

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE AUTOMOBILE ADVERTISING IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study examines the Critical Discourse Analysis of Japanese Automobile Advertising in Indonesia. It focused on selected advertisements of Japanese car brands Toyota Kijang Innova Zenix, Honda BR-V, Daihatsu Terios, and Suzuki Ignis. This study analyzes how language, visuals, and symbolic elements are strategically employed to shape consumer perception. Using Teun A. van Dijk's framework, the study investigates microstructure (lexical choice, slogans, and persuasive expressions), macrostructure (main themes and messages), and superstructure (organizational patterns of advertising discourse). The findings reveal that Japanese automobile advertisements consistently construct ideological meanings related to technological advancement, reliability, modern lifestyle, and social prestige. These discursive strategies influence Indonesian consumers' social cognition by reinforcing the belief that Japanese vehicles represent durability, innovation, and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the advertisements reflect broader socio-cultural contexts in which global branding interacts with local expectations and aspirations. This study highlights how advertising discourse functions not only as a marketing tool but also as a tool for shaping cultural ideology and consumer identity in contemporary Indonesian.

Keywords – *Advertisement, CDA, Japanese Automobile,*

Introduction

Advertising is a form of non-personal and indirect promotion intended to introduce and promote ideas, products, and services to the public, carried out by sponsors who finance the communication process (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Advertising is also an effective marketing strategy used as a medium of communication between companies and consumers (Ambar, 2013). Advertisements are designed and developed as attractively as possible to capture the attention of potential consumers and are creatively constructed to generate unique and innovative ideas (Limbong & Winarni, 2017). In this context, advertisements contain messages directed toward target audiences in order to persuade them about specific products and services. In addition, advertisements aim to attract attention, influence, persuade, and encourage the public to use promoted products. Therefore, advertising functions as a form of communication that can guide public perception and behavior (Astuti, 2017). Effective advertisements typically include persuasive expressions or invitations that encourage audiences to take actions desired by advertisers. Furthermore, advertisements serve to increase knowledge and provide information to society (Sri, 2013). The delivery of advertising messages is crucial, as advertisers generally employ both visual and verbal cues to communicate effectively (Candra, 2019). The primary objectives of advertising include persuading consumers, introducing products, increasing consumer awareness, influencing public opinion, and encouraging audiences to think and act according to the intentions of

advertisers (Rossiter & Percy, 1997). Additionally, advertisements help the public recognize specific products and services more clearly.

Several previous studies have examined advertising using Critical Discourse Analysis approaches. A study entitled "*Mana" Tau: Indian Royal Café* analysed advertising discourse and found that the text structures frequently emphasized particular identity constructions such as millennial identity and Indian cultural elements. Consumer lifestyle representation became a basis for advertisers to introduce alternative food choices different from common preferences (Susanti et al., 2019). Another study entitled *Critical Discourse Analysis of the LINE Short Film Advertisement Version "Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?"* showed that advertisements contain various intentionally constructed discourses, including nostalgia discourse through the use of elements from the film *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002). In this advertisement, nostalgia was commodified as a strategy to increase sales, although it ultimately served broader capitalist economic interests (Saputra, 2019). Another relevant study entitled *Critical Discourse Analysis of Energen Advertisement Using Van Dijk's Theory* demonstrated that the Energen advertisement functioned not only as a promotional tool but also as a medium for constructing health-related ideology in society. Through narrative strategies, persuasive language, and strong visual imagery, the advertisement influenced consumer perceptions and behavior (Dea Mita et al., 2024).

Through the effective formulation and arrangement of words and sentences, advertisements are closely related to the ideological messages conveyed by advertisers (Susanti et al., 2019). Changes in public ideology through the discourse of Japanese automobile advertisements can be understood through processes of social cognition and social context that influence consumers in Indonesia. Discourse is not only understood as a system of language but also as *parole*, reflecting its practical use in social communication (Juliantari, 2017). Public ideology is influenced by social contexts such as product quality, pricing, and technological innovation offered by Japanese automobile manufacturers. Social cognition refers to public perceptions regarding Japanese automobile advertisements as representations of advanced and reliable vehicles. Indonesian society generally perceives Japanese automobiles as strong, durable, and technologically sophisticated products. This study focused in analysing advertisement based on CDA perspective such as microstructural, macrostructural, and superstructural analysis. These analysis aims to present the advertisement is not only for marketing strategy but also to change Indonesian ideology trough CDA perspective.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method with a naturalistic approach, meaning that the data were collected in their natural setting without researcher manipulation to provide an objective and realistic description of the phenomena. The research is conducted over a period of ten months, consisting of two months of initial observation, data collection from the third to the seventh month (which may be shortened if the data are considered sufficient and representative), and the final two months devoted to data analysis and the completion of targeted research outputs. The study focuses on a literature-based analysis of advertisements for the best-selling Japanese automobile brands in Indonesia, including Toyota, Honda, Daihatsu, Suzuki, Mitsubishi, Mazda, and Nissan. Primary data are obtained through the classification of these automobile advertisements, while secondary data are collected through observations and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Data collection techniques include observation using recording and note-taking methods. The data are analyzed descriptively using a qualitative approach, supported by relevant theoretical frameworks as analytical tools.

