

The interpretation of verbal and visual signs in the education advertisements

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Abstract - The existence of an advertisement can be inextricably linked to verbal and nonverbal signs and it also appeared in education advertisement, especially for submission new university students that used by an educational institution as a form of promotion. A good advertisement will consider the use of a verbal and nonverbal sign, so that, prospective students understand the meaning of signs that will be transmitted by the advertisers. The widespread phenomenon is about the ability of people to understand the advertisements. Prospective students sometimes will have difficulty to catch the meaning of an advertisement. This study is semiotic research by using advertisement of submission of new students in Indonesia as the data source. This study was conducted to find out the types of signs and the meaning behind the series of a sign that appeared in the advertisements, so that they can be known whether the advertisements have used a sign in accordance or not. In an effort to data collection, observation with note-taking technique was applied in the research methodology. Then data were analyzed qualitatively using the theory of semiotic (Barthes, 1998), theory of meaning (Leech, 1974) and several supporting theory such as theory of English Advertising (Leech 1966) and Pierce (2007), the sign and images and theory (Cazanave, 2000) about the colour. The results of the analysis found that the advertisements have been using a verbal and visual sign in well proportioned. Verbal sign consists of linguistic features such as the used of verb and adjective dominantly in lexical choice. There were four types of sentence structure found namely declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentence. It also used figurative language and abbreviation which has a correlation with the context. Besides the conceptual meaning to give information, from the sign there was also a hidden message behind it. A visual sign consists of symbol, icon, index and colour that make different reaction for every advertisement. These signs have an important role in conveying the purpose of advertisers such as to persuade, command and give some information to the public. It can be said that the use of verbal and visual aspects in these advertisements are in a right combination.

Key words: non-verbal sign, conceptual meaning, verbal-visual meaning

1. Introduction

Advertising is defined as a message that offers products intended for the community through the media (Kasali, 1995: 9). Advertisement are designed and displayed as attractive as possible without omitting the important messages contained in the ad. The language of advertising must be persuasive and interesting to influence the reader. The language used is a short, clear, solid language effective and can affect the customers. To be more attractive, advertising is also supported by the use of colours, illustrations and logos. The existence of an advertisement can be inextricably linked to verbal and nonverbal signs; this case also appeared in education advertisement, especially for submission new university students that used by the college as a form of promotion.

A good advertisement will consider the use of verbal and nonverbal sign, so that, prospective students understand the meaning of signs that will be transmitted by the advertiser. Different forms of advertising with other types of text make advertising very important to research. The images, colour, sign, words and phrases contained in the advertisement are included in the verbal and non-verbal markings that require a deeper study in order to better understand about the meaning of an advertisement. This study was conducted to find out the types of signs and the meaning behind the series of a sign who appeared in the advertisement, so that it can be known whether the advertisements have used a suitable sign in accordance or not.

2. Method

The data were taken from advertisements of submission for new university students in Indonesia. There were 80 data in the form of brochure, billboard and downloaded advertisement from the website of each university used throughout this study. These advertisements were chosen as the data source because they contain verbal and visual signs for the analysis. There was a tendency that the use of signs in these types of advertisements are different from other commercial advertisements.

The data were collected by using an observation and note taking technique, and the data were also collected through field research and online research. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively based on the theory of semantic by Barthes (1998), Leech (1966) about English advertising and Leech (1974) about meaning. In visual signs, the data were analyzed based on theory proposed by Pierce (2007) to analyze for the sign and images. In analyzing visual sign there are analyzed about colour itself. The colour of those advertisements are analyzed based on the theory proposed by Cazanave (2000).

