

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Research

Advertising refers to content created for mass media to encourage viewers, listeners, or readers to take action and buy a specific product or service (Climis & Anwar, 2017). According to Johannessen et al. (2010), the presence of advertising is widespread in our everyday experiences because it is intertwined with a culture of society and economics. It highlights that the communication process in advertising is complex, and language influences people and their behavior when purchasing products.

Quite similarly, Shirinboyevna (2020) mentions that advertising language creates a relationship between social lives. It should be recognized as an example of the art of speech because unusual sentences must be used to attract the attention of consumers to purchase a product. The type of language used in advertisement is also known as promotional language. It refers to the type of language that specifically focuses on persuading, attracting, and engaging consumers to buy a product that is promoted in the advertisements. Essentially, promotional language is a component of advertising language. Hong & Ahmad (2014) believe that promotional language is important for business professionals to market and promote a company's products and brands.

The method and medium of advertising have also evolved from print media to digital platforms such as social media. According to Kumah (2020), social media

has improved organizational communication and fostered brand awareness and customer service relationships. Therefore, social media is considered to implement marketing to build and strengthen their brand value.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, can also be used for commerce. According to Howe (2023), Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms in Indonesia, a free platform designed primarily for sharing photos and videos along with captions explaining the detailed information of the posts. The way advertisements are posted on Instagram is by posting content like photos or videos of the product along with engaging captions to attract customers to purchase the product.

Various categories of products are promoted on Instagram, such as clothes, makeup, skincare, and many more. Observing one of the categories deeply, skincare is a product used to maintain a healthy skin condition of the human's face. Several skincare brands specifically produce products for different genders and use different communication styles in their advertisements to promote the products. Using various communication styles aims to help customers connect with the message conveyed in the advertisement. It makes them attracted to purchase the product because they believe that is specifically designed for them, either for men or women by the different communication styles used in the advertisements.

Advertising influences consumers' lives socially, culturally, and economically (Chafai, 2008). He argues that men and women are different and these variations contribute significantly to how they function within society. He believes

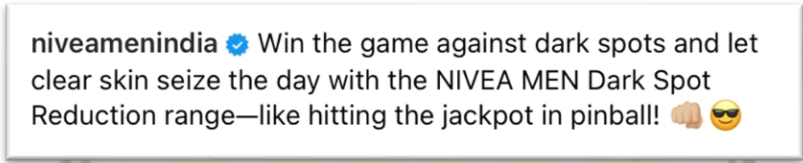
that examining the role gendered language is essential to understanding how advertising shapes perceptions and experiences of women and women. Furthermore, He highlights how women are typically presented in the advertisement. “It may be divided into three areas like as wives and mothers, as beautiful bodies deemed to maintain their physical appearance either through beauty products or fashion, and finally portrayed as busy creatures in dire need of entertainment” (Chafai, 2008). However, he also highlights women are frequently represented in roles that emphasizes preserving their appearance to satisfy the male gaze.

According to Lakoff (1975), women’s language is a style of speech that reflects and reinforces subordinate position of women in society. It is characterized by linguistic features that convey uncertainty, politeness, and a focus on maintaining relationships. On the other hands, Coates (2003) mention that men’s language is a way of speaking that reflects and reinforces traditional masculine roles in society. It is marked by features such as competitiveness, minimal emotional expression, topic control, and a focus on asserting status and independence in conversation. Additionally, Tannen (1990), mentions that women often use conversation as a tool for building connection and intimacy with others, also known as rapport talk. Meanwhile, for most men, the conversation described as report talk, emphasizes independence, strategic negotiation, and the reinforcement of social status. She also mentions that the language used to describe women and men differs in significant ways.

This phenomenon can be found in advertising, particularly with skincare brands like Garnier, Ponds, and NIVEA, which also produce skincare products for

men and women. The brands use different communication styles to target specific customers, men and women, to increase the number of purchases effectively. The following examples are the captions of men's and women's skincare advertisements on Instagram:

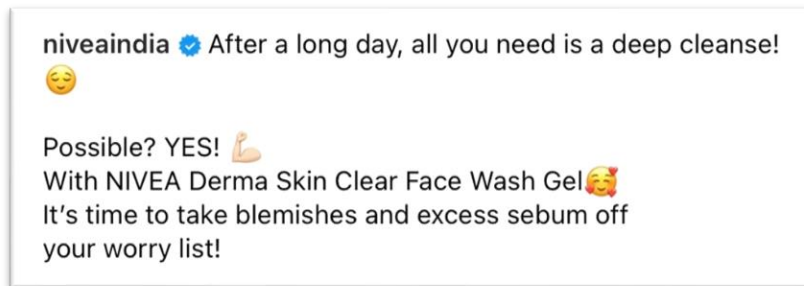
### Example 1

An Instagram post from the account 'niveamenindia' (verified with a blue checkmark). The caption reads: 'Win the game against dark spots and let clear skin seize the day with the NIVEA MEN Dark Spot Reduction range—like hitting the jackpot in pinball!' followed by a fist-bump emoji and a sunglasses emoji. The background of the post shows a man's face with a green circular graphic over a dark spot on his chin.

niveamenindia ✅ Win the game against dark spots and let clear skin seize the day with the NIVEA MEN Dark Spot Reduction range—like hitting the jackpot in pinball! 🤝😎

This caption clearly centers around the theme of competition. The choice of words like “win” and “seize the day” emphasizes action and control and achievement. As Coates (2003) explains, men’s language frequently serves to assert status and display success, and this caption reflects that pattern. It positions the skin as a site of conflict, with dark spots portrayed as obstacles to overcome. By framing skincare as a battle, the message reinforces traditional masculine values such as strength, competence, and determination. In doing so, it redefines skincare not as self-care, but as part of a results-driven, performance-based routine. The part of the caption “Win the game against dark spots” presents a challenge, and “Let clear skin seize the day” highlights the result of using the product. The overall tone is results-driven and informative, which is typical of report talk.