The results are presented using both formal methods (such as symbols, signs, and diagrams) and informal methods (through descriptive explanations using words, sentences, and technical terms) to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of the analysis.

Finding and Discussion

Based on the analysis of Japanese automobile advertisements broadcast in Indonesia, the findings reveal the presence of textual elements, social context, and social cognition that construct meaning and influence consumer ideology. These advertisements function not only as promotional media but also as instruments for shaping public image, values, and trust toward automotive products. Through persuasive language, modern visual representations, and creative message construction, the advertisements reinforce the perception that Japanese cars are associated with quality, reliability, prestige, and social status. Overall, the analysis shows that Japanese automobile advertisements convey not only product promotion but also ideological messages that shape consumers' perceptions and consumption behavior in Indonesian society. The supporting social context strengthens the dominance of Japanese cars in the Indonesian market, while social cognition positions advertising as a medium for constructing ideology related to prestige, quality, and status.

Data 1



Figure 1. Suzuki Ignis

The advertisement of the Suzuki Ignis presents a strong representation of urban mobility identity through the integration of minimalist visual composition, modern color selection, and directional graphic structure that emphasizes flexibility and contemporary lifestyle compatibility. At the microstructural level, the advertisement uses dominant blue tones combined with clean geometric framing that construct meanings related to reliability, technological awareness, and youthful dynamism. Blue as a primary visual element function symbolically to represent trust, intelligence, and modern professionalism, which supports the positioning of the Suzuki Ignis as a practical yet stylish urban vehicle. The visual placement of the vehicle within a structured and futuristic graphic environment strengthens the impression

that the Suzuki Ignis is designed for city-based mobility and efficient daily transportation. The limited use of textual explanation shifts communicative emphasis toward visual persuasion, allowing the advertisement to highlight identity-based meaning rather than technical specifications. This strategy suggests that the Suzuki Ignis is marketed not only as a functional city car but also as a lifestyle-oriented product targeted at modern and active urban consumers. At the macrostructural level, the central theme of the advertisement reflects the construction of the Suzuki Ignis as a compact crossover vehicle that supports flexible and efficient urban mobility. The advertisement represents the vehicle as suitable for young professionals and modern city users who prioritize practicality, manoeuvrability, and contemporary design in their daily transportation choices. Through the use of clean visual space and directional composition, the advertisement communicates the idea that the Suzuki Ignis enables independence, mobility freedom, and adaptability within urban environments. In this way, the vehicle is positioned not only as a transportation tool but also as a symbolic representation of modern lifestyle identity and personal mobility confidence. The thematic emphasis on simplicity and clarity further reflects Suzuki's branding strategy to present the Ignis as accessible, efficient, and stylistically distinctive within the compact urban vehicle segment.

At the superstructural level, the advertisement follows a structured persuasive organization that begins with visually dominant geometric framing designed to capture attention and create a futuristic atmosphere. The central placement of the Suzuki Ignis establishes the vehicle as the primary communicative focus, while the surrounding visual gradients guide viewer interpretation toward themes of movement, innovation, and modern urban living. The minimalist layout reduces informational complexity and allows symbolic visual meaning to function as the main persuasive mechanism. This structured composition supports the interpretation of the Suzuki Ignis as a vehicle aligned with contemporary urban mobility needs and evolving consumer lifestyles. Overall, the advertisement demonstrates how visual symbolism, spatial arrangement, and color strategy work together to construct meanings related to practicality, innovation, and youthful urban identity, thereby reinforcing the positioning of the Suzuki Ignis as a reliable and stylish city-oriented vehicle within the Indonesian automotive market

