The duality of makeup: empowering or concealing?

A qualitative study of discourses on makeup and empowerment through makeup on YouTube constructed by young female American beauty bloggers

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ABSTRACT

In modern Western societies, feminist and post-feminist movements have facilitated a prominent discourse on the ideas of female empowerment. However,, advertisers took feminist and post-feminist values out of their original political context and repurposed them into for-profit commercial strategies by assuring women that they can achieve empowerment through consumption of beauty products. Existing literature extensively discusses the concepts of feminism, empowerment, makeup and social media, however, a study that would look into the representation of makeup and makeup empowerment on social media using a feminist perspective seems missing. This thesis aimed to fill the gap related to the construction of empowerment through makeup on social media and tried to answer the following research question: How do young female American beauty bloggers construct discourses on empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorials on YouTube? A sub-question that will complement the main question is: How do young female American beauty bloggers construct discourses on makeup in their makeup tutorials on YouTube? Moreover, this thesis also intended to determine whether there were differences in the discussions on makeup empowerment in two distinct types of makeup tutorials with the help of the following sub-question: Do the empowerment discourses differ between natural and 'full glam' makeup tutorials? This thesis aimed to provide the answer to the research questions by studying contemporary discourses on makeup constructed by seven young female American beauty bloggers. Seven natural makeup tutorials and seven 'full glam' makeup tutorials have been examined using critical discourse analysis. All videos were transcribed verbatim and the transcriptions were examined using critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA revealed the unequivocal positive representation of makeup in the tutorials, along with three distinct types of empowerment discourses: 'transformation', 'explicit' and 'creativity & skills' discourses, within which empowerment is linked to makeup for various reasons. It has been concluded that among the selected tutorials, using makeup is associated with a positive way to engage in self-care, express creativity, embrace the transformation and take pride in one's altered appearance.

KEYWORDS*: makeup empowerment, feminism, beauty blogging, advertising, critical discourse analysis*

Introduction

In contemporary Western societies, under the influence of feminism and post-feminism, the ideas of female empowerment and emancipation became increasingly widespread (Lazar, 2006; Gill, 2016; Dosekun, 2015). After the second wave of feminism, a new generation of young post-feminists reached the spotlight, constituting a third wave of the feminist movement (Press, 2011; Riley & Scharff, 2012). Post-feminists distanced themselves from existing feminist values and started engaging in traditionally feminine activities that the first two waves were rejecting; namely, using makeup, wearing high heels and exposing cleavage with low-cut necklines (Rampton, 2019). By embracing beauty practices, post-feminists aimed to make a statement that they were already empowered and that there was no need for feminist rejection of femininity and beauty rituals (Riley & Scharff, 2012). By claiming that women had the confidence to enjoy the self-aestheticization, post-feminists facilitated the creation of the empowered feminine identity, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

However, under the influence of consumer culture, advertisers emptied feminism and post-feminism of their original purposes as these movements were turned into 'consumer feminism' - a strategy used to promote products to women under the disguise of popular ideas of liberation and empowerment (Goldman, 1992; McRobbie, 1996; Lazar, 2006). By using these commercial strategies, the beauty industry elicits ideas that the feelings of empowerment and confidence can be achieved by consuming beauty products (Lazar, 2006). Being an integral part of the beauty industry, makeup is advertised to women as substances used to change physical appearance. Within feminist discourses, using makeup has been largely considered as going against feminism (Iyer, n.d.; Riley & Scharff, 2012). Particularly, Chambers (2008), Bindel (2019), Barthel (1988) and Adkins (1997) have stressed that using makeup is disciplinary and oppressive, meaning that the desire to engage in beauty practices is dictated by the objectifying beauty standards of the society. Moreover, using makeup has been viewed by Duffy (2013) as an attempt to mask the natural appearance due to a lack of self-esteem. On the other hand, there are feminist defenders of makeup within feminist discussions claiming that using makeup empowers women and allows them to express themselves and their creativity (Walter, 1999; Lehrman, 1997; Williams, 2018). The feminist discussion on makeup usage is two-sided, as feminist views on beauty practices appear to be versatile (Riley & Scharff, 2012). Lately, the views on makeup usage have been increasingly positive as distinct discourses on empowerment through makeup have emerged, particularly on social media. Within such discourses, using makeup transformed into a way to achieve

and express confidence and empowerment (Aguilar, 2019; Williams, 2018; Pang, 2016; Roncal, 2013). Moreover, nowadays, social media encourages and empowers its users to speak up and post content (Li, 2016; Leong, Pan, Bahri & Fauzi, 2019), providing more opportunities for women to participate in the increasingly visible empowerment discourses and amplifying their voices.

Among the ways to share thoughts and engage with other users in online discourses, video blogging on YouTube has witnessed a surge in popularity in recent years (Wright, 2017). One of the most popular sub-genres of video blogging, beauty blogging, consists of beauty bloggers who have built their audience base around their vast knowledge on beauty and makeup-related products (Riboni, 2017; Wright, 2017). They typically share their expertise and opinions with their followers and are viewed as influential digital celebrities (Garcia-Rapp, 2016). American beauty bloggers are predominantly young women in their twenties and thirties (Riboni, 2017; Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017; Berryman & Kavka, 2017) who are seen as reputable characters by their audiences. Nowadays, the gendered definition of beauty bloggers can be expanded, since a lot of men have entered the world of makeup and are growing in popularity not only on YouTube, but in the overall beauty industry (Gill, Henwood & McLean, 2015; Jayson, 2014). Although male beauty bloggers remain a minority, using makeup among men is becoming more mainstream (North, 2018).

The most popular genre of beauty-related videos on YouTube comprises makeup tutorials or 'How to' videos where beauty bloggers show the step-by-step process of achieving makeup looks (Riboni, 2017; Garcia-Rapp, 2016; Tolson, 2010). In these videos, bloggers show makeup products and makeup application techniques. By talking about makeup and educating their viewers about makeup, beauty bloggers are themselves participants in the makeup discourses on YouTube. In addition, the theme of female empowerment, a multidimensional social construct that is synonymous with feelings of confidence and agency, is prominent in the beauty community. Other than discussing makeup, bloggers simultaneously engage in the discourses on makeup empowerment, as they are sharing with their viewers how wearing makeup makes them feel satisfied, confident and proud. For instance, a video by a famous Dutch-based beauty blogger titled "The POWER of makeup!", which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, is one of the most prominent examples of makeup empowerment, as the blogger proudly expresses her love for makeup and its transformative power. It is interesting to study exactly how the beauty bloggers discuss makeup and empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorials. Importantly,

beauty bloggers are arguably preferred over traditional ways of advertising by young audiences (Riboni, 2017) and have high influencing power over audiences, according to Wright (2018). Such status and popularity make bloggers' opinions about makeup valuable to consumers, in a sense that they have potential implications for consumer purchases and the beauty industry in general (Creswell, 2017; Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017). This thesis concerns the topic of empowerment through makeup and how beauty bloggers portray it discursively in their makeup tutorials and aims to answer the following research questions: *How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct discourses on empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorial videos?* In addition to exploring the representation of empowerment through makeup, this thesis will contribute to existing discussions on makeup and its discursive representation and will generate valuable insights by answering the sub-question: *How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct discourses on makeup in their makeup tutorial videos?*

In addition to exploring how beauty bloggers construct discussions about makeup and empowerment through makeup, this thesis will also compare the discourses that are used to describe the two most popular makeup looks that bloggers create and show: 'no makeup' and 'full glam' looks. This thesis focuses on two distinct makeup looks as they differ in their purposes and concern different makeup techniques and applications. For instance, to create a natural or 'no makeup' makeup look, makeup is applied to achieve a "natural-looking base" (Winter, 2020), whereas 'full glam' looks are characterized by extensive application of makeup products to make facial features stand out and look 'dramatic' (McCullough, 2018; Bende, n.d.). These makeup looks will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The looks differ drastically in their nature and purposes, creating a potential difference in the makeup discourses. Namely, the 'no makeup' makeup look concerns applying as little makeup as possible and is usually associated with naturalness, authentic beauty and minimal alterations (Gillette, 2018; Fabricant & Gould, 1993). On the other end of the spectrum, 'full glam' makeup looks are intended to look dramatic and visibly enhanced and are usually designated for special occasions (Kennedy, 2016). By introducing the two looks, this paper will investigate whether there are any differences in the discourses on makeup empowerment by beauty bloggers in different types of makeup tutorials. Therefore, the second sub-question that will aid in answering the main research question is: *Do makeup empowerment discourses differ between natural and full glam makeup tutorials?*

1.1 Relevance

To this day, extensive research has been conducted on the topics of feminism (regarding feminist views of the beauty industry) (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2008; Fraser, 2012), female empowerment (Diebolt & Perrin, 2013; Lazar, 2006), female representations in advertising (Duffy, 2013; Pounders, 2018), and in online beauty communities (Garcia-Rapp, 2016; Garcia-Rapp & Rosa-Cuberes, 2017). Additionally, existing literature discusses beauty bloggers and beauty content on social media (Riboni, 2017; Garcia-Rapp, 2017; Kennedy, 2016). Existing research mainly focuses on bloggers' communication strategies, such as being relevant to their audiences (Riboni, 2017; Garcia-Rapp, 2016), and the perceived opinion leadership of beauty bloggers in regard to their (Riboni, 2017; Mardon, Molesworth & Grigore, 2018). However, the area of beauty bloggers (Riboni, 2017) and its relation to empowerment ideology still remains unexplored. Notably, there has been no research on how beauty bloggers construct empowerment in their makeup-related videos, indicating a potential gap in the literature. To fill this gap, this thesis will research the construction and communication of empowerment in the contemporary YouTube world of beauty blogging. Moreover, this thesis uses a theoretical framework that consists of a feminist perspective to examine empowerment through makeup. The use of a feminist outlook on empowerment and the role of makeup in women's lives will provide the theoretical basis for the analysis. This thesis will yield valuable results and contribute to existing studies, since in the age of social media, discussions on empowerment are increasingly present in Western society and call for an updated examination (Roehl, 2017; Harkness, 2017). Moreover, according to Rampton (2019), the future of feminism is unknown, as is the view of beauty practices by feminists, and an up-to-date study is needed to expand the academic discussion.

Overall, this thesis will investigate how beauty bloggers discuss makeup and how they construct empowerment through/with the help of makeup in their makeup tutorials with the following research question: *How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct discourses on empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorial videos?* The following sub-questions will help to answer the main question: *How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct makeup discourses in their makeup tutorial videos? Do makeup empowerment discourses differ between natural and full glam makeup tutorials?*

1.2 Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 (Theoretical framework) will briefly introduce feminism and then proceed to the discussion about post-feminism and consumer feminism to establish a theoretical base for this research. Furthermore, theoretical discussion will be enhanced by an in-depth discussion on the beauty industry, makeup, and what makeup usage entails. In addition, Chapter 2 elaborates on the concepts of empowerment and empowerment through makeup in detail. Afterwards, the chapter explains the phenomenon of beauty blogging on YouTube and presents a brief summary of the research in the last sub-chapter. Chapter 3 (Methodology) will discuss the research design, sampling size and criteria, and operationalization of relevant concepts, and will justify the choice of critical discourse analysis as a method of research for this paper. In addition, Chapter 3 includes a section on reflexivity to enhance the transparency of the research process. Chapter 4 (Results) proceeds to the detailed discussions of the 14 analyzed YouTube videos to determine how discourses on makeup and empowerment through makeup are being constructed on YouTube by female beauty bloggers. Finally, Chapter 5 (Conclusion) will draw overall conclusions for the research. This chapter will also acknowledge limitations of the research and provide suggestions for future research.

Theoretical framework

  This chapter discusses relevant literature regarding various components of this thesis which concerns the construction of discourses on empowerment through makeup by beauty bloggers on YouTube. First, this chapter sets up a feminist perspective by describing various feminist waves and the theme of empowerment. Secondly, existing theories on consumer feminism will be revised, which will be followed by a discussion on makeup practices and discourses on empowerment through makeup. In addition, this chapter will present the phenomenon of empowerment on social media and illustrate the role of makeup and empowerment in beauty blogging on YouTube. This chapter is finalized with a short summary of the overall theoretical framework for this thesis.

2.1 A feminist perspective

  Feminism is thought to have its roots in ancient Greece, spanning throughout medieval times, when an Italian humanist Christine de Pizan decided to combat the dominance of misogynistic literature in her country by writing the first major feminist tract in Western tradition in 1405 (Bennett, 1989). Since then, the advocacy for women's rights has been circulating in Western society and by the late nineteenth century has transformed into a clear, deliberate, and recognized movement (Rampton, 2019). Feminists were keen to undermine the persisting gender injustice and fought for earning voting rights for women, establishing equal pay, educational equality, reproductive freedom and the right to use birth control (Grady, 2018; Rampton, 2019; Hewitt, 2010; Fraser, 2012). Importantly, feminists achieved several major accomplishments, the biggest ones considered the female right to vote and the right for women to become political candidates (Maxwell, 2014). Feminism challenged patriarchal systems and pushed Western societies closer to gender equality in multiple areas (Maxwell, 2014). Although the Western world was majorly impacted by the feminist movement, there are still ongoing challenges, such as persisting gender pay gap and lack of female representation in various fields (Gill, 2016), that are yet to be overcome by the new waves of feminism.

