

# DEAR ME BEAUTY FOR BEAUTY INCLUSIVITY IN EMPOWERING WOMEN TO CONQUER THEIR INSECURITY: POSITIVE MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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## Abstrak

*Inklusi dan keragaman kecantikan telah ditekankan untuk memberikan kesempatan kepada ras lain dan jenis kecantikan lain agar dapat diwakili. Penelitian ini menganalisis iklan Dear Me Beauty di Instagram Reels menggunakan Teori Penilaian (Martin & White, 2005) untuk menganalisis unsur verbal dan Teori Tata Bahasa Visual (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) untuk menganalisis representasi visual. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana Dear Me Beauty menyampaikan diskursus inklusivitas melalui representasi visual model dengan berbagai warna kulit dan bahasa inklusif dalam caption dan deskripsi produk. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif untuk menganalisis elemen visual dan verbal dalam iklan Dear Me Beauty dalam kerangka multimodal. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Penghargaan Positif (65,28%) dan Afek (21,96%) mendominasi diskursus verbal, menyoroti fokus merek pada pemberdayaan, keragaman, dan penerimaan diri. Pola gradasi menunjukkan peningkatan dan intensifikasi yang sering, memperkuat optimisme dan inklusivitas. Representasi visual menunjukkan dominasi tindakan unidirectional dan non-transaksional, tatapan seimbang, dan jarak sosial yang setara, yang membangun keaslian dan keterjangkauan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada bidang analisis wacana multimodal dan menawarkan implikasi praktis bagi pengiklan dan akademisi yang tertarik memahami wacana inklusivitas melalui iklan.*

**Kata Kunci :** *Kecantikan dan Keberagaman, Iklan Kosmetik, Positive Multimodal Discourse Analysis.*

## Abstract

Beauty inclusivity and diversity have been echoed to give a chance to other races and other types of beauty are represented. This study analyzes Dear Me Beauty advertisements in Instagram reels using Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) to analyze the verbal elements and Visual Grammar Theory (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) to analyze the visual representation. This research aims to explore how Dear Me Beauty communicates the discourse of inclusivity through visual representation of models with various skin colors and inclusive language in caption and product descriptions. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine visual and verbal elements present in Dear Me Beauty advertisements within a multimodal framework. The findings reveal that Positive Appreciation (65.28%) and Affect (21.96%) dominate the verbal discourse, highlighting the brand's focus on empowerment, diversity, and self-acceptance. Graduation patterns indicate frequent upscaling and intensification, reinforcing optimism and inclusivity. Visual representation shows the dominance of unidirectional and non-transactional actions, balanced gaze, and equal social distance construct authenticity and approachability. This research contributes to the field of multimodal discourse analysis and offer practical implications for advertisers and scholars interested in understanding the discourse of inclusivity through advertisements.

**Keywords:** Beauty and Diversity, Cosmetic Advertisements, Positive Multimodal Discourse Analysis

## 1. Introduction

Beauty standards in Indonesia are still largely dominated by the social construction that fair skin, slim bodies, straight hair, and glowing faces as the ideal beauty (Gloria & Limanta, 2023). These standards began to emerge during the colonial period, influencing the formation of perceptions of attractiveness (Baroroh et al., 2025). Skin color, in particular, was often associated with privilege and social status, while people with darker skin were often treated unfairly (Lakamau & Husein, 2025). Although Indonesia is made up of various ethnic groups with different physical characteristics and skin colors, the representations shown in most cosmetic advertisements do not represent Indonesians as a whole. Representations in the media and advertisement often show a narrow and un-diverse type of beauty.

The representation of beauty standards is not only shown through the selection of models, but also through implicit narratives, color palettes, lighting, and shooting angles that tend to favor white skin and certain facial features. Research by (Hartono et al., 2022) shows that this representation is demonstrated by the emergence of models with fair skin and Caucasian characteristics, establishing fair skin as the ideal of beauty. Similarly, by (Khoirunnisaa & Harti, 2023) and (Santa Maya Pramusita, 2021) shows how local cosmetic advertisements often promote Korean or Western aesthetics, constructing the meaning that ideal beauty is synonymous with fair skin and flawless skin. The abundance of beauty standards has caused many women in Indonesia to feel insecure and doubt themselves. As a result, many Indonesian women often feel that they are not beautiful enough if they do not meet these beauty standards (Aqilah & Trihandayani, 2023). In response to this, changes began to occur in the definition of beauty in the global beauty industry.

