

Semiotic Meanings in *the Esse Change 'Click to Change' Cigarette Advertisement*

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Abstract

The Indonesian government has imposed strict regulations on cigarette advertising, so cigarette companies have become very creative in promoting their products. In an advertisement, there are many semiotic signs that imply hidden messages that are trying to be conveyed to consumers. This research discusses the semiotic analysis of Esse Change cigarette advertising videos using Roland Barthes' theory. The data source used is the Esse Change cigarette advertising video version of "Click to Change" which was published on YouTube in 2019. The signs of denotation, connotation, and myths that appear in cigarette advertisements are described with a qualitative descriptive approach and the results of the analysis are described systematically in paragraph. The results found that there are meanings contained in the form of signs based on denotation, connotation, and myth. Signs are illustrated with words, images, and colors that appear in the advertisement. Advertisers try to make videos from the consumer's point of view that each cigarette advertisement has its own characteristics. The conclusion of this research is that denotative and connotative signs in advertisements contain hidden meanings that eventually become myths.

Keywords: connotation, denotation, Esse change cigarette, myth.

A. Introduction

Advertising is one of the media that serves to promote something in society. Besides being used to promote a product or service, advertisements can also be in the form of public service advertisements that usually present social messages aimed at raising public awareness about a number of issues. Advertising can be successful if it succeeds in gaining public trust in a product that will encourage them to consume or use the product or service offered (Kotler & Keller, 2005).

In its role as a driver of industrialization, advertising is not a creative work that can freely express and explore. In his book, Widyatama (2007, p. 32) states that advertising is a herald of ideas, claims in advertising must be honest, must not be deceptive or unfair, and must be based on evidence. For some specialized products or services, additional

rules may apply. Advertisements are subject to rules requested by clients as well as regulations made by the government and it can be concluded that there are things that limit creativity in making advertisements.

Of the many product advertisements, there are differences between cigarette and non-cigarette advertisements. Cigarette advertisements have limitations in visualizing their products. This is due to the strict regulation of cigarette advertisements by the government in Law No. 32 of 2002 concerning broadcasting, article 46 paragraph 3 letter C. This is a challenge for cigarette companies to be more creative in promoting their products.

Advertising aims to influence and persuade consumers to use the goods offered, in this case, cigarettes. Therefore, the advertisements made must be as attractive as possible. To make it look attractive, advertisements are usually made more eye-catching. Not only use language but also attractive signs, as well as symbols that indicate products. Symbols can take the form of words, pictures, body language, sounds, etc. Symbols are used to represent or describe processes, things, events, or ideas that enable communication to occur (Adler & Rodman, 2016, p. 96).

Advertising is not just a meaningless visual but contains many signs that can be interpreted into a message. However, not everyone can interpret the meaning of signs. Therefore, there is a science that studies signs, namely Semiotics. This research is to find out the denotation, connotation, and myths contained in the Esse Change "Click to Change" cigarette advertisement using Roland Barthes' theory.

In terms of Semiotics, the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce, have two dominant contemporary models of what constitutes a sign. As quoted in Chandler (2007, p. 9), Saussure states that the name semiotics or semiology is taken from the Greek, Semeion, which means sign. Saussure (2007, p. 16) also states that "Semiotics analyzes the role of signs as part of social life." Semiology would reveal what comprises signs and what laws regulate them. Furthermore, according to Barthes (1977), images, gestures, musical sounds, or anything else can be a sign, regardless of their substance, because semiotics seeks to encompass any system of signs. In addition, another expert, Sobur (2013), states that semiotics is a science or method for analyzing signs. So the writer concludes that semiotics is the study of signs based on the definitions given above. The study of semiotics, it assumes that social and cultural phenomena in society are also signs, semiotics studies the systems, rules, and conventions that allow these signs to have meaning.

