WOMAN PORTRAYAL OF COSMETICS ADVERTISEMENT: SEMIOTICAL SIGNIFICATION MEANING

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Abstract

This qualitative study is important to look at representation of woman through social media advertisement in particular cosmetics. Not many research studies discuss on semiotics methodology by having Barthes’s (1967) concept with the intention of outlining the production of sign and meaning of beautifulness of woman in Indonesia. The jargon of beautifulness is represented by noun and adjective of language features connected with parts of woman body in such lips, skin, face aligned with outdoor designed activity and brightness color.

Keywords: sign, meaning, woman portrayal, advertisement.

INTRODUCTION

One can indeed argue that woman descends from signs and that his humanity pertains to a certain signification or symbolic order. This is all the more true if we think of Rose’s (2001) phrase from his famous sonnet jargon which states that we do not live amongst things, but rather within “a forest of symbols”. In advertising the image is perfect ‘representation’ of life. According to Barthes (1967), in advertising the signification of
the image is undoubtedly intentional; the signifieds of the advertising message are formed a priori by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds have to transmit as clearly as possible.

If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising these signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading: the advertising image is frank, or at least emphatic (Lester, 2000). Significant images are an important part of advertising. Nike, with their “Just do it!” campaign has provided the intended audience – young athletic men and women – with rewarding praise for the physically fit and consistent inspiration for the unfit to chuck their lethargy, to stop the tendency to accept the societal norm, and just do it. This imagery is heightened through excellent photography, the use of celebrities, and dramatic situations. It is a type of advertising called, rather literally, image advertising (Miller, 1998, p. 8).

Williamson (1978) said that advertisements endow products with a certain social significance so that they can function in our real social world as indexical signs connoting the buyer’s good taste, trendiness, or some other ideologically valued quality. Thus advertisements give meanings to products, to buyer of products and to readers of ads, and to the social world in which we and the products exist. Therefore, this research is guided by the following question: How are Indonesian women portrayed in cosmetics advertisement?

**Woman and Media**

Media is a device that has many roles in such entertaining, informing and influencing people (Dines & Humez, 1995). For example, woman is highlighted in media; it turned out having positive and negative effects (Fata et al., 2016). At some point, Barker (2003) pointed out that appearing of woman in media representing symbol of stereotype gender, this is especially so in advertising.

In the past ten years, the development of technology especially media encountered people in public domain (Lester, 2000). It has some significant contribution of women in the
context of media appearance. At some points, women turned out embodied the projection of high life style, images, consumers, target of trade and so forth.

**Signification Meaning**

Signification defined as denotative and connotative meaning (Nöth, 1990; Barker, 1967). Denotation according to Barthes (1967, p. 67) is the literal meaning which is what the dictionary attempts to provide. Denotation is a first level of meaning; language at the level of the first or initial meaning. Denotation is a primary signifier and signified system comprises; denotations are the first system consisting of signifier and signified.

An example of signifier and signified at the first level of meaning is in the sentence of “women are bought and sold like cattle”. The first marker is meant women, while the second marker is bought and sold like cattle. As a first level of meaning; meaning as in the first stage, or in other words in the sentence denotation is the similarities between women and cattle. The similarities between women and cattle are sold-able and trade-able.

The denotation meaning of woman and cattle are found in the dictionary. For example the word woman means a person who has a vagina, can have menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding; ladies (Kridalaksana, 2008). Meanwhile the word cattle refers to ruminant animals, horned, hoofed even, four-legged, bodied large, raised for the beef and dairy; ox.

The meaning of women and cattle are discussed based on the similarity of woman and cattle’s definition found in this dictionary. It becomes a challenging discussion. Because sometimes, to capture what people think about woman seem alike cattle would not stop at the denotation meaning. Then, the understanding of meaning continues to the second phase or what we call connotation meaning. But in this study, the dictionary meaning is called denotation meaning.