  After the radical second-wave feminist fights for women's rights and freedom emerged post-feminism, a 'new consciousness' among young female generations of the 1980s-1990s (Ortner, 2014; McRobbie, 2009). The term 'post-feminism' has been used to describe various instances, such as an attempt to keep up with other 'post-' trends, a new name for the third wave of feminism (Gill, 2016) and, primarily, a backlash against radical

feminism (Blloshmi, 2013). Post-feminists did not want to be associated with previous feminist values partially because the old values were considered to be 'too strong and harsh' by the new generation (Ortner, 2014), meaning that the actions of the second-wave feminists were viewed as 'radical' and 'extreme'. By refusing to identify as 'feminists' (Rampton, 2019), post-feminists have fostered a movement that has been dubbed 'counterattack to the feminist killjoy' (Ahmed, 2010). Indeed, post-feminist generations emerged in a different cultural and political context than second-wave feminists (Banet-Weiser & Portwood-Stacer, 2006), namely, post-colonial and post-modern thinking (Rampton, 2019), and held values different from previous waves of feminism. Generally, post-feminism defends the idea that women have achieved the total freedom and equality they were fighting for and are now in control of their bodies, feeling an empowered feminine identity (Lazar, 2006; Riley & Scharff, 2012), which will be elaborated on later in this sub-chapter. One of the central beliefs of post-feminists is that women have appropriated and readopted objectification, in a sense that they abandoned victimization and embraced femininity which was previously rejected by second-wave feminists (Rampton, 2019; Riley & Scharff, 2012). Post-feminists stated that in order for feminism to be effective, it is necessary for women to embrace the pleasures of self-aestheticization, which are central to gaining confidence and agency (Grady, 2018; Riley & Scharff, 2012; Lazar, 2006). To manifest the empowered feminine identity, post-feminists started engaging in the stereotypical 'traditionally feminine' practices (Rampton, 2019). Namely, young post-feminists started wearing bold lipsticks, high heels and shirts with deep cleavages, which were previously associated with female objectification and were refuted within the feminist waves (Rampton, 2019). Among post-feminists, feminist rejection of femininity was considered to be misogynistic and oppressive in itself, since they argued that femininity is no less valuable than masculinity and should not be opposed by feminists (Grady, 2018; Munford, 2007). The oppressive nature of feminist criticism towards femininity and sexuality can be seen in Germaine Greer's (1999) words: "To deny a woman's sexuality is certainly to oppress her". Hence, to eliminate feminist restrictions and set women free, desire for self-aestheticization and feminine practices was accepted and celebrated by post-feminists (Lazar, 2006). Post-feminists stopped fighting the stereotypes and instead embraced them and bestowed power upon them (Eskes, Duncan & Miller, 1998; Grady, 2013).

As mentioned before, the central narrative of post-feminism stated that by embracing femininity and being open towards enjoying feminine practices, women become more confident and empowered (Dosekun, 2015; Riley & Scharff, 2012; Baumgardner & Richards,

2004; Lazar, 2006). In the literature, 'empowerment' and 'choice' have been extensively discussed as the key points of post-feminism (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Gill, 2007; Rampton, 2019), as post-feminism has fostered the emergence of the empowered feminine identity (Diebolt-Perrin, 2013; Lazar, 2016). Empowerment, a multidimensional social construct (Hur, 2006) that plays a key role in the empowered feminine identity, can be seen as both an empowering process and an outcome that is embodied in the state of being empowered (Li, 2016; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Empowerment entails gaining control and autonomy (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) and usually is the driving force behind social change and development (Drury & Reicher, 2009). Empowerment occurs across multiple dimensions, such as social and political, and on individual, group and community levels (Hur, 2006). Because of its inherent social nature, empowerment is subjected to discourses, within which participants strive to feel empowered and share their personal empowerment experiences.

2.3 Consumer feminism

Advertising has been changing constantly, responding to alterations in the economy, politics, technology, fashion and society (Gill, 2008). By the 1990s, as the influence of post-feminism and empowerment ideology on lifestyles and attitudes grew, advertising executives had to rethink their strategies of representing emancipated women and femininity in advertisements (Gill, 2008; Goldman, 1992; Goldman, Heath & Smith, 1991). As a result, advertisers 'repackaged' feminism and femininity into a set of strategies for commercial success (Goldman et. al, 1991; Lazar, 2006). Feminist ideology was stripped of its original social and political purposes and placed in a commercial context (Gill, 2008). The appropriation of feminist ideas by advertisers resulted in the birth of 'commodity feminism' (Lazar, 2006) - a commercial strategy employed by popular culture and advertisers to appeal to women and evoke commodity consumption (Goldman, 1992; Hains, 2014). As advertisers turned "feminist social goals to individual life-style" (Rapp, 1988, p. 32), feminism got 'depoliticized' and blended with consumer culture (Gill, 2016).

Similar to Lazar's (2006) view on commodity feminism, which incorporates both feminist and post-feminist ideas, I argue that besides infamously exploiting feminism for economic purposes, commercial players have 'rebranded' post-feminist narratives as well. By assuring women that they can become empowered through consumption, advertisers incorporate post-feminist ideology of the empowered feminine identity and portray confident women who embody freedom and agency in advertisements (Lazar, 2006). However, within

consumer feminism, empowerment is turned into a commodified and consumer-oriented discourse, which is particularly prominent in the beauty industry (Fahs, 2011). Modern popular culture presents beauty brands as empowering agents, giving women the confidence, empowerment and agency that women desire (Wolf, 1991; Lazar, 2006). The underlying message in the advertisements states that women can only achieve confidence and empowerment and be attractive by turning to the beauty industry and consuming beauty products (Gill, 2016; Duffy, 2013), while the act of engaging in the consumption is presented under the narrative of female emancipation and agency of choice (Riley & Scharff, 2012). One of the examples of empowerment in advertisements provided by Lazar (2006), "Empower eyes with *Advanced Volume Mascara* [emphasis in original]", illustrates well how women's only way to empowerment seems to occur by engaging in alteration and enhancement of appearances.

2.4 Makeup practices

Within the beauty and cosmetics industry, makeup gets advertised heavily to female consumers as a means to change physical appearances. Before proceeding to the key topic of this research – the empowerment discourses through makeup - it is crucial to first discuss what makeup is and how it is viewed in the existing literature.

As a starting point, I will use English dictionaries to introduce the existing definitions of makeup, a the dictionary definitions will provide an understanding of how makeup is generally referred to in the English language. The most popular online English dictionaries define makeup as substances used to change appearance that are predominantly applied onto one's face (Oxford Dictionary, 2020; Cambridge Dictionary, 2020; Merriam-Webster, 2020). However, in these definitions, makeup is portrayed as a tool to not only *change*, but also specifically *enhance* and *improve* appearance. The Oxford Dictionary (2020) goes as far as stating that makeup "is worn especially by women to make their faces look more attractive". Such choice of words suggests that the very essence of using makeup – its purpose – is gendered, in the sense that it is women who are trying to make themselves look more attractive. The above-mentioned dictionary definitions also include words like 'improve', 'enhance' and 'beautify', referring to the abilities of makeup to change the appearance for the better. Makeup indeed concerns substances that are used to change or alter appearances, but applying makeup serves more purposes that go beyond the aforementioned element of physical attractiveness, that will be discussed in detail in the following sub-chapters.

Particularly, the following section in this chapter about "*Makeup empowerment discourses*" will elaborate on this topic.

Previous academic research on makeup usage states that using makeup relates to self-image improvement in relation to others and to oneself (Rudd, 1997) and to identity construction (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). In addition to the existing dictionary definitions, previous studies in social psychology have shown that apart from enhancing physical attractiveness, using makeup also elevates self-esteem, feelings of social confidence and social interactions (Cash, Dawson, Davis, Bowen & Galumbeck, 1989; Cash, Rissi & Chapman, 1985; Miller & Cox, 1982; Theberge & Kernaleguen, 1979). In addition, in the feminist discussions, feminist opinions on makeup and beauty practices are differing (Riley & Scharff, 2012). As mentioned before, within feminism, makeup practices and the beauty industry are largely considered to be 'anti-feminist' (Iyer, n.d.). For example, Chambers (2008) refers to makeup and other beauty and grooming practices for women as "disciplinary", meaning that the beauty industry dictates how women should look and behave. As argued by Briscoe (2019), the beauty industry creates unrealistic standards that pressure women into feeling the need to hide their flaws and adhere to a certain image. Likewise, Adkins (1997) and Barthel (1988) both stated that makeup forces patriarchal culture upon women since the main purpose of makeup is to enhance attractiveness for the opposite sex. Moreover, by engaging in makeup practices, women spend a lot of time adjusting their looks to appear more attractive for the opposite sex, which limits their time for other matters, according to Bordo (1993). Along these lines, Bindel (2019) fiercely campaigns against the use of makeup and says that women do not have to wear makeup in order to look better and feel good about themselves. In Bindel's (2019) understanding, certain societal expectations about 'beauty' are forcing women to wear makeup and make women feel as if they are not 'beautiful' enough without cosmetics on their faces. Similarly, Harkness (2017) expressed her view of using makeup as a practice that is hiding women's natural appearances. Moreover, using makeup is said to be damaging to women's self-esteem and causing dependency on beauty tools in women (Jaquez, 2019). All in all, the unfavorable perspectives on makeup usage largely imply that engaging in beauty practices is a result of detrimental societal pressure and norms (Jacquez, 2019; Bindel, 2019), which are reinforced by the beauty industry itself.

On the other hand, feminist and, particularly, post-feminist discussions also view makeup usage as a favorable practice (Lehrman, 1997; Walter, 1999; Riley & Scharff, 2012). Already in 1984, at the beginning of the post-feminist wave, Susan Brownmiller indicated

that feminists were resistant to recognizing women's versatile reasons for wearing cosmetics, implying that using makeup serves more purposes to it and is not solely about discipline. Moreover, as Lehrman (1997) and Walter (1999) argued, makeup has been 'reclaimed' by women, meaning that women make choices whether or not to wear makeup. Lehrman and Walter both assert that beauty culture is not harmful to self-confidence and wearing makeup is no longer associated with patriarchal objectification (Lehrman, 1997; Walter, 1999). In addition, as the previous paragraphs have mentioned, femininity and makeup were embraced by post-feminists (Rampton, 2019; Riley & Scharff, 2012) who started actively engaging in beauty practices as a means to show their empowered feminine identity. Within this empowerment ideology, post-feminists are able to enjoy traditionally feminine activities and derive confidence, agency and empowerment from pleasurable and deliberate participation in beauty practices and consumer culture (Riley & Scharff, 2012). As seen from the discussion on feminist perspectives, beauty practices were usually linked to societal expectations and oppressive beauty standards, but now seem to be shifting away from this association (White, 2018) and this change will be explained in the next sub-chapter.

2.5 Makeup empowerment discourses

Over the years, the role and view of makeup have changed among feminists and within Western societies in general (Aguilar, 2019; Riley & Scharff, 2012). Using makeup became no longer associated with objectification or discipline, as widely viewed before, but rather with expressing confidence and empowerment (Aguilar, 2019). There are multiple reasons for wearing makeup: among other things, it is a tool for artistic freedom, self-expression and stress relief (Williams, 2018; Aguilar, 2019). From this point of view, using makeup is not a damaging, but freeing practice used by confident and empowered individuals who derive pleasure and enjoyment from engaging in beauty practices (White, 2018). Such reconfiguration of women's engagement with makeup facilitates the construction of makeup empowerment discourses.

I define makeup empowerment discourses as positive discussions about empowerment through makeup, in the sense that empowerment is achieved with the help of using makeup. I will now illustrate the main characteristics of these discussions in detail. As mentioned in the "*Post-feminism*" sub-chapter, empowerment itself is synonymous with gaining freedom and control (Hur, 2006). Empowerment is inherently social (Drury & Reicher, 2009) and is the central point of empowerment discourses. Within makeup empowerment discourses, makeup practices are embraced by the participants who refer to

makeup as a tool for empowerment and share their positive experiences of achieving confidence through makeup usage. Notably, the context of such empowerment discourses is uplifting and positive. Namely, instead of viewing makeup usage as a disciplining activity, individuals are aware of its altering abilities, but they embrace such power to change their appearances and are happy to use it on themselves. Participants are taking pride in their enhanced appearances and this act is praised by fellow makeup-lovers (Roncal, 2013). Using makeup is often referred to as "playing with makeup" (Aguilar, 2019), highlighting the overall perception of makeup usage as a mood-lifting activity. Moreover, makeup application implies spending time on oneself, and self-care is respected and praised by participants across makeup empowerment discourses (Harveys Beauty, 2018; Aguilar, 2019). As opposed to Bindel's (2019) arguments against spending excessive time on beauty practices, participants of the makeup empowerment discourses are eager to engage in self-grooming. In addition, taking pride in wearing makeup is a form of collective protest against makeup shaming – a practice of discrediting those who wear makeup (Kennedy, 2016; Iyer, n.d.). As Aguilar (2019) described, people are constantly faced with opinions of others on what to do and how much makeup to wear, yet, these decisions are subjected to personal choice and should not be dictated. Participants of the makeup empowerment discourses often encourage and support each other, forming an empowered community.

2.5.1 Social media empowerment

In addition to being derived from makeup usage, empowerment is fostered by social media as well. Social media can create shared meanings (Castells, 2009) and makes it easier for people with similar values and understandings to connect with each other (Downey & Fenton, 2003). Social media platforms act as digital environments for users to find like-minded people (Fieseler & Fleck, 2013) and participate in discussions (Martensen, Brockenhuus-Scheck & Zahid, 2018). Such connections have the power to facilitate mobilization of others, improve users' abilities to take collective actions and foster global participation in various movements (Li, 2015; Shirky, 2011). By virtue of building connections, facilitating social power and providing space for discussions, social media empowers users.

Due to feeling empowered to speak up on social media, women now have more opportunities to participate in the discourses on empowerment through makeup. A platform which empowers people to post and show themselves can also show this empowering discourse around beauty. Interconnectedness of social media platforms allows the makeup

empowerment discourses to take new forms and reach wider audiences. Social media helps to amplify the voices of the participants in the makeup empowerment discourses and provides opportunities for the empowerment discourses to circulate in interviews, blogs, video blogs, photos and other digital content. For instance, Lydia Pang (2017), a creative director at Refinery29, describes her mood-lifting and empowering experience with makeup in an interview:

> …I love makeup. Everything about it. From buying it, to applying it, to how it makes me feel. I find it therapeutic. And I don't feel like I'm covering up or masquerading as someone more exciting or badass, but like I'm celebrating exactly who I am on the inside…

Moreover, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, the video of a Dutch beauty blogger Nikkie de Jager about makeup empowerment titled "The POWER of Makeup" challenges 'makeup shaming' – a practice of discrediting those who wear makeup. The assumption behind makeup shaming' is that makeup is worn because of insecurity, hiding the 'true' face and, thus, creates a 'fake' appearance (Kennedy, 2016). In the video, Nikkie appeared with half of her face covered in makeup and leaving the other half bare, while pointing out various imperfections on her face and how she could use makeup to alter her appearance. Nikkie's aim was to show the public that anyone can use makeup to transform themselves and that her transformation is empowering because she embraces both appearances, altered and unaltered (Kennedy, 2016). "The POWER of Makeup!" started a movement where people showed half of their faces with makeup and the other half without, embracing both looks and supporting the message. Nikkie's feelings of empowerment from the makeup transformation are linked to her personal choice to use makeup in a way that is pleasurable and enjoyable for her. The empowered movement is centred around a belief that women are able to *choose* and endow makeup with their own values and use it for their own purposes (Chan, 2016; Riley & Scharff, 2012).

