

## **The Representation of Women in Instant Seasoning Advertisements**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study entitled *The Representation of Women in Instant Seasoning Advertisements*. This study aims to investigate how women are represented in instant seasoning advertisements and reveal ideologies behind the representation. This study investigates the representation of women in five instant seasoning advertisements; ABC 'Sambal Masak' advertisement "Kayak Masakan Mami", Royco 'All in One' advertisement "Ini Resepku", Indofood 'Bumbu Racik Tempe' advertisement "Resep Kering Tempe", Masako 'Bumbu Kaldu Penyedap' advertisement "Cuma Ubi", and Bango 'Bumbu Ayam Goreng Bacem' advertisement "Petani Ketumbar". The advertisements were downloaded randomly from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Women in instant seasoning advertisements were investigated through the visual elements of the advertisements as follows; actresses (physical appearance, fashion, facial expression and emotion), setting and properties, frame size, camera angle, and color saturation. This study uses order of signification's theory by Barthes (1957), reading images' theory by Kress and Leuween (2006), and some theories of visual elements in television advertisement. The results show that women are mostly represented as brave, feminine, motherly, cheerful, independent, calm, optimistic, and modern women. The study also concludes that there are three ideologies in instant seasoning advertisements: femininity, modernism, and recreation.

**Keywords:** Semiotics, Representation, Women, Advertisements

## INTRODUCTION

Many companies compete to create attractive promotions in selling their products to market. The sale process does not only involve people but also media as marketing tools. Advertisement is one of the promotion tools which most often used by companies to sell their products. The media of advertisement can be print media such as newspapers and magazine or electronic media such as television and radio.

Advertisement comes from the Latin word "*ad vertere*" means "to turn toward". According to Dyer (1982), advertisement means drawing attention to something or notifying or informing somebody of something. According to Oxford Dictionaries (2014), advertisement is a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product, service, or event or publicizing a job vacancy. In other words, advertisement is a tool of communication to attract people's attention in order to promote and publicize product or service.

As the development of science and technology, the development of advertisement around the world is growing rapidly. The development does not only occur in printed advertisements, but also in electronic advertisements. An advertisement is made as attractive as possible to catch audiences' attention in order to make audiences buy the product. Therefore, many products sold in the market due to the influence of advertising presentation.

Television advertisement is one of the most ideal tools to promote a product. It invites viewers to indirectly feel the benefit of the product. Television advertisement uses some interesting music/sounds, actors, storyline, settings and properties to make audiences easily tempted to the product.

Advertisement is not only used as promotion and publication tool, but also as guidelines in society because advertisement obtains societal values. Societal values in advertisement can construct ideologies. An ideology is a logical and relatively fixed set of beliefs or

values (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Thus, ideology reflects the common beliefs and values in society. A graphic designer should be able to produce an advertisement that contained ideology in it. Roxburgh (2010) asserts that design is described as reproducing ideologies and identities. He also mentions that the art of design is reliant on “Myth of Creativity” (Roxburgh, 2010). In other words, an advertisement is not only designed to sell products, but also to show ideas and ideologies through visual representation. According to Correa (2011), advertisement is a vehicle for ideologies which reflect ideas, beliefs, and opinions of the society. Therefore, ideology is conveyed through the representation in advertisement.

Representation is the construction of aspects of reality in any medium (Chandler, 2002). Representation may reflect ideologies because it constructs the aspects of reality which in turn will be the set of beliefs and values in the society. Gender is one of the aspects of reality which always shows in

television advertisement. The representations of gender often involve stereotypes. Doring (2006) states that the depiction of men and women in media often portrays gender stereotypes. According to Amancio (1993), gender stereotypes are seen as social representations or collective ideologies defining model behavior. It can be understood that gender stereotype refers to what men and women should behave in society as social and cultural construction.

Many television advertisements use the representation of women to promote and publicize their product. Women often show in various advertisements, for example, beauty products, cleaner products, electronic device products, food and drink products, etc. It may occur because women have bigger desire to shop than men and women have responsibility for shopping in a household. Thus, many television advertisements make women as their target audiences.

