Multimodality Analysis of Beauty Guidance in Rahasiagadis Account in Instagram

Tania Meitafasiana  
Viqi Ardaniah  

English Department, Universitas Airlangga

Abstract

The present study concerns the popularity of one Instagram account, Rahasiagadis. Rahasiagadis is an Instagram account which posts some tips related to beauty, health and relationship. This study aims to examine beauty guidance from Multimodality perspective. The analysis is based on three principles of composition by Kress and van Leeuwen and speech roles by Halliday and Matthiessen. It demonstrates how the beauty is represented visually and verbally. Qualitative research was applied since the data were in the form of photograph. This research was conducted by choosing particular beauty guidance types showing physical and behavioral guidance posted in April 2016. The findings reveal that all beauty guidances posts analyzed linguistically signify command. Moreover, visually, all of the pictures showing the placement of a woman’s figure in the center indicate the most important message. Based on the visual and verbal analyses, Rahasiagadis suggests women nowadays to gain height, and be elegant. These characteristics present the portrayal of a perfect woman according to Rahasiagadis; this leads the viewers to follow the instruction given in the beauty guidance.

Keywords: beauty guidance, Instagram, multimodality, rahasiagadis

1. Introduction

Women are frequently used as the object of the media because there are many interesting things about them to be talked about. One of them is their beauty. Basically, the concept of beauty is different from time to time. Melliana (2006) described that the thin women, tanned skin and wave haired were considered the ideal women during 60-70s’ era. In the following era, the concept of beautiful women has changed and become more complex. This changing is supported by the media that contributes to influence the women’s thought about ideal beauty. Engeln-Maddox (2006) observed women’s belief, mentioning that their life will change if their appearance looks similar with the standard beauty presented in media because they seek social, psychological, and practical rewards.

In this era, the women are interested in everything related to the beauty improvement. One of the innovations which is interesting is beauty guidance. Beauty guidance is defined as information about ways to dress up and keep healthy or beauty. The information is presented clearly and briefly and sometimes there is a picture to attract audience/reader. The beauty guidance could be found either in printed media or online media. Those types of media above may differ in the frequency of sharing the information and the content. Similarly, Cacciatore, Anderson, and Choi (2012) suggested that “online media are providing different and new portrayals of issues rather than merely amplifying traditional news media portrayals”.

One of the well-known social media nowadays is Instagram. Frommer (2010) Instagram is an online mobile phone application for taking and sharing photos and videos or social networking that enable the user to see, like and comment other people’s photos. This social media is popular and it has many users. Widiartanto (2015) mentioned that “the number of active users in December 2014 reached 300 million and less than one year later; the number increased to 400 million”. There are several accounts in Instagram that share about tips for health and beauty such as Rahasiagadis (1.4m), Infia_Health (737k), dunia.perempuan (146k), tipherian (23k) tipsperawatanwajah (2311). On these bases, Rahasiagadis account was selected as the focus of the study.
Actually, there are several previous studies which are concerned with the representation of women and their beauty in media. First, Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2012) conducted a research about how beauty is produced and reproduced in beauty advertisement in local English magazine through Critical Discourse Analysis. Second, Maharyani (2013) conducted a research about the representation of beauty presented in Citra Beauty Lotion advertisement in 1995, 1998, 2005 and 2011 through textual analysis. Third, Rachman (2013) conducted a research about the concept of beauty in female rubric of Kompas online newspaper through Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Last, Alif (2014) studied the beauty representation in vegetarian text in vemale.com through Critical Discourse Analysis.

The four previous studies discussed the women and their beauty in different types of media such as printed and online media. Furthermore, all of them employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the article which focus more on language and text production. On contrary, the present study used social media to gain more about representation of beauty in beauty guidance using multimodality approach which focus on the features in picture, so that the implicit meaning could be revealed.