2.6 Beauty bloggers & Beauty content on YouTube

On the Internet, YouTube is one of the most popular video-sharing platforms worldwide (Burgess & Green, 2009; Garcia-Rapp, 2017; Kennedy, 2016) and in recent years, beauty blogging became one of the most widespread type of content on the platform (Rasmussen, 2018; Wright, 2018; Garcia-Rapp, 2017b). Beauty bloggers are typically

classified as online influencers who have a follower base centered around their beauty expertise (Riboni, 2017; Mardon et. al, 2018; Rasmussen, 2018). Similar to Boerman's (2020) categorization of micro- (< 10000 followers) and meso- (10000 - 1 million followers) Instagram influencers, YouTube beauty bloggers can be categorized under micro- (1000 - 100000 subscribers) and macro- (100000 – 1 million subscribers) levels, depending respectively on the number of their followers and the level of their popularity (Willson, n.d.). It is necessary to refine the characteristics of beauty bloggers for this thesis as the research question here concerns female American beauty bloggers. As Choi and Behm-Moravitz (2017, p. 80) have demonstrated, English-speaking beauty bloggers as "mostly young and female". Similarly, Riboni (2017) narrows down the definition of Western beauty bloggers as entrepreneurial women in their twenties or thirties, in the sense that they are likely to have their own business ventures in the beauty industry, such as their own beauty brands. Moreover, Berryman and Kavka (2017, p. 308) describe the beauty community on YouTube as consisting "predominantly of women aged 14–34 who, either by posting videos themselves or contributing to discussions using YouTube's commenting function, have fostered a collaborative, knowledge-sharing community". On YouTube, beauty bloggers have channels where they post beauty- and lifestyle-related videos, sharing their knowledge about, or, more often, reviewing cosmetic products (Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017; Rasmussen, 2018; Berryman & Kavka, 2017). Besides beauty product reviews, makeup tutorials are considered to be the most popular genre of videos among beauty bloggers on YouTube (Riboni, 2017). Makeup tutorials are video narratives where beauty bloggers explain the application of makeup techniques step-by-step in a 'how-to' style combined with lifestyle narratives (Riboni, 2017b; Garcia-Rapp, 2017b; Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017; Tolson, 2010). Beauty bloggers provide their audience with detailed knowledge about makeup products and makeup application techniques to maintain their beauty-related expertise and be distinguished from regular "makeup enthusiasts" (Riboni, 2017; White, 2018). To operationalize "young female American beauty bloggers", this thesis combines the above-mentioned characteristics and views the bloggers as young adults ranging from late teens to women in their thirties who upload beauty-related videos on YouTube and have a following base around their beauty-related knowledge.

Two kinds of makeup tutorials will be examined in this thesis: those that explain how to achieve 'no makeup' or natural makeup looks and 'full glam' makeup looks. 'No makeup' makeup looks are precisely what they sound like – natural-like looks which resemble a bare face with no makeup (Winter, 2020; Fabricant & Gould, 1993), as briefly mentioned in the

Chapter 1. The purpose of a natural makeup look is that makeup application is unnoticeable and the final result should look like an unaltered face (McCullough, 2018; Fabricant & Gould, 1993). 'No makeup' makeup looks are even referred to as "I woke up like this" to reflect how the altered appearance is passed on as unaltered (Winter, 2020). On the other hand, 'full glam' stands for a dramatic, glamorous makeup look with a lot of makeup products applied (McCullough, 2018). 'Full glam' usually refers to a makeup look that is being worn to special events, where women desire to define and highlight facial features in an intentionally visible, dramatic way (Blende Beauty, n.d.).

A distinct characteristic of beauty bloggers is their perceived trustworthiness by the audience (Riboni, 2017). Subscribers feel familiarity with beauty bloggers and can sympathise with them, since most beauty-related videos are structured in a form of a conversation with a friend (Riboni, 2017; Rasmussen, 2018; Berryman & Kavka, 2017). While exhibiting vast knowledge of beauty products, majority of the bloggers try to make themselves more appealing to their followers (Riboni, 2017), although some bloggers choose to maintain professional tonality. Furthermore, drawing on the concept of parasocial relationships, when a one-sided relationship is experienced between the influencer and the follower, viewers often feel like they know the bloggers (Martensen et. al, 2018). Moreover, beauty bloggers are perceived as trustworthy sources of information who have superior product-related knowledge; thus, consumers tend to seek expert advice from the bloggers' content (Martensen et. al, 2018; Creswell, 2017). The above-mentioned characteristics of influencers or opinion-leaders suggest that they might have a high degree of influencing power over viewers' buying decisions when transmitting certain messages (Mardon et. al, 2018). As a result of their popularity, beauty bloggers are highly demanded by beauty brands for marketing purposes and brand endorsements (WARC, 2011). Moreover, bloggers have successfully commercialized their ability to impact the opinions of their followers - perceived 'opinion leadership' (Mardon, et. al, 2018) - and turned it into profitable collaborations. According to statistics, despite being a small minority, leading American beauty bloggers earn anywhere from 5000 to 40000 dollars a month (Richtman, 2015).

The way beauty bloggers frame certain topics in their videos and talk about makeup has a potential impact on their viewers due to the previously discussed perceived 'opinion leadership' (Mardon et. al, 2018). By creating beauty-related content, beauty bloggers participate in the makeup discourses on YouTube. Moreover, as makeup plays a key role in the lives of the beauty bloggers, using makeup to create different looks arguably serves versatile purposes for the bloggers. As seen in the example of NikkieTutorials' video about

empowerment through makeup, it is interesting to investigate the ways in which beauty bloggers discursively portray makeup and empowerment through makeup in the makeup tutorials.

2.7 Summary

Empowerment and emancipation have been the key themes of the feminist movement and the new wave of post-feminism facilitated the creation of an empowered feminine identity. According to post-feminists, women have confidence to embrace the feminine beauty practices and derive empowerment from self-aestheticization. At the same time, the feminist values got stripped of their original core purposes and were 'repackaged' into consumer feminism - commercial strategies used by advertisers and the media. Beauty practices and makeup in particular are advertised to female consumers as ways to achieve confidence and empowerment. Within a feminist framework there is a two-sided view on makeup usage and femininity: critical feminists reject the beauty culture, whereas post-feminists embrace beauty practices. Gradually, using makeup has transitioned from being viewed as an oppressive practice towards an empowering tool to boost self-confidence. Nowadays, discourses on beauty and makeup empowerment in particular are increasingly visible on social media platforms, where users are encouraged to participate and share their opinions. On social media platforms, beauty bloggers are active participants in makeup discourses, as they share their thoughts, skills and exclusive knowledge about makeup with their viewers. As the examination of the current literature has determined, a research on the discourses on makeup and empowerment by beauty bloggers on a social media platform seems to be missing, and this study will fill this gap by analysing the spoken discourses of beauty bloggers on empowerment through makeup in the makeup tutorials.

Methodology

       This chapter discusses the research design of this thesis and the methods that have been chosen in order to answer the main research question and the accompanying two sub-questions: How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct discourses on empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorial videos? How do young female American beauty bloggers on YouTube construct discourses on makeup in their makeup tutorial videos? Do the discourses on empowerment differ between natural and 'full glam' makeup tutorials?

       First, the chapter starts by discussing the chosen approach, after which critical discourse analysis will be introduced as a method of analysis and explained. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the sampling procedure and sampling criteria. Finally, this chapter will discuss operationalization of the relevant concepts and demonstrate how the chosen method of critical discourse analysis has been utilized in order to answer the research questions.

3.1 Methods

       The research aim that this thesis is planning to achieve addresses the construction of discourses on empowerment through makeup on YouTube, a platform for sharing video content. As introduced before, such discourses concern the ongoing discussion about empowerment achieved by/with the help of using makeup. In order to answer the main research question and the sub-questions, an interpretative, qualitative approach will be employed. An exploratory qualitative approach is needed when trying to understand the topic in-depth and to make sense of the data (Boeije, 2010). In a qualitative study, the research process is flexible and iterative, allowing the researcher to alter parts of the research as the study is being carried out (Maxwell, 2008). A qualitative research consists of cycles of data processing within data analysis that are constantly revised in order to grasp the complexity of the data (Boeije, 2010). Moreover, a close involvement of the researcher is necessary, who will take active part in the analysis process (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005). With the help of the researcher's interpretation, patterns will be identified among the data and the qualitative research will result in a greater understanding of the underlying meanings of data.

       The research topic concerns YouTube beauty bloggers' discussions of empowerment through makeup in two different types of makeup tutorials. This thesis is focusing on spoken discourses of beauty bloggers, for which the use of discourse analysis is suitable – one of the popular methods used in qualitative research that aims to generate a thorough understanding

of texts (Kress, 1990). Specifically, the objective of discourse analysts is to uncover the underlying systems of meaning in a given situation through examining language (Hall, 1997; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). To analyse the construction of discussions about makeup and empowerment through makeup, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was selected as a tool for examination. There is a set of critical approaches that can be classified as CDA (Machin & Mayr, 2012), as CDA is not homogenous and does not have clear and defined tools (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 1999). CDA has its roots in the works of Foucault (1976) on discourse, which suggest that reality is constructed through language and that we make sense of the world by giving meaning to it through language (Hall, 1997; Macdonald, 2003; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). In the realm of CDA and other types of discourse analyses, the ways in which objects and subjects are constituted can be studied through a set of statements, i.e. texts (Potter, 2004). Hence, by analysing texts it is possible to expose the underlying meaning in the discourse (Kress, 1991; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). What distinguishes CDA from other methods, and what makes it suitable for this research, is its critical aspect which concerns power relations, ideologies and discourses on inequality and power imbalance (Kress, 1990; Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rogers, Schaenen, Schott, O'Brien, Trigos-Carrillo, Starkey & Chasteen, 2016). 'Critical' in the critical discourse analysis stands for the denaturalization of common sense, denying easy explanations of the given phenomenon and revealing hidden assumptions (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Wodak, 1999) while taking a critical stance. This means that while performing the analysis, the researcher stays critical of the research data. The following paragraph will now illustrate how CDA will be carried out to fit the research needs of this thesis.

As set in Chapters 1 and 2, This study aims to uncover how the discourses on empowerment through makeup are constructed by the beauty bloggers via their choice of language and how meaning is given to makeup in two different kinds of makeup tutorials. Critical discourse analysis will help to examine how makeup is being discursively framed and how bloggers represent empowerment through using makeup, while critically assessing the language. In this study, CDA does not concern authority or status (Machin & Mayr, 2012) and the focus is not on the direct relationship between dominant and subordinate groups or the intentions behind domination; instead, this study looks at empowerment ideology in connection to beauty practices, meaning how empowerment is represented in beauty-related videos and is constructed through makeup. This thesis unites CDA with a feminist theoretical framework, resembling feminist CDA proposed by Lazar (2007), yet the approach here is different. According to Lazar (2007), feminist CDA aims at advancing an understanding of

the complex interrelations between power and ideology in discourses which concern gender relations in society. In Lazar's understanding of feminist CDA, the research is likely centred around gender ideology, meaning ideology of institutionalized gendered social arrangements, and asymmetric power relations between the genders. Similar to feminist CDA, this thesis will contribute to discourse studies as it utilizes feminist studies as a theoretical base. However, it will not look at the imbalance of gender relations, but rather at how the empowerment ideology is discursively produced in a specific context of beauty blogging on a social media platform and will assess the situation using a feminist theoretical perspective. Importantly, this study looks at the previous academic discussion on post-feminism and consumer feminism to understand the evolution of empowerment ideology and how it is linked to the beauty practices. Looking at the representation of makeup and empowerment through the lens of post-feminism and consumer feminism will aid in understanding the contemporary trends in empowerment discourses.

3.2 Operationalization

As explained in detail in Chapter 2, makeup empowerment discourses are defined as positive discussions on empowerment through makeup. Makeup may be represented as a positive practice that is embraced by the participants of such discourses (Aguilar, 2019). Within such discourses, participants are happy to use makeup and take pride in their altered appearances, which make them feel good and confident. Makeup empowerment discourses often form empowered communities since participants encourage and support each other (Roncal, 2013). Based on the existing discussions on empowerment through makeup in literature and digital sources (Hur, 2006; Roehl, 2017; Aguilar, 2019; Roncal, 2013; Pang, 2017; Shapouri, 2015), it is possible to provide preliminary linguistic markers of empowerment. If makeup is being portrayed as empowering, then linguistic choices of bloggers may contain words like 'empowering', 'confidence', 'fun', 'expression', 'control', 'freedom', 'creativity', 'beautiful' (Roehl, 2017; Chan, 2016). The context in which such linguistic choices are produced is positive and suggests that makeup elevates self-esteem, helps to express creativity and provides artistic freedom for experimenting and trying new looks (Shapouri, 2015; Roncal, 2013). Bloggers could also indicate how makeup makes them feel good and that they are proud of wearing it. In this case, makeup will be referred to as something enjoyable and pleasant (Roncal, 2013; White, 2018; White, 2017). Moreover, bloggers could be expressing their satisfaction with the amount of control they gain when

using makeup, in a sense that they can alter their appearances in a way they want (Flaherty, 2018). On the other hand, to obtain a more complete analysis, there could be other types of discourses, where makeup is being portrayed as an unfavorable concealing practice, much like in the existing radically feminist discourses on beauty practices (Adkins, 1997; Harkness, 2017; Bindel, 2019). Within such discourses, makeup is framed as oppressive and disciplining and the discourse is centered around makeup as a mask. Using makeup is associated with an attempt to cover up imperfections and hide behind makeup out of insecurities and lack of confidence (Harkness, 2017; Bindel, 2019). Such discourse may be built on words like 'concealing', 'covering', 'imperfections', 'flaws', 'fix', 'hide', 'issue', 'problem' and the overall context of the discourses would indicate that using makeup is forced upon the makeup users (Harkness, 2017). However, as makeup is largely considered to be a passion for beauty bloggers and as their (partial) source of income, arguably, beauty bloggers do not participate directly in the critical discourses and it is unlikely that they frame using makeup as something bad. Possibly, makeup could be called 'unnecessary' and bloggers could express their personal preference for bare face and natural beauty.

