

The grammar of beauty through the language of advertisements on Vaseline US and Indonesia websites

Gramatika kecantikan pada bahasa iklan di situs Vaseline Amerika Serikat dan Indonesia

Agata Filia Dei Gratia^{1,*} & Merry Andriani²

^{1,2}Universitas Gadjah Mada

Tinalan Baru KG 2/498A, Prenggan, Kotagede, Yogyakarta 55172

^{1,*}Email: agatafiliadeigratia@mail.ugm.ac.id; Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4517-6208>

² Email: merry.andriani@mail.ugm.ac.id; Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6224-2369>

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Abstract

This study examines how the systemic functional grammar is employed in Vaseline advertisements to construct and convey notions of beauty, as well as the underlying brand messages communicated through promotional content. Specifically, it compared the linguistic features on the Vaseline ads for the US and Indonesia. Qualitative-descriptive methodology was employed in this study. The data collected correlated to the transitivity found in the sentences on both advertisements. The Transitivity in SFG theory by Halliday & Matthiessen serves as the analytical framework, which focuses on three elements of transitivity: process, participants, and circumstance. The findings show that Vaseline advertisements' transitivity refers to a reflection of relational and material processes. Vaseline US focuses on its line of products and services to achieve dream skin, while Vaseline Indonesia emphasizes its key ingredients and reputation as an innovator. The concept of beauty in both nations is also reflected in the transitivity. Vaseline US encourages Americans to strive for healthy skin, while Vaseline Indonesia perpetuates the myth of ageless and bright skin. In conclusion, Vaseline's technique of differentiating linguistic elements in Vaseline advertisements based on the concept of beauty standards might be considered effective as it makes Vaseline becomes one of the biggest beauty brands.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan meneliti bagaimana gramatika fungsional sistemik digunakan dalam iklan Vaseline untuk membangun dan menyampaikan gagasan tentang kecantikan, serta pesan merek yang mendasarinya yang dikomunikasikan melalui konten promosi. Secara khusus, penelitian ini membandingkan fitur linguistik di iklan Vaseline untuk Amerika Serikat dan Indonesia. Metodologi deskriptif kualitatif diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Data yang dikumpulkan berkorelasi dengan fitur transitivitas yang ditemukan pada kalimat di kedua iklan tersebut. Teori Transitivitas dalam Tata Bahasa Fungsional Sistematis (SFG) oleh Halliday & Matthiessen berfungsi sebagai kerangka analitis, yang berfokus pada tiga elemen transitivitas: proses, partisipan, dan keadaan. Temuan analisis menunjukkan bahwa transitivitas iklan Vaseline mengacu pada refleksi proses relasional dan material. Vaseline AS berfokus pada lini produk dan layanannya untuk mencapai kulit impian, sementara Vaseline Indonesia menekankan material unggulan dan reputasinya sebagai inovator. Konsep kecantikan di kedua negara juga tercermin dalam transitivitas. Vaseline AS mendorong warga Amerika untuk berjuang demi kulit yang sehat, sementara Vaseline Indonesia mengabadikan mitos kulit yang awet muda dan cerah. Sebagai kesimpulan, teknik Vaseline untuk membedakan unsur-unsur linguistik dalam iklan Vaseline berdasarkan konsep standar kecantikan dapat dianggap efektif karena membuat Vaseline menjadi salah satu merek kecantikan terbesar di dunia.

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A. Introduction

The marketing of a brand, service, or product to the public, which aim to generate attention, engagement, and sales is known as advertising; to reach a broad range of audiences with advertisements (Sales et al., 2022). Advertisement is a marketing tool or media, which can be in print, electronic, and most recently, digital media. The primary purpose of advertising as a kind of media aims to communicate, convince, and remind customers about the goods and services being provided, while also enhancing the impression of the brand. Advertising creators always look for effective ways to make their advertisements stand out from the other brands in terms of effectiveness, uniqueness, and attractiveness. Language plays a crucial role in marketing and is often called advertising language. The study of relations with the public in the framework of advertising language is a unique subject of modern science and a special phenomenon (Beard et al., 2024). This also occurs in one of the world-famous beauty brands, namely Vaseline.

Vaseline is a global beauty product with the highest sales figures in the world and is very famous among people, especially women, including in the United States and Indonesia. It has been around for more than 130 years. Many people trust the Vaseline brand as they believe it to be a reputable and credible company with good intentions, which in turn encourages them to want to stick with the brand and purchase Vaseline products (Kesumaputri et al., 2022; Rahmatin & Rusdianto, 2024). Data from international online research and analytic technology identified Vaseline as the most popular skincare brand in 2024 (The Most Famous Skincare & Cosmetics Brands (Q3 2024), 2024). This aligns with Cemara (2023) finding that Vaseline ranked first in the best-selling category for body lotion sales in the marketplace during 2023.

The source material used in this study is the Vaseline US and Indonesian websites since this is also considered a medium for promotion and branding product. These websites were chosen because they qualify for the data source requirements, which are reliable sources, official promoting media, not scams, and representative. Related to a linguistic study, these websites have fulfilled the representative requirement and can be described as the systematic study of human language, its structures, its uses, and the relationships between them (Brinton & Brinton, 2010; Finegan, 2014). Consequently, this study requires object material that includes parts of grammar as the main focus of linguistics research, such as words, sentence construction, and meaning.

