

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the present society, advertisements play a huge part in passing on messages. As Brown and Knight (2015) demonstrated, the media relay powerful messages to spread and modify cultural beliefs. In our everyday lives, we are surrounded by mass media such as television, radio, newspaper, internet and social media. Even though these media exist with differences between one and another, they have one common function: as a platform for companies to advertise their product. Advertising itself is a complex form of communication that operates to pursue goals and uses strategies to influence consumers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Sugiharti, 2018, p.384). It is included in marketing communications, a general term that is used to refer to all forms of communication strategies that the marketers use to reach their customers and deliver their messages (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells, 2011). Advertising generally has at least four roles both in the business world and social life. As Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells (2011) demonstrated, there are marketing roles, communication roles, economic roles, and societal roles. Advertisement has a main function as a medium to provide information about the advertised product/service/idea. Besides that, it also functions to influence people to take action against what is being advertised.

As Zubir and Kadir (2012) demonstrated, advertisements reflect society's dominant values, attitudes and habits (as cited in John, 2015). Cook

(2001) points out that advertisements inform, persuade, remind, influence and perhaps change opinions, emotions and attitudes (as cited in Kaur et al., 2013). In other words, advertisements do not only sell products but also change society and make people buy things that they might not want or need. Cook (2001) also added that advertisements do give warnings or information to people. Hence, advertisements can help create awareness, construct identities and attitude.

An advertisement, as one embodiment of the mass culture, not only aims to provide and influence consumers' decisions to buy goods or services, but also creates a value hidden in the advertisement itself (Sugiharti, 2018).

According to Will (2014), there are some psychological things, both positive and negative, constructed in the advertisements. Advertisements are constructed by a collection of individual perceptions, cognition, and tactile engagements with material resources and their potential to make judgements and differences. Through advertisements, consumers are encouraged to promote their personal images through emotional, physical and economic consumptions such as buying clothing, accessories and cosmetics (Xu & Tan, 2020, p. 176). Then, it leads to a condition where in the present days, advertisements are able to shape the attitudes of the society and the individual.

Advertisements realized in the form of texts or visual imagery, colors, movements and music are considered as the medium of rhetorical, symbolic and metaphorical meaning (Hirschman & Stern, 2003, as cited in Xu & Tan, 2020, p. 176). Advertisers can pass on their expectations through language and visuals in their advertisements, making visuals and language in the

advertisements play a prominent role in delivering the messages and influencing consumers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. According to Goddard (1998) as cited in Susanti (2019), advertisement is about more than just selling products; it's also about presenting the prospect of writings that will help to shape the image of a person, group, or organization. In 2015, Deborah Ashabai Fredericks John found that in English newspaper advertisements in Malaysia, advertisers used visuals and Malay lexis to convey two broad ideological categories. The advertisers were able to convey an ideology and also persuaded readers that unity was the ideal to strive for, compounded by the Government's branding effort through advertising and the media. Another study conducted by Aazam, Baig, and Farraz in 2021 showed how sexist language is used in advertisements and how the female body is represented through language. They found that in the advertisements, various linguistic devices such as emotive words, scientific and technical words and slogans are used to attract the people. The Advertisers portray a beautiful image of women that can only be acquired by using their beauty products revealing that the language used in the advertisements is used to control people's minds and create an idealized lifestyle.

In recent years, it is seen that some progressive social ideas have emerged in the marketing and promotional campaigns in the media (Barkay, 2013, as cited in Xu & Tan, 2020). For example, in 2003, Dove, a personal care brand criticized the dominant media-constructed notion of beauty by launching a campaign called *Real Beauty* which has been very successful and received public attention and increased sales. Following that, more beauty