## Example 2



This caption demonstrates features of woman's language, emphatic stress as in the phrase "Possible? YES!" used to add emphasis and intensity to a statement. The use of capitalization in "YES!" further reinforces the emphasis, making the statement sound more expressive and persuasive. This technique heightens engagement and enthusiasm, drawing attention to the effectiveness of the product. The characteristics of the communication style in this caption align with rapport talk according to Tannen's (1990) theory. It creates a relatable and engaging tone rather than just delivering factual information. The part of the caption "After a long day, all you need is a deep cleanse!" resonates with shared experiences, making it feel more personal. The conversational question-and-answer structure in the caption "Possible? YES!" adds an interactive element, mimicking real dialogue rather than just stating product benefits. Additionally, the line "It's time to take blemishes and excess sebum off your worry list!" reinforces support rather than simply giving instructions. Since the caption fosters connection and engagement rather than focusing purely on task-oriented information, it is characteristic of rapport talk.

Based on the analysis of Instagram captions for skincare products from several brands, it is interesting to study the differences in gender communication styles used in these advertisements. This topic is chosen because previous research



on the language used in advertisements from a gender perspective has not yet addressed this subject. Therefore, a thorough investigation of online advertisements in the skincare industry is needed to observe differences in communication styles related to gender identities, in this case, those used in skincare product Instagram captions.

To analyze what type of genderlect styles the captions included, Coates' (2003) Men's Talk and Lakoff's (1975) Women's Language Features theories are applied. Furthermore, the analysis will continue by using Tannen's (1990) theory of genderlect style to examine the differences in communication style used in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

This section presents the theories applied in the analysis of the data in this research. Theories that will be used are (1) Sociolinguistics, (2) Linguistic Variations, (3) Language and Gender, (4) Features of Men's Language, (5) Features of Women's Language, (6) Genderlect Styles, and (7) Computer-Mediated Communication. These relevant theories are applied to analyze the objective of this research.

### **1.2.1 Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics is a study that investigates the relationship between language and society (Wardhaugh, 2006). The objective is to analyze the linguistic structures and their functions within communicative context. He mentions that language and society are interconnected in multiple ways. One idea is that the way

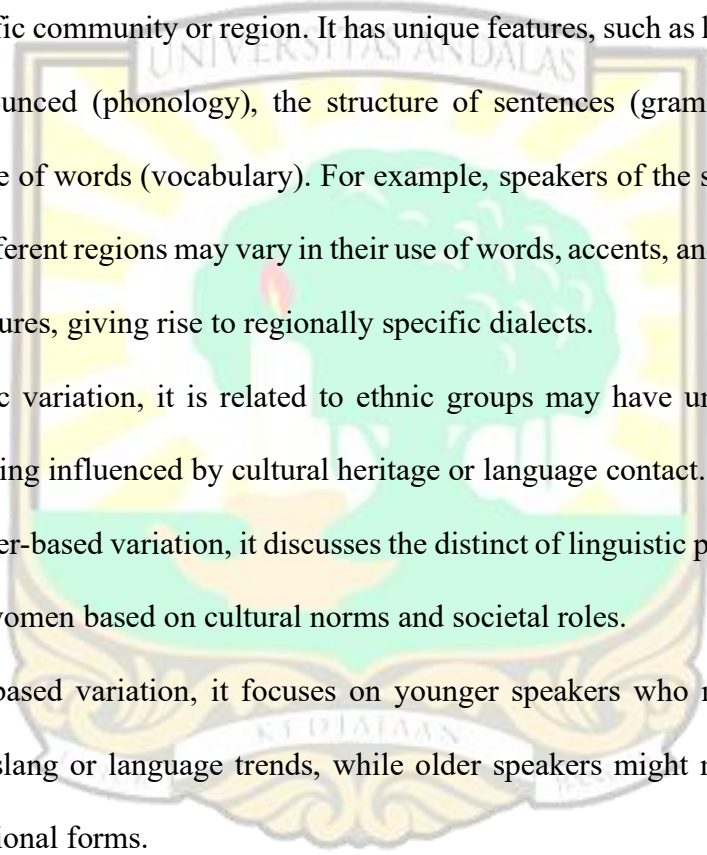
society is structured can affect how language is formed and used. Language variations among speakers often corresponds to differences in region, social status, ethnicity, and gender. Additional research indicates that specific speech patterns, lexical choices, and conversational norms are strongly shaped by social expectations.

According to Meyerhoff (2006), the field of sociolinguistics explores how individuals use language, how linguistic practices vary across communities and regions, and how societies determine official language use in institutions like courts and school. He argues that everyone can modify the way they speak depending on who they are with or what the situation is. When they do this, they are drawing on their sociolinguistic knowledge. Variations in speech based on audience or context serve to reinforce and expand the shared sociolinguistic understanding within a community. It can be said that sociolinguistics examines language variation based on its speakers' uses.

### **1.2.2 Linguistics Variations**

Linguistics variation is a term used by Wardhaugh (2006) to refer to how language varies and changes in different social contexts among other speakers. It focuses on linguistic features like word choice, sentence structure, or grammatical forms that vary between speakers. This variation can occur based on several factors, such as geographical region and social class (also known as dialect), gender, age, ethnicity, and the social setting of communication.