The purposes of advertising are to influence, convince, or persuade consumers to purchase the promoted product. However, advertisements in the media nowadays are no longer solely used to promote products; they are now also used to spread ideologies (Umarela et al., 2020). The problem underlying in this research is the apparent inconsistency in the messaging of the Vaseline advertisements in the US and Indonesia, across different cultural contexts, despite originating from the same company. This study seeks to compare the conceptual framing and representation of Vaseline's US and Indonesian advertisements. According to the study's objectives, people can benefit from this research by making wiser choices when purchasing cosmetics and skincare products while also becoming more aware that advertising language is full of subliminal interpretations designed to attract consumers. Furthermore, as a form of promotion media, advertisements frequently communicate a message that is conveyed without being recognized by the audience to be thoroughly examined in this study.

Studies on advertising language have been conducted by many researchers because language is used extensively in advertising. In addition, the language of advertisements has significant effects on a consumer's willingness to make the purchase. Regarding the consumer's purchasing power, some researchers were interested in studying and analyzing the themes and patterns, language styles and choices, multilingualism, sincerity aspect, violation of advertising language, as well as representation (Chen & Yang, 2020; Dennaya & Bram, 2021; Hoon et al., 2023; Hornikx et al., 2023; Sabaliauskienė et al., 2019; Yusuf & Abas, 2024). The results indicate that advertisers may create more effective advertisements by recognizing how particular language features are used. However, it may attract more customers, get them to pay more attention, and persuade to buy the product.

The brand aspect selected for this research makes this research particularly interesting. Numerous studies have examined the Vaseline brand from a variety of angles, including price, product innovation, brand image, consumer perception, and ingredients (Hertanti & Giyana, 2025; Listyawati et al., 2022; Kamrani et al., 2024). According to the research, Vaseline has been reported to be growing in popularity lately, following trends and earning the loyalty and trust of its customers. As it receives more attention, it becomes essential and fascinating to learn and study what is found about this brand.

To understand the idea and concept of beauty from the Vaseline US and Indonesian advertisements, it can be more depth analyzed by utilizing the transitivity approach from the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) theory as done by several previous researchers (Fitri et al., 2021; Kurniawati, 2022; Lastari, 2022; Lenora et al., 2022; Shi & Gu, 2022). They agree that the theory of transitivity is useful in revealing the meaning, motive, ideology, intention, notion, and concept in media, speech, and some types of text.

This study is relevant to those studies mentioned above as it focuses on analyzing the advertisements from a big global beauty brand, namely Vaseline. The researcher is interested in examining this brand from a different perspective, which is linguistics. The novelty of this research is the comparison of the ideas implicitly expressed in marketing between Vaseline advertisements in the US and Indonesia. A study on the beauty grammar refers to how grammar defines the meaning of "beauty". The type of grammar is transitivity, according to Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday. This theory is relevant as the grammar of beauty exists in advertisements, specifically, transitivity explains how Vaseline articulates beauty and what message the brand wishes to portray in its ads. A brief framework of the theory used in this research is presented below.

This study focuses on the transitivity system, as a branch of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Language use is structured in response to the needs of people as social beings. According to Halliday, language serves social functions shown in the development of modern English's functional grammar. According to this theory, language serves and develops to fulfill certain social functions. It indicates that language is a systematic tool for creating and sharing meaning, considering language as a social semiotic system. Language has three primary meanings, or "meta-functions," that serve these purposes, including textual, interpersonal, and ideational meta-functions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Umiyati & Yanti, 2022). There are various meanings of beauty conveyed through language meta-functions in advertisements.

One aspect of language's ideational meta-function is transitivity as a key idea in SFG. According to Halliday and Matthiessen, it provides an understanding of grammatical structure concerning the language's overall meaning capabilities. The three components of transitivity include circumstances, participants (actor and goal), and process. As a representation of a process, participants, and any accompanying circumstances, the clause interprets and usually represents a transformation in the course of certain occurrences. It mostly illustrates the link of signification between a word and its meaning. The "actor" means the active participant in that "process". Then, the process "consists of a flow of events, or goings-on". The way the "process" progresses could affect another role, which is its "goal" and "circumstances" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 180-213). The "goal" is the role toward whom or which the "process" is directed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Circumstance is typically expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases and provides information about when, where, how, and why for what or who.

The process is the central element in SFG because transitivity expresses processes to achieve the ideational function. Every sentence structure is composed of an event that exposes a process along with participants who are directly involved in this process in some manner; "in addition, there may be circumstances related to time, place, cause, manner, or a few more types" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 213). The six classifies of processes are material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral, and existential. Material process constructs the external experience of creation or production. In contrast, the mental is concerned with the interpretation of an internal emotional experience. Behavioral process manifests as observable external expressions of inner workings,

coming out of mental and physiological processes. Then, the verbal process serves symbolic relationships originating in human consciousness and expressed through language. It is said to be an existential process when a phenomenon of any kind is acknowledged to 'be'—to exist or to occur.

