A SEMIOTIC STUDY ON VERBAL AND VISUAL SIGNS FOUND IN *EVLON* COSMETICS ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis makna tanda verbal dan visual yang terdapat pada iklan kosmetik *Revlon*. Data penelitian ini adalah iklan yang diunduh dari internet di www.google.com. Teorisemiotika Saussure (dikutip dalam Chandler 2007) digunakanuntukmenganalisistanda verbal dan visual melalui penanda dan petanda, sedang kantegori semiotika oleh Barthes (1977) digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan makna tanda verbal dan visual, baik makna denotative maupun konotatif. Analisis ini juga didukung oleh teori makna warna oleh Cerrato (2012) yang diterapkan untuk menganalisis pilihan warna dalam iklan. Data dianalisis dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa adaenam tanda verbal dan enam tanda visual dalam dua iklan kosmetik *Revlon*. Tanda-tanda verbal dan visual ini memiliki makna denotative dan konotatif, dimana makna denotative berfokus pada penyampaian informasi terkait produk yang diiklankan dan makna konotatif berfokus pada penyampaian makna lain dan pesan tersembunyi dari iklan yang ingin disampaikan kepada pelanggan, khususnya wanita.

Kata kunci*: semiotik, tanda verbal, tanda visual, iklan, Revlon.*

Abstract

The aims of this research are to identify and analyze the meaning of verbal and visual signs found in *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements. Data of this research are advertisements downloaded from the internet at www.google.com. The theory of semiotics by Saussure (cited in Chandler 2007) was used to analyze verbal and visual signs through signifier and signified, while the theory of semiotics by Barthes (1977) was used to describe the meaning of verbal and visual signs, both denotative and connotative meanings. The theory of the meaning of color also supports this analysis by Cerrato (2012) which is applied to analyze color choices in advertisements. The data were analyzed by descriptive qualitative method and the results of this study showed that there were six verbal signs and six visual signs in two *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements. These verbal and visual signs have denotative and connotative meanings, where denotative meaning focuses on conveying information related to the advertised product and connotative meaning focuses on conveying other meanings and hidden messages from advertisements to be conveyed to customers, especially women.

Keywords*: semiotic, verbal sign, visual sign, advertisement, Revlon*

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is the study of language as a human communication system (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 343).Linguistics encompasses a wide range of approaches to the study of language and research areas, such as semantics, which is the study of meaning.According to Afifah, et al. (2021:67), semantics cannot be separated from the existence of meaning, and vice versa, because semantics examines meaning, both meaning in broad sense and meaning in a narrow sense. Semantics has a more specific section of study called

semiotics,as the topic discussed in this article, which is the study of signs. Semiotic analysis is more focused on seeing language as a sign system and each sign is composed of two parts, namely the signifier and the signified (Muttalib&Wahyuddin, 2022: 28).Therefore, semiotics can be defined as the study concerned with understandinghow individuals utilize signs and symbols to convey meaning.In a semiotic sense, words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects can all be employed as signs.

One of the famous pioneers of semiotic theory is Ferdinand De Saussure. According to Saussure (in Chandler, 2017: 13), language is a sign system, and linguistic signs make meaning only as part of the language sign system.Saussure developed a "dyadic," or two-part, sign paradigm. He described a sign as having two components: a signifier (the shape that the sign takes) and a signified (the concepts that it represents). On the other hand, Roland Barthes, a French semiotician, refined the notion of meaning into denotation and connotation. The initial order of signification is referred to as denotation. It refers to the literal connection of a sign to the ideas of signifier and signified (Barthes, 1977: 89). Therefore, it can be said that the denotation is the meaning drawn from the word itself, while connotationis a meaning that is referred to as the second order of signification, which comprises of signifier and signified.Connotation is something's secondary meaning. It has an implicit or hidden meaning that goes beyond the definition provided by the dictionary.

