



## Cultural Representation in the L'Oréal Paris Advertisement "Nous le valons bien"

Nurfebry Salsabila Isdiansyah<sup>1</sup>, Diah Vitri Widayanti<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia<sup>1-2</sup>

Email Korespondensi: [nurfebrysalsabila@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:nurfebrysalsabila@students.unnes.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [diahvitri@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:diahvitri@mail.unnes.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

Article received: 19 Maret 2026, Review process: 24 Maret 2026,

Article Accepted: 19 April 2026, Article published: 01 Mei 2026

### ABSTRACT

*The expansion of digital media has transformed advertising into a medium that constructs cultural meanings and social values beyond its promotional function. This study aims to analyze cultural representation in the L'Oréal Paris 2024 advertisement "Nous le valons bien", focusing on how meaning is constructed through visual and verbal elements. The research applies a qualitative descriptive method using a constructionist approach. The data source is a 40 second advertisement video obtained from the official YouTube platform, with scenes and sequences as the unit of analysis. The findings reveal that representation operates through reflective, intentional, and constructionist approaches. While the advertisement reflects multicultural diversity and communicates empowerment, the constructionist approach dominates by actively producing meanings of inclusive beauty, contemporary feminism, and global identity. In conclusion, the advertisement functions as a cultural text that not only reflects but also shapes social reality, contributing to cultural studies and language learning.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Representation, Advertising, Digital Media, Feminism, Identity.

### ABSTRAK

Perluasan media digital telah mengubah periklanan menjadi media yang membangun makna budaya dan nilai-nilai sosial di luar fungsi promosinya. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi budaya dalam iklan L'Oréal Paris 2024 "Nous le valons bien", dengan fokus pada bagaimana makna dibangun melalui elemen visual dan verbal. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode deskriptif kualitatif menggunakan pendekatan konstruktivis. Sumber data adalah video iklan berdurasi 40 detik yang diperoleh dari platform YouTube resmi, dengan adegan dan rangkaian sebagai unit analisis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa representasi beroperasi melalui pendekatan reflektif, intensional, dan konstruktivis. Meskipun iklan tersebut mencerminkan keragaman multikultural dan mengkomunikasikan pemberdayaan, pendekatan konstruktivis mendominasi dengan secara aktif menghasilkan makna kecantikan inklusif, feminisme kontemporer, dan identitas global. Kesimpulannya, iklan tersebut berfungsi sebagai teks budaya yang tidak hanya mencerminkan tetapi juga membentuk realitas sosial, berkontribusi pada studi budaya dan pembelajaran bahasa.

**Kata Kunci:** Representasi Budaya, Periklanan, Media Digital, Feminisme, Identitas.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of digital media has significantly transformed the modern communication landscape, transforming advertising into more than just a

---

promotional tool, but also a space for the production of complex cultural meanings. In this context, advertising functions as a medium that not only conveys information but also shapes perceptions, values, and social identities through the construction of persuasive and symbolic messages. Nurzaman et al., (2023) define advertising as an information medium strategically designed based on market segmentation and audience needs to generate a positive response to the product being offered. Similarly, Pratama & Wenerda (2020) assert that digital media enables interactive and flexible information exchange, thus strengthening advertising's position as a dynamic form of communication. Through the integration of visual, verbal, and audio elements, advertising not only represents social reality but also shapes it through a system of meaningful signs. From a cultural studies perspective, John Fiske states that representation is the process of constructing meaning through media, allowing advertising to be understood as a cultural text containing specific ideologies, values, and identities.

The concept of representation in cultural studies is comprehensively explained by Stuart Hall, who views representation as the process of producing meaning through language, symbols, and social practices. Hall (1997) proposed three main approaches to understanding representation: reflective, intentional, and constructionist. The reflective approach views language as a reflection of reality, while the intentional approach emphasizes the role of the message creator in determining meaning. Meanwhile, the constructionist approach asserts that meaning is actively constructed through sign systems within a social and cultural context. This latter approach serves as the primary foundation of research because it positions media as a dynamic arena for the production of meaning. Thus, advertising is understood not as an objective representation of reality, but rather as a symbolic construction that shapes understandings of identity, social relations, and cultural values through the interaction between text and context.

