REVEALING THE MYTHS IN IPHONE 14 ADVERTISEMENT: SEMIOTICS APPROACH

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Abstract
Semiotics is a branch of science that examines human signs. The semiotic aspects and cases are exciting topics to discuss in interpreting the meaning of advertising because the ambiguous message conveyed in the advertisement may cause difficulties in understanding its meaning among the customers. This research aims to discover the connotative and denotative meanings of the signs in the iPhone 14 advertising video. This study was qualitative research. The data of the study is iPhone 14 advertising video; Action Mode Feature. The data were analyzed with verbal and nonverbal signs according to Saussure's theory (1950) in the form of words, phrases, sentences, sounds, situations, models, motion, and video images of iPhone 14 advertisement and then searched for connotative and denotative meanings according to Barthes' theory (1983). The results revealed that the advertisement aims to create consumer appeal by emphasizing the iPhone 14's luxurious design and the quality associated with the Apple brand. In addition, by featuring Black individuals prominently, the ad sends a message of inclusivity and empowerment, suggesting that success and prestige are attainable by all, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. Therefore, the iPhone 14 positions itself as a symbol of progress, both technologically and socially.

Keywords: Semiotics, Meanings, Signs, iPhone 14 Advertisement

Introduction
Semiotics is the study of signs in their broad meaning in society, both directly and figuratively, using language and non-language. Semiotics analysis seeks to find the meaning of signs, including things hidden behind the signs (texts, advertisements, news, movies, and even songs). This study explores and analyzes how meaning is produced and associated with people and society. Hoed (2011) says semiotics is a branch of science examining human signs. Semiotics basically takes signs or sign systems as the object of study.
Saussure (1950) stated that, as quoted in Rahmah (2019), signs are concrete objects in the form of letters, sounds, signs, and images that function as markers. In line with Saussure, Chandler (1994) stated that signs can be expressed through words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects in a semiotic sense. Semiotics and signs are two things that are often found in human life. One human field that contains many signs is the entertainment sector, especially when advertising products, services, or commercial items.

Concerning semiotics, the constructivist Ferdinand Saussure proposed the concept of semiotics (Saussure, 1972: 33). In 1956, Roland Barthes read Saussure's General Linguistics and discovered that semiotics could be used in other fields as well. His view of linguistics in semiotics differs from that of Saussure. By contrast, he said, semiotics is a branch of linguistics because ideas (meanings, symbols) can be represented by symbols in other realms of structural composition because they can contain symbolic and verbal content.

In Barthes' semiotics, symbols are the first layer of the system, and the meaning is the second layer. In this case, the sign is close to the meaning of the object. Through this literal
interpretation of what oppression means, Barthes tries to avoid and deny it. Its true meaning is determined by the laws of nature. This theory is based on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of symbols. This simple explanation makes sense in two steps (Ninuk, 2012).

From those explanations, it can be concluded that Barthes's theory in semiotics is the expansion of Saussure’s theory. The difference is in Barthes’ theory, denotation and connotation are terms describing the relationship between the signifier and signified, and an analytic distinction is made between two types of signifieds, a denotative signified and a connotative signified. Meaning includes both denotative and connotative (Isfandiyary, 2017)

Advertising is a means of communication in which products, brands, or services are promoted to others to generate actual interest, engagement, and sales of the advertised goods or services. In short, it is a form of public communication that advertises goods, names, services, or opportunities. Customers are influenced and encouraged by advertisement to purchase goods or avail services. It is an essential component of everyday life, particularly in the commercial world, as it serves to promote client interest and the sale of goods and services. A strong advertising plan is required to help with sales and marketing in a business. Ads can be actively driven by their implicit and imaginative content.

Kusumawati (2015), stated that verbal communication is a form of communication that the communicator conveys to the communicant in writing or verbally, while non-verbal communication is communication that does not use words, for example using body language such as facial expressions and hand movements, even intonation, voice, and speed of speech. As a result, many manufacturers produce all kinds of imaginative and imaginative advertisement to attract consumers. Ads rarely use subliminal messages, whether in the spoken words or the images shown. It serves to generate customer interest in ads. Sukma (2017) stated that advertising is an attempt to attract the attention of customers or clients. This is done through persuasive messages in the form of pictures, video, or words about the products or services offered.

