

## SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS OF MCDONALDS VIDEO ADVERTISEMENT ON YOUTUBE

Ayu Putu Lestari<sup>1</sup>, Desak Putu Eka Pratiwi<sup>2</sup>

Fakultas Bahasa Asing, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

Alamat Email: [ayuputulestari36@gmail.com](mailto:ayuputulestari36@gmail.com), [desakekapratiwi@unmas.ac.id](mailto:desakekapratiwi@unmas.ac.id)

**Abstract:** This research uses semiotic analysis to find the meaning behind McDonald's video advertisements. Using Barthes' semiotic theory and Saussure's concept of signifier and signified, this research analyzes the verbal and visual signs in McDonald's advertisements. This research was conducted using the observation method to gain detailed information. The method applied in the analysis of this research is descriptive qualitative method. This analysis uses the theory presented by Saussure (1983:65) to analyze and describe verbal and visual signs, and Barthes' theory (1967) to analyze the meaning of verbal and visual signs in the advertisement. From the results of the research, several verbal and visual signs were found. In the advertisement contains 9 verbal signs and 25 visual signs. Visual signs are the most frequent signs found in the McDonald's video advertisements. This research shows how these signs play a role in McDonald's branding. Verbal signs provide a direct message, while visual signs indirectly influence emotions and perceptions, therefore powering consumer engagement and loyalty to the brand.

*Key Words:* verbal sign, visual sign, McDonald's, advertisement.

### Introduction

In today's era, communication is an essential part of human life. Communication serves to convey information, build relationships, and influence perceptions. However, many people do not realize that underlying the words that are spoken or written, there are signs that are conveyed to the audience. According to Barthes (1967), the term "semiotic" encompasses any system of signs, whether they are images, musical sounds, gestures, objects, or other forms, and the intricate connections among these, which together constitute the content of ritual or public entertainment. Signs can be easily found in various parts of the world, even the smallest things contain their own signs and meanings. Saussure (1959) defined a sign as "the composition of a signifier and signified.". The signifier is the sign's physical form; it is what we see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. Meanwhile, the signified is the mental concept that the signifier refers to; it is the meaning or idea evoked in the interpreter's mind. Signifier and signified can be combined into a sign (Saussure, 2011). Communication can be divided into two parts, verbal and visual communication. Verbal communication involves using words to convey a

message and can be spoken or written. Meanwhile, visual communication involves the use of gestures other than words to convey a message. This includes facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, tone of voice, and other body language.

Dyer (2008 : 2) asserts that “advertising means drawing attention to something, or notifying or informing somebody of something”. In this modern era, many companies use advertising to attract potential customers. With various creative strategies, they try to attract attention and influence consumers' decisions to choose their products or services.

Semiotics can be used as an important tool that helps viewers understand what is contained in a statement and how to interpret the news, making it more meaningful (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). One of the company that uses advertising to attract customers is McDonald's, which is famous worldwide as a fast-food restaurant. The platform's engaging video content effectively captures viewers' attention, making the ads both memorable and influential. As a result, the semiotics of advertisements on YouTube can be observed in the form of verbal signs and visual signs.

Several semiotic studies have been conducted, contributing to a deeper understanding of the topic. The first article is the analysis of verbal and visual signs of “AQUA Life: Care for Nature, Nature Cares for You” conducted by (Trinadi, Pratiwi, & Skolastika, 2022). The second article is entitled Discovering Hidden Messages in Covid-19 Advertisement “Stay Home Save Lives” by (Trisnayanti, Pratiwi, Candra, 2021). The third article was conducted by (Wirasana, Pratiwi, & Juniarta, 2021) with entitled “Uncovering Implied Messages in Burger King Advertisement: A Semiotic Analysis”). The fourth article is entitled “The Analysis of Semiotic Signs on Forest Fires’ Posters” by (Pratiwi, Widiadnya, Sari, 2021). The fifth article entitled “Verbal and Non-verbal Signs of “Scream” Movie Posters” by (Handayani, Pratiwi, & Putri, 2022).

The similarities the previous study with this study was analyzing the verbal and visual signs found in the advertisement. In additions, the difference is the previous study was using posters as the data source meanwhile in this

study is using video advertisement. Furthermore, the previous study was using theory of color proposed by Cerrato (2012) and (Wierzbicka, 1996) but in this study is does not using theory of color.

In this research, the author aims to analyze McDonalds Video Advertisement and will find Verbal and Visual signs in the advertisement. Within the field of communication science, semiotic analysis is a distinctive method used to examine advertisements. It is important to analyze because it provides insights into the company's marketing strategies and how they effectively communicate with their target audience. Understanding these advertisements helps reveal how McDonald's builds brand loyalty, adapts to cultural trends, and differentiates itself from competitors.

### **Material and Method**

The material in this research is a McDonald's video advertisement titled *"New & Improved McD Beef Burgers"* uploaded on the YouTube platform. This video was selected because it presents various elements of verbal and visual communication that are interesting to be analyzed semiotically. The verbal signs analyzed include words or phrases that appear in the advertisement, such as slogans or product names. Meanwhile, the visual signs include product images, visual effects such as steam and light reflections, the McDonald's logo, and the halal certification label. All of these elements serve as the primary data to uncover both explicit (denotative) and implicit (connotative) meanings within the advertisement.

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a semiotic analysis approach. The data were collected through observation by closely examining the content of the McDonald's video advertisement as the object of the study. In analyzing the identified signs, the researcher applies Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to identify the relationship between the signifier and the signified, as well as Roland Barthes' theory to reveal the denotative and connotative meanings of each sign, both verbal and visual. Through this approach, the researcher is able to interpret the messages conveyed in the advertisement in a more in-depth and interpretative manner.