Connotation is also reinforced by the opinions of other linguistics scientist; according to Kridalaksana (2008, p. 67) connotation is one of the aspects of meaning of a word or a
group based on feelings, thoughts arising or incurred in the speaker and listener. Connotation is acknowledged as an early sign of the development of meaning. It is concluded that the connotation is the signifier and signified at the second level and experience of the first expansion phase.

METHODS

This study intended to explore the issues addressed in a qualitative way. In this study, the researcher described the expression of women. Then the researchers analyzed the expression to figure out denotation and connotation meaning (signification) meaning.

Qualitative research is described by Cresswell (2000, p. 3) as a process to understand the social problems by creating a complete holistic picture formed with words; reported a clear view of the informant and arranged in a scientific background. The researcher described the data by using Semiotics analysis. There are three cosmetics advertisement chosen based on purposive sampling in which Garnier and Wardah, the video retrieved from official cosmetics marked you tube sites whereas intended viewers to publicly watch and elaborate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data of GARNIER advertisement: Garnier Light Complete Serum Cream - Cerah Tanpa Kilap.

E1 Translated ..Chelsea and I are look alike. However we have different skin types and I have oily skin. Oil causes the skin to be duller indeed. ... Be bright without oil!
When the sign of garnier advertisement is read in the context of signifier / signified and denotation / connotation, it appears that the women are pictured with tank top t-shirt of bright yellow and soft green vests color in her hands instead of dark color, which is managed with the design of outdoor activity in which painting.

According to Williamson (1978) painting is a fun activity, outdoor, increasing the reason of having the outdoor places may denote the sign of having bright color by using this product may avoid the sense of afraid for not doing activity outside room. The concept of beauty tends to show up a beautiful woman as stereotyping bright skin and white skin.

Barthes (1994) mentions a denotation that beholds what the context tells us about. As the language choice of this advertisement, “oily face might cause oily skin”, means that to be beautiful, a woman should not have oily skin. However the skin should be normal, to do it so, a woman is suggested using this garnier white serum product to brighten and to control oily face. Connotatively, the customer is suggested bearing in mind that only normal bright skin face is considered as beautiful woman.

This fact is similar to what Nöth (1990) had figured out, in which advertisements tend to lead the customers to embrace beauty in the context of white, bright, no oily face.
Data of WARDAH advertisement:
E2: ... Hey, do you want to know why do Raline and I love wardah lipstick very much? It has wonderful colorful, long lasting, intense-no transfer, matte. Your color, coloring the world!

Figure 2: Wardah advertisement on YouTube

This advertisement traded specifically the lipstick. It signified the use of adjective of: last long, matte (sample of color), and so on. The connection words of adjective embedded to lips of women. For example, the color of matte of the lipsticks will last longer than any other ones.

On the other hand, the signifier or connotative meaning of this advertisement showing up that coloring woman life is triggered by having lipstick. The lipstick refers to a thing which has a bright (red) color and lasts long. This data tends to trigger women (hijab or non hijab woman) may have this type of lipstick. Bringing up two women of hijab and non hijab represents the other meaning. The lipstick brand recognized the target market of woman in Indonesia. Lester (2001) mentioned that the most successful trade is by knowing who the customer is. Connotatively, this long last lipstick would make hijab and non hijab women look bright and cheerful.
CONCLUSION

It is merely concluded that both data represent the use of language features; adjective and noun in the denotative meaning context. The concept of beautiful women is embodied with the beautiful, bright, color and etc. Meanwhile, connotatively, the meaning of beauty for women on both data tend to use parts of body in such skin, face and lip to be brighter, and thus it can be addressed as a beautiful woman.

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REFERENCES


**APPENDIX**


E2: Hei mau tau kenapa Raline dan aku (Dewi Sandra) suka banget sama lipstik wardah yang ini, karena warna warninya wow, long lasting, intense-no transfer, matte. Warnamu warnai dunia!