At this point, the researcher is interested in looking into the ways that Vaseline advertises its products around the world. This research focuses on the contrastive analysis of the linguistic features on both Vaseline US and Indonesian websites, leading to the social point of view of beauty in both countries. The problems in this research are formulated into several research questions as follows: How is transitivity displayed on both Vaseline websites? How are the transitivity displayed on both Vaseline websites to articulate the idea of beauty in both countries?

B. Method

The research method employed in this study is qualitative because the researcher discusses the linguistic phenomena that reflect the social context and ideology of the two nations in the marketing strategy on the Vaseline US and Indonesian websites. Qualitative research results in narrative or textual descriptions of the problem is being investigated (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). The main data in this study are Vaseline US and Indonesian advertisements collected from official advertising media on Vaseline websites based in the US and Indonesia. In this stage, the researcher utilized observation techniques as a data collection method to obtain details and information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher followed up and took the data in the form of sentences from Vaseline's advertising campaign and product claims. Following the data collection, the researcher classified the functional structure based on SFG by Halliday and Matthiessen by classifying texts based on their sentence structure, which includes the type of Process and its Participants. However, in certain instances, some clauses in the Vaseline ad lack explicit process elements due to deliberate omission by the ad creators. To address this, the study incorporates the study of ellipsis, which refers to the intentional omission of words or element that can be inferred from the contextual clues, often for reasons of economy, emphasis, or style (Biber et al., 1999; Kerl, 1861; Rajimwale, 2006). Then, the results of the analysis are presented in the form of an explanation based on the type of Process classification within SFG theory. Following the identification of the process types, the study further explores the embedded ideas and messages from the Vaseline US and Indonesia advertisements by examining the Participants and Circumstances involved in the Process. This comparative analysis is supported through the use of semantic relationship between a hyponym and a hypernym, whereby a hyponym represents a word with a more particular meaning that is part of the meaning of a hypernym. The study concludes with a synthesis of the analytical findings and discussion, providing an interpretation of how the ads convey the meaning across different cultural context.

C. Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings and discussion are presented. The followings are the analysis and explanation of the data related to the functional grammar of transitivity. Based on the analysis conducted by the researcher, the following result displays sentence structure displayed on the Vaseline US and Vaseline Indonesian websites.

1. Systemic Functional Grammar of Transitivity on Vaseline Websites

Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity theory explains the grammatical structure and language meaning capabilities, highlighting the transitivity system as the basis that delivers to its environment the capacity to exist. Three components comprise transitivity: Process, Participants, and Circumstances, with the Process being the central element. Table 1 below presents the distribution of Processes types featured on the Vaseline US and Indonesian websites.

Table 1. The Process Types on the Vaseline US and Indonesian Websites

	Type of Process						No Process
	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Behavioural	Existential	
US	18			4			6
Indonesia	8			12			8

It can be seen from Table 1 above that the only compatible types of Processes in Vaseline for advertisement purposes are material and relational processes. The difference between Vaseline US and Indonesia in implementing the Process is also very apparent. Vaseline US implements more material processes, indicating that Vaseline US mostly shows their action, creation, and changes. Meanwhile, Vaseline Indonesia implements more relational processes that tend to highlight their attributes and identity. Some sentences are considered to have no process because the ad maker might omit them for unknown reasons.

Following the classification of the types of Processes on the Vaseline US and Indonesian websites, the researcher continued to map out the distribution of the Process, along with its Participants and Circumstances in the sentence structures as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Structure of Vaseline US and Indonesian Websites

No	Structure	United States	Indonesia
1	Actor + process + goal + circumstance	6	3
2	Actor + process + circumstance	8	2
3	Actor + process + goal	4	3
4	Process + goal + circumstance	2	8
5	Process + circumstance	2	1
6	Process + goal	0	3
7	Goal	5	7
8	Circumstance	1	1

a. Actor + Process + Goal + Circumstance

The first kind of structure is a sentence that has the most complete elements. This structure is identified in six sentences on the Vaseline US ads and only three sentences used in the Vaseline Indonesia ads. This indicates that Vaseline US wants to bring more attention to the one who carried out the action or the figure who brought about change, what changes or events occurred, the circumstances, and what they are expected. Vaseline US wants its customers to have access to as complete information as possible related to the claims made for their products. The following sentences show several examples containing this function structure that can be found on the Vaseline US website:

- (1) *“This rich but fast-absorbing formula delivers powerful moisturization to transform very dry skin into healed skin in just five days.”*
- (2) *“This powerful cream immediately boosts your skin’s healing moisture by 250%.”*
(Vaseline US, n.d.)

Table 3. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

This rich but fast-absorbing formula	delivers	powerful moisturization	to transform very dry skin into healed skin in just five days
Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance

One example of this function structure is in the sentence: *“This rich but fast-absorbing formula delivers powerful moisturization to transform very dry skin into healed skin in just five days”* on the Vaseline US website. The Vaseline tries to emphasize every function of this message. The Process in this sentence, *delivers*, is a material process, presenting as an action. The Actor of this sentence, *this rich but fast-absorbing formula*, complements its process by showing who performs actions and creates

progress. The Goal, *powerful moisturization*, indicates what is being delivered. Then, the Circumstance, *to transform very dry skin into healed skin in just five days*, shows what the impact of the action/process is. Advertisements generally intend to highlight the achievement and benefit of their product, which is the phrase after the process, *powerful moisturization to transform very dry skin into healed skin in just five days*.