Several previous studies have shown that cultural representation in media is not a neutral process and always involves the construction of specific meanings. Aqilla et al., (2025) demonstrated that cultural representation in digital discourse is dynamic and continually undergoes negotiation of meaning. Sholichah et al., (2023) emphasized that cultural representation does not simply display reality but, through a process of selection and packaging, produces new meanings. In the context of advertising, Afriyanto et al., (2024) found that visual and verbal elements play a crucial role in shaping brand image and fostering consumer loyalty. Meanwhile, Soleha et al., (2025) demonstrated, using a semiotic approach, that advertisements can construct connotative meanings such as togetherness and nostalgia through sign systems. Other research also reveals that advertisements represent culture through visual symbols, language, and cross-cultural narratives, such as in the Bodrex advertisement (Habibi & Hariyanto, 2023) and the international version of Go-Jek (Pratama & Wenerda, 2020). Furthermore, studies on gender representation in advertising indicate a shift toward more progressive narratives that challenge patriarchal stereotypes (Suryasuciramdhan et al., 2024).

Although various studies have examined cultural representation in the media, most studies tend to focus on semiotic or discourse analysis approaches without

---

explicitly linking them to constructionist approaches in global and pedagogical contexts. Studies such as Nurzaman et al., (2023) and Handayani (2019) have indeed linked representation to identity construction and cultural circuits, but have not specifically examined global beauty advertisements as cultural texts addressing issues of inclusivity, contemporary feminism, and transnational identity. Furthermore, studies linking cultural representation in advertisements to the context of foreign language learning in Indonesia are still relatively limited. This gap highlights the need for research that analyzes not only how meaning is constructed in media texts but also how that meaning is relevant in the context of cultural literacy and cross-cultural learning.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze cultural representation in the 2024 version of the L'Oréal Paris advertisement "Nous le valons bien" using Stuart Hall's constructionist approach. Specifically, this study focuses on the analysis of visual elements, such as the representation of multiethnic models and body expressions, as well as verbal elements, such as slogans and idiomatic dialogue, in constructing cultural meaning. In addition, this study also aims to identify the construction of meaning related to the value of inclusivity, contemporary feminism, and the hybridity of global-French identities. Thus, this study is expected to provide not only theoretical contributions to the study of cultural representation, but also practical contributions in utilizing authentic digital media as a learning resource to improve cultural literacy critically and contextually in foreign language education.

## METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that focuses on how cultural representations are constructed in media texts. Qualitative methods emphasize in-depth explanation and understanding of meaning (Mahmud, 2011). Using Stuart Hall's theory of representation based on a constructionist approach, the population in this study is not understood as the number of respondents, but rather as the entirety of the elements of the representational system operating in the L'Oréal Paris advertisement video "Nous le valons bien" (We're good valors) accessed through the official YouTube platform. The research data source is a single advertisement video, which serves as a cultural text. The unit of analysis in this study is a scene and a combination of several shots containing cultural representations, both visual and verbal.

Data collection methods were conducted through textual observation of audiovisual media and documentation studies. In this study, the primary instrument was the researcher herself (human instrument), who served as data collector, processor, and interpreter. Data analysis was conducted through qualitative text analysis using Stuart Hall's approach framework. Data in the form of dialogue transcriptions and visual descriptions were reduced by selecting scenes containing cultural representations, including visual elements (costumes, colors, expressions, settings, symbols), verbal elements (narration, dialogue, subtitles), and narrative structure. An interpretive analysis was then conducted to examine how the sign systems and language within the audiovisual text construct cultural meanings and shape representations of identity within a social context.