advertisements advocate for women's empowerment by promoting feminist independence images in the advertisements, such as supporting "power," "freedom," and "change." This conspicuous trend drew a lot of attention, especially after Rihanna launched her makeup brand Fenty Beauty in 2017 and provided 40 shades of foundation ranging from light to deep dark. The brand also made a campaign called 'Beauty for All' which was praised for its representation of diversity and inclusivity by featuring 15 diverse models to share their story. With this breakthrough, the brand challenged other makeup brands to create collections that were more inclusive to all skin tones. This then created a shift in the beauty industry towards inclusivity and diversity of all races, genders, ages, and sizes. Later, beauty brands took the "#Me too" movement on social media. For instance, Olay joined the women empowerment movement and launched the ad campaign "Face Anything" in 2018. Beauty brand Bobbi Brown launched their *Be Who You Are* campaign in celebrating their 25th anniversary, reminding that when a woman uses cosmetics, it must be to enliven their unique identities and not to cover their existing flaws. More beauty brands have joined the trend by launching their campaigns such as Cover FX's *Nude is Not Beige* campaign, L'oreal *Your Skin, Your Story* campaign, and Lancôme's *My Shade My Power* campaign. As the beauty industry has become a daily necessity for women, it is worth noting to study how these new changes are involved in the advertising discourse and how they represent their target audiences.

This study aims to examine the language features and visual signs in Maybelline cosmetics advertisements to see how Maybelline deconstructs the

concept of beauty from the traditional beauty concept to a broader beauty concept. Maybelline New York is an American cosmetics, skin care, fragrance, and personal care company based in New York. It is one of the biggest and most popular make-up brands in the world which is now available in 129 countries offering more than 200 products. In its cosmetics area, Maybelline offers a variety of daily-use cosmetics such as foundation, powder, lipstick, mascara, eyeliner, eyeshadow, eyebrow, and a lot more. Maybelline took the fourteenth place for most valuable cosmetics brands with highest net worth and popularity in the world as per 2020 and thirteenth place as per 2020 and 2021 (Brand Finance, 2022). The statistics also showed Maybelline on the seventh place for strongest brands as per 2020. The strong performance is largely attributed to the brand's loyal customer base, supported by their ability to position themselves at the forefront of popular culture and adapt to online trends by using influencers, celebrities, and targeted social media advertising in their global marketing campaigns. Maybelline is also one of the most followed cosmetics brand on Instagram with a total of 11,4 Million followers as per 2022, followed by L'oreal with 9,8 Million followers, NARS cosmetics with 8,8 Million followers, Tarte Cosmetics with 10 Million followers, Huda Beauty with 6,9 Million followers, and Too Faced with 12,8 Million followers.

By unpacking the verbal language and visuals in the five advertisements, this research aims to investigate how the advertiser Maybelline New York constructs the concept of beauty in diversity through discursive strategies in Maybelline advertisements by adopting Kress and van

Leeuwen's framework of reading images and Halliday's systemic functional grammar to analyze the texts and visuals in the ads. Thus, by adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen's model of social semiotic and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, this study attempts to examine how the beauty brand uses various linguistic and visual strategies in its advertisements.

Kress and van Leeuwen's concept of visual grammar (2006) views visual images systematically and displays how the elements are joined together in the image. In their book *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design*, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) recognized three types of metafunctions adapted from Halliday's three broad metafunctions of communication. According to them, there are three kinds of metafunctions, as shown by images, to create meaning which consist of representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and compositional metafunction. The representational metafunction are the represented participants which include the people, places, and objects in the image that answer the questions about what the image is. The interpersonal metafunction is about the actions among all the participants involved in the production and viewing of an image, such as the creator, the represented participants, and the viewer. The interpersonal metafunction answers the question of how the image engages the viewer while the compositional metafunction answers the question of how representational and interpersonal metafunction relate to each other and integrate into a meaningful whole that makes sense to the reader (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

Halliday's transitivity discusses how meaning is conveyed in the clauses. According to Halliday, there are three primary and essential components that are involved in the use and application of transitivity, namely the participant, the process, and the state or circumstance. The participant is the actor of the process and the one who receives the end of the action. It can be people, objects or abstract concepts. The participant is represented by nouns or noun groups. The process is represented by the verbs or verbal groups. Lastly, the state or circumstance is represented by the adverbial groups or prepositional phrases which give details about when, where, and how the process occurs. In transitivity, there are six types of process which consist of three main types of process namely material process, mental process, and relational process and three minor types of process namely verbal process, existential process, and behavioral process.