Meanwhile, in Vaseline Indonesia advertisements, only three sentences are formed by this transitivity functional structure. Those examples containing this function structure can be found in the following sentences:

- (3) “*Formula unik kami membuat produk terasa ringan seperti tetesan air dan cepat menyerap saat dipakai*”
[Our unique formula makes the product light like a drop of water and absorbs quickly when used.]
- (4) “*Vaseline® Soft Glow Gluta Vitamin SPF 20 Body Serum mampu mencerahkan kulit dan memudarkan noda hitam yang merupakan tanda hiperpigmentasi dalam 7 hari*”
[Vaseline® Soft Glow Gluta Vitamin SPF 20 Body Serum can brighten the skin and fade black spots, which are signs of hyperpigmentation, in 7 days]
(Vaseline Indonesia, n.d.)

Table 4. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

<i>Formula unik kami</i>	<i>membuat</i>	<i>produk</i>	<i>terasa ringan seperti tetesan air dan cepat menyerap saat dipakai</i>
Our unique formula	makes	the product	light like a drop of water and quickly absorbs when used.
Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance

The sentence above shows one example that represents this kind of structural function. Vaseline Indonesia also attempts to highlight each function in this sentence. The Process implemented in this sentence, *membuat*, is a material process that refers to the creation process of the Goal, *produk*. The phrase, *Formula unik kami*, as the Actor, has a relation to the Process and Goal. The personal possessive pronoun “*kami*” refers to Vaseline Indonesia itself. The intention aims to indicate the ownership of the unique formula. The Circumstances, *terasa ringan seperti tetesan air dan cepat menyerap saat dipakai*, represents the outcome that is obtained from the effort of the Process.

b. Actor + Process + Circumstance

The second construction of the Vaseline website is the Actor + process + circumstance. This construction lacks the Goal, which indicates that the Process only requires a condition connected with or relevant to an event or action. This structure is the most utilized in the Vaseline US websites by eight appearances. Some examples of this structure are mentioned in the following sentence.

- (5) “This body lotion for dry skin absorbs fast for rich moisturization and glowing skin without feeling greasy.”
- (6) “This rich formula absorbs fast for a non-greasy feel.”
(Vaseline US, n.d.)

Table 5. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

This body lotion for dry skin	absorbs	fast for rich moisturization and glowing skin without feeling greasy.
Actor	Process	Circumstance

It can be seen that the Process does not require a Goal. The type of process is material. The process of absorption refers to an action to take in a liquid or other substance from the surface. The

Actor clarifies the participant who does the action of absorption, which refers to Vaseline US' body lotion for dry skin. The Circumstance explains how the Actor absorbs, indicating that it can absorb fast and not be greasy. The phrase "for rich moisturization and glowing skin" is also the Circumstance that complements the Process. From this sentence, Vaseline US intends to inform the customers that their products are capable of absorbing fast without feeling greasy to achieve rich moisturization and glowing skin.

The following section shows both sentences containing this transitivity function structure that can be found on the Vaseline Indonesia website:

- (7) "*Kulit tampak lebih cerah mulai dalam 2 minggu*"
[Skin looks brighter starting in 2 weeks.]
- (8) "*Vaseline® juga membantu mengurangi penyebab kulit kusam karena menggunakan GlutaGlow yang 10x+ lebih kuat dari Vitamin C*"
[Vaseline® also helps to reduce the causes of dull skin because it employs GlutaGlow, which is 10x+ stronger than Vitamin C.]
(Vaseline Indonesia, n.d.)

Table 6. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

<i>Kulit</i>	<i>tampak</i>	<i>lebih cerah mulai dalam 2 minggu*</i> .
Skin	looks	brighter starting in 2 weeks*.
Actor	Process	Circumstance

In the example above, by not including the Goal, it can be concluded that the Process requires elements that are associated with the process instead of something affected by the Process. The type of Process in this sentence is relational, which functions to identify and have attributes. The verb *tampak* is identified as a linking verb that denotes to appear or to seem, which means that it should be followed by adjective groups. Adjectives in sentences stand as Circumstances, not Goals. In this sentence, the Actor, *kulit*, is identified by the Goal. The relational process makes the Circumstances have a role as an attribute to the Actor. The Circumstances *lebih cerah* and *dalam dua minggu* are attributed to the Actor *Kulit*. Meanwhile, the adjective *lebih cerah* identifies a comparison between the circumstances described by the Process.

c. Actor + Process + Goal

The functional construction that consists of Actor + process + goal also exists in both Vaseline US and Indonesia. There are four appearances in the language of the advertisements on the Vaseline US website and three appearances on the Vaseline Indonesia website. As evidenced by the nonexistence of the Circumstance in this structure, Vaseline intends to ignore some of the specific details of how, when, where, and why an activity or event occurs in favor of concentrating on what is impacted by the action. The section below provides some instances of this structure from Vaseline US.

- (9) "This fast-acting lotion provides immediate relief and lasting moisturization."
- (10) "It will not clog your pores."
(Vaseline US, n.d.)

