

## Critical Discourse Analysis on Male Product Advertisements

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### ABSTRACT

Beauty standard ideology or belief which is traditionally popularized by and through makeup products advertisement for women is not only influencing women across the globe but is now normalized in male products advertisements as well which convinces them to buy the product and which also has an impact on men's belief of what an ideal masculine man is supposed to be. This study aims to find the "real man" standard ideology in male product advertisements. Moreover, the critical discourse analysis three-dimensional framework by Fairclough is applied in this research to show the "real man" ideology that is presented in male product advertisements especially the ones on social media where the latest ads can be found. Furthermore, we use descriptive qualitative research in analyzing and explaining 6 male products with a variety of types and brands. Data collection was carried out with structured interviews and advertisement observations. The findings of this study indicate that male product is very important to meet the main needs in overcoming problems in men. In addition, the main factor that is the reason for men to use male products is the demands of work or self-care, which is a representation of one's identity. According to the findings of this study, advertised men's products contain linguistic features that create ideology and manipulation for men, causing them to be interested in purchasing and using these products. Furthermore, men use these products because of stereotypes and public criteria for the appearance of a manly man.

**Keywords:** Advertisements, Beauty, Ideology, Male's Products, Men.

### INTRODUCTION

The culture, norms, and of course beliefs in the society in which we are living currently, have certainly changed from year to year for different reasons, and one of them includes advertisements. Moreover, now that we live in the era where social media not only exist but also are a big part of people's lives in terms of socializing, finding friends, entertainment, and even helping people to do their job, advertisers see this as a huge opportunity for them. They expand and put their latest advertisement on social media as more people are using it especially because the young generation from the age of 18 to 29 are the ones that are most likely to buy a product from watching the advertisements (Statista, 2021). Furthermore, companies that

make and publish their advertisements through social media find it to be beneficial because unlike on television, their advertisements and products' posts can be shared, liked, and commented on which can be useful for their brand (Islam & Mahmood, 2018). Some advertisements especially ones like beauty products whether it is for men or women do have a certain deeper purpose that they use to influence them into buying their product that they might not need as well as influencing them into believing in something and it changes people in seeing a standard for someone's beauty and in which social media help them to achieve both of that (Rohmah & Suhardi 2020, cited from Fill, 2002). As a result, people believe what they say as well as show and are directly influenced by those advertisements and eventually buy their products to look like the ideal beauty or masculinity described (Rahmania & et al. 2021 cited from Hambur's 2019). Moreover, people can also be very insecure about themselves and start comparing their looks to what they see or heard in those advertisements which might lead to other more serious problems such as eating disorders, constant self-consciousness, negative mood, the belief of being unattractive, anxiety about their appearance, and so on (Tiggemen & McGill, 2018). Unfortunately, many times this issue about beauty advertisements only focus on women's products and not men's, when in reality the ideology about what beauty or handsomeness is, is also normalized in the men's products' advertisement and they are also affected, and influenced by the same ideology advertisements try to embedded into society. Although other things became the major contribution to how society nowadays perceives standard beauty for both men and women, advertisements on social media certainly play a part that supports and works as the discourse that carries the belief and delivers it to people.

Furthermore, advertisements that people see or watch have already been prepared well behind the camera before they started filming. They use models who have looked that way even before using their products and use filters to touch up their appearance (Rohmah and Suhardi 2020). Moreover, they also use language such as using certain words and making a certain scene where it seems that all the women are looking at the male model to convince the viewers that if they use their products, they will most likely look like and have the same experience as the model and their problems regarding their appearance can also be solved through the use of the products (Hidayah & Milal, 2016). Though perhaps society knows that everyone comes in different sizes, shapes, and colors, and is more appreciative of those differences, people tend to choose descriptions of beauty from ads and decide that is how everyone should look like or otherwise they would not be part of the "normal-looking group". Furthermore, from the perspective of discursive, advertisements, whether it is written or spoken can exert social dominance, inequality, or power abuse as well as change social practices (Turhan & Okan, 2017, cited from Tasmabji & Kalkhajeh, 2013). In addition, due to high competition between different products in terms of attracting customers, advertisers are forced to not only sell products but also demanded to know how to market them which made them use a variety of strategies that involved constructing an idea where a perfect solution to women and men's issue can be attained by using their products being advertised (Renaldo, 2017).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are a few different theories regarding ideology and critical discourse analysis in this study. Critical discourse analysis is an approach that can be used to analyze written and spoken texts from critical linguistics to semiotics and seen through communication, language, and discourse. It differs from discourse analysis in that it discusses parts that are outside of the

