

A MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GARNIER GREEN BEAUTY ADVERTISEMENT

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Abstract

This study investigates how a multinational cosmetic company uses its advertising to promote green cosmetics in Indonesia. Using Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), the study analyzes how Garnier utilized linguistics features and discourse strategies and positioned their customers in the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement. The analysis revealed that Garnier employed some linguistic features (e.g., positive adjectives, pronouns, repetitions, etc.) and scientific-sounding words as a discourse strategy in the advertisement. It was also found that Garnier made a deliberate marketing decision to employ advertising, positioning their customer as empowered actors to create socio-environmental change. The findings also discuss the features distinguishing green cosmetics advertisements from typical ones.

Keywords— multimodal critical discourse analysis, green cosmetics, advertising, femvertising

Introduction

The cosmetics industry is a big business. Globally, its market value was 507.8 billion US dollars in 2018 and is projected to grow to 758.4 billion US dollars in 2025 (Statista Research Department, 2022a). Such a high market valuation encourages companies to attract as many consumers as possible to generate profit from the lucrative market. This race to acquire customers explains why cosmetics advertisements are everywhere, swarming our media from billboards and newspapers to radio, TV, and even social media. Through these advertisements, cosmetics companies introduce their products and persuade potential consumers that they need the products.

Typically, cosmetics advertisements share some common characteristics. First, they use persuasive language, catchy slogans, and attractive visuals to persuade consumers (Hidayat et al., 2020; Raharjo et al., 2020; Rohmah & Suhardi, 2020). Additionally, the advertisements often employ a problem-solution formula, in which the promoted products solve the consumers' problems with their physical appearance (Kaur et al., 2013). Another common feature of cosmetics advertisements is celebrity endorsement, portraying the ideal image that the customers can attain or associate with by using the promoted products (Kaur et al., 2013; Lestari, 2020; Raharjo et al., 2020; Susanti, 2019). Also, they often use scientific claims to convince the customers (Kaur et al., 2013; Kenalemang-Palm & Eriksson, 2021; Lestari, 2020; Susanti, 2019).

However, the rise of ethical consumerism affects the cosmetics industry in many ways (Sahota, 2013), including how cosmetics companies advertise their products. According to Lixandru (2017), as consumers become more informed than they used to, they tend to prefer more natural and environmentally friendly cosmetics, pushing the industry to adopt the "less is more" concept in their advertisements. This approach has turned the cosmetics industry green (Sahota, 2013). As a result, many companies promote their products using terms like natural or green to mark their shift to sustainable business practices, giving rise to the term green cosmetics (Kenalemang-Palm & Eriksson, 2021).

There have been quite many studies investigating cosmetics advertisements in Indonesia, such as studies conducted by Amatullah et al. (2019), Hidayat et al. (2020), Oey (2019), Raharjo et al. (2020), Rohmah and Suhardi (2020), and Susanti (2019). These studies helped us understand the cosmetics advertising discourse in Indonesia. However, none of these studies investigated green cosmetics advertisements, leaving a gap in the literature on Indonesian advertising discourse. Therefore, to fill the gap, we critically analyzed the discourse of a green cosmetics advertisement, focusing on an advertisement published by Garnier. In this study, we set to answer the following questions: 1) What linguistic features and discourse strategies are used in Garnier's green cosmetics advertisement? 2) What are non-linguistics features used in Garnier's green cosmetics advertisement? 3) How are customers positioned in Garnier's cosmetics advertisement?

Method

This descriptive qualitative research employed Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as its analysis method. In real-life communication, messages are not only communicated via text but also via non-linguistic features, such as images, video, audio, etc. Advertising, which often comes in posters, leaflets, or videos, is a typical example of multimodal text. Due to this reason, we decided to employ MCDA as it helps understand a message packed within a multimodal text. MCDA focuses on how language and visual choices are employed in real-world contexts to uncover the underlying ideas, values, identities, and power relations hidden in texts that are used to transmit meaning (Ledin & Machin, 2019).

