

## SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS IN ADVERTISING: HOW MESSAGES ARE COMMUNICATED TO SOCIETY

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### **Abstract**

Any communication that aims to persuade someone to buy a product or service, encourage public opinion, or garner support for an advertiser's viewpoints or actions is considered advertising. Information can be communicated effectively and efficiently through advertising. This can be used to influence individuals to use the advertised goods and services. Through a semiotic theory approach, advertisements are expected to be able to be classified based on the signs, codes and meanings contained therein. A review of the literature was the method employed in this article. Library research involves gathering information and data from a variety of sources found in libraries, including reference books, published works, notes, articles, and journals that are relevant to the issue you are trying to address. This research discusses communication theory, the meaning of advertising, semiotics in the context of advertising, the dynamics of messages in advertising, and semiotic models.

**Keywords:** Analysis, semiotics, advertising, mass communication

### **INTRODUCTION**

Designed to inform or influence certain audiences and groups, advertising is a type of mass communication via mass media that is funded by businesses, nonprofits, and individuals featured in advertising messages. Writing, graphics, movies, or a mix of all these can be used as a kind of advertisement. Through advertising, a company can communicate a product in the form of services or goods produced (Harrigan et al, 2018).

Advertising cannot be separated from a marketing concept, so advertising has an important role in promoting a product to the public. So, in delivering the advertisement, it must show an interesting side and have characteristics and be persuasive so that consumers are voluntarily encouraged to take action in accordance with what the advertiser wants. 1 Many visual advertisements are often used as a promotional medium and also as a marketing strategy to sell. product or brand. The development of advertising and advertising in consumer society has now given rise to various social and cultural issues regarding advertising, especially regarding the signs used, the

images displayed, the information conveyed, the meaning obtained, and how all of this influences perception. Advertising serves as a means of communication for the most part. This is evident from Arens' definition, which states that advertising is an informational and impersonal communication structure that is typically funded by known sponsors and used in a variety of media to convey non-persuasive messages about things (goods, services) (Bruce & Rao, 2017).

Advertising can be used to inform about products and services from producers which are considered very effective in increasing public attraction to the advertisements displayed. In the world of advertising, advertisements can be displayed by combining audio and visuals that can attract people to see them. Advertisements serve as a vehicle for manufacturers to convey any type of message they choose to reach consumers, together with non-personal information. To put it plainly, advertising is a useful communication tool that may be utilized to spread knowledge. This can be used to influence individuals to use the advertised goods and services. The likelihood of public attention increases with the advertisement's level of interest. Therefore, in an effort to stick in people's minds, producers compete to create commercials that are as eye-catching and imaginative as possible (Kim & Reid, 2014).

Mass communication is an abbreviation of mass communication media including electronic and print media such as: newspapers, magazines, radio and television which have broadcast circulation aimed at the public. Technological advances in the field of radio and television are able to reach longer distances with better sound. Television via satellite broadcasts is able to connect visually, auditively, lively, and when an event occurs, everything has an influence. Based on technological advances, in this case communication via television, it will be discussed, especially regarding advertising issues from a semiotic perspective (Balci & Ozgen, 2017).

Through a semiotic theory approach, advertisements are expected to be able to be classified based on the signs, codes and meanings contained therein. In this way, clarity can be found regarding aesthetic considerations in advertising in terms of the relationship between sign and message. With a semiotic theory approach, it is hoped that the basis for harmony between verbal signs and visual signs can be identified to support the unity of their appearance as well as knowing the relationship between the amount of message content (verbal and visual) and the level of creativity in making the design (M Faizan, 2019).

The use of semiotics as a method of reading advertising is due to the tendency to view various things such as art, culture, social, visual communication design, and as phenomena of language and signs. Semiotic methods basically operate at two levels of analysis. First, analyze the signs individually. Includes: type, structure, code and meaning of signs. Second, analyze the signs as a group or combination. Namely a collection of signs that form text, while text is understood as a combination of signs. Thus, one form of visual communication design work can also be seen as text. Therefore, its existence is a combination of signs and needs to be approached with Semiotic studies (Vincent & Kolade, 2019).