Signs are often found in various communication media, such as advertisements. Therefore, in semiotics, the meaning of the sign can be studied, which generally contains the message to be conveyed to the advertising reader.Advertisement is a kind of communication used to promote a product and make people interested in buying the product. According to Dyer (1982: 2), advertising draws attention to something or notifies and informs someone of something. They have an impact on people's decisions, thoughts, and feelings.Generally,the sign in advertisementsincludes both verbal and visual signs.A verbal sign of the advertisement is a text that can take a word, phrase and sentence. Meanwhile, a visual sign of advertisement is the image or picture that usually depicts the type of product, the company's logo, and the colors (Prawangsa, 2018: 248). Advertisement language is typically short, simple, clear, and understandable.There are many types of advertisements, especially commercial advertisements that can be easily found online, one of which is *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements.

In 1932, Charles and Joseph Revson and a scientist named Charles Lachman developed *Revlon*, an iconic American beauty brand. Women are already familiar with *Revlon* cosmetics. *Revlon's* superiority over its competitors can be attributed to its brand and products.*Revlon* markets its products through attractive advertising designs. Readers who read this product's advertisements for the first time will be drawn in by the pictures and the language given in the advertisements. It strongly supports the role of an advertisement in conveying messages to the readers to avoid public confusion in understanding the advertisements' message.Therefore, the objectives of this study are focused on two aspects: to find verbal and visual signs and to analyze the meanings of verbal and visual signs found in *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements.

There are several previous studies related to the topics analyzed in this article.The first related study was an article written by Oktavia (2017) entitled *Analisa Desain Visual dan Verbal Kemasan Parfum Eskulin TerhadapKetatnya Persaingan Globalisasi*. It is focused on analysisverbal and visual designs on *Eskulin* perfume packaging. Shefound that the verbal and visual elements contained in the perfume packaging can provide clues regarding the benefits of the product so that it can attract consumers' purchasing power. In this previous study, she focuses on how verbal and visual designs on packaging affect consumer purchasing power in a globalized competition, while this study focuseson denotative and connotative meanings conveyed by verbal and visual signs in

advertisements. However, these two studies conclude that both verbal and visual design or signs have an important role in attracting the attention of buyers.The second related study was an article written by Wishnawa, etal.(2021) entitled *Semiotics Approach on Verbal Signs in Would You Care More If I Was a Panda?*. This previous studyanalyzes verbal signs and their connotative meanings in wildlife advertisements. They found three verbal signs consisting of representamen, interpretants, and objects, where the connotative meaning was expressed in words, phrases, or sentences with interpretations based on knowledge, emotion, and imagination. Meanwhile, the researcher in this study analyzed both verbal and visual signs described through signifier and signified, then analyzed both denotative and connotative meanings of each sign.The third related study was an article written by Putra, etal. (2017) entitled *Semiotic Analysis of Four Popular "Memes" in Memecenter.com.* This previous study focused on the signifier and signified found in memes and the function of memes. The results of their study were not specific to verbal and visual signs but rather to signifiers and signifieds that are shared by the signs in general. They stated that every *meme* has a sign with its own function because basically, *memes* are created from facial expressions in the form of cartoons. This is different from this study, which focuses on analyzing verbal and visual signs with their denotative and connotative meanings. However, both of these studies use a semiotic approach in analyzing the data.

This study focuses on finding verbal and visual signs and analyzing the meaning of verbal and visual signs from *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements. *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements have messages that want to be conveyed to readers, either explicitly or through certain signs which contain a deeper meaning. Therefore, theories related to semiotics are applied to solve research problems in order to realize the objectives of this study.

