

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Advertising can be interpreted as communicating business information to the target audience through the media. Ads presented through text, visuals, colors, movements, and music serve as a means to convey rhetorical, symbolic, and metaphorical meanings (Hirschman & Stern, 2003). The influence of advertising has significantly increased due to the growing materialistic nature of society. In an environment full of various advertisements, whether on billboards, shops, magazines, newspapers, television, or social media, consumers are encouraged to show their identity by consuming emotionally, physically, and economically, for example, by buying clothes, accessories, and cosmetic products (Xu & Tan, 2020). As a result, advertising has been a big part of creating a society that cares more about stuff and fitting in than important values.

In advertisements, the representation of gender influences how consumers form attitudes towards the advertisements they see. As many as 57% of characters in advertisements are female-dominated, while the remaining 43% are male (Bruce & Ha, 2023). A recent study by Srivastava and Yadav (2023) revealed that as many as 53% of respondents agreed that advertisements that used women as product representatives successfully attracted the general public's attention. Similarly, Kumari and Shivani (2015) found that consumers in India tend to be in favor of the stereotypical way women are shown in ads. They believe these

portrayals make them like, remember, or recognize the ads and the brand more. The success of advertising depends on the appeal of role models who play an important role in determining the market appeal of a product or brand. An attractive model increases the perceived value of the attributes associated with the product (Levi in Tanyildizi & Yolcu, 2020). That is because advertisement plays an important role in creating a bridge between the audience and the company, instilling confidence in the product being sold. The success of advertising can be measured based on its ability to increase individual confidence in the product, which ultimately encourages consumers to buy the product or service offered. Therefore, Sari (2020) argues that women are the main focus in the print or electronic industry as the most targeted audience.

Stereotypes of attractiveness or beauty for women refer to appearance with a clean and bright facial appearance, a slim and tall body shape, and long, straight, black hair (Mahendra, 2023). Women with lighter skin tones received a 242% higher amount of advertising investment compared to women with darker skin tones (Bruce & Ha, 2023). The existence of beauty stereotypes is a result of the belief that attractive women are those who possess physical perfection and allure (Widodo & Loisa, 2021).

The emergence of beauty stereotypes or beauty standards affects women's perception of "beauty." Beauty product advertisements often emphasize the ability and convenience of achieving beauty (Dassy, et al., 2021). Certain women are willing to go to great lengths to achieve fair skin, including diligently following skincare routines from morning to night, opting for plastic surgery, and, in some

cases, resorting to unsafe skin-lightening products, all in an attempt to conform to the beauty standards established by those in the capitalist industry (Mahendra, 2023). As a result, numerous capitalists compete to produce beauty products marketed as "skin whitening" to cater to women's aspirations of enhancing their beauty.

The effect that beauty ads have these days is substantial. Most of the responsibility for the fixation on looks in our culture belongs to cosmetic ads. Because of this, women now use makeup to conform to social norms around beauty rather than to improve their looks (Radzi & Musa, 2017). Makeup reinforces the belief that a woman's body is something to be examined and judged and suggests that their physical appearance is naturally flawed and needs to be altered. Women's tendency to avoid going out in public without makeup may suggest that they not only challenge beauty standards that require wearing cosmetics but also adopt advertising language that emphasizes the importance of using makeup to improve physical appearance (McCabe, et al., 2017). Motivated by how the stereotype of women's beauty portrayed through advertisements, it is necessary to explore the visual grammar and do a stylistic analysis from a feminist perspective to see how the strategy used by *Something* makeup brand represents beauty in women.

This research explored visual grammar and feminist stylistic dimensions within the context of Instagram post advertisements, with a specific focus on the brand *Something*. Visual grammar is a method of analyzing visual communication developed by Kress and Leeuwen (2006). While, feminist stylistic, proposed by

Mills (2005), illustrates the relationship between language, beliefs, and dominance (Radzi & Musa, 2017). Thus, the researcher explored the two sides of the post, such as the visual element from the post and the textual element from the caption. The preliminary data of the research can be seen as follows:

Table 1.1 Preliminary Data: Visual Data


Visual Grammar				
<div><p>Posted: September 11, 2023</p></div>				
Representational				
Narrative			Conceptual	
Participant	Process	Circumstances		
Female model	Action Process (Non-transactional process)	Circumstances of Means	Symbolic Process	
Interactive				
Contact	Social Distance	Attitude		Modality
		Horizontal	Vertical	
Demand	Close-shot	Frontal Angle	Eye-level Angle	High Modality
Compositional				
Information	Salience			Framing
Centre-Margin	Product (Hooman cushion, Hooman Loose Powder, Idol Lip Matte). Emblem & Brand Name			No frame line

Table 1.2 Preliminary Data: Textual Data

Feminist Stylistic		
<p>She's an icon, she's a legend, she's #Hooman Available in 14 shades that looks matte-nificent on every skin tone.</p> <p>Let Hooman Cushion empower you to love your reflection ✨</p>		
Level	Aspect	Analysis
Word Level	Generic Pronouns	" <u>She</u> 's an icon"
		" <u>she</u> 's a legend"
		" <u>she</u> 's #Hooman "
		"Let Hooman Cushion empower <u>you</u> to love your

