

Ideal Beauty Representation: Multimodality Analysis of Scarlett Whitening's Content with Song Joong-Ki

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Abstract. Advertising as a form of communication is considered an effective tool to promote sales. According to the stereotype in the public, beauty brands usually are represented by women. For Scarlett Whitening's advertisement, Song Joong-Ki is chosen as their ambassador even though there is still a stereotype of men's role, especially in advertisements. This research aims to describe modality and analyze ideational, interpersonal, and compositional meta-functions in collaboration content between Scarlett Whitening and Song Joong-Ki. This research was conducted with a qualitative approach and using multimodality methods by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) with the type of social semiotics research. The results show that Song Joong-Ki invites the audience to focus on the product, shows a close relationship with the audience, and shows his love for the product and the audience. Scarlett Whitening emphasizes the representation of beauty standards, the Pan-Asian Look, which is identical to clean white skin, marketed and represented visually with Song Joong-Ki as the primary focus. Results also demonstrated Song Joong-Ki's usage of beauty products as a male in the campaign and that the marketer may use his status as a Korean actor to employ Para-social contact with his fans as market targets.

Keywords: beauty standard, multimodality, beauty brand, representation, brand ambassador

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INTRODUCTION

The role of media in everyday life is vital, namely as a means of communication and a means of interaction. Apart from being used as a means of daily interaction by the community, the media is also used as a facility for advertising, either in print or online. Advertising itself is a way for companies to introduce their products. Advertising is used to motivate, persuade, and strengthen consumers' memories of a product or service so they are interested in buying from a business. According to Kotler & Keller (2012), advertising is the presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services paid for by sponsors through print, broadcast, internet, electronic, and exhibition media.

Advertising as a form of communication is considered an effective tool for sales promotion. According to the theory behind the attempt to define multimodal as "socially and culturally structured resources for generating meaning" (Bezemer & Kress, 2008), the mode of communication in advertising should consider the social and cultural context. Apart from sound, advertisements can also be shown through images, text, and symbols. However, visual advertising usually creates different impressions for each person. Therefore, this research will examine advertisements, especially collaboration content, with multimodality analysis.

This research will focus on

the content of Beauty Brand Scarlett Whitening's collaboration with South Korean actor Song Joong-Ki. Scarlett Whitening itself is an Indonesian beauty brand owned by Felycia Angelista. Established in 2017, Scarlett Whitening's beauty products focus on brightening the skin with Glutathione and Vitamin E. Quoted from *Compas.co.id* (Joan, 2022), in the second quarter of 2022, the total transaction value of the beauty care product category in the online market had reached more than Rp 210 billion. Moreover, from Scarlett Whitening's sales data from April to June 2022, this brand is firmly at the top of sales, with a market share of 11.32% and sales revenue of 23.8M.

Song Joong-Ki is a South Korean actor who has successfully played in several famous dramas, such as *Descendants of the Sun* and *Vincenzo*. In 2021, he also won several awards, including the Popular Star Award at the Blue Dragon Film Awards, Best Actor at the Brand of The Year Awards, and Outstanding Korean Actor at the Seoul International Drama Awards, which shows his skills and fame as a top actor in South Korea.

Scarlett Whitening's collaborative content introduces Song Joong-Ki as its new star ambassador. This is quite interesting, considering that initially, according to the stereotypes of the general public, beauty products are usually represented by women. Meanwhile, in this advertisement, a beauty brand uses Song Joong-Ki as an ambassador even though there is still a mindset that is generally embedded regarding stereotypical male roles, especially in advertisements.

Through content analysis of prior research, it has been determined that men and women are equally represented in non-stereotypical roles and activities. However, protagonists are more likely to be portrayed as male than female,

indicating gender differences in role distribution. As a result, advertisers and marketers are already using the evolving status of women as a factor for original digital media content (Aramendia-Muneta et al., 2020). Through the past five decades of research on gender portrayal in advertising, it has also been found that shifting role structures in the family and workforce bring about significant variations in the roles of men and women that are then reflected in advertising. Role change in men is an area of much interest in recent years. Men are portrayed in advertisements as 'softer', interacting with their children and presented in a more equal role (Zotos & Grau, 2016).