3. Results and Discussion

The discussions were divided into verbal signs and continue with visual signs. Verbal sign in advertisements consists of words that do not only describe things, communicate feelings and associate attitudes, but also bring ideas to our mind. Verbal signs usually use in the headline, body copy, signature line and standing details. Verbal signs in these advertisements were analyzed based on the linguistic features, such as lexical choice, syntactic pattern, figurative language and acronym. These linguistic features were analyzed using the theory of English advertising by Leech (1966). In term of lexical choice, verbs and adjective were mostly appeared. The dominant verbs are: fill

(*mengisi*), open (*membuka*), apply (*menerapkan*) accept (*menerima*), pay (*membayar*) and submit (*menyerahkan*) such as:

- a. **Mengisi** formulir pendaftaran bisa secara online di <http://-----> (*Sekolah Tinggi Farmasi Mahaganesha*).
'Fill out the registration form online at <http://----->'
- b. **Menerapkan** UKT (*Uang Kuliah Tunggal*) (*Akademi Kebidanan*).
'Applying a single tuition fees'
- c. **Membayar** uang pendaftaran dan mengisi formulir (*UNBARA*).
'Pay registration fees and fill out forms'
- d. **Menyerahkan** fotocopy ijazah 1 lembar (*UNBARA*).
'Submit a photocopy of a diploma 1 sheet'
- e. Yayasan Pendidikan Widya Kerthi Universitas Hindu Indonesia **membuka** penerimaan mahasiswa baru tahun akademik 2017/2018 (*UNHI*).
'Education Foundation of Widya Kerthi Universitas Hindu Indonesia opens registration for new student admissions for the academic year....'
- f. Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar **menerima** mahasiswa baru TA 2018/2019 (*UNMAS Denpasar*).
'University of Mahasaraswati Denpasar opens registration for new students for the academic year....'

The used of those verbs indicates about the submission itself. For the example sentence (e) '*Widya Kerthi Foundation University of Hindu Indonesia opens the submission of new students in year 2017/2018*' and sentence (f) '*Mahasaraswati University accepts submission for new students in year 2018/2019*'. The word 'open' (*membuka*) has meaning 'allowing things or people to go through', and the meaning of 'accept' (*menerima*) is to take willingly something that is offered. Refers to the meanings, the advertiser gives an information to public about the time for submission of new students is started. The verbs 'submit' in sentence (d) has a meaning to give a document, proposal, etc., so then the conceptual meaning of this sentence gives an information to the prospective students to bring the copy of diploma when they register to that university as one of the requirements needed. The affective meaning from the example is related to the personal feeling of the reader those are prospective students will be interested in the information and they will share the information to other. After understanding the requirement is very simple they will register themselves immediately.

The used of adjective is in superlative type, for the example 'best' '*terbaik*', as it is seen below.

- a. Universitas Muhammadiyah adalah **PTS terbaik** (*Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera*).
'Muhammadiyah University is the best private university'
- b. **Kesempatan terbaik**, Kuliah di **Kampus ICT terbaik di Bali Nusra** yang semua program studinya sudah terakreditasi B BAN-PT dan International ISO 9001: 2008 (*STIKOM BALI*).
'The best chance, study at the best ICT campus in Bali and Nusa Tenggara, in which all of the study programs are accredited B by National Accredited Board and International ISO 9001'

The sentences (a) and (b) above used superlative word ‘the best’ to explain the quality of their institutions. As it is seen in the example (a) ‘Muhammadiyah University is the best University’. (b) ‘The best chance is to study at the best ICT University in Bali Nusra...’ These sentences use an adjective ‘the best’ to inform public about the quality of their institutions. The affective meaning from these sentences are about the feelings of the readers, after knowing the quality of an institution, they will realize that one of these universities is the right place to choose to continue their study.

The data also showed the tendency of using various sentence structures such as declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative sentence like following example.

1. Declarative Sentence

Declarative sentence is mostly used in this advertisement rather than other structure, because these advertisements try to give information, share facts and statements as well. One of the functions of declarative sentence in this advertisement is to give information about the accreditation status of each university, as seen below.

- a. *Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas Medan Area telah terakreditasi BAN-PT dengan predikat B untuk seluruh Program Studinya (Universitas Medan Area).* ‘The Post-Graduate Program of Medan Area University has been accredited by BAN-PT with the title B for all of its Study Programs’
- b. *Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta terakreditasi A (Universitas Atma Jaya).* ‘University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta is accredited A’
- c. *We proud of the **B accreditation**, We have gotten from Ban-PT (Universitas Dwijendra).*

The examples above express about the accreditation status of each university. Nowadays accreditation is the soul of every university. It was not a new thing if we found this word as the part of promotion. Accreditation or an accredited institution has a collocative meaning, it emphasizes that the university has been formally checked the government to guarantee its quality. The advertisers sell the word ‘accreditation’ in promotion as a good image of the campus itself.

