

## Conference Paper

# Social-Semiotic Analysis of *Chupa Chups* Printed Advertisement

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## Abstract

This research will emphasize the visual elements and layout of Chupa Chups ads in printed media that considered as a sign. Morrison (2007) explains that the basic components of printed media advertising can be called signs which consist of: headlines, advertisement agencies (text containing messages intended for ads readers, usually in the form of slogans or taglines), visual elements (brands, logos, color, photo, or illustrated image of the advertised product), and the layout used. This research is done by using qualitative approach by using social semiotics text analysis theory done by descriptive analysis on Chupa Chups printed advertisement. This ad is selected because it uses objects instead of human figures and interesting concept to representing it meaning. The analysis will describe all the marks on the ad while social semiotics focused on visual grammar. This research discusses 3 aspects of visual design meaning (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006) namely representational meaning, interactive meaning, and composition meaning. Found these 3 meanings are complementary in building the image of Chupa Chups product ads so that the purpose of the ad is well delivered to the readers.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the study

Advertising has become an integral part of human life. Every time the ads are scrambling to attract the sympathy of the audience. Often, the ads also upset the audience because at the time of the audience was busy watching a television suddenly cut off by the ad. However, this is not realized by the audience because the ads have formed and participate in determining the community in deciding and making choices. Advertising is a media space filler. One of the media used for Advertising is printed media. Amir (2013) said that printed media is the third best after television. Television still dominated the ad's share last year by earning 64% of the total advertising expenditures, followed by 20%

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online media, followed by printed and magazine in 5% as well as 3% tabloids. Printed media is one medium in advertising uses color and picture. Printed media as media to advertise is effective communication medium and efficient as a medium for product information and corporate image. From all products advertised in the printed media, Chupa Chups product advertisements has uniqueness in its advertisement. Basically, in advertising communication, the symbol used in the ad consists of two types, namely verbal and non-verbal. The verbal symbol is the language we know; non-verbal are the shapes and colors presented in the ads, which are not specifically imitating the form of reality. Ads trying delivering a message of realities to be absorbed by consumers according to their frame of mind so that symbols and signs should be a symbol or a sign known in their daily lives such as language, characters, rituals and others. Generally, ads always show a product picture in every impression (Kurniawan, 2001).

One of the most interesting Chupa Chups ads is the *Sugar Free* edition in the printed media. The ad created in 2016 has an interesting look and simple themes and concepts and taken from daily sign and symbols. Generally, the ad delivered in a non-verbal language known to the public. This is what makes the authors interested to provide views and further investigate the ad which is expected to obtain a detailed picture of the meaning of social semiotic sign constructed on the ad by using semiotic analysis. In every ads, nonverbal terms are usually used to describe all communication events outside of spoken words. Theoretically nonverbal communication and verbal communication can be separated. But in reality, these two types of communication are mutual intertwine, complement each other in the communication that we do day-to-day.

Advertising as a semiotics object, has a fundamental difference with three-dimensional design, especially product design. Ads, like mass communication media in general, has a direct communication function, while the product design has a indirect communication function. Therefore, in advertising, communication aspects such as messages is a key element of advertising. Which the product design is one of the only aspects of the various other major aspects (function, human, production) (Fiske, 2004).

Each printed media ad must have its own language, either both verbal and non-verbal. The language of the ad can be viewed from the component as a sign that inside the ad itself. Morrison (2007) explains that the basic components of printed media advertising can be called a sign consists of: headline, ad body (text containing the intended message to an ad reader, usually a slogan or tagline), a visual element (brand, logo, color, photo, or illustrated image of the advertised product), and layout used. In this study, it will be more emphasis on the element visuals and layouts to be regarded as a sign.

The language in the ad contains a meaning. Based on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), explains that a sign (visual element as well as layout) in visual communication has a grammar, which they refer to as visual grammar (visual grammar). In search of a meaning of a visual design, this can be obtained through the meaning of representational meaning, interactive meaning, and composition meaning. Representational meaning concern at narrative structures and conceptual structures. Interactive meaning examines distance, contact between sign in text and point of view. While the composition meaning concern to the value of information submitted, framing, and visual characteristics. These three meanings can be obtained the meaning of an ad design.

## 2. Method

This research is done by using qualitative approach by using social semiotics text analysis theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). It's done by descriptive analysis on Chupa Chups printed advertisement *Sugar Free* edition. This ad is selected because it uses interesting symbol objects instead of human as whole. Content analysis will describe all the marks on the ad. While social semiotics are used more focused on visual grammar (visual grammar). The analysis concern on three aspects of meaning such as:

### 2.1. Representational meaning

The first has to do with the patterns of representation, in other words, the way experience is encoded visually. The visual encoding is carried on either by narrative and/or conceptual structures. Narrative structures present unfolding actions and events, processes of change and transitory spatial arrangements. They always include depicted element which forms an oblique line and indicates directionality, called vector (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 59). There are several kinds of narrative processes: action, reactional, speech, mental, and conversion, depending on the types of vectors and participants included.