Table 7. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

This fast-acting lotion	provides	immediate relief and lasting moisturization.
Actor	Process	Goal

The type of process in this sentence is a material process. The process, *provides*, means an action of offering or giving something to make it accessible for use. In this case, something that is

being provided is *immediate relief and lasting moisturization*, which stands as the Goal of the sentence. While the Actor, *this fast-acting lotion*, relates to the doer of the action. It gives a message to the customer that Vaseline US provides a fast-acting lotion that is effective in helping customers get immediate relief and long-lasting moisturization.

Some sentences that form Actor + Process + Goal are also employed by Vaseline Indonesia. The following shows several examples from the Vaseline Indonesia website that contain this kind of transitivity functional structure:

- (11) “*Vaseline Gluta-Hya Serum Burst Lotion adalah lotion pertama dengan GlutaGlow dan Hyaluron yang memberikan kekuatan 10x lebih cerah daripada Vitamin C*”
[Vaseline Gluta-Hya Serum Burst Lotion is the first lotion with GlutaGlow and Hyaluron, which provides 10x more brightening power than Vitamin C]
- (12) “*Vaseline® Healthy Bright Soft+Glow Gluta Vitamin SPF 20 PA++ Serum dilengkapi teknologi GlutaGlow yang mempunyai kemampuan 10x kekuatan pencerah*”
[Vaseline® Healthy Bright Soft+Glow Gluta Vitamin SPF 20 PA++ Serum contains GlutaGlow technology, which has 10x the brightening power.
(Vaseline Indonesia, n.d.)

Table 8. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

<i>Vaseline Gluta-Hya Serum Burst Lotion</i>	<i>adalah</i>	<i>lotion pertama dengan GlutaGlow dan Hyaluron yang memberikan kekuatan 10x lebih cerah daripada Vitamin C.</i>
Vaseline Gluta-Hya Serum Burst Lotion	is	the first lotion with GlutaGlow and Hyaluron which provides 10x more brightening power than Vitamin C.
Actor	Process	Goal

This sentence does have the Process role even though the verb is not a verb, but an auxiliary. These are simply additional words to complete a sentence and make its meaning clearer. Therefore, an auxiliary does not describe an action that the Actor of the sentence performs but is still considered a Process that eventually affects the Goal. The use of an auxiliary verb in this sentence indicates that the Process is relational and this defines a correlation between two terms, using one component to identify the other. It is used to create an attribute or identity. The Process is accompanied by two nominal groups of participants, which are an Actor and a Goal. In this sentence, the Actor is identified by the Goal. Due to the existence of the relational process, the Goal has a role as an attribute to the Actor.

d. Process + Goal + Circumstance

This transitivity functional construction is also present in both the Vaseline US and Indonesia websites. This structure appears eight times, most frequently on the Vaseline Indonesia website, but only appears twice on the Vaseline US website. This structure lacks the Actor who functions as the participant who does the action. Some examples that implemented this kind of structure are mentioned below.

- (13) “Provides 48 hours of moisture for noticeably healthier and hydrated skin”
- (14) “Contains pure Cocoa Butter, known to nourish and reveal the skin’s natural radiance, and is formulated with Ultra-Hydrating Lipids to fortify the skin barrier and replenish moisture.”
(Vaseline US, n.d.)

Table 9. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

Provides	48 hours of moisture	for noticeably healthier and hydrated skin.
Process	Goal	Circumstance

In this sentence, the type of process is material because the verb *provides* indicates an action of giving or offering something. The noun phrase *48 hours of moisture* is the Goal that complements the Process, indicating the role as something being offered. The prepositional phrase *for noticeably healthier and hydrated skin* is the Circumstance of contingency that complements the Process indicating the function of a situation that is anticipated to happen shortly as a result of the Process. The Actor who does the action is not mentioned since people are already aware of who or what the Actor is.

Eight sentences are found on the Vaseline Indonesia website that have this kind of transitivity system. Some of them are mentioned in the following.

- (15) “*Mengandung SPF 20 PA++ untuk melindungi kulit dari sinar matahari*”
[Contains SPF 20 PA++ to protect the skin from sunlight.]
- (16) “*Memiliki UV filter untuk melindungi kulit dari sinar UV A/B*”
[Has a UV filter to protect the skin from UV A/B.]
(Vaseline Indonesia, n.d.)

Table 10. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

<i>Mengandung</i>	<i>SPF 20 PA++</i>	<i>untuk melindungi kulit dari sinar matahari.</i>
Contains	SPF 20 PA++	to protect the skin from sunlight.
Process	Goal	Circumstance

In the sentence above, the type of Process is relational because the verb *mengandung* indicates an action of having an attribute. The noun phrase *SPF 20 PA++* stands as the Goal that complements the Process, indicating the role as something being attributed. The prepositional phrase “*untuk melindungi kulit dari sinar matahari*” is the Circumstance of manner that complements the Process indicating the function of an attribute on how it happens. In other words, *SPF 20 PA++* is identified to be able to protect the skin from sunlight. Vaseline Indonesia purposefully refuses to identify the actor who does the act since people already recognize who or what the actor is.

e. Process + Goal

The next construction also lacks the Actor. However, the type of Process requires a Goal as a complement rather than a Circumstance. This structure is not found on the Vaseline US website, but there are three appearances on the Vaseline Indonesia website. Some examples found on the Vaseline Indonesia website below describe this construction.