---

To ensure validity and reliability (credibility and dependability), this study utilized repeated viewings to deepen interpretations, comparisons of findings with Stuart Hall's theory and related literature, and systematic documentation of the analysis process (audit trail). Discussions with colleagues were also conducted to minimize researcher subjectivity. This study did not use statistical tests because it was qualitative and focused on the analysis of meaning, not numerical measurements. The scope of the study was limited to the analysis of one video as a cultural text, focusing on cultural representations in visual and verbal elements. This study did not analyze audience reception or the empirical impact on French language learners. The results are contextual and aim to provide in-depth understanding, not broad generalizations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of digital media has transformed advertising into dynamic cultural texts that produce the meaning of inclusivity and identity through a system of verbal visual signs, as explained by Fiske (2010) and Hall (1997) in their constructionist approach that emphasizes meaning as an active construction through language and social symbols, rather than simply a reflection of reflective reality or intentional intentional makers. L'Oréal Paris 2024 advertisement "Nous le valons bien" was chosen as the object of analysis because it represents global-French hybridity through a multiethnic model (white European, Asian brown, non-Western tan) with a cosmopolitan modern setting, in line with L'Oréal's commitment at Paris Fashion Week 2024 and Cannes which features inclusive representation including Indonesian artists. Spreading information over the internet allows the message to reach the entire world without borders, creating a global discourse about universal beauty. This study fills the gap in the literature with Hall's constructionist semiotic application to contemporary beauty advertising in Indonesia, where previous studies such as Pratama & Wenerda (2020) showed that L'Oréal Paris ads in Europe highlight diversity and inclusivity, while ads in Asia emphasize women's empowerment. Ramadhan et al., (2024) found that L'Oréal Paris Infallible Foundation advertisements feature models with diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds so as to build an inclusive message.

In the L'Oréal Paris 2024 ad version of "Nous le valons bien" aired on the YouTube platform with a duration of 40 seconds, culture is represented as an active construction of the meaning of ethnic engagement, contemporary feminism, and the global mixing of France through a verbal visual data frame with ideological symbols. This analysis applies Hall (1997) theory of representation with three main approaches reflective, intentional, and constructionist to uncover how advertising dynamically produces cultural meaning, reflecting, establishing, and constructing the social reality of multicultural beauty.

### *Reflective Approach: A Reflection of Cultural Reality*

In a reflective approach, Stuart Hall views representation as a direct reflection of objective cultural reality, i.e. visual and verbal signs of producing the social world without significant ideological distortions. In the L'Oréal Paris 2024 advertisement, the "Nous le valons bien" version of the female models are of various white, brown

to tan skin, narrow eyes or have gray eyeballs reflecting ethnic diversity in global urban societies such as Paris or Jakarta.



Figure 1: Reflective Approach at minute to 00:00:02

This scene literally reflects the demographic reality of contemporary women's skin, hair variations and makeup as much as the urban diversity of Paris. Authentic facial close-ups and self-confidence messages reflect real social experiences in the age of body acceptance, so cosmetics play a role as a confidence booster in everyday life. This is not a new construction, but rather a "mirror" of the inclusive culture of the 2020s.



Figure 2. Reflective Approach at 00:00:04 minute

In this scene, it shows a woman with curly hair hanging out, with brown skin, glowing brown eyes, wearing a black shirt, and wearing nude lipstick on a modern white background, accompanied by the text "c'est ce qui me donne confiance en moi." literally meaning "this is what gives me confidence". In Stuart Hall's reflective approach, this scene directly reflects the social realities of non-European urban women who use everyday cosmetics to boost their confidence amid the pressures of global beauty standards. Stuart Hall's representation analysis in (Perreault, 2023) affirms that reflective approaches are effective in preserving cultural heritage by reflecting social realities transparently, while research by Radja & Sunjaya (2024) states that authentic ethnic representations like this fight against negative stereotypes that often favor white women and at the same time reinforce minority cultural identities. Alfadilah et al., (2017) in their research argue that the French Advertisement reflects Western individualism (elite elegance through the Cannes

Festival), while the Indonesian version reflects Asian collectivism (hair health for social harmony through Dian Sastrowardoyo). Peirce's semiotics confirm the visual signs reflect the norms of the original culture without any new construction.