### 2.2. Interactive meaning

The interactive meaning is represented by the patterns of interactions between participants. Several types of participants are involved in visual communication, namely represented (depicted) and interactive (real). They can lead to various relations within the same types and between the different types (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 114). The

interactive meaning of images has three dimensions: contact, distance and point of view. The contact is related to the gaze direction of the represented participants, which can be directed at the viewer (demand) or not (offer). Demands are considered to establish an imaginary relation with the viewer since they address her/him directly. The act can also be emphasized by facial expressions and gestures (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 116-118). As far as distance is concerned, it is influenced by different sizes of frame, namely close-up, medium or long. These sizes apply not only to humans, but also to objects, buildings or landscapes. They can lead to different relations between represented participants and viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 124-129). The size of frame in the focused image is a close-up shot, which leads to a close social distance and involves the participants in an informal relation typical between friends. The last dimension of the interactive function is point of view or perspective. There are two types of images: subjective, presenting everything from a particular perspective, dictated by the image-producer, and objective, depicting all there is to know about the subject (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 143). Participants can be depicted from various angles each indicating a different relation.

### 2.3. Composition meaning

The meaning refers to the meaning of composition, being related to “the way in which representations and communicative acts cohere into the kind of meaningful whole we call ‘text’” (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 181). Meaning is built by three interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing. In addition, these systems are not restricted to single pictures, but they apply also to composite visuals, i.e. visuals, which combine text, image and/or other graphic elements, and their layouts. Information value is associated to three main visual areas: left and right; top and bottom; and centre and margin. In the case of left and right, the composition is structured along the horizontal axis. The left side is related to given information, which is assumed to be familiar and accepted as a point of departure for the message by the viewer. As opposed, the right side is reserved to new information, to something unknown or requiring special attention (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 179-185). Another important system in the composition of visual meaning is salience. This makes a difference among elements, as some are presented as more important or attractive than others. The visual clues indicating salience are: size, sharpness of focus, tonal and colour contrast, placement in the visual field, perspective and specific cultural factors (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 201-203). To conclude this description of Kress and van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual design

(2006; 2006), framing is another system that connects the representational meaning to the interactive one. The elements in an image or page can be either connected or disconnected by frame lines, discontinuity of shape or empty space between elements. Moreover, connection can be emphasized by vectors (2006: 203-204). The image illustrated contains no framing itself. Considering it, however in its context, the image is framed by thick borders, which can signify individuality and differentiation. This means that the image is presented as a separate information unit from the text, fact in accordance with the vertical arrangement of ideal versus real.

### 3. Finding and Discussion

#### 3.1. Representational meaning

The portrayal of the signs in this ad is silent, not constructed to represent the series of events that form a story so that it can be seen directly the concept of the meanings contained. Chupa Chups print ads are included in the conceptual meaning, in this ad there is a classification structure seen from the relationship between the sign, the symbolic relationship of ants and candy that connotes the subordinate position of each object.



Figure 1

From the picture shown that, there are a symbolic structure of the very conspicuous relationship between the sign of ants and candy. The two signs describing a gesture or movement of the human behavior that became pointing out the symbolic attribute to the viewer in this ad (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, h.79 and 105). All signs are motivated, the signs represented by the image show that the printed advertisement became one of the forms of visual communication design resulting from rationality, based on knowledge,

logic and pragmatic (Widagdo, 1993, p. 31). Here's an explanation of the meaning of each sign:

### Sign 1: Candy



Figure 2

The candy icon used in this ad is one of Chupa Chups' most famous products. This product is a creamy strawberry vanilla product which is the most popular variant in 2016 (Unilever Survey, 2016). This product icon represents the symbolic structure of the product offered to consumers. Candy symbol that looks very fresh and delicious with glossy glaze that gives a fantasy of pleasure when consuming it. The candy in this ad is a representative symbol of a product's figure and connotes the intended target audience of all consumers from all classes with various occupational professions. The biggest content of a candy is sugar. But in this ad, the link between sugar and a candy will be more indicated in the interaction relationship on the symbol in the ad.

### Sign 2: Ants

The marching ants indicates a relationship between ants and sugar. This relationship is shown implicitly in a collection of ants. This relationship in the figurative context can be represented by the sequence of ants that accumulate in a place.



Figure 3



Figure 4

### Sign 3: Grass and Concrete

Grass and concrete represent the outdoors where the relationship between candy and ants takes place. This symbol shows this product can be enjoyed openly or by all ages whether children, adolescents or adults.

### Sign 4: Text “It’s Sugar Free” and Chupa Chups Logo

The existence of a product icon with the text “It’s Sugar Free” aims to clarify the purpose of advertising and build the audience memory of other Chupa Chups ads where the text describes the sugar content of Chupa Chups products.



Figure 5

### 3.2. Interactive meaning

Interactive meaning analyzed based on some such focus as Contact, Distance and Point of View.