- (17) “*Memanfaatkan kekuatan bahan perawatan wajah canggih yang menjanjikan manfaat yang lebih baik*”
[Utilizes the power of advanced facial care ingredients that promise better benefits.]
- (18) “*Diformulasikan dengan Amino Peptide Complex*”
[Possess the formula of Amino Peptide Complex.]
(Vaseline Indonesia, n.d.)

Table 11. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

<i>Memanfaatkan</i>	<i>kekuatan bahan perawatan wajah canggih yang menjanjikan manfaat yang lebih baik</i>
Utilizes	the power of advanced facial care ingredients that promise better benefits.
Process	Goal

The sentence above shows that the Process requires a Goal as its complement. The type of Process in this sentence is material because the verb *memanfaatkan* denotes the action of using or utilizing something, particularly for an advantageous reason. Therefore, this verb needs a nominal

phrase to explain what is being utilized. In this case, the nominal phrase “*kekuatan bahan perawatan wajah canggih yang menjanjikan manfaat yang lebih baik*” stands as a Goal that explain something being utilized. Vaseline Indonesia wants to emphasize that the company uses advanced ingredients for skincare in its products, which could offer greater benefits. The participant who does the act of utilization is omitted because people understand the context that it refers to Vaseline Indonesia.

f. Process + Circumstance

Besides the Process and its Goal, there is a transitivity functional structure that contains Process + Circumstance. This construction is found on both Vaseline US and Indonesia websites. This construction is similar to the previous one, but this time, the Process does not require the Goal to complement, but the Circumstance instead. There are two appearances of this construction on the Vaseline US website and only one appearance found on the Vaseline Indonesia website. The examples of this construction from the Vaseline US website are mentioned as follows.

- (19) “Helps heal your skin, restoring its soft, smooth texture and natural glow.”
 - (20) “Formulated with pro-lipids, glycerin, and Vaseline® Jelly it helps to repair and strengthen skin’s barrier function.”
- (Vaseline US, n.d.)

Table 12. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

Helps	(to) heal your skin, restoring its soft, smooth texture and natural glow.
Process	Circumstance

The sentence above shows the material Process with a Circumstance as its complement. However, material Process can be followed by a noun phrase as a Goal, but in this case, Vaseline US prefers to use Circumstance to complement its Process. The verb *helps* describe the action of doing something for someone or offering them anything they need to make their work easier. However, Vaseline US does not mention who does the action and who is getting the action because people already know from the context. The phrase “(to) heal your skin, restoring its soft, smooth texture and natural glow” aim to explain how the action works. It is considered the Circumstances of manner.

There is only one sentence that contains this transitivity functional structure on the Vaseline Indonesia website, as seen in the following section.

Table 13. Sentence Structure of Vaseline

<i>Hadir</i>	<i>dalam tekstur ringan yang meledak menjadi tetesan air.</i>
Comes	in a light texture that explodes into water droplets.
Process	Circumstance

Similar to the previous one, in this case, Vaseline Indonesia employs a Circumstance to complement its Process. The type of the Process is material because the verb *hadir* demonstrates the action of arriving at a place or somewhere to achieve something or obtain something. However, Vaseline Indonesia does not identify the individual responsible for the action because of the context. The prepositional phrase “*dalam tekstur ringan yang meledak menjadi tetesan air*” function to explain the manner or how the action happens.

g. Goal

This transitivity functional structure does not possess a Process. In general, sentences have Processes, but this form of sentence construction is elliptical because Vaseline purposefully omits the primary component of the transitivity system. This element stands as a nominal group and

refers to whom or what action is directed and aimed at. The researcher identified five sentences from the Vaseline US website and seven sentences from the Vaseline Indonesia website that are identified as having this structure. The language of the advertisement containing this construction displayed on the Vaseline US website can be seen in the sentences below.

- (21) “Unscented lotion that provides fast relief to sensitive and very dry irritated skin.”
(22) “This dermatologist-tested lotion for dull, dry skin”
(*Vaseline US*, n.d.)

Table 14. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

[Vaseline offers]	unscented lotion that provides fast relief to sensitive and very dry irritated skin.
Omitted Actor + Process	Goal

Although the sentence above is incomplete, people can assume what the complete one would be; for instance, *Vaseline offers an unscented lotion that provides fast relief to sensitive and very dry irritated skin*. However, Vaseline US prefers to omit some elements, such as the subject and the verb, to look more concise. Therefore, from people’s assumption, it can be seen that the Goal, *unscented lotion*, is something that is directed from the omitted Process by the omitted Actor. It indicates that Vaseline US wants customers to know that the company offers an unscented lotion that quickly relieves irritated, sensitive, and extremely dry skin. The phrase “*that provides fast relief to sensitive and very dry irritated skin*” is a clause that stands as an object complement.

Seven sentences from the Vaseline Indonesia website are also considered elliptical sentences that leave a Goal as the transitivity functional system. Three of them are listed in the following section.

- (23) “*Produk terbaru dari Vaseline Healthy Bright*”
[The newest product from Vaseline Healthy Bright.].
(24) “*Body care untuk membantu kulit tampak lebih cerah merata*”
[Body care that helps skin look brighter and more even.].
(*Vaseline Indonesia*, n.d.)

