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Semiotics Analysis of Coffee and Meals Advertisements on the Bandung Cafe Instagram Account

Desi Indrawati

Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia

email: desi.indrawati@binus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Virtual ads, such as company names and logos, can now be embedded on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms thanks to recent advancements in digital technology. Product placement on these platforms has developed into a standard marketing strategy and a distinct advertising area at the same time. Two research questions are answered in this research, they are: (1) What types of signs are found in coffee and meal advertisements; and (2) what meanings do these signs deliver? This study aims to analyze the semiotic elements in coffee and meal advertisements frequently appearing on Instagram and to identify the meanings formed within these virtual advertisements. This research qualitatively analyzed the semiotic components and meanings constructed in virtual advertisements on the Bandung café Instagram account. Additionally, this study shows the semiotic analysis proposed by Van Leeuwen (2006). This research demonstrates that the semiotic elements have specific meanings that align with the concept of coffee and meal advertisements. Through advertisements for coffee and meals on the Bandung Cafe Instagram account, this study investigated the elements and meanings in semiotic terms. The elements were divided into two categories: verbal and nonverbal signs. Furthermore, these indications could be verbal or nonverbal, such as a logo, color, letter form, or icon, depending on the elements.

ABSTRAK

Iklan virtual seperti nama dan logo perusahaan kini dapat disematkan di Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, dan platform media sosial lainnya berkat kemajuan teknologi digital terkini. Penempatan produk di platform ini telah berkembang menjadi strategi pemasaran standar dan area periklanan yang

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berbeda pada saat yang bersamaan. Dua pertanyaan penelitian dijawab dalam penelitian ini, yaitu: (1) Jenis tanda apa yang ditemukan dalam iklan kopi dan makanan; dan (2) makna apa yang disampaikan oleh tanda-tanda ini? Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur semiotik dalam iklan kopi dan makanan yang sering muncul di Instagram dan untuk mengidentifikasi makna yang terbentuk dalam iklan virtual ini. Penelitian ini menganalisis secara kualitatif komponen semiotik dan makna yang dibangun dalam iklan virtual pada akun Instagram kafe Bandung. Selain itu, penelitian ini menunjukkan analisis semiotik yang diusulkan oleh Van Leeuwen (2006). Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa unsur-unsur semiotik memiliki makna tertentu yang selaras dengan konsep iklan kopi dan makanan. Melalui iklan kopi dan makanan di akun Instagram Kafe Bandung, penelitian ini menyelidiki unsur-unsur dan makna secara semiotik. Elemen-elemen tersebut dibagi menjadi dua kategori: tanda verbal dan nonverbal. Lebih jauh, indikasi ini dapat berupa verbal atau nonverbal, seperti logo, warna, bentuk huruf, atau ikon, tergantung pada elemen-elemennya.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media platforms have transformed the nature of business-consumer interactions. Instagram has become a major player in digital marketing among these platforms. They have revolutionized the way businesses interact with consumers. Instagram has also emerged as a dominant force in digital marketing due to its highly visual interface and rapidly growing user base. With more than 2 billion worldwide active users, Instagram provides brands with a distinctive chance to connect with their audiences via visually attractive and targeted ads. Instagram ads that are interactive and personalized can significantly influence purchase intentions. Ads integrated into native content, such as influencer posts or Instagram Stories, are more effective than traditional display ads (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

Simpson (2001) states that there has been a tremendous increase in interest regarding the linguistic and discursual features of advertising. According to Verlegh et al. (2015), it constitutes a type of impersonal communication that promotes convincing brand messages aimed at swaying individuals into product purchases by covering the expenses for the media utilized. In the meantime, the content of the virtual ad serves specific aims to attract customer attention by incorporating language that enhances semiotic assets. These assets represent the symbolism of various typefaces and type categories in virtual advertising. In some way, a clear and beneficial connection can be seen between the expectations of online consumers and the effectiveness of online advertising (Palanisamy & Wong, 2003). The product's branding is somehow emphasized by the virtual advertisement. The messages contained within it outline the advertiser's strategy aimed at prompting a consumer to respond in some way to the advertisement (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999).

In addition, linguistic elements go beyond simple communication; they can provoke desires, ignite emotions, and awaken aspirations in the audience (Rashid, 2017). According to Chandler (2001), semiotics is the study of signs within society. Saussure (1983) claims that a sign must consist of both a signified and a signifier. Moreover, the signs are categorized into verbal and nonverbal types. The verbal sign is characterized as something that involves text and words, whereas nonverbal signs typically pertain to the image (Chandler, 2001).