Some studies have been conducted to analyze the representation of women. Aryani (2012) analyzes women

representation in *PT. Kao* detergent products. She investigates how woman was represented through product packaging designs. The data used were the selected packages namely *Attack Softener*, *Attack Clean-Maximizer*, *Attack Color* and *Attack Easy*. The results of the study show that women are mostly represented as feminine, tender, motherhood, mature, independent, warm, loving, caring, beautiful, attractive, friendly and happy. Another previous study about women representation was done by Utami (2013). She investigates women representation in magazine advertisement. She uses *Maybelline's Moisture Extreme Lipcolor*, *Sally Hansen's Mega Shine Nail Top Coat*, *Dove Deodorant*, *Loreal's Kiss Proof Ultra Glossy Lipstick*, *Maybelline's Volum' Express Turbo Boost Mascara*. The results of the study show that women are mostly represented as stylish and trendy women as reflection of modern women.

The previous studies above analyze the representation of women in printed advertisements through

packaging designs and magazine advertisements. They do not analyze the representation of women in other types of advertisements, such as radio or television advertisements. Those studies also analyze the representation of women without clearly enough explain about the ideology of the representation and how the representation create stereotype of women in society.

Based on the matters above, the present study aims to investigate the representation of women in other media. This study analyzes television advertisement to give another analysis about how women are represented visually in advertisement. The present study also analyzes the representation of women in another kind of advertisements. Instant seasoning is a kind of television advertisements which usually represents women as the model of their visualization. The present study is limited to analyze five instant seasoning advertisements and reveal ideologies behind the representation.

Instant seasoning advertisements always engage

women as their models. However, every advertiser of instant seasoning companies has their own way to represent women and convey ideologies behind the representation. The present study investigates five instant seasoning advertisements: *ABC 'Sambal Masak'* advertisement "*Kayak Masakan Mami*", *Royco 'All in One'* advertisement "*Ini Resepku*", *Indofood 'Bumbu Racik Tempe'* advertisement "*Resep Kering Tempe*", *Masako 'Bumbu Kaldu Penyedap'* advertisement "*Cuma Ubi*", and *'Bango 'Bumbu Ayam Goreng Bacem'* advertisement "*Petani Ketumbar*".

The representation of women in the advertisements above is analyzed through their visual elements. There are some visual elements of television advertisements: actor, setting, property, frame size, camera angle and color saturation (Dyer, 1996; Selby and Cowdery, 1995). Following the kind of visual elements itself, this study analyzes actor, setting, property, frame size, camera angle, and color saturation involved in instant seasoning

advertisements. These visual elements belong to the visual sign in semiotics. The present study uses some theories: Barthes' orders of signification theory (1957), Kress and Leeuwen's reading images: the grammar of visual design (2006), and some other theories about visual elements in television advertisement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive qualitative is used as a method of analysis. A qualitative research aims to describe, explain and interpret the collected data (William, 2007). The qualitative research deals with words and pictures, not numbers (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Thus, the qualitative method is appropriate to use because the present study does not aim to account the data by numbers rather the present study focuses on the analyzing and interpreting the meaning of visual representations of instant seasoning advertisement. Meanwhile, a descriptive method is an investigation that attempts to describe and examine the particular phenomena and current situation (Travers, 1978, cited in Sevilla et al.,

1992). Therefore, a descriptive qualitative method is an appropriate method for this study, because this study aims to analyze, describe and interpret the representation of women in instant seasoning advertisement.

The data used in this study are instant seasoning advertisements. The selected advertisements are downloaded randomly from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). There are five selected advertisements of instant seasoning product in this study: *ABC 'Sambal Masak' advertisement "Kayak Masakan Mami"* (duration: 30 seconds), *Royco 'All in One' advertisement "Ini Resepku"* (duration: 31 seconds), *Indofood 'Bumbu Racik Tempe' advertisement "Resep Kering Tempe"* (duration: 29 seconds), *Masako 'Bumbu Kaldu Penyedap' advertisement "Cuma Ubi"* (duration: 31 seconds), *Bango 'Bumbu Ayam Goreng Bacem' advertisement "Petani Ketumbar"* (duration: 29 seconds). These advertisements are selected because its contain the issue of how women are represented in instant seasoning advertisements.