3.3 Sampling

The sample size for this paper is 14 YouTube makeup tutorials with an average length of 11 minutes. The videos sampled for this thesis were selected from seven of the most subscribed YouTube channels owned by female American beauty bloggers, namely:

Name of the beauty blogger	Number of subscribers (in millions)
Bethany Mota	10.1
Tati Westbrook	9.66
Michelle Phan	8.92
Carli Bybel	6.19
Jaclyn Hill	5.86
Laura Lee	4.47
Christen Dominique	4.22

The most subscribed channels have been chosen for the sample since the beauty bloggers behind these channels arguably have the highest level of influence and popularity (Wright, 2018). The age of the bloggers ranges between late teens to thirties (Riboni, 2017; Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017). To ensure a balanced allocation of the makeup tutorials

across the selected YouTube channels, the sampled videos from each of the beauty bloggers contained one natural makeup look and one 'full glam' look, resulting in 14 videos being allocated over 7 channels.

The sampling process consisted of typing the key phrases 'natural makeup' or 'no makeup makeup tutorial' and 'full glam makeup tutorial' in the YouTube search bar together with the name of the beauty blogger. Key phrases contain the word 'tutorial' purposefully since makeup tutorials are the type of videos this thesis is examining. This video search led to the beauty bloggers' most popular makeup tutorials suggested by YouTube. Some videos were excluded from the sample since they did not contain references to the makeup empowerment discourses. For instance, the most subscribed YouTube channel with 14.4 million subscribers belongs to Rachel Levin, however, her channel did not have the required makeup videos. After typing the key phrases and Rachel's name into the search bar, the search results contained neither natural nor 'full glam' makeup tutorials and, thus, Rachel's videos did not satisfy the sampling criteria and were excluded from the sample.

It was acknowledged that informed consent was not required to collect and study YouTube videos since they do not fall under the category of private information (Moreno, Goniu, Moreno & Diekema, 2013). Moreover, data was stored privately and will be destroyed after this thesis is completed.

3.4 Data analysis

First, similar to thematic analysis, I watched the selected YouTube videos closely and transcribed them verbatim. After completing the transcripts, I had a close look at the texts and marked the relevant parts of the text that were related to makeup, as that was the focal point of research. At the beginning of the analysis, it was necessary for me to highlight the relevant areas of the transcripts that I would be examining. Afterwards, I performed coding, which is described by Creswell (1997) as a process in which "specific statements are analyzed and categorized into clusters of meaning that represent the phenomenon of interest" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1376). As I marked the relevant areas of the text beforehand, I was coding words and phrases within makeup- and empowerment-related themes, meaning that not every single piece of text was taken into account. When coding, I followed Machin and Mayr's (2012) guidance of carrying out CDA. I have adopted several chosen elements of the guidance for my research, namely: overlexicalization, lexical choices, structural oppositions and suppression, which will be explained in detail in the next paragraph. Moreover, during the process of analysis, several new categories emerged from the data that were similar to the

ones I selected from Machin and Mayr's (2012) guidance, but were coded separately; the difference will be explained further. To fit the needs of this thesis and create a more elaborate model I have modified and extended some of Machin and Mayr's (2012) categories of analysis. These categories of analysis and the corresponding color-coding scheme can also be seen in Appendix A in the form of a table.

When performing the analysis, I paid attention to overlexicalization, which implies a cluster of certain words that are the same or similar in connotation (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Category of overlexicalization indicated where the emphasis was more prominent (e.g. 'every day', 'routine', 'all the time', 'every single day'). I contemplated why certain words were elaborated or overused and what they could be communicating. As mentioned before, during data analysis, new categories emerged and one of them was emphasis - a category that was linked to overlexicalization. Emphasis was used to code the intensifiers (amplifiers) – words used to emphasize or exaggerate, such as 'really', 'super', 'extremely', 'so'. Similar to the category of overlexicalization, emphasis was used to indicate the areas where the emphasis was prominent and where the topic's importance was enhanced by the beauty bloggers (Waksler, 2012). Although the intensifiers are often used within the age group of young adults (Stenstrom, 2000), their usage in relation to makeup and/or empowerment signified important information about the bloggers comments that were emphasized in the discourses (Waksler, 2012). Furthermore, Machin and Mayr's (2012) category of lexical choices helped me to identify specific word choices of beauty bloggers in the discourses and I considered what kind of meaning the words could carry. During data analysis, a category of attitude emerged that was linked to the established category of lexical choices. The category of attitude encompassed verbally expressed personal attitudes, opinions and perceptions of the bloggers through certain lexical choices. With the category of attitude I examined how bloggers expressed their feelings and thoughts about makeup and empowerment through makeup in the spoken discourses through certain statements (e.g. "Mh-mmm! Gosh, I love highlighter") and I could draw inferences whether the attitudes were positive or negative. In addition, attitude was manifested through distinct personality traits, which bloggers use to differentiate themselves from others and establish a connection with their audiences (Riboni, 2017). Furthermore, I looked for structural oppositions in the text, which are, in essence, lexically opposing concepts that exist in pairs (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Similar to the category of lexical choices, structural oppositions are specific word choices of beauty bloggers, but this category is differentiated by Machin and Mayr (2012) themselves because the opposing words exist in a form of binary oppositions (e.g. good – bad, beautiful – ugly).

Usually, only one of the oppositions is mentioned in the text, which explicitly suggests its distinct qualities. If such part of the opposition was present, then the word evoked the existing association and brought the existing opposing concept to my attention. During data analysis I have created a related category of juxtapositions, which helped me understand the similarities and differences between certain statements. Similar to the category of structural opposition, the category of juxtapositions signified the areas where the statements were opposing each other, however, the role of juxtapositions in the text was to compare or contrast two elements placed together. Besides, juxtaposing words helped to determine whether positive or negative perceptions prevailed. Juxtapositions were marked by comparing and contrasting words like 'but', 'like', 'just', 'however', 'although' and similar. Finally, the last category in the coding scheme was lexical suppression, which, as Machin and Mayr (2012) describe it, means that certain words that are absent or suppressed in the text. Lexical suppression is often manifested in a form of pauses or, as just mentioned, lexical omissions in the text (e.g. "well… you know"). By looking at lexical suppressions I paid attention to why certain elements were omitted and with what purpose. If there were certain absences, this would make me think why the text producer (here, beauty blogger) did not want me to think of them. Overall, when carrying out CDA, I posed structural questions like "How is makeup being represented?", "How is empowerment being constructed in relation to makeup?", "What strategies are being used to associate empowerment with makeup?" and "In what ways do the discourses differ between natural and 'full glam' makeup tutorials?".

After the video transcripts were coded using the above-mentioned categories, they were sorted into themes to identify broader relationships (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The overarching themes are illustrated in the form of tables in the Appendices B and C. To create the themes, interpretative analysis was used, during which I examined the codes for recurring themes and grouped them into bigger patterns (Ayres, Kavanaugh & Knafl, 2003; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). This helped me establish a structura; overview of how beauty bloggers discuss makeup and whether there were differences in their makeup empowerment discourses.

3.5 Reflexivity

Being reflexive about my activities as a researcher allows me to be more open to challenges that question the transparency of this research (England, 1994). I recognize that qualitative studies can be influenced by the perceptions and attitudes of the researcher (Giglietto, Rossi & Bennato, 2012). Moreover, as a female researcher, I had certain thoughts

about (using) makeup which I share with the bloggers that I researched due to the intersubjectivity of the topic (England, 1994; Ward, 2016). I acknowledge that my interpretation is not universal and that the data in this thesis could potentially be interpreted differently in a different context or by another researcher. Nevertheless, I have provided sufficient information in Chapter 3 to ensure transparency of the research process. I included clear explanation of conceptualization and operationalization processes, as well as detailed description of analysis and sampling to eliminate subjectivity as much as possible. Moreover, Appendices that are attached at the end of this thesis contain additional research material and enhance transparency of this research.

Results

       This chapter presents the results of the critical discourse analysis conducted to explore the construction of makeup (empowerment) discourses by young female American beauty bloggers. This section will be divided into several parts. First, I will report on the overall discussions of makeup and representation of makeup in the tutorials, namely, how bloggers are portraying makeup in general. Then, I will proceed with an examination of the discourses in natural 'no makeup' and 'full glam' makeup tutorials. Next, I will elaborate on the notion of makeup empowerment and its presence in the makeup tutorials. Finally, three interrelated types of discourses on makeup empowerment that were identified during the analysis will be presented and explained.

4.1 General discussion on makeup

       First, in all video tutorials makeup was portrayed as a 'livening' agent, which means that it would bring vitality and health into someone's appearance. This can be seen in the adjectives that are being used to describe both makeup looks, such as 'fresh', 'alive', 'healthy', 'glowy', 'dewy', 'awoken'. Notably, Christina Pirello (2001) explains the link between glow, health and beauty in her book "Glow: A prescription for radiant health and beauty". It becomes evident that those whom we perceive as beautiful are radiating vitality in the form of glow that comes from within (Pirello, 2001). Within this perception, beautiful appearance is equated to a healthy appearance, which can be seen in Christina's own words: "Elegance, grace and beauty arise naturally from good health (…) Our glow is from within" (Pirello, 2001, p. 2). In the case of makeup tutorials, makeup is depicted as a tool that can provide dewy and radiant look: "… *beauty*, *glowing* goddess…" (Tati Westbrook, 2018), "...*dewy* skin and polished eyes (...) *dewy* finish (...) *glowing* from within..." (Michelle Phan, 2011). In one of her tutorials, Jaclyn Hill emphasizes how that healthy and revitalized look comes specifically after applying makeup, which can be seen here: "…you wanna make sure that you look *alive*, you look *vibrant*, you look *healthy*, you look *glowing...*" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). In the same video, Jaclyn also brings attention to the fact that makeup has refreshing and awakening abilities: "...make yourself look more *fresh* and *awake*…" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). As discussed before, similar associations between makeup, revitalization and rejuvenation are evoked in advertisements, where makeup is promoted as being able to bring youth back into the appearance and diminish signs of ageing (Gill, 2016; Duffy, 2013; Westmore, 2001). Moreover, without makeup, as noted in the bloggers' spoken discourses, the unaltered face appears as tired and dull: "…this is the area that really just gets me looking like *I haven't*

slept in thirty years" (Christen Dominique, 2016). Having identified these elements of structural oppositions, it seems like the natural appearance of the bloggers is not 'glowy' enough, not 'alive' enough and not 'fresh' enough and makeup can 'brighten it up'. Similarly, in the following quote, Laura describes her natural lashes as 'poor' and 'annoying' because they grow straight by nature, which upsets Laura, and makeup comes as a tool that can fix that: "…it [mascara] definitely lengthens my *poor little* lashes…" (Laura Lee, 2016).

It is important to note that several bloggers expressed the 'need' to perform certain actions or alter certain areas. For each of them the area or the step is different. Bloggers used words like 'need', 'have to' and 'can't resist' when talking about enhancing, altering, covering up or putting makeup in specific places: "...I just *have to*, I *can't resist*." (Laura Lee, 2016), "…I *have to* have a nose highlight..." (Jaclyn Hill, 2018). Similarly, after a pause that indicates suppression, Christen (2019) states how she cannot leave certain parts of her face without alterations: "…cause, you know... some things I just *can't* go uncontoured…". Further, Christen emphasizes her need to use certain makeup products: "I'm gonna take some highlight, because, you know, we *need* highlight in our life, especially on those 'no makeup' makeup days" (…) Like, I always feel like I *need* lashes on my 'no makeup' makeup days…" (Christen Dominique, 2019). In one of her tutorials, Laura Lee emphasizes the fact that she needs to visually enlarge her lips: "By 'line my lips' I mean I'm gonna overline my lips - I *can't help* it, I *have to*" (Laura Lee, 2016). Later in the same tutorial, Laura speaks for her audience about the need to alter: "If you have problems with your makeup (…) and you're like 'we *have to do* something with this, okay?'" (Laura Lee, 2016). An important question is raised: where does this 'need' come from? First, beauty bloggers are involved in the makeup industry more than others in the first place. Majority of the beauty bloggers are dependent on sponsorships and the beauty industry is their source of income, hence, the 'need' to wear makeup could be explained by their occupation as bloggers. Still, *how* to wear makeup is not dictated or enforced and, interestingly, these bloggers feel that they 'have' to perform these alterations. The choice of the word 'need' suggests certain perceived necessity and an obligation to act. I propose that when referring to this 'need', bloggers feel pressure rather than desire to perform those extra steps of makeup. Moreover, the suggested perceived necessity could potentially be an indicator of insecurity and dissatisfaction with existing facial features, as well as wider societal pressures (Chambers, 2008; Briscoe, 2019; Mbabazi, 2019; Obiora, 2020). It is possible to suggest that the 'need' is linked to societal expectations, which are closely associated with the beauty standards constructed by the beauty industry (Briscoe, 2019). Because of the unrealistic beauty standards that are embedded into the