Phrase/sentence Level	Generic Nouns	reflection”
		“She’s an <i>icon</i> ”
		“she’s a <i>legend</i> ”
		“she’s <i>#Hooman</i> ”
		“Let <i>Hooman</i> Cushion empower you to love <i>your</i> reflection”
	Ready-made phrase	“She’s an icon, she’s a legend, she’s <i>#Hooman</i> ”
	Metaphor	“Let Hooman Cushion empower you to love your reflection 🌟”
	Presupposition and Inference	“Available in 14 shades that looks matte-nificent on every skin tone.”
	a. Presupposition	1. There are 14 different shades available
		2. The shades are suitable for all skin tones
		3. The shades are designed to appear matte
		4. The shades are perceived as magnificent or impressive
	b. Inference	The inference from the sentence "Available in 14 shades that looks matte-nificent on every skin tone" is that this lipmatte is versatile and flattering for everyone. This statement implies that the product's shades are designed to suit a diverse range of skin tones, suggesting that it is inclusive and appropriate for different individuals. The use of the term "matte-nificent" combines "matte" and "magnificent," indicating that the product's finish is both impressive and matte. This statement aims to attract potential customers by suggesting that the product can enhance their appearance, regardless of their skin tone, potentially making it more attractive and marketable.
	Transitivity Choice	
	a. Material Process	“Available in 14 shades that looks matte-nificent on every skin tone”
	b. Mental Process	“Let Hooman Cushion empower you to love your reflection 🌟”
	c. Relational Process	“She’s an icon, she’s a legend, she’s <i>#Hooman</i> ”
Discourse Level	Character/roles	An icon
		A legend
		A human
		A magnificent person
	Focalization	“Let Hooman Cushion empower you to love your reflection 🌟”
	Schemata	From the caption, the scheme that occurs with women as objects is that women are humans who have many skin tones and are assumed to be insecure about skin color (line 3 "Let Hooman Cushion empower you to love your reflection 🌟") so that with the presence of the Somethinc cushion which has 14 different shades, will empower women to love their respective skin colors (to love your reflection)

Somethinc Makeup's Instagram post used visual grammar to tell a story featuring a female model who is reacting to their cushion product. Through the use of direct gaze, close-up shots, and a frontal point of view, the post aimed to engage viewers intimately. The compositional features of the post emphasized the product's prominence, while the feminist stylistics in the caption reinforced empowerment and inclusivity. The use of generic pronouns and metaphors in the caption presupposed suitability for all skin tones, promoting self-love and confidence. The choice of transitivity highlighted both tangible benefits and emotional effects. The post characterized the product as an "icon" and "legend" and focused on empowerment to underscore the brand's commitment to diverse beauty representation and positive self-image. Overall, the post appealed to a broad audience with its empowering messaging and inclusive imagery.

Somethinc stands out as a skin care product that employs the portrayal of women within the context of beauty in its advertising. This local brand, established by Irene Ursula in 2019, offers a wide range of beauty products, encompassing skincare, cosmetics, and beauty tools. Notably, *Somethinc* achieved the top spot in 2022 as the leading facial serum brand in the E-commerce industry, as reported by Ahdiat in 2022, and it was also acclaimed as the top-selling skincare brand on Shopee in 2021. On Instagram, *Somethinc* has successfully garnered a total of 1.3 million followers up to this point. Meanwhile, another Instagram account of *Somethinc* that focuses more on makeup products namely *@somethincmakeup* already has 72.5K followers.

In the analysis of advertisements as an indicator of different perceptions of beauty amongst countries, Spyropoulou et al (2020) found that in a study of 257 global ads, researchers found consistent beauty traits like symmetry, high cheekbones, small noses, thin jaws, lush hair, smooth skin, and white teeth. However, regional preferences differed: Latin America, the USA, and Australia favored tanned skin and fuller lips, while Asia preferred milky white skin and small mouths. Models in Southeast Asia were younger, and Arab and Southeast Asian women often had intense eyebrows and used artificial eyelashes. Similarly, Dita & Pribadi (2022) state that a beautiful, clear complexion is vital for women's happiness and self-confidence, while dull skin is associated with unhappiness. Society often judges a woman's beauty by her clear skin, fair complexion, and slim figure as shown in the ad.

Although there was existing research on women's representation, more studies were needed to specifically examine beauty and makeup brands like *Somethinc* as the subject of investigation in the beauty representation of women. Additionally, the feminist stylistic approach to analyzing advertisements remained to be explored. Therefore, the researcher was interested in studying beauty representation in *Somethinc Makeup's* Instagram posts. This research aimed to provide a more profound understanding of how the beauty of women was represented through the visual and textual elements in the advertising posts on *Somethinc Makeup's* official Instagram account.

B. Problem of the Study

This study examined the linguistic characteristics employing a feminist stylistic approach and incorporated visual elements in the context of *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram Posts. Consequently, the research questions are:

1. What elements of visual grammar and feminist stylistics are found in *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram post to represent the beauty of women?
2. How does *Somethinc Makeup* realized strategies of visual grammar and feminist stylistics on Instagram Posts to portray beauty representation?

C. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study involved revealing the beauty representation within the *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram Posts organized as follows:

1. To find out the element of visual grammar and feminist stylistics found in *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram post to represent the beauty of women.
2. To explain the utilization of strategies of visual grammar and feminist stylistics on *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram Posts to portray beauty representation.

D. Scope of the Study

This study centered on examining the linguistic elements within *Somethinc Makeup* Instagram Posts, employing a Feminist Stylistic Approach consisting of three levels: Level of Word, Level of Sentence/Phrase, and Level of Discourse as outlined by Sara Mills in 2005. It also considers other factors, specifically Visual Grammar: Representational, Interactive, and Compositional by Kress and Van Leeuwen in 2006, to explore beauty representation.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretically:

- a) This research aims to enhance theories of literature.
- b) This research aims to offer fresh insights through an applied multimodal analysis, exploring the beauty representation in the beauty industry.

2. Practically:

- a) For readers, to know that this study provides valuable insights into how language and visuals shape societal perceptions of beauty, especially in today's visually-driven online platforms.
- b) For future researchers, it is anticipated that this study can serve as a reference in the domain of multimodal analysis, encouraging further progress in similar topics for more comprehensive research.