There are several steps in analyzing how women are represented in instant seasoning advertisements. First, this study selects and organizes scenes which represent the issue of how women are represented in the advertisements. Second, this study analyzes the scenes by their visual elements: actors (physical appearance, fashion, and facial expression and emotion), setting and properties, frame size, camera angle and color saturation. The analysis of the visual elements is divided into three levels of significations based on Barthes' orders of signification theory (1957); denotation as first order of signification, connotation as second order of signification and myth as third order of signification. Fashion and physical appearance in the scenes are analyzed by using Barnard's connotation of fashion and physical appearance theory (2006). Meanwhile, facial expressions and emotions are analyzed by using Ekman's connotation of facial expressions and emotions (2003). The connotation of colors relies on the theories by Wilfred (1962),

Linschoten & Mansyur (as cited in Kasali, 1995) and Fisher (2004). Furthermore, reading images: the grammar of visual design by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) is used to analyze the meanings of frame size and camera angle in order to find out the relation between the represented and the interactive participant in the scenes. The last step is to interpret the findings based on the analysis to reveal the ideologies behind the representation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the analyzed data, women are represented in many ways. In term of physical appearance, women are mostly represented with long hair and bright skin. There are six women with long hair and four women with short hair. According to Synott (2003, cited in Aryani, 2013), almost men thought that women who have long hair are sexier than the women who have short hair. Women with long hair show the stereotype of beautiful woman. Bright skin also supports the stereotype of beautiful woman. According to Barnard (2006), bright

skin signifies beauty. In other words, bright skin represents the concept of beauty for women in the advertisements. The significations also show that woman with long hair is a feminine and motherly woman. Thus, woman with long hair is the symbol of femininity. A motherly woman basically has a desire to give the best for her family. In instant seasoning advertisements, the desire is reached by serving delicious dishes that cook using instant seasoning.

In relation to fashion, most young women wear blouse with bright colors. Pink, red, yellow, green and purple are displayed in five instant seasoning advertisements. Pink signifies love, while red signifies active and brave (Wilfred (1962); Linschoten and Mansyur (Cited in Kasali, 1995); Fisher, (2004)). Yellow and purple signify happiness and hope, while green signifies affection (Wilfred (1962); Linschoten and Mansyur (Cited in Kasali, 1995); Fisher, (2004)). These colors represent young woman as a cheerful and brave woman who loves her family.

In relation to the products, young women have bravery to use instant seasoning products and they do not rely on recipe. Moreover, old women are displayed in neutral color, such as brown and white. Brown signifies old, while white signifies elegant (Wilfred (1962); Linschoten and Mansyur (Cited in Kasali, 1995)). Old women are represented as old and conservative women who have elegant appearance. In the context of the advertisement, the old woman still uses traditional way in cooking, while young woman uses modern way by using instant seasoning product.

In connection to facial expressions and emotions, women are mostly displayed with smile expression. Smile expression signifies happiness and decreasing tension (Barnard, 2006). Thus, women in instant seasoning advertisements are mostly represented with happy emotion. In relation to the product, women are happy because they can cook delicious dishes by using instant seasoning product. The

advertisements also show that cooking is a fun activity.

In term of setting and properties, women are mostly represented in kitchen and dining room. Kitchen signifies a room where food is prepared and cooked and dining room signifies a room in a house in which meals are eaten (Bull, 2011). These settings show that woman manages the household affairs, especially the food needs. Kitchen setting also reflects the idea that woman is someone who is responsible to cook. Furthermore, the properties of the advertisements represent an ideal dining room and kitchen. Ideal dining room and kitchen in this advertisement is showed with clean and beautiful rooms. It is also supported by the goods (properties) of the room. White and grey are the dominant colors of the properties. White signifies pureness, naivety, peace, goodness and cleanliness, while grey signifies independent, stability, seriousness, and neutral (Wilfred (1962); Linschoten and Mansyur (Cited in Kasali, 1995)). White in properties reflects that the woman



loves the serenity in her life and always maintains cleanliness. Grey in properties reflects that the woman is a serious and independent person. Moreover, properties of the advertisements also represent that woman takes care all of the household needs, especially organizing the house.