societal structure, women might feel the pressure and the need to perform certain alterations to look a certain way and conform to the standards (Obiora, 2020; Mbabazi, 2019). Furthermore, as stated in Korichi, Pelle-de-Queral, Gazano and Aubert's research findings (2008), one of the primary reasons why women wear makeup is camouflage, in a sense that "Women who are anxious and insecure tend to use makeup to appear less noticeable" (Van Edwards, n.d.). Similarly, according to Bindel's (2019) and Harkness' (2017) arguments, makeup is used to hide the natural appearances of those who lack confidence in their natural looks. Moreover, as Cash and Cash's (1982) research shows, women who are dissatisfied with certain aspects of their appearance reported higher patterns of makeup use. Several phrases could serve as examples of the dissatisfactions with natural features. For instance, Bethany is unhappy with her skin problems, addressing her viewers with "See, guys, I get acne and it's *not fun*", and she uses makeup to hide her acne: "…I apply it [concealer] anywhere I have blemishes" (Bethany Mota, 2011). Furthermore, Jaclyn implies that her unaltered nose looks strange: "That's how I think about my nose - just this *weird pale thing* sitting in the centre of my face" (Jaclyn Hill, 2018). Here, Jaclyn makes an emphasis on 'pale' and the same unfavorable perception of paleness is observed in Fabricant and Gould's (1993) research. The study findings discuss aversion of paleness by young adults and attempts to bring color to one's face in order to look healthy, vibrant and alive (the same characteristics of vitality and healthiness were discussed in-depth in the beginning of the chapter as a part of the general discussion on makeup). Furthermore, multiple existing and unavoidable elements of the face, like pores and natural oils, are highly unwanted among beauty bloggers and are even called an 'issue' or a 'problem' (Laura Lee, 2016). Bloggers use words like 'get rid of', 'remove', 'control', 'make … go away', when talking about these undesired parts and how makeup can eliminate them: "...you can just press it into areas that get oily very easily and this will help *control* that (...) *control* the oil *issue*" (Laura Lee, 2016), "...*get rid of* that extra shine…" (Bethany Mota, 2011). Both Bethany and Laura refer to the natural oils that "need" to be mattified. Similar to Tati, who wants to "*get rid of* her large pores" as a first step in her makeup tutorial (Tati Westbrook, 2018), Jaclyn and Laura referred to pores as a problem: "…I have been *struggling* with pores for the first time in my life…" (Jaclyn Hill, 2018), "…I have a little bit of a *pore-showing issue* through here" (Laura Lee, 2016). Because of the pervasive beauty standards, flawed skin and imperfections make women feel insecure about their natural self and women feel pressured to make alterations to their appearances (Briscoe, 2019; Chambers, 2008; Obiora, 2020). In addition, there are a number of makeup products that are claimed to 'prevent' certain unwanted natural things

from happening when wearing makeup, like creasing. For instance, creasing happens when natural oils start to come through and there appear visible lines or marks in areas of the foundation. To prevent makeup from creasing, bloggers emphasize certain steps in the makeup application "…go under the eye to *prevent* any creasing" (Tati Westbrook, 2018); "…And then, to *set* my undereyes - that way it doesn't *crease*…" (Carli Bybel, 2018). Additionally, bloggers want to make sure that they set their makeup in place to prevent it from moving throughout the day: "…I'm just gonna press that underneath the eye to make sure that my concealer *does not move*…" (Tati Westbrook, 2015); "You can either press it all over your face, like I'm gonna do today, to make sure everything's *locked and loaded*…" (Laura Lee, 2016). With the above-mentioned lexical choices, bloggers appear to constantly combat natural features. Oil, oiliness and grease are known to be linked to disgust and the word "greasy" has been used in the 1500s to discredit others, according to Connor (2004), and I could imagine that this is linked to why bloggers are so intensely hiding natural oils. Pores, on the other hand, create an uneven skin surface, whereas bloggers are trying to make the surface of their skin even and smooth. Bloggers even use makeup products with names like 'Pore *Minimizer'* and 'Pore *Vanishing* Stick', which directly reflects their purpose to *eliminate*. In addition, pores can get clogged with dirt and makeup residue and this is also highly unwanted by beauty bloggers: "…taking that off completely is so important, so that your skin doesn't get all *clogged up*!" (Tati Westbrook, 2018). Once again, this could be seen as reinforcing the 'need' to conform to beauty standards and the imagined 'perfect' appearance (Chambers, 2008). At the same time, Tati's statement about skin getting clogged up suggests that the skin needs to be managed at all times to maintain its good condition.

Out of all seven bloggers, only three mention that natural beauty is still important. Bethany Mota (2011) explicitly tells her viewers that makeup is not necessary and does not determine beauty, which is in line with Bindel's (2019) view of makeup as unnecessary, discussed earlier in the Chapter 2. Bethany reminds everyone that they should be able to go outside and feel confident without makeup. Makeup, in her opinion, is just a 'fun thing to do' when she wants her skin to look better – that is, enhanced. Although, as argued in previous paragraphs, makeup is a source of income for beauty bloggers, so, apart from being a "fun thing to do", the use of makeup also appears to have a financial incentive to it. However, bloggers' audiences are not dependent on this sort of income and they could perceive the representation of makeup differently. In addition, it is important to note that Bethany's natural makeup tutorial was created 9 years ago. Arguably, at that time, Bethany could have had beliefs different from nowadays. Moreover, 9 years ago, the occupation as a blogger on

YouTube was not as prominent as it is now and beauty blogging as a source of income was not established as such. Furthermore, in her makeup tutorial, when introducing her look, Michelle Phan (2011) makes an explicit claim "nothing is prettier than dewy skin and polished eyes". In her claim, Michelle directly refers to the natural-looking appearance, but presents the natural 'beauty' as enhanced and 'polished'. She also points out that such a look will be good on anyone and draws a link between the beauty of a natural-looking makeup look and its universality: "It's a *simple* and *clean* look that can *complement any face*" (Michelle Phan, 2011). Finally, Tati Westbrook (2018) said that "there is something" about a simple look that is 'minimal', but 'sophisticated', and that she loves it. The rest of the bloggers did not express their thoughts on or preferences for natural beauty.

Overall, makeup has been portrayed and discussed in a positive way. Bloggers encourage their viewers to engage in makeup usage and strive for an overall positive atmosphere in their makeup tutorials. Bloggers repeatedly mentioned how they love makeup products, the process and the outcome and enjoy creating looks:

1. ...I *love* mascara (Bethany Mota, 2011)
2. ...I *love* a good coverage makeup (…) *love* it. *Love, love, love* (...) I *love* a really reflective high shine gloss (…) Whoo, I *love* this stuff (…) I *love* this kind of look so much! (…) I *love* my makeup right now… (Tati Westbrook, 2018)
3. ...all the works, which I personally *love*, it's so much fun for me (…) *Love* it, it's perfect (…) I personally *love* how it came out (Carli Bybel, 2018)
4. I *love* makeup (…) I absolutely *love* this product (…) And I absolutely *love* the way it makes this look (…) I *love* that look" (Jaclyn Hill, 2018)
5. ...mmm! I *love* it so much! (…) I *love* the drama of the winged liner (Laura Lee, 2016).

Out of seven bloggers in the sample, only two, Bethany Mota and Carli Bybel, mentioned that they do not wear makeup every day. Carli stated that she enjoys makeup and loves 'full glam' looks, but does not wear them in her ordinary life: "…but on a *day-to-day basis* I'm not doing my makeup like that [full glam]" (Carli Bybel, 2018). Moreover, in her natural makeup look tutorial, Bethany does not recommend her viewers to wear makeup every day and encourages them to embrace their natural look and be confident without makeup on: "...I do not by any means wear makeup every day and *I don't think anybody should*…" (Bethany Mota, 2011).

Beauty bloggers use a lot of intensifiers to communicate their attitude and personal opinions (Waksler, 2012) to their viewers. Words like 'really', 'very', 'super', 'extremely'

and 'so' have been used when describing makeup products and makeup looks, usually to call attention to certain features. For instance, when introducing her 'full glam' look, Christen makes an emphasis on its features: "...*super* flawless foundation with a *super* glam eyeshadow…" (Christen Dominique, 2016). Similarly, when describing the natural 'no makeup' look, Jaclyn uses intensification to amplify positive characteristics: "...it looks *very* dewy, *very* healthy (…) *so* beautiful, *so* natural..." (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). In other instances, bloggers used intensifiers to express their personal preferences: "...I love a *really* reflective high shine gloss…" (Tati Westbrook, 2018), "...*really* works for me…" (Carli Bybel, 2018). Furthermore, the intensification is recognizable in one of Tati's videos because she communicates to her viewers the wearability of a natural look: "...I think it's *extremely* wearable…" (Tati Westbrook, 2015). Although these intensifiers are common in spoken language among young adults (Stenstrom, 2000) and among females in particular (Stenstrom, 1999; Graddy, 2006), they have been useful in detecting subjectivity and attitude in the discourses (Waksler, 2012). The above-mentioned intensifiers were used in conjunction with positive features of makeup and this prompted me to highlight their importance. Furthermore, when using intensifiers repeatedly in combination with other words that are similar in nature, beauty bloggers accentuate how good certain makeup products are: "This is by Medalist, 'The Sparkling Foil' pigment in the color 'Touch and Sole', it's *so* pretty" (Carli Bybel, 2018). "And it is just *the most* natural looking bronzer I've ever seen in my *entire* life; it is *so* beautiful" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). By doing that, bloggers could be trying to, perhaps, persuade the viewers to try certain makeup products on themselves, which can be seen in Jaclyn's comment about a lip-gloss that she likes: "It is *absolutely* beautiful, it's a baby pink color, I just think it's gonna be gorgeous on *pretty much* everybody" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). This could surely be explained by the business aspect of the tutorials, meaning that beauty bloggers benefit financially from promoting certain makeup products. For instance, in her video, Christen appears to be promoting a new mascara by Laura Mercier by intensifying her attitude towards the makeup product: I'm *really* excited about this mascara because it's *so* different and unique" (Christen Dominique, 2019).

4.2 Natural 'no makeup' looks

 Across the tutorials, natural makeup looks have been called differently by the bloggers to highlight the naturalness and 'realness' of the looks, like 'no makeup', 'everyday', 'realistic' and 'routine' looks. Making the altered skin look unaltered, but enhanced, and minimizing the visibility of makeup seems to be the focal point of the 'no

makeup' makeup look, which is in line with the findings of previous academic studies (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). Moreover, as discussed in the beginning of the previous section,'glo' and'radianc' have been associated with a healthy and lively appearance (Pirello, 2001) and the examined tutorials portray makeup as a means of achieving that appearance. This link has been particularly prominent in the natural 'no makeup' makeup discourses. 'Natural' seems to be widely associated with 'glowy' or 'dewy', alluding to a look that is characterized by nourished, hydrated and healthy skin that is naturally beautiful, without alterations and enhancement (Pirello, 2001). Natural makeup looks contain a lot of emphasis on the illusion of an unaltered appearance. Christen (2016) directly suggests to her viewers to present their altered appearance as unaltered: "Now you can tell everybody you *woke up like this,* flawless". Additionally, Michelle (2011) uses the word 'illusion' in her natural makeup look tutorial to describe the seamless alterations: "And run it down the centre of your nose to give an *illusion* that it's taller (…) it gives my forehead an *illusion* that it has more definition". Finally, as Jaclyn comments on the look of the foundation, "It's gonna do the job of a foundation, but yet it's *not gonna look like you're wearing foundation…*", she implies that everyone desires such an effect: "…which, hell up: who doesn't want that?" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). In the abovementioned quotes, the attention is centred around making other people think that the appearance is unaltered. For instance, as just mentioned, in her natural makeup tutorial Michelle Phan (2011) explicitly uses the word 'illusion' to explain what exactly she is doing with makeup - presenting the altered appearance as unaltered. According to Michelle Phan, the point of her natural makeup look tutorial is to make other people think that her appearance is unaltered and natural, whereas, in reality, a lot of work has been put into the look, as briefly mentioned before: "Your eyes should look *effortlessly* beautiful, but we all know it takes a lot of work (...) Your skin should look like it's glowing from within - all thanks to highlighting, but *people won't know* - just keep them guessing (Michelle Phan, 2011). Michelle intentionally enhances her features but presents them to others as 'effortless' and 'makeupless'. According to Michelle, the look appears 'makeupless' and unaltered to everyone else, but the person wearing makeup knows the truth behind it and the power of the makeup transformations. Could it be that by presenting their appearance to others as "woke up like this" bloggers make others believe that they are naturally 'flawless'? The 'illusion' element and its connection to the power of transformation will be discussed in detail in the next sub-chapters.

According to bloggers, natural-style makeup has to be lightweight, as part of 'naturalness' is not feeling the makeup on the skin, like it is not there. For example, Tati

(2018) points out the "Really *light* layers…" in the makeup application, which is similar to what Carli has to say about natural makeup look: "...is a lot more *lightweight* on the skin…" (Carli Bybel, 2018). Moreover, Bethany comments on the feel of a natural makeup look on the face: "...it's so *light* and you really *don't feel* like you're wearing foundation" (Bethany Mota, 2011). These characteristics are in line with the conceptualization of natural "no makeup" makeup looks from Chapter 2, according to which natural looks are seamless in the sense that they are lightweight and resemble an unaltered face (Winter, 2020). In addition, bloggers use minimizing language - words like 'a little bit', 'small', 'tiny', 'light', 'slight', 'a bit' and similar, to showcase that alterations done to the face have to be minimal and seamless. Arguably, by minimizing the visibility of alterations, bloggers are able to pass on the altered version as unaltered. Additionally, when wearing a natural look, bloggers want to feel less makeup on the skin by minimizing the amount of makeup on the face: "...I *don't wanna feel it*, I kinda want my skin to shine through…" (Christen Dominique, 2016). Similarly, Carli (2018) comments on the reduced intensity of the makeup application for a natural finish: "So, I line them and then *lightly* fill them in, like, *just a little bit*, and then I'll use my finger… to blend it out, so it's *not too intense*".