A declarative sentence also used to give an additional information, such as facilities, qualification, payment and also teaching and learning process as it is shown in the following example.

- a. *Dosen bersertifikasi nasional (serdos), kualifikasi magister dan doctor (STIE Muhammadiyah Kalianda).*
‘Lectures accredited nationally (certified lectures), Master and Doctor degrees’
- b. *Kelas ac, slide presentasi tutorial (STIE Muhammadiyah Kalianda).*
‘Air Conditioning classroom, OHP tutorial presentation’
- c. *Telah dibuka Kelas Karyawan (STIBA Satya Widya Surabaya).*
‘Open registration for workers’
- d. *Biaya awal masuk kuliah Rp 2.150.000 dapat diangsur 2x (STTN Lampung).*
‘The initial tuition fee of 2.150,000 rupiahs can be paid in 2x’
- e. *SMK dibawah naungan Yayasan Samodra Ilmu Cendekia mendapatkan potongan 50% DP3 (Stikes Yogyakarta).*

‘High Vocational School under the auspices of the Samodra Ilmu Cendekia Foundation get a discount of 50%....’

2. Interrogative Sentence

A question sentence or it is popularly called an interrogative sentence is a question form used to interrogate others or digging some information from others. In this advertisement, the use of interrogative sentence does not need any answer because it has been already mentioned or provided as seen in the next example.

- a. *Kuliah? BSI aja!! (BSI)*. ‘Will you continue your study? Please, study here (BSI)’
- b. *Kuliah sambil bisnis? Ya STIEBBANK!* ‘Will you continue your study by having a business? Yes, study at’

In the sentence (a) ‘do you want to continue studying? Just go to BSI!’ In sentence (b) ‘studying while doing a business? Yes, STIEBBANK is the answer!’ both of sentence are interrogative sentence, and the answer have been provided. The function is not asking question but to give information about this campus and emphasize the readers about the existence of this campus. It has an affective meaning because advertisers try to persuade readers to continue their study at their ideal institutions.

3. Imperative Sentence

An imperative is a word expressing a command, thus, an [imperative sentence](#) gives instructions, requests, or demands, or shares a wish or invitation. Basically, they tell someone what to do or reflect something you want to happen. Here are some examples of imperative sentences in advertisements.

- a. *Daftarkan diri anda mulai hari ini (STIKOM Bali)*.
‘Register yourself starting today’
- b. *Segera daftarkan diri anda (STKIP Muhammadiyah, Lampung)*.
‘Register yourself soon’
- c. *Ayo segera bergabung bersama kami! (Unbara)*.
‘Let’s join us soon’
- d. *Makin cepat daftar, biaya makin ringan (STMIK EL Rahma Yogyakarta)*.
‘The sooner the registration, the lesser tuition fee will be’
- e. *Mau brosur gratis, SMS/WA alamat lengkap anda ke 0856-4390-6888 (STMIK EL Rahma Yogyakarta)*.
‘Need free brochure, send your complete address via a message/whatsapp to....’
- f. *Let’s Join in The Campus of Innovation (Universitas Widyagama Malang)*.
- g. *Come and join Us (Universitas Bhayangkara)*.

The examples above in conceptual have functions in which to give suggestion, urge, command, offering, and invitation readers. As it is seen in the example sentence (d) ‘register yourself faster, and the cost will be lower’, this sentence indicates an urge about the reward that will be accepted when someone does a registration immediately. It also used in sentence (e) ‘If you want to get a free brochure, text your address to 0856-4390-6888’. This sentence contained a command, those are to send your address

if you want to get a free brochure. The affective meaning from these sentences is encouraging the prospective students to register themselves immediately, because there are many profits offered.

4. Exclamative Sentence

Exclamative sentences share strong feelings or excitement. The examples of exclamative sentence like the following examples.