Eco (1979) identifies three limits to semiotic research: "the cultural realm," "the realm of nature," and "the epistemological realm." Culture pertains to the relationship between signs and their meanings, grounded in a society's cultural values. Additionally, the social semiotics of visual communication in virtual advertising encompasses the detailing of semiotic resources, what can be conveyed and executed with images and other visuals, and how to interpret the actions and statements people make regarding images (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.134). According to C.S. Peirce's theory (Yasin, 2011), there are three categories of advertisements in semiotics: icon, symbol, and index. Eriana, 2015; Lestari, 2016).

Moreover, the extratextual context of communication is viewed as an integral aspect of the communicative act, situated within the socio-cultural domain according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). Meanwhile, perception and interpretation vary from person to person, semiotics offer a systematic method for examining the construction and communication of signs, symbols, and meanings (Oputa & Ahmad, 2019). For example, what one individual views as a prompt to enjoy a cool drink, another may interpret as a nuanced remark about social standing or lifestyle decisions. (Patel & Bhutiani, 2018).

The aims of this study are to analyze the use of semiotic signs or symbols in Instagram advertisements, and it involves examining how visual and textual elements are employed

to convey brand messages, emotions, identities, or values. Additionally, it explores how brands of coffee and meals construct meaning through imagery and language on the Bandung Cafe Instagram Account. Instagram's visual nature makes it an ideal platform to study the interaction of images, captions, hashtags, and layouts

2. METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative method to analyze the semiotic components and meanings constructed in Coffee and Meals advertisements on the Bandung café Instagram account. Berg (2007) states that qualitative researchers are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.

Additionally, documentation or picture focusing is the main method of data collection. The unit of analysis comprised contemporary drink and meal ads on Instagram, and data validation methods involved triangulation. The process of data analysis included the reduction and display of the collected data, as well as the formulation of conclusions based on it. This process ultimately yielded insights into the semiotic features of modern drink and meal advertisements on the Instagram accounts of cafes in Bandung.

The data of this study was taken from March 10 - May 31, 2025, on the Bandung Café Instagram account. There are five posts analyzed in this study. The posts from cafe Instagram accounts in Bandung such as Sejiwa Coffee, Marka Cafe, Juice For You, Tebu Ncek, and Byasa. Those cafe Instagram accounts in Bandung were chosen because they represent the category of semiotic signs.

Semiotic analysis of this study involves the validity of interpretations which are below:

1. **Enhancing Credibility:** By using multiple data sources, methods, or analysts, the interpretation becomes more grounded and reliable.
2. **Balancing Subjectivity:** Semiotics can be deeply personal; triangulation ensures interpretations are not purely individual or idiosyncratic.
3. **Capturing Complex Meanings:** Instagram ads are multimodal (text, image, video, emoji, hashtags, etc.). Triangulation helps decode the layers of meaning by viewing the content from multiple angles.
4. **Contextualizing Social Media Content:** Instagram ads are shaped by algorithmic visibility, user engagement, and visual culture. Triangulation incorporates these contexts for a more valid interpretation.

This study uses Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework to investigate the ways in which meaning is constructed using various semiotic resources (language, images, layout, color, and gesture). By stressing not only the meaning of signals but also how they are used to express ideological meanings within certain social activities, Van Leeuwen's approach goes beyond traditional semiotics.

3. RESULTS

The analysis was conducted based on theories proposed by Van Leeuwen (2006). The semiotic examination of contemporary beverage ads on the Bandung Cafe Instagram accounts uncovered several important findings:

a. Sejiwa Coffee

The study of signs and symbols and their meaning-conveying processes is semiotics. Here below are the components of Sejiwa's logo:



Picture. 1 Logo of Sejiwa
Source: Sejiwa Coffee's Instagram Account

Caption:

Our #IceSeaSaltLatte is the perfect blend of coffee, cream, and a sprinkle of magic. Come try it at #SejiwaCoffee !
#BrewingJoyOneCupAtATime

- 1) Cursive character: a style of writing where letters are connected in a flowing, often slanting, manner, unlike block letters where each letter is separate.
- 2) Based on Sejiwa Coffee's Instagram account states that the logo provides a fresh interpretation of the true meaning of Sejiwa. It means the simultaneous unification of two or more beings or elements.
- 3) Pride in its bold and youthful: the characteristics with a slightly modern twist related to pride and youth, which may be associated with the current image of the modern era.

b. Marka Cafe

The study of signs and symbols and their meaning-conveying processes is semiotics. Here below are the components of Marka's logo



Picture 2. Packaging of Marka
Source: Marka's Instagram Account

Caption:

Bingung buka puasa pake apa dan lagi males keluar? Di marka kalian bisa order melalui online loh! Kita tersedia di GoFood maupun GrabFood.