Roland Barthes was born in 1915 in Cheorbough and grew up in Bayonne. Roland is a major figure in the history of semiotics. According to Barthes (1977), semiotics is the science that is used to interpret a sign. Language is an arrangement of signs that have certain messages from society. Besides, signs can be in the form of songs, musical notes, objects, dialogues, images, logos, gestures, and facial expressions (Barthes, 1977). Roland Barthes is one of the semioticians who demonstrated a new semiotic doctrine that

allows researchers to analyze the sign system to prove how nonverbal communication is open to interpretation through a two-stage sign analysis model (two orders of signification), then dividing it into denotation and connotation (Bouzida, 2014). Barthes uses the terms denotation and connotation to indicate levels of meaning. The interesting thing about Barthes' semiotics is the existence of myths. Barthes' famous semiotic theory is called the two orders of signification.

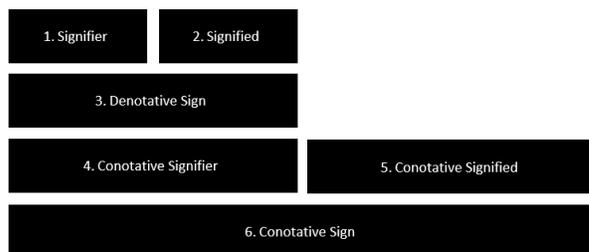


Figure 2.1: Barthes's Two Order of Signification

The pattern above demonstrates that the first signification generates denotative meaning. At the denotation level, there are two components: signifier and signified (1 & 2). This denotation sign will be the signifier (4), which will be used in conjunction with the signified (5). It will result in connotation (6), also known as the second order of sign. This pattern shows that the signified in the first level can also be the signifier in the second level (Chandler, 2007, p. 140).

One of the media that can be used to convey a message is using advertising media. Tjiptono in Faizan (2014, p. 2) explains that advertising is a form of indirect marketing communication, which is based on information about the advantages or advantages of a product, which is structured in such a way as to create a sense of fun that will change one's mind to make a purchasing decision. Meanwhile, Kotler & Keller (2007), advertising is any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services for a fee by a specific sponsor. To summarize, advertising is any non-personal presentation with the intention of promoting something or providing information about the advantages and benefits of a product that is funded by a specific sponsor.

B. Method

This research used a qualitative descriptive method because the analysis was subjective and the results were described systematically in the paragraph. According to Creswell (2007, p. 21), the qualitative approach is one in which investigators frequently make knowledge claims based on a constructivist, participatory, or both perspectives. Every interpretation of signs or symbols that someone did, would definitely be different from the interpretation of others. This was because the background of every human being was different and could not be generalized, both in terms of thought and experience which could affect the way we think about something. The interpretation process also becomes

very subjective, and it could be concluded that even this study is in accordance with the results of personal interpretation.

The object of this research was the selected scenes in the advertising video entitled "Esse Change - Click To Change" which was downloaded from Youtube, and later became the unit of analysis. The writer got twenty-two selected scenes from this video. The reason for choosing the twenty-two scenes included in this study was because it fulfills the semiotic element in Barthes' theory. Twenty-two scenes used visualized Barthes' semiotic elements, namely denotation and connotation. These things were interconnected in expressing the message or myth of the advertisement.

In collecting data, the writer used non-participant observation, because the writer only interpreted the object's meaning without taking part in making the video. Sudaryanto (2015, p. 134) stated that non-participant observation was where the writer did not engage in conversation or actively participate. To obtain the data, the writer downloaded the ad video from YouTube, watched the video and identified what signs were in the advertisement, screenshotted the scenes that contained signs that have been identified, collected and analyzed the signs contained in the screenshotted scenes, explained the denotation, connotation, and myth of the signs found, and summarized analysis results and found the myths contained in the ad.

C. Findings and Discussion

This section is devoted to answering the research questions, namely What are the denotation and connotation meanings contained in the Esse Change cigarette advertisement version "Click to Change"? and What are the myths or messages contained in the Esse Change cigarette advertisement version "Click to Change"?