The beauty industry has become one of the aspects that influence cultural forces in shaping women's identities, values, and self-perceptions in the digital age (Yuman, 2023). In recent years, marketing discourse have begun to change from promoting idealized beauty standards toward embracing diversity, authenticity, and empowerment in global beauty brands (Foster & Pettinicchio, 2025). The rise of social media platforms particularly Instagram enables brands to directly engage with consumers and construct narratives of self-acceptance has largely driven the transformation of beauty industry and the awareness of inclusivity and representation (Putri & Pratiwi, 2023). Digital beauty campaigns no longer merely sell products, but also communicate ideological meanings related to gender, identity, and social values.

In Indonesia, this shift is reflected in the emergence of local brands such as Wardah, Somethinc, and BLP, which promote local beauty ideals and national identity. However, Dear Me Beauty stands out for its consistent emphasis on beauty inclusivity and women's empowerment. Through campaigns such as *"Beauty is Universal"* and *"Beauty is You"*, the brand stand for the idea that beauty is personal and diverse, challenging long-standing stereotypes surrounding fair skin and Eurocentric aesthetics. Dear Me Beauty promotes a new discourse of empowerment and self-acceptance, by constructing solidarity among Indonesian women marginalized by conventional standards.

Several research have begun to discuss about how cosmetic brands challenge dominant beauty discourse by promoting inclusivity and authenticity. (Tanca, 2025) analyzed how BLP Beauty, through their Instagram account @blpbeauty, is challenging stereotypes about beauty standards for women in Indonesia. Employing qualitative descriptive methods and Roland Barthes' theory, the results show that BLP Beauty rejects beauty standards by creating a new concept of female beauty. This is evidenced by the selection of models that contrast with existing beauty stereotypes,

featuring larger bodies, darker skin, and fuller cheeks. Moreover, (Saraharah & Ningtyas, 2023) also shows the emergence of Indonesian brands that also voice beauty inclusivity through their beauty campaigns, such as SAC's beauty, Somethinc, and BLP Beauty. These three brands explicitly demonstrate inclusivity through the selection of diverse models and inclusive narratives. (Saraharah & Ningtyas, 2023) also discusses the effect of these beauty campaigns in changing the public's perspective on beauty as diverse, relative, unique, and not generalizable. As a result, people have become more confident and have overcome the insecurities they have had all this time.

Studies on colorism also reveals ongoing disparities in digital beauty discourses. For instances, (Childs, 2022) examines how Black women challenge colorist standards promoted by the beauty industry using YouTube and Instagram. The study shows how individuals can actively redefine beauty narratives on social media sites, which are contentious environments. Similarly, (Joon & Hooda, 2022) contend that inclusive social media marketing strategies are becoming more and more important for companies looking to interact with a wide range of consumers and establish genuine relationships. According to their findings, brand distinction and customer loyalty are increased when inclusivity is demonstrated through culturally sensitive imagery, inclusive language, and varied models. When taken as a whole, these global studies offer a framework for investigating how inclusion is formulated in regional settings, where social, historical, and cultural elements influence beauty discourses in various ways.

While a number of brands have started to adopt “natural looks” and variety of skin tones, these efforts are frequently restricted or lack consistency. Studies conducted by (Kiranantika et al., 2023) indicate that Indonesian beauty is still caught between the reproductions of globalized ideals and the redefinition of beauty based on local values. Within this framework, the emergence of brands that explicitly promote inclusivity such as Dear Me Beauty, presents a chance to investigate how beauty discourse might be reconfigured through multimodal approaches that integrate languages, visuals, and emotion.

Previous studies have increasingly applied (Martin & White, 2005) Appraisal Theory and (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) Visual Grammar to discover meaning-making processes in media discourse. (Marsakawati, 2022) illustrate how evaluative language in tourism blogs expresses affect and appreciation to engage how audiences. (Zhang, 2023) analyzed film posters through Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) framework, highlighting how representational and interactive meaning transform over time. (Hafifah & Sinar, 2021) found that Chanel's 2021 campaign used gaze, color, and angle to construct femineity and elegance during the pandemic. Similarly, (Wihadi & Sujatna, 2024) analyzed beauty advertorials and found that Judgment resources in Appraisal Theory portrayed Muslim women as capable and decent consumers, showing how language encodes cultural and moral values in advertising.

Collectively, these studies highlight that Multimodal Discourse Analysis provides a strong framework for examining how verbal and visual elements construct identity and ideology. However, previous studies on beauty advertisements in Indonesia have primarily employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) or Systemic Functional Linguistics to uncover how power, ideology, and gender are represented. For example, (Alek & Jalil, 2020) and (Alifah, Nur, 2024) analyzed how Wardah's Islamic branding shapes notions of religious identity and femininity, whereas (Hartono et al., 2022) pointed out that advertisements frequently perpetuate narrow beauty standards. However, these studies often concentrate on established brands and critical viewpoints, paying little attention to positive and empowering elements of advertising discourse. Additionally, there has been little investigation into the collaboration between verbal and visual elements in crafting

an inclusive message. Previous research has not investigated inclusive beauty discourse through the combined of Positive Multimodal Discourse Analysis, especially Appraisal Theory and Visual Grammar in the context of Indonesian cosmetic brand. This gap creates an opportunity for a study that not only critique but also emphasizes constructive meaning- making in local contexts.