Using a qualitative approach and SWOT analysis, Chen and Zhong (2022) conducted research on the influence of male idols advertising beauty products to female consumers in China. The study revealed that using male idols as the face of a beauty brand can influence female consumers and better promote products for female consumers to consume. A beauty brand will have a good and popular image due to the influence of celebrities through the effect of fans as long as the character of an idol is in line with the image of the beauty brand (Chen & Zhong, 2022). A multimodality analysis was conducted in 2021, which studied gender-based objectification in commercial advertisements. This is because there are images that can only be created from a certain gender, so it is only suitable for advertising certain products. This is also a widely used strategy to reach certain markets (Khan et al., 2021).

With many social media options as advertising markets, Instagram is now a popular place for teenagers and adults to interact, so influencers are also opening up markets there, including influencers of beauty products. Based on research by Barker in 2018 cited in a journal by Jace Lopez in 2021, Instagram has become

one of the most widely used social media platforms on the internet, which is 32% in the US region (Islam & Lopez, 2021). Meanwhile, according to data by We Are Social in 2022, Instagram is the 4th most used social media in the world, after Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, and is the second most preferred social media after WhatsApp. Meanwhile, Indonesia is the 4th most populous country that uses Instagram after India, USA, and Brazil (Kemp, 2022).

This momentum is maximized by brand owners to also market their products through Instagram, so they also create Instagram profiles and work with influencers to increase engagement with their products, including the Beauty Industry. The beauty industry is one of the most competitive industries in the world, and in the last 5 years, it has grown by 17% (BBC Radio 4, 2023). Many celebrities and influencers create their own cosmetic brands or partner with big companies to do beauty product “collaborations”. These collaborations rely on the influence of celebrities and influencer marketing to increase sales and build brand awareness (Islam & Lopez, 2021).

However, the beauty industry is now starting to evolve from being seen as feminine to using male influencers or celebrities as the ‘face’ of their brand. Karjo and Wijaya (2020) previously conducted a text analysis of promotional videos from male and female beauty influencers. Her study’s findings indicate that male and female influencers’ language qualities and characteristics differ. Male influencers are frequently more forthright and direct. They also employ less complex words. Meanwhile, women try to sound more polite and familiar when using their language (Karjo & Wijaya, 2020).

Through the many studies above, no research has conducted a multimodality analysis of the presence of men as a representation of beauty

products. So, in the academic realm, this research is expected to interpret content related to beauty generally represented by women, now starting to be filled by men, using multimodality analysis that has never been described in previous studies. This can change the perception of ‘beauty’ based on gender representation. Practically, this research can be useful for the beauty industry, beauty influencers, and even advertising agencies to find out why men can now represent beauty in products where the majority of consumers are women.

The purpose of this study is to describe the modality in the content of the collaboration between Scarlett Whitening and Song Joong-Ki, as well as analyze the ideational, interpersonal, and compositional meta-functions in the content of the collaboration between Scarlett Whitening and Song Joong-Ki. In addition, this research is expected to find out the meaning of the ideal beauty representation implied in the content of the collaboration between Scarlett Whitening and Song Joong-Ki.

METHOD

The research method used is multimodality. Multimodality is a method of integrating many modes in communication to better explain meaning. Several modalities or communication signs exist to control the meaning generated by adjusting semiotic sources according to each user’s needs, called multimodality (Rodríguez et al., 2013, p.49).

The paradigm used is the critical paradigm. Critical paradigm studies reveal and analyze social realities that question the inequality of existing social relations (Halik, 2018). From the perspective of multimodality, language is not seen as an independent phenomenon, and it is isolated from other communication forms (O’Halloran (2004) Eriyanto, 2023).

According to O'Halloran (2004), analysis and interpretation of the use of language are related to the resources of semiotics that are simultaneously being used in meaning-making. Three keywords in multimodality (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018) are:

1. Meaning is created by many different semiotic resources, each with potential and limitations.
2. Meaning-making includes the overall production and multimodality.
3. If we study meaning, we include all the sources of semiotics used in the whole.