In relation to frame size, most women are displayed through the use of medium shot which shows object and its personal relationship (Selby and Cowdery, 1995). According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006), medium shot constructs a social relation between the represented participants and the viewers. Medium shot is used to represent that women have same position as the viewers in society. Medium shot reflects that women in instant seasoning advertisements want to give the best to their family, especially in serving delicious dishes like other women in society (viewers). Thus, medium shot displays women in instant seasoning advertisements as the reflection of women in society. Another frame size in the advertisement is long shot. Long shot represents an impersonal

relation between the represented participants and the viewers (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Long shot is used to show how environment in this advertisement attaches to the actress. They connect each other. The advertisements show how a delicious dish that is cooked by using instant seasoning can attract people's attention and make people happy and satisfied.

In relation to camera angle, women are mostly represented through the use of eye level angle. According to Selby and Cowdery (1995), eye level angle represents equality. Eye level angle also shows that there is no power difference between the represented participant and the viewers (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Thus, women are represented equal with the viewers; being equal in having love, affection, hope, bravery, and obsession to make their families happy as those of viewers'.

In relation to color saturation, women are represented through the use of warm color saturation. In instant seasoning advertisements, women have a hope and desire to cook delicious dishes. The warm

color saturation represents that women are optimist to cook delicious dishes by using instant seasoning.

Based on the findings, there are several ideologies revealed in this study: femininity, modernism and recreation. First, femininity is revealed through the physical appearance. Based on the findings, women in instant seasoning advertisements are mostly represented with long hair. Hair is a language that reveals as much as about a woman as the style of clothes she wears (Sarlet, 2011). Woman with long hair illustrates the idea of femininity. According to Cardellino (2014), women who have long hair are more in touch with their feelings. Soenarko (2013) also states that men are more interesting with women who have long hair because women with long hair seem more elegant and sensual. Thus, women with long hair are considered to be feminine.

Second, modernism is found in the representation of women in instant seasoning advertisements. Modernism is reflected in the development and acceptance of new technologies to have a qualitative

difference in the life (Dawson, 2012). Bull (2011) also states that modernism is a movement towards modifying traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas. In the advertisements, it is clearly depicted that the main characters (young women) are modern women. The advertisements represent modern women through their actions in the advertisements. In the first scene of ABC *'Sambal Masak'* advertisement *"Kayak Masakan Mami"*, the young woman has smart idea to cook a delicious dish by using instant seasoning. In the last scene, mother-in-law of the young woman is satisfied and happy with the dish and she thinks that the dish is similar with her cooking. The scenes signify that although the young woman uses instant seasoning, but she can cook a delicious dish which has the same taste with her mother-in-law's cooking. Other evidences are the scenes of Royco *'All in One'* advertisement *"Ini Resepku"*. In this advertisement, the young woman is confident with her cooking. She ignores her mother's recipe and cooks using instant seasoning. The

last evidences are the scenes of Indofood 'Bumbu Racik Tempe' advertisement "Resep Kering Tempe". The scenes 2, 3 and 4 clearly show that cooking with traditional ways are more complicated. The young woman of this advertisement prefers to use instant seasoning because it is simpler and easier. All of the evidences above illustrate modernism. Instant seasoning is a modern way in cooking because it does not need to use variety herbs and spices. The young women of the advertisements are modern women because they choose simpler and easier ways by using instant seasoning, and the advertisements show that using instant seasoning also can produce delicious dish.

Last, recreation is found in the representation of women in instant seasoning advertisements. Recreation is an act or experience, selected by the individual during his/her leisure time, to meet a personal want or desire, primarily for his own satisfaction (Yukic, 1970, cited in Veal, 1992). In addition, Gray and Pelegrino (1973, cited in

Veal, 1992) states that recreation is an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of well-being and satisfaction. The recreation ideology is represented through the facial expressions and emotions of women in instant seasoning advertisements. Based on analyzed data, all women are represented with smiling expression. According to Barnard (2006), smile signifies happiness. Thus, women in instant seasoning advertisements are represented as happy women. The advertisements show that cooking is not a boring activity. The women are happy and enjoy with cooking activity. Therefore, cooking is a kind of recreation because it makes people happy (especially women).

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