Data 2



Figure 2: Honda BRV Advertisement

The advertisement of the Honda BR-V titled “*All New BR-V: Driving Redefined*” presents a persuasive representation of a modern family vehicle through the integration of textual elements, visual composition, and symbolic meaning. Based on the microstructural level of analysis, the advertisement employs concise and impactful lexical choices such as “*All New*” and “*Driving Redefined*,” which emphasize innovation and transformation. These expressions construct the perception that the vehicle represents a new standard of driving experience rather than merely a product update. The use of uppercase typography strengthens the impression of confidence and technological advancement. In addition, the visual placement of the vehicle at the center of the composition highlights its dominance as the primary focus of the message. Supporting background images depicting family interaction, a child sleeping comfortably inside the car, outdoor activities, and urban landscapes reinforce associations with safety, comfort, mobility, and modern lifestyle identity. The contrast between the dark background and illuminated visual panels further enhances the impression of elegance, exclusivity, and sophistication.

At the macrostructural level, the advertisement conveys the broader theme of redefining driving as part of a modern lifestyle experience. The vehicle is represented not only as a transportation tool but also as a symbol of family security, urban mobility, and social progress. The inclusion of family-oriented imagery suggests that the vehicle supports responsible parenting and emotional protection, while the urban background signifies professional success and participation in contemporary metropolitan life. Through this thematic construction, the advertisement positions the vehicle as a representation of both functional and symbolic value that aligns with the aspirations of middle-class consumers in Indonesia.

At the superstructural level, the organization of the advertisement follows a systematic persuasive structure consisting of a headline, central product visualization, supporting lifestyle imagery, and a closing tagline. The headline “*All New BR-V*” functions as an attention-grabbing element that highlights product innovation. The central placement of the vehicle visually reinforces its importance as the solution offered to consumers’ mobility needs. Supporting lifestyle images create a narrative context that connects the vehicle with family wellbeing, active living, and urban sophistication. Finally, the tagline “*Driving Redefined*” serves as a concluding interpretive statement that frames the overall meaning of the advertisement as a transformation of driving experience rather than a simple product promotion. Overall, the advertisement demonstrates how textual elements, visual representation, and schematic organization work together to construct ideological meanings related to comfort, reliability, modernity, and social status. Through these discourse strategies, the advertisement contributes to shaping consumer perceptions of Japanese automobiles as symbols of quality and lifestyle advancement within Indonesian society.

Data 3



Figure 3: Innova Zenix Advertisement

The advertisement of the Toyota Innova Zenix presents a strong visual emphasis on technological sophistication and modern lifestyle transformation through the integration of layered visual composition, reflective framing effects, and minimalist textual representation. At the microstructural level, the advertisement uses overlapping visual panels and reflective graphic elements that create a futuristic and dynamic impression. These visual techniques symbolize movement, innovation, and transition from conventional mobility toward a more advanced driving experience. The dominance of grey tones in the visual composition plays an important communicative role, as grey is commonly associated with modernity, technological refinement, stability, and premium quality. This color choice strengthens the representation of the vehicle as a sophisticated and reliable product designed for contemporary consumers. Although textual elements appear limited and stylized, their placement contributes to the perception of innovation and exclusivity, reinforcing the technological identity of the vehicle. From the macrostructural perspective, the advertisement conveys the broader theme of modernization and transformation in family mobility within contemporary Indonesian society. The Toyota Innova Zenix is represented not only as a multipurpose vehicle but also as a symbol of progress and technological advancement aligned with current lifestyle demands. The layered visual structure suggests flexibility and adaptability, reflecting the expectations of modern middle-class consumers who require vehicles capable of supporting both family and professional activities. Through this thematic construction, the advertisement positions the vehicle as a representation of functional reliability combined with symbolic social advancement. The emphasis on visual abstraction rather than technical explanation indicates that the advertisement prioritizes emotional engagement and identity formation over purely informational promotion.

At the superstructural level, the advertisement follows a persuasive schematic organization that begins with visually dominant abstract framing designed to capture attention and stimulate curiosity. This opening visual arrangement encourages viewers to interpret the advertisement as representing innovation even before fully identifying the product. The gradual introduction of product imagery within the layered structure reinforces the association between the vehicle and technological progress. Supporting graphical elements function as narrative components that connect the vehicle with modern environments and contemporary lifestyles. The limited use of textual explanation allows visual symbolism to guide interpretation more strongly, directing viewers toward understanding the vehicle as a representation of modern mobility and social prestige. Overall, the advertisement demonstrates how visual composition, symbolic use of grey tones, and structured layout contribute to constructing meanings related to innovation,

reliability, and modern family mobility, thereby strengthening the ideological positioning of Japanese automobiles as technologically advanced and socially desirable within Indonesian society.

Data 4.