In analyzing the beauty guidance in Rahasiagadis, this study employs the multimodality approach related to both language and visual element by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Here, multimodality works to combine all elements in the picture to gain the hidden meanings. Kress and van Leeuwen (cited Machin & Mayr, p.8, 2012) proposed a concept in which the features and element of images are not only looked closely, but also how these work together would be observed. Every element in multimodal text is attributed as having ‘meaning potential’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

This study identifies how the text and the picture in Rahasiagadis represent the beauty. It is expected that this study can provide the example of the application of the theory of multimodality by Kress and van Leeuwen in analyzing picture in social media and suppose to add more information about the concept of beauty represented in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study may give practical contributions to future research in linguistic field especially in social semiotic in order to understand a hidden meaning of the picture in social media.

2. Methodology

In this study, qualitative approach is suitable because the data are photographs that contain some words. According to Dörnyei (2007) various of data such as recorded interviewes, various types of texts (for example, field notes, journal, documents) and images (photos or videos) are worked in qualitative research. Another reason is that this study attempts to reveal the ideology of beauty in one community. Dörnyei (2007) mentioned that the objective of qualitative approach is to describe social phenomena as they occur naturally.

The source of data in this research were taken from the photos of Rahasiagadis account in Instagram www.instagram.com/Rahasiagadis. The writers chose this Instagram account because the writer found that this account purposively uploaded or shared about many tips and anything related to the women. Rahasiagadis is an Instagram account from Indonesia. This account was created in 2014; it had 800.000 followers. The number gets higher and by the time this research is written, the number has reached 1.5 million followers.

In taking the sample, the writers picked the beauty guidance post uploaded only in April 2016. There were two types of beauty guidance (physical and behavior beauty guidance) as the data and selected the most liked photo for every types. The reason why April was chosen is that there is a commemoration of Kartini Day in Indonesia in April. She is a national heroine and inspirational figure for the women struggling their right in Indonesia. Thus, the writers attempted to explore the beauty perception from the data taken from April 2016.

There were two steps taken by the writer to collect the data. The writer first downloaded Instagram application and created the account. After that, the writer opened the app, typed Rahasiagadis in search box, clicked and directly went to Rahasiagadis account. After Rahasiagadis account appeared, the next step was to select the data. The writers began to scroll and search one by one the photos that were uploaded in April 2016. Next, the most liked photos and saved the photos were selected.
The data analysis was started by employing three three principles of composition by Kress and van Leuween (2006). The first principle is information value which has a purpose to realize the meaning of element based on its placement. Then, it would continue to salience which is purposed to measure the importance of each elements. The last principle is called as Framing in which the connection of every element was determined. The analysis did not stop in three elements and it would continue to analyze “speech roles” proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004).

“Speech roles can be ‘giving information’ which is a form of a statement to achieve acknowledgment. Next, speech role can be ‘giving goods-and-services’ which is realized by various idioms to achieve acceptance. Then, speech role can be ‘demanding goods-and-services which is a kind of command to make the listeners carrying out a command. Last, speech roles is demanding information which is realized from interrogative mood to get the answer” (Halliday and Matthiessen (2004).

Those are the explanations of several types of speech roles. To identify the speech role types, a clause is analyzed into Mood and Residue. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) states Mood consists of Subject and Finite while Residue consists of Predicator, Complement and Adjunct.

2.1. Linguistic characteristics
A textual description of the verbal component in the data was analysed through speech act proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). To identify the speech role types, a clause is analyzed into Mood and Residue in which Mood has two components namely Subject and Finite. “Mood is is a permutations of the order of the subject and the finite element of the verbal group (i.e. the element of the verbal group that expresses tense and modality)” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Furthermore, they clearly stated that Subject is identified with nominal group and constitute to form a proposition; it is something by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied. Then, Finite is a part of verbal group expressing tense (e.g. is, has) and modality (e.g. can, must) also can have temporal operators (past, present, future) that appear either positive or negative form. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) affirmed that Predicator is present in all major clauses and its presence identified by finite (e.g. was shining; shining as Predicator) and non-finite (e.g. waiting). The second feature is Complement; it is an element realized by nominal group within Residue that cannot be functioned as Subject (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Then, An adjunct is a word or words which may not be possible being Subject and usually an adverbial group or prepositional phrase.

