

The Function of Language in Advertisements that Promote Fair Skin as a Beauty Standard

Fungsi Bahasa dalam Iklan yang Mempromosikan Kulit Putih sebagai Standar Kecantikan

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<p>Description Submission: 08 March 2026 Revised: 01 April 2026 Accepted: 26 April 2026 Approved: 01 May 2026</p> <p>Kata Kunci <i>fungsi bahasa, iklan kecantikan, kulit cerah, Jakobson, sociolinguistik</i></p> <p>Keywords Language function, beauty advertisement, fair skin, Jakobson, sociolinguistics</p>	<p>This study examines the role of language in beauty advertisements that promote fair skin as a beauty standard. It aims to identify the language functions used and to explain how these functions contribute to the construction of fair skin as an ideal of beauty. The problem of this study focuses on how language is used to influence and shape audience perceptions in advertising discourse. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. The data consist of 20 beauty advertisements collected from TikTok and YouTube, focusing on verbal elements such as slogans and persuasive expressions. The analysis is based on Roman Jakobson's theory of language functions. The findings show that the conative function is the most dominant, followed by poetic and emotive functions. Overall, the study reveals that language in beauty advertisements plays a significant role in constructing and reinforcing fair skin as a beauty standard.</p> <p>Abstrak <i>Penelitian ini mengkaji peran bahasa dalam iklan kecantikan yang mempromosikan kulit putih sebagai standar kecantikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi fungsi-fungsi bahasa yang digunakan serta menjelaskan bagaimana fungsi-fungsi tersebut berkontribusi dalam pembentukan kulit putih sebagai ideal kecantikan. Permasalahan dalam penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana bahasa digunakan untuk memengaruhi dan membentuk persepsi audiens dalam wacana periklanan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data penelitian terdiri dari 20 iklan kecantikan yang dikumpulkan dari TikTok dan YouTube, dengan fokus pada unsur verbal seperti slogan dan ungkapan persuasif. Analisis didasarkan pada teori fungsi bahasa Roman Jakobson. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa fungsi konatif merupakan yang paling dominan, diikuti oleh fungsi puitik dan emotif. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa bahasa dalam iklan kecantikan memainkan peran penting dalam membangun dan memperkuat kulit putih sebagai standar kecantikan.</i></p>



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1. Introduction

Beauty has long been an important aspect of human culture and social life. Throughout history, societies have developed various concepts of what is considered beautiful, and these concepts have influenced how individuals perceive themselves and others. Beauty is not merely a personal matter but

also a social phenomenon, as beauty standards are constructed, maintained, and transmitted through cultural practices, social interactions, and media representations (Tektigul et al., 2023; Noreen & Kamran, 2024). In modern society, beauty standards have become increasingly globalized, particularly through advertising, social media, and popular culture (Campbell et al., 2025).

One of the most prominent beauty standards in contemporary society is the construction of fair skin as a desirable appearance. Beauty standards are socially and culturally constructed norms that determine what is considered attractive in a given society (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). These standards are dynamic and influenced by various factors such as history, economy, and culture. In many parts of the world, fair skin is often associated with positive attributes such as cleanliness, health, social prestige, and success, and this perception is continuously reinforced through media, particularly in beauty advertisements (Basir et al., 2022; Catu et al., 2025).

The role of beauty advertisements is highly significant in promoting fair skin as a beauty standard. Advertisements not only display fair-skinned models but also use language as a primary tool to shape audience perceptions (Haasrin & Sidik, 2023). In beauty advertisements, the concept of fair skin is often not expressed explicitly through the word "white," but is instead conveyed through terms such as "bright" and "glowing." These expressions function as implicit linguistic strategies that represent fair skin in a more subtle and socially acceptable way. By using such expressions, advertisers are able to construct the idea of fair skin as desirable without directly referring to whiteness. As a result, although the advertisements predominantly use terms like "bright" and "glowing," they still contribute to the construction and reinforcement of fair skin as a dominant beauty standard in society.

In advertising, language is strategically used through slogans and persuasive expressions to influence how consumers perceive beauty (Edouihri, 2024). For instance, slogans such as "rahasia kecantikan perempuan Indonesia untuk kulit cerah" and "cerahkan cantikmu" illustrate how language is used to construct the idea that fair skin is desirable and should be achieved. The use of language in advertising is not neutral; rather, it serves specific functions aimed at attracting attention, evoking emotions, and encouraging consumer action. Through word choice, sentence structure, and stylistic features, advertisements are able to create strong and persuasive messages (Saeed & Khan, 2022). In this context, slogans become an essential element because they are designed to be brief, appealing, and memorable, thus having a significant impact on the audience.

