

## Gendered textual paralinguistic in Indonesian skincare brand discourse

**ABSTRACT** - This study investigates the role of textual paralinguistic (TPL) in constructing gendered meaning within Instagram captions produced by Indonesian skincare brands. In response to a paucity of research on how gendered communication is realized through written paralinguistic features in established digital discourse—particularly where emotional expression and identity construction are salient—this study integrates discourse analysis with a sociolinguistic framework of gender. Employing a qualitative discourse-analytic design complemented by descriptive analysis, the study examines a purposively selected corpus of sixty Instagram captions from six Indonesian skincare brands, evenly divided between those targeting female (n = 30) and male (n = 30) audiences. Each caption serves as a unit of discourse and is analyzed using Luangrath et al.'s (2017) typology of textual paralinguistic, comprising voice qualities, interpersonal resonance, typographic symbolism, visual kinesics, and punctuation cues. Frequency mapping identifies dominant patterns, while interpretive analysis focuses on the functional role of these features in conveying gendered meaning within their discursive contexts. Findings indicate five principal categories of TPL, each exhibiting distinct gendered tendencies. Captions oriented toward female audiences tend to be more expressive and relationally oriented, whereas those targeting male audiences are characteristically more concise and restrained, mirroring prevailing Indonesian sociocultural norms of femininity and masculinity. Collectively, the results demonstrate that TPL serves not merely a decorative function but a constitutive role in meaning-making within digital discourse. By systematically linking gendered TPL patterns to local ideologies of gender, this study advances linguistic scholarship on how written paralinguistic cues instantiate culturally specific gender norms in online brand communication.

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## 1. Introduction

Digital communication has become a space where emotions, identity, and social relations are expressed in written discourse. On visually oriented platforms such as Instagram, written language rarely stands alone. It is commonly accompanied by emojis, capitalization, typographic variation, elongation, and punctuation patterns that shape tone and interpersonal stance. These nonverbal cues are referred to as textual paralinguage (TPL) (Luangrath et al., 2023). TPL conveys vocal tone, gesture, and affect in textual form, enabling digital writers to express warmth, intensity, intimacy, or authority without being physically present.

From a multimodal perspective, TPL does not function as mere decoration. Together with lexical choice, visual elements, and typography, it contributes to ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Zappavigna & Logi, 2024). This supports Poyatos's argument that language, paralinguage, and kinesics are inseparable in communication (Poyatos, 2022). In digital environments, TPL can therefore be understood as the written realization of these integrated semiotic resources. In sociolinguistics, gender is viewed not as a fixed attribute but as a discursive accomplishment constructed through interaction (Almuslehi, 2024; Sabri et al., 2022). Linguistic practices are closely tied to social identities and ideological positions. Research on language and gender shows that expressive styles, stance-taking, and interactional strategies contribute to the production of femininity and masculinity in discourse (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013).

Across digital platforms, these differences are often manifested through textual and visual cues such as emoji selection, rhythm, capitalization, and punctuation. Beauty and skincare discourse then provides a relevant context for examining these processes. Media representations frequently associate femininity with warmth, care, and aesthetic awareness, while masculinity is linked to control, efficiency, and performance (Lazar, 2006). Within the Indonesian context, gender identities are shaped by sociocultural norms that negotiate modernity, consumerism, and local values. These norms are reflected and reproduced in digital brand communication. Skincare captions therefore offer a site for analyzing how written paralinguistic features express culturally specific forms of femininity and masculinity.

In recent years, studies on paralinguistics have become more common, particularly in technologically mediated communication. However, existing research largely concentrates on Western consumer contexts and marketing effectiveness (Hayes et al., 2016). Although (Luangrath et al., 2023) provide a systematic typology of TPL, their framework has mainly been applied in consumer behaviour research rather than in discourse-oriented analysis. More broadly, most theoretical models of textual paralinguage are grounded in Western traditions and based on Western data (Barnes & Pietsch, 2022; Sun, 2025). The analytical tools used to classify textual features were developed from Western linguistic assumptions, and their applicability to non-Western contexts has rarely been critically examined (Li, 2022).

Research on digital discourse in Southeast Asia remains limited and often focuses on memes or general online interaction rather than on brand communication (How, 2022). Studies on brand and gender also tend to examine global corporations, such as Nike, within transnational feminist frameworks (Posbergh et al., 2022), while local brands in culturally specific contexts

receive far less attention. Furthermore, although textual paralinguistics has been discussed in marketing communication (Sun, 2025), only a small number of studies integrate it with sociolinguistics of gender to analyze how paralinguistic features function as indexical resources that reproduce or negotiate gender ideologies. As a result, the role of TPL as a linguistic mechanism for constructing gendered meaning in non-Western digital brand discourse remains underexplored.