Applications for designing and planning commercial advertisements and public service advertisements (non-commercial) always involve all media. With a semiotic theory approach, it is hoped that we can find out the basic harmony between verbal signs and visual signs to support the unity of their appearance as well as knowing the relationship between the amount of message content (verbal and visual) and the level of creativity in making the design.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

A literature review (literature study) is the research methodology employed in this study. Library research involves gathering information and data from a variety of sources found in libraries, including reference books, published works, notes, articles, and journals that are relevant to the issue you are trying to address. Activities are conducted methodically in order to gather, process, and analyze data using certain approaches/techniques in order to identify solutions for the issues encountered (Danandjaja, 2014).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Advertising Communication Theory**

In English, "communication" can refer to a variety of concepts. The term "communication" has Latin roots (*communis*), meaning "the same thing" (common), according to etymology. The verb *communicare*, which meaning to transmit or impart information to other persons in order to achieve the same understanding, is derived from the word *communis*. "Communication is the sending and receiving of messages and news between two or more people so that the message in question can be understood," according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI). So, communication involves two or more people, among whom there is still a common language used to ensure congruence in meaning. The same language in conversation does not necessarily indicate

compatibility of meaning with other words. Language alone cannot be said to communicate, so the purpose of communication is that there is compatibility of language and meaning between the communicator and the communicant (Thorson & Rodgers, 2019).

In the communication process there are the following communication elements:

1. Source

The source is the person who creates or sends the information in all communication events. Human communication might originate from a single person or from a collection of individuals. The source is sometimes referred to as the communicator, sender, or encoder in English.

2. Order

The sender's and the recipient's communication together constitute the message that is discussed in the communication process. Both in-person interactions and communication media procedures can be used to transmit messages.

3. Media

The media being discussed here are instruments for sending communications from the sender to the recipient. Diverse viewpoints exist concerning media or networks. Some people believe that media can come in many different forms. For instance, some regard the five senses as communication medium when it comes to interpersonal contact. Media is a technology in mass communication that can link sources and recipients in an open way so that everybody can see, read, and hear what is being said.

4. Recipient

The person to whom the source is sending a message is known as the recipient. The beneficiaries may take the shape of a mass or a group of one or more individuals. Because he is the communication's target, the message's recipient is a crucial component of the communication process.

5. Influence

The difference between the recipient's thoughts, feelings, and actions prior to and following the message's delivery is known as influence or effect. A person's knowledge, attitudes, and conduct may be impacted by this. Consequently, receiving a message can also cause someone's ideas about their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior to alter or get stronger, which is another way to define influence (Freire, 2014).

The dissemination of communications about a good, service, or concept to the general public (consumers) through paid and mass media with the intention of persuading them to utilize the good, service, or idea is known as advertising communication. The series of events that take place in advertising communication is known as the advertising communication process (Diaz & Martin, 2016).

### **Definition of advertisement**

Any communication that aims to persuade someone to buy a product or service, encourage public opinion, or garner support for an advertiser's viewpoints or actions is considered advertising. In essence, advertising is a communication strategy employed by communicators in this example, businesses or producers to tell the general public, particularly consumers, about products or services via mass media. Aside from it, the goal of all commercials is the same: to enlighten viewers and encourage them to attempt or follow the advertisement's recommendations, which may include using the provided goods and services (Kim & Reid, 2014).

Advertising's primary goal is to teach consumers about a good or service in a way that is compelling and strategy-driven, making the news or message easy to comprehend, accept, and remember. It also aims to boost specific activities, like purchasing, by drawing in customers and forming associations. relationships that can stimulate appetite, causing them to behave in the communicator's desired manner (Jha & Gangwar, 2017).

Effective communication is a key component of marketing strategy. A unique kind of communication used for marketing purposes is advertising. Of course, advertising operations need to involve more than just giving the audience information in order to fulfill the marketing role. To increase sales and profits, advertising needs to be able to influence the general public to act in a way that aligns with the business's marketing plan. Advertising must be able to persuade people to purchase goods that the marketing division has created with the intention of satisfying their requirements or wants. To put it succinctly, advertising ought to have the power to affect consumers' decisions. Advertising's primary goal is to alter or influence the views of its target audience in this case, the attitudes of customers. The aim of commercial advertising is to convince viewers to purchase the promoted product instead of rival offerings, or to encourage future purchases of the promoted product.

### **Semiotics in Advertising Context**

The scientific study of signs is known as semiotics. These could be feelings, ideas, thoughts, or experiences. Something, like black smoke rising in the distance, can stand in for B, which would be something like a fire (experience). An index sign would be one such sign, indicating that there is a relationship (contiguity) between A and B. An icon is a picture or image that serves as a sign. Based on similarities, photos can be used to depict a particular reality. For example, a photo of the previous president Suharto can represent the person in question, making it an experience. A sign may also serve as a symbol if the link between it and the thing it represents is predicated on a consensus or convention. For instance, a red light may serve as a symbol for a "prohibition (idea)" in accordance with societal norms. It is thought that pigeons are a sign or emblem of peace, and other birds or animals cannot simply take their place (Ivanov, 2018).

A sign is something that represents something, if "something" is conveyed through a sign from the sender to the recipient, then that something can be called a "message". Advertising in the context of semiotics can be observed as an effort to convey a message using a set of signs in a system. In semiotics, advertisements can be observed and created based on a relationship between the signifier or signifier and the signified or signified, like signs in general, which are an inseparable unity between the signifier and the signified (Lee & Kim, 2014).