Language in beauty advertisements plays a crucial role in constructing and reinforcing beauty standards, particularly in relation to fair skin (Sembiring et al., 2020). Through slogans and linguistic expressions, advertisements do not merely convey information but also shape perceptions and social values within society. Therefore, it is important to examine how language functions are used in beauty advertisements, especially in slogans, in order to understand how beauty standards are constructed and normalized. Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the function of language in beauty

advertisements that promote fair skin as a beauty standard by applying Roman Jakobson's theory of language functions as the theoretical framework (Jakobson, 1960). This study focuses on language functions, particularly the conative, emotive, and poetic functions, as used in slogans and persuasive expressions in advertisements. Through this analysis, the study seeks to reveal how language plays a role in constructing and reinforcing fair skin as a beauty standard in society. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of sociolinguistics and advertising discourse, as well as to enhance public awareness of how language influences perceptions of beauty in contemporary society.

2. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the function of language in beauty advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard. Qualitative research is used to explore and understand meanings embedded in social phenomena through detailed interpretation. Using this approach, the present study focuses on analyzing how language functions operate in advertising slogans.

The data source of this research is beauty advertisement content obtained from digital platforms, namely TikTok and YouTube. These platforms are selected because they widely disseminate beauty-related content and significantly influence public perceptions. The data consist of 20 slogans taken from beauty advertisements, with 10 slogans from TikTok and 10 from YouTube. The data are selected purposively based on their relevance to the promotion of fair skin as a beauty standard.

In this study, each slogan serves as the unit of analysis. Only slogans that explicitly or implicitly promote fair skin are included, while irrelevant data are excluded.

The data collection and analysis are conducted through several systematic steps.

The technique of collecting the data is carried out through the following steps:

- a) **Watching:** The writer watches various beauty advertisements on TikTok and YouTube to observe the use of verbal language such as slogans related to the promotion of fair skin as a beauty standard.
- b) **Selecting:** From the observed advertisements, the writer selects those that meet the established criteria, specifically advertisements that explicitly or implicitly promote fair skin as a beauty standard through verbal language.
- c) **Collecting:** A total of 20 relevant beauty advertisements are collected as the primary data of the study, consisting of 10 advertisements from TikTok and 10 advertisements from YouTube.
- d) **Downloading:** The selected advertisements are downloaded from TikTok and YouTube to archive the data and allow for more detailed and systematic analysis of the verbal language used.

- e) Transcribing: The verbal language in each advertisement, including slogans, is transcribed to be analyzed based on language functions according to Roman Jakobson.

The instrument of data collection in this study is the researcher herself as the primary instrument.

The method of data analysis in this study is qualitative analysis based on Roman Jakobson's theory of language functions. To ensure a systematic and structured interpretation of the collected data, the analysis is conducted through the following stages:

- a) Data Selection and Reduction: The writer selects and focuses on relevant verbal elements such as slogans that are related to the promotion of fair skin as a beauty standard and that demonstrate identifiable language functions according to Jakobson's theory.
- b) Data Organization and Display: The selected data are organized and presented systematically according to the language functions identified, facilitating a clearer and more structured analysis of how each function operates in the advertising texts.
- c) Classification: The verbal elements are classified according to Jakobson's categories of language functions, particularly the conative, emotive, and poetic functions, to identify the dominant language functions present in the advertisements.
- d) Verification: The writer checks the consistency and validity of the data and findings by cross-referencing the classified data with the theoretical framework and ensuring that the classification is consistently applied across all advertisements.
- e) Interpretation: The writer interprets the language functions identified in the advertisements and draws conclusions on how these functions contribute to the construction and promotion of fair skin as a beauty standard in contemporary digital advertising.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the analysis of language functions in beauty advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard. The analysis focuses on identifying the types of language functions used in the slogans and examining how these functions contribute to the construction and reinforcement of fair skin as a beauty standard.

In addition, this section provides a deeper understanding of how language is strategically used in advertising discourse. By examining the linguistic aspects of the slogans, this study demonstrates that language functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a tool for shaping audience perception and constructing social meanings. In the context of beauty advertisements, language plays an important role in promoting certain beauty standards, particularly the concept of fair skin as a desirable standard of beauty.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights the relationship between language and ideology in advertising. The slogans analyzed in this study reflect how beauty standards are constructed and reinforced through repeated linguistic patterns. These patterns are not used randomly but are strategically designed to influence audience perception and to normalize fair skin as an ideal appearance. Therefore, this section not only presents the findings but also discusses their broader implications in a sociolinguistic context.