Table 15. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

[<i>Ini adalah</i>]	<i>Produk terbaru dari Vaseline Healthy Bright.</i>
[This is]	the newest product from Vaseline Healthy Bright.
Omitted Actor + Process	Goal

Similar to the previous explanation from Vaseline US, despite the sentence's incompleteness, people can predict what the full one would be, for example, *ini adalah produk terbaru dari Vaseline Healthy Bright*. However, to make its message seem more concise, Vaseline Indonesia decided to leave out certain components. Therefore, from people’s assumption, it can be seen that the Goal, “*produk terbaru dari Vaseline Healthy Bright*”, is something that is attributed to the omitted Actor as a result of the omitted Process since the omitted Process is relational.

h. Circumstance

This transitivity functional structure lacks Process since the type of sentence with this kind of structure is an elliptical sentence, and Vaseline prefers to omit the main element of the transitivity system. Circumstance is an element that complements its omitted Process to explain how the action happens. The examples below show the only example containing this function structure that can be found on the Vaseline US website.

Table 16. Sentence Structure of Vaseline US

[It is]	Great to moisturize and protect skin especially dry areas, such as hands, elbows, knees, heels, and feet.
Omitted Actor + Process	Circumstance

People can figure out what the whole sentence would be even when the one above is not complete. The possible one is: *It is great to moisturize and protect skin especially dry areas such as hands, elbows, knees, heels, and feet.* In this case, Vaseline US prefers to omit the subject and the verb. Therefore, from people's assumption, it can be seen that the Circumstance, *great*, identifies the omitted Actor as a result of the identification action by the omitted Process since its type is relational. It can be seen that Vaseline US wants people to know that their product is great for protecting and moisturizing dry parts of the skin, including hands, elbows, knees, heels, and feet.

On the Vaseline Indonesian website, there is a single sentence featuring this Circumstance as the transitivity system. This sentence containing this function structure can be found in the following example.

Table 17. Sentence Structure of Vaseline Indonesia

[Ini diformulasikan]	dengan kekuatan 10x sheet mask.
[It is formulated]	with the power of 10x sheet masks.
Omitted Actor + Process	Circumstance

Similarities happen in the example coming from Vaseline Indonesia, which shows that the whole prepositional phrase functions as a Circumstance. This is considered incomplete due to the absence of a subject and a verb. If this clause is written completely, it might be *ini diformulasikan dengan kekuatan 10x sheet mask.* From the complete one, the phrase "*dengan kekuatan 10x sheet mask*" complements the omitted relational Process that identifies the omitted Actor. Vaseline means to inform people that the phrase "*dengan kekuatan 10x sheet mask*" describes the excellence of their product.

2. The Contrast between Vaseline US and Vaseline Indonesia

Although both websites are intended to publicly promote products from the same company, they are different in terms of linguistics, or the language used. These variations in Vaseline's marketing strategy contributes to the brand's ability to resonate with and be acknowledged by the people of both countries. Based on the transitivity functional grammar, the Vaseline US website is dominated by some sentences that contain an Actor. There are 17 (seventeen) sentences from a total of 28 (twenty-eight) containing the role of an Actor. It indicates that Vaseline US considers an Actor to be an important element to complement the Process. On the other hand, Vaseline Indonesia has no concern about who the doer of its Process is. Some sentences that have Goals predominate in Vaseline Indonesia and appear in 24 out of 28 sentences. Vaseline Indonesia considers that the Processes require Goals to complement them instead of Actors.

Concerning the transitivity that focuses on the type of Processes, Vaseline US implements more material Processes, while Vaseline Indonesia implements more relational ones. It indicates that Vaseline US focuses on describing the action of creating and producing commodities, goods, or products that can be traded to make a profit. In this case, Vaseline US shows what this brand provides, delivers, and offers to achieve people's dream skin. In contrast, Vaseline Indonesia needs more validity from the people by showcasing outstanding stuff that the brand is proud of. In this case, Vaseline Indonesia mentions its valuable ingredients and highlights its status as the first pioneer to make an identity among other brands.

Following the analysis of this Process, the researcher examines the Participants and Circumstances involved in the Process to compare the idea and message of the Vaseline US and Indonesia ads. It can be seen from the adjectives used to indicate the hypernym of "beautiful skin", which is the source of the hyponymy or subordinate, such as healthy, hydrated, moist, soft, smooth, and glowing. Vaseline US also shows the hyponyms of the hypernym "damaged skin" to reveal

the standards for unattractive skin that Vaseline’s products can solve and heal. It can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 as follows.

