WHEN ACTORS TAKE OVER THE PRODUCTS: SHOWCASING HALLYU-INFLUENCED INDONESIAN BEAUTY PRODUCT ADVERTISING THROUGH MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS

Herman[1]*; Tatum Derin[2]; Ridwin Purba[3]; Jaka Satria Warman[4]; Andrew Setiono[5]

[1]Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen
Jl. Sangnawaluh No. 4, Siopat Suhu, Pematang Siantar, Sumatera Utara, 21136, Indonesia
[2]Research in Second Language Education Department, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge
CB2 8PQ, United Kingdom
[3]Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Department of Teacher Professional Program, Universitas Simalungun
Jl. Sisingamangaraja Barat, Bah Kapul, Pematang Siantar, Sumatera Utara, 21142, Indonesia
[4]School of Education, Faculty of Sciences and Laws, University of Bristol
Beacon House, Queens Rd, Bristol BS8 1QU, UK
[5]Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Groningen
Groningen, 9712 TS, Netherlands
[1]herman@uhnp.ac.id; [2]td476@cam.ac.uk; [3]purbaridwin61@gmail.com;
[4]js.warman.2021@bristol.ac.uk; [5]andrewsetiono98@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research attempted to address the research gaps in the semiotics of Korean-related media, considering that there were only a few studies on advertisements that had been influenced by the Korean craze. Capitalizing on the Hallyu Wave, an Indonesian cosmetics company, Scarlett Whitening, changed its Instagram marketing strategy to focus on its South Korean brand ambassador, Song Joong Ki. The data were two Instagram advertisements of Scarlett Whitening that represented their change of strategy in September 2021. The data were analyzed using multimodal analysis to find out the three metafunctions of the advertisements, referring to Kress and Leeuwen's social semiotics theory. Results show that the representational meaning of both advertisements contains a solid narrative to invite readers to buy the product so that they can be closer to the South Korean actor. The interpersonal metafunction influences consumers to believe that the human model is very familiar with the product, and the compositional metafunction highlights the association between Song Joong Ki's white skin, white clothes, and white product with the brand's name. However, the analysis also indicates an extreme spotlight on the South Korean actor and a stark neglect of the product across the linguistic, visual, and spatial semiotic systems. The research is significant in revealing a potentially concerning upcoming business marketing strategy that capitalizes on the popularity of Korean culture at the cost of neglecting the authenticity of their products.

Keywords: hallyu wave, Indonesian beauty product, advertising product, multimodal analysis

INTRODUCTION

The most common media for communication in daily life are radio, television, and newspapers. The telephone, of course, is also essential for communication. Nowadays, people can watch television advertisements meant to be used as a communication tool, especially when telling others about a good or service. Advertising is a component of marketing communications. It is a general term that refers to all methods of communication that marketers use to connect with their clients and spread

their message. The life of effective marketers is by advertising their products. Advertisement is successful when it can convince people to respond as suggested by the advertisement (Shariq, 2020). Advertisement is a process of conveying information about products such as goods, services, and ideas from a company to a target audience. Advertising is the origination or communication of product ideas to motivate consumers to purchase. During marketing, advertisements can provide the audience with information, ideas, or messages. To make their advertisements stand out, creators of advertisements deliberately design their text, images, and other semiotic elements, such as audio or video, to stand out and attract customers (Singh et al., 2021). However, the notions of 'standing out' and 'attractive' are highly subjective because individuals have different preferences and online flow experiences; however, all marketers need to design their advertisements in a way that will somehow stand out and attract massive amounts of people. This is where world trends have a role.

The academic world, particularly East Asia, has been fascinated by studying the effects of the overwhelming popularity growth of South Korean pop culture (Hallyu). Counteracting centuries of western hegemony, Korean dramas have grabbed the attention of not only their own citizens but also Japan, China, the Middle East, and Europe in the 1990s – 2007 (known as the first Hallyu wave). Then, K-pop massively took advantage of smartphone advancements and spearheads Korean products in all sorts of industries, such as cosmetics and games, in the late 2000s (known as the neo-Hallyu wave) (Jin, 2018). All seven corners of the globe have witnessed the craze for Korean products as fans and supranational fandoms actively act as ambassadors and facilitators of Korean culture among their acquaintances (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020). Non-South Korean people around the world voluntarily take up the role of cultural ambassadors and become the catalyst of Korean product marketing strategies worldwide. As the spread of Korean fandom correlates with the number of individuals attracted to Korean things, this research has noted that non-South Korean businesses are starting to market their products by specifically using the Korean fan culture cycle in their advertising.