In addition, advertisement often have deeper cultural, political, and other meanings. Not infrequently, advertisement use implied meanings, both the words used and those displayed non-verbally. This applies to capture customer curiosity about the advertisement. However, only some can understand the concept of advertising. Advertisement often use cues such as language, images, music, colors, and other elements and signs that can have different meanings (Novitasari, 2014).

The ambiguous message conveyed in the advertisement may need help understanding its meaning. Because each individual can interpret a sign in an advertisement differently, the existing signs must be understood accurately, precisely, and equally by everyone (Putri, 2014). As a result, advertising content must not be confusing or deceptive. Therefore, to understand and judge the true meaning of the advertisement, customers need to do more research and have a deeper understanding. Thus, semiotic analysis is the designation for this type of research (Putri, 2014).

The semiotic aspects and cases above are exciting topics to discuss in interpreting the meaning of advertising. The researcher is interested in analyzing new feature ads on iPhone 14 advertisement and choose to analyze this advertisement because it uses creative ways to convey their advertisement. It also contains many signs, such as attractive pictures, sounds, and words to convey meaning. In addition, based on CNN World News data, the iPhone 14 Pro Max accounts for 28% of all iPhone sales in the US QA 2022. The second most popular is the iPhone 14, which accounted for 23% of total US iPhone sales during the same quarter. Moreover, Counterpoint shows an increase in the premium cellphone market in Southeast Asia throughout Q3 2022. Compared to the previous year, the iPhone 14 Pro Max experienced a significant growth of 63% in Southeast Asia from July to last September, with Vietnam as the largest country that uses iPhones. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the iPhone 14 Pro Max dominates the first position in the mobile phone segment, with prices above USD 700.

From the data above, it can be concluded that customers’ interest in using the iPhone 14 Pro Max is considerable, especially at the launch of this product. Therefore, this aroused the researcher’s curiosity to analyze the signs in the advertisement for the iPhone 14. Good product sales can be influenced by good marketing, especially by commercial means. Through
advertising videos, the researcher can also see creative and exciting ways of advertising. Verbal and non-verbal signs are perfectly displayed. However, advertisers are trying to convey a specific message through the signs in the iPhone 14 ad to customers. Thus, to ensure consumers or readers understand their message, advertisers create various codes.

Previous research conducted by Sarah and Masinissa (2017); A previous study on social preference analysis of Condor smartphone advertisement in Algeria, found that Condor smartphone advertisement had nonverbal symbol sources (images, colors), using symbols and words, (information) sensitive; focus) and language (subject, clause, pronoun/noun/adjective, and verb).

This aligns with research conducted by Ramadhani (2021) titled "Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Meanings in Telephone Ads Using a Semiotic Approach.” It was found that the denotative and connotative interpretation of the meaning of the sign (verbal and nonverbal meanings) attracted viewers to buy the product. A further related study was carried out by Agustia & Kurniawan (2022) with the title, "Semiotic Analysis of Non-Verbal Language in Digital Gadget Ads," with the result that there was a misinterpretation of the meaning of nonverbal language in digital gadget advertisements. Three commercials were discussed because there is no verbal component.

The last related study, “Semiotis Analysis of OPPO F Mobile Phone Ads,” was conducted by Rahmah (2019). The researcher found 36 signs in 12 “OPPO F” advertisements. These marks are 13 Iconic signs and 23 Symbolic signs. The researcher gets six different meanings from each of advertisement.

All of the above studies state that the advertisement analyzed has several signs and meanings explicitly and implicitly contained in this advertisement. These signs can perfectly capture consumers' interest in purchasing the product or using the promoted service. The study conducted by Sara (2017) also stated that analyzing the meaning of signs using a semiotic approach can help customers catch hidden messages conveyed through advertising videos. The fact is that not everyone can understand the creativity shown in advertisements (Jefkins, 2021). The average person thinks that the advertiser exaggerates the product or service so that people are enticed to buy and use it.

This study continues the study above but uses different data related to video advertisements for the iPhone 14. Therefore, researchers conducted research to analyze it using the theory of Saussure (1950) and Barthes (1983). This research is more focused on the verbal and non-verbal signs contained in the iPhone 14 Advertisement Video and the connotative and denotative meanings of each of these signs.