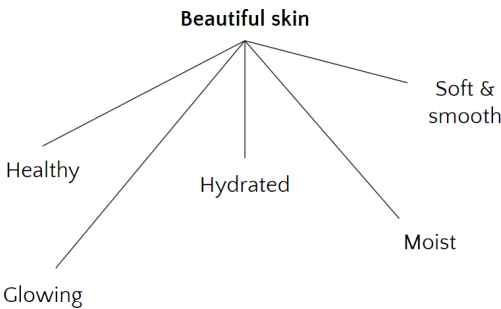


Figure 1. Hyponyms of Beautiful Skin According to Vaseline US

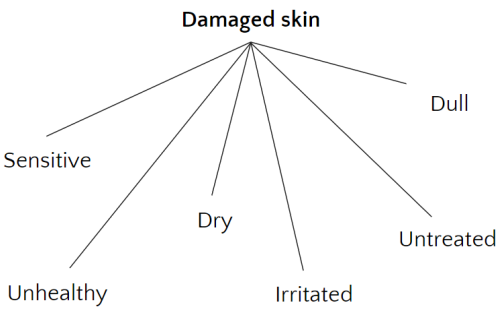


Figure 2. Hyponyms of Damages Skin According to Vaseline US

The reason for this phenomenon is due to the context and situation of its country and its people. Americans prioritize and dream of healthy, moisturizing skin. Greaves, on the *Instyle* beauty page, revealed that US people have their own standard of beautiful skin. It stated that the US beauty standard is for people who have radiant, healthy-looking, soft, and moist skin because everyone's goal is to "glow" (Greaves, 2019). In this way, skin conditions that don't follow beauty standards are considered as the unkempt and untidy, as the criteria indicated by the hyponym of "damage skin". This might represent the reason behind Vaseline's strategy; therefore, the chosen words reflect ideas that Vaseline seeks to emphasize and are relevant to Americans.

On the contrary, Vaseline Indonesia has a different focus regarding the application of hyponyms. Vaseline Indonesia has different hyponyms compared to Vaseline US to define "beautiful skin," which is bright, firm, healthy, glowing, even, and anti-aging skin. Vaseline Indonesia also shows the hyponyms of the hypernym “damaged skin”, which is also different from the Vaseline US, revealing what skin issues, such as dark, dull, hyperpigmented, and black spots, that Vaseline’s products may overcome.

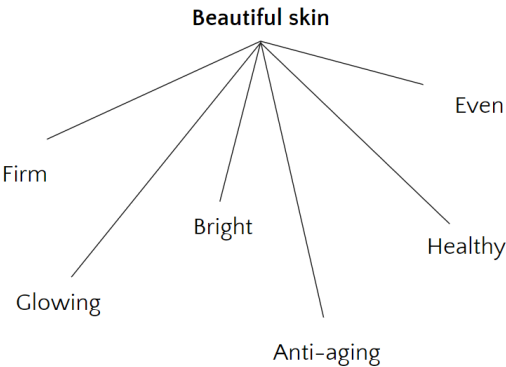


Figure 3. Hyponyms of Beautiful Skin According to Vaseline Indonesia

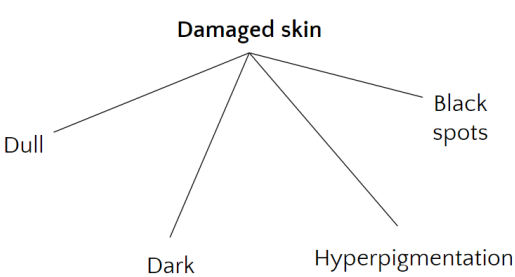


Figure 4. Hyponyms of Damages Skin According to Vaseline Indonesia

These are the selected terms to describe beautiful skin and unattractive skin that Vaseline may fix. This phenomenon exists due to the situational context of its country and people. These terms reflect what Indonesians believe about the standard of beauty for skin, which is to have bright and firm skin.

It implies that such an arrangement of beauty leads people to a naive notion of what beauty is. The concept of beauty that Vaseline advertisement has brought for more than a century has made people unable to escape the constructed beauty myth. The beauty myth includes Indonesians' desire to maintain a youthful look and to have light skin in a tropical climate. With Vaseline ads promising SPF sunscreen and skin lightening products, Indonesians may suffer from being stuck in the obsession over light and ageless skin.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, to the analysis based on Systematic Functional Grammar (SFG) reveals that the transitivity structure in Vaseline advertisements represents material and relational processes. Vaseline US predominantly employs more material processes, emphasizing the brand's products and services as an instrumental tool in offering help to achieve the ideal of "dream skin". In contrast, Vaseline Indonesia implements more relational ones. It shows that Vaseline Indonesia requires recognition from the public by showcasing the brand's unique attributes, such as its signature ingredients and describing itself as a pioneering innovator to cultivate a distinct identity within the competitive beauty market.

Apart from the Processes, the Participants and Circumstances further describe how the transitivity articulate the concept of beauty in both countries. Through its language, Vaseline US ads aims to represent that the beauty standard in the US is moisturized and healthy skin. Conversely, the benchmark for beautiful skin among Indonesians might be stated to be ageless and bright. The researcher proceeds to the implementation that the Vaseline US ads encourage Americans to strive for healthy dream skin since, to them, it represents beauty. Vaseline Indonesia ads, on the other hand, permit Indonesians to remain imprisoned in the obsession on the myth of ageless or everlasting youth and bright skin.

Considering that Vaseline has stood the test of time for 150 years and grown to become one of the biggest beauty brands globally, it may be inferred that the way advertisers differentiate language aspects in their advertisements based on the idea of beauty standards might be considered effective. This finding is in line with previous research where the language of advertisement significantly influences consumers. In this context, it plays an important role in the promotion of Vaseline beauty products, as well as spreading distinct concepts or ideas of beauty standards recognized by Americans and Indonesians. Similar to earlier studies, the transitivity theory of SFG helps to uncover the ideas of this beauty.

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