These cultural representations are explicitly created to reflect ethnic diversity and collective identity in contemporary society. Nude/red lipstick and authentic face close-ups symbolize the real experiences of minority groups navigating Eurocentric beauty hegemony, thus reinforcing the norm of multicultural inclusivity as a marketable cultural "common sense".

### *Intentional Approach: Manufacturers' Intentions in Cultural Encoding*



Figure 1. Intentional Approach at 00:00:11 minutes

The intentional approach emphasizes intentional meaning by the manufacturer through the coding process, where the representation reflects the perspective and goals of the maker. Wahyuni (2024) Analyzes how advertisers deliberately use distinctive representations (branded elements) to ensure consumers recognize new ads, showing the producer's communicative intention in shaping brand perception. L'Oréal carefully chooses a multiethnic model along with self-empowerment narratives such as "affirmer qui je suis" (affirm who I am), "Célébrer mes différences" (celebrating my differences), to the climax of "pour faire avancer le monde... parce que nous valons bien" (to advance the world... because we elevate it well) to market the product as a tool for cultural transformation. This intention is an evolution of the iconic slogan "Parce que je le vaux bien" (because I deserve it) since 1971, which has now expanded into an inclusive global campaign to avoid criticism of racism such as the 2017 Dove case. Visual close-up of products (foundation, mascara) on a modern white background followed by a collective movement of embracing shows the intentionality of building women's solidarity across cultures. Importance: This strategy effectively reaches the Asian and African markets, where tan skin is an aspirational representation. The findings are in line with Garnier's analysis of ad reception in Indonesia, where the manufacturer's intention for "universal beauty" increases positive perceptions.

### **The Constructionist Approach: The Development of Cultural Meaning in Social**

Stuart Hall explains that the most dominant approach in his theory is the constructionist approach because it views meaning not as a passive reflection of

reality (reflective) or the subjective intention of the producer (intentional), but as a dynamic and context-dependent social construct, constructed through a system of linguistic signs, visuals, and cultural practices that interact with each other in a particular historical and ideological context.



Figure 3. Constructionist Approach at 00:00:30 minutes

This scene shows a woman with long blonde hair, gray eyes, nude lipstick, wearing a blue shirt, walking smiling while wearing high heels with the text "en marchant tête haute" which literally means walking with her head held high. In a constructivist context, this scene does not simply show women walking, but constructs a cultural meaning that is interpreted as "women's dignity" in a socially dynamic way through a system of signs that interact with each other in a specific ideological historical context. While an upright posture and a strategic smile build a strong but marketable femininity. Beauty is not a biological essence, but rather a social process engineered for all-round empowerment.



Figure 2. Constructionist Approach at 00:00:33

In L'Oréal Paris' version of the "Nous le valons bien" ad, the minute features a brown-skinned woman with curly hair hanging out moving in the gentle breeze while walking forward with a confident smile accompanied by the narrative text "et soutien chaque femme" (and supporting every woman). In Hall's theory, the constructivist approach states that meaning does not exist naturally in objects or reality, but is socially produced through a system of interconnected signs in a

network of languages, cultural practices, and historical-ideological contexts. This scene does not merely reflect (reflect) or establish the intention (intentional) image of women walking, but constructs the concept of multicultural women's solidarity. Furthermore, this scene is a constructionist masterpiece because it transforms the four simple signs (hair + step + smile + narrative) into a complex system of meaning that revolutionizes the global perception of beauty, proving that cosmetics can be a medium of construction of contemporary cultural identity.



Figure 3. Constructionist Approach at 00:00:37

The dramatic climactic scene of this commercial, in which all the models walk straight together while embracing each other tightly and looking at each other in solidarity, with the final text "parce que nous levons bien" (because we lift it well), accompanied by uplifting music and a cosmopolitan background that blends in. In Stuart Hall's constructionist approach, this scene is not simply a reflection of simple reality or intention, but rather the culmination of the dynamic construction of social meaning through an interinteracting system of signs, which produces a new cultural reality in which beauty is redefined as a collective process of solidarity of multiethnic women who are empowered and responsible for the progress of the world. Azhar & Fitriyah (2024) apply Hall's constructive approach, showing that L'Oréal Paris' advertising constructs a new cultural category through the interaction of visual signs of consumer products, with the slogan "Nous le valons bien" as an anchor that creates a semantic relationship between self-esteem and cosmetic consumption.