Related to the factors of linguistic variations, he also emphasizes several types of linguistic variations as follows:

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- a. Dialect, according to Wardhaugh (2006), dialects are explicitly identified as a key type of variation, reflecting regional and social differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Wardhaugh explains that linguistic variation includes the different ways language is used by speakers, influenced by factors like region, social class, ethnicity, and context. A dialect is a variation of a language that reflects the linguistics norms of a specific community or region. It has unique features, such as how words are pronounced (phonology), the structure of sentences (grammar), and the choice of words (vocabulary). For example, speakers of the same language in different regions may vary in their use of words, accents, and grammatical structures, giving rise to regionally specific dialects.
- b. Ethnic variation, it is related to ethnic groups may have unique ways of speaking influenced by cultural heritage or language contact.
- c. Gender-based variation, it discusses the distinct of linguistic patterns of men and women based on cultural norms and societal roles.
- d. Age-based variation, it focuses on younger speakers who may introduce new slang or language trends, while older speakers might maintain more traditional forms.
- e. Contextual or situational variation, it describes the speakers adjusting their language depending on the social context or setting, such as shifting from formal language in professional environments to informal language with friends.



Wardhaugh (2006), through his work, highlights how social structures and interactions deeply influence linguistic variations. This research will focus on gender-based variation, specifically how gender-based differences in language use in advertisements. Additionally, he mentions that dialects and gender-based variations are both types of linguistic differences. Dialects change based on where people are from or their social group, while gender-based variations reflect how men and women use language differently due to social expectations. These variations are related because both show how language can differ depending on who is speaking and their identity.

For example, men and women might use different forms of the same dialect, with women using more polite or standard language, and men using more casual or direct language. It investigates the influence of gender on linguistic behavior and how language serves to construct and maintain gendered identities and expectations. This field of study examines the distinct in communication patterns vary between genders, a topic commonly referred to as language and gender.

### **1.2.3 Language and Gender**

The field of study within sociolinguistics that explores the differences in language used between gender in society is known as language and gender. According to Wardhaugh (2006), A key focus in sociolinguistics is the interplay between linguistic features and the gendered social roles of speakers. He also mentions that gender is also something we cannot avoid. It reflects the manner in which societies are arranged, with different societies adopting their own system of order.

When discussing gender, there is also one related term known as sex. As Litosseliti (2006) mentioned, there is a difference between the terms sex and gender. Theorist of language and gender commonly define sex in biological terms, while viewing gender as shaped by cultural and social influences. This distinction suggests that gender is more complex and broader.

Additionally, Lakoff (1975) describes women's subordinate position in society as shown in both how they are expected to speak and how others talk about them. When people talk about women, they often describe them as objects, especially in a way that avoids directly mentioning anything sexual. Also, women's roles in society are usually seen as secondary or dependent on men. It is characterized by linguistic features that convey uncertainty, politeness, and a focus on maintaining relationships. These features reflect the social pressure for women to be less assertive and more relationship-oriented. In contrast to the direct and dominant language often attributed to men. Women's language is characterized by ten distinct features, highlighting how societal expectations shape their speech to appear polite, deferential, and relationship-focused.

Other theorists explained a different perspective on variation in language according to gender. Tannen (1990), In her book entitled *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, she pointed out that the differentiation of language use between men and women is caused by the difference in cultural and social influences on boys and girls. She considered that girls and boys experience gender-specific socialization, which shapes their communication behaviors differently. In other words, their communication can be seen as a form of

two distinct cultures. She believes men and women have different communication styles. Tannen (1990) divided men's and women's communication styles into two categories: masculine communication style (report talk) and feminine communication style (rapport talk). These three language and gender theories from Coates (2003), Lakoff (1975) and Tannen (1990) are applied in the analysis of this research data.

#### **1.2.4 Features of Men's Language**

Coates (2003) explains the way men talk often reflects how they see themselves and want to be seen as confident, independent, and in control. She found that when men talk with other men, they usually prefer topics like sports or work, things that do not get too personal. They often take turns telling stories, trying to show expertise or outdo each other in a playful way. There's not much emotional sharing but still reinforcing traditional ideas of masculinity like being strong, competitive, and self-reliant. The following are patterns or features of men's language features in Coates' theory:

##### **a. Competitive Talk**

Coates (2003) identifies competitive talk as a feature of men's language where speakers attempt to assert dominance or expertise within a conversation. Men often use language to compete with each other by trying they are more knowledgeable or better. In a conversation about sports, one man might say, "I scored the winning goal last weekend," to outshine others. The kind of talk is about showing skill or status and often happens through stories or boasting.

For example, in a group discussion about fitness routines, a man might say, “I’ve been lifting 100 kilos without a spotter for months now,” to outdo or impress others in the conversation. This statement not only conveys skill and strength but also positions the speaker above others in terms of physical prowess. According to Coates, this form of communication reflects how men are socially encouraged to compete and display dominance in public discourse. Unlike collaborative or rapport-driven styles, competitive talk is more about “winning” the conversation than building connection. In contrast, women’s talk tends to focus more on support, agreement, and mutual understanding. The presence of competitive talk reinforces traditional gender roles where masculinity is associated with power, assertiveness, and self-promotion.

#### b. Verbal Play and Teasing

Verbal play and teasing highlighted as important interactional tools among men, which function to build solidarity and test social boundaries. Teasing often involves playful insults or banter, such as calling a friend “slowpoke” in humorous manner when he arrives late and everyone laughs. Teasing is a way for men to connect, but it can also be competitive or challenge someone’s status.