Bezemer and Jewitt (2018) identified three approaches in multimodality analysis: functional-systemic, social semiotic, and conversation analysis. All these approaches focus on language in use, related to what people do with language in daily life and how they create a social world through language. The research design used is social semiotics to fulfill the chosen critical paradigm. Social semiotics is a theory of meaning and meaning-making through interaction investigating how texts are generated. Texts are viewed as multimodal complexes in social semiotics, comprising more than one mode (writing, speech, gesture, music, dance, layout, etc.). Social semiotics consists of three aspects: ideational, interpersonal, and textual or compositional. Social semiotics in this research looks at the role of actors and the selection of poses used by actors in the promotional content.

Ideational means language is used to reveal physical-biological reality and is related to interpretation and the representation of experience. In written language, this ideational is realized in the structure of transitivity language. This structure realizes the meaning of experience, which consists of three aspects: process, participant,

and circumscription (Eriyanto, 2023). Process describes an activity performed by an actor to a goal and consists of agentive-non-agentive, projective-non-projective, action-reaction, transactional-nontransactional, and unidirectional-bidirectional (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). In written language marked by verbs. Circumstance describes a condition marked by using properties (adjective). In written language, transitivity can be seen from the use of the predicates used in the grammar (verbs, adjectives, etc.) that indicate the events that want to be described. Meanwhile, in image language, transitivity can be viewed from vectors. This vector directs our view as the audience on what part of the image we should observe.

Interpersonal means that language reveals social reality and relates to the interaction between speaker/writer and listener/reader. These metaphors relate to relationships or interactions. Inter-participant. This interaction between participants can be divided into two parts: (a) giving or asking. (demanding). Contact refers to whether the participant shown in the image interacts with the audience or not (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Demand: The participant was shown to make a request (demand). Participants in the picture are "looking" at the audience and (as if) asking for something. The actor/participant is offered as an object of contemplation to the audience. Participants do not "look" at the audience; their eyes are not directed at the public but at the object, allowing the public to observe it. Social distance is the proximity the image wants to display to the audience, whether the picture wants the audience to be close to the actors/acts shown in the picture or vice versa (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Textual/compositional means language is used to reveal the semiotic reality or the reality of symbols and relate



FIGURE 1. Promotional Content by Scarlett Whitening with Song Joong-Ki

to how text is created in context. One of these forms of textual realization is the old information structure to the new one (Eriyanto, 2023). Clause begins with old information and then continues with new information. Old information is shared information, whether speaker or listener, while new information is the development of old information.

The object used in this research is Scarlett Whitening's product promotion content, which uses Korean actor Song Joong-Ki as its Brand Ambassador. This content was chosen because the use of South Korean actors is considered unique enough to represent a beauty brand's product; moreover, this brand comes from Indonesia. In addition, beauty products are synonymous with women, so it can be assumed from this promotional content model selection that certain intentions are being played by producers, namely the Scarlett Whitening brand, to consumers.

Data collection is done through several stages. The research observed several promotional content posts on Instagram @Scarlett_Whitening, which involved Brand Ambassador Song Joong-Ki on promotional posters. Then,

the researcher selected the promotional content with the highest follower interactions. The post on November 26, 2022, on the @Scarlett_Whitening account, with 42 thousand likes and 510 comments, finally became the object of this research. This is intriguing because, initially, stereotypes among the general public suggested that women typically portrayed beauty items. Meanwhile, in this advertisement, Song Joong-Ki is used as an ambassador even though there is still a mindset that is generally embedded regarding stereotypes of male roles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ideational

Based on the visual analysis, this promotional content has an ideational component based on narrative structure (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). In the narrative structure of the ideational meta-function, this content has a process shown by the activities carried out by the actor in the picture, namely Song Joong-Ki. The use of poses by the actor certainly has a specific purpose. The depiction of a Korean actor smiling and holding a local product from the beauty brand Scarlett

Whitening shows that there is a purpose to promote the beauty product and that the beauty product from Scarlett Whitening can be used by men, even by an actor from South Korea.