discourse rather than just at the level of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Van Dijk, 1995). Reading an advertisement cannot be isolated from ideology, value, or specific interest, and critical discourse analysis might be used (Lestari, 2020). Furthermore, in general, ideology is group of beliefs, attitudes, ideas that intentionally or unintentionally, reflecting and shaping misconceptions as well as understandings regarding the social and political world (Freedon, 2022). Not only that, ideology is also an set of opinion, values, and attitudes or also a way utilized to think about human and society in which the total ideology of a person might include economics, minority groups, politics, religion, and many more (Gerring, 1997, cited from Adorno et al. 1950). According to (Gerring, 1997, cited from Hamilton, 1987), ideology means a system of normative and factual ideas as well as beliefs or attitudes that are set together to advocate particular social relationships and arrangements's particular pattern or aimed at justifying certain pattern of action, which its proponents look to pursue, realise, promote, and eventually maintain. Moreover, in critical discourse analysis, ideology means ideas, beliefs, and values that reflect the ones in power can be found on all sides of social life (Xu & Tan, 2020). In critical discourse analysis, ideologies have something to do with ideas in particular political, religious, and social ideas shared by social groups and movements or to put it simple, ideology is the fundamental belief of every member in a group (Van Dijk, 2012). In addition, it is believed that discourse joins texts in language with certain specific social practices which results in the study cannot be separated from the aspect of politics and societal problems such as social status and power (Tahmasbi & Kalkhajeh, 2013, cited from Gee 1999). The purpose of critical discourse analysis is to explore the unclear connection of the side effect and determination between discursive practice, events, text, and bigger social and cultural structures as well as the relation and the processes in which is to reveal hidden messages and meanings whether it is consciously or unconsciously that are planted in utterances in which can also be interpreted as to uncover the ideological values of a text that is reflected in the discourse (Renaldo, 2017, cited from Fairclough in Locke, 2004). This study utilizes Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (2001) which focuses on a three-dimensional framework. The framework consists of discourse (Rohmah & Suhardi, 2020):

1. text (micro-level): which analyzes the linguistic characteristics of a text, clauses combination, vocabulary, and grammar which are put in order in one document.
2. discourse practice (Meso level): which analyzes how the text is produced, distributed, interpreted, and adapted;
3. Sociocultural practice (macro-level): evaluating the context in terms of the (situational, institutional, or community level.)