To fill this gap, this research adopts a Positive Multimodal Discourse Analysis, which emphasizes the exploration off empowering and transformative discourse instead of domination or inequality. Multimodal discourse analysis serves as the overarching analytical framework, within which verbal and visual modes are examined through specific theoretical modes. The study incorporates Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) particularly on Attitude and Graduation to analyze verbal data and Visual Grammar theory (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) to analyze the visual data. The Appraisal Theory provides a systematic model for identifying how language evaluate human behavior according to social norms and rules, while the Visual Grammar enables the examination of how images communicate meaning through representational and interactive meaning. Positive Discourse Analysis function as an interpretative orientation within the multimodal discourse analysis framework, guiding the analysis toward constructive and empowering meanings rather than critique-oriented discourse (sitasi). Furthermore, this study seeks to answer the research question:

1. How does Dear Me Beauty construct and communicate beauty inclusivity through verbal language used in captions and Instagram reels?
2. How does beauty inclusivity visually represent through Dear Me Beauty Instagram reels?

The findings are expected to contribute in the theoretical implementation in Multimodal Discourse Analysis, and practically offers guidance on how to convey messages of empowerment and inclusivity.

## 2. Method

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive design to examine how beauty inclusivity is constructed through verbal and visual resources in digital advertising. This approach is considered most suitable since the data are derived from Dear Me Beauty's Instagram Reels advertisements, which combine visual, verbal, and audio elements that naturally occur in digital contexts. Following (Ditchfield et al., 2018), qualitative digital research focuses on interpreting authentic online materials such as videos, images, captions, and comments, without manipulating the environment in which they appear. To support interpretative findings frequency counts were conducted to identify dominant appraisal patterns. These numerical distributions were used descriptively to highlight recurring evaluative tendencies rather than to conduct statistical or inferential analysis.

This research employs five steps of collecting the data. First, the data were collected by identifying campaign that were published on Dear Me Beauty's official Instagram account (@dearmebeauty). Instagram reels uploaded between 2020 and 2024 were examined to identify campaigns that explicating promote inclusivity, diversity, and women's empowerment. From this population, four reels were purposively selected based on the explicit representation of diverse models and the presence of both verbal and visual evaluative resources related to inclusivity. These four reels were considered sufficient for in-depth qualitative multimodal analysis, as the study prioritizes analytical richness over numerical representative.

Second, the selected Instagram reels were downloaded in their original format to preserve visual and audio quality and were viewed repeatedly to ensure familiarity with their narrative and

multimodal features. Third, visual data were obtained through systematic screenshot extraction, resulting in 121 screenshots that captured key actions, participant representations, gaze, and compositional features relevant to Visual Grammar analysis. Fourth, verbal data were collected by documenting all associated textual elements, including voice-over transcript, on-screen text, and Instagram captions. While the visual analysis focused on four selected reels, the verbal analysis incorporated captions from both reels and thematically aligned feed posts to ensure data saturation and analytical depth. In total, 40 captions and two voice-over recordings from the four selected reels were analyzed. All verbal data were segmented into clauses and organized in a spreadsheet to support Appraisal analysis and frequency counting.

The analytical process involved four key steps. First, the verbal data were systematically coded according to the Attitude system which includes affect, judgment and appreciation. Second, the clauses were coded into force and focus, and further analyzed using the Graduation system to identify how meanings were intensified or softened. Third, the visual data extracted from the selected Instagram reels were analyzed using (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) Visual Grammar theory, focusing on two metafunctions mainly representational meaning and interactive meaning. Representational meaning examined narrative processes and attention was given to how models were depicted performing actions, and how these actions contributed to the construction of agency and autonomy. Interactive meaning analysis focused on visual features that position the viewer in relation to the represented participants. These included gaze, social distance, angle and power relations. Each screenshot was coded according to these categories to identify dominant visual patterns that support inclusivity, equality, and empowerment. Fourth, after completing separate verbal and visual analysis, the findings were interpreted through the lens of Positive Multimodal Discourse Analysis. This stage involved examining how verbal and visual resources interact to produce congruent meanings across modes.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The following data were analyzed to answer how Dear Me Beauty construct and communicate beauty inclusivity through visual and verbal elements in its Instagram Reels Advertisements using (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) theory in visual grammar and (Martin & White, 2005) appraisal theory. Each construct provides insight into how Dear Me Beauty communicate beauty inclusivity and empowerment through their Instagram post. There is a total of 316 clauses were analyzed based on appraisal analysis and 337 appraisal items were found. The higher number of appraisal items in comparison to clauses reflects the fact that a single clause can be encode more than one evaluative resource, especially through the simultaneous realization of Attitude and Graduation.