In this study, we analyzed a green cosmetic advertisement published by Garnier, titled *Garnier Berkomitmen Menuju Green Beauty* (Garnier Committed Towards Green Beauty) (Garnier Indonesia, 2020). This one-minute video advertisement was a part of Garnier's green marketing campaign in Indonesia and was initially published on September 27, 2020. The advertisement was chosen because of two reasons. First, the video was Indonesia's only publicly available sample of green cosmetic advertisements. Second, as of July 2022, the video has garnered more than 57 million views on Youtube. With such a high number of views, it is safe to assume that many Indonesians have seen it.

Data analysis was carried out following the steps laid out by Paltridge (2012). First, data were collected. The video was viewed repeatedly to consider how different modes (text, visual, audio) contribute to the overall meaning of the advertisement. Next, the texts—both narrated and displayed as visuals—were transcribed, and non-linguistic data were obtained by collecting snapshots of the various scenes from the advertisement. Then, once all data were collected, they were logged or summarized. Finally, we conducted a detailed analysis of the data, focusing on the data required to answer the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Result

Linguistic Features and Discourse Strategies

In this section, we discuss the findings from the lexical analysis of the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement. As multimodal texts utilize multiple types of texts, the lexical features in this analysis were taken from two sources: the narration and the texts displayed in the advertisement. Table 1 presents the transcription of the narration in the advertisement, while Table 2 displays the texts shown in the video.

Table 1
Transcription of Narrated Text from the Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Transcribed Narrated Text	English Translation
Banyak yang kita lakukan untuk merawat diri tapi untuk Bumi ini...	We do a lot to take care of ourselves but for this Earth...
Untukmu dan Bumi kita, Garnier memulai Green Beauty	For you and our planet, Garnier started Green Beauty,
Sebuah langkah awal untuk menjadi lebih hijau disemua lini produksi...	The first step towards being greener on all production lines...
dari proses produksi yang lebih ramah lingkungan	from more environmentally friendly production
Sampai kemasan yang nantinya dapat didaur ulang	processes to packaging that can later be recycled.
Kini, kamu juga bisa menjadi bagian Green Beauty dengan mendaur ulang kemasan plastik bekas pakaimu	Now, you can also be a part of Green Beauty by recycling your used plastic packaging.
Kunjungi garnier.co.id/greenbeauty untuk tahu lebih lanjut	Visit garnier.co.id/greenbeauty to find out more
dan rawat keindahan Bumi kita bersama Garnier Green Beauty	and take care of the beauty of our Earth with Garnier Green Beauty.

Table 2
Displayed Text from the Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Displayed Text	English Translation
	This video was made using recycled plastic
	From sustainable natural sources
	Using natural ingredients
	Reducing CO ² emissions and water consumption



Eco-friendly packaging

Visit garnier.co.id/garnierbeauty

Our analysis indicates that, from the narration and the text displayed in the advertisement, there are some notable features, including positive adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, etc. Table 3 summarizes the linguistic features identified from the lexical analysis.

Table 3
Linguistic Features of Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Features	Examples
Positive adjectives	greener, environmentally friendly, recycled, sustainable, natural, eco-friendly
Pronouns	We do a lot to take care of ourselves... For you and our planet, Garnier started Green Beauty... Now, you can also be a part of Green Beauty by recycling your used plastic packaging... ...and take care of the beauty of our Earth...
Conjunctions	We do a lot to take care of ourselves but for this Earth... For you and our planet, Garnier started Green Beauty... Visit garnier.co.id/greenbeauty to find out more and take care of the beauty of our Earth with Garnier Green Beauty. Reducing CO2 emissions and water consumption
Modality	... packaging that can later be recycled Now, you can also be a part of Green Beauty
Repetitions	...but for this Earth take care of the beauty of our Earth to packaging that can later be recycled ...by recycling your used plastic packaging This video was made using recycled plastic Eco-friendly packaging Garnier started Green Beauty be a part of Green Beauty with Garnier started Green Beauty From sustainable natural sources Using natural ingredients
Imperatives	Visit garnier.co.id/greenbeauty ... take care of the beauty of our Earth...

In addition to various linguistic features, our analysis also reveals that the Garnier Green Beauty advertising utilized technical or scientific-sounding words (e.g., *recycling, sustainable natural*

resources, CO² emissions, etc.) as a discourse strategy to persuade potential customers.