## Finding

This part presents the analysis of verbal and visual signs found in the McDonald's video advertisement entitled "*New & Improved McD Beef Burgers*". This research found 4 verbal signs and 12 visual signs in the McDonald's video advertisement "*New & Improved McD Beef Burgers*". The verbal signs include phrases such as "The Difference," "Juicily Grilled," "Taste the Change," and product names like "Big Mac™," "Double Cheeseburger," and "Spicy Double Beef with Cheese." The visual signs consist of images of burgers, floating buns, steam and oil effects, the McDonald's logo, and the "Halal Approved" label, which emphasize quality, freshness, and brand identity.

## Discussion

The analysis of the meaning from the verbal and visual signs in the McDonalds advertisement will be presented as follows:

### "The Analysis of McDonalds Video "*New & Improved McD Beef Burgers*"



**Figure 1 (0:01)**

The first scene of the advertisement uses a beef burger. The verbal sign in this advertisement begins with a sentence "*The Difference*". This phrase emphasizes the noticeable improvement or unique quality of McDonald's beef burgers. It suggests that the product stands out from competitors or previous versions of the burger.

The first visual sign in this image is "Picture of a burger" which shows an image of a partially assembled burger with visible layers, including cheese, pickles, ketchup and onions, on top of a beef patty. This visual connotes the



freshness and quality of the ingredients used in the burger. the presence of multiple layers (cheese, bread, pickles, ketchup) connotes richness and satisfaction, implying that the burger is filling and satisfying. This visual arrangement conveys that the burger is not only delicious, but also made with high-quality ingredients.

The second visual sign is the "Buns floating in the air" displayed in the air, about to be placed on top of the burger, which shows the freshness and the process of making the burger. This creates a sense of enthusiasm and excitement, emphasizing that the burger has just been made.

The third visual sign is the "McDonald's Logo" with the iconic McDonald's logo at the bottom right corner signifying the brand identity. This visual shows that McDonald's is confident in its superiority, emphasizing that their burgers are the "difference" in terms of quality and taste. The logo is immediately recognizable and associated with a global fast-food giant known for its consistent quality and taste.

The fourth visual sign is the "Disahkan Halal (Halal Approved)" label which indicates that the burger is halal certified, which is important for Muslim consumers who follow food laws. This broadens the appeal of the ad to include this demographic group, ensuring that the product meets their nutritional needs.



**Figure 2 (0:08-0:09)**

The image highlights McDonald's beef burgers with the prominent phrase "Juicily Grilled," emphasizing the juicy, flavorful quality of the patties. The visuals glossy meat, caramelized texture, steam, and sizzle effects enhance the message of

freshness and taste, aiming to attract consumers by showcasing a delicious and satisfying burger experience.

The first visual sign in this picture is the “Beef Patties” which shows close-ups of grilled beef patties. The patties appear moist and have a slightly charred, caramelized exterior, indicating they are cooked to enhance flavor.

The second visual sign is the “Steam and Oil Sizzle” with the presence of steam and the glistening surface of the patties indicate that they are hot and freshly cooked. This adds to the sensory appeal, suggesting that the burgers are not only tasty but also freshly prepared.

The third is the “McDonald’s Logo” with the iconic McDonald's logo at the bottom right corner signifying the brand identity, assuring viewers of the product's source. This visual shows that McDonald's is confident in its superiority, emphasizing that their burgers are the " difference" in terms of quality and taste.

The fourth is the "Disahkan Halal (Halal Approved)" Label indicates that the burger is halal-certified, which is important for Muslim consumers who follow dietary laws. It broadens the advertisement's appeal to include this demographic, ensuring that the product meets their nutritional requirement



**Figure 3 (0:25-0:26)**

The combination of verbal and non-verbal elements in the image emphasizes the enhanced flavor of McDonald's beef burgers. The main verbal sign, “Taste the Change” invites customers to try the improved burgers, suggesting better taste and quality. Other verbal signs include “Big Mac™” representing the iconic double-layered burger, “Double Cheeseburger”

highlighting a classic with double patties and cheese, and “Spicy Double Beef with Cheese,” appealing to those who enjoy a spicy option.

The first visual sign is the “Visual of the Burger” that shows three burgers, the Big Mac™, the Double Cheeseburger, and the Spicy Double Beef with Cheese, presented side by side. Each burger looks appetizing, with fresh ingredients and a neat assembly.

The second visual sign is the “McDonald's Logo”. The McDonald's logo in the bottom right corner signifies the brand identity, assuring viewers of the product's source. It leverages McDonald's strong reputation and global recognition, ensuring customers of the product's quality and consistency.

The third visual sign is the "Disahkan Halal (Halal Approved)" Label indicates that the product is certified halal, reassuring Muslim consumers that the food complies with their dietary laws, thus broadening the market appeal.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that each McDonald's video advertisement contains verbal and nonverbal signs. In the advertisement contained 4 verbal and 12 nonverbal signs. Nonverbal sign is the most sign that is found in the video advertisement. By combining these visual strategies, McDonald's advertisements effectively communicate their products' quality, freshness, and appeal. The vibrant colors and delicious images stimulate the viewer's senses, while the clean presentation and strategic use of lighting enhance the overall attractiveness of the food. These elements work together to create a compelling and persuasive advertisement that attracts and informs potential customers, ultimately driving sales and brand loyalty.

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