Overall, the constructionist approach dominates this L'Oréal Paris ad as some scenes actively produce the meaning of beauty as a dynamic and marketable process of cultural solidarity, transforming cosmetics from objects of consumption into symbols of cross-ethnic social change that challenges power inequality between men and women and the existence of discrimination based on race. This construction relies on the interaction of the signs of a firm movement, a collective embrace, a progressive French narrative that is relevant to the post-2020 trend of self-love, but has the potential to strengthen capitalism through cursory "empowerment". Gustina et al., (2020) analyzed the construction of beauty in Wardah cosmetic advertising and found that multiethnic visual representations construct inclusive social norms that normalize local diversity through patriarchal cultural codes; Yuliani (2022) in the

Hada Labo advertisement confirmed that the skin bright sign is constructed as a marketable social transformation process in the digital era, similar to L'Oréal's final scene solidarity; and Syahrani et al., (2022) in the Wardah Instagram study show how the narrative of Muslim women's self-empowerment began to construct traditional modern beauty as a world standard, in line with the global meaning of this advertisement.

Cultural representation in L'Oréal Paris's "Nous le valons bien" ad through three approaches Stuart Hall reveals the gradual and complex dynamics of the production of meaning: the Reflective Approach reflects the urban ethnic diversity authentically through models of diverse skin and appearance, the Intentional Approach shows marketable empowerment through French narratives such as "affirmer qui je suis" for the global market of anti-racism, and the Constructionist Approach at the climax of the dominating scene by building beauty as multicultural feminist solidarity through signs of collective embrace and "Nous le valons bien", transforming cosmetics from commodities into agents of post-pandemic social transformation.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the L'Oréal Paris advertisement "We love you" functions not only as a promotional medium but also as a cultural text that actively constructs social meanings about beauty and female identity. Analysis using Stuart Hall's representational approach demonstrates that reflective, intentional, and constructionist approaches operate simultaneously, with the latter dominant in producing meanings of inclusive beauty, contemporary feminism, and global identity. These findings confirm that advertising functions as a cultural practice that not only represents social reality but also shapes it through a system of signs, in line with John Fiske's perspective on media as a system of meaning.

Conceptually, this study contributes to expanding the study of cultural representation in global beauty advertising, particularly in the context of foreign language learning in Indonesia through the use of authentic media to enhance cultural literacy. Furthermore, the results of this study open up opportunities for further research to examine cultural representation across a wider range of digital media platforms and integrate interdisciplinary approaches to more comprehensively understand the relationship between media, culture, and identity in the context of globalization.

## REFERENCES

- Afriyanto, N. F., Oktavia, A. R., Cahyaningtyas, C. D., Munawaroh, L. L., Hidayat, M. T., & Veron, S. (2024). Analisis Semiotik Dalam Konteks Ekonomi Pada Iklan Aqua 100% Murni, 100% Indonesia (2024) Di Televisi. *Journal of Social and Economics Research*, 6(1), 933–943. <https://doi.org/10.54783/jser.v6i1.473>
- Alfadilah, R. N., Armin, M. A., & Hasyim, M. (2017). *Representasi L'oreal Dalam Iklan Berbahasa Perancis Dan Indonesia (Suatu Studi Komperatif)*. 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.34050/jib.v5i1%20Juni.2359>