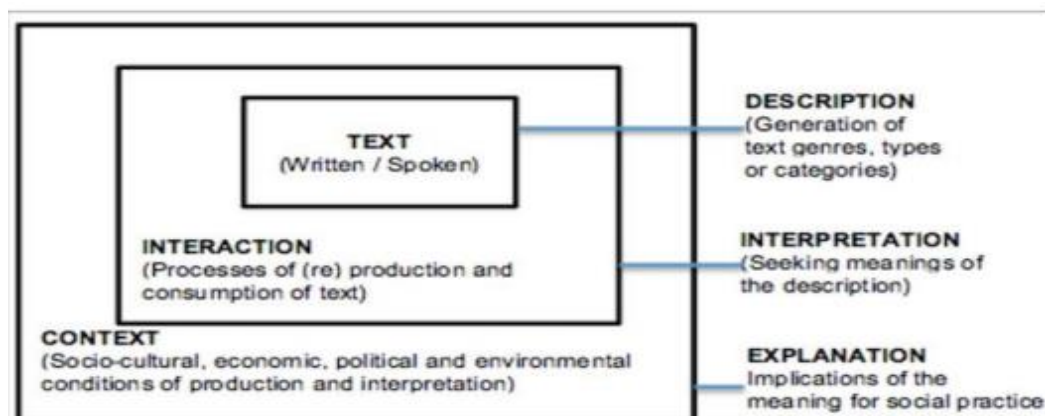


Figure 1. The three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough

These three are closely related to each other. Moreover, through these three-dimensional frameworks, the goal is to investigate how language relates to power through an inherent ideology as well as how advertisers persuade men to buy their products.

CDA helps people to find out how language is connected to social practice and power in society. It sees language as a form of social practice or can also be a discourse that carries ideology with them to be transferred to someone else in the hope to dominate and overpower other people. There have been several similar studies regarding critical discourse analysis for TV beauty product advertisements by Rohmah and Suhardi (2020) which focused their research on female beauty products advertisements on television and how those ads influence and affect women's beliefs who watch the advertisements and use the product about what standard beauty to them is. In addition, another study that covers facial care product advertisements has also been done by Sarwono and Fayardi (2018). In their research, they focused the study on male facial care product advertisements but used social construction of reality theory, stereotypes, and fetishism. Not only that, a study about the demonization of the ideal concept of beauty products through skin care advertisements on Instagram by Rahmania, and Yannuar et al. (2021) was also conducted. Moreover, another study on advertisement was also conducted by Falaq and Puspita (2021), which aims to reveal masculinity through L-men product advertisements. Similar to the previous studies mentioned above, they also use Fairclough's theory to focus their research on the hidden messages which is carried by the product's advertisements on what it conveys regarding the behavior in gaining men's dominance and whether or not it is equal to having a strong and muscular figure. A critical discourse analysis study on advertisements by Turhan and Okan (2017), was done as well. However, instead of a product, this research focused on non-product advertisements. Lastly, study by Xu and Tan (2020) was also conducted with which the aim is to investigate how the advertisers of the beauty product called SK-II build their ideal image of a woman through discursive strategies in the advertisements as well as uncovering ideologies in the ads discourse. Xu and Tan's research found that even though the SK-II advertisements claimed to support and empower women through advocating a change of destiny on people in their advertisements, ideology regarding gender proceeded to be dominant and affect women.

However, no study focuses on finding the ideology of men's international and local products advertisements on social media using critical discourse analysis by Fairclough. Therefore, in this research, the researchers would like to raise the issue of advertising for men's

beauty products and its ideology based on Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis. This research is done to answer the question below:

1. What are the linguistic features used by the male product advertisements?
2. What are the discourse strategies used in the male product advertisements to persuade the consumers?
3. What are the social features used in the male product advertisements?

## **METHOD**

In analyzing and discussing this research, the writers applied the descriptive qualitative method. The reason why the writers use the descriptive qualitative method is that it is found to be the perfect tool and beneficial for assisting in finding or discovering great explanations for this phenomenon (Falaq & Puspita, 2021, cited from Magilvy & Thomas, 2009). Moreover, similar to (Rahmania & Yannuar et al. 2021), since this study collected the data in the forms of texts or words (non-numerical data), qualitative research seems to be the perfect match method for this study. In addition, this research explained the data collected from Head and Shoulders Lemon, AXE Dual Action perfume, Garnier Acne Fight, AXE Chocolate and Gold Perfume, Nivea Men Whitening Cooling Mud Foam, Dior Sauvage, Ponds Acne Solution advertisements and interviews thoroughly which will be fully in descriptive format and that is why the researchers believe that the qualitative method is suitable. Lastly, descriptive qualitative is a method that has three main objectives: to describe, explain, and also to validate findings (Hidayah and Milal, 2016, cited from Krathwohl, 1993). Therefore, descriptive research was conducted in this study to accurately describe the characteristics of a particular item or in this case male product advertisements and the ideology as well as its impact on men. In this qualitative research, researchers participated in the conditions or events under study because the results of qualitative research require in-depth analysis from researchers. Therefore, the author makes several interviews with 5 men from different universities to understand more deeply how ideology from the discourse studied, (male products' advertisements) affects men and their belief of what masculinity is.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The results and discussions are presented by using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analyses framework such as the textual (micro), discursive (meso), and social levels (macro).