For instance, a man might jokingly say to a friend who arrives late, “Nice of you to finally join us, slowpoke,” prompting laughter from the group. While the comment pokes fun, its underlying function is to include the person in the group dynamic through shared teasing. Coates (2003) argue that teasing among men serves dual purposes: it fosters connection but also operates as a subtle form of

competition or status negotiation. Being able to handle teasing—by laughing it off or teasing back—is a way for men to demonstrate toughness, wit, and group belonging. This contrasts with women’s conversational styles, which are generally more focused on affirming others and avoiding potential conflict. Thus, verbal play and teasing reinforce traditional masculine norms that value strength, resilience, and social control, using humor as both a bonding mechanism and a test of interpersonal boundaries.

#### c. Topic Control

Men tend to dominate conversations by initiating or steering discussions toward topics of interest and resisting changes. For instance, if the group is talking about cars, one man might steer the talk back to cars if others try to change the topic. This control over discourse topics reflects underlying power dynamics and masculine norms of assertiveness.

For example, during a mixed-group conversation that shifts to travel, a man might redirect it by saying, “Yeah, but speaking of engines, did you see the new Tesla model?” bringing the topic back to cars, which he finds more engaging. This tendency demonstrates how men use topic control to assert dominance and align with masculine norms of leadership and confidence in communication. In contrast, women are more likely to support topic shifts and encourage inclusive dialogue, emphasizing collaboration over control.



#### d. Monologic Style

Coates (2003) identifies the *monologic style* as a common feature of men's language, where men take extended turns in conversation, often speaking at length without interruptions. This style is typically used to tell stories, give explanations, or share experiences in detail.

For example, a man might recount a fishing trip with vivid descriptions for several minutes, while others listen without interrupting. Such long, uninterrupted speech reflects confidence and helps the speaker project authority or expertise. Unlike women's more interactive and collaborative talk, men's monologic style reinforces traditional masculine traits like dominance, control, and self-assuredness. This style shows confidence and helps the speaker appear knowledgeable or important.

#### e. Minimal Listener Support

Minimal listener support refers to men's comparatively sparse use backchannels or verbal encouragements such as fewer responses like "uh-huh" or "yeah" when others speak, compared to women. When a friend talks, other men might just stay quiet instead of giving many encouraging sounds. This can make conversations feel less supportive but reflects men's focus on facts rather than feelings.

For instance, when a friend is talking, other men might simply nod or stay quiet rather than verbally affirming what's being said. This lack of response may seem unsupportive but reflects a communication style focused more on content than

emotional engagement. In contrast, women tend to use frequent listener support to show attentiveness and build rapport, emphasizing connection over information.

#### f. Impersonal Topics

Men prefer to talk about facts, events, or things outside themselves rather than emotions or personal issues. Discussing the latest football game instead of how someone is feeling. This helps men avoid vulnerability and maintain a strong, independent image.

For instance, in casual conversation, a man might say, “Did you watch the game last night?” rather than asking, “How have you been feeling lately?” This topic choice helps men avoid vulnerability and reinforces traditional masculine ideals of self-reliance and emotional control. In contrast, women’s talk often centers on relationships and personal matters, emphasizing emotional connection and support.

#### g. Constructing Masculinity

Coates (2003) explains that men use language as a mean of constructing masculinity, performing identities aligned with cultural expectations such as strength, autonomy, and resilience. For example, sharing a story about independently fixing a car exemplifies self-reliance. Through these linguistic practices, it becomes a way to perform and reinforce masculine identity.

For example, a man might say, “I fixed the car myself over the weekend,” highlighting self-reliance and technical skill. This linguistic strategy helps establish a masculine identity and signals competence or toughness to others. Unlike

women's language, which often emphasizes connection and empathy, men's speech in this context serves to affirm autonomy and status within social interactions.

### **1.2.5 Features of Woman's Language**

Lakoff (1975) proposed there are ten features of women's language. It shows that society expects women to speak in a way that sounds polite, respectful, and focused on maintaining good relationships with others. This means they are often encouraged to be gentle in their words, avoid confrontation, and prioritize harmony in conversations. The following are ten of the women's language features in Lakoff's theory:

#### **a. Lexical Hedges or Fillers**

Lakoff argues that women's speech tends to contain more phrases like "sort of," "kind of," "I guess," "maybe," etc. These words and phrases are known as lexical hedges, and they express hesitation, lack of confidence, and reduce the assertiveness of a statement. Women use hedges more frequently because they are socially conditioned to avoid sounding overly assertive, reflecting their subordinate societal role.

For example, a woman might say, "Delvin is sort of short," instead of directly stating, "Delvin is short," to appear less authoritative. Lakoff highlights hedging may reflect a desire to soften speech to avoid being perceived as masculine or forceful. In contrast, men tend to use more direct and assertive language and avoid hedges to demonstrate confidence and dominance. This difference reinforces gendered expectations in communication.

#### b. Tag Question

Lakoff (1975) describes tag questions as a feature of women's language, they used when the speaker is uncertain about the accuracy of their statement. It is more like softening a statement by turning it into a question for seeking confirmation. For instance, "The cake is delicious, isn't it?". These are used to maintain politeness, seek agreement, or avoid assertiveness, reflecting societal expectations for women to be cooperative and non-dominating in conversations.

For example, Lakoff compares women and men when using tag questions, like women might say "John is here, isn't he?" with men's tendency to use straightforward and declarative like "John is here." This difference shows how language used by men is more direct and authoritative, while language used by women is more deferential. Thus, tag questions serve as polite forms of expression, as they allow the addressee to agree or disagree without pressure.