Non-linguistic Features

In this section, we discuss the findings from our analysis of the non-linguistics features of the advertisement. We realize that non-linguistic features include numerous elements, such as video, audio, color, camera angle, facial expression, iconography, salience, etc. However, providing a detailed analysis of each element would be a gargantuan task and requires written explanations in pages beyond the acceptable limit of this journal. Therefore, we only focus our analysis on six scenes from the advertisement that we found to be the most informative elements of the video.

The scene started with Figure 1, showing a notice claiming that the video was made entirely from recycled plastics. With this move, Garnier tried to show potential customers that they are committed to protecting the environment.

Table 4
Scene 1 from Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Snapshots	Narration
	We do a lot to take care of ourselves
	
	

Figure 2 depicts a woman picking out a flower to be worn as an accessory (see Figure 3). This scene symbolizes how human beings consume natural resources to beautify themselves. This symbolism is asserted with the narrator's speech, saying, "We do a lot to take care of ourselves...".

Table 5
Scene 2 from Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Snapshots	Narration
	But for this Earth...
	

Scene 2 illustrates rapid environmental destruction due to the consumption of natural resources previously displayed in Scene 1. Figure 4 shows the grass on which the woman stands withered and turned to dust. This process continued gradually until the green area became dry, barren land, as shown in Figure 5. Figure 5 shows the woman standing on a barren land surrounded by dying trees. In the background, we can see a small factory in operation, as indicated by an industrial chimney exhausting black smoke. The narrator further amplified the destruction by saying "...but for this earth..." to emphasize how excessive consumption and human negligence had led to the destruction of the Earth.

Table 6
Scene 3 from Garnier Green Beauty Product

Snapshots	Narration
	For you and our planet, Garnier started Green Beauty,



Figure 7. Blooming Flowers

In Scene 3, the woman realized that her action had resulted in environmental damage, so she replanted the flower she had picked, as shown in Figure 6. Figure 7 shows that the flower grew into numerous flowers, forming the letter G and symbolizing Garnier's logo. The sentence "Garnier started Green Beauty..." spoken by the narrator created an impression of Garnier's dominant role in rehabilitating the environment. The woman's action led to the re-growth of flowers and the re-greening of the surrounding area. The trees were thriving again, and the grass went back to green.

Table 7
Scene 4 from Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Snapshots	Narration
	The first step towards being greener on all production lines, from more environmentally friendly production processes to packaging that can later be recycled.
	

Scene 4 illustrates a glimpse of the cosmetic production process. Figure 8 shows a conveyor belt with a row of cosmetic bottles, illustrating a typical production line in a manufacturing company. However, unlike typical production lines, we could see trees, leaves, and branches in the background. Around the conveyor belt, we could see scattered flower petals. These images give the impression that Garnier's cosmetic production process is carried out in an open green space. Of course, this is a deliberate move to make the audience think that the cosmetic production process is genuinely natural. Figure 9 shows a Garnier cosmetic bottle. On the right side of the screen were the recycling logo and the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) logo, creating the impression that Garnier cosmetic packaging is environmentally friendly. The positive impressions from these images were reinforced by the narrator's remarks, claiming "...the first step towards being greener on all production lines, from more environmentally friendly production processes to packaging that can later be recycled."

Table 8
Scene 5 from Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Snapshots	Narration
	Now, you can also be a part of Green Beauty by recycling your used plastic packaging
	
	

Scene 5 emphasizes the impact of recycling. In Figure 10, the woman was carrying cardboard marked with the recycling logo, indicating that she was recycling the cosmetic packaging she had used. The narrator made this impression explicit by saying, "Now, you can also be a part of Green Beauty by recycling your used plastic packaging." Figures 11 and 12 illustrate the before-and-after effect of recycling. In Figure 11, the left side of the bridge was an arid land. In the background, an industrial chimney was emitting black smoke. Also, the river flowing under the bridge looked dark brown, indicating heavy pollution. Figure 12 suggests that the woman, as a representation of Garnier's consumers, managed to bring about positive changes with recycling. The land on the left side of the bridge became green again. The factory emitted white smoke, which implies eco-friendlier manufacturing. The river flowing under the bridge became clear again.