METHOD

The data of this study were downloaded from the internet at www.google.com which are selected advertisements from *Revlon* cosmetic. This *Revlon* cosmetic advertisement was chosen as data because it contains many verbal and visual signs which are combined well to create informative, communicative, and interesting advertisements. The choice of words and short sentences that convey meaning related to information or hidden messages, along with attractive color choices and images to persuade readers to buy the advertised product. Advertisers deliver the information or their ideas well through verbal and visual signs contained in advertisements. There are three steps in the process of collecting data. The first step is to download selected advertisements from the internet. The second step is to classify parts of the advertisement which are verbal and visual signs by taking notes. The last step is to re-check the data that has been collected to analyze the meaning of the verbal and visual signs themselves.

In analyzing, verbal and visual signs must be understood first. There are two *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements which are analyzed in this study using descriptive qualitative method. Furthermore, two theories were applied to analyze the data, including the theory of semiotics about the sign proposed by Saussure (cited in Chandler, 2007). The second theory is proposed by Barthes (1977) about denotative and connotative meaning. In addition, there is also a supporting theory proposed by Cerrato (2012) about the meanings of colors that develop eleven colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, black, pink, gray, and brown. There are two steps in the data analysis process. First, identify verbal and visual signs through signifiers and signifieds based on Saussure's semiotic theory. Second, analyzing the meaning of verbal and visual signs using Barthes'

semiotic theory, followed by color analysis as part of the visual sign using Cerrato's color theory.

FINDING

In analyzing *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements, the researcher uses the semiotic theory by Saussure (cited in Chandler 2007), the semiotic theory by Barthes (1977) and the theory of meaning of colors by Cerrato (2012). There were two *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements analyzed with a total of six verbal signs and six visual signs. The first advertisement consists of three verbal signs and three visual signs, while the second advertisement also consists of three verbal signs and three visual signs as shown in the following table.

Table. 1 Result of Verbal and Visual Signs on the Advertisements.

Advertisements	Verbal Signs	Visual Signs
The first Revlon Cosmetic Advertisement.	1. Shimmer, Glimmer, Light Years Ahead! 2. Revlon 3. Feel Like A Woman!	1. There is a picture of a female model posing holding her waist while smiling. 2. There is a picture of lipsticks. 3. The background of the advertisement, the color of the female model's dress, and the color of the lipstick, which is purple.
The second Revlon Cosmetic Advertisement.	1. Revlon 2. I Can. So I Did. 3. Skin Enhancing Makeup	1. There is a picture of a female model posing with her hands on her head. 2. There are pictures of foundation, concealer, and powder. 3. The background of the advertisement is white.

The table above shows that there are two advertisements analyzed that contain verbal and visual signs. Verbal signs in advertisements include words and short sentences, while visual signs are pictures, gestures, facial expressions and color combinations found in advertisements.There are an equal number of verbal and visual signs in the advertisementto look balanced.Verbal signs have more denotative meanings because actual information about the product is seen in the sentences that appear in advertisements. Meanwhile, visual signs have more connotative meanings because hidden meanings or messages are conveyed through model images and color combinations in advertisements.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion section, verbal and visual signs are described based on the meanings they have, either denotative or connotative meanings. The analysis is presented as clearly as possible in order to give the reader a better understanding.

Data 1

Figure 1. Revlon Cosmetics Advertisement

The first verbal sign is "*Shimmer, Glimmer, Light Years Ahead!*" which signifies the slogan of the cosmetic product in this advertisement. This sentence looks interesting because of the choice of words to attract the attention of the readers. It can have both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, this sentence means a soft sparkle that emits a light that will last for years to come. Connotatively, it can be a slogan where the advertiser wants to tell the worth of this lipstick which can produce a soft shine on the lips with a long-lasting time. The statement "*Light Years Ahead!*" emphasizes that the shine produced by lipstick can last a long time. This sentence is made as if to increase the enthusiasm of the readers to buy the advertised lipstick.

The second verbal sign is the text written "*Revlon*" which signifies the name of the brand. It has a denotative meaning because it contains information related to the *Revlon* brand, which launched a lipstick product. As stated by Parapat, et al. (2021: 202), the denotative meaning relates to objective factual information. Therefore, it is often referred to as the literal meaning. *Revlon* is well known cosmetic brand, especially among women. By displaying the brand name in this advertisement, it will convince readers of the advertised lipstick.