### **Textual Analysis**

The first Phase of Fairclough's CDA framework is analyzing the textual analysis of the words or texts in products' advertisements in which linguistics features such as syntax and

vocabulary. In this study, the advertisements applied strategies such as the use of positive adjectives in their advertisements since they describe the quality of the products. According to Rohmah and Suhardi (2020, cited from Delin, 2000), advertisements and adjectives are related to each other because adjectives carry meanings. In this case, several male products convey positive adjectives:

1. Melawan bakteri penyebab jerawat (fight acne-causing bacteria) - Garnier Acne fight
2. lemon Segar (fresh Lemon) - Head and Shoulders lemon
3. Wangi Segar (fresh fragrant) - AXE Dual Action Perfume
4. Rambut bebas ketombe (hair free from dandruff) - head and shoulders lemon
5. Menggodanya dan mewah seperti Emas (tempting and luxurious like gold) – AXE Chocolate and Gold perfume

The examples above showed that male product advertisements use positive adjectives to describe their products and to make them sound and look beneficial. In the particular case of AXE perfume, as the positive adjectives mentioned by the narrator, the advertisement also showed two men models who use the perfume passing a woman who looks at them because she can smell the products. This means that the advertisement created a belief that for men to be attractive to women, they have to use AXE products.

In addition, advertisements also used negative adjectives to describe problems or issues before using the products or also to describe the consequences of not using the products they advertise:

1. Kotor dan berminyak (dirty and greasy) - Garnier acne fight
2. Muka Kaku (stiff face) - Nivea men whitening cooling mud foam
3. Kepala bau (smelly head) - Head and Shoulders lemon
4. Panas terik (sweltering) - Head and Shoulders lemon
5. Keringat esktrim (intense sweat) Head and Shoulders lemon

As shown above, it is revealed that those advertisements used negative adjectives to define or describe the consequences of not using their products or before using their products issues to the viewers or readers.

Moreover, in the advertisements, advertisers also used slang to create a friendly atmosphere with the consumers because they are more likely to purchase a product when a friend or people close to them recommend it to them. It is revealed that some male product ads use words like “bro” to give people a sense of informality and friendship. Furthermore, they also use certain noun words that refer to male identity like “*cowok*” or man within sentences that emphasize how men must be able to pick or do things correctly or without a mistake: “*Cowok pasti tau alat yang pas*” – Garnier Acne fight

Furthermore, they also apply other techniques such as using scientific words to show the viewers or people who see the advertisements that their products are up to date with scientific progress and that their products also contain beneficial ingredients that can help fix their problems regarding their appearance. The following examples are shown below:

1. Carnitine - Nivea men whitening cooling mud foam
2. Licorice - Nivea men whitening cooling mud foam

3. Thymo-T Essence - ponds acne solution
4. salicylic acid - Garnier acne fight
5. herba repair - Garnier acne fight
6. Ekstrak Lemon - Head and Shoulders lemon
7. The New Elixir - Dior Sauvage perfume

As a result of the use of these scientific words, more and more people particularly men are convinced that they will experience great results such as having more radiant skin, smell better, looking more fresh, glowing faces, and more because of the ingredients. Moreover, in the case of Dior Sauvage men Perfume’s advertisement, the words or texts that are spoken by the model are very elegant, formal, and fancy because their target buyers are more older people whom presumable have work or young people from the upper class:

“Bold and Powerful”

“Embodies the Sauvage spirit”

“a deep composition for a man who is true to himself”

Lastly, advertisers also use technics such as the use of disjunctive syntax which means sentences without verbs or subjects and it only consists of one or two grammar items.