Advertising has the ability to "encourage" and "persuade" people to enjoy, select, and ultimately purchase a product in addition to providing information about ideas, services, and items. Primitive forms of advertising include the shouts of sellers who go around peddling their wares from house to house. In recent developments, advertising has reached the point of utilizing sophisticated communication and information technology through interactive and cyber media, namely via the internet in various forms (Lytvynenko & Enska, 2022).

Cultural context is a reference that cannot be ignored in relation to the success of an advertising communication. Horse riding men have connotations of masculinity and valor, which is not necessarily appropriate to the cultural context of a particular social group. Horse riding men can have different meanings, such as the existence of the lower class which is always synonymous with horse riding. The signifier of a man on a horse can have the signified of "lowly person". Signs cannot be separated from their context, for example traffic signs (traffic lights) are useful when they are installed on the highway.

The sign will be of no use if it is installed in a sugar cane field in the interior of an isolated tribe (Mazzali-Lurati & Pollaroli, 2014).

In addition to words, additional communication elements including images, colors, and sounds are also used in commercial communication. Two main mass media channels are used to distribute advertisements: print media, which includes newspapers, magazines, billboards, and pamphlets, and electronic media, which includes radio, television, and movies. To examine advertising from a semiotic perspective, by examining it through the sign system in advertising. Advertisements use a sign system consisting of symbols, both verbal and icons. Advertisements also use index imitation, especially in radio, television and film advertisements (Namin & Rohm, 2020).

In accordance with Peirce's theory, semiotic signs, such as icons, indices, and symbols, can be used to identify signs in visual media.

1. Icon

An icon is a sign where the signifier and the signified have the same natural relationship. Stated otherwise, an icon is the association between a sign and a comparable object or reference, like a map and a portrait.

2. Index

An index can be a sign that directly refers to reality or a symbol that illustrates a causal or cause-and-effect link between a sign and a signified. The most evident illustration is smoke, which indicates a fire.

3. Symbols

A symbol is a sign that illustrates the arbitrary, naturally occurring relationship between the signifier and the signified, a relationship founded on social norms (agreements).

Texts that indicate or refer to something do so because of a variety of laws, covenants, and natural laws that serve as the foundation and justification for the signs' indication of their contents. Jakobson claims that these indicators make up a system known as a code. The language code that was employed to express the content in question is the first code that pertains to texts. Grammars and dictionaries list the codes of language. Aside from that, since language is the major sign system used in the content, texts are ordered using other codes, also referred to as secondary codes. Texts use secondary codes, such as tale structure, theater principles, forms of argumentation, and metric systems, to convey meaning. These codes are divided into five code grids by Roland Barthes in his book *S/Z: hermeneutic code, semantic code, symbolic code, narrative code, and cultural code* (Tarighatbin & Sadati, 2019).

Here is an explanation of these codes' description. The articulation of several methods to pose queries, solve problems, respond, withhold answers, and ultimately arrive at a solution is known as the hermeneutic code. Stated differently, the Hermeneutic Code has to do with the problems that come up in a conversation. Code with marker-level meanings is known as semantic code. Connotations of femininity and masculinity, for instance, or, to put it another way, the Semantic Code, are signs designed to convey meanings related to nationality, ethnicity, allegiance, and masculinity and femininity. Symbolic code, specifically codes pertaining to schizophrenia, antithesis, ambiguity, and opposition of two parts. A code that includes a plot, sequence, narrative, or anti-narrative is referred to as narrative code. Cultural or Cultural Code: communal, anonymous, subconscious, mythical, wise, knowledgeable, historical, moral, psychological, literary, artistic, and fabled voices.

### **Message Dynamics in Advertising**

Advertising is not only able to provide complete and complete information regarding ideas, thoughts or products being marketed, but is also related to management within the organization. Advertising objectives are:

1. Communication and coordination tools to provide demands for the parties involved, such as advertisers, Account Executives from the agency and the creative team to communicate with each other. Furthermore, it can assist in organizing every work group, including a group of copywriters, radio experts, media buys, and research specialists.
2. Able to provide decision making criteria. If there are two alternatives in an advertising campaign, one must be chosen. Unlike decisions made based on executive tastes, they all have to go back to their goals and decide which one is more suitable.
3. A tool for evaluating the results of an advertising campaign, therefore the need arises to link several measures such as market share or brand awareness with the objectives of the advertising campaign (Terskikh & Zaytseva, 2021).