Given the identified research gap, this study discusses (1) how textual paralinguistics is used to construct gendered meaning in Indonesian skincare brand captions on Instagram. (2) It examines the types and distribution of TPL in captions targeting female and male audiences and (3) analyzes how these features function as indexical resources that position brands within culturally recognizable models of femininity and masculinity in Indonesia. By examining this interaction, the study clarifies the semiotic role of written paralinguistic cues in shaping gendered meaning in digital brand discourse.

## 2. Literature review

This literature review is based on multimodal communication theory and sociolinguistics of gender. It draws on Poyatos's model of language, paralinguistics, and kinesics to explain how verbal and nonverbal elements work together in meaning-making. Luangrath et al.'s typology of textual paralinguistics provides the analytical categories used to classify voice qualities, interpersonal resonance, typographic symbolism, visual kinesics, and punctuation cues. Social semiotic perspectives on emoji clarify how visual signs contribute to interpersonal and textual meaning. In addition, gender performativity and discourse theory frame gender as a socially constructed identity, enabling analysis of how skincare brands linguistically construct femininity and masculinity in Indonesian digital communication.

### 2.1. Textual paralinguistics and nonverbal communication

Textual paralinguistics (TPL) is written manifestations of nonverbal cues that modify or enrich verbal meaning in digital communication. In face-to-face interaction, tone, gesture, and facial expression convey interpersonal meaning. In digital contexts, these functions are represented through symbolic textual forms. TPL is textual elements that represent audible, tactile, and visual dimensions of nonverbal communication (Luangrath et al., 2017, 2023). Their framework identifies five main categories: voice qualities, interpersonal resonance, typographic symbolism, visual kinesics, and punctuation cues.

Voice qualities simulate vocal tone and intensity through capitalization, elongation, repetition, or expressive wording. Interpersonal resonance includes address terms and inclusive markers that construct relational alignment. Typographic symbolism refers to visual formatting that adds emphasis. Visual kinesics primarily involves emojis that substitute for gesture or facial expression. Punctuation cues guide rhythm and emotional tone. These categories provide the analytical basis for identifying and comparing TPL features in brand captions.

They further show that TPL influences audience perception along dimensions such as warmth and competence. Expressive emojis and affiliative markers tend to signal relational

warmth, while structured typography and controlled punctuation may signal authority and competence. This distinction supports the interpretation of how different TPL configurations contribute to gendered brand positioning.

The theoretical grounding of TPL can be traced to Poyatos (1997, 2022), who argues that communication consists of language, paralinguage, and kinesics as interconnected systems. In digital environments, textual and visual symbols function as adaptive equivalents of nonverbal channels. (Zappavigna & Logi, 2024) extend this perspective by situating emojis within a social semiotic framework, showing that visual elements operate ideationally, interpersonally, and textually. Together, these frameworks provide the basis for examining how the types and frequency of textual paralinguage influence tone, audience alignment, and the construction of gendered identities in Indonesian skincare branding.

## 2.2. *Gendered communication and brand representation*

In this study, I do not treat gender as a fixed biological category. Instead, I approach gender as something constructed and performed through discourse. Based on Butler's theory of performativity, gender is understood not as something people inherently possess, but as something they repeatedly enact through everyday social practices that gradually become normalized (Lorello & Flexman, 2021; Neupane, 2025). In this view, gender identity is formed through repetition of socially regulated norms, thus language plays an important role in sustaining those norms.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, gender should not be seen as the cause of linguistic behaviour, but as something shaped through language itself (Sabri et al., 2022). Identity does not exist first and then get expressed in discourse. Rather, it is continuously negotiated in interaction. The way people choose words, organize sentences, use stylistic patterns, or apply symbolic features contributes to how they position themselves and others within gendered social expectations.

Discourse analysis helps us examine how these identities are constructed in particular contexts (Almuslehi, 2024; Azhari & Simanjuntak, 2023a). It allows us to look closely at how communicative norms and semiotic resources produce social meaning. In digital communication, these resources include not only vocabulary but also emojis, typography, capitalization, and punctuation. Such features are part of how gendered meanings are signalled in online interaction.

Hall, (2013) argue that traits commonly associated with femininity and masculinity are shaped by social expectations rather than biology. Emotional expressiveness and relational closeness are often linked with femininity, while assertiveness and control are linked with masculinity. When communication moves into digital writing, these expectations may appear through different patterns of textual and paralinguistic choices.

In the Indonesian advertising context, Amir et al. (2025) identify the rise of "soft masculinity," which blends confidence with emotional warmth. Similarly, (Hidayat et al., 2023) show that female-oriented beauty advertisements often emphasize empowerment and relational connection. These studies suggest that gendered identities in branding are built through repeated

discursive patterns. In this process, textual paralinguage becomes one of the key semiotic resources through which such identities are performed and stabilized.