Figure 6

From focus of Contact, the ads shown that the visible contacts of the ad in the interaction of ants and candy. The line of ants that avoid the presence of candy. The ants' portrayal that seems to avoid candy shows an element of opposite correlation. In general, ants should swarm the candy (sugar) but in this ad portrayal, the ants avoid the candy to show that the product that represented is a sugar free product and even the

ants are not interested to swarm it. In accordance with Heslin in Mulyana (2004, p. 336) states that one form of non-verbal communication is in the form of touching, it shows the emotional attachment or interest. This creates an emotional contact on the viewer of the ad, i.e. the incidence trying to say that the product is sugar. However, in this ad there is no direct eye contact between the viewer with the signs in the ad because the human figure replaced by ants and candy.

In the focus of Distance, Chupa Chups ad connotes the distance between the absence of sugar in Chupa Chups products by using the ants and candy icons. According to proxemic science by Edward T. Hall (1996) in Mulyana (2004, p.359), the physical distance formed from the ants and candy icons includes the intimate distance refer to human social distance between 0 cm to 45 cm. It represents the avoidance activity, with very close proximity conditions. The intimate distance illustrated by the contact between the ant icon and the candy also connotes the distance of expression of the ants that uninterested in touching the candy because it contains no sugar.

And from the focus of Point of View shown that the gesture portrayal of the ant line avoids the presence of candy visibly and reinforces the construction of advertising messages thus becoming the point of view of Chupa Chups printed ads. According to Birdwhistel (1952 and 1970) in Danesi (2010, p.74-77) explains that the connotation of gestures is a kinesic code of people perceptive perceptions by designating certain parts of an advertisement. In addition, because the second position of the sign is in the middle of the ad, making the two signs are dominant in the composition of the field of advertising.

### 3.3. Componential meaning

Componential meaning in this advertisement supported by Information Value, Saliency and Framing. Every aspect described as follow.

From the side of Information Value described that the placement of signs in this ad has its own meaning. The candy icon placed on the right side of the ant icon (when viewed from the audience's point of view). These icons connote as sugarless candy is the primary focus of this ad. The position of these icons relates to the ethics of everyday life which is the product of patriarchal thought. The right position is considered as better position so connoting the candy is a good thing and it does not matter if you consume it with excess because it is basically a good thing (Murniati, 2004). The candy icon and the ant icon are placed in the central position as the main message of this ad. The message that the product offered does not contain sugar. Meanwhile, the Chupa Chups product

icon or logo and the "It's sugar free" text are placed in the lower right corner as a mean to clarify the purpose of the ad. The placement of other signs on the back acts as a background and as supporting ideas of the main signs.

As the focus of Saliency can be described that the overall composition of the sign uses some added icons as a visual mark on Chupa Chups printed ads. It aims to replace human figures (individuals). Signs that represent human relationships and thoughts using ants and candy make this ad look attractive and the most noticeable of the composition of this mark are the ant icon and the candy icon. The right placement is in the middle of the ad field and the size of the icon that looks bigger than the other signs and reinforced by the gesture connotations described by the two signs. While the grass and concrete icons as a sign of support (participant) that serves to reinforce the construction in the ads that look of placement and size smaller than the main signs.

From the side of framing, it provides a picture of the reality of how an advertising product should provide a truth clearly but can be manipulated in such a way for commercial purposes. Overall the purposive meaning in this ad state that the reality of a concept or a way of describing the products manipulation to attract and hope to be accepted by consumers.

## 4. Conclusion

The complexity created by the description and interpretation of images and/or any other type of visuals raises interest in various fields where visual communication is thoroughly used. To conclude, the model proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen is applicable to domains, such as promotion and cultural aspects of non-verbal communication, to mention just a few. It can help, on one side, students and researchers understand better visual communication and, on the other, professionals make a more adequate use of visual communication in order to convey information and persuade more successfully. Broadly speaking, Chupa Chups *Sugar Free* edition ads describe the relationship between consumers and the products offered from a perception of how the product is produced in accordance with the need of consumers and the trend that is occurring. The desire of the community to always be able to enjoy a product that can actually harm but still get the benefits of the product. Desire community to living the healthy lifestyle but with no rules that control their behavior. In the ad it is clear that the product of a candy is described as containing no sugar in the presence of a gesture from the line of ants. This is an effect expected by Chupa Chups ads themselves when consumers consume their products, it is not a thing that will interfere their health because it does not contain any

sugar. However, this ad is one of Chupa Chups ads which is always interesting because this ad succeeded in replacing human figure with object but not losing the meaning of the product offered.

This Chupa Chups *Sugar Free* edition ad shows that the presence of human figures replaced by more simple objects (ants and candy) can be an alternative visual communication strategy of an advertising design; especially on food product advertisements which containing messages about the composition and health issues of the product.

## 5. Suggestions

In the analysis of Chupa Chups ads, it is the initial analysis because it only takes one type of form of advertising. There are many other forms of advertising such as online media, audio ads, television and other advertising media. Each ad medium has aspects that can be analyzed. As a suggestion, for the next can be carried out a similar analysis but with a more diverse advertising media and not only analyze advertising in printed media.

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