The research is motivated by the results of a preliminary observation of a recently launched marketing strategy of an Indonesian cosmetics company, Scarlett Whitening. This beauty product brand was founded by Indonesian actress Felicya Angelista in 2017 and has been focused on selling skincare products (Diananto, 2021). One of their social media accounts with the strongest presence is their Instagram page, where they post images of their products paired with Indonesian and English texts that focus on introducing their products' benefits and suggestions to order their cosmetics. At times, their Instagram page would publish pictures of unidentified men and women or a famous Indonesian songwriter, Agnez Monica, with the texts largely remaining the same. However, in September 2021, this Indonesian beauty product brand's marketing strategy took a different direction, where their advertisements began to strongly emphasize the Hallyu culture by introducing Song Joong Ki as their Star Ambassador. Ever since they released their teaser video of the famous South Korean actor, Scarlett Whitening made headlines, and their posts began to frequently include images of the actor and other South Korean celebrities, and their texts shifted to introducing Song Joong Ki rather than their own products (Soehandoko, 2022).

This contradiction of marketing tactics sparks the interest of the research to understand how they tailor their advertisements to the Hallyu wave phenomenon, as the results of the research can be useful for business stakeholders who are also researching how they can replicate Scarlett Whitening's successful advertising tactic. Scientific investigation of advertisements remains an important task for researchers due to the rapid expansion of the online environment generating the demand for online markets to establish brands (Ngongo, Dethan, & Hina, 2018; Herman et al., 2022), and this social media page is a suitably perfect example that shows how the Hallyu Wave affected the way producers promote their products to attract potential consumers.

Despite the popularity of academic studies on the Hallyu Wave, surprisingly, very few studies (on English language databases) analyze Korean product advertisements' semiotic elements. Kristiva and Suprajitno (2020) have analyzed the subtle marketing strategy of product placement in which products are included in the narratives of a top K-drama, and Alhadi et al. (2022) have examined the representational meanings behind male-targeted Korean skincare advertisements. Two other studies cover the context of both Korean and Indonesia marketing, although they focus on an Indonesian video advertisement that verbally mentions K-drama in the script (Rahmawati & Sinar, 2021) and the other one compares the two country's video advertisements of tourism, not products (Andriani & Hamzah, 2021). Clearly, there is still more room for focused investigations on advertisements that have been affected by the Hallyu Wave.

Moreover, Ganghariya and Kanozia (2020) have published the only systematic literature review paper on the phenomenon of Hallyu Wave that has been published, to the knowledge of the researchers, screened 100 relevant papers out of 5030 Google Scholar search results and noted that majority of existing research has mostly focused on discussing Hallyu Wave as part of the globalization discourse, but rarely carried out conceptual studies that would add to the conceptual understanding of theories about the Hallyu Wave. Ganghariya and Kanozia (2020) have also identified that Korean-related media is the least explored dimension of Hallyu, as most researchers concentrate on the Hallyu Wave itself or K-dramas only in particular. To address these research gaps, this research carries out a multimodal analysis of Scarlett Whitening's advertisements that featured their

star brand ambassador, Song Joong Ki. The research offers a new take on the study of Hallyu-influenced advertising since the object of the research is not directly Korean products or from Korean companies but an Indonesian beauty company that capitalizes on Korea's global popularity in this era.

METHODS

The research applies a qualitative descriptive in design as it utilizes systemic functional linguistics (Chefor, 2019) to understand the online advertisement's pictorial and written forms of data. The data consists of two of the first Song Joong Ki posts on Scarlett Whitening's Instagram page, published on September 3rd and 16th, 2021, respectively. These posts are selected because they are the most representative of the Indonesian cosmetics business' attempt to shift their advertising images and texts from emphasizing their products to shining the light on their South Korean brand ambassador instead.

