

## **ANALYSIS OF PEPSI BRAND ADVERTISING IMPLEMENTATION USING #BETTERWITHPEPSI FOR FAST FOOD BRANDS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Pepsi's recent advertisement campaign, which features the tagline #BetterWithPepsi, was launched in honor of National Burger Day. The campaign has been promoted across all social media platforms and showcases portraits of fast-food packaging that incorporate Pepsi's signature colors into the branding of popular fast-food chains such as Burger King, McDonald's, and Wendy's. This advertisement has been analyzed using semiotic theory by Roland Barthes, who suggests that the use of the advertisement is akin to a collaboration or combination between fast food and drinks that complement each other, such as Pepsi. The tagline #BetterWithPepsi implies that the public will consume food and drinks that are always together, thereby creating a mindset that associates the consumption of food with the use of Pepsi. The advertisement's use of semiotics is evident in the incorporation of Pepsi's colors into the branding of other fast-food chains, which creates a visual association between the two. This association is further reinforced by the tagline, which suggests that the consumption of food is incomplete without the addition of Pepsi. The advertisement's effectiveness can be attributed to its ability to tap into the public's desire for convenience and the need for a complete dining experience. By positioning Pepsi as an essential component of the fast-food experience, the advertisement creates a sense of loyalty and brand recognition among consumers.

**Keywords:** #BetterWithPepsi, Roland Barthes, fast food, iklan target audience satisfaction

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### **INTRODUCTION**

There are various types of advertisements aired on traditional and modern media, where advertisements are broadcast on TV, newspapers, magazines, highways to social media (Rabindranath & Singh, 2024). Broadly speaking, advertising is an action taken by companies or institutions that want to broadcast products or services using conventional and modern media to reach the target audience of the company. The definition of advertising itself is also explained by (Blakeman, 2023) as part of a marketing communication strategy for companies to achieve information that is easy to understand in a short time. Advertisements that appear in the media now raise awareness of the kinds of products used to meet very varied needs and cause companies to compete to grab consumer attention through advertised products (Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2023). The idea of advertising is now used by companies that confront consumers with a negative side, where advertising can educate consumers to get basic information about products and on the other hand consumers are confused in remembering product information that is too diverse. In the midst of intense competition of advertisements aired, the target audience itself will only be interested in advertisements that have unique and creative concepts and, in this case, Pepsi is one of the advertisements that caught the author's attention (Chen, 2023). Reporting from the pepsi.com website, the American company that has been established for more than 50 years has a strong identity in producing various types of drinks, including the famous carbonated drinks that have been distributed in several states including Indonesia.

In Pepsi's advertising campaign titled "Better with Pepsi" to commemorate National Burger Day on May 27, Pepsi's advertisements were aired in several media such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and also print media. In the visuals of the ad, Pepsi shows several portraits of fast-food wrappers showing the colors of the Pepsi logo: blue, white, red and says the phrase "even when we're not on the menu, we're always in the picture" through their Twitter account. While

on YouTube, it can be seen in the ad that shows a tasting test of the combination between Pepsi and fast food such as burgers, sandwiches, nachos, dry rub ribs, hot dogs, wings, and fried chicken and finally announces that the burger menu best matches Pepsi on National Burger Day. The slogans and images contained in the Pepsi advertisements themselves have meanings that need to be analyzed further where these advertisements have their own appeal and are the key to success in the goal of identifying and selling Pepsi to the target audience. Not only that, each advertising slogan and visual also has a different purpose, such as comparing differences with the intention of provoking, highlighting the differences between one product and another, and commemorating a day that has a strong relationship with the product.

In looking at this phenomenon, the author intends to conduct research whose purpose is to examine more deeply the meanings that arise behind the Better with Pepsi advertisements displayed in the media using the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis theory, where the outline of the researcher's focus will be the theory above will help find denotative, connotative and mythical meanings contained in the advertisement. And in the end, with the discussion and analysis of this journal, it is hoped that it can help deepen knowledge of semiotics, especially in advertisements.