#### A. Beauty Inclusivity verbally constructed through Appraisal Analysis

##### a. Attitude Analysis

**Table 1.** The data of Appraisal distribution

ATTITUDE	Positive Instances	Positive (%)	Negative Instances	Negative (%)
Affect	74	21.96 %	1	0.30%
Judgment	37	10.98 %	4	1.19 %
Appreciation	220	65.28 %	1	0.30 %
Total	331	100	6	100

The table above presents the distribution of appraisal categories found in the captions, taglines, and product descriptions of Dear Me Beauty's Instagram Reels advertisements. There is a total of 337 appraisal items were found as three major categories, with Affect found 75 items, 74 positive and 1 negative, Judgement found 41 items, 37 positive and 4 negative, and Appreciation found 221 items, 220 positive and 1 negative. From the table above, it can be seen that there is a significant gap between affect, judgement, and appreciation. It is quite clear that the foreground system is appreciation with 65.28 % of the overall appraised items, particularly in positive valuation (97), positive reaction (65), and positive composition (58). The positive Affect categories show around 21.95 % and positive judgement categories 6.31 %, while the negative categories show a really small number.

According to (Martin & White, 2005), affect is a type of attitude used to express how people feel towards other. In Dear Me Beauty Instagram caption affect is used to express the brand emotion and acknowledgement. Judgement is a type of attitude used to asses and evaluate people's behavior. In Dear Me Beauty Instagram caption, judgement is used to evaluate beauty standard and how it effects the audience. Appreciation is a type of attitude used to value things, performance, and phenomena/ natural phenomena. In Dear Me Beauty Instagram captions most of the appreciation is used not only to highlight the quality of its product, but also value that beauty is inclusive.

The predominance of Appreciation suggests that Dear Me Beauty relies heavily on evaluative language to highlight the quality, value, and appeal of its products. Based on (Martinn & White, 2005) appreciation is a type of attitude used to judge and evaluate objects or things. The frequent use of positive valuation indicates that the brand emphasizes worth and inclusivity by positioning its product as beneficial and empowering for diverse users. Meanwhile, the relatively small number of Judgement resources shows that the advertisements are less concerned with moral or ethical evaluation, focusing instead on product quality and consumer experience.

Moreover, positive emotional categories like affect specially in positive satisfaction (29), positive security (20) indicate that the texts seek to generate emotions of satisfaction and security in the audience. The limited presence of negative categories, strengthen the notion that the verbal approach intentionally sidesteps negative sentiment. It shows that Dear Me Beauty is choosing instead a linguistic style that promotes dialogue and emotional resonance. The findings resonate with previous studies on beauty advertising, which argue that positive appreciation is strategically implied to construct empowerment and aspirational values thereby reinforcing inclusivity narratives (Hidayat et al., 2020). Some of the examples of appraisal found in the captions can be seen in the following data. The data shown in the table below is taken from Dear Me Beauty Instagram caption in one of their campaigns *#beautybeyondlabels*, and the second data is taken from Dear Me Beauty reels audio.

## Affect

**Table 2.** Example of Affect

Item	Appraiser	Affect	Target	+/-
We are <b>thankful</b> for the journey that you and Dear Me Beauty have shared	Dear Me Beauty	Happiness	Audience	+
<b>Menyadari</b> dan ikut <b>merayakan</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Security, Happiness	Audience	+
<b>Terima kasih ya,</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Happiness	Audience	+

Table 2 illustrate how Dear Me Beauty build a friendly and positive relationship with its audience through various sources of affect. In the sentence “We are thankful for the journey”, Dear Me Beauty conveys joy and gratitude to the audience, showing affection and connection. The phrase “menyadari dan ikut merayakan” combines a sense of security and happiness, showing that the audience is not only acknowledge but also involved in the celebration, which creates a sense of belonging and security. Similarly, “Terimakasih ya” clearly conveys joy and appreciation, emphasizing the brand gratitude. Overall, these phrases create a supportive and constructive atmosphere, treating the audience as valued partners and strengthening the relationship between them.