Notably, bloggers have less content dedicated to 'no makeup' makeup looks on their channels, compared to 'full glam' looks. For example, on her channel, Laura Lee has 19 videos in a "Full glam makeup tutorials" playlist compared to 13 videos in a "Neutral Everyday Makeup Tutorials" playlist. Similarly, out of 150 makeup looks in Jaclyn Hil's "Makeup Tutorials and Looks" channel playlist, 139 are either 'full glam' or artistic looks. Moreover, Jaclyn has an additional playlist called "Holiday Makeup Tutorials and Looks", which is comprised of 15 additional festive makeup looks. This trend continues across channels by other beauty bloggers. As the bloggers from this research themselves claim, most of the videos from their channels are 'full glam' and 'full coverage' looks. For instance, Bethany (2011) and Jaclyn (2014) stated that they have never done a natural makeup look tutorial on their channels before: "*I haven't even done* one of these before on my channel…" (Bethany Mota, 2011), "*I have never done a look* on my channel that has been so minimal…" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). Interestingly, a video search revealed that Bethany has been mainly uploading makeup tutorials between 2011 and 2015 and has stopped posting them since then. Perhaps, Bethany shifted her focus from doing particularly makeup tutorials, as her content is still related to lifestyle, fashion and beauty. Other bloggers have indicated that natural makeup looks are different from their usual content: "…*A lot of the time* my videos are "full glam", full contour highlight, cream contour, powder contour - all the works…" (Carli Bybel,

2018), "Today's video is gonna be a *little bit different* than most of my makeup tutorials…" (Laura Lee, 2016). Additionally, Carli (2018) highlighted that even though she had done a natural makeup look tutorial before, it has been a long time since she did another one: "...it's been *a long time* since I've shown you guys, like, a simple, quick, easy routine…". This could be explained by Carli's preference for 'full glam' makeup looks, as mentioned in the section on "General discussions on makeup".

Natural makeup looks are often presented as 'simple' and 'easy' looks for beginners. For instance, Laura Lee (2018) mentioned that 'full glam' is not for everyone and emphasized the link between natural makeup looks and beginner level:

> ...you guys have been requesting that I do a look *for beginners* (…) I get on YouTube and I do these vee-va-voom, Instagram makeup or all this heavy makeup looks with a hundred steps and I forget - *not everybody wants that*, *maybe somebody wants to take it easy* (...) Great for *beginners…*

Similarly, as Carli Bybel mentions, 'full glam' makeup looks are not used by most people: "...I know I'm always on here showing, like, dramatic, full face looks, and I know, realistically, for *majority of the population…*" (Carli Bybel, 2018). Carli does not state what exactly it is for the "majority of the population" and ends her sentence with a pause. This omission perhaps signifies that, in real life, most people do not engage in 'full glam' looks that often. Thereby, Carli's following statement provides some context: "I know there are *some people* that like to glam every single day …" (Carli Bybel, 2018), where Carli makes an emphasis on 'some', making it clear that not everyone likes that. Other bloggers have highlighted the simplicity and ease of the natural looks: "...a little *simpler* makeup look" (Tati Westbrook, 2018), "...it's *easy-peasy* (…) so *minimal* and *easy-peasy…*" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). Similarly, Michelle Phan has drawn a comparison between simplicity and cleanliness: "It's a *simple* and *clean* look…" (Michelle Phan, 2011). These references emphasize the simplicity of natural makeup looks and such one-sided elements of the structural oppositions suggest that 'full glam' makeup looks are for skilled and knowledgeable experts, like these beauty bloggers, and natural looks are for beginners, who are not familiar with makeup, which can be seen in Laura's (2018) comment: "I think this is a great learning tutorial, if you *don't know much* about makeup…". Arguably, the ease of natural makeup looks can be justified when compared with 'full glam' looks, since natural looks do not require as many steps or skills in the makeup application process. 'Full glam' looks consist of more steps and

techniques within the application and more makeup in general and are considered to be more difficult to perform. Moreover, since natural looks are meant to be resembling unaltered, but enhanced appearance, makeup application and techniques should not be visible. On the other hand, making the appearance look unaltered, but enhanced, could take some effort and precision and this will be discussed in detail in the sub-chapters on empowerment.

Interestingly, I noticed an association between natural makeup looks and cheaper makeup products. Namely, in her natural makeup look tutorial, Tati Westbrook (2018) is not using her usual expensive foundation, but a cheaper brand and explicitly points this out: "...in the long run, if you use a more expensive foundation, which… *I'm not today* - I'm using Wet n Wild, but you get my point". In this statement Tati talks about a skincare tool Clarisonic and its ability to blend foundation nicely. With 'her point' Tati meant that when using this tool, less product is needed, and thus it is beneficial in the long run when applying expensive makeup products because it is possible to save money in that way: "…you use less product, it's a good thing…" (Tati Westbrook, 2018). Still, Tati contrasted her usual expensive foundations with a cheaper brand for her natural makeup look. Using a cheaper brand could evoke an impression that natural makeup looks are not made with expensive products and, thus, are not luxurious or sophisticated, as seen in these videos. Moreover, when smelling the foundation, Tati acknowledged with a disgusted face that it does not smell good: "We're gonna go in with a little "Soft Beige" from Wet n Wild, which everyone says that this smells like *paint thinner*… [smells the product] *Ew, it does*", which verbally diminishes the worth and value of the product used to create a natural look. In another instance of using cheaper alternatives, Bethany Mota (2011) emphasized the cheapness of a makeup product in her natural makeup look tutorial: "...it's, like, *seven dollars*...". To contrast, in her 'full glam' makeup tutorial Bethany used expensive high-end brands like Giorgio Armani, NARS and Anastasia Beverly Hills. The association between cheaper makeup products and natural makeup looks could be explained by the discussion in the previous paragraph about references to a beginner level. As natural makeup looks are often positioned as easy and beginner-friendly, beginners arguably would not have as many (expensive) makeup products and tools in their possession as beauty bloggers would. Hence, beauty bloggers might be using less expensive products to appeal to a part of their audiences that is less advanced in makeup or chooses budget-friendly options. Although the associations between cheaper brands and natural makeup looks were present, it is important to highlight that those associations were followed by positive characteristics. When talking about the seven-dollar blush, Bethany (2011) expressed her liking: "…it's just *amazing* (…) I *love this*". Similarly,

after the disgusted "Ew, it does", Tati acknowledged the good side: "But it sure does look *beautiful* and it's five dollars" (Tati Westbrook, 2018)..

Another prominent characteristic of 'no makeup' makeup looks is lack of time, in a sense that the looks are to be done quickly. Several of the bloggers explicitly stated that the natural makeup looks are appropriate when a person is in a rush and does not have time to work extensively with makeup. For instance, Tati, Carli and Laura comment on the quick process of achieving a natural makeup look: "This is a pretty *quick* look (…) how I do my makeup pretty *quickly*…" (Tati Westbrook, 2018), "…normally, this would take me *ten minutes and under*…" (Carli Bybel, 2018), "...or just, like, a *quick little* 5-minute makeup tutorial" (Laura Lee, 2018). Moreover, Carli (2018) highlights that such a look is realistic for the regular mornings that are oftentimes busy: "*...simple*, *quick*, *easy* routine that is *realistic* for the mornings when you *don't have a lot of time*". Similarly, Jaclyn emphasizes the lack of time in her natural makeup tutorials by posing a question to her viewers: "what's going to make you look better than you already do, but yet you *don't have time* to do anything glamorous over the top?". Then, Jaclyn points out that a natural makeup look is 'great' to do when there is no time: "When you're *in a hurry*, this is a great thing to do… (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). In addition, Jaclyn highlights the omission of certain steps in the makeup application when in a rush: "I'm not going to try to sit here and sculpt out – *we don't have time for that*" (Jaclyn Hill, 2014). These references very much suggest that 'full glam' makeup looks are for individuals who are ready to invest money into makeup products and dedicate more time and effort to makeup application. In line with the aspect of simplicity discussed in the previous paragraph, the ease of natural makeup looks is not supposed to make the application take a lot of time.

Two beauty bloggers, Michelle and Laura, pointed out that their natural makeup looks are great for school, even though both of the bloggers were in their late twenties: "This is the perfect look for *school*, minus the fake lashes…" (Michelle Phan; 2014), "...I also think that this is a great tutorial for *school...*" (Laura Lee, 2018). In her tutorial, Laura attributed natural makeup looks to young people: "Some people are *young,* and they don't wanna wear that much makeup…" (Laura Lee, 2018). The parallel between 'natural' and 'school' could simply be traced to the bloggers' audiences. A big part of these beauty bloggers' viewers are young adults and teenagers, which could provide some reasoning as to why bloggers make an emphasis on school and young people in natural makeup tutorials. Moreover, the aforementioned association between 'no makeup\ makeup looks and cheaper brands could also gain some explanation in this context: the choice of less expensive makeup products for

natural makeup looks could be a result of catering to younger audiences that do not spend a lot of money on makeup.

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, since most of the bloggers' content is devoted to 'full glam', 'full face', creative makeup looks with a lot of extensive steps, natural looks are often positioned as quick, easy, ordinary and average, not something that requires a lot of time and effort. After analysing bloggers' spoken discourses, it seems that they prefer "full glam" looks that consist of more makeup. An interesting point to examine would be why this is the case. It is important to note that beauty bloggers actively work with beauty brands and rely heavily on sponsorships. Perhaps, bloggers are in favor of 'full glam' makeup looks because they can utilize more sponsored makeup products. Moreover, beauty bloggers could prefer 'full glam' makeup looks because they can showcase their skills and creativity and this link will be explored further in detail in the next sub-chapter.

Overall, in the natural makeup tutorials the focus lies greatly on skin and skin texture: "...if I want my *skin* to look a little bit better (…) just soak it into your *skin* and look more natural" (Bethany Mota, 2011), "…I really just wanna keep the *skin* as natural as possible" (Tati Westbrook, 2018), "...create smoother looking *skin*" (Michelle Phan, 2011). In addition, in her natural makeup look tutorial Tati specifically describes the look as centred around the skin: "...more effortless type of a vibe, *focused on skin*" (Tati Westbrook, 2018). Now, even and smooth skin is not necessarily an attribute of a natural skin, but more of an 'enhanced', 'retouched' skin. In her natural makeup tutorial, when describing the foundation and its effect on the skin, Jaclyn Hill (2014) puts this idea into words: "*my* skin but better", with the emphasis on 'my'. Several important things need to be discussed here. First, by saying 'better', Jaclyn acknowledges that she is indeed intentionally using makeup to make her appearance look better, enhanced, 'perfected'. Second, she still considers it to be *her* skin and emphasizes it, even though it has been beautified. Lastly, her attitude while saying those words appear to be positive and encouraging.

4.3 'Full glam' looks

The majority of the bloggers associated 'full glam' makeup looks with a special event, like a night out or a party, where they will be seen by many people. For instance, Bethany and Tati suggest that 'full glam' makeup looks are for parties: "...it is for fall [autumn] *night out*." (Bethany Mota, 2017), "...this is a fantastic way to immediately look like you are ready for the *party*." (Tati Westbrook, 2015). Additionally, Carli states that she

will be wearing her 'full glam' makeup look to a a music festival: "It's perfect for *Coachella*. (...) two day *parties* that I'm going to on Saturday…" (Carli Bybel, 2017). Similarly, Christen makes a link between going to a special event and wearing a lot of makeup: "...it's gonna last all *night* (...) If I know I'm gonna go to an *event*, I know I'm gonna be wearing a *lot of makeup*" (Christen Dominique, 2016). As well as mentioning a similar occasion for a 'full glam', Laura includes other opportunities for wearing a glamorous makeup look: "I think today's tutorial is great for a *date night* look, a little *fancy wedding* you have to attend, you know you're gonna *see your ex-boyfriend* out and you want to look *slayed*." (Laura Lee, 2016). Here, Laura mentions a potential encounter with an ex-partner and implies that her viewers should look exceptionally good for such an occasion. Akin Laura's encouragement, women are actively advised to make their ex-partners 'regret' ending the relationships: "If you want to capture his attention, *look good every time*. This means your physical appearance and how you relate to other people. *If you have an imperfection, fix it and then flaunt yourself*" (Samuel, 2020). By enhancing physical attractiveness and, hence, showing their ex-boyfriends what 'they have lost', women are seeking revenge on their ex-partners (MissFQ, 2020). This theme of revenge has been prominent in the Western literature, where numerous female characters are involved in revenge narratives (Tassi, 2011). Moreover, a link to the female empowerment discourses can be observed, where women are encouraged to feel confident and empowered by 'making him regret' (Samuel, 2020). Furthermore, regarding the connection between 'full glam' look and a special occasion, the element of being in public potentially explains the time and effort spent on the makeup look, since other people are expected to be paying attention to the physical appearance. For such events, bloggers say that they look 'fancy', 'sophisticated' and 'slayed' [exceptionally impressive, Cambridge Dictionary, 2020]: "...but this is a night out, so we're being a little *fancy* (..) we're just being *fancy* today" (Bethany Mota, 2017). As mentioned before, Carli calls attention to the special event she has to attend and uses it to justify the 'full glam' look: "...whooh! Or a lot, *cause it's Coachella*, right? Let's go with the whole glowy vibe." (Carli Bybel, 2017). Furthermore, Jaclyn performs an extra step of makeup in her tutorial and points out that her "full glam" needs more makeup: "I'm actually gonna highlight my brow bone *today* too - I feel like *this look needs it*." (Jaclyn Hill, 2018). The occasions for wearing 'full glam' looks are special and in such a way more makeup seems to be allowed and approved by others to be worn on the face. Wearing a 'full glam' makeup look when going to special events comes across as appropriate and, on the contrary, in normal, ordinary life such looks are out of place and not

really acceptable. A link between makeup and normativity/acceptance will be discussed in detail further in the Chapters 4 and 5.

Oftentimes, 'full glam' makeup looks and makeup application steps are referred to as 'scary' by the bloggers and this connection will be explored in this paragraph. Makeup application steps are called 'scary' when bloggers talk about how difficult it can seem to apply makeup products in the right way, contrary to the previously discussed 'easy' and 'simple' natural looks. For example, Bethany mentions that it can be 'scary' to apply makeup: "*...And to edge it up a bit, I'm using a dark plum shadow, which is a little scary...*", implying that her audience may be intimidated: ""...if you've never tried, like, that winged liner and you're, kind of, *scared* " (Bethany Mota, 2017). Additionally, Laura Lee points out the intimidating process: "This part can be a little *scary...*" (Laura Lee, 2016). Reference to the 'scariness' of makeup can be linked to the fact that bloggers possess the right kind of knowledge and know how to handle makeup and apply products in the right way. For them, makeup application is not scary because they know how to do it, they are skilled and they provide the tutorials to teach others. However, when talking about the 'full glam' makeup look itself, 'scary' is synonymous with 'abnormal'. For instance, Christen Dominique refers to the natural makeup look as the look of a 'normal', 'ordinary', 'regular' person: "…I just wanna look healthy and glowy and just even and *normal*, just like a *normal human being*" (Christen Dominique, 2016). Such one-sided parts of the structural oppositions used by Christen imply that a 'full glam' makeup look, on the other hand, is considered to be abnormal and extraordinary. Christen (2016) even points out how too much makeup could be scary to others: "...we can go out into the world and look like a *regular human being* and *nobody is gonna be scared*". Perhaps, the 'scary' characteristic could also be linked to the phenomenon of makeup shaming discussed in Chapter 2, where people discredit those who wear makeup for various reasons. Makeup shaming reflects criticism towards makeup and wearing too much makeup, since it can seem that the person is hiding their insecurities behind makeup, like a mask (Kennedy, 2016).