- Aqilla, B. W., Sari, C. N., Rahma, E. Y., Safawati, A., & Widhiandono, D. (2025). Kunjungan Ishowspeed Sebagai Sarana Representasi Budaya Indonesia Dalam Wacana Netizen Internasional. *RELASI: Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi* (e-ISSN: 2807-6818), 5(04), 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.69957/relasi.v5i04.2176>
- Azhar, M. F., & Fitriyah, U. (2024). *Representations of diversity in L'Oréal Paris advertisements in Europe and Asia*. 3(2), 305–321.
- Fiske, J. (2010). *Television culture*. Routledge.
- Gustina, A., Rahmawati, U., & Wulandari, S. (2020). *Makna Cantik Iklan Kosmetik (Analisis Semiotika Charles S. Peirce pada Iklan Wardah Kosmetik Versi Kisah Ramadhan 2019# SelaluBersyukur)*. 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.54895/jm.v1i1.642>
- Habibi, R. D., & Hariyanto, D. (2023). *Representasi Budaya Indonesia dalam Iklan bodrex Tahun 2022 (Analisis Semiotika)*. <https://doi.org/10.21070/ups.1826>
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. SAGE Publications.
- Handayani, D. (2019). *Representasi Budaya Dalam Iklan (Analisa Semiotika Iklan Marjan Versi Tari Betawi dan Sepatu Roda)*. 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.36456/JBN.vol3.no1.2111>
- Mahmud. (2011). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Pustaka Setia.
- Nurzaman, E. P. B. R., Aina, A., & Nugraha, S. A. (2023). *Representasi Budaya Dalam Iklan "Citra Cantik Indonesia"*. <http://proceeding.unindra.ac.id/index.php/semnasdesainmedia/article/view/7056/2077>
- Perreault, M. F. (2023). Book Reviews: Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices by Stuart Hall. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 100(4), 1009–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990231175689>
- Pratama, G., & Wenerda, I. (2020). Representasi Budaya Indonesia dan Vietnam Dalam Iklan Go-Internasional 2018. *ETTISAL : Journal of Communication*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.21111/ejoc.v5i1.3646>
- Radja, I. G. S., & Sunjaya, L. R. (2024). Representasi Budaya Jember dalam Jember Fashion Carnival: Pendekatan Teori Representasi Stuart Hall. *WISSEN : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(3), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.62383/wissen.v2i3.160>
- Ramadhan, A. A., Hardjantini, V., & Onasie, T. Y. (2024). Universal Beauty: Analysis of L'Oreal Paris Advertising by Semiotic Charles Sanders Peirce. *Syntax Idea*, 6(4), 1724–1732. <https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v6i4.3170>
- Sholichah, I. M., Putri, D. M., & Setiaji, A. F. (2023). Representasi Budaya Banyuwangi Dalam Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival: Pendekatan Teori Representasi Stuart Hall. *Education : Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan*, 3(2), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.51903/education.v3i2.332>
- Soleha, D. N., Apriyani, S. D., Elga Nugraha, & Karen Kusnadi. (2025). Representasi Budaya Indonesia Pada Iklan Indomie 50 Tahun #TerushidupkanseleraIndonesia. *Pantarei*, 1(1), 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.36080/ptr.v1i1.272>

- Suryasuciramdhan, A., Lena, L., Meida, K. L., & Barasa, Y. V. (2024). Analisis Perubahan Representasi Gender Dalam Iklan Televisi Di Indonesia. *TUTURAN: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(3), 01-13. <https://doi.org/10.47861/tuturan.v2i3.1010>
- Syahrani, S., Hadawiah, H., & Zelfia, Z. (2022). Semiotic Analysis Of Wardah Beauty Moves You Ads Through Youtube Media. *Respon Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi*, 3(2), 202-220. <https://doi.org/10.33096/respon.v3i2.124>
- Wahyuni, D. (2024). Pengaruh E-Marketing Mix Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Oleh Konsumen Milenials Melalui Minat Produk Fashion Muslimah Pada Platform Marketplace Indonesia. 7(4), 17274-17284. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v7i4.38689>
- Yuliani, R. (2022). Konstruksi Kecantikan Perempuan dalam Iklan Kosmetik Jepang Hada Labo. *Chi'e: Journal of Japanese Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 42-51. <https://doi.org/10.15294/chie.v10i1.52754>