(Gaines, 2010) argues that semiotics provides a solid foundation for analyzing mass communication and the process of meaning creation. More than just the understanding of meaning provided by experts, semiotics provides a systematic method for understanding how signs work in the meaning-making process. Gibson & Brown (2009) emphasize that in objects, texts, language and other attributes that are implicated in signs, and semiotic analysis leads to an approach that investigates the meaning of signs and other interconnected attributes. Semiotic analysis involves the use of concepts that help to categorize and describe the process of making meaning from language, text, images etc. Looking back at history, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce are well-known figures of semiotics (Innis, 2023). Both of them showed an explanation of the system and formulation to analyze the meaning in the signs of visual objects. In addition, they managed to describe what the meaning behind it was which was then developed by other semiotic experts.

It is important to note that the origin of Barthes' semiotics refers to Saussure's theory. Saussure emphasized that language can be analyzed as a system of language itself (ve Çerçioğlu & Kovac, n.d.). A sign consists of two components: signifier and signified (Mochalov, 2023). Signifier is a word in a language (a set of words used to represent the actual meaning of the word (Appolloni, 2023)). While the signified is a concept derived from the signifier itself, and the sign is the relationship between signifier and signified (Zicman de Barros, 2023). Roland Barthes developed this idea and defined myth. In his book titled 'Mythology' he explains that Myth is language. Any object, idea, concept, thought can be expressed through myth. However, Barthes distinguishes myth and from Saussure's concept of the sign, signifier and signified (Klopf, 2023). Myth is a form of social history that creates a system of meanings and rules of the significant world (Lassman et al., 2023). Not only expressed through speech, myths can also be expressed through writing and opinions in a visual creation. Bathes reinforces the idea and states that the signifier can take any form or model of expression that represents the signifier. This statement shows that a sign has a signifier and a signified that will produce an overall meaning.

Another example, Barthes' semiological structure of myth can take Valentine's Day as an example of Myth. Roses can be symbolized as the color red and a fragrant flower, which makes it a Sign (Shinde et al., 2023). This would be interpreted as a form of love, where love would be signified by a heart shape with a red color which turns this into a signifier as stated earlier, the intention of Barthes' semiotic model of myth is to divide the findings into three parts, namely: (1) the denotative message which shows the literal message and (2) the connotative message which shows the secondary meaning that exists within the message and (3) the myth.

In explaining Roland Barthes' model, Gibson & Brown (2009) state that language takes place denotatively, meaning the literal meaning of the message. In contrast, myth takes place connotatively, which is to explore the second meaning by using cultural perspectives. Denotative meaning and connotative meaning need to be distinguished in order to achieve a deeper discussion of meaning; this is one way that linguists use. Roland Barthes is one of the linguists who is concerned with both denotative and connotative issues (Lee & Chiu, 2023). Roland Barthes' statement that the broad field of study presented by semiology includes art, literature, anthropology, mass media, and so on. Simply put, the definition of semiology is presented as the study of meanings and signs that are reproduced or represented to a person or audience through language, art, mass media, music, and every other endeavor (Fuchs, 2023).

There are several case studies that discuss semiotic theory, one of which is in the journal (Puteri, 2017) which looks at Aqua advertisements through Roland Barthes' myth theory, and it is found that people often choose Aqua as the first choice of drink whose reputation has been trusted and shown that Aqua has become the main mineral water wherever the community is located which serves to reduce dehydration and increase concentration when consuming mineral water.

More deeply discussed by Heriawati (n.d.) in her journal that in Barthes' semiotic theory itself, there are denotative and connotative meanings in the visual elements of advertisements where the meanings conveyed through advertisements form different experiences in each community scope (OISAMOJE, 2023). One example is cigarette advertisements that convey product messages not directly, but rather shape people's perceptions of cigarettes themselves such as the slogan "Men have taste" or "The taste of a brave man" which looks full of meaning. Since the Semiotic Approach can be applied anywhere in everyday life, the researcher decided to elaborate Barthes' theory with the "Better with Pepsi" advertisement. Taken from a British essay titled 'Roland Barthes and his Semiotic Theory', it shows that the semiotic approach is suitable for identifying meanings within images and texts.