With 'full glam', it is possible and even necessary to take time and bloggers mention this aspect numerous times: "I *take my time*, I go slow" (Tati Westbrook, 2015). Likewise, when introducing her natural makeup look, Jaclyn (2014) referred to 'full glam' as the look that takes time: "…what's going to make you look better than you already do, but yet *you don't have time to do anything glamorous over the top*?". In the previously discussed 'no makeup' makeup tutorials, natural makeup looks are presented as quick and easy. In the discussion on natural makeup looks, the identified structural oppositions indicated that 'full

glam' takes more time and is an enjoyable activity. This is similar to how spending time on self-care is encouraged across the beauty community and discourses on empowerment through makeup (Roncal, 2013). Furthermore, 'full glam' is also made to experiment and try new things, like Carli Bybel (2017) did in her tutorial: "Let's *switch it up* (…) Let me add a bit of *twist*", which calls attention to the artistic freedom and self-expression elements of makeup (Aguilar, 2019). Similarly, Tati (2015) indicated her desire to try something new ("…*trying new techniques* out") in a playful way ("*playing around* with [new technique]"). It can be seen that makeup is linked to creativity and has been described as an art form (Ririnui & Nguyen, 2010; Owen, n.d.; Lopus, 2017). A bare face has been compared to a blank canvas and a makeup artist to a painter (Ririnui & Nguyen, 2010), showcasing the ability of makeup to enhance creativity and artistic freedom. Encompassing creativity, festivity and leisure, 'full glam' makeup looks seem to be a great way to have fun and enjoy the process of creation.

Notably, naturalness and 'normality' are still important to the 'full glam' look, as bloggers emphasize that the look shouldn't be 'too much', 'fake', 'cakey', 'patchy', "streaky" or 'crazy'. Bloggers ensure that everything is blended out and that the surface of the skin is smooth and even. For instance, Tati (2015) warns against the overuse of the makeup products: "…so, you don't want *cakey*, it just looks really fresh and smooth, which is *what we want*". Later in her tutorial, Tati (2015) emphasizes it again: "…you don't wanna go in with a ton of product on your brush – that will look *patchy* and *not natural*". In the same way, Jaclyn (2016) described what might happen when using the wrong undertone for the bronzer: "…it might look a little *harsh*, you might look a little *fake*…". While makeup is intended to alter the appearance, the face should still look the least altered and enhanced: "And when you're contouring, especially your nose, you *want things to look natural*" (Tati Westbrook, 2015). These examples show that bloggers want to maintain a certain level of naturalness to their 'full glam' looks, even when using more makeup. Interestingly, in the case of the skin, the smoothness and evenness do not only mean 'natural', but also 'normal', in a sense that it does not deviate from the established norm, as suggested earlier in this chapter. A similar connection between 'natural' and 'normal' has been observed in the study by Fabricant and Gould (1993), where it was determined that a face altered with makeup was intended to look like there was no makeup at all. Moreover, Gagne and McGaughey (2002) argue that as a result of the socially constructed norms, 'natural' is closely tied to the conceptualization of normal, meaning that it does not deviate from the ordinary, the regular (Clarke & Griffin, 2007). Having 'too much' makeup that is visible or looking 'fake' is implied as abnormal,

since 'normal' appearance does not look like that. It is possible to suggest that even when doing a 'full glam' makeup look, where makeup is more obvious compared to natural looks, bloggers still want to minimize the prominence of makeup, as something foreign on the face that should not be fully identified. It even seems that unless makeup is used for theatrical or drag queen performances, where it is a known fact that the artist is wearing a lot of makeup, in both 'no makeup' and 'full glam' looks the primary goal is to make the final look of the face appear as natural as possible, yet enhanced (Fabricant & Gould, 1993).

In addition, 'full glam' looks appear to be associated with sexuality and sensuality. When introducing her 'full glam' makeup tutorial, Jaclyn emphasizes feelings of confidence and sexual appeal that come with the look: "I wanted to create an extremely easy and extremely flattering makeup tutorial {…} where you can feel really *sexy* and really *confident* and still have like that *smoky sex appeal*" (Jaclyn Hill, 2016). Moreover, Jaclyn accentuates women's desire to feel sexy while wearing makeup "…you want to be able to, like, do a *dark smoky* eye or feel *sexy* in a nude lip" (Jaclyn Hill, 2016). Similarly, Laura describes her 'full glam' eye makeup as 'sensual' and hisses at the camera to imitate sexual appeal: "I'll go in with a little bit of 'Lou' and smoke it out and make it, like, *sensual* and *dark* and *smoky* [hisses at the camera]" (Laura Lee, 2016). Previous research has stated that makeup is known to indicate a woman's sexual desires (Miller & Cox, 1982). Moreover, bright, vibrant colors and dramatic makeup were linked to sexy looks by Fabricant and Gould (1993). Interestingly, the association between dramatic 'full glam' makeup and sexuality could explain the aforementioned notion of normativity in makeup looks. Specifically, since 'full glam' makeup looks are widely perceived as sexual, natural looks, on the contrary, are viewed as conservative and suitable for everyday life (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). Possibly, 'full glam' looks or other artistic looks are not regarded as acceptable in 'ordinary' life because of their implicit sexual meaning. Nevertheless, in the examined makeup discourses, the encouragement to feel sexy and sensual is strongly connected to the feelings of confidence and empowerment, which will be addressed in the next sub-chapter.

4.4 Makeup empowerment discourses

First, this paragraph will briefly describe the characteristics of the makeup empowerment discourses mentioned in Chapter 2. As has been touched upon above, within such discourses, makeup serves versatile purposes and using makeup is perceived as a positive, creative and enjoyable activity (Aguilar, 2019; Williams, 2018; Pang, 2017). Using makeup may also elevate self-esteem and confidence, making the participants of the

discourses feel good about themselves (Aguilar, 2019). Those who participate in the discourses know that makeup can enhance and alter the appearance, however, it is not a damaging experience for them. On the contrary, they embrace the transformative power and utilize the altering abilities of makeup for creativity (Roncal, 2013; Kennedy, 2016). Importantly, discourses on empowerment through makeup form an empowered community where participants encourage and support each other (Hur, 2006). Further discussion on empowerment through makeup will be addressed at the end of this sub-section, after acknowledging the link between makeup and conformity to societal expectations.

One of the criticisms towards makeup stated that makeup is used by women to enhance attractiveness for men and, in such a way, conform to the patriarchal culture of sexism and objectification (Adkin, 1997; Bordo, 1993). Notably, as touched upon in the previous sub-section, Laura Lee (2016) emphasized the link between makeup and revenge narrative, which implies enhancing physical attractiveness so that the change is noticed by the opposite sex. Nevertheless, I argue that makeup is no longer widely connected to patriarchal culture, like it was disputed by Adkins (1997) and Bordo (1993). Instead, I would say that the demands now come from society in general (Jacquez, 2017). Importantly, makeup is still partly used with the intention to cover unwanted elements, which could be stemming from dissatisfaction with existing features, as discussed in the sub-chapter "*General discussions on makeup*". This means that the dissatisfaction with natural features could be a result of the oppressive and disciplinary beauty standards constituted by the beauty industry (Chambers, 2008; Korichi et. al, 2007; Jacquez, 2017). With these ideal representations embedded into western society, women are expected to look a certain way, but the expectations are often unrealistic (Mbabazi, 2019; Obiora, 2020). The double standards of the beauty industry pressure women into altering their appearance, hence the previously discussed perceived necessity of the beauty bloggers to perform certain alterations (Briscoe, 2019).

Nevertheless, the examined makeup tutorials contained characteristics of the discourses on empowerment through makeup mentioned at the beginning of the sub-section. Most of the bloggers described makeup as 'fun' (Bethany, Jaclyn, Carli, Tati) and for some of them (Tati and Carli) makeup provides room for experimenting and artistic freedom (Williams, 2018; Aguilar, 2019). Moreover, Jaclyn and Laura drew a parallel between makeup and sexuality, evoking the impression of an empowered female identity. Bloggers portrayed makeup positively and indicated that spending time on makeup makes them feel good. Within the examined discourses on makeup I propose that empowerment achieved by

using makeup comes from different aspects of makeup for different bloggers. I have identified three interrelated types of discourses on empowerment through makeup constructed by beauty bloggers, namely *transformative empowerment*, *explicit empowerment* and *creativity & skills empowerment*.

4.4.1 Transformative empowerment

This type of empowerment implies that bloggers embrace the transformative power of makeup and take pride in their altered appearance (Aguilar, 2019). Moreover, they are happy to use makeup for transformation purposes and present the altered version of themselves to others as seemingly unaltered. Arguably, this is the dominant discourse on makeup empowerment that emerged from almost all of the tutorials on both makeup looks, even though it was more prominent in the natural makeup tutorials.

When introducing the looks and explaining the application techniques, bloggers oftentimes stated that the result does not look like there have been alterations done to the face. I argue that within this discourse, bloggers intentionally use makeup to create an illusion of an unaltered appearance, while it has actually been altered with makeup. Notably, while the altered appearance is intended to look unaltered, it is also enhanced, meaning that the 'imperfections' and 'flaws' are eliminated. A good example of this is Christen's (2019) comment on the natural look "I woke up like this", implying that the enhanced appearance is presented as natural. I suggest that by making others believe that their appearance is natural and unaltered, bloggers become empowered in the sense that they are able to present themselves in a desired way and gain control over their appearance.

4.4.2 Explicit empowerment

This type of discourse revolves around explicit statements about empowerment through makeup, which include direct references to how empowerment is achieved with using makeup. This type of discourse is not widespread in the sample and was only present in the case of one beauty blogger, Jaclyn Hill, and her 'full glam' makeup tutorial. Jaclyn (2018) is very outspoken about the power that makeup has and the power she "personally has chosen to give it". In her 'full glam' makeup tutorial, Jaclyn comments on how the final makeup look makes her feel: "I feel like I have more *confidence*, I feel like I have more *energy*, like, I can just *do anything* right now…". With a full face of makeup, Jaclyn feels "*completely different* in a good way", she can "do anything" and is "*ready* to go!" (Jaclyn Hill, 2018). Taking these claims into account, I can suggest that makeup acts as an armour or

a shield to help Jaclyn 'fight' whatever has to come her way: "…Whatever *life has to throw at me - I can handle* it!" Jaclyn Hill, 2018). The role of makeup as a shield for women is identical to the findings of Fabricant and Gould (1993). Furthermore, the above-mentioned statements from Jaclyn include the lexical markers of empowerment provided in Chapter 2, like 'confidence', 'beautiful', 'power' (Roehl, 2017; Chan, 2016), which Jaclyn (2014; 2018) herself uses in both tutorials: 'really *confident*', 'absolutely *beautiful*', '*gorgeous*', 'the *power* that makeup has'. Furthermore, Jaclyn emphasizes the power of makeup to fix problems: "That statement really is true: having a bad day, *you highlight – it gets better*; going through a breakup, you highlight – it gets better". However, the context surrounding the fixing abilities of makeup does not suggest a lack of self-esteem or insecurities; instead, it is positive and uplifting. In addition, Jaclyn (2018) comments on her ability to feel confident when she does not wear makeup: "I mean, don't get me wrong, I also be *bossing* people around *bare face with acne* everywhere…". This indicates that while enjoying a full face of makeup, Jaclyn is also able to go outside without alterations and still feel good about herself. Moreover, Jaclyn (2014) acknowledges her imperfections: "I just have so much *redness* and just *breakouts* and, like, just *texture…*" and reassures others that they are not alone: "…I do have redness around my nose, which is *very common in women…*". These statements suggest that Jaclyn embraces both states, natural and altered, and she is confident because she accepts both. It seems like Jaclyn is not pressured to wear makeup, but she chooses to do so in order to enhance her appearance and embrace it. To communicate her love for makeup and its power, Jaclyn (2018) uses expressions like "Goodbye redness", "Oh, yeah! Mm-hmm! Gosh… highlight just makes everything so much better!", "Oh my gosh, bronzer just makes the face comes to life", and indicates that she is proud with her final look: "…[proudly] bitch, I *only* used three shadows!". Notably, as Roncal (2013) stated, taking pride in the enhanced appearance is one of the key themes of makeup empowerment.

4.4.3 Creativity & skills empowerment

This type of discourse centres around characteristics of makeup as a fun and joyful outlet, with a playful element to it (Aguilar, 2019). Within this discourse, makeup is also portrayed as a tool to express creativity, showcase skills and experiment (Ririnui & Nguyen, 2010; Roehl, 2017; Lopus, 2017). These characteristics are a part of the previously mentioned discussion about empowerment in Chapter 2.

First, bloggers mention how they love makeup because it is 'fun', like Carli did in her tutorial: "---all the works, which I personally love, it's so much *fun* for me" (Carli Bybel,

2018). Similarly, Bethany (2011) mentioned that makeup is 'fun' for her and Tati (2018) referred to makeup products as 'fun'. Here, makeup is discussed as something to spend time on that provides amusement and enjoyment. With 'full glam', bloggers also point out that they can "try new things" and the process of applying makeup is "exciting" for them. Furthermore, bloggers imply that 'full glam' looks are for skilled professionals who possess special exclusive knowledge about makeup. For beauty bloggers, using makeup is thus a way to use their makeup-related skills and showcase expertise in the beauty world (Aguilar, 2019). Moreover, as mentioned before, there are parallels between makeup and art, face and canvas and makeup artist and painter (Ririnui & Nguyen, 2010; Lopus, 2017). Associations between makeup and art are arguably more prominent in other, more artistic types of tutorials that have not been examined in this thesis (e.g. carnival looks). Nevertheless, creativity and skills discourse on empowerment is prevailing across the 'full glam' makeup tutorials, since bloggers have more opportunities to express creativity, share their expertise and play with makeup (Ririnui & Nguyen, 2010; Lopus, 2017; Pang, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter presents an overall conclusion that answers the main and the sub-research questions. It also acknowledges the limitations of the research and includes suggestions for future research and theoretical implications for the academic field.