Figure 4 : Daihatsu Terios Advertisement

The advertisement of the All-New Daihatsu Terios presents a strong representation of adventure, strength, and personal identity through both visual and textual elements. The slogan “Terios is My DNA, Daily New Adventure” suggests that the vehicle is not only a means of transportation but also part of the driver’s lifestyle and personality. The expression “My DNA” symbolically constructs the car as something inherent and essential to the user’s character, while “Daily New Adventure” emphasizes exploration, excitement, and continuous movement. This linguistic strategy creates an emotional connection between the product and potential consumers by positioning the car as a companion for everyday journeys and challenges. Visually, the advertisement displays the vehicle in a natural landscape with mountains and open terrain in the background. This setting reinforces the image of the Terios as a strong and reliable sport utility vehicle (SUV) capable of handling various road conditions. The natural environment symbolizes freedom, endurance, and outdoor exploration, which supports the ideological message that the vehicle is designed for active and adventurous lifestyles. The white color of the car further suggests elegance, modernity, and reliability, strengthening its appeal to middle-class urban consumers who value both functionality and style. From the perspective of microstructure, the advertisement uses persuasive lexical choices such as *DNA*, *daily*, and *adventure* to construct a narrative of personal identity and excitement. These words create a sense of emotional attachment and continuity between the consumer and the vehicle.

From the macrostructural perspective, the main theme of the advertisement highlights adventure, durability, flexibility, and lifestyle mobility as central values promoted by the brand. The slogan “*Terios is My DNA, Daily New Adventure*” constructs the vehicle not only as a transportation tool but also as a representation of personal identity and everyday exploration.

The use of a mountainous natural landscape further strengthens the macro-theme of environmental adaptability and toughness, positioning the Daihatsu Terios as a reliable sport utility vehicle capable of supporting both urban activities and outdoor journeys. This thematic structure reflects the broader discourse that Japanese vehicles are designed to meet diverse mobility needs while maintaining durability and efficiency.

Meanwhile, in terms of the superstructure, the advertisement follows a systematic persuasive pattern consisting of three main stages. First, the dominant visual presentation of the vehicle attracts audience attention and establishes product prominence. Second, the slogan reinforces identity construction by linking the vehicle with personal lifestyle values through the expression “*My DNA*.” Third, the environmental background strengthens the adventurous image by suggesting terrain capability and freedom of movement. This structured organization guides viewers to interpret the vehicle as a symbol of strength, independence, and exploration. Overall, the advertisement constructs the All New Daihatsu Terios as a vehicle that represents reliability, confidence, and an adventurous spirit. Through the combination of landscape imagery and persuasive linguistic strategies, the advertisement shapes consumer perception that the Terios is suitable for individuals who seek both functional mobility and lifestyle expression in their daily activities. This discourse also reflects the broader ideological positioning of Japanese automobile brands in Indonesia as technologically capable, durable, and closely aligned with modern mobility aspirations and active lifestyles.

Conclusions

Based on the Critical Discourse Analysis of the advertisements for the Honda BR-V, Toyota Innova Zenix, Suzuki Ignis, and Daihatsu Terios, it can be concluded that Japanese automobile advertising in Indonesia constructs meanings that extend beyond product promotion toward shaping consumer ideology and lifestyle identity. At the microstructural level, the advertisements employ persuasive slogans, modern typography, and symbolic visual elements such as family scenes, urban environments, adventurous natural landscapes, and dynamic compositions to emphasize innovation, comfort, reliability, practicality, and mobility flexibility. In particular, the Daihatsu Terios advertisement strengthens the discourse of exploration and personal identity through expressions such as “*Terios is My DNA, Daily New Adventure*,” which positions the vehicle as an extension of the driver’s character and everyday mobility experience. At the macrostructural level, the vehicles are represented as symbols of modern mobility, technological advancement, social aspiration, and active lifestyle orientation tailored to different consumer segments, including family-oriented users, urban professionals, young city drivers, and adventure-seeking individuals who value versatility across urban and non-urban terrains. At the superstructural level, the advertisements consistently follow persuasive narrative patterns through attention-grabbing headlines, dominant product visualization, supportive lifestyle imagery, and concise taglines that guide audience interpretation toward meanings of prestige, progress, independence, and convenience. Overall, these advertisements collectively reinforce the perception of Japanese automobiles as modern, reliable, technologically advanced, and socially desirable products, while simultaneously constructing ideological associations between vehicle ownership, lifestyle identity, and mobility aspirations, thereby strengthening the symbolic dominance of Japanese automotive brands in the Indonesian market.

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