The last verbal sign is "*Feel Like A Woman!*" which signifies the slogan of the *Revlon* brand itself. Each *Revlon* advertisement has a different slogan to attract readers' attention, one of which is the slogan "*Feel Like A Woman!*" It has a connotative meaning because there is a hidden message that advertisers want to convey. Through this slogan, advertisers expect that women who use lipstick from the *Revlon* brand will find their true identity as a woman. This slogan was also created to express what women feel after wearing this lipstick, where they will get a shiny and long-lasting lip color which is what women generally want when choosing lipstick.

The first visual sign is a picture of a female model posing holding her waist while smiling which signifies the brand ambassador of this advertisement. It can have both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, this female model emphasized that the advertised lipstick product was made especially for women. Connotatively, this picture of a female model represents the confidence that women feel when wearing lipstick from *Revlon*. It can be seen from the gesture and facial expressions of the female model. This pose shows the comfort felt by women with facial makeup, especially lip color so that it can increase self-confidence. The female model looks happy with the color of her lips so this is also expected to be felt by women who will buy and wear this lipstick. In addition, women have a dominant role in grabbing people's attention with their beautiful appearance so it is expected to persuade readers to buy the advertised lipstick.

The second visual sign is a picture of lipsticks which signifies the advertised product of the *Revlon* brand. It has a denotative meaning because it aims to convey information

related to what products are in the advertisement. When reading advertisements, readers need to know how the advertised product looks. Through the picture of this lipstick, readers will know the actual form of the advertised product to attract readers' attention to buy the lipstick.

The last visual sign are the background of the advertisement, the color of the female model's dress, and the color of the lipstick, which is purple. It can be seen that this advertisement is dominated by purple. According to Cerrato (2012:13), purple represents power and luxury. This color can increase people's perceptions of beauty and their reactions to more creative ideas. It has a connotative meaning because there is a hidden meaning that advertisers want to convey to readers through the choice of purple color. The advertiser wants to createadvertisements that have power to attract readers' attention by using purple gradations. In addition, the purple color also represents the luxury of the advertised lipstick so that women who wear lipstick from the *Revlon* brand are also expected to feel luxury in their appearance, especially their lip color.

Data 2

Figure 2. Revlon Cosmetics Advertisement

The first verbal sign is "*Revlon*" which signifies the brand's name.It has a denotative meaning because it contains information related to the brand name, namely *Revlon*, which launched the product in the advertisement. *Revlon* is one of the most popular cosmetic brands in the world. Revlon launched cosmetic products needed by women. Presenting the *Revlon* brand's name in advertisements will help advertisers introduce the brand widely and let readers know about which brand the advertised product comes from.

The second verbal sign is "*I Can. So I Did,*" which signifies the slogan of the advertised product. It can have both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, this sentence states someone who has the ability to do something. However, this statement has a hidden meaning if it is associated with this advertisement. Connotatively, the statement "*I Can. So I Did*" is a short slogan that aims to convey a hidden message from the advertisement. This slogan is included as part of a campaign carried out by the *Revlon* brand. Through the slogan "*I Can. So I Did,*" the *Revlon* brand wants to invite women to fully be themselves by using a collection of cosmetic products from *Revlon* consisting of foundation, concealer, and powder. This product is formulated to help produce makeup that looks soft and natural so that women who use it will feel that they can still be themselves. Furthermore, through this slogan, women are encouraged to be more confident in doing what they want and not worry about how their makeup looks. Likewise, products from this cosmetic collection will work well in providing the natural makeup results that women desire to make them more confident.