**Table 3.** Example of Affect

Item	Appraiser	Affect	Target	+/-
Sebagian besar dari <b>kita tumbuh dicekoki</b> standar-standar kecantikan	Dear Me Beauty	Dissatisfaction	Audience	-
Kita semua <b>terlahir dengan keunikan</b> masing-masing	Dear Me Beauty	Security	Audience	+
<b>Mengajak beberapa orang</b> dengan latar belakang yang berbeda	Dear Me Beauty	Happiness	Audience	+

Table 3 demonstrate a tonal shift from negative to positive emotion, while engaging the audience. The phrase “*Sebagian besar dari kita tumbuh dicekoki standar-standar kecantikan*” indicate Affect of dissatisfaction, with the experience that beauty standards impose on us and deMonstrates an understanding of the audience’s frustration. This is contrasted with the statement, “*Kita semua terlahir dengan keunikan masing-masing,*” which indicate Affect of security and recognition, as it reassures the audience of their inherent value and uniqueness. Finally, “*Mengajak beberapa orang dengan latar belakang yang berbeda*” generates Affect of happiness, as it emphasizes inclusivity and the celebration of diversity, fostering a positive and welcoming environment. These elements collectively indicate a transition from criticizing limiting norms to acknowledging uniqueness and shared happiness.

## Judgement

**Table 4.** Example of Judgement

Item	Appraiser	Judgement	Target	+/-
Itulah alasan kami terus berusaha menghadirkan produk makeup yang sesuai	Dear Me Beauty	Tenacity	Audience	+
atas antusias dan <b>dukungan</b> kamu selama ini.	Dear Me Beauty	Tenacity	Audience	+

Table 4 illustrate the use of judgement, highlighting commitment and appreciation. The phrase “itulah alasan kami terus berusaha” reflects tenacity, portraying the brand as diligent and resolute in fullfuling audience needs. Similarly, the phrase “atas antusias dan dukungan kamu selama ini” reflects judgement tenacity, emphasizing the audience’s sustained enthusiasm and support as a driving force. This statement taken together, shows assessment of behavior and values mutual support, dedication, and persistence, strengthening the sense of partnership and trust between brand and audience.

**Table 5.** Example of Judgement

Item	Appraiser	Appraisal	Target	+/-
Ada yang bilang <b>cantik itu kalau punya badan langsing</b> , pinggul yang ramping, kulit putih, mulus, dan bening.	Dear Me Beauty	Veracity	Beauty Standard	-
<b>Sebagian besar dari kita</b> tumbuh	Dear Me Beauty	Veracity	Audience	-
Mengajak beberapa orang dengan latar belakang berbeda untuk di makeover	Dear Me Beauty	Veracity	Audience	+
Dear Me Beauty <b>percaya</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Veracity	Brand	+
<b>mendukung</b> keragaman Indonesia	Dear Me Beauty	Propriety	Brand	+

Table 5 illustrate how Dear Me Beauty employes judgement of veracity to assess beauty norms, the audience, and the brand. The phrase “ada yang bilang cantik itu kalau punya badan langsing...” conveys a negative assessment of beauty standards, implying that they are limiting and unattainable. Similarly, “sebagian besar dari kita tumbuh” carrie on with this critique, pointing out the detrimental effects these standards have had on the audience. In contrast, “mengajak beberapa orang dengan latar belakang yag berbeda” presents a positive judgement, emphasizing the value of inclusivity and diversity among participants.

## Appreciation

**Table 6.** Example of Appreciation

Item	Appraiser	Appreciation	Target	+/-
warna kulit orang Indonesia yang <b>beragam</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Audience	+
<u>yang sesuai dengan warna dan kondisi kulit wajah.</u>	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Audience	+

Table 6 illustrate the use of Appreciation of valuation to offer a positive assessment of diversity and suitability. The expression “warna kulit orang Indonesia yang beragam” demonstrates a positive appreciation for the audience’s diverse skin tones, indicating respect and recognition of the diversity within Indonesia. Similarly, “yang sesuai dengan warna dan kondisi kulit wajah” emphasizes the suitability and flexibility of the products to address these varied requirements. The statements recognize the audience’s diversity and the endeavor to offer products that align with that diversity, thereby bolstering inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.

**Table 7.** Example of Appreciation

Item	Appraiser	Appreciation	Target	+/-
Cantik itu sebenarnya tidak bisa ditakar dengan standar tertentu	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Beauty concept	+
Kita semua terlahir dengan <b>keunikan masing-masing</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Audience	+
Beauty is <b>universal</b>	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Audience	+
Mendukung <b>keragaman</b> Indonesia	Dear Me Beauty	Valuation	Brand	+

Table 7 demonstrates the use of appreciation of valuation to create a positive portrayal of beauty, individuality, and diversity. The statement “cantik itu sebenarnya tidak bisa ditakar dengan standar tertentu” views beauty as fluid and immeasurable, challenging rigid norms. Similarly, “terlahir dengan keunikan masing-masing” stresses the importance of valuing the audience’s individuality, thereby strengthening self-worth and uniqueness. The expression “Beauty is

universal” broadens this affirmative assessment by depicting beauty as an all-encompassing and worldwide idea. Finally, “mendukung keragaman Indonesia” showcases gratitude for the brand’s dedication to honoring national diversity. These statements work in concert to produce a unified narrative that honors cultural respect, individuality, and inclusivity while casting the brand and beauty in a favorable, empowering light.