Literature Review

Semiotics is an analytic approach to the study of symbols in everyday life. Etymologically, the term semiotics comes from the Greek Seminion, meaning "sign." Semiotics is the study of signs. Semiotics comes from the Greek word 'semeion,' which means sign. A sign itself is divided into two which are a verbal sign and a non-verbal sign. Verbal signs in its use of language can make a set of words that have been structured become the core of meaningful sentences (Cangara, 2003). Meanwhile, non-verbal signs are used for a communication environment with possible information about the meaning of a result sender or receiver (Mulyana, 2007).

Research Method

Silverman (2020) also notes that qualitative research emphasizes subjective meaning when describing people's experiences through reading or words without calculation. Data analysis aims to analyze data precisely so that it is easy to understand. The data in this study were analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques and a semiotic approach, namely by choosing the suitable advertisement, categorizing it, and then identifying it based on the verbal and non-verbal signs.

In this study, the researcher analyzed the advertisement of the iPhone 14. This advertisement was iPhone 14; Action Mode Feature. The advertisement was taken from Apple’s
advertisement on YouTube that was uploaded in 2023.

**Results and Discussion**

The ad video chosen by the researcher was an ad that was broadcast in January 2023. The ad displayed the action mode feature found on the iPhone 14. The ad video is 0.39 seconds long. Analysis of the ad video can be seen in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>00.01</td>
<td>Get out my way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signifier**
The running race participants from different races are ready for the race. They look serious and focus on the race. There is a song title that appears at the bottom of the scene that is written: “Get out my way.” A back song that sings the song with the title written accompanies the video.

**Signified**
The race is about to begin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.</th>
<th>00.08</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You cross that line.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signifier**
The boy stares at the mother. His face looks serious. The close-up shot is taken to show the audience about how serious the boy is. The text: “You crossed that line.” appears at the bottom of the scene. A back song with the lyric written accompany this scene.

**Signified**
The boy stares at the mother.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0.09</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>It ain’t your day.</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Written: It ain’t your day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signifier</td>
<td>Signified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The mom stares back at her son while holding an iPhone 14, preparing to take the video. At the back of her, there are other audiences who also watch the race. A written text, “It ain’t your day,” appears at the bottom of the scene. A back song with the lyric written accompany this scene.</td>
<td>The Mom is ready to record her son’s running race.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0.11</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action mode</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signifier</td>
<td>Signified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The scene shows the counting time and the written text “Action Mode.” Then the whistle is blown, which signifies that the race begins. The song “get out my way” still played to accompany the video.</td>
<td>The action mode of the iPhone is activated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>00.31</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Get out of my way.</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaky camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signifier</td>
<td>Signified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The video shows the child model running a race while his mother is</td>
<td>The child’s mother is taking the video of the race.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
taking the video by running, following the movement of her son. The written text “Shaky camera” appears in the middle of the screen. The back song, “get out my way,” accompanies this scene, and the song lyric “get out my way” is written at the bottom of the scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.</th>
<th>0.23</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stable video</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signifier**
There is a text “stable video” on the middle of the screen, and the boy model who runs over other participants, trying to lead the race.

**Signified**
The text “stable video” shows the audience that the video will remain stable even if the recorder moves or runs during the recording. The boy model, who runs over other participants, shows that iPhone 14 is able to run over other mobile competitors and lead the race.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.</th>
<th>0.26</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relax, it's iPhone 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signifier**
In this scene, there are the words "relax; it's iPhone 14," which has a background of a mother taking a video with a very serious face because she is running beside her child, who is racing while taking pictures. The video shows a busy background, but the audience can still focus on the advertised product because the model is doing different activities from the background, namely running.

**Signified**
The verbal signs above mean that the iPhone 14 claims that it is able to fulfill the necessity of the customer who wants to take pictures in any condition with better video quality like a professional. The busy background identified that the recorder can still take good-quality pictures in any situation.
Verbal | Non-verbal
---|---
(Well) I need my space |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier</th>
<th>Signified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
At the end of the scene, the video shows that the boy model is able to win the race. He leads the race and makes some quite a far distance from other competitors. The song text “(Well) I need my space.” | The scene when the model boy becomes the winner identifies that, in the end, iPhone 14 will win the mobile market competition. The space that is a far distance from other competitors indicates that iPhone 14 is difficult to compete by other competitors. The song lyrics “(Well) I need my space” shows that iPhone 14 has its own space in the mobile phone market. |

Based on the analysis in the table above, each scene of the advertisement has a denotative meaning, which consists of a signifier and a signified. However, each first order of signification does not always have one-second order of signification. Therefore, the connotative meaning is described in the paragraphs instead of within the table.