There are several studies related to transitivity, social semiotics, or beauty product advertisements that have been conducted by scholars. A study titled *Language choice and ideology: Examining the use of the Malay language in English Newspaper Advertisements in Malaysia* was conducted in 2015 by Deborah Ashabai Fredericks John. The study examines the use of Malay words and phrases in English newspaper advertisements in Malaysia, and the ideologies communicated through such language choice by using an approach based on a critical social semiotics framework from Caldas-Coulthard and van Leeuwen (2003) on 68 English newspaper advertisements with Malay words and phrases. The analysis revealed that advertisers used visuals and Malay lexis to convey two broad ideological categories: a Malay-

Muslim ideology that expressed the worldview, values and culture of the Malay ethnic group; and a socio-political ideology of unity which can be seen as both a social message and a political tool of the Government. The advertisers were able to convey an ideology and also persuaded readers that unity was the ideal to strive for. This is compounded by the Government's 1 Malaysia branding effort through advertising and the media that unity is the 'common sense' option for Malaysians. The difference between the previous study and this study is that the previous study focuses more on how verbal language in the advertisement can communicate ideologies to the viewers while this study focuses on how both the visual and verbal elements in the advertisement.

Tazanfal Tahseem and Umme Kalsoom also conducted a semiotics study in 2015 focusing on beauty advertisements titled *Exploring the Veiled Ideology in Cosmetics Adverts: A Feminist Perspective*. The study reveals how the advertisements shape their female customers' perspective. It explores how language and images are employed to make women realize their status in male-biased society. Kress and van Leeuwen's study of signs and Fairclough's concept of CDA were applied to unveil the hidden ideology presented in the language used in ten different beauty advertisements. The result exposes how print media constructs certain ideologies regarding feminism in its advertisements. Language and signs are used to manipulate the minds of women and the media has the power to tempt women to purchase beauty products even which they don't need.



In 2016, Vinakha Naraswas Sriratu conducted a qualitative study titled *A Case of Multimodal Analysis: The Representation of a Female Model in the "Insight" Public of Male Magazine 147 Edition*. The study aims to examine the image of Indonesian women displayed in men's magazines visually and verbally. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics was applied to analyze the visual and verbal data. The visual data were analyzed using the visual language approach by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Wilfred's colour meaning (1962), and Barnard's theory of fashion and physical appearance (2007). The verbal data were analyzed using Halliday's theory of transitivity (1994). The results show that fashion integrated visual and verbal elements that complement each other to build female image models. The female model is visually represented as a physically and spiritually beautiful woman with aggressiveness. Verbally, the female models are represented as hard-working, famous, and curious women who tend to use their feelings in life. Relating to gender, the study found that the magazine reflected how stereotypes of women change over time depending on the culture of the people. Both the previous study and this study use the same theory to analyze the visual and textual elements. The difference is the previous study brought the issue of how female models are represented in men's magazine while this study focuses on how Maybelline advertisements represent the concept of diversity in their brand.

Further study conducted by Huimin Xu and Yunying Tan in 2020 titled *Can Beauty Advertisements Empower Women? A Critical Discourse Analysis of the SK-II's "Change Destiny" Campaign*. The study examines the

advertising campaign of a beauty product SK-II, “Change Destiny” through the lens of critical discourse analysis. By unpacking the verbal language and visuals in the three advertisements and a video advertisement, this article aims to investigate how the beauty advertiser SK-II constructs the ideal images of women through discursive strategies in ads and uncover the possible ideologies underlying the advertising discourse. Adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1990, 1996) framework of ‘reading images’ and systemic functional grammar (Butt, 2012; Halliday, 1994), this study has found that the beauty brand SK-II has utilized various strategies to engage the audiences and market its products, such as problematizing the aging of women, providing personalized solutions to the problem of aging, constructing certain feminist discourses for women, and drawing itself close to the younger generation through women empowerment. The findings show that although the beauty brand claims to empower women through advocating change of destiny for women in its ads, gender ideology remains to be dominant and continues to perpetrate women. It is concluded that these new changes in the ads are simply playful discursive strategies employed by advertisers to legitimize the new capitalism and commercialism and generate more sales. Both the previous study and this study uses Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics and Kress and van Leeuwen’s model of social semiotics. The difference lies in the source and data used. The previous study uses SK-II’s *Change Destiny* campaign while this study uses Maybelline cosmetics advertisement.

