

DISCOVERING THE MEANING OF VERBAL AND VISUAL SIGNS IN L'OREAL PARIS VIDEO ADVERTISEMENT: A SEMIOTIC STUDY

A.A. Diah Trisna Andina¹, Desak Putu Eka Pratiwi², Ni Made Verayanti Utami³
English Study Program Faculty of Foreign Languages Mahasaraswati University Denpasar, Jl.
Kamboja, No. 11A Denpasar.
diahtrisna359@gmail.com¹, desak.eka.pratiwi@gmail.com²,
verayanti.utami@unmas.ac.id³

ABSTRACT

The study entitled “*Discovering the Meaning of Verbal and Visual Signs in L’Oreal Paris Video Advertisement: A Semiotic Study*” which aimed to identify and analyze the verbal and visual signs as well as their meaning. Commercial advertisement plays an important role in promoting a new product. It could be the fastest and practical ways to sell the products or services to the costumers. The data was taken from L’Oreal Paris Total Repair 5 Shampoo video advertisement. The data was collected by observation method and analyzed in descriptive qualitative method. This research used three theories, they are of semiotic theory by Saussure (1983: 67), theory of meaning by Barthes (1977) and theory of color terms by Wierzbicka (1996). The findings showed that there are 5 verbal signs and 6 visual signs. As the result of this study, the verbal signs in this advertisement are appeared as the texts and sentences that written in big font texts, while the visual signs appeared as a picture and also supported by some colors which could attract the audience’s attention when they watch the advertisement video. Both of verbal and visual signs convey denotative and connotative meaning.

Keywords: *verbal sign, visual sign, advertisement, meaning*

INTRODUCTION

People used language as a media of communication, both words and signs are used to interact with other people. Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols and signification. The important elements in advertisement are verbal and visual signs. The verbal signs are including spoken and written language such as slogans, phrase and all the words in the advertisements. Visual signs are represented as picture which is describing company’s logo, products, models or gestures. Saussure (1983: 67) described a language as a system of sign, which has meaning by virtue of their relationship to each other. He divided a sign as being composed of: A “signifier” is being the form that the sign takes. It is a material sign of the language, actual letter, sound and symbol used to present what the speaker or writer wants to communicate. A “signified” is the concept of represents. It is not the material object, but as an abstract concept of what the signifier means. The

signified and the signifier works together to make up the sign. It can be concluded that signifier and signified cannot be separated, because they are strictly related to each other.

Meaning has a very important role in advertisement. According to the theory of meaning by Barthes (1977), there are two types of meaning which are denotation and connotation meaning. Denotation is the first order of signification, which consists of a signifier and a signified. In other words, denotation is what we see and think as a literal, permanent and also has a dictionary meaning of a word which is ideally universally agreed. Connotation is the second level of signification that contains changes in the meaning of words associatively. The meaning of connotation is a subjective meaning; it is the result interpretation when the sign meets the feelings and values of the cultures of the reader. For example, the word "home", it connotes a warmth and love place to live together with family.

Nowadays, the internet has been growing so fast which people usually use it to browse something interesting and YouTube becomes the application that is often used. YouTube has a big role in advertising and L'Oreal Paris used it as their media to advertise their products through creating unique and interesting video that makes people enjoy watching it and would like to buy the products. In this research, the writer analyzed the verbal and visual signs appeared in L'Oreal Paris advertisement to discover the meaning behind them.

METHODS

The data source in this study was taken from the advertisement of L'Oreal Paris Total Repair 5 Shampoo on YouTube <https://youtu.be/zbHfehqb3j8>. The video was published on July 3, 2019 by Aishwarya Net account with duration 0:47 seconds. The data was collected by observation method, which conducted in some techniques. First, searching and downloading the video on YouTube, then watching it carefully and understanding every scenes of the video. Second, doing note-taking technique by writing down the verbal and visual signs found in L'Oreal Paris advertisement. Third, classifying the verbal and visual signs that found in the advertisement and finding the meaning that conveyed by verbal and visual signs. Afterwards, the writer analyzed the meaning that conveyed by verbal and visual signs using the theory of meaning by Barthes (1977) and also using supported theory of color terms by Wierzbicka (1996).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data 1



The verbal sign in this advertisement is “I have a secret”, which signified a woman that wants to make everyone curious about her secret. As we know that a secret is something that is known by ourselves or only a small number of people and it can't be told to anyone else. The sentence of “I have a secret” connotes that L’Oreal Paris tries to take attention and raise the curiosity of the audiences to watch and pay more attention to the next part of the advertisement.

The visual sign or the gesture in this advertisement is a woman who is putting her index finger on her lips. This sign has a connotative meaning, which is used to tell everyone to keep in silence and also keep the woman's secret. The picture is shown in black color or in a dark situation, while the word “secret” is written in red color. According to the theory of color terms by Wierzbicka (1996), black color could give a sense of mystery, while red color usually used to signify danger, strength or warning. These colors can attract the most attention by keeping it mysterious and give a strong emotion. L’Oreal Paris makes a good strategy by using the red color and hiding the model's appearance which only showing the gesture to attract the viewer's attention.

Data 2



The verbal sign of "To Fight Damage" connotes that when we are in a trouble or when we have a problem, we must fight for it. The word "damage" which is written in big size connotes the importance of the text on the advertisement which draws audience's attention. The word "damage" denoted to harm or spoil something, however in this scene it is representing the five hair's damage or hair's problems that faced by most of the girls.