In Scene 6, we see a concerted effort by a group representing Garnier consumers to recycle cosmetic packaging (see Figure 13). These people, in Figure 14, handed over recyclable cosmetic packaging to a collection agent. From the Garnier logo plastered on the door of the agent's truck, we get the impression that Garnier plays an active role in facilitating the efforts of its consumers. Figure 15 is an image that promises the benefit of participating in a green cosmetics campaign. This image suggests that the woman lived in harmony with nature. She sat in a green meadow, with flowers and butterflies, under a clear blue sky. A large Garnier logo was positioned in the middle, indicating that Garnier has a dominant role in achieving this harmonious state.

Table 9
Scene 6 from Garnier Green Beauty Advertisement

Snapshots	Narration
	Visit garnier.co.id/greenbeauty to find out more and take care of the beauty of our Earth with Garnier Green Beauty.
	
	

Discussion

What linguistic features and discourse strategies are used in Garnier's green cosmetics advertisement?

Our analysis reveals that the advertisement employed some linguistic features, namely positive adjectives, pronouns, repetitions, etc. The most noticeable feature is positive adjectives (e.g., greener, environmentally friendly, recycled, etc.). In advertising, positive adjectives are commonly used to ensure potential customers can remember the product's benefits. For example, cosmetic advertisements often use positive adjectives that promise physical changes desired by consumers as a result of using the promoted beauty product (Kaur et al., 2013; Lestari, 2020; Susanti, 2019). However, in Garnier Green Beauty advertisements, positive adjectives highlight the benefits of using green cosmetics for the environment. This is perhaps one feature that distinguishes green cosmetics advertising from typical cosmetics advertising.

Another interesting feature is the repetitive use of certain words, such as green, packaging, natural, recycle, and the Earth. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), this phenomenon is called overlexicalization and usually creates a sense of "over-persuasion and is normally evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention" (p.37). In this case, we can see that the advertiser is deliberately overusing these words as a hard-sell method, trying very hard to persuade potential customers to buy into the idea of green cosmetics.

Another finding worth discussing is the lack of discourse strategies used in the Garnier

Green Beauty advertisement. Our analysis shows that the advertisement only utilizes scientific-sounding words as its sole strategy. This is different from the findings from previous studies (Kaur et al., 2013; Lestari, 2020; Susanti, 2019), which indicate that cosmetic advertising could employ several discourse strategies. This striking difference may be due to the different nature of green cosmetics advertising. Usually, cosmetic advertising persuades customers by highlighting their insecurities about their physical appearance. To be effective, it uses several discourse strategies, such as puffery and emotive words, invoking inadequacies, and displaying optimistic and unrealistic/exaggerated images.

On the other hand, green cosmetics advertising has a different focus (i.e., to convince customers that environmentally-friendly cosmetics are better for the environment). Therefore, it should not be surprising that Garnier Green Beauty advertising does not employ the common discourse strategies because it does not try to invoke customers' physical insecurities. Instead, it tries to reorient customers to a more sustainable way of beautifying themselves. In other words, unlike typical cosmetics advertising, green cosmetics advertising has a different way of persuading potential customers.

From all the findings from our lexical analysis, we conclude that the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement could be considered reason advertising. According to Simpson (2001), reason advertising appeals to reason or motive for purchase, while tickle advertising tends to appeal to humor, mood, or emotion. The lack of emotive words, puffery, celebrity endorsement and its deliberate focus on convincing potential customers to protect the environment indicate that Garnier Green Beauty's advertisement priorities reasoning over emotional appeals. Therefore, the advertisement falls into the category of reason advertising.

What are the non-linguistic features used in Garnier's green cosmetics advertisement?

We found that, just like in the linguistic features of the advertisement, the video also maintains a sharp focus on the idea of protecting the environment. It can be seen in Figure 1, Figure 8, and Figure 9. For example, in Figure 1, Garnier attempts to persuade viewers by claiming that the advertisement was made using recyclable plastics. This is a way to signify their commitment in front of their potential customers and, hopefully, will attract sympathy from viewers to join Garnier's cause to save the environment. Similarly, Figures 8 and 9 display the keywords (e.g., *natural* and *environmentally friendly*), creating a recurring theme for potential customers to remember.