The title of text 1 shows a sentence, Cara Menambah Tinggi Badan. The title of this image shows that the clause consists of Subject, Predicator, and Complement. The clause is preceded by the noun cara as Subject and followed by the verb menambah as Predicator. Therefore, the title of text 1 is categorized as demanding goods-and-services. Then, the title of text 2 shows Tips Menjadi Wanita Berkelas. It can be seen that the clause in the title of this image consists of Subject, Predicator, and Complement. The clause is preceded by the noun tips as Subject and followed by the verb menjadi as Predicator. Therefore, the title of figure 7 is also categorized as demanding goods-and-services.

There are two clauses within information box in text 1. The first sentence is written lakukan lompat tali minimal 15 menit setiap hari. The clause number 1 consists of Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. This clause is preceded by the verb lakukan as Predicator. Since it is preceded by Predicator, this clause is considered as demanding goods-and-services. Then, the second clause is written lompat tali dapat membuat postur tubuh menjadi lebih tegap dan mengurangi lemak tubuh sehingga kamu akan terlihat lebih tinggi. The clause number 2 consists of Subject, Finite, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. It is preceded by the noun lompat tali as Subject and followed by a modality dapat as Finite. This clause is categorized as giving information since it includes both Subject and Finite in the beginning.

In text 2, there are also two clauses. The first clause is written elegan bukan dibentuk dari sikap, melainkan dari hati. This clause consists of Subject, Finite, and Adjunct. It is preceded by the noun elegan as Subject and followed by the auxiliary verb bukan as Finite. Clause 1 is categorized as giving information type since it has both Subject and Finite. The clause 2 is written percayalah kalau kamu adalah gadis yang keren, disukai oleh banyak orang, dan tidak perlu mengemis cinta pada pria yang tidak bisa tulus mencintaimu. This clause shows the information about classy girl which is not preceded by Subject, but Predicator. However, there is a Subject and Finite in the middle of the clause. Yet, this clause is considered as giving information since it contains Subject and Finite.

The explanation above shows that there are two types of speech role in text 1 and text 2 namely, demanding goods-and-services and giving information. By reading the title and clause 1 in the text 1, it can be implied that the viewers are demanded to follow the guidance given by Rahasiagadis. It is in line with Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) view that emphasizes the goal of demanding goods-and-services, which is carrying out a command. After giving the command and instruction, Rahasiagadis shares the benefit of following the command which is written in the clause 2 as giving information. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) stated that the purpose of this type is get an acknowledgement. As seen on the picture, Rahasiagadis stated that the advantage is getting taller and well-built body. Thus, this account implicitly shares their belief that the tall woman with well-built posture is the depiction of perfect woman.

Moreover, in text 2, looking at the title, Rahasiagadis demands the viewers to be a classy woman. They continue to define that a classy woman is someone who looks fabulous and attractive in the last clause. Those two characteristics must be possessed because the purpose of demanding goods-and-services is to make the listeners carry out a command (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). After that, they explain the meaning of being elegant in the clause 1. In that clause it is clear that they demand the viewers to keep it
in mind that elegant is a part of being classy woman. Such a implicit demand is present since the purpose of giving information is being acknowledged by the audiences (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

2.2. Visual characteristics

The visual elements involved in the construction of meaning can be interpreted with the help of principles of composition such as information value, salience and framing. These three principles belong to compositional metafunctions. The three principles were employed because this metafunction attempted to break down the separation between the study of language and images and unify them as integrated texts (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

The composition of multimodal concerns the information value. This principle refers to the placement of elements in the text (left or right, top or bottom, center and margin) (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). First, the writers analyzed the element that appears in the top and bottom area. The top area is called as Ideal and it refers to the general point of information (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The data illustrate to the title of image at the top: Cara Menambah Tinggi Badan (‘the way to increase the height’in text 1) and Tips Menjadi Gadis Berkelas (‘tips on how to be a classy woman’in text 2) present the general information of the texts. Then, the bottom area is called as Real and refers to the specific information or practical information (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). In the data, there is an information box which contains 1-2 sentences in the text 1 and text 2. The box 1 provides the detail information on how to increase height and the box 2 provides the detail information on how to be a classy woman.