The direction of Song Joong-Ki's gaze directly to the side of the camera shows that the actor is looking directly at the audience and creating a sense of closeness to them. The use of a heart-shaped hand pose on Scarlett Whitening products aims to show that the actor loves the product he is holding and create trust in consumers to use Scarlett Whitening products.

Based on its position, this content illustrates an agentive position, where the actor in the content occupies one position and does not act as the object of other actions. However, the actor acts as the audience, namely promoting Scarlett Whitening products. The selection of this agentive position aims to make the audience focus on one actor, Song Joong-Ki, and understand the purpose of product promotion. The activities in this picture fall into the non-projective category, where the activities of the actors are shown from the picture without any complementary narration. The only narrative available is a caption on the hashtag #MoreThanMoisturizing, which shows the advantages of Scarlett Whitening products held by Song Joong-Ki.

This content falls into the action category in terms of the actions shown in the visual because the actor performs an action, starting with a smiling expression directed at the audience and showing the product for promotion. The action is also a form of transactional because the depiction of the actor has a specific purpose due to the direction of the gaze and gestures directed at the audience. The direction of the gesture is bidirectional because the actor is pointing at the same goal: the audience.

Interpersonal / Interactive

Interactions or interpersonal relationships between audiences and participants in the content images can be seen through three factors, namely Contact, Social Distance, and Attitude (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Judging from Image 1, Song Joong-Ki, as a representative participant in the picture, makes eye contact by looking directly at the audience as if asking (Demanding) us to use the product he is holding. Through the shooting distance, marketers use a medium distance, thus capturing the entire posture performed by Song Joong-Ki up to the waist. This distance effectively conveys the message that Song Joong-Ki likes and uses this product through his gestures in the picture but still pays attention to a reasonably close relationship with the audience.

The attitude captured in image 1 can be analyzed through two sides, Subjectively and Objectively. From the subjective viewpoint of the audience, the picture is taken from the front, thus creating Involvement with the audience, as if what Song Joong-Ki is doing also involves what the audience is doing. Vertically, the audience's point of view is also made equally (Equality), creating the impression that the audience and Song Joong-Ki are in the same position and Song Joong-Ki is part of the audience.

Objectively, marketers aim to demonstrate that Song Joong-Ki genuinely enjoys their product. They do this by using information presented in the form of images (Knowledge Orientation). The intention is that the audience who feels involved will also buy the same product that Song Joong-Ki uses.

Compositional

Information Value, Saliency, and Framing are three components of compositional meta-function (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Analyzing Image

1, the two types of information value in the compositional meta-function show that the poster composition is centered

(Centered-Margin), this can be seen from Song Joong-Ki as a brand ambassador being the central element to be the main

TABLE 1. Multimodality Meta-function Analysis

MULTIMODALITY META-FUNCTION		
Types of Meta-function	Identification	Analysis
Ideational	Narrative Structures: Process	The content describes an activity performed by the actor (Song Joong-Ki) to achieve the goal, which is to show Scarlett's products to the audience.
	Position: Agentive	The actor occupies one position and does not act as the object of other actions. However, the actor performs actions on the audience.
	Process / Activity: Non-Projective	The participants' activities are shown in the images without accompanying narration.
	Action: Action & Transactional	The actor acts, smiling at the audience and showing the product. The direction of the gaze and gestures directed towards the audience also indicate a specific purpose.
	Vector: Eye gaze direction love-shaped gesture Direction: Bidirectional	The vector is shown by the direction of the actor's eyes towards the audience and the heart-shaped hands, which can refer to the love for the product and the audience. Actors refer to the same goal, which is the audience.
Interpersonal	Contact: Demand	His eyes stare directly at the audience as if demanding that we also use the product he is holding.
	Social Distance: Social	The photo was taken from a medium distance, not too close, but not too far. You can see the pose that Song Joong-Ki is doing, but his face can still be seen clearly.
	Attitude - Subjectivity: Involvement & Equality	The photo is taken from the front, creating engagement with the audience. The angle taken is also parallel to the audience, creating the impression that the audience and Song Joong-Ki are in the same position and that Song Joong-Ki is part of the audience.
	Attitude - Objectivity: Knowledge Orientation	The purpose of this image is to inform that Song Joong-Ki likes the product he is holding.
Compositional	Information Value: Centered	The main element is Song Joong-Ki, the brand ambassador. In contrast, the margin elements include additional information about him, such as the brand name, signature, and product tagline.
	Saliency: Maximum	Song Joong-ki's proportions dominate the advertising poster.
	Framing: Maximum Connection	Each element in the poster layout shows unity from the color palette to the expression.