Table 1 Social Semiotic Aspects of Multimodal Analysis

Social Semiotic Aspects	Descriptions
Representational Metafunction	It shows the relationship between objects and aspects of the world outside the representational system. This metafunction emphasizes the position, color, size, and arrangement that are actually present in the image. The researcher's task is to show a narrative that is dominantly legible in the text, both in the form of images and writing.
Interpersonal Metafunction	The visual demands have two functions: to create visuals of the advertised product and to invite readers to feel what is conveyed by the human image object. Interpersonal metafunction emphasizes analyzing the relationship between each object in the image text, such as body gestures and the impression one wants to show the reader.
Compositional Metafunction	It shows the relationship between the two previous metafunctions, namely representational and interpersonal, to determine the message the producer wants to convey. It analyzes the value of information that applies to the choice of semiotic signs chosen by producers, the size of the advertising image, the colors used in the advertising image, and the modalities of this advertising image in the text.

Because these advertisements use two or more semiotic tools or 'modes' of communication (e.g., image and text), this research uses multimodal analysis to understand online advertisements (Ledin & Machin, 2020; Xiaochen & Yang, 2021). Of the five multimodal semiotic systems (e.g., linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial), this research only focuses on the linguistic, visual, and spatial systems because the research objects are only pictures and texts (Yanti & Yuniari, 2021). The theoretical basis of the data analysis technique refers to Kress and Leeuwen's (2020) three meta-semiotic steps to understand multimodal data. Table 1 shows the social semiotic aspects of multimodal analysis.

Referring to Kress and Leeuwen (2020), the two Scarlett Whitening advertisements featuring Song Joong Ki will be analyzed with several steps. The first step is to analyze the representational metafunction by paying attention to the human and non-human objects (represented participants). The second step is to analyze the interpersonal metafunction by paying attention to the type of image, the action shown in the image, the visual proximity of the image to the reader, the perspective highlighted by the producer of the advertisement image, and the background of the producer choosing Song Joong Ki as the main focus in the advertisement image. The third step is to analyze the compositional metafunction by paying attention to the effect of choosing represented participants in the images, the relationship between one represented participant and another represented participant in this ad image, the effect of using color, and how these images appear to the reader. The last is to conclude the meaning of the discourse conveyed through Scarlett Whitening's Hallyu-influenced advertisements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research focuses its multimodal analysis on two of the first Song Joong Ki posts on Scarlett Whitening's Instagram page (Figure 1).

In Song Joong Ki's rendition of the Scarlett Whitening publicizing banner that is available in Figure 1, the authentic meta-work comprises articles, specifically a white glass with the item logo as a non-human item, Song Joong Ki as human items, and pack Scarlett Whitening items as non-human articles arranged from left to right. Of the three items, non-human articles are more prevailing in light of the fact that they are situated around Song Joong Ki as the human article is in the center. The activity shown by Song Joong Ki in the article is grinning at the peruser by holding the Scarlett Whitening item. This image shows an account and a classificatory idea that proposes a connection between the items present. There are two vectors that show up in this promotion. The cycle in this notice is classificatory because it highlights Song Joong Ki as a component of the Luwak White Koffie espresso epicurean gathering. The justification behind picking the pictures shown on the Instagram page during 2021 is to show that Scarlett Whitening items are delighted in by Indonesians, but at the

same time are sought after by shoppers from abroad with the presence of Song Joong Ki, who represents unfamiliar nationals. From this, it very well may be seen that Song Joong Ki is a specialist in underlining the talk, specifically that this Scarlett Whitening item is a worldwide standard item. From that explanation, it can be concluded that this Scarlett Whitening product is targeting Song Joong Ki fans as the main target market. If this advertising model is replaced with another model, for example, Indonesian actors or artists will produce different effects because the target market is also different. Of course, the selection of Song Joong Ki as an advertising model is the impact of the growing interest of the Indonesian people in 2021, especially teenagers in South Korean culture.

At this stage of the compositional metafunction, the researcher relates the relationship between the two previous metafunctions, namely representational and interpersonal, to find out the message the producer wants to convey. The placement of images in this advertisement has an important meaning because the producers are trying to attract readers' attention by placing an image of a human model who acts as the center of the advertisement by displaying the image that radiates from the object. This implies that the human image represented by Song Joong Ki is the center for conveying the message to the reader. The composition of the image elements on this Instagram page represents the purpose of the producer. At the representational metafunction stage, it is read that the image has a solid narrative to invite readers to buy and consume the product. The interpersonal metafunction in Figure 2 shows that the producer intends to make the advertising model as part of the reader so that