Cek link yang ada di bio kita yuk biar langsung menuju aplikasi ojol kesayangan kamu 🤗

#markyourlife #markacafe #coffeebandung #ngopidibandung #explorebandung #coffeeshop #markacoffee #marka #masfotokopi #kopilokal #coffeeshopbandung #coffeeart #latteart #coffee #meetingspace #coffeetime #espresso #latte #breakfast #coffeelovers #coffeeholic #coffeeaddict #foodporn #coffeeagram #bukberbandung #instacoffee #iftarbandung #caf #coffeebreak #bhfyp

Examine the semiotics of "Marka Cafe," which has a logo that includes a black circle and the text "Marka" with the words "Marka Cafe". Semiotics is centered on comprehending how signs and symbols communicate meaning. In this regard:

- a) In semiotics, a circle often symbolizes wholeness, unity, infinity, and cyclical nature. It can also represent timelessness, eternity, and even the cosmos.
- b) Wholeness and Unity: the circle's continuous form, with no beginning or end, evokes a sense of completeness and oneness.
- c) Infinity and Cyclical Nature: the circular form inherently evokes notions of the infinite, recurrence, and cyclical phenomena such as the seasons or the life cycle.
- d) Timelessness and Eternity: the circle's lack of a defined start or finish can also be interpreted as timelessness or even eternity.
- e) Balance and Perfection: the perfect symmetry of a circle can symbolize equilibrium, harmony, and the idea of perfection.
- f) Balance and Perfection: the flawless symmetry of a circle can represent balance, harmony, and the notion of perfection

c. Juice For You



Picture 3. Packaging of Juice For You
Source: Juice For You's Instagram Account

Caption:

Good juice, good mood, better when shared! 🤍
Let's spread the freshness and health—one bottle at a time.

#juice #kuliner #kulinerbandung #healthylifestyle #purejuice #JuiceJoy #HealthySips #RefreshingMoments

Below are the interpretations of Packaging of Juice For You:

- a) In the field of semiotics, "Juice for you" can be understood as a signifier within a communicative act. The tangible manifestation (the expression "for you") indicates a signified idea, which here refers to the person who is meant to receive or benefit from something. Semiotics investigates how signs such as this generate meaning in a particular context.
- b) The colour of "Juice For you": in this context highlights the individual or specific audience for whom a sign is meant or interpreted. The colors of green, orange, red, and yellow on the look of the Juice For You here represent the fresh drink that is served specifically for the customers with a fresh, delicious, and not disappointing taste.

The symbols of "nature" and "freshness" in the Juice For You drink are very relevant when associated with the healthy lifestyle of urban youth. In semiotics, these symbols not only function as visual markers but also carry strong ideological and cultural meanings. "Nature" Symbol: Usually manifested through visual elements such as leaves, fruits, and green or earthy brown colors. This represents closeness to nature, organic, and sustainability values that are increasingly valued by the environmentally conscious urban youth generation. The "Freshness" Symbol is displayed through images of cold liquids, ice cubes, dew, or bright colors such as lime green, lemon yellow, and orange. This signifies vitality, energy, and refreshment, which are the needs of the fast and busy lifestyle of urban youth.

In addition, the relation to the Healthy Lifestyle of Urban Youth: Urban youth now tend to choose products that are not only practical but also healthy and natural. The "nature" symbol gives the impression that Juice For You drink is free from harmful chemicals. Meanwhile, "freshness" supports the product's image as a drink that can recharge energy and maintain the body's balance after intense activity.

d. Tebu Ncek



Picture 4. Icon of Tebu Ncek
Source: Tebu Ncek's Instagram Account

Caption of mysm.event Instagram with @tebu_ncek:

@tebu_ncek bakalan hadir di Pesta Makan paling cetar tahun 2024!
Perdana di Mekar Wangi... Parade Kuliner Nusantara!

Didatangkan dari Medan, Pontianak, Singkawang, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Semarang sampai Jakarta, ditambah lagi puluhan tenant terbaik Bandung!

Pastinya siap memanjakan semua pecinta kuliner. Saatnya makan enak, perut kenyang dan hatipun senang.

Jadi udah siap seseruan bareng?

Catat tanggalnya ya..

Ajakin semuanya merapat!

Parade Kuliner Nusantara

Graha Mekar Wangi

1-3 November 2024

08.00 - 21.00

FREE ENTRY!