Aishwarya as the model on this shampoo's product tries to share her tips in solving hair's damage. The visual sign of Aishwarya who is sitting with a hand resting on the chin connotes that we can't only sit or stay still and give up with the hair's problem, we have to fight for it. Again, the verbal sign is written in white and red color. According to Wierzbicka (1996), the color of white is associated with clearness. Therefore, the word "to fight" is written in white color to help the audiences read it clearly, while the word "damage" is written in red color to attract the audience's attention to focus on that word. L'Oreal Paris shows that its product is as a medium to reach the women's dream which is having beautiful hair. The figure of Aishwarya connotes that the beauty of hair can be gotten by everyone who treat their hair well.

Data 3



The verbal sign of L'Oreal Paris indicates the name of a Cosmetic and Beauty Company in France. It is the world's largest cosmetics, concentrating on hair care products, skin care, sun protection, make-up and perfumes. This brand is already famous in many countries, because of the good products they provide. This brand is not only focusing on woman's product but also released some products that can use by men.

The logo is not an image or a symbol, but just a word mark. It has a connotative meaning that L'Oreal Paris tries to makes a simple, clear and readable logo. So the name of this brand can be easily memorized by the costumers. The white color in the word "L'Oreal Paris" means goodness, innocence and purity to add the value that the products of L'Oreal Paris are all made purely with good ingredients. Red color is as the background means strength, powerful and also loves. It connotes that the company of L'Oreal Paris spread their loves to the costumers which make this company continues to grow strongly and rapidly every year.

Data 4



The Total Repair 5 shampoo is a new product of L'Oreal Paris brand.

L’Oreal Paris tries to make a product which can solve hair problem, especially for girls or women. Total Repair 5 is written in big size which has connotative meaning. It can attract the audiences and also tell them that this product can solve 5 hair problems in 1 solution. This product helps to fight against the five visible signs of damaged hair, which are hair fall, dryness, roughness, dullness, and split ends without weighing it down.

It is such a beneficial product that girls must use in repairing the hair’s problem. It is shown that Aishwarya is holding two Total Repair 5 Shampoos. Women have dominant role in attracting people attention, with their beautiful appearance, hair and smile. Therefore, L’Oreal Paris invited Aishwarya who is the most popular and influential celebrities in India to promote this product. The combination of denotative and connotative meaning in this part is to make a big promotion which can persuade people to buy and try the new Total Repair 5 Shampoo.

Data 5



In this scene it is shown the verbal sign of L’Oreal Total Repair 5 which connoted that L’Oreal Paris is introducing its new shampoo product that can solve five hair problems, especially for girls or women. All the texts are written in big size to attract the audiences and also telling them that this product can solve 5 problems of hair damage in 1 solution. This product is helped to fight against the five visible signs of damaged hair, which are hair fall, dryness, roughness, dullness, and split ends.

The next verbal sign is “You Are Worth It” which signifies the slogan of this brand. This sentence emphasized that every individual has a high value. It has also created a big impact to the costumers by boosting the sense of self-worth and self-respect. Every person has the beauty which has to be treated and kept in good condition. L’Oreal Paris produces this Total Repair 5 shampoo to help woman in repairing hair damage, because the company believes that every woman deserve the extra care and they truly worth it.

The figure of a beautiful woman who wears red shirt looks really

beautiful with her long, smooth and shining hair also supports with a cheerful face indicates self-confidence. For most of women having a healthy, smooth and shining hair is really important to support their appearance. The expression of Aishwarya connotes that when we have healthy and beautiful hair, it will make us more confident and of course our day is being more beautiful, because we don't have to be afraid in having a bad hair day.

The brand's name of "L'Oreal Paris" is written in black color. Based on the theory from Wierzbicka (1996), black color could create a meaning of elegance. The text "Total Repair 5" that written in red color connotes a rich and warm color that is really eye-catching. Meanwhile, the phrase "You're Worth It" is written in white color which connotes that the slogan is associated with goodness, faith and purity that the advertiser wants to share to the audiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, advertisement is actually a part of human's need that often found on mass media, TV, YouTube and also social media. Advertisements are the fastest and practical ways to sell the products or services. The advertisements are composed by verbal and visual signs. The advertisement of L'Oreal Paris Total Repair 5 Shampoo shows that the company tries to convey a message with a video concept that was made simple but attractive by collaborating with a beautiful and also well-known Indian artist, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

The verbal signs that can be analyzed on the advertisement are the text or the sentence that appear in every scene of the video. In almost all scenes the advertiser uses big font size to emphasize the meaning that are conveyed by the advertiser. The slogan which is "You Are Worth It" that appeared in end of the video brings value to the video and could attract the audiences with a positive message. The phrases are contained both two meaning which are connotative and denotative meaning.

The visual signs seen in this video advertisement are a famous model, the product of L'Oreal Total Repair 5 Shampoo, and the use of particular colors. This product dedicated to everyone, especially women who have hair damage. This product is really effective in repairing five problems of hair, such as hair fall, dryness, roughness, dullness and split ends. The dominant colors that appeared in the video are: red, white and black, which become the characteristic of the product. The red color is expressing the strength and powerful, the color of white is expressing the goodness and purely of the product, while the black color is associated with elegance. In other words, the color used in the text or phrases were made the advertisement became more interesting and attractive.

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