### 2.3. *Digital engagement and marketing context in Indonesia*

Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have become essential spaces for brand communication in Indonesia as digital interaction shifts from one-way promotion to participatory discourse (Alsehani et al., 2023). Brands no longer simply deliver messages because they engage in ongoing interaction with audiences and co-create meaning through platform affordances and user participation (Romero-Rodríguez & Castillo-Abdul, 2023). Research in digital discourse shows that online communication is inherently multimodal, integrating linguistic, visual, and paralinguistic elements that shape how meaning, tone, and relational stance are constructed (Almuslehi, 2024; Vlachou & Panagopoulos, 2022). From a functional perspective, captions do not merely inform but perform specific communicative roles aligned with platform norms and audience expectations (Tardy, 2023). At the same time, credibility in digital environments is increasingly exchanged through authentic and culturally responsive interaction rather than institutional authority alone (Blom et al., 2025; Unay-Gailhard & Simões, 2021). These studies collectively justify the importance of expressive and conversational brand communication within Indonesia's digital landscape.

However, most of this scholarship concentrates on engagement outcomes and strategic effectiveness rather than on how meaning is linguistically constructed. Limited research systematically examines how textual and paralinguistic features function as semiotic resources in shaping gendered brand voices. In particular, there is little comparative analysis of how male- and female-oriented brands differ in their distribution and functional use of textual paralinguage within the same cultural and product context.

Indonesian skincare brands provide a relevant site for this inquiry because beauty discourse is closely tied to identity, emotion, and self-presentation, all of which are shaped by cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity. Although textual paralinguage has been theorized in digital communication studies (Hayes et al., 2016; Luangrath et al., 2017; Zappavigna & Logi, 2024) and gender representation has been examined in advertising research (J. A. , & K. M. L. Hall, 2013; Hidayat et al., 2023), limited attention has been given to how different types of textual paralinguage are distributed and function differently across gendered brand discourse in Indonesia.

Therefore, by identifying the types of textual paralinguage used in skincare captions, comparing their frequency across gendered brand categories, and interpreting their communicative functions, this study advances a sociolinguistic understanding of how gendered identities are constructed and negotiated in digital branding practices.

### 3. Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the data. The analysis followed an existing theoretical framework proposed by Luangrath et al. (2017), which identifies five forms of textual paralinguage (TPL): *voice qualities*, *interpersonal resonance*, *typographic*

*symbolism, visual kinesics, and punctuation cues*. These categories were adopted deductively and used as the basis for classification.

The focus of the analysis was threefold. First, it identified how TPL features appear in skincare brand captions and how they are configured within each text. Second, it examined the types and distribution of TPL across male-oriented and female-oriented brand groups. Third, it interpreted how these features contribute to the construction of gendered meaning within Indonesian digital branding. The analysis therefore moved from identification, to comparison, and finally to interpretation.

In addition, the methodological choice is tied in nonverbal communication theory. Hall (2013) explain that meaning in interaction is not carried by words alone, but also by vocal tone, gesture, facial expression, and other nonverbal signals. In digital environments, these signals are not physically present, yet they are represented through textual forms such as emoji, capitalization, repetition, and punctuation. Following this perspective, textual paralinguage can be understood as the written manifestation of nonverbal behavior. Therefore, identifying and classifying these features through an established typology provides a theoretically justified way to examine how emotional tone and relational stance are constructed in online brand communication.

### 3.1. Data collection

The dataset consisted of 60 Instagram captions collected manually from the official accounts of six Indonesian skincare brands: *Wardah, Skintific, Make Over, Kahf, Clorismen, and ErhaMen*. These brands were selected purposively because they represent both female-oriented and male-oriented market positioning within the same product category. This selection allowed comparison of gendered branding voices within a shared commercial context. Thirty captions were selected from brands primarily targeting female consumers and thirty from brands targeting male consumers. Only captions attached to posts, carousels, and reels were included. Instagram stories were excluded because they are temporary and not consistently accessible.

The data were collected from posts published between January 2024 and July 2025. Each caption was archived in screenshot format to preserve original emoji use, typography, capitalization, and punctuation, since these elements constitute the main analytical focus. The sample size was determined based on analytical sufficiency rather than statistical representativeness. The aim of the study was not to generalize findings to all skincare brands, but to identify recurring patterns of textual paralinguage within clearly defined gendered categories. Across the dataset, the five predefined TPL categories were consistently observable, indicating that the data were sufficient to examine patterned use within each group.

### 3.2. Procedure of theoretical classification

Each caption was treated as a single unit of analysis. The procedure followed a structured deductive process:

1. Each caption was read carefully to understand its overall message and tone.

2. Textual elements corresponding to the five TPL categories were identified using the operational definitions provided by Luangrath et al. (2017).
3. These elements were then classified under the relevant theoretical category.
4. The presence of each category within a caption was recorded to enable comparison across male- and female-oriented groups.
5. After classification, the interaction between multiple TPL features in the same caption was examined in relation to tone, relational stance, and gender positioning.