**b. Graduation Analysis**

**Table 8.** Graduation Distribution

	Graduation		Count	Frequency (%)
Force	Quantification	Extent-Proxy	4	1.27 %
		Extent-Distri	12	3.80 %
		Number	35	11.08 %
		Mass	0	0 %
	Intensification	Process	25	7.91 %
		Quality	24	7.59%
Focus	Sharpen		4	1.27 %
	Soften		4	1.27%
Scaling	Upscale		104	32.91%
	Downscale		4	1.27%
Isolating	Isolated		32	10.13%
	Infused		76	24.05%
Non-Graduation			208	65.82%
Total Clause			316	100.00%

The data above shows the distribution of the graduation on the total of 40 captions and 2 videos. Out of 316 measured clauses, the most frequent findings are non-graduation (208 instances, 65.82%), indicating that most statements are presented without explicit linguistic upscaling or downscaling. However, when present, Graduation is mostly used for upscaling. Upscale categories collectively represent the highest frequency of graduation types at 104 instances (32.91%). This is primarily driven by Number quantification (35 instances, 11,07%). In contrast, forms of attenuation appeared rarely with 4 instances (1.27%). Similarly, soften appeared rarely with 4 instances (1.26%). Furthermore, the data shows that Infused graduation with 76 instances (24.04%) is significantly more frequent than Isolated graduation with 32 instances (10.13%), meaning that the intensification of meaning is more often achieved through implicit intensifiers rather than explicit grammatical choices.

**Table 9.** Example of Graduation

Graduation Category	Except	Sub Category	Isolated/infused	Scaling
Force	Dengan 15 pilihan shades	Quantification: Number	Isol-non-fig	Upscale
	Lip balm yang hadir dalam 5 shades yang disesuaikan dengan keragaman kulit Indonesia	Quantification: Number	Infused: non-fig	Upscale
	Dear Me Beauty selalu percaya bahwa beauty is universal	Quantification: Extent-Distri	Infused: non-fig	Upscale
	Hypergloss Lip Balm x Tan Skin? It’s a Match Made in Heaven!	Intensification: Quality	Infused: fig	Upscale

	yang khusus dirancang untuk kulit orang Indonesia,	Intensification: Process	Isol:non-fig	Upscale
	Tumbuh dengan dicekoki berbagai standar-standar kecantikan	Intensification: Process	Isol:non-fig	Upscale
Focus	Ada yang bilang cantik itu ini dia cheat sheet yang bisa dijadikan guide untuk kamu yang punya skin tone light, medium, hingga tan skin.	Soften	Infused:non-fig	Down Scale
		Sharpen	Infused: non-fig	Upscale

## B. Visual Representation of Beauty and Diversity

### a. Narrative Representation

**Table 10.** Data of Narrative Process in Narrative Representation

Narrative Process	Count	Frequency (%)
Projective: mental	0	0 %
Projective: speech	0	0 %
Non-transactional action	40	33.05 %
Non-transactional reaction	19	15.70 %
Unidirectional transactional reaction	0	0%
Bidirectional transactional reaction	4	3.30 %
Bidirectional transactional action	10	8.26 %
Unidirectional transactional action	48	39.66 %
Total	121	100.00

Table 10 shows the distribution of narrative process found from the visual analysis. The results indicates that unidirectional transactional action dominate with 48 occurrences (39.66%), followed by non-transactional action with 40 occurrences (33.05%). Bidirectional transactional reaction and action appeared in a small number with the occurrences of 4 (3.30%) and 10 (8.26%). Meanwhile, projective processes (mental and speech) were not found. The dominance of unidirectional transactional action suggests that represented participants are primarily positioned as actors who perform purposeful actions directed toward goal, most commonly the cosmetic product itself. In these visuals, the product functions as the goal of the action, while the model retains full agency as the initiator of meaning-making.

Similarly, the high frequency of non-transactional actions further reinforces this emphasis on individual agency and self-directed activity. Non- transactional actions depict models engaging in actions that are not directed toward another participant, such as applying lipstick or displaying facial expressions, thereby minimizing interpersonal interaction within the image. This absence of reciprocal action between participants indicates that the visual narrative does not rely on social validation or peer interaction to construct beauty.