#### **Discourse Practice analysis**

At this level, we will be focusing on the study of the production and consumption of texts which centered on how power relation is imposed. below is the table that shows the strategies used in the advertisements:

TABLE 1. Strategies in Advertisements

<b>No.</b>	<b>The strategies Used in the Advertisements</b>	<b>Linguistics Devices</b>
1.	Manufacturing consent through implication	<i>Yakin parfumu bikin kamu tetap segar saat berkeringat? Coba axe baru kini lawan bau badan dan wangi segar bahkan saat kamu berkeringat. (Are you sure your perfume can keep you fresh while you are sweating? Try this new AXE that can fight body odor and smells fresh even when you sweat.)</i>  <i>muka kaku karena pakai sabun pria berbahan keras emang bikin susah senyum, Baru Nivea Men Whitening Cooling Mud Foam dengan Cooling Mud Formula efektif mengontrol minyak di wajah (having a stiff face because using low quality men soap makes it hard to smile, New! Nivea Men whitening Cooling Mud Foam with</i>

		Cooling Mud Formula effective in controlling oil on face)
1.	Invoking inadequacies	<i>Yakin parfumu bikin kamu tetap segar saat berkeringat?</i>  <i>muka kaku karena pakai sabun pria berbahan keras emang bikin susah senyum</i>
2.	Irrealistic self-representation	<i>Melawan 99.9% kuman penyebab jerawat dalam 10 detik</i>
3.	Positive self-representation	<i>Nivea men whitening cooling mud foun dengan cooling mud formula efektif mengontrol minyak berlebih 10x mencerahkan tanpa muka kaku</i>  <i>Garnier Men AcnoFight ampuh menangkal jerawat lawan 99% kuman penyebab jerawat dalam 10 detik</i>
5.	Puffery	<i>Get whiter, get energize</i> <i>Alami, Garnier</i>
6.	Celebrity endorsement	<i>Johnny Depp (Dior)</i> <i>Iqbaal Ramadhan (Garnier)</i> <i>Iko Uwais (Head and Shoulders)</i> <i>Jameson Blake (Pond's men)</i>
7.	Scientific Evidence/Clinical Test Proof	<i>Garnier Men Acno Fight ampuh menangkal jerawat</i>  <i>lawan 99% kuman penyebab jerawat dalam 10 detik</i>  <i>48 Jam Segar</i>  <i>Ekstrak Lemon yang mengangkat minyak</i>
8.	Emotive words	<i>Segar (Fresh)</i> <i>Alami (natural)</i> <i>Wangi (smell good)</i>

From the table above, it is revealed that the advertisements used several strategies to attract possible customers to buy their products and also to build and transfer a belief in which what they shared in the products ads about what ideal masculinity is and what it looks like to be true.



### **Social Practice Analysis**

At this level, the researcher will discuss the result of the interview of 5 young men from different universities and social backgrounds as well as find out whether the advertisements actually influence them to buy the products and whether it also shapes their belief about what ideal masculinity is. The writers asked questions that are related to the topic that is: advertisements and their products as well as their current belief about what ideal men should look like, directly or face-to-face. The result was that 3 out of 5 people who used the products mentioned above such as AXE, Garnier, Nivea, and Head and Shoulders stated that they were affected and influenced to buy the products after seeing the advertisements. Moreover, they also stated that those male product advertisements do shape their belief of what ideal men should look like in life. Three of them agreed that men ideal men should always smell good, tidy and short hair, and have glowing faces. Moreover, the participants said that they feel more confident after using the products and that they would recommend the products to other men. Lastly, three out of these 5 men also said that what has been said in the advertisements regarding the products has proven to be true or works. Meanwhile, 2 out of 5 people have similar answers, however, they stated that their belief of what the ideal men are, is not affected or influenced by the advertisements whatsoever even after seeing them and that they also use the products simply because someone else recommends them. Furthermore, these 2 young people stated they their confidence does not change before and after using the products. However, they would still recommend it to other people. One fascinating fact from this interview which also seemed to prove our hypothesis about the ideology of ideal masculinity and attractiveness stated in the introduction is that some of them revealed that one of the reasons they bought the products (particularly perfume) is that women love the smell which thus also can be interpreted that they will also find them attractive. From the research it can be concluded that though there are many advertisements from different companies and countries, most of them transmitted ideology where men should look clean, whiter, smells good, and handsome, and look attractive to women. Thus, when men used the products, they believed that it will result in looking like the actors and like the actors' said.