The iPhone 14 Action Mode Apple’s advertisement of has several connotative meanings. From the first scene, it shows the running race participants that come from different races getting ready for the race. They look serious and focus for the race. A boy who wears a red long sleeve T-shirt looks serious. His eyes look forward. While other participants also prepare for the race, waiting for the whistle to blow. A singer's voice sings, “Get out of my way,” as the lyric text is written at the bottom of the scene.

This scene shows that the running race participants from different races represent various mobile phone brands in the world market. A black boy model represents iPhone 14 because Apple wants to give a different perspective of advertisement. Apple wants to break the stigma that it has to be a white person to become a model for a world-class product. Actually, any kind of race also can be a model for world-class products. The other reason is that even though iPhone 14 is one of the most expensive mobile phone brands. Still, it also can be used by black participants, who are usually considered people from a lower middle-class economy. Apple is one of global companies that have a Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) program, a long-term global effort to advance equity and expand opportunities for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous communities. Apple has supported education, economic empowerment, and criminal justice reform work across the U.S., with recent expansion to Australia, the U.K., and Mexico. Apple launched REJI at a pivotal moment in the U.S., as protests against racial injustice swept the nation (Apple Newsroom, 2023). No wonder Apple tries to campaign its program, included in its advertisement. The Apple company has a goal to live out its program by conveying its meaning through broadcast advertisements. Therefore, Apple issues advertisements with models of various races that are often underestimated in society; the intention is to give a stigma that all creatures are the same and equal so that the
impression of luxury from the iPhone can also be implied by race, which is often underestimated.

The running race in this advertisement describes the mobile phone competition in the world. The running race participants who come from different races and get ready at the start line represent the various product of mobile phones in the world that are ready to compete in the mobile phone market. It is because of the increase in information technology that the number of mobile phone productions also increases. Various mobile phone types can be found in the market, trying to get as many customers as possible. No wonder every mobile phone brand launches new features to attract customers.

The words "get out my way" mean that all mobile phone competitors must get ready to move from the market since iPhone 14 will lead the market. The new feature launched by iPhone 14 makes Apple as iPhone 14 producer, feel optimistic that iPhone 14 will be able to dominate the mobile phone market in the world. According to Rizal and Zaenal (2022), the development of iPhone market share increased from the 1st quarter of 2021 by 16% increase through the 1st quarter of the year 2022 by 18%.

Second data of the video shows that the boy stares at the mother. His face looks serious. The close-up shot is taken to show the audience about how serious the boy is. The boy gives a code to his mother to get ready to take the video. This scene represents that the boy actually gives a sign to the audience to become the witness of the new feature of iPhone 14. A back song with the lyric that is written on, accompanying this scene, “You cross that line,” means warns other mobile phone products that want to compete with iPhone 14 should be careful because iPhone 14 has new features that they do not have.

The third data shows that the mom stares back at her son while holding an iPhone 14, preparing to take the video. At the back of her, there are other audiences who also watch the race. The written text “It ain’t your day” appears at the bottom of the scene, and a back song with the lyric that is written on accompanies this scene. A visualization of the mom staring back at her son while holding an iPhone 14 means that the mom is ready to take the video, which in connotative mean is the audience should be ready to watch the new feature of iPhone 14. The song lyrics “It ain’t your day,” which also appears at the bottom of the scene, tell that other mobile phone brands must prepare to accept the reality that iPhone 14 will dominate the world mobile phone market. It is because iPhone 14 has launched a new feature that it does not have with other mobile phone brands.

The next scene shows the counting time and the written text “Action Mode.” Then the whistle is blown, which becomes a sign that the race begins. The song “get out my way” still played to accompany the video. The written text “Action Mode” shows that the new feature of iPhone 14 has been activated. The audience should observe how magnificent the unique feature of the iPhone 14 is. The song “get out my way” indicates that other mobile phone production should step aside and give way to iPhone 14 to lead the mobile phone world market because it has the latest feature that could lead iPhone to become the number one mobile phone brand globally.