#### c. Rising Intonation on Declarative

Lakoff (1975) identifies rising intonation on declaratives as a feature of women's language, where a statement is spoken with the intonation of a question, making it sound less assertive. He argues there is a unique sentence intonation pattern used by women in English, where a declarative response to a question has the rising pitch characteristic of a yes-no question, accompanied by a sense of hesitation.

For example, in a conversation where the man asks "When will breakfast be ready?", instead of saying "In 15 minutes" with a flat tone, a woman might say

"Hmm... around 15 minutes?" with a rising intonation, even when making a statement. Lakoff argues that this reflects societal expectations for women to appear uncertain or avoid sounding too authoritative. In contrast, men tend to use falling intonation, signaling confidence and finality in their statements.

#### d. Empty Adjectives

‘Empty’ adjective is one of the lexical items that differentiate language used by men and women. Lakoff (1975) identifies empty adjectives as a characteristic of women’s language, signaling the speaker’s approval or admiration for something. It also conveys emotional or aesthetic approval without adding substantial meaning. For instance, words like "lovely," "adorable," and "charming" are called “empty” adjectives which means delivering an expression of feeling rather than factual content.

Lakoff argues that women are socialized to use these adjectives more often to express appreciation or positivity, aligning with societal expectations for women to focus on emotions and relationships. For instance, a woman might say, "What a lovely performance!" instead of simply stating, "What a good performance." In contrast, men tend to avoid such adjectives, favoring more neutral or evaluative language. Unlike men, women often face a choice between neutral and distinctly feminine language, and this choice can reveal much about their character and attitude toward the subject.



e. Precise Color Terms

Lakoff argues that women are generally more accurate than men in distinguishing and labeling different shades of color. She identifies precise color terms as a feature of women's language, referring to their use of specific and nuanced color terms. Words like "mauve," "turquoise," "beige," "lavender" and so on, are unremarkable in a women's active vocabulary, but absent from that of most men. Lakoff argues that women are socialized to pay more attention to subtle color distinctions, reflecting their association with domestic and aesthetic roles. For example, a woman might say, "The dress is a beautiful shade of lavender," while a man might simply say, "The dress is purple." Men tend to use broader, less specific color terms, focusing less on fine distinctions.

f. Intensifiers

Lakoff identifies intensifiers or words like "so," "very," "really," and "such" as a feature of women's language because women tend to use it more frequently than men. It refers to words like that amplify the strength of an expression, emotions, or assertions. Lakoff argues that women use intensifiers more frequently to convey enthusiasm or emphasis, which aligns with societal expectations for women to appear emotionally engaged or expressive. For example, a woman might say, "This is really amazing!" instead of simply saying, "This is amazing." In contrast, men tend to use fewer intensifiers, favoring more restrained and direct speech.

g. 'Hypercorrect' Grammar

Lakoff mentions that women are generally expected to speak politely, as they are culturally positioned as symbols of literacy and refinement. She identifies hypercorrect grammar as a feature of women's speech, referring to the consistent use of standard grammar, pronunciation, and linguistic forms. Women tend to avoid slang, contractions, or informal speech, such as "goin'," "gonna," "kinda," and so on. Instead, women would say "going," "going to," and "kind of" to appear more polite and proper. Lakoff argues that this reflects societal pressure on women to maintain a higher standard of speech as a way to gain respect or approval. In contrast, men tend to use informal, non-standard language as a way to express independence or masculinity.

h. 'Superpolite' Forms

Lakoff argues that women are generally expected to use more polite language than men, showing extra attention to manners such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' and adhering to social norms. She points to superpolite forms as a notable feature in women's speech, characterized by consistently using highly respectful and deferential language to avoid offending others. Women often use phrases like "Would you mind if...", "If it's not too much trouble," or "I'd really appreciate it if..." Lakoff argues that these forms reflect societal expectations for women to prioritize politeness and deference in their speech. For example, a woman might say, "Could you please turn off the TV?" instead of the more direct "Turn off

the TV." In contrast, men are more likely to use straightforward or less elaborate requests.

i. Avoidance of Strong Swear Words

Lakoff (1975) identifies the avoidance of strong swear words as a feature of women's speech, where women tend to use milder expletives like "oh dear," or "oh my goodness" instead of stronger swear words commonly used by men. This reflects societal expectations for women to maintain decorum and avoid coarse or aggressive language. For example, a woman might say, "Oh, sugar!" instead of a stronger expression like "Oh, damn!" Lakoff contrasts this with men's language, which often includes stronger swearing to convey anger or assertiveness. The term 'stronger,' when applied to men, reflects their dominant social position, while 'weaker,' when applied to women, mirrors their comparatively subordinate status in society. It's commonly acknowledged that men tend to use more forceful expletives, whereas women are expected to use softer or less intense forms.

j. Emphatic Stress

Lakoff (1975) stated that heavy stress appears to be more typical of women's speech than men's. She describes women's speech as 'italicized,' meaning highly expressive or performative, with the level of emphasis increasing alongside conventional notions of femininity. Speak in italics is another way of expressing uncertainty and the statements may appear contradictory. Another function of the use of italics is used to add emphasis to the utterance. Lakoff identifies emphatic stress as a feature of women's language, where women often emphasize certain

words to convey their emotions or to intensify their expressions. This can include stressing words like "so," "really," or "quite" to show enthusiasm or importance. For example, a woman might say, "I'm so happy to see you!" or "This is really important!" Lakoff argues that women use emphatic stress to express emotional engagement and to be more expressive. On the other hand, men are less likely to use such stress, preferring more neutral or restrained forms of expression.