The last verbal sign is "*Skin Enhancing Makeup*" which signifies the role of foundation, concealer, and powder products in makeup. This sentence has a denotative meaning because it emphasizes the role of foundation, concealer, and powder that can help enhance the beauty of women.This product is also formulated to improve the appearance of

the face to be softer and naturalwhen using make-up. Therefore, this sentence can complete the advertised foundation, concealer, and powder information and convince the reader to buy it.

The first visual is a picture of a female model posing with her hands on her headwhich signifies the brand ambassador of the advertised product. The picture of this female model can have both denotative and connotative meanings. Denotatively, this picture confirms that this product is intended for women. Connotatively, there is a hidden message from the picture of this female model. The gestures and facial expressions of this female model show her confidence and courage to express herself. Through this picture, advertisers want women to be able to make themselves as comfortable as possible and become more confident to do everything they want with the help of the foundation, concealer, and powder products that give perfect results to their makeup looks.Women are always synonymous with the beauty of their faces so that the results of soft and natural makeup will help them to dare to carry out their daily activities. Therefore, this picture of a female model is presented to grab the attention of readers, especially women to be persuaded to buy the advertised foundation, concealer, and powder. In addition, the clothes used by the female model are pink.According to Cerrato (2012: 17), pink represents love. The pink color of the clothes worn by female models is associated with every woman's self-love. With self-love, women can accept themselves and be more confident, especially with the look of makeup after using foundation, concealer, and powder by*Revlon* brand.

The second visual sign are pictures of foundation, concealer, and powder which signified the type of product that the *Revlon* brand wants to advertise. This picture has a denotative meaning because it delivers information related to the actual form of the product launched by the *Revlon*. The collection of this product consists of foundation, concealer, and powder. These three products are important elements in women's makeup collections. *Revlon* also confirms that these foundations, concealers, and powders are formulated to produce a soft and natural makeup finish. The picture that shows the actual product from this advertisementis intended to convince readers to buy and use the foundation, concealer, and powder launched by *Revlon*.

The last visual sign is that the background of the advertisement is white.Cerrato (2012: 14) states thatwhite represents innocence and purity. The innocence of white as the advertising background is associated with the naturalness of the advertised foundation, concealer, and powder products so that customers who use these products will get soft and natural makeup results. Through this choice of white, the product in the advertisement is associated with the innocence and purity that the advertiser wants to convey to the readers.

CONCLUSION

Verbal and visual signs are important components that can create informative and attractive advertisements in order to promote a brand's products. There are six verbal and six visual signs in the two *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements. The first advertisement consists of three verbal signs and three visual signs, the same as the second advertisement consisting of three verbal signs and three visual signs. Verbal signs in advertisements include slogans and short sentences, while visual signs are pictures of female models, pictures of products, and color combinations presented in advertisements.Furthermore, verbal and visual signs have denotative and connotative meanings. The total of denotative meaning is nine and connotative meaning is seven. There are verbal and visual signs that only have denotative meaning to reinforce information about the advertised product. There are verbal and visual signs with denotative and connotative meanings to convey other meanings or hidden messages from the advertisement. In these advertisements, verbal signs convey more denotative meaning because it contains information about the

advertised product, while visual signs convey more connotative meaning because they contain hidden meanings or messages from advertisements that want to be conveyed to readers.Besides promoting products, these two *Revlon* cosmetic advertisements also aim to convey a message to women to always feel confident to do whatever they want and love themselves.

SUGGESTION

There are several suggestions for the next researcher who is interested in undertaking a semiotic analysis, particularly about the meaning of verbal and visual signs. The researcher realizes that this article is still far from being perfect.There are still many additional advertisementsthat is designed with fascinating and relevant messages, making it difficult to examine. As a result, future researchers must be more observant and critical thinkers because signs in advertisements, both verbal and visual, might have many other meanings that differ from the literal meaning. Advertisers also use innovative and fascinating commercials to express their views and feelings.Hopefully, future researchers will discover new semiotic analysis problems outside the denotative and connotative interpretations of verbal and visual signs.

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