Regarding the element that appears in the left and right side, there are some interesting things. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state that the elements placed on the right (New) attract more concerns than on the left side (Given) because it contains the information. The text 1 shows the word tinggi badan (height) is the information of text 1 and cara menambah (ways to increase) is an agreed message that the viewers have already known. Then, in the text 2, the New is gadis berkelas (classy woman) and the Given is tips menjadi (tips to be).

The analysis continues to the placement in the center and the margins. The center refers to the nucleus of the information (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The text 1 and text 2 show the figure of woman that is placed in the center. She is placed in the center with medium long shot in which shows the full figure in the text 1 while the woman is positioned in the center with medium close shot which shows the figure’s body up to the waist and depicts an individual interests in the text 2 (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). As depicted in this image, the woman is illustrated with glowing tanned skin and thin body. The woman is wearing an Indonesian traditional costume (Kebaya) with hair bun and make-up. It may be concluded that Rahasiagadis indirectly suggests that modern women should not forget their traditional culture.

The area surrounding the woman is called as Margin. The elements surrounded the text 1 show the presence of nature such as the sky and the sea in blue color. Blue is often associated with body and represents seriousness (Color meaning, 2012). The way the woman turns away from the viewers represents her seriousness. Her eyes are looking down and she seems to say to herself ‘I need to try harder’. Then, the elements surrounding text 2 are supported by white as the background and font color, while gold in her costume. White is often symbolized as the color of perfection (Color Meaning, 2012). Then, gold refers to generosity, wisdom and loving (Color Psychology, 2009). Therefore, it could be inferred that the classy woman is a perfect woman who must be wise, loving and kind.

The second principle is Salience to measure the importance among the elements and it can be understood by several factors such as choice of color, placement, size (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The most salient element of the text 1 and text 2 is the woman’s figure. It becomes a salient element because the appearance of human figure is one of the factors of salience elements (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Besides the appearance of the woman’s figure, the second most salient element in the text 1 and text 2 is the title of the image. The size of the letters at the top area is designed bigger than the others. Therefore, this element becomes the second most salient element after the woman’s figure.

Finally, the last principle of composition concerns framing. This principle is used to identify the connection or disconnection parts of elements (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). There are several ways to reach the connection or achieve framing. It could be done by actual frame lines, by white space between elements, by discontinuities of color (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The box of text 1 at the bottom side
has several words written in black color. The use of black color for all the words in the box indicates that these words only have one idea. Then, the repetition of using blue color for the background and the woman’s outfit indicates that this image exposes part of body. As mentioned by Color Meaning (2012), blue is often associated with body. Then, the box of text 2 has several words written in white color. The use of white color for all the words in the box indicates that these words imply one idea.

3. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis of beauty guidance, physical and behavior beauty guidance visually used and placed woman’s figure in the center either in full or half shot body. In Rahasiagadis, women are instructed to increase height. Rahasiagadis also demands women to be elegant. Due to the placement of the figure in the middle of the text and other factors such as size and color, this figures become the most salience element of the text Rahasiagadis. The woman’s figure in the center of the picture emphasizes the important message which is the appearance of the woman. The woman in Rahasiagadis’s picture is portrayed as the one with slim body, tanned or bright skin.

The texts have similar characteristic linguistically. The findings discover that there are two out of four speech act types. They offer information and demanding good and service. However, demanding goods-and-service occurs more than offering information. Based on the findings, the writer can conclude that the beauty guidance in Rahasiagadis purposively does not only inform the reader but also indirectly asks the reader to carry out the instruction.

The verbal and visual characteristics are related to each other. In other words, they provide similar idea. The depiction of woman’s figure in the Rahasiagadis’s picture is the portrayal of perfect woman nowadays. Thus, the viewers might have to follow the instruction that is given in order to be perfect or beautiful because woman is the one who beautifies her body and has a good personality (Baker, 1984).

4. References