- a. *Satu-satunya Perguruan Tinggi Agama Hindu Negeri di Bali Utara (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Hindu Negeri MPU Kuturan Singaraja).*
'The only State Hindu Religion University in North of Bali'
- b. *Dapatkan Laptop bagi 30 pendaftar pertama! (STIBA LIA).*
'Get a laptop for the first 30 registrants!'
- c. *Kuliah singkat, siap kerja! (BATC).*
'Short studying, be ready to work'
- d. *Mau Kuliah S1, ada juga lho! (STTN Lampung).*
'Want to study S1, there are also you know!'

In exclamative sentence, the advertiser emphasized the strength of each university. As the example sentence (b) 'Get a free laptop, by being the first-thirty registrants'. In this sentence, the advertiser expressed the feeling of enthusiastic and competitive because here clearly mention that free laptop will be given just for the first thirty registrants, it was limited. Example (d) 'Undergraduate study (S1), you can find it here!' This advertisement tries to build the curiosity of the reader. This curiosity will lead the readers to find out clearly information about the undergraduate program. The affective meaning from these examples still encourages the students to register themselves in this university because of the strength that mentioned in every sentence.

The use of figurative language and acronym becomes the other choices in advertising. For the example:

- (a) *Bersama kami, raih cita wujudkan mimpi (Universitas Bhayangkara).*
'With us, reach goals, realize your dream'
- (b) *Creating a Brighter future (Universitas Bhayangkara).*

Sentence (a) and (b) are refers to hyperbole because the way of writing the advertisement makes someone or something sound bigger and better than they are. Sentence (a) 'With us, reach your goal and realize your dream', this sentence is heard quite impossible because from the statement looks like this university will escort the students until they reach their goals and dream, but in fact the maximum time to study in a university is 4 years. After graduation, students will take their goals and dreams by themselves. The used of abbreviation sometimes make a different interpretation and have an ambiguous meaning because it was not familiar, like:

- a. **UMPCR** (*Ujian Masuk Politeknik Caltex Riau*).
'Entrance Examination of Polytechnic of Caltex Riau'
- b. **PSUD** (*Penjaringan Siswa Unggul Daerah*). 'Regional Superior Student Screening'

- c. **PSB** (Penerimaan Santri Baru) MTS Al-FADLILYAH Darussalam.
'Registration of New Islamic Student'
- d. **KPB** (Kelas program Bilingual) MTS Al-FADLILYAH Darussalam.
'Bilingual class program'

The example number (a), (b), (c), and (d) above will make different interpretation because these abbreviations did not provide long statement in the advertisement, to understand the meaning of these acronyms we need to notice the context.

The advertisements of submission for new university students are also supported by visual signs. As the example there were two representative data shown below.



1. Symbol

The symbol in the advertisement of STP Satya Widya Surabaya is the University logo. Peirce (see Deledalle, 1978: 140-141) explained that a symbol is an inverted sign on the object pointing by rule. This symbol aims to introduce Satya Widya Surabaya Tourism College to many people. This symbol is only used in accordance with the rules of the college.

2. Icon

Icon listed in above advertisement is fourteen lecturers and students. Peirce (in Deledalle, 1978: 140) states that icons are a sign that points to objects that simply show the characters that the object possesses. Classification of images on students and lecturers listed in that advertisement are included icon diagrammatic. Icon fourteen students and lecturers who appear in this advertisement want to show the customers that there are a variety of majors and expertise that can be selected at STP Satya Widya Surabaya. The message to be conveyed is that the readers can easily know the program of tourism expertise owned by STP Satya Widya Surabaya and of course has been educated by professional lecturers in their field.

3. Index

The index that appears in this advertisement is uniform and property used. Peirce (see Deledalle, 1978: 158) stated that an index is a sign aimed at the object because of the dynamic relationship (spatial relationship) with the personality of the object. The appearance of uniformed students equipped with property used, is presenting students at STP Satya Widya Surabaya has a good tourism expertise in accordance with their

majors. In addition, the message to be conveyed in the index shown is the institution has been able to educate students very well. It has been graduated become good personal skills; therefore, they will be able to compete in the hospitality industry.