Types of Language Functions

To provide a clearer representation of the data analyzed in this study, Table 1 presents the classification of language functions in the selected beauty advertisement slogans.

Table 1
Types of Language Functions in Beauty Advertisement

No	Slogan	Language Function
1	kulit cerah bercahaya sebening kristal	Poetic
2	mencerahkan dalam 7 hari	Conative
3	cerahkan cantikmu	Conative
4	untuk kulit tampak bercahaya seketika	Conative
5	membantu mencerahkan wajah hanya dalam waktu 3 hari	Conative
6	100x brightening power	Conative
7	tampak cerah dalam 1x cuci muka	Conative
8	cantik putih semuanya	Poetic
9	10x kekuatan pencerah, pudarkan hiperpigmentasi	Conative
10	wajah 2 tingkat lebih cerah, 8 jam bebas kilap	Conative
11	wajah lebih putih cerah merona hingga 60%, putih cerah merona bagai sakura buktikan sekarang	Conative
12	7 hari udah pasti cerah	Conative
13	ini standar cerah yang baru, wajah bening bercahaya, kamu juga bisa	Conative
14	8x advanced brightening formula, teruji klinis, 100x mencerahkan	Conative
15	untuk kulit glowing seperti kaca	Poetic
16	kulit tampak putih merata seketika	Conative
17	kulit cerah, siap tampil pede	Emotive
18	kulit cerah merata, rahasia cantikmu	Conative
19	putih glowing tanpa cela	Poetic
20	wajah glowing, cerah maksimal, percaya diri maksimal	Emotive

From the 20 slogans analyzed, three types of language functions were identified based on Roman Jakobson's theory, namely conative, emotive, and poetic functions. Table 1 presents the classification of language functions in each slogan. To further illustrate the distribution of these functions, Table 2 presents their frequency.

Table 2
Frequency of Language Functions in Beauty Advertisement Slogans

Language Function	Frequency
Conative	14
Emotive	2
Poetic	4
Total	20

Based on Table 2, the conative function appears most frequently in the data, with a total of 14 occurrences. The poetic function appears 4 times, while the emotive function appears least frequently, with only 2 occurrences. This finding indicates that there are differences in the frequency of language functions used in beauty advertisement slogans.

The identification of these functions shows that various types of language functions are employed in beauty advertisement slogans. The variation in their distribution reflects the differing emphasis placed on each function in delivering the message. This difference also indicates that the use of language functions is not evenly distributed, but rather shows a certain tendency in accordance with the communicative purposes of the advertisements.

Analysis of Language Functions

Based on the data presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the analysis shows that each language function plays a different role in promoting fair skin as a beauty standard.

The conative function is the most dominant function found in the data. This function is used to influence or persuade the audience through language. In beauty advertisements, it appears in slogans that encourage the audience to achieve fair skin as an ideal beauty standard. For example, the slogan "*cerahkan cantikmu*" represents the conative function because it directly addresses the audience through the use of the word "*-mu*." Another example is "*mencerahkan dalam 7 hari*," which offers a specific result within a limited time, creating a sense of certainty and effectiveness. Similarly, the slogan "*ini standar cerah yang baru, wajah bening bercahaya, kamu juga bisa*" constructs a new beauty standard and encourages the audience to achieve it. These examples indicate that the conative function is widely used to persuade the audience and promote fair skin as a desirable ideal.

The emotive function is found in several slogans that express feelings and attitudes related to beauty. This function emphasizes emotional responses, particularly confidence associated with fair skin. For example, "*kulit cerah, siap tampil pede*" expresses a sense of confidence linked to having bright skin. Another example, "*wajah glowing, cerah maksimal, percaya diri maksimal*," highlights strong emotional intensity through repetition. These slogans show that fair skin is associated with positive emotions, especially self-confidence.

The poetic function appears in slogans that emphasize the aesthetic and stylistic aspects of language. This function makes the message more attractive

and memorable. For example, "*kulit cerah bercahaya sebening kristal*" uses figurative language to create a vivid image of clear and radiant skin. Similarly, "*putih glowing tanpa cela*" emphasizes perfection and flawlessness, making the message more appealing. These examples show that the poetic function contributes to constructing the image of fair and flawless skin as an ideal beauty standard.