**Table 1**

Example of dataset classified theory-based classification of textual.

<b>Raw caption</b>	<b>Identified textual features</b>	<b>Corresponding category</b>	<b>TPL</b>
“ <i>Yuk, share produk favoritmu, Beauties! ❤️</i> ” (Wardah, 2024)	Emoji (❤️), inclusive address term ( <i>Beauties</i> ), imperative structure ( <i>Yuk, share...</i> )	Voice Qualities; Interpersonal Resonance; Visual Kinesics	
“ <i>Micellar water cowok pertama di indonesia!</i> ” (Kahf, 2024)	Full capitalization, exclamation mark, gendered lexical reference ( <i>Cowok</i> )	Typographic Symbolism; Punctuation Cues	

Because the categories were predefined and clearly described in prior researches, the analysis focused on observable textual features such as capitalization, emoji selection, address terms, repetition, and punctuation patterns.

### 3.3. Analytical consistency and transparency

Since the classification was theory-driven and based on established definitions, consistency was maintained through careful and repeated examination of the data. The captions were reviewed multiple times to ensure that the definitional criteria of each TPL category were applied uniformly across both gender groups.

When emojis or symbols appeared ambiguous, they were interpreted in relation to their immediate linguistic context rather than in isolation. All classifications were documented in analytic tables that link raw textual examples with their corresponding theoretical categories. This documentation ensures transparency and allows readers to trace how interpretations were derived from the data.

The study emphasizes conceptual clarity and procedural transparency rather than statistical measurement. Because the analysis focused on manifest textual features defined in existing theory, the risk of subjective category formation was minimized.

### 3.4. Ethical considerations

All data were obtained from publicly accessible Instagram accounts belonging to corporate brands. The study did not include user comments, personal accounts, or private interactions. Only brand-generated captions were analyzed. No personal data were collected or processed.

## 4. Findings and discussion

This section presents the main findings based on the analysis of textual paralinguage (TPL) used in Instagram captions of male- and female-oriented skincare brands. The discussion follows the research sub-questions focusing on (1) the types and frequency of TPL, (2) the dominant linguistic functions of TPL in each gendered brand group, and (3) the implicit meanings and implications of these expressions.

### 4.1. Types and frequency of TPL

This subsection presents the findings on the types and frequency of Textual Paralinguage (TPL) identified in the Instagram captions of male- and female-oriented skincare brands. The analysis reveals that both groups make extensive use of TPL, yet with distinct stylistic and communicative tendencies. Across the 60 captions analyzed, five main categories of TPL they are voice qualities, interpersonal resonance, typographic symbolism, visual kinesics, and punctuation cues. They were consistently identified, following Luangrath, Peck, and Barger's (2017) typology. Female-oriented brands tend to employ more expressive, decorative, and emotionally charged forms of TPL, creating warmth, inclusivity, and aesthetic appeal, while male-oriented brands favor concise, assertive, and minimalist expressions that highlight confidence and efficiency. These patterns suggest that gendered branding voices are constructed not only through lexical choices but also through the visual and paralinguistic features embedded in digital text, shaping how tone, identity, and relational stance are communicated to different audiences.

**Tabel 2**

Distribution of textual paralinguage (TPL) in male-oriented skincare brand captions (n = 30).

Type of TPL	Frequency (out of 30 captions)	Dominant example(s)	Supporting linguistic visual component	Communicative function
Voice Qualities	24/30	“Lo tunggu apa lagi?”, “Simple, efisien, hasil maksimal.”	Use of imperative verbs, rhythmical phrasing, capital letters	Creates assertive, confident, and action-oriented tone


Interpersonal Resonance	16/30	“Bro!”, “Share di komen ya!”, “KahfBro”	Informal address terms (Bro, Lo, Men), direct invitations	Builds solidarity and peer connection between brand and audience
Typographic Symbolism	15/30	“Micellar water cowok pertama di Indonesia!”, “spicestone.”	Full capitalization, bullet lists, dashes, and bold typography	Reinforces masculine power, clarity, and energy through visual emphasis
Visual Kinesics (Emoji / Gesture)	15/30		Action-based emojis, minimal gestures (no decorative emojis)	Expresses vigor, confidence, and performance without affective excess
Punctuation Cues	8/30	“Investasi!”, “Proteksi maksimal tanpa ribet!”, “Raw, elemental truths.”	Exclamation marks, rhythmic punctuation, and list-style dots	Shows decisiveness and controlled enthusiasm
No TPL	2/30	“Micellar Water mengangkat kotoran tanpa residu.”	Plain sentence, neutral tone, absence of emoji or typography	Projects professionalism and objectivity

Table 2 presents the distribution of Textual Paralanguage (TPL) features found in captions from male-oriented skincare brands. The dataset includes 30 captions collected from three brands targeting male consumers. Compared to the female-oriented group, these captions display a more restrained but deliberate use of paralinguistic elements, often emphasizing strength, efficiency, and confidence.