#mysmevent #helenysm #helenyangsukamakan #kulinerbandung #bandungfoodies #bandungjuara #eventbandung #paradekulinernusantara #foodbazaar #bazaarkuliner #kuliner #jajan #makanenak

An iconic sign (or icon) in semiotics is a sign that represents its object through resemblance or similarity. It is a depiction that resembles what it represents. The signs communicate meaning by visually reflecting the object they denote.

Below are the meanings of Tebu Ncek's icon:

1. The character of Tebu Ncek conveys the taste of the natural deliciousness with Ncek Sugar Cane. Made from 100% real sugar cane juice, every sip is an unmatched taste feast. It delivers the icon of originality and happiness.
2. Essentially, icons are signs that bear a visual resemblance to what they signify, which allows for easy comprehension through visual recognition.

e. Byasa



Picture 5. Letter form of Byasa
Source: Byasa's Instagram Account

Caption:

Which one your favorite bites? Burger or sandwich? 🍔 🥪

Byasa Cafe

Mon-Thu: 07.30am - 10pm | Fri-Sun: 07.30am - 11pm

Jl. Madura No 1, Citarum, Kota Bandung #TapIntoTheSpaceAndTaste #BYASACafe

Below are several potential interpretations and viewpoints:

1. In semiotics, a letter form is considered a signifier, which is the material form of a sign, and it can be analyzed for its meaning within a specific system (like language or writing).
2. Capital letters of Byasa create a symbolic association with authority, professionalism, and brand recognition. It also conveys a green enclave that meets tasty treasures.
3. Capital letters are not just visual markers, they **function as signs** that convey meaning about **tone, structure, identity, and power**.

4. CONCLUSION

Both verbal and nonverbal symbols are essential for enhancing an advertisement's resonance and significance. Depending on the components, visual symbols like a logo, color, letter shape, or icon can be either spoken or nonverbal. They are quickly identifiable and have a wide range of associations and meanings. These symbols are frequently used to express a concept or emotion, which increases the advertisement's customer appeal and accessibility. These effective statements capture the spirit of the product or message and transform it into something memorable and powerful. For instance, "Juice For You" is a tagline that not only identifies the product but also sends a powerful message to the consumer.

Advertisers as well as English and design majors can benefit from this study. This study emphasizes the semiotic techniques that underpin effective campaigns and offers insightful information about the craft of making captivating and convincing ads. Additionally, this study informs scholars about the significance of indicators in the realm of social media advertising.

The analysis of the formulated problems allows us to conclude the following points:

This research examined the components and significances in semiotic terms via Coffee and meal advertisements on the Bandung Cafe Instagram Account. These components were categorized as verbal and nonverbal signs. Verbal signs include linguistic expressions such as words and phrases, while nonverbal signs involve gestures, facial expressions, symbols, images, colors, and other non-linguistic forms of communication.

Furthermore, this research shows that the semiotic components or elements are demonstrated to have specific meanings that correspond to the concept of advertisements on Instagram. However, it is instructive to note that the analysis of semiotics in Coffee and meal advertisements on the Bandung Cafe Instagram Account can carry several meanings depending on the nature of their elements. According to the elements, those signs may appear in the form of verbal and nonverbal signs such as logo, color, letter form, and icon. They cover some issues mostly concerning semiotics.

The signs in semiotics are crucial in enhancing the significance and impact of advertisements. Logos, icons, letters, and icons are examples of verbal signs that can be recognized immediately and may evoke numerous associations and connotations. These symbols frequently act as shortcuts to express intricate ideas or feelings, enhancing the accessibility and appeal of the advertisement for consumers. While colours carry great power as nonverbal signs: they can stir feelings and express significance. Various colors are linked to distinct emotions and concepts, shaping our perceptions and interpretations of messages. Grasping these connections can enhance our ability to convey and comprehend nonverbal messages.

Those elements mentioned above serve primarily to convince consumers to commit to memory of the signs and messages associated with those products. In addition, it can be concluded that the results and discussion uphold the hypothesis that the coffee and meal advertisements on the Bandung Cafe Instagram account are effective, as they utilize specific semiotic elements and meanings that are crucial in advertising and have a positive impact on consumers. Ultimately, an advertisement can comprise verbal and nonverbal signs or elements that carry meanings based on semiotics.

Further research needs to bridge the gap between semiotic theory and consumer behavior quantitatively linking types of semiotic signs to brand recall, trust, or purchase intention. This study also focuses only on symbolic signs or language-based or culturally defined meanings.

However, previous research primarily analyzed digital identity creation, cultural narratives, and general aesthetic trends in Instagram accounts in Bandung. However, this study concentrates on a more narrowly defined semiotic dimension, such as the symbolism employed in advertising.

5. PERNYATAAN PENULIS

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article. The author confirms that the article manuscript is free from plagiarism.

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