attraction. While the surrounding margin elements become supporters of the poster, such as the text of Song Joong-Ki's name and signature as an affirmation of the identity of the brand ambassador, then the placement of the tagline #LebihDariMoisturizing as additional information about the product held by Song Joong-Ki, that the product has other benefits besides just moisturizing the skin, the Scarlett logo at the top confirms the product brand held by Song Joong-Ki, and the illustration "love" illustrates Song Joong-Ki's hand pose which shows his love for this moisturizer product.

Next is salience, which is defined as proportion. Here, Song Joong-Ki's brand ambassador dominates the poster (Maximum Salience), suggesting that the brand really wants to present the South Korean actor as the center of attention.

Another compositional meta-function component is framing, defined as a collection of elements in a layout that can show a connection. The framing seen in this poster has a connection (Maximum Connection) starting from the composition of the background color with the matching blue product packaging.

From the ideational meta-function analysis results, the Scarlett Whitening brand creates promotional content in collaboration with actor Song Joong-Ki with activities that indirectly act actively to promote moisturizer products. In semiotic social analysis, the point of attention of Represented Participants (RP) in advertising images is the potential meaning created (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The choice of poses and gestures from Song Joong-Ki, who stares directly at the camera, aims to create a sense of closeness with the audience so they feel directly face-to-face with the actor. The gesture of the actor carrying the product while his hand forms a heart indeed aims to show the impression that Song Joong-Ki loves and recommends the product

from Scarlett Whitening. The gesture also means that the audience should not hesitate to try Scarlett Whitening's moisturizer products because Song Joong-Ki, a South Korean actor, also believes in and likes Scarlett Whitening's products. This promotional content focuses on the gesture of the actor who seems to love the product and builds a sense of closeness and friendliness to the audience to form trust in the Scarlett Whitening brand.

Through the results obtained in the interpersonal meta-function analysis, marketers of Scarlett Whitening want to target Song Joong-Ki's fans to buy Scarlett products held by Song Joong-Ki. With the public's enthusiasm for Korean models, marketers utilize Parasocial interactions through images that capture eye contact with the audience and gestures that show the object's preference for the product he is holding. This is shown by the direction of Song Joong-Ki's eyes looking directly at the audience, and marketers utilize this factor so that the audience feels seen by Song Joong-Ki, which they rarely get if they only watch through the dramas starring him. The choice of this South Korean actor to represent a local beauty brand indeed aims to build a sense of trust and closeness to the Scarlett Whitening brand, in the sense that a South Korean actor is willing to try local Indonesian products, so the audience should also believe in the quality of the brand. This is also supported by the research by Sari (2018), which found that the election of a Korean actor as an advertisement's ambassador is one of the consequences of the increasingly popular Hallyu Wave worldwide.

Distance relates to the emotions and intimation that emerge from the image of the advertisement presented (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The shooting distance was deliberately taken medium, as the marketer wanted to focus the audience's attention on 'Song Joong-Ki holding

Scarlett's product with a symbolic heart in his hand'. Although the distance taken could have been a close-up for the audience to get deeper involvement, the appearance of the body up to the waist shows that the marketer wants to focus on letting the audience know that Song Joong-Ki likes the product he is holding and wants the audience to try it too. In addition, the angle of shooting by marketers is also done from the front and parallel to the audience, giving the impression that between the object of representation and the audience, there is no caste difference, no one is higher or lower, and the object is also part of the audience. Marketers use the above factors because they want the audience to feel that Song Joong-Ki, as a representative object, wants them to use their favorite products often.