Additionally, the result of the research proven that ideology found in the discourse advertised by the products' companies is related to other disciplinary, in particular socioeconomics, as well as deconstructing the initial notion of masculinity in society. Socioeconomic is a discipline which studies the relationship between economics and social behaviour especially focusing on how social processes and economic activity interact in society (Hellmich, 2017). Since the advertisements were persuading the viewers to buy the products by transmitting ideology that contained encouragement to look better or smell better, most viewers were then influenced and bought the products to look or appear exactly like the advertisement described or showed. The advertisements influenced the society in particular men viewers to buy the products in turn increase their profit. In addition, the ideology hidden in the advertisements discourse is also slowly deconstructing traditional masculinity ideology. Traditional masculine ideology is characterized by homogenic, sexist, and rigid belief regarding how men should behave or feel and contained components such as: men should not be feminine, men should not show weakness, and more (Levant, 1996). The ideology in the advertisement which emphasize on beauty standard for men slowly changing how men look at beauty or skincare products in which men before men used to associate beauty products with women and femininity that men should

not use to encouraging men buying and using the products to look handsome, manly, and attractive.

The changing perception of beauty and skincare products for men, as influenced by evolving advertising ideologies, is closely related to socio-economic perspectives. The references provide insights into the intersection of beauty, gender, and socio-economic factors, shedding light on how these changing perceptions are influenced by and impact individuals within various socio-economic contexts. Mafra et al. (2018) highlights the influence of socioeconomic status on self-perception, demonstrating that men from higher socioeconomic classes tend to consider themselves more attractive. This suggests that socio-economic factors can influence individuals' self-perception in relation to beauty standards, potentially impacting their attitudes towards beauty and skincare products. Moreover, The findings from the study indicating that men's use of products is influenced by work and self-care demands, which are shaped by linguistic features reinforcing stereotypes about "real men," have significant implications for socio-economic perceptions. These findings intersect with various aspects of socio-economic experiences. The influence of advertising on beauty and masculinity perceptions can contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and stereotypes, which may impact individuals' socio-economic experiences. For instance, the glorification of masculinity in advertisements may perpetuate societal expectations of men, potentially influencing their career choices, economic behaviors, and social interactions (Alam, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 6 male product advertisements using critical discourse analysis, it can be concluded that adjectives, nouns, verbs, and pronouns make up the lexicon of linguistic features. The benefits of the product and the outcomes of using the product are described using language that has a positive meaning. on the other hand, Terms with negative connotations are used to express the problems that the majority of men have with their appearance and skin. In this case, social error is also reflected in the advertisement, which makes men insecure and demands that they look attractive at all times. Advertisers attribute problems that are related to consumer manipulation.

Advertisement criteria for a man's virility include things like bright skin, acne-free skin, clean hair, and fresh fragrance. This demonstrates how an advertisement can influence what is said. Furthermore, an ideology is developed and distributed to the audience, particularly men, to change how people view and perceive manliness. As a result, advertisements are created by stereotypes and criteria of men in the eyes of society, and they play a role in creating and spreading them. However, further research is needed to prove deeper ideology and how it relates to language and advertising, which requires more data and samples.

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