Usually, cosmetic advertisements employ a before-and-after illustration to convince their viewers. For example, in a typical anti-acne cream advertisement, one may see a young woman looking troubled due to some acne on her face. Then a friend tells her to apply the cream on her face and, finally, after using the cream, her face looks brighter and free from acne. Our analysis reveals that the same pattern is used in the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement. Figures 11 and 12 provide similar before-and-after illustrations, portraying recycling as a solution to revive a severely polluted environment. For example, in Figure 11, we can see that the area on the right end of the bridge is barren land devoid of vegetation, and the river is heavily polluted. However, in Figure 12, we can see the land and the river are fully restored to their pristine condition after the main character in the video takes part in recycling.

Overall, from the narration, displayed text, and the whole scenes in the video, we could see that the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement approaches customers differently. Typical cosmetic advertisements would promote beauty products to potential customers using emotive words, exaggerated representations, etc. Also, they often display the image of beautiful, active, confident women. However, on the other hand, the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement resembles an informational video rather than a promotional one. This is in line with the study by Shimul et al. (2022), which points out that green cosmetics advertisements should inform and educate viewers about the going green movement as this would likely encourage them to purchase the products.

How are customers positioned in Garnier's cosmetics advertisement?

Our findings indicate that Garnier positions customers, especially women, as empowered individuals, having the capacity to make changes. This is illustrated in Figures 10, 11, and 12, in

which one individual's action creates significant environmental changes. This empowering image is directed to individual customers and all customers. Figures 13 and 14 show customers walking in unison as a group, participating in a recycling campaign that results in a harmonious state depicted in Figure 15. This finding corroborates a previous study by Kenalemang-Palm and Eriksson (2021). They found that the marketing strategy of green cosmetics is to create a sense of empowerment, choice, and sustainability.

Figures 13 and 14 also reveal Garnier's attempt to promote equal gender representation in the advertisement. In these two Figures, we can see a male figure participating in the recycling campaign, which indicates that he is one of Garnier's consumers. From this depiction, Garnier tries to challenge the traditional view often shown in cosmetic advertising, which commonly portrays cosmetics as a solution to make women look more beautiful, confident, and attractive to men. This effort reflects reality, as it is increasingly common to see cosmetic brands advertising cosmetics and personal care products for men. Globally, the market size for men's personal care products is expected to grow and reach 81.2 billion US dollars in 2024 (Statista Research Department, 2022b).

Finally, throughout the video, it was evident that Garnier put a woman as the leading figure in this environmental movement (see Figures 10-14), creating a better representation of women in advertising and at the same time trying to address gender stereotyping, by including a male figure in the picture. These efforts indicate femvertising, an advertising style that "highlights women's talents, centers themes on pro-woman messaging and counters stereotyping" (Varghese & Kumar, 2022). In the last few years, more and more cosmetic brands have embraced this style in their advertising as they compete to portray women as empowering figures. Therefore, we found it not surprising that Garnier employs femvertising; it may have been a deliberate marketing decision as femvertising is beneficial in building an emotional connection between women and brands (Lima & Casais, 2021).

Conclusion

Our multimodal critical discourse analysis has shown that the Garnier Green Beauty advertisement employs some linguistic features that can also be found in other cosmetic advertising (e.g., positive adjectives, pronouns, repetitions, etc.). However, unlike other cosmetic advertisements, its discourse strategies are very limited in number. We also found that Garnier made a deliberate marketing decision to employ femvertising, highlighting women's empowerment, and addressing gender stereotyping in their Garnier Green Beauty advertising. With these, Garnier positioned their customer as empowered actors to create socio-environmental change.

We realize that, for practical reasons, our study is limited as it does not address the video's iconography, camera angle, and other elements in our analysis. Therefore, we suggest that future studies investigate these elements to contribute to the growing green cosmetics advertising discourse literature.

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