Lakoff presents ten features that define the speech patterns of women, reflecting societal expectations of politeness, deference, and emotional expression. These features include lexical hedges, tag questions, rising intonation on declarative, empty adjectives, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, precise color terms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. They point out that women often communicate in a manner that is more reserved, respectful, and centered on maintaining social bonds, whereas men's communication style is usually more direct, dominant, and emotionally minimal. These language differences underscore the societal pressures that shape how men and women communicate.

### **1.2.5 Genderlect Styles**

Tannen's (1990) genderlect style examines the differences in communication style between men and women which can also be found in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions. The following are the types of genderlect styles.

### **a. Report Talk**

In Tannen's (1990) Genderlect Styles theory, report talk is a term used to describe a masculine communication style typically associated with men. It refers to a communication style that focuses on exchanging information and facts. She describes that typically men use language as a means to protect their independence and establish their status within a hierarchical framework. Several characteristics indicating report talk according to Tannen (1990) are as follows:

#### **i) Preserve Independence**

Tannen (1990) mentions that in a world defined by status, autonomy is vital because the ability to command others is a key indicator of high status, while taking orders is associated with lower status. She highlights independence refers to how men often use language to assert autonomy, self-sufficiency, and personal status within interactions. Men emphasize their independence using language to show they can handle things, make decisions, and maintain a sense of autonomy.

For instance, in her book, Tannen mentions the example of a couple named Linda and Josh. Josh says "I can't say to my friend, 'I have to ask my wife for permission!'". In the case of, Josh refuses to ask permission from his wife because he sees it as a threat to his independence. Tannen uses this example to show how men value autonomy in conversation and decision-making. For Josh, admitting that he needs his wife's approval would make him seem dependent or less in control, which goes against the way men are often socialized to present themselves. It indicates that he doesn't have the



freedom to act on his own, which could cause him to feel like a subordinate or even childlike.

ii) Maintain Status

Maintaining status in report talk refers to how men use language to assert authority, demonstrate competence, and avoid vulnerability. Men use language to show dominance and see conversation as competition. Men also avoid showing weakness or uncertainty, as vulnerability could lower their standing in the social or professional hierarchy. In this way, men use language to secure their place and assert power in interactions.

Tannen mentions a case in her book about a woman and her fiancé who said to her “My friends are downstairs,” he said. “I don’t want them to get the impression that you order me around.” This case shows how men use talk to maintain status in social situations. He is concerned about how his friends perceive him because, for men, maintaining a position of authority and control in their peer group is important. If his friends think he is being "ordered around" by his partner, it could make him seem less dominant or independent, which could lower his status among them. This reflects how men often use language to assert control and avoid appearing subordinate, reinforcing Tannen’s idea that men engage in report talk to establish and protect their status in conversations.

iii) Exhibiting knowledge and skill

Exhibiting knowledge and skill in report talk is known as using language to demonstrate expertise, competence, intelligence, and problem-

solving abilities. In report talk, men often share facts, solutions, or information highlighting their expertise. This is a way of demonstrating competence and reinforcing their role or status within a group or situation.

Tannen (1975) highlights that boys' games are more like competitions that have winners and losers. The rules of these games are elaborate and often the focus of heated discussions. Moreover, boys are usually heard bragging about their abilities and debating who is the most skilled. Another case that shows knowledge and skill about the idea that men are natural problem solvers was evident in the contrasting answers of a husband and wife when they were asked the same question on a radio talk show about their life with an autistic child. The husband said, "Life is problem-solving. This is just one more problem to solve."

This case illustrates exhibiting knowledge and skills because the husband views life through the lens of problem-solving, reinforcing the idea that men often use language to demonstrate competence and control. This reflects how men use report talk to assert expertise and maintain status by focusing on logic and solutions rather than emotions.

#### iv) Imparting Information

In this context, imparting information refers to using language to convey facts, data, or specific knowledge. The primary goal is to share information in a clear, structured way rather than to build relationships or emotional connections. In other words, it reflects a communication style that prioritizes the delivery of facts and knowledge over emotional connection.

For instance, in her book, Tannen addressed the issue of women's dissatisfaction with the lack of communication from men at home. In this case, the husband wants to read a newspaper and asks his wife, "Is there anything you would like to say to me before I begin reading the newspaper?". In this situation, he sees talk as a means of exchanging information. Because the husband views conversation as a way to exchange important facts rather than as a means of emotional connection. Once he starts reading, he assumes there is no reason to continue talking unless something important needs to be conveyed. This reflects report talk, where men focus on giving and receiving information.

#### **b. Rapport Talk**

Rapport talk is a feminine communication style that is typically associated with women according to Tannen's(1990) Genderlect Style theory. The primary goal of rapport talk is to build and maintain relationships, build emotional connections, and create a sense of intimacy and understanding between speakers. She notes that in a world defined by connection, intimacy is crucial, with individuals negotiating complex relationships, minimizing differences, trying to find consensus, and avoiding appearing superior. Several characteristics indicate rapport talk according to Tannen's (1990) theory as follows:

##### **i) Establishing connections and intimacy**

In Tannen's theory, establishing connections and intimacy involves creating and maintaining close, supportive relationships through conversation. Women often share personal details, experiences, and feelings

to develop intimacy and invite others to do the same. By affirming each other's feelings, offering validation, and showing understanding, they build an emotional bond that creates a sense of intimacy.

For instance, it can be seen in a case in Tannen's book about a couple called Linda and Josh. Linda asked for permission from her husband before deciding by saying "I have to check with Josh." This case illustrates establishing connections and intimacy because Linda sees checking with her husband not as asking for permission, but as a way to show that their lives are intertwined and connected. It makes her feel fulfilled to know and reveal that she is part of someone else's life, with her own life intertwined with theirs. This aligns with rapport talk, where conversation is used to build and maintain relationships.

ii) Negotiating relationship

Negotiating relationships in rapport talks involves managing the dynamics of interpersonal connection through conversation. Women use language to maintain and adjust emotional closeness, provide support, and ensure harmony in their relationships. Tannen suggests that women use language in social interactions to define, adjust, and maintain their relationships with others. In rapport talk, women often avoid hierarchical or competitive structures in conversation but negotiate relationships and mutual respect instead.