Figure 1 Scarlett Whitening's First Post Featuring Song Joong Ki

Figure 2 Scarlett Whitening's Second Post Featuring Song Joong Ki

it gives the impression of being familiar with the gestures and actions he performs. This compositional metafunction analyzes the value of information that applies to the choice of semiotic signs chosen by producers, the size of the ad image, the colors used in the ad image, and the modality of this ad image with Scarlett Whitening products. Song Joong Ki as a model is a meaningful choice because it contains the intention of producers who emphasize white or white as the core of the advertisement. The first reason is that Song Joong Ki in Figure 2 has white skin, similar to the product name containing the word 'white'. This shows that if the model is replaced with a black model, the meaning of this ad image also changes. Second, the glass that the model is holding also has a white color, which implies that this product is white. Third, the clothes used by the model Song Joong Ki are also white, which further emphasizes that this product has a white color. For these reasons, it can be seen that the white color representation in this ad image is dominant. The meaning of the white color indicates the modality of the advertising image. Modality is a semiotic social concept that questions the meaning of the representation used by looking at the interactions of each element of the image present. The representation of the dominant white color in each image element in Figure 2 indicates that the producer is trying to emphasize to the reader that this is a new product that is light and fun. The black and white gradation in the picture shows the impression of being more than real.

From the analysis of the three social semiotic aspects, namely representational, interpersonal, and compositional metafunctions, it can be stated that Scarlett Whitening's advertisement after September 2021 has drastically switched its focus from its own product to the point that it seems to promote the actor instead. This is a strategy to attract the interest of potential consumers, especially fans of the actor and the general public. The selection of Song Joong Ki as the brand ambassador of Scarlett Whitening is one result of the growing popularity of the Hallyu Wave globally. The Hallyu Wave means that there is a significant public interest in the popularity of culture and entertainment originating from South Korea since the 1990s in various parts of Asia, which is influenced by the development of various social media (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020). This clearly affects how producers promote their products to attract potential consumers who now spend more time on social media. The selection of Song Joong Ki as the main image on the official Scarlett Whitening Instagram page throughout 2021 is the impact of the rapidly changing fan culture cycle. Jin (2018) has once argued that social media, such as Instagram, becomes a catalyst for its development so that young prospective consumers can more easily access various product advertisements.

This causes consumers to no longer choose products based on the quality of the ingredients, but on the way producers advertise their products. Song Joong Ki's version of Scarlett Whitening is not only seen as advertising ordinary products. From the three metafunctions, it can be seen that the focus of the advertisement is the actor, not the product. The position of the actor in the middle and the product on the side indicates that there is a special discourse to be conveyed. The discourse is about the covert spread of Hallyu Wave culture. This makes it clear that the internet plays an important role in the Hallyu Wave to spread their culture and make them more famous in Asia (Jin, 2018). The selection of advertising stars from South Korea for Indonesian skincare products is the impact of the increasing number of people interested in the Hallyu Wave culture. From the analysis of the three metafunctions, it can be stated that the quality of the product is not important when compared to the actors who advertise the product. The research reveals a unique, potentially concerning, new trend of marketing that non-South Korean business companies might adopt to increase their sales figures.

CONCLUSIONS

The research presents a multimodal analysis of the beauty product advertisements of Scarlett Whitening. The novelty of the research is that the objects of the research are advertisements of Indonesian skincare products that capitalized on the Hallyu Wave for their new marketing strategy. Scarlett Whitening's Instagram posts now put their emphasis on both their image, text on image, and caption texts exclusively about their South Korean brand ambassador, Song Joong Ki, and almost entirely abandoned their previous marketing language style of introducing and educating their audience about the benefits of their skincare products. The research reveals a potentially concerning upcoming business marketing strategy that capitalizes on the popularity of Korean culture at the cost of neglecting the authenticity of its products. The results of the research are expected to provide benefits to potential product consumers and the general public regarding the hidden intentions in advertisements on social media. The research is also expected to be a reference for other researchers who use social semiotics in analyzing visual images in various print and social media.