Although previous literature extensively discusses the topics of feminism, empowerment, makeup usage and social media, a study that includes all of the above-mentioned concepts seemed to be missing. Significant portion of the existing literature devoted attention to feminism (Fraser, 2012; Nicholson, 1990; Rampton, 2019; Solomon, 2009), post-feminism (McRobbie, 2004; Gill, 2016; Grady, 2018; Press, 2011; Blloshmi, 2013) and consumer feminism (Lazar, 2006; Goldman et. Al, 1991; Hains, 2014; McRobbie, 2008). Moreover, literature has discussed makeup usage and what it means for women (White, 2018; Bindel, 2019; Roncal, 2013; Aguilar, 2019). The identified gap in the literature was related to the construction of discourses on empowerment through makeup, which were described as discussions on empowerment achieved through/with the help of makeup usage. This thesis aimed to fill the gap related to the construction and representation of empowerment through makeup on social media and tried to answer the following research question: How do young female American beauty bloggers construct discourses on empowerment through makeup in their makeup tutorials on YouTube? To obtain a thorough understanding of the discourses on general makeup usage and produce richer results, a following sub-question was developed: How do young female American beauty bloggers construct makeup discourses in their makeup tutorials on YouTube? Moreover, this thesis intended to determine whether there were differences in the discussions on empowerment through makeup between two different makeup looks: natural 'no makeup' looks and 'full glam' looks. As the two looks differ in their purposes, they suggest a potential difference in the discussions on makeup and empowerment through makeup. As touched upon in Chapter 1 and 2, the 'no makeup' makeup looks are associated with naturalness and minimal changes (Gillette, 2018), whereas the 'full glam' makeup looks are dramatic and visibly enhanced (Kennedy, 2016). This thesis examined whether there were differences between the two types of makeup tutorials and aimed to answer the following sub-question: Do the empowerment discourses differ between natural and 'full glam' makeup tutorials? The answers to the research questions were produced by investigating contemporary discourses on makeup and makeup empowerment constructed by seven young female American beauty bloggers. Seven natural makeup tutorials and seven 'full glam' makeup tutorials were analyzed using critical

discourse analysis. After examining the makeup tutorials on YouTube, several important findings have emerged.

First and foremost, in the examined makeup tutorials, makeup has been unequivocally represented as a positive outlet and no negative attitudes towards makeup usage were detected. Words used to refer to makeup like 'love', 'fun', 'amazing' and 'perfect' prevailed in the makeup discourses. As discussed in Chapter 2, across empowerment discourses, makeup appears to be serving versatile purposes. In the makeup tutorials, beauty bloggers portray makeup usage as a creative and fun activity that allows people to express themselves (Shapouri, 2015). Bloggers commented numerous times that makeup makes them feel good about themselves and take pride in their altered appearances (Roncal, 2013). By disseminating positive opinions about makeup and encouraging viewers to try using makeup products, bloggers contribute to the positive representation of makeup usage. They support their viewers within the beauty community and create an overall positive space in their tutorials, which reflects the social nature of empowered communities (Hur, 2006).

Regarding the sub-question on differences between the empowerment discourses, the analysis has shown that empowerment discourses differed and resulted in three interrelated types: *transformation*, *explicit* and *creativity & skills* empowerment. Within transformation empowerment discourses, participants derived power from embracing the transformative abilities of makeup and having control over their appearances (Aguilar, 2019; Kennedy, 2016). In these discourses, the altered appearance is intended to look unaltered, but still enhanced, meaning that the imperfections were eliminated with the help of makeup. The makeup application is intentionally made to look unnoticeable to others, and this act enhances confidence of the makeup user. Furthermore, the second type of discourses - explicit empowerment discourses - contained explicit positive statements about empowerment through makeup. This type of empowerment discourses was linked to only one beauty blogger, Jaclyn Hill, who is very outspoken about her feelings of empowerment and confidence achieved with makeup in her 'full glam' makeup tutorial. It appears that the explicit claims about empowerment through makeup were not as prominent as in other digital sources discussed in Chapter 2, like blogs, articles and interviews (Aguilar, 2019; Williams, 2018; Roehl, 2017), but, nevertheless, present. Finally, creativity and skills empowerment discourses contained discussions about makeup as a fun and artistic outlet that allows to express creativity, experiment, showcase skills and expertise.

Importantly, there were several instances where makeup was constructed as needed to fix flaws or perform alterations to the appearances and it was noted that using makeup was

associated with an attempt to hide imperfections (Harkness, 2017; Bindel, 2019). Moreover, the statements referring to the need to cover imperfections included words like 'flaws', 'fix', 'hide' and 'issue' and makeup was represented as a necessary fixing agent. In the discussion, the 'need' to perform alterations was connected to the pressure to look a certain way that is coming from the society (Briscoe, 2019) and reflected the existing criticism towards makeup usage in the literature (Jacquez, 2019; Chambers, 2008; Barthel, 1988). It was acknowledged that the makeup discourses on YouTube contain references to the often-unrealistic societal expectations that are closely tied to the beauty standards (Mbabazi, 2019; Obiora, 2020).

Although, there were instances of makeup usage as a perceived necessity, it is concluded in the contemporary discourses on empowerment through makeup on YouTube, using makeup is presented as an empowering activity for the various reasons that were mentioned in the previous discussion on three types of empowerment discourses. Participants in the discussions on empowerment through makeup largely seem to derive empowerment from having a *choice* – a concept that has been circulating in the literature together with empowerment as one of the focal points of post-feminism (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Burkett & HaMilton, 2012; Gill, 2007; Rampton, 2019). By exercising the freedom of choice to use makeup for their own personal reasons, participants detach makeup from existing negative discourses. Moreover, I argue that the link between makeup usage and sexist patriarchal culture (Adkins, 1997; Barthel, 1988) is not widespread in the contemporary discourses on makeup empowerment on YouTube. Instead, the link to patriarchal culture could be replaced by pressure coming from the societal expectations, in a sense that the need to use makeup comes from the desire to adhere to a certain normalized standard of 'beauty' (Korichi et. al, 2007; Jacquez, 2019; Chambers, 2008; Barthel, 1988).

I state that the overall context surrounding makeup and makeup usage has come to be predominantly positive and uplifting. Moreover, bloggers like Jaclyn Hill and Nikkie de Jager, who are open about their empowerment experiences through makeup and are participants in the explicit empowerment discourses, are increasingly coming to light in the YouTube beauty community. Much like the post-feminist narrative of women reclaiming what was known as an unfavorable attitude towards stereotypical femininity, prominent participants of the makeup empowerment discourses detach makeup from existing criticism and turn it into a tool to enhance their overall well-being (Theberge & Kernaleguen, 1979).

5.1 Limitations

This thesis has provided an extensive analysis of YouTube discourses regarding makeup and makeup empowerment, however, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the YouTube videos that were selected for this thesis have been uploaded several years ago and the current opinions of beauty bloggers might differ from those they expressed in the videos. Considering the dynamic nature of beauty blogging, the results could remain confined to a specific time period. Moreover, the sample is limited to seven beauty bloggers and does not represent the whole population of the beauty community on YouTube. Several of the most subscribed female beauty channels on YouTube have been excluded from the sample because their hosts are not American, and this serves as a limitation to this study. For example, Nikkie de Jager, a Dutch beauty blogger, has been mentioned earlier in this paper as a prominent contributor to the discourse on empowering properties of makeup and could have provided interesting data for such a topic. Finally, this study examined only natural and 'full glam' makeup tutorials, yet, there are many more types of makeup looks on beauty channels that could yield valuable information about makeup. All in all, this thesis is qualitative in nature and did not aim to generalize the makeup empowerment discourses, but rather to deliver a detailed investigation of them.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

The final part of this chapter will provide some suggestions for future research that could take this thesis as a base and build on its findings in order to develop the topic further.

As an overarching recommendation, YouTube beauty bloggers should be researched more as they have the ability to positively impact and empower their audiences (Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017). It has been previously noted that more studies on bloggers should be carried out within the consumer culture research (Arsel & Zhao, 2013), as existing research on YouTube bloggers is limited (Tolson, 2010). Moreover, beauty companies are eager to understand the beauty community on YouTube in particular in order to leverage their opinion leadership and audiences (WARC, 2011) and future research could provide beauty brands with valuable information. As this thesis provided insights into the contemporary discourses on makeup and empowerment on YouTube and presented three types of discourses on empowerment through makeup, there is a potential to use these types of empowerment discourses in a more complex future research.

Since this thesis focused on female beauty bloggers, it would be interesting to research male beauty bloggers and the empowerment discourses in which they take part. As

mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2, men have stepped into the beauty world and the number of male beauty bloggers is rising (Gill, et. al, 2015; Jayson, 2014; North, 2018; Warfield, 2019). I suggest comparing male and female beauty bloggers in future studies to see if there are any gender differences between the discourses.

Second, this study examined American-based beauty bloggers. As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, this served as a limitation to the study. Thus, it would be a good idea for the future research to include international beauty bloggers from other countries. Makeup usage and makeup empowerment differ across cultures (Cllafollett, 2014; Leal, 2015), and cultural background could provide some context to the topic of the study.

Additionally, smaller channels should be examined in the future, since this thesis focused on the most popular female beauty bloggers (Choi & Behm-Moravitz, 2017). Smaller bloggers could have more freedom to be critical in their reviews as their dependence on sponsorships is arguably smaller compared to bigger, famous bloggers. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, only two types of makeup looks were examined for this research. Further research could investigate artistic and colorful looks, as well as advance on the creativity and skills empowerment discourse that has been discussed in this paper.

Finally, it is advisable to shift the focus to a reception study. Future studies could look at user comments and reactions in order to grasp audience reception of the makeup tutorials. As social media fosters empowerment and encourages users to speak up (Fieseler & Fleck, 2013; Li, 2016; Leong et. al, 2016), the user reactions could provide information about their empowerment experiences with makeup. Additionally, there is a possibility open for future research to inspect user-generated feedback on other social media platforms in addition to YouTube, like Instagram or Facebook.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Coding scheme

Coding unit	Explanation
Area of interest	Marked text extract that represents a relevant area of interest for analysis that is related to makeup
Overlexicalization	Abundance and overuse of the same or similar in connotation words in one area (e.g. every day, every single day, all the time, my routine)
Lexical choices	Specific word choices done by bloggers (e.g. ethereal, "slayed")
Structural oppositions	Structural oppositions are also specific word choices, but are coded differently because they exist in a form of binary opposition (e.g. good - bad, beautiful - ugly)
Suppression	An area where there is a hidden, implicit meaning, usually with pauses. Some things are expected to be in a sentence, but are absent and prompt questioning "why?" (e.g. "We're gonna… you know")
Attitude	Encompasses attitude, opinion, perception of the bloggers. Express how bloggers feel or think about makeup (e.g. "I love makeup!", "Mm-hmm, that highlighter must be on fleek!")

Juxtapositions	Two things are placed together for comparison or contrast (e.g. but, like, just, however, although, even though)
Emphasis	Intensifiers - words used to emphasize or exaggerate (e.g. really, very, super, so, how, pretty)

Appendix B: Themes in natural'no makeup' makeup tutorials

Common themes
Natural = nice
Makeup = "fresh","alive", "healthy", "glowy", "dewy", "awoken"
Nothing harsh, sharpened, defined
Some things *need* to be altered; cannot go untouched (restriction)
Minimizing language - "little", "light", "slight", "a bit", "tiny", "small" etc.
It doesn't look like there is makeup on

Differing						
Bethany Mota	Tati Westbrook	Michelle Phan	Carli Bybel	Jaclyn Hill	Laura Lee	Christen Dominique
Makeup shouldn't be worn every day; confidence should be	Natural makeup look - cheaper brand used	Nothing prettier than a natural look; universality of natural	Natural = realistic	Natural makeup = better, amplified version of yourself	Natural makeup = for beginners	Natural makeup = embracing and enhancing natural

without it		beauty				features
	Natural = simple, minimal,	Natural makeup is an illusion	Prefers less makeup on a daily basis	Natural makeup = easy (implies that full glam = for professionals, time costly)	Natural makeup = for young people	Natural makeup = normal / ordinary / regular human being (implies that full glam = extra, unusual, abnormal, too much, scary)
			Natural look = balanced	Natural makeup is for when a person doesn't have time		The goal - to look the most natural
			Natural look is for when there is no time	_My_ skin but better		Skin shine through, natural skin still visible

Appendix C: Themes in 'full glam' makeup tutorials

Common themes
Full, intense coverage
Full glam = nice
Full glam = a lot of glow and sparkles

Cover up imperfections
Naturalness is still important, the look shouldn't be "too much", "cakey", "fake"
Makeup brings life into the face

Differing						
Bethany Mota	Tati Westbrook	Michelle Phan	Carli Bybel	Jaclyn Hill	Laura Lee	Christen Dominique
Does not do full glam often	Makeup can immediately transform the look from basic to glam	Glam can be easy	Full glam = experimenting	Full glam = sexy	Full glam = learning tutorial	Full glam = hiding the darkness
Full glam = night out; a special occasion "permits" more makeup	Full glam = playing around = fun	Makeup = rescuing	Full glam = party; a special occasion "permits" more makeup	Full glam = vibrant, healthy, angelic, ethereal	Full glam = for a special event; makeup is used to make the person look their best	Full glam = for a special event
			Full glam = balanced	Extra products - good	Makeup = controlling, preventative, hiding	Full glam = new layer of skin without imperfections
			Full glam = a lot of makeup, but it is okay	Makeup has power and Jaclyn personally chose to gave makeup that power	Natural imperfections = issue, problem → makeup as fixing	
			Does not do	Makeup =	Makeup can	

			full glam often	confidence and energy boost	be scary	
				Makeup changes the feeling ("completely different") in a good way	Full glam = sensual, seducing → sexy	