Tannen (1975) mentions that the balance in connection is the foundation of community: When two people are both seeking closeness, they are

working toward the same thing. Moreover, Boys and girls are socialized into different linguistic worlds. Many of their activities do not involve competition. Even though some girls may be more skilled, they are expected not to brag or show that they are superior to others.

It illustrates negotiating relationships because it highlights how girls prioritize connection and equality in their interactions. Tannen explains that girls grow up in social environments where relationships are built through closeness and cooperation, rather than competition. Unlike boys, who often engage in games with winners and losers, girls focus on maintaining harmony in their friendships. They avoid boasting or showing superiority because their social structure values inclusion and mutual support.

iii) Displaying similarities

Displaying similarities in rapport talk is about using conversation to create emotional connections by focusing on shared experiences, feelings, perspectives, and common ground to develop a sense of connection and closeness. Women often seek out and emphasize what they have in common with the person they are talking to. They also may share personal stories or experiences similar to those of their conversation partner. By doing so, they convey that they understand what the other person is going through and are aligned with them emotionally.

Tannen (1975) shows how people, especially women, use conversation to create a sense of shared experience and connection. When someone shares a problem, they are not always looking for a solution but



rather for understanding and validation. By saying things like "I know how you feel" or "That happened to me too," individuals reinforce rapport, conveying the message that "We're the same; you're not alone." This mutual exchange of experiences creates symmetry in conversation, strengthening relationships and fostering a sense of community where both speakers feel connected and understood.

#### **1.2.6 Computer-Mediated Communication**

Many studies of language used now is based on the use of language on computer. This research used data that published on social media that included to Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). This theory was first introduced by Joseph Walther in 1992 through his Social Information Processing (SIP) theory. Computer-mediated communication is characterized as any form of interaction conducted via computer or digital devices that occurs using two or more networked computers (Yu, 2011). It refers to any form of communication that happens through computers or digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, or laptops, instead of face-to-face interaction. It includes texting, emailing, chatting on social media, social media posts, video calls, and online forums. Essentially, it is how people communicate and build social relationships online using technology.

According to Walther (1992), there are two types of CMC. The first type is synchronous, which refers to real-time communication like video calls and instant messaging, where users exchange messages instantly, similar to face-to-face interaction. Another type is asynchronous, which refers to delayed communication

like emails, comment sections, and social media posts, where messages are exchanged at different times.

Captions in social media posts typically fall under asynchronous CMC because they are not direct conversations like messaging. There is a time delay between when the message in the form of a caption is posted and when people engage with it through likes, comments, shares, etc. As in this research, skincare brands communicate with their audience through Instagram captions. They share information, promote products, and engage with their Instagram audience through digital platforms, which falls under asynchronous CMC.

In asynchronous communication, users have the opportunity to craft their messages carefully. They take the time to plan the wording, emojis, hashtags, and tone rather than responding spontaneously as they might in synchronous interactions. Walther (1992) suggests that carefully writing messages, like Instagram captions, helps compensate for the lack of body language and facial expressions in asynchronous communication.

Drawing on Tannen's Genderlect Theory, men are more likely to engage with report talk, emphasizing clear, direct communication and problem-solving, while women tend to respond better to rapport talk, which fosters connection and emotional engagement. Understanding these gender-based communication patterns will help brands deliver their messaging strategies to resonate with their audiences.

### 1.3 Review of Previous Studies

Studies on language use in social media have been widely explored in various ways. When it comes to social media and gender, many researchers around the world have studied the connection between social media and gender. One of the well-known studies is Gender Advertisement by Erving Goffman in (1976). Meanwhile, in the past few years, research conducted in Indonesia that focused on language and gender in social media can be found among others in the work of Hidarto and Andrieza (2022), Marhaeni et al. (2022), Sari et al. (2020), Shalaby and Alkaff (2019), and Aini (2017). Each of the studies will be discussed here.

The study by Hidarto and Andrieza (2022) focuses on gender differences in the way influencers advertise on Instagram. The study explores how Instagram influencers integrate words and images in their promotional content, comparing the endorsement techniques of male and female influencers. This study applies the theories of Gender Linguistic Features by Newman et al. (2008) and Gender Differences by Goffman (1988) and Kang (1997). The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. The results show that female influencers use more persuasive features with conceptual and textual linguistic elements. Meanwhile, male influencers use more interpersonal features. However, gender did not have a substantial influence on the overall application of linguistic metafunctions. Females use more descriptive adjectives, while males focus on less emotive, object-centered topics. Both genders use informal language, emojis, and hashtags to express emotions. The differences suggest that female influencers aim to invite followers, using second-person pronouns, whereas male influencers use imperatives and give

direct instructions. These findings help us to understand how gender affects advertisements created on Instagram.

The study by Marhaeni et al. (2022) is about the influence of gender and age on social media language. This study examines how celebrity trust affects the credibility of advertisements, brands, and companies and how gender and age play a role in influencing this effect. This study applies Smart PLS to predict relationships between different factors and only focuses on making predictions. The research method used in this study is quantitative and descriptive, and the sample was chosen using purposive sampling in Jakarta. The study found that gender plays a significant role in marketing, so companies should target advertisements for specific genders. The results show that gender affects how celebrity trust impacts credibility. Trusted celebrities attract more consumers, especially those who follow them on Instagram.