Collectively, these narrative choices underscore both product centrality and participant autonomy. By foregrounding individual action and reducing interpersonal dependency, Dear Me Beauty visually construct beauty as an accessible, self-determined experience. This aligns closely with the brand's inclusivity discourse, which positions every individual as having the authority and capability to define and express beauty on their own terms.

## b. Interactive Meaning

**Table 11.** The data of Interactive Meaning

Interactive Meaning		Count	Frequency (%)
Contact	Offer	87	71.90%
	Demand	34	28.09%
Subjectivity 1	Detachment	83	68.59%
	Involvement	38	31.40%
Subjectivity 2	Viewer Power	50	41.32%
	Equality	48	39.66%
	Representation Power	23	19.00%
Social Distance	Intimate	49	40.49%
	Social	47	38.84%
	Impersonal	25	20.66%
Total		484	100.00%

The table above shows the dominance of offer over demand in contact category with the percentage of 71.90% and 28.09%, indicating visuals often provide information rather than directly addressing viewers. Based on (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021), offer images position the viewer as an observer who is invited to contemplate the represented participants or products, rather than being directly addressed or commanded to respond. This suggests that the visuals primarily function to present information and possibilities, allowing viewers to interpret and engage at their own pace. Such strategy avoids overt persuasion and aligns with contemporary advertising practices that emphasize subtlety and viewer autonomy.

Secondly, viewer relationship that are approachable yet respectful are formed through moderate detachment (68.59%) in conjunction with intimate (40.49%) and social distance (38.84%). The moderate detachment prevents excessive familiarity that could appear intrusive, while intimate and social distances foster emotional closeness and relatability yet not intrusive, encouraging identification without exerting pressure. This balance enables viewers to feel acknowledged and included, while still retaining personal space and interpretative freedom.

Lastly, the balanced between viewer power (41.32%) and equality (39.66%) indicate an empowering visual positioning that neither places the audience in a subordinate role nor allows for domination over them. Visuals angles that convey viewer power grant audiences' symbolic authority as evaluators of the product, reinforcing their role as decision-makers in the consumption process.

Collectively, these interactive meaning patterns reveal a deliberate visual strategy that prioritizes viewer empowerment, autonomy, and respectful engagement. By applying offer images, maintaining balanced social distance, and constructing equitable power relations, Dear Me Beauty positions its audience as active agents capable of making informed choices. This interactional design supports the brand's broader inclusivity discourse by visually reinforcing the idea that beauty is not imposed or prescribed, but discovered and affirmed by individuals on their own terms (Zhang, 2023)

## Discussion

The findings reveal that message of inclusivity and empowerment is consistently promoted by Dear Me Beauty through both verbal and visual elements. Positive Appreciation resources dominate with (65.28% instances) indicating that the brand prioritizes evaluative language to highlight quality, inclusivity, and diversity. This shows that Dear Me Beauty construct beauty as

universal and attainable, moving away from traditional and exclusionary beauty norms (Devira & Westin, 2021). The frequency of positive Affect (especially happiness, security) is consistent with the brand efforts to create intimacy and emotional connections with its audiences (Nurrachmah, 2025). By contrast, Judgement resources are less common and generally depict persistence and solidarity reflecting a partnership between brand and audience, rather than moral assessment. These linguistic choices reflect an empowering communication style that promotes self-acceptance and shared confidence rather than critique. However, at the same time, some clauses also show how Dear Me Beauty challenges the ideal standards.

The graduation analysis provides further insight into how the brand amplifies its inclusivity discourse. The findings demonstrate systematic quantification and intensification (32.91% upscaling, 0% downscaling) indicates that Dear Me Beauty intensifies meaning to emphasize inclusivity, quality, and diversity. This is driven through quantification number (e.g., “15 shades for all skin tones...”) creates a sense of abundance and positivity while reinforcing beauty as diverse, expansive, and inclusive. The predominance of infused intensification makes the amplifications implicit, embedding power and enthusiasm naturally within the language instead of using overt exaggeration. This subtle intensification strengthens emotional engagement and creates a persuasive tone without appearing excessive (Devira & Westin, 2021). However, Dear Me Beauty has been seen using isolated intensification several times, delivering explicit and bold messages. For example, the word “*dicekoki?*” (fed) gives an isolated and upscaling impression, illustrating the brand’s concern about beauty standards. The low number of downscaling or softening resources further supports the idea that Dear Me Beauty maintains an optimistic and confident tone throughout its campaign.