The most common TPL category is voice qualities, which appeared in 24 out of 30 captions. Examples such as “Lo tunggu apa lagi?” and “Simple, efisien, hasil maksimal.” frequently use imperative verbs, short clauses, and capital letters. These features establish an assertive and motivational tone, reflecting an action-oriented brand voice that appeals to male audiences.

Interpersonal resonance occurred in 16 captions. Expressions like “Bro!”, “Share di komen ya!”, and “KahfBro” demonstrate the use of casual address terms and direct calls for interaction. These choices create a friendly but equal relationship between the brand and its audience, promoting a sense of camaraderie rather than emotional intimacy. Typographic Symbolism was found in 15 captions. Phrases such as “Micellar water cowok pertama di Indonesia!” and “Spicestone.” use full capitalization, bullet points, and bold typography to emphasize product uniqueness and strength. This visual style projects clarity and energy while maintaining a masculine aesthetic.

Visual kinesics (Emoji/Gesture) appeared in 15 captions, typically using minimal emojis such as 🔥, 💪, 😎, and 🙌. These icons reinforce ideas of power, performance, and coolness without conveying overt affection. Punctuation Cues were less frequent, found in 8 captions. Exclamation marks and rhythmic punctuation (e.g., “Investasi!” or “Raw, elemental truths.”) were used to express controlled enthusiasm. Finally, no TPL was observed in 2 captions that contained plain, informative sentences without expressive elements, reflecting professionalism and a straightforward communication style.

**Table 3**

Distribution of textual paralanguage (TPL) in female-oriented skincare brand captions (n = 30).

Type of TPL	Frequency (out of 30 captions)	Dominant example(s)	Supporting linguistic visual component	Communicative function
Voice Qualities	24/30	“Run don’t walk!”, “Say Hello”, “Get yours now!”	Use of capital letters, exclamation marks, imperative verbs, rhythmic tone	Creates persuasive, cheerful, and enthusiastic brand voice
Interpersonal Resonance	18/30	“Beauties!”, “Yuk!”, “See you there!”, “Ayo tanya-tanya!”	Inclusive address terms (Beauties, Weety), direct invitations, repeated emoji (💕💕)	Builds friendliness, emotional intimacy, and community belonging
Typographic Symbolism	15/30	“Approved”, “Pink cushion”,	Capitalization, repetition of numbers (5X), hashtags, bold formatting	Highlights aesthetic appeal, vibrancy, and modern identity
Visual Kinesics (Emoji / Gesture)	30/30	💕 ✨ 💄 👩💄 💕	Heart, sparkle, lipstick, and gesture emojis used decoratively	Enhances emotional tone, visual charm, and femininity through expressive icons
Punctuation Cues	16/30	“→”, “...”, “!!!”, “👉”	Exclamation marks, arrows, ellipses, and list-style layout	Expresses excitement, playfulness, and conversational rhythm
No TPL	0/30	–	–	All captions contained expressive or visual elements

Table 3 presents the distribution of textual paralinguistic (TPL) features identified in captions from female-oriented skincare brands. The data consist of 30 captions collected from three brands that target women consumers. Overall, all captions contained at least one form of expressive or visual element, showing a consistent use of paralinguistic cues in this group. The most frequently used TPL category is Visual Kinesics (Emoji/Gesture), appearing in all 30 captions. Emojis such as 🍷, 🍷, 🍷, 🍷, and 🍷 were commonly used to decorate the text and visually convey femininity, friendliness, and emotional warmth. This frequent use indicates that emojis function as a key visual resource for enhancing the expressive quality of brand messages.

Voice qualities were also highly frequent, found in 24 out of 30 captions. Expressions such as “Run don’t walk!”, “Say hello”, and “Get yours now!” often appeared with exclamation marks, capital letters, and imperative verbs. These features gave the captions a rhythmic and persuasive tone, emphasizing enthusiasm and encouragement. Interpersonal resonance occurred in 18 captions. Phrases such as “Beauties!”, “Yuk!”, and “See you there!” were frequently combined with inclusive address terms or repeated emojis like 🍷 🍷. These linguistic choices created a sense of community and emotional closeness between the brand and its audience.