The study by Sari et al. (2020) examines the language used by men and women in Instagram captions. By applying Lakoff's gender features theory, this study investigates the similarities and differences in the language used by men and women in Instagram captions from personal accounts. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. In this research, seven language features are used by men and women in the Instagram caption. They are lexical hedges or fillers, tag questions, hypercorrect grammar, empathy adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and empathic stress. The findings of the study suggest that men and women do not use all the gender language features described in Lakoff's (1975) theory in their Instagram captions. Both genders use features like lexical hedges, tag

questions, hypercorrect grammar, empathy adjectives, intensifiers, super polite forms, and emphatic stress, similar to using intensifiers to strengthen statements. However, differences emerge in empathy adjectives, where men and women choose different words to express admiration for fashion products. These variations in language features reflect men's and women's different intentions and styles of communication in their Instagram captions. The findings can help us understand how gendered language impacts social media interactions.

The study by Shalaby and Alkaff (2019) focuses on a cross-cultural analysis of how women are represented in Instagram cosmetics advertisements. The study aims to investigate how the portrayal of women might be changing on social media. The theory used in this study is Goffman's (1979) and Kang's (1997) frameworks of gender displays in advertisements. The qualitative descriptive method is applied in this research. The study shows that the portrayal of women in Instagram cosmetic advertisements has not changed significantly and still reflects traditional stereotypes. These advertisements continue to depict women in ways similar to print media, with images of vulnerability and sexualization remaining common. This finding aligns with Kang's (1997) study, which found more stereotyping of women in the "Licensed Withdrawal" category since Goffman's 1979 analysis. Women are still often portrayed as fragile and stereotyped in online cosmetic advertisements. The findings reveal that despite the new medium, Instagram advertisements still portray women in traditional and stereotypical ways. It is helping us see how these portrayals continue over time.



The study by Aini (2017) explores the linguistic style of three American gay entertainers on Instagram. This study aims to identify women's language features and the function used by three American gay entertainers in Instagram's captions. The theory used in this study is Lakoff (1975) for women's language features and Holmes (2013) for the function of women's language features. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. The study found that some gay men, like women, use specific language features commonly associated with women's language, such as intensifiers and emphatic stress. Among three American gay entertainers on Instagram, about 40.95% of their captions included these features. The study identified two main functions: hedging and boosting, which are more common as they aim to strengthen their statements and grab attention. Gay men have their linguistic styles, but they often use women's language to assert themselves and be noticed, possibly because of lingering insecurity about expressing their gay identity openly. This study provides valuable insights into how language features typically associated with women are used by American gay entertainers on Instagram.

Previous studies on gender and language in social media that have been discussed before provide useful insights into genderlect styles. However, those previous studies show some gaps that can be explored when analyzing genderlect styles in skincare advertisements on Instagram. Studies like of Hidarto and Andrieza (2022) and Marhaeni et al. (2022) Hidrato and Andrieza (2022) explore gender differences in influencer advertisements and the effect of celebrity trust. They primarily focus on the role of visual cues, trustworthiness, and celebrity



influence. These studies do not explore the linguistic aspect in detail, especially about skincare advertisements. Furthermore, Hidarto and Andrieza (2022) Analyze language in influencer posts, but their study is limited to general gender differences and does not focus on specific products like skincare.

Other studies, such as Shalaby and Alkaff (2019) and Sari et al. (2020), align with my research, and explore gender representation in Instagram advertisements and language features used by men and women. However, this analysis focuses more on cosmetic advertisements and personal Instagram posts than skincare product advertisements. Furthermore, Sari et al. (2020) did not address language's communicative goals or functions in a commercial setting, such as whether men use more report talk and women use more rapport talk, as explained in Deborah Tannen's theory.

The gap here lies in the lack of attention to how genderlect styles function within the language of skincare product promotions, specifically in the context of Instagram captions, where the use of language for connection or information delivery might differ significantly between genders.

Furthermore, in this research, several aspects that differentiate communication styles in men's and women's skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions are observed by applying the genderlect theory proposed by Tannen (1990). This study hopefully will lead to the need for further research of language used in skincare product advertisements on social media from a gender perspective. Specifically, by offering insights into how gender stereotypes in society

manifest in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions, how the communication style might differ between male and female-targeted products, and how they align or contrast with the findings from earlier studies on gendered language in digital media. Additionally, by focusing on Instagram captions, this research would contribute to understanding how marketing language in social media uses different communication styles in advertisements for different genders.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the explanation of language phenomena in the background of this research, gender-based distinctions in communication styles in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions need to be analyzed from a gender perspective by applying Coates (2003) Men's Talk, Lakoff (1975) Women's Language Features, and Tannen (1990) Genderlect Styles. Therefore, the significant questions related to this phenomenon can be stated as follows:

1. What are the features of men's and women's language used in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions?
2. What are the types of genderlect styles in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions?

#### **1.5 Objectives**

Dealing with the research questions, the objectives of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. To describe features of men's and women's language used in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions.

2. To examine the types of genderlect styles in skincare product advertisements in Instagram captions.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study analyzes men's and women's language features and genderlect styles in skincare product advertisements in Instagram's captions. The analysis is limited to advertisements in Instagram captions from three skincare brands, Garnier, Ponds, and Nivea that are posted in 2024. The research examines these captions to identify the men's and women's language features and types of genderlect styles in skincare advertisements in Instagram captions outlined in Coates (2003) Men's Talk, Lakoff (1975) Women's Language Features, and Tannen (1990) Genderlect Styles.