Visual analysis shows the predominance of unidirectional transactional actions and non-transactional actions indicating that Dear Me Beauty presents models who act independently, such as applying lipstick or holding the product, instead of group interaction. This visual independence aligns with the brand’s inclusive ideology that every woman possesses agency over her appearance. The frequent offer in social distance, combined with moderate detachment and equality in social distance, reflects a communicative stance that invites rather than commands (Hafifah & Sinar, 2021; Zhang, 2023). These visual strategies produce approachable, authentic representations that encourage viewers to see themselves within the imagery.

The relationship between verbal and visual elements in Dear Me Beauty’s campaign illustrate what (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) describe as a semiotic integration, the coordination of multiple modes to deliver congruent meaning. The linguistic and visual elements do not work in isolation but establish consistent intermodal relations with the ideational, interpersonal, and compositional meta functions. Ideationally, verbal expressions such as “*warna kulit orang Indonesia yang beragam*” are visually supported through images of models with different skin tones, constructing and integrated representations of diversity. Interpersonally, the inclusive tone of the caption aligns with the model’s confident poses and direct gaze, inviting viewers into an emotional identification with the brand’s value. This integration of semiotic resources strengthens the brand’s inclusive discourse and reinforces its ideological stance on beauty as diverse and empowering.

This study is aligned with the previous studies. (Marsakawati, 2022) show that the Appreciation (e.g., “beautiful”, “unique”) and Affect (e.g., “enjoy”, “happy”) is primarily used to describes destinations, highlighting how students express positive emotions towards tourist sites. The graduation subsystem shows the dominance of force intensifications to emphasize attraction and persuasion. Moreover, the study by (Wihadi & Sujatna, 2024) on halal beauty advertisements in

Indonesia shows that Judgement is the most dominant attitudinal resource, appearing in 60% of the total tokens. The most appeared subcategories within the Judgment system are capacity (33.85%) and tenacity (23.08%), indicating that the advertisements primarily evaluate the moral and behavioral qualities of the audience. The findings suggest that the halal beauty campaigns construct idealized Muslim women as virtuous and capable individuals whose attractiveness is grounded not in physical beauty but in moral character. In contrast, Dear Me Beauty is dominated by Appreciation (65.28%), followed by Affect (21.96%), rather than focusing on Judgement resources (10.98%). The small percentage of negative Attitude resources in Dear Me Beauty's discourse also indicates a deliberate avoidance of exclusion or critique, consistent with the principles of Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA), which is foreground constructive and affirming meanings (El-Falaky, 2023; Guan, 2022).

This research provides contribution in both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it broadens the scope of multimodal discourse analysis by showing how Appraisal theory and Visual Grammar can be combined to examine inclusive advertising discourse in a positive perspective. Practically, it offers beauty brands and media creators guidance on how to convey messages of empowerment and inclusivity in a manner that connects with diverse audiences. This study also sheds light on how local Indonesian brands can engage in shaping cultural narratives of beauty that are more pluralistic, authentic, and empowering for women.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings indicate that the brand consistently employs positive linguistic and visual strategies to create empowering, diverse, and culturally resonant representations of beauty. Verbal analysis revealed that positive Appreciation and Affect are dominant, while Graduation patterns show a tendency toward upscaling and intensification, emphasizing optimism, diversity, and empowerment. Visually, the prevalence of unidirectional and non-transactional actions, combine with approachable gaze and equality in social distance, reinforces the message of authenticity and inclusivity.

These findings suggest that Dear Me Beauty uses multimodal recourses not merely to market products but also to reframe beauty narratives in Indonesia. The combination of evaluative language, intensified tone, and relatable visual demonstrates how inclusivity can be articulated through harmony between verbal and visual modes. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of multimodal discourse analysis by integrating Appraisal theory and Visual Grammar within the framework of Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA). It extends prior critical studies by focusing on affirmative and empowering discourses rather than solely uncovering ideological domination. This approach broadens the analytical scope of multimodal studies and demonstrates the potential of positive discourse as an agent of social change.

Practically, this study offers implications for the advertising and marketing industries, particularly in promoting inclusivity and diversity in visual and linguistic representation. Dear Me Beauty's approach provides a model for how local brands can align commercial communication with ethical values, fostering emotional connections and social empowerment. The findings may also guide practitioners in designing campaigns that encourage confidence, celebrate uniqueness, and challenge outdated beauty norms.

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### Declarations

#### Author Contribution Statement

Zahra Naila La Zinu took the role as main author of the article, the analysis, and data collecting steps as well as the revision phase. Muhammad Hafiz Kurniawan took the role as the second author contributing in concepting the research design, contributing in theoretical approach and framework, creating the data analysis tools from spreadsheet and contributing in validating the findings of the research.

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The data of this research is available publicly in Instagram reels of Dear Me Beauty official account.

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The authors declare no competing interests.

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The authors did not use generative AI or AI-assisted tools in the writing, editing, or preparation of this manuscript.

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