Typographic symbolism appeared in 15 captions. Examples such as “Approved” and “Pink cushion” used capitalization, repetition of symbols, and hashtags to attract visual attention. These typographic cues added emphasis and helped strengthen the brand’s youthful and energetic style. Finally, punctuation cues were found in 16 captions. The use of marks such as “→”, “...”, “!!!”, and arrows (👉) added a sense of excitement and guided the reader’s focus through the text. No captions were found without TPL elements, suggesting that expressive, visual, and rhythmic features are an integral part of communication among female-oriented skincare brands.

**Table 4**

Comparison of textual paralinguistic (TPL) in female and male-oriented skincare brand captions (n= 60).

No	Type of TPL	Frequency female	Frequency male	Dominant function (Female)	Dominant function (Male)
1	<b>Voice qualities</b>	24/30	24/30	Creates a friendly, expressive, and persuasive tone with soft intonation and feminine appeal.	Establishes assertiveness and confidence through a casual yet direct masculine tone.
2	<b>Interpersonal resonance</b>	18/30	16/30	Builds emotional closeness and community through inclusive address terms (e.g., <i>Beauties, Skintizen</i> ).	Promotes peer-level familiarity using colloquial male address terms (e.g., <i>Bro, Men, Lo</i> ).
3	<b>Typographic symbolism</b>	15/30	15/30	Enhances aesthetic appeal and	Reinforces strength and

				promotional energy using capitalization and decorative typography.	performance through bold capitalization and typographic emphasis.
4	<b>Visual kinesics (Emoji / gesture)</b>	30/30	15/30	Highly expressive; heart, sparkle, lipstick, and gesture emojis convey emotional warmth and beauty.	More minimalist; emojis signify confidence, activeness, or physical energy.
5	<b>Punctuation cues</b>	16/30	8/30	Expresses enthusiasm and friendliness through exclamation marks and ellipses, creating soft intonation.	Suggests controlled rhythm and decisiveness with limited punctuation use.
6	<b>No TPL</b>	0/30	2/30	All captions included expressive or visual cues, reflecting emotion-driven and aesthetic language.	Two captions were neutral and informative, focusing on factual product descriptions.

Table 4 shows that both female- and male-oriented skincare brands use Textual Paralinguage (TPL) widely, but with different stylistic emphases. Female-oriented captions display higher expressiveness and emotional warmth, while male-oriented ones emphasize clarity, confidence, and restraint. Voice qualities appear equally in both groups (24/30), yet their tone differs: female brands use soft imperatives and rhythmic phrasing to sound persuasive and friendly, while male brands employ direct and concise sentences to project assertiveness. Interpersonal resonance is slightly more frequent in female brands (18/30) than male ones (16/30), where women's brands use affectionate address terms such as *Beauties* to build closeness, while men's brands prefer informal but equal terms like Bro or Lo to express camaraderie.

Typographic symbolism occurs at the same rate (15/30) but serves different purposes: female captions use decorative typography to highlight beauty and energy, while male captions use bold and simple designs to reinforce strength and performance. The most striking difference is seen in Visual kinesics, where all female captions (30/30) contain expressive emojis, while only half of male captions (15/30) include minimal, action-oriented icons like 🔥 or 🙌. Similarly, Punctuation cues are more common in female data (16/30) than in male (8/30), reflecting a softer and livelier tone versus a controlled one. Only male brands feature captions without any TPL (2/30), indicating that female brands rely more consistently on expressive cues to build emotional engagement, whereas male brands occasionally choose a neutral, factual style.

#### 4.2. *The dominant linguistic functions of TPL*

The comparison of communicative functions of textual paralinguistic (TPL) in male- and female-oriented skincare captions reveals that digital branding strategies are shaped by gendered audience orientations. In general, captions targeting female consumers highlight interpersonal resonance and visual kinesics through the use of warm greetings, expressive emojis, and inclusive language. These elements foster emotional closeness and community belonging between brand and audience, reflecting the idea that nonverbal cues play a central role in building trust and intimacy in digital communication (Ge-Stadnyk, 2021). In contrast, captions directed at male audiences rely more heavily on voice qualities and typographic symbolism such as imperative tone, capital letters, and structured layouts. These features convey strength, decisiveness, and product performance, in line with paralinguistic principles that associate tonal assertiveness with leadership and (Azhari & Simanjuntak, 2023a; Luangrath et al., 2023; Pasaribu, 2021). Meanwhile, punctuation cues appear in both gendered groups but function differently: female captions use them to express controlled enthusiasm, while male captions employ them to communicate urgency and intensity (Radchenko & Likhushina, 2022). Altogether, gendered variation in TPL does not merely indicate stylistic difference but reflects how brands construct emotional tone and gendered identity in alignment with audience expectations.