The findings demonstrate that language functions in beauty advertisement slogans are used to promote fair skin as a beauty standard. The presence of conative, emotive, and poetic functions indicates that language is utilized in different ways to deliver messages in advertising, showing that slogans are constructed not only to inform but also to influence and attract the audience. The dominance of the conative function shows that the slogans are mainly directed toward influencing the audience. This indicates that language in beauty advertisements plays a significant role in shaping audience perception by encouraging them to associate fair skin with a desirable appearance. The frequent use of this function reflects how advertisements emphasize results, benefits, and the possibility of achieving the promoted appearance. As a result, the language used in the slogans supports the idea that fair skin is something that can be obtained and should be pursued.

In addition, the presence of the emotive function indicates that beauty advertisements also involve emotional aspects in delivering their message. The slogans connect fair skin with positive feelings, such as confidence and attractiveness, which suggests that beauty is not only constructed through physical characteristics but also through emotional experiences. This shows that language is used to build a personal connection with the audience, making the message more meaningful and relatable.

Furthermore, the use of the poetic function highlights that language in advertising is designed to be appealing and memorable. The aesthetic aspect of language plays an important role in strengthening the message, as attractive expressions can capture attention and remain in the audience's memory. This indicates that the effectiveness of slogans is not only determined by the information they convey but also by how the message is presented.

Moreover, the combination of these language functions shows that they do not work separately but support each other in delivering the overall message. The conative function focuses on influencing the audience, the emotive function adds emotional value, and the poetic function enhances the attractiveness of the message. This combination creates a stronger impact, making the slogans more effective in promoting fair skin as a beauty standard. Overall, the findings indicate that language functions play an important role in beauty advertisement slogans. Language is not only used as a means of communication but also as a tool to influence perception, express emotions, and construct appealing messages. This shows that beauty advertisements actively use language to shape and reinforce the idea of fair skin as a beauty standard in contemporary society.

This study provides several important implications covering theoretical, practical, and social aspects, particularly in the field of linguistics. Theoretically,

it contributes to Roman Jakobson's theory of language functions by showing that three language functions appear in advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard, namely the conative, emotive, and poetic functions. These findings strengthen the relevance of his theory in analyzing language functions in advertisement slogans. The conative function is found to be the most frequently used in advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard, indicating that language in advertisements tends to be used to influence the audience by shaping interest or acceptance of the message, thus reinforcing its role as a persuasive tool in advertisement communication in advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard.

Practically, the findings help readers understand how language functions operate in advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard to deliver messages effectively. Language functions in these advertisement slogans play an important role in shaping how messages are understood and interpreted by the audience. Therefore, the study can serve as a reference for analyzing language functions in various forms of advertisements, particularly beauty advertisements.

Socially, the use of language in advertisement slogans that promote fair skin as a beauty standard contributes to shaping public perceptions of beauty standards, particularly the idea of fair skin as an ideal standard of beauty. The repeated use of persuasive, emotional, and aesthetic language in these advertisement slogans helps reinforce the social construction of beauty concepts in society. This shows that language does not only function as a means of communication but also plays a role in shaping and reinforcing social beliefs about beauty.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that beauty advertisement slogans contain three types of language functions based on Roman Jakobson's theory, namely conative, emotive, and poetic functions. Among these, the conative function is the most dominant, with 14 occurrences out of 20 data, followed by the poetic function with 4 occurrences, and the emotive function with 2 occurrences. This indicates that the use of language functions in the slogans shows varying distributions. This distribution shows that the language functions are not used in equal proportions, but rather display certain tendencies in their usage. The conative function appears most frequently in the data, while the poetic and emotive functions occur less frequently. This difference reflects variation in the use of language within beauty advertisement slogans.

In addition, the findings indicate that these language functions are used to convey meanings related to fair skin as a beauty standard. Through the use of different language functions, the slogans present messages that support this representation within the context of beauty advertisements. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the use of language functions in the slogans is not random, but shows particular patterns in message delivery. Each function is used in different contexts, resulting in variation in how messages are

expressed in the slogans. Overall, the study shows that language functions in beauty advertisement slogans play a role in conveying and shaping meaning, particularly in representing fair skin as a beauty standard. Therefore, language in beauty advertisement slogans contributes to reinforcing this representation within advertising discourse.

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