In essence, the goal of advertising is to organize the message as best as possible according to the characteristics of the audience targeted by the advertisement. Of course, the most desired final goal is for the public, audiences and consumers to obtain sufficient information so that they are willing to buy the advertised product or agree with the ideas put forward. The

essence of advertising should not only be concerned with the top line, aka sales, but also the bottom line, namely profit.

Advertising should generate awareness, if possible even top of mind. Advertising must sell, and generate extraordinary turnover. Advertising must make money. But that's not enough. Because advertising must generate profits. It's not enough just to "top line", but it must reach the "bottom line". Advertising has the following functions:

1. The purpose of advertising is to provide information. Advertising tells customers about the newest products and conveys details about the product, including its features and sales location.
2. The purpose of advertising is to encourage people to purchase specific brands or to alter their opinions of the company or product.
3. The purpose of advertising is to serve as a constant reminder to consumers about a product, encouraging them to purchase it in spite of other brands. Based on these three elements, advertising messages at the first level can accelerate changes in decision making, because information The initial stage was able to create increased consumer knowledge and awareness of the product (Syukur & Sukri, 2018).

### **Semiotic Model**

1. Ferdinand De Saussure Semiotics

Saussure claims that the study addresses social indications and the legal framework governing them. This implies that the sign is constrained by socially accepted laws. Saussure stressed that signs have meaning because language plays a part in them. in contrast to other aspects like religion, customs, and so forth. Four concepts comprised Saussure's semiotic notion. Specifically, signifier and signifiant, langue and parole, syntagmatic and paradigmatic, as well as synchronic and diachronic.

First, namely signifiant and signifie, signifiant or signified are things that can be accepted by our minds such as the original visual image of the object. Signifie is the meaning we think after we receive a sign.

The second concept is part of language, which is divided into parole and launge.

The third concept is synchronic and diachronic, which are concepts that study language over a certain period of time. Synchronic in language is an explanation of certain conditions related to a certain period. Meanwhile, diachronic is an explanation of developments after something that happened at a certain time.

The fourth concept, syntagmatic and paradigmatic, is the relationship between elements of linguistics which contain the arrangement or series of words, sounds in a concept. During school we are taught to form a sentence consisting of a subject, predicate, object and reference so as to form a sentence in one complete unit.

2. Charles Sanders Peirce

Peirce's semiotic concept is that signs are closely related to logic. Humans utilize logic to make sense of the signs that they see around them. Signs are able to connect thoughts between one person and another. Pierce divides signs into 3 things to give meaning to an object. These 3 things are icons, indexes and symbols. Icons are visual images that have similarities between the shape of the sign and the object shown. For example, the object of a cow, the icon for this object can be a picture of a cow, a sketch of a cow, a statue of a cow, or a photo of a cow. They have something in common, namely depicting a cow. An index is a symbol that points to or implies a specific item. Signs and signifieds have a causal relationship that makes reference to known facts.

3. Roland Barthes

A significant person in semiotics history is Roland. He defined semiotics as the science of sign interpretation. Language is a system of signals with predetermined social messages. Apart from language, signs can include songs, musical notes, objects, dialogue, images, logos, gestures and facial expressions.

Roland, coined a two-stage analysis model of signification or two orders of signification. Then Roland divided them into denotation and connotation. The relationship between the signified and the signified in actual form is the initial step of signification. It is what Barthes refers to as denotation that is, the original meaning or general meaning that the majority of people fully comprehend. Barthes uses the term "connotation" to refer to the second level of importance. This explains the interaction that takes place when emotions or feelings are combined with signs (Sifaki & Papadopoulou, 2015).

Semiotic figures have similarities in their understanding of a sign. The only difference is the concept they use in their approach to interpreting a sign. If Ferdinand places more emphasis on language to interpret a sign and divide it into long concepts. Even though signs can appear through customs, religion and many others. Pierce's semiotic idea, on the other hand, analyzes meaning

using three notions. includes symbols, indices, and icons, but the concept is still too vague to reveal any hidden meanings. Therefore, the Roland analysis paradigm is recommended for locating signs' conceptual and in-depth meanings. almost entirely addresses every topic started by earlier figures.

## CONCLUSION

Any communication that aims to persuade someone to buy a product or service, encourage public opinion, or garner support for an advertiser's viewpoints or actions is considered advertising. Through a semiotic theory approach, advertisements are expected to be able to be classified based on the signs, codes and meanings contained therein.

In this way, clarity can be found regarding aesthetic considerations in advertising seen from the relationship between sign and message. With a semiotic theory approach, it is hoped that we can find out the basis for harmony between verbal signs and visual signs to support the unity of their appearance and find out the relationship between the amount of message content and the level of creativity in making the design. Similar to signs in general, which are an indivisible unity between the signifier and the signified, ads can be observed and developed based on a relationship between the signifier or signifier and the signified in semiotics.

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