Findings

A. Denotation and Connotation

The denotative meaning in the Esse Change advertisement is shown in many aspects such as the play of colors, the appearance of the model, the place, and the camera shot. The Esse Change "Click to Change" video ad uses a young male model with a trendy to formal look. The colors displayed are quite varied, namely orange, yellow, red, green, and blue, to purple with a bright appearance accompanied by glitter. The location often shown is in the city center with a background of tall buildings and a formal party venue. The camera shots used are wide shots, full shots, and close-up. The concept of "change" that is carried looks very suitable with visuals described as quite dynamic. This is because there are quite a lot of image movements displayed in the 30-second ad. The movement and dynamics in each scene are also depicted quite clearly and do not confuse the audience so that the value that the ad wants to convey can be understood.

As for the connotation meaning in the Esse Change advertisement, where the male model in this advertisement is described as a charismatic metropolitan man, the colors

displayed also describe the personality of different consumers, of course, this is a form of branding that Esse Change expects as a cigarette that can be used by men with diverse backgrounds. So that they feel charismatic, brave, and creative. In addition, the connotation aspect in the Esse Change advertisement also shows how Esse Change wants to always be associated with a style that suits metropolitan men living in the capital. Therefore, the connotation meaning that then emerges from here is how Esse Change wants to always be attached to its users who like challenges. Esse Change also wants its users to be associated with a charismatic and strong image.

B. Myth in Esse Change "Click to Change" Video Advertisement

The meaning of myth in Esse Change is closely related to the number of colors used, where the color spectrum is used as a differentiator that Esse Change is suitable for men with the characteristics of any model. These various colors are also described as a choice of flavors presented by Esse Change cigarettes. The myth in Esse Change cigarettes is closely related to how the purple color in Esse Change is closely related to the sense of nobility and wealth and glamor. Then for the orange color in Esse Change cigarettes, it is closely related to the 'smoldering' feeling that should exist in every man ideally. Then also on the one hand, the blue color that also appears in the Esse Change cigarette advertisement is also a marker of how then blue is always identified with the color of calm and coolness which is expected to stick with Esse cigarette users.

Discussion

From the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings that have been found, this advertisement can indeed contain many denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings in it. Through this ad, Esse Change wants to build an image that its products can be used by men with various characters and backgrounds. The concept is "Click to Change" where users have to do a process first to make changes. This can be seen from several scenes showing changes in the appearance of male models that change quickly and dynamically. This is also in line with the way Esse Change cigarettes are used, where users must "click" on one part of the product, then when used it will cause a flavor (depending on the variant, Applemint, Grape, and Juicy). The use of different colors is also a representation of each of these flavors.

D. Conclusion

In this research, the writer conducted about 22 scene analyses from Esse Change cigarette advertisements which lasted about 30 seconds. All 22 scenes in the Esse Change cigarette advertisement are then analyzed using semiotic theory derived from Roland Barthes, namely from the connotation, denotation, and also from mythical side.

In terms of denotation, the Esse Change cigarette advertisement uses a male model with a metropolitan style with a modern appearance. In this case, from the denotative aspect, this Esse Change cigarette advertisement wants to be seen as a cigarette brand that on the one hand wants to show the side of masculinity and modernity that is attached to the user.

In terms of connotation, the Esse Change cigarette advertisement shows how this brand wants to be seen as a brand that is suitable for use by anyone. During the duration of the advertisement, Esse Change featured many style changes that were quite fast and also quite dynamic, in this case, it meant that Esse Change wanted to be seen as a modern cigarette brand that was identified with metropolitan men.

In terms of myth, the color spectrum used in Esse Change's advertisements in this case is also quite a lot, ranging from blue, purple, and also orange. These various color spectrums to show how the personalities of the men who use Esse Change can also vary, but the key is that they are all dynamic and young. Again, originally, this color is also to show the various choices of cigarette flavors on offer.

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