In terms of voice qualities, male-oriented captions tend to employ a firm and direct tone. Sentences such as “*Lo tunggu apa lagi?*” or fully capitalized slogans present confidence and assertiveness that symbolize masculine authority. This textual tone acts as a substitute for vocal dominance, supporting findings that tonal qualities in text can reinforce perceptions of brand competence and leadership (Azhari & Simanjuntak, 2023b; Luangrath et al., 2017). Female-oriented captions, on the other hand, use the same imperative function but soften it with affiliative elements, such as “*Yuk coba sekarang, Beauties!*” which invites action while maintaining a friendly and empathetic tone. This contrast reflects the broader gendered communication pattern where female discourse tends to emphasize cooperation and emotional engagement rather than command or control.

Interpersonal resonance is the most prominent function in captions directed toward female consumers. Personal address, expressive emojis such as hearts or smiles, and conversational prompts like “*Share your thoughts below!*” are used to create an atmosphere of friendliness and equality between brand and audience. This strategy constructs a sense of emotional community and consumer involvement, consistent with findings that interpersonal cues enhance engagement and loyalty (Ge-Stadnyk, 2021). In male-oriented captions, however, interpersonal elements appear in a more restrained form. Phrases like “*Bro!*” signal camaraderie and shared energy rather than emotional intimacy, suggesting that male-oriented resonance focuses on solidarity and collective action rather than affective bonding.

In the category of typographic symbolism, the contrast becomes even clearer. Male skincare captions frequently use bold typography, uppercase letters, or block text arrangements to emphasize strength, confidence, and directness. Such layout choices serve as visual markers of masculinity and authority, consistent with visual design theories where typography carries symbolic weight beyond its informational value (Pan et al., 2024). Female-oriented captions

employ typography in a more aesthetic and balanced way, using softer capitalization, clean spacing, and decorative emojis to convey elegance and approachability. Typography here reinforces the brand's feminine identity and professionalism, highlighting beauty and harmony over intensity.

Visual kinesics also exhibit distinct gendered patterns. Female-oriented captions often contain emojis like ❤️, 🌸, or 😊 that amplify positive emotions and relational warmth. These visual signs act as emotional extensions of the text, enriching the communicative tone and enhancing readers' affective response (Dai et al., 2022). In male-oriented captions, emojis like 💪, 🔥, or 🏋️ symbolize energy, power, and determination. Rather than expressing affection, they emphasize vigor and achievement, aligning with masculine representations of performance and resilience.

The function of punctuation cues further illustrates the emotional contrast between the two gendered communication styles. Captions for male audiences often use multiple exclamation marks ("!!!") to heighten intensity and suggest action. Female-oriented captions, however, use softer punctuation patterns such as ellipses or single exclamation marks to indicate enthusiasm that remains polite and controlled. As Radchenko and Likhushina (2022) point out, punctuation serves as a visual paralinguistic device that adds emotional tone and rhythmic emphasis, subtly guiding readers' interpretation of brand voice.

Finally, the category of no TPL appears only occasionally in both gender groups. When present, such captions often convey factual information or product specifications, emphasizing professionalism and credibility. For male brands, this minimalism reinforces a sense of objectivity and efficiency, while for female brands it signals transparency and authenticity, particularly in educational or scientific contexts (Azhari & Simanjuntak, 2023).

Overall, the comparison demonstrates that TPL functions as a strategic linguistic resource to reflect and reinforce gendered brand identities. Female-oriented skincare captions privilege affective functions that nurture warmth, empathy, and community connection. Male-oriented captions, in contrast, prioritize conative functions that promote action, competence, and assertive energy. This division aligns with Luangrath et al. (2022), who emphasize that paralinguistic design in text contributes to both warmth-based and competence-based perceptions of a brand. Through TPL, Indonesian skincare brands consciously balance these two dimensions to communicate not only what their products do but also who their audiences are and how they wish to be represented in the digital space.

#### *4.3. Symbolic negotiation of emotion and gender through textual paralinguage*

Patterns of textual paralinguage (TPL) in Indonesian skincare brand captions reflect not only stylistic differentiation but also culturally situated constructions of femininity and masculinity. Paralinguistic choices such as tone, typography, emoji selection, and punctuation function as multimodal signs that index socially recognizable gender models. Within male-oriented captions, directive voice qualities, concise imperatives, emphatic capitalization, and restrained emoji use construct a digital persona marked by discipline, control, and performance (Clark, 2004). These features resonate with established analyses of Indonesian masculinity,

which emphasize rationality, self-regulation, and achievement-oriented identity. The preference for direct commands and visual firmness aligns with masculinity framed around authority and decisiveness, reinforcing competence-based brand positioning as discussed in textual paralinguistic research (Luangrath et al., 2023).

At the same time, the selective use of action-oriented emojis such as 🔥, 💪, and 😎 reflects urban aspirational masculinity associated with coolness, style, and controlled confidence (Nilan, 2009). Rather than conveying emotional openness, these visual signs signal energy and self-mastery. Even the presence of captions without any TPL elements in the male dataset may be interpreted as an enactment of emotional restraint and informational objectivity, traits culturally associated with disciplined masculine identity (Clark, 2004). Thus, paralinguistic minimalism itself becomes meaningful within Indonesian gender norms.