At this stage of compositional metaphor, the researchers associate the relationships between the two previous metaphors, representational and interpersonal, to identify the message the producer intends to convey (Culache & Obadã, 2014). In the results of the compositional meta-function analysis, it can be seen that the way Scarlett markets this moisturizer product does want to emphasize featuring South Korean actor Song Joong-Ki compared to Scarlett's moisturizer beauty products. This can be seen from the proportion of Song Joong-Ki's photo size that dominates the poster layout and is placed in the center, even the comparison of the appearance of the product size and the South Korean actor is very comparable. However, further explanation of what product is being displayed with the actor is shown through the hashtag #LebihDariMoisturizing so the audience can receive the value of the information conveyed.

The visual requirement has two functions: to create the visual of the advertised product and an invitation for

the reader to feel what the object of the human image conveys (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). A component that shows that Song Joong-Ki acts as a marketing lure for this beauty product is the emphasis on introducing the South Korean actor with the presence of Song Joong-Ki's name and signature on the poster. It can be seen that the brand utilizes parasocial interaction, knowing that Song Joong-Ki has many fans in Indonesia. Scarlett interprets this as a way to expand the audience's attention from various sides of the eye when viewing the poster. This is also related to the influence of the actor Song Joong-Ki on Scarlett's target market so that it can invite audience interaction to like and leave reactions in the comment column.

The choice of a male figure to represent a local Indonesian beauty brand is seen as a breakthrough. This is because beauty brands are generally associated with women. However, in this case, gender stereotypes in promotional content are lost because a male figure can now represent beauty standards. The beauty standard shown is still based on the Pan-Asian Look standard, which emphasizes white and smooth skin. Song Joong-Ki aptly represents this figure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the representational, interpersonal, and compositional meta-functions, the meaning of the ideal beauty representation is implied in the content of the collaboration between Scarlett Whitening and Song Joong-Ki. From these meta-functions, it can be seen that Song Joong-Ki invites the audience to focus on the product, shows a close relationship with the audience, shows his love for the product and the audience, and invites the audience to use the same product as him. From this, the beauty brand Scarlett Whitening emphasizes the representation of beauty standards,

namely the Pan-Asian Look, which is synonymous with pure white skin and is marketed and represented visually with Song Joong-Ki as the primary focus. Song Joong-Ki, as a brand ambassador, also shows that marketers want to reduce the use of gender stereotypes by exploring non-stereotypical gender portrayals. It also shows that smooth skin, a youthful appearance, and an attractive face are no longer extended beauty standards that apply to women and men.

Marketers achieve two goals from this image: alerting the audience that Song Joong-Ki uses Scarlett Whitening's beauty products as a man and that this is one of the reasons why his face is so attractive. Thus, this study contributes to the study of communication and marketing to better understand and improve the use of models for a brand, specifically a beauty brand. This research has also given new insights into the use of multimodality methods. This research also contributes to exploring the meaning-making process through multimodal analysis to better understand the advertisement's strategy. Methodologically, the selection of the population and samples was not based on a standardized method. There are no specific criteria and requirements for sample selection other than the number of likes obtained. Therefore, for future research, a more proper population and sample selection can be carried out using standardized methods, both random and non-random.

Further research can explore other types of Indonesian-made products that also use brand ambassadors from South Korea. Advertising research can also be done on other objects because, in daily life, many types of advertising emerge from various media, both print and visual media. Advertising is an integral part of society's social life. This social semiotic research aims to provide new insights to the public, especially potential

consumers, that there is always a meaning hidden behind all the advertising images displayed or appearing in various media. This research can also be a benchmark for academics who want to discuss the impact of Korean trends in Indonesia, especially among the youth. This type of research is necessary because social media technology is becoming more rampant and advanced, making it easier for various groups to access foreign cultural products.

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