The research can still be continued by other researchers, especially regarding other types of products made in Indonesia that also utilize brand ambassadors from South Korea. This is important to research, considering that the Hallyu Wave is still a trend in various parts of the world so that it can attract public sympathy for the advertisement. Research on advertising needs to be carried out on other objects, considering that in everyday life, many types of advertisements appear from various media, both print and visual media. Advertising is an inseparable part of people's social life. This social semiotic research aims to be able to provide new insights to the public, especially potential consumers, that there is always a hidden meaning behind all advertising images that are

displayed or appear in various media. The research can also be a reference for academics who want to discuss the impact of the Hallyu Wave in Indonesia, especially for young people. This is important considering that the development of social media technology is increasingly intensive, making it easier for various groups to access foreign cultural products.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Alhadi, A. B., Gunawan, W., Wirza, Y., & Syihabuddin, S. (2022). Multimodal analysis of South Korean male skincare advertisements. *Journal of English Language Studies, 7*(1), 40-59. https://doi.org/10.30870/jels.v7i1.14027.

Andriani, N., & Hamzah, H. (2021). Comparison of Indonesia and Korea video tourism advertisements found in YouTube using social semiotic. *English Language and Literature, 10*(1), 20-33. https://doi.org/10.24036/ell.v10i1.113084.

Chefor, V. M. (2019). Interpersonal function in Paul Biya's 2018 French inaugural speech and its English translation. *International Journal of Systemic Functional Linguistics, 2*(2), 47-54. https://doi.org/10.22225/ijsfl.2.2.1371.47-54.

Diananto, W. (2021, January 10). *Felicya Angelista lebarkan sayap bisnis, berani luncurkan varian baru di tengah pandemi Covid-19.* Retrieved from https://www.liputan6.com/showbiz/read/4453034/felicya-angelista-lebarkan-sayap-bisnis-berani-luncurkan-varian-baru-di-tengah-pandemi-covid-19.

Ganghariya, G., & Kanozia, R. (2020). Proliferation of hallyu wave and Korean popular culture across the world: A systematic literature review from 2000-2019. *Journal of Content, Community and Communication, 11*(10), 177-207. https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.06.20/14.

Herman, H., Sulistyani, S., Ngongo, M., Fatmawati, E., & Saputra, N. (2022). The structures of visual components on a print advertisement: A case on multimodal analysis. *Studies in Media and Communication, 10*(2), 145-154. https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v10i2.5717.

Jin, D. Y. (2018). An analysis of the Korean wave as transnational popular culture: North American youth engage through social media as TV becomes obsolete. *International Journal of Communication, 12*, 404-422.

Kress, G., & Leeuwen, T. van. (2020). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (3rd Ed.). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099857.

Kristiva, N., & Suprajitno, S. (2020). Multimodal analysis on product placement in Korean drama: "Goblin". *K@ta Kita, 8*(2), 219-225. https://doi.org/10.9744/katakita.8.2.219-225.

Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2020). *Introduction to multimodal analysis.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ngongo, M., Dethan, M., & Hina. H. (2018) Metafunction meaning realization in lexicogrammar of sermon texts on 'Language and Cultural Month', Kupang town: A systemic functional linguistics approach. *Proceeding, Series: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research.*

Rahmawati, & Sinar, T. S. (2021). Multimodal analysis on sprite advertisement. *International Journal of Research Publications, 80*(1), 61-67. https://doi.org/10.47119/IJRP100801720212047.

Shariq, M. (2020). Tools & techniques used in the language of advertisements: A linguistic analysis of Indian TV commercial ads. *Media Watch, 11*(3), 564-578. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2020/11092020.

Singh, M. K. S., Shah, M. I., Jamil, E., & Feroz, R. (2021). Semiotics with style and situation: Multi-modal comparative analysis of title pages of native and non-native English novels. *Register Journal, 14*(2), 263-282. https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v14i2.263-282.

Soehandoko, J. G. (2022, April 27). *Profil bisnis Scarlett Whitening, yang didirikan artis Felicya Angelista.* Retrieved from https://entrepreneur.bisnis.com/read/20220427/263/1527944/profil-bisnis-scarlett-whitening-yang-didirikan-artis-felicya-angelista.

Xiaochen, W., & Yang, G. (2021). Analysis of the social interpersonal function of Biden's inaugural speech based on big data technology. *2021 International Conference on Public Management and Intelligent Society (PMIS),* 71-74. https://doi.org/10.1109/PMIS52742.2021.00023.

Yanti, N. P. M. P., & Yuniari, I. G. A. M. E. (2021). Multimodal analysis of Energen ads. *International Journal of Systemic Functional Linguistics, 4*(1), 25-28. https://doi.org/10.22225/ijsfl.v4i1.4118.