In contrast, female-oriented captions rely heavily on interpersonal resonance and visual kinesics to construct warmth and relational intimacy. The consistent use of affectionate address terms, inclusive invitations, and decorative emojis such as hearts and sparkles aligns with long-standing sociocultural constructions of Indonesian femininity. Suryakusuma's (1996) concept of *State Ibuism* describes how womanhood in Indonesia has historically been institutionalized through the figure of the "ibu" as nurturing, supportive, and relational (*State Ibuism*, n.d.). The high frequency of interpersonal markers and expressive emojis in female-oriented captions can be read as a contemporary digital articulation of this relational femininity. Through these cues, brands reproduce a communicative style grounded in care, emotional accessibility, and communal belonging.

At the same time, the aesthetic polish and empowerment tone found in female captions resonate with Brenner's (1998) discussion of how Indonesian women negotiate modern consumer identity alongside moral femininity. Decorative typography, visually appealing layouts, and repeated emojis do not merely express softness; they signal a modern, stylish, and self-aware femininity embedded within consumer culture. The combination of empowerment-oriented imperatives and relational warmth suggests that digital skincare branding reflects a negotiated femininity that is both aspirational and communally grounded (Brenner, 1998).

From a broader theoretical perspective, these patterned differences support the understanding of gender as socially constructed and performative rather than biologically fixed. As Boellstorff (2005) argues, gender and identity in Indonesia are contextual and produced through social practice. In this light, textual paralinguistic operates as a performative resource through which brands enact culturally intelligible forms of masculinity and femininity. Emojis, capitalization, and punctuation become semiotic tools that embed gender ideology within everyday promotional discourse.

The contrast in punctuation further illustrates this negotiation. Multiple exclamation marks in male-targeted captions intensify urgency and assertive energy, whereas ellipses or single exclamation marks in female-targeted captions modulate enthusiasm into a softer affiliative tone (Radchenko & Likhushina, 2022). These differences are not random stylistic choices; they align with culturally structured expectations of emotional display and relational stance.

Taken together, the restrained use of emojis and preference for directive voice qualities in male-oriented captions resonate with Indonesian constructions of masculinity that emphasize control, rationality, and performance (Clark, 2004; Nilan, 2009). Conversely, the intensive use of relational address terms and decorative visual kinesics in female-oriented captions reflects sociocultural models of femininity associated with emotional expressiveness and communal orientation (Suryakusuma, 1996; Brenner, 1998). In this way, Indonesian skincare branding does not simply adapt global marketing conventions but localizes them within historically embedded gender ideologies.

Ultimately, TPL functions as a strategic semiotic resource that mediates emotion, identity, and cultural normativity in digital brand communication. It enhances social presence and authenticity (Hayes et al., 2019; Luangrath et al., 2017), yet its distribution remains gender-differentiated. Through patterned configurations of warmth-based and competence-based cues, digital discourse becomes a site where Indonesian gender norms are enacted, circulated, and subtly reinforced in everyday commercial interaction.

## 5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that textual paralanguage (TPL) constitutes a central semiotic resource for constructing gendered meaning in Instagram captions produced by Indonesian skincare brands. Findings reveal systematic discursive divergence: female-oriented brands consistently employ expressive emojis, inclusive address forms, and dynamic punctuation to cultivate affective warmth and relational proximity, whereas male-oriented brands rely more heavily on direct imperatives, typographic emphasis (e.g., boldface), and restrained punctuation to project confidence and agentive performance. These patterned contrasts indicate that emotional expression and gender positioning are encoded through systematic written nonverbal cues. The study makes three primary contributions. First, to sociolinguistics, it demonstrates that gender performance in digital discourse operates not only through lexical selection but also through paralinguistic design. Second, to multimodal discourse analysis, it provides empirical evidence that emojis, typography, and punctuation function as integrated semiotic resources in meaning-making. Third, to digital marketing linguistics, it clarifies how brand voice and audience targeting are linguistically structured via patterned TPL choices. Future research directions include examining TPL use in multilingual captioning, cross-platform communication (e.g., TikTok or X), and non-beauty product sectors. Additional inquiry may explore how generative AI reproduces, modifies, or standardizes gendered emotional patterns in promotional texts, and whether such patterns reinforce or challenge local gender ideologies.

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### Declaration on the use of AI

This study used AI-based tools, specifically ChatGPT and Grammarly, to support language refinement, grammar checking, and initial drafting of selected sections. The AI was not used for data analysis, interpretation, or generating research findings. All conceptual development, analytical processes, and final decisions remain the full responsibility of the author.

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