The last previous study is conducted by Didin Nuruddin Hidayat, Desruinova Kusuma, Maya Defianti, Alek, and Rahmah Purwahida (2020) entitled *'Beauty Advertisement Products in Forming the Reality of Society: A Critical Discourse Analysis'*. This research compares two competing cosmetics brands (Wardah and Maybelline) by using Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the ad text of beauty products to understand how the producers compose words to persuade and attract people to buy their products by shaping certain realities. This research uses three advertisements from Wardah and Maybelline New York in the form of commercial video taken from YouTube. The results show that the local cosmetics brand Wardah focuses on displaying 'Halal' cosmetics products inspired by sharing the goodness of 'Wardah starting from Halal' to fellow Indonesians. Wardah featured Sandra Dewi as its commercial model, representing Muslim women who wear hijab, is always helpful, full of enthusiasm, creative, and inspiring. The advertiser specifically tries to convey the message and provide products based on Indonesian Muslim women's real conditions as the main target of this ad. Meanwhile, Maybelline advertisement with its slogan 'Make it Happen' forms a bold mentality without a doubt into becoming what is dreamed. Maybelline featured Gigi Hadid and several other models that act as women who can make all their wishes happen without restrictions. The models play several jobs according to their respective hobbies. It follows the conditions of Western society, which prioritizes individual freedom and the emancipation of women.

The difference between the previous research and this research lies in the issues and theories used. In the previous research, the issues discussed were how Wardah and Maybelline compose words in their advertisements to attract the viewers by shaping certain realities and the theory used is Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis. For the similarity between the previous research and this research is the data or corpus used in the research, both of the researches use beauty advertisements, specifically Maybelline advertisements. However, the difference lies in the form of the advertisement. The previous research uses Wardah and Maybelline New York advertisements in the form of commercial video while this research uses only Maybelline advertisements in the form of posters.

Researchers have widely used beauty advertisements in their studies but none has examined how the concept of beauty in diversity is constructed in Maybelline advertising posters. The researcher chose beauty advertisements due to the popularity of cosmetics products that became the big obsession and interest by women. One of the well-known cosmetics companies is Maybelline New York. The brand has existed for more than 100 years and has become one of the big cosmetics brands around the world. This study focuses on how Maybelline represents and constructs the concept of beauty in diversity through their advertisements. Maybelline has been trying to provide an overview of beauty in diversity by producing various products and advertisements for their products.

While the previous studies only focus on the descriptions on how the language features used in beauty advertisements without drawing a

connection to a particular issue, this research tries to examine the link between the language features used in Maybelline advertisements and relate it with the issue of beauty in diversity. The ads used in this research are also the newest advertisements from 2019 to 2022 while the previous studies used older video or poster advertisements. Based on this thought, the author tries to reveal the gaps in previous research related to beauty advertising posters and how Maybelline represents their concept of beauty in diversity.

### **1.2 Research Question**

How is the concept of beauty in diversity constructed in Maybelline advertisements through the visual and verbal text?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

This study aims to reveal how the concept of diversity is represented in Maybelline advertisements.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on examining how the concept of beauty in diversity is portrayed in Maybelline cosmetics advertisements by using Halliday's transitivity and Kress and van Leeuwen's model of social semiotics. The advertisements were released in a range from 2019 to 2022 and are chosen due to the availability of the idea of beauty in diversity in the advertisements as well as the popularity of Maybelline itself whose voice might influence millions.

### 1.5 Significance of Study

This study is expected to give contributions towards the related field which is a study of media discourse, specifically in advertisements, using social semiotics theory and systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory. This study is also expected to raise awareness about diversity in makeup and beauty. While the previous studies cited earlier focus primarily on the language features used in beauty advertisements, this study examines the link between the language choice and the visual text in the advertisements and how they represent their target audiences in the context of beauty in diversity. This study will also be beneficial for the future researchers as supporting data when conducting research about the idea of beauty in diversity as well research discussing the semiotics in beauty product advertisements.