The fifth scene shows the child model running a race while his mother is taking the video by running, following the movement of her son. It describes the circumstances when the mother takes the video. The written text “Shaky camera” appears in the middle of the screen, showing that the camera is shaky since the mother takes the video with running, following his son's movement. In taking a video, one expects the video to have a good quality picture with a smooth and stable picture. But in some conditions, one cannot take the video smoothly and easily because he or she has to move, following the video objects. It becomes an obstacle for video makers to get good-quality pictures.

In the sixth scene shows the child keeps running, overtaking other participants. The text “stable video” appears in the middle of the scene. This scene represents that by the launching of the new feature of iPhone 14, this brand will run ahead and overtake other mobile phone products. The text “stable video” means that the advertisement wants to show to the audience that iPhone 14 has stable video. Even though the video taker has to run, passing other audiences, the quality of the picture is stable. The song lyric texts “get out of my way (move), get out of
my way (woo)” written at the bottom of the scene shows that Apple wants all the other mobile phone products should move because they cannot compete with iPhone 14.

The seventh scene shows that there is a written text, "Relax, it's iPhone 14". The mother is taking a video with a very serious face because she is running beside her child, racing while taking pictures. Her hands shake sometimes, but she still focuses on taking the video. This scene shows that iPhone 14 is able to fulfill the necessity of a video taker, which is good quality video; even during the video taking, someone has to move unstable, the quality of the picture is high, and this feature can get in iPhone 14. At this scene also shows the backside design of the iPhone 14. The myth from this scene is iPhone 14 has a luxurious design that can be seen even from the backside. The Apple logo shown on the backside becomes the guarantee of the quality of the iPhone 14, which is already well-known worldwide.

At the end of the scene, the video shows that the boy model is able to win the race. He leads the race and makes some quite far distance from other competitors. This seems to indicate that by the new feature of the iPhone 14, it can win the competition in the world market. The back song “(Well) I need my Space” that accompanies this scene and the song lyric “(Well) I need my space” that is written at the bottom of the scene means that Apple wants to dominate the mobile phone world market.

From those scenes in iPhone 14 Action Mode Apple’s advertisements, it is concluded that iPhone 14 is ready to become the winner and dominate the mobile phone market. Its feature, which is a camera video that can take pictures in any condition, will become the favorite for every video taker or social media content creator because this iPhone has features like a professional camera. Moreover, in this advertisement, Apple wants to give a different perspective of advertisement. Apple wants to break the stigma that it has to be a white person to become a model for a world-class product. It is because Apple is one of the global companies that have a Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) program, a long-term global effort to advance equity and expand opportunities for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous communities.

This advertisement has a myth that exists, namely, black people who were previously considered rude, low, and stupid by the stigma of society are now much different. They can even use the iPhone 14. The advertisement appears to employ a narrative or myth that seeks to challenge and counteract negative stereotypes and stigmas associated with Black individuals. It highlights a transformation from being perceived as "rude, low, and stupid" to now being portrayed as capable and successful individuals who can afford and use the latest iPhone 14 series. The advertisement also ties the possession and use of a high-end product like the iPhone 14 series to social status and success. It implies that owning this product is not just about technology but also about belonging to a certain socio-economic class. This, in turn, challenges stereotypes about economic disparity within the Black community. Moreover, this advertisement employs a powerful myth of transformation to challenge negative stereotypes and stigmas associated with Black people. It attempts to convey a message of inclusivity, empowerment, and social progress, while also using consumerism and brand association to create a narrative of success. However, it’s essential to critically assess such advertisements to determine whether they genuinely contribute to positive social change or are primarily aimed at marketing products.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the iPhone 14 advertisement reveals a multifaceted narrative with several intertwined myths. The primary myth in this scene centers around the luxurious design of the iPhone 14, particularly emphasizing its appeal from the backside. The Apple logo, prominently displayed, is used as a symbol of quality assurance, drawing on the brand's global reputation for excellence. This myth positions the iPhone 14 as a high-end, desirable product that transcends mere functionality and serves as a status symbol. Additionally, the advertisement employs a secondary myth of transformation to challenge negative stereotypes and stigmas associated with Black people. It conveys the message that owning an iPhone 14 is a symbol of success and empowerment, countering historical stereotypes that may have portrayed Black individuals in a negative light.
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