4. Colour

The colour shown in this advertisement is a combination of white and green (Cazenave, 2000: 167). Green colour is for freedom, joy, health, hope, and generosity. In popular symbolization, green is the colour of hope, and the dream in which it appears interprets it. Green colour presents a great hope to the readers to drop his choice in STP Satya Widya Surabaya. The combination of white colour is used to present cleanliness and sincerity, hoping the reader is interested in the advertised agency.



Identification:

Symbol	Image of Institution Yayasan Saraswati Denpasar
Icon	Two students image, Professor image and Graduation image
Index	Photos of students activities and Photos of pharmaceutical products
Colour	Blue, Red and Orange
Background	Institution environment

The symbol used in this advertisement is a foundation symbol. Peirce (in Deledalle, 1978: 140—141) explained that symbols are signs that refer to objects that point by rule. The symbol that is shown in this advertisement is the Saraswati foundation symbol. Not all universities can use the Saraswati Foundation symbol, and this symbol is used in accordance with the rules of the college that shelter it.

Icons listed in the advertisement above are the images of two students, image of professors, graduation photos. Peirce (in Deledalle, 1978: 140) stated that "Icons are a sign that points to objects that simply show the characters that the object possesses. The classification of human images listed in that advertisement is included in the Diagrammatic Icon. A simple example of a diagrammatic icon is a scheme that shows the classification of living things consisting of humans, plants, and animals (Peirce, in Deledalle, 1978). The icon of two students, lecturers, and graduation that appear in the advertisement want to show about the good and commendable character of students and all academic community at Akademi Farmasi Saraswati Denpasar.

The index that appears in the advertisement of Akademi Farmasi Saraswati Denpasar are photos of students' activities, photos of pharmaceutical products. Peirce (in Deledalle, 1978: 158) stated that an index is a sign aimed at the object because of

the dynamic relationship (spatial relationship) with the personality of the object and with the memory or thinking of a person. The display of photos of students' activities and pharmaceutical products are a way to give memory and interest to the readers that pharmacy has various activities. Those activities can enhance the creativity and activities of students who are ready to work in the field of pharmaceutical industry. So, the index can represent the intent and the purpose of the advertisements to the readers.

The colour shown in this advertisement is the dominance of light blue combine with red, orange colour on the words "Join". The blue colour is the colour of the sky and gives the impression of calm (Cazenave, 2000: 84). The dominance of blue colour used is to show calm situation and not to be in a hurry to make any decision. Giving the reader impression to calm down and consider the best college for pharmacy is Akademi Farmasi Saraswati Denpasar. The red colour in New Student Admissions shows courage and firmness in influencing readers to join at Saraswati Denpasar Academy of Pharmacy. The red colour is a colour that symbolizes courage or passionate spirit (Cazenave, 2000: 167). The orange colour in the words "join" symbolizes the greatness of the reader's heart in making decisions and consolidates to join at the institution (Cazenave, 2000: 167). Orange is the colour that gives a variety of colours, contrast, glory or personal greatness.

The background used in this advertisement is the top-looking campus environment equipped with clouds and sky. This background wants to showcase a wide, peaceful and peaceful campus environment. This background can represent the atmosphere of a comfortable environment in learning process and teaching and learning activities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented above, it could be concluded that all of data source used the semiotic signs by both verbal and visual aspects. These signs have an important role in conveying the purposes of the advertisers such as to persuade and give some information to public. It can be stated that the use of the verbal and visual aspects in the advertisements are in a proportional combination. The representation of visual signs is supporting the verbal signs in each advertisement make public easier to understand about the meaning and the function.

Verbal sign consists of (1) lexical choice (adjective and verb), (2) structure of sentence (declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative), (3) the use of figurative language and (4) abbreviation. Besides the conceptual meaning used to give information, from the sign there is also hidden message behind it, like an affective meaning and collocative meaning which is used to persuade, give command, invitation and suggestion. Visual sign consists of (1) symbol (institution logo), (2) icon (students and lecturer image, graduation image), (3) index (uniform used, property used, product), (4) colour (blue, red, orange, green and white), (5) background (environment).

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