While analyzing the Pepsi advertisement and elaborating it with several theories, the author noticed that various challenges would be faced. Using content analysis as a methodology, (Burns, 2023) highlights that the process of paraphrasing can affect the interpretation of the data and the process of generating meaning can be misinterpreted.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The main purpose of analyzing advertisements using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is to find the meaning contained in them. In advertisements that are often found in various media, especially on social media and print media, the writer must be able to find strong meanings related to certain connotations, myths, or ideological content to understand the product to be chosen.

### **1. YouTube Ad "Better with Pepsi | Burgers"**

In this 15-second YouTube ad, we see in the first second a scene of a hand opening a cold can of Pepsi, followed by the man who is seen enjoying a burger while sipping Pepsi in his car with the roof open. In the surrounding environment, we can see the hot daytime weather supported by tropical clothing with a beach feel. The atmosphere that the author describes above is the denotative meaning, while the connotative meaning means that Pepsi is more enjoyable to sip cold and can be eaten anywhere, which means that Pepsi is a type of flexible bottled drink that can be taken anywhere as a dining companion. In western culture, it is seen that burgers are a filling fast food menu and Pepsi wants to show people that burgers are quite greasy food and are very fitting to eat with Pepsi which will give a relief effect on the throat after drinking it; creating a culture and necessity to drink Pepsi after consuming fast food.

In the scene at the 9th second, the man holding the Pepsi and burger is stared at by the little boy in the car who is holding a melted ice cream and then he swallows while looking at the

man and seems to forget about the ice cream he is holding. The connotative meaning contained in this scene based on the author's observation is where the child is very interested and curious about the freshness provided by Pepsi after eating a burger, considering that the little boy has just eaten sweet food which tends to make the child's taste buds saturated with the concentrated sweetness of ice cream.

The ad then ends with the narration "Burgers: Better with Pepsi, that's what I like" at a duration of 4 seconds at the end of the ad, accompanied by visuals of capital white letters as well as burgers and Pepsi side by side placed on a table full of bread crumbs. The connotative meaning of the last scene of the advertisement that the author wants to emphasize is in the "that's what I like" narrative part, where Pepsi wants to show that their carbonated drink is the best friend for eating burgers based on their opinion, but also not limited to burgers only, but also to other fast food such as chicken, wings, nachos etc.,

## **2. "Better with Pepsi" Twitter**

On Pepsi's Twitter on May 26, 2021, Pepsi wrote "ALL burgers go #BetterWithPepsi... even when we're not on the menu, we're always in the picture. Try for yourself this Friday on #NationalBurgerDay and the Pepsi is on us" by displaying Burger King, McD and Wendy's food wrappers.



Seen in the image uploaded by Pepsi on the Twitter account, they circle certain parts of the fast-food wrapper. From the connotative meaning of the advertisement, it is shown from the intention of Pepsi's presence that is ready to accompany the public when consuming fast food by circling the red, blue and white parts of the food wrapper which clearly shows the colors of the Pepsi logo. On the same occasion, Pepsi also managed to attract the attention of the public to consume burgers with Pepsi for free on National Burger Day.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the use of advertising by Pepsi with the #betterwithpepsi campaign against fast-food brands, it can be concluded that Pepsi itself wants to attract the attention of the audience just like the advertisements in Indonesia, namely Teh Botol Sosro, by using the tagline "whatever the food, drink Teh Botol Sosro" it also has the same meaning as the purpose of the Pepsi advertisement which is to make that all fast-food is very well combined with Pepsi. Another form of cue in the advertisement, namely the use of color in the packaging of each fast-food packaging such as McDonalds that started the introduction of the advertisement.

Based on the analysis of Roland Barthes' theory related to the advertisement, the advertisement also provides an illustration that consuming Pepsi can be done at any time which is found in the scene of the advertisement of a man who consumes Pepsi in the morning at 8am. This shows that a sentence issued by the talent indicates that the Pepsi brand wants people not to think about what food is consumed, the most important thing is that the drink is Pepsi.

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