

The Representation of Youth in *Pocari Sweat*

Television Advertisements

By:

HasahHasanah

English Language and Literature Program

(E-mail: sha_noveriza@yahoo.com / Mobile: 085720081358)

Abstract

This study entitled *The Representation of Youth in Pocari Sweat Television Advertisements*. This study aims to reveal the representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements and the ideologies behind that representation. This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The theory used in this study is the orders of signification proposed by Barthes (1957). The findings of this study show that youth is represented through the use of the visual elements of television advertisement (actors or actresses, settings, properties, frame sizes, camera angle, color saturation, and video editing) which show the positive characteristics of youth. In terms of ideologies, this study found three ideologies behind the representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements: feminism, nationalism, and commercialism. Feminism is viewed from the use of more actresses than actors; nationalism is reflected from the use of actors and actresses who have Japanese oriental faces; and commercialism is seen from the use of actors and actresses who have white or bright skin, and the representation of youth who has good characteristics in this life. From those three ideologies, commercialism is the dominant ideology found in that representation.

Keywords: *Representation, Youth, Advertisements, and Ideologies.*

There are many advertisements nowadays. It can be seen or heard in the television, radio, the Internet, and print media. The word 'advertisement' comes from the Latin verb 'advertere' meaning 'to turn towards'. Goddard (1998) defines advertisement as a text which attempts to attract people's attention. Meanwhile, according to Oxford Dictionaries (2013), advertisement is a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product, service, or event or publicizing a job vacancy. It can be inferred from those definitions that advertisement is made to attract people's attention by promoting and publicizing something.

Advertisement actually has other functions besides promoting and publicizing. According to Schwartz and Sagiv (1995, cited in Branchik and Chowdhury, 2012), advertisement expresses societal values or desirable goals that serve as guiding principles in the society. In addition, Hynes and Janson (2007, p. 322) also says that "advertisement must be considered to be 'relics' thriving on what is going on in

society". From those statements, it indicates that advertisement provides societal values obtained from relics and those societal values have become the guidelines in society.

The societal values contained in advertisement can construct ideologies. An ideology is a logical and relatively fixed set of beliefs or values (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Thus, ideology reflects the common beliefs or values of society.

According to Correa (2011), advertisement is a vehicle for ideologies which reflect ideas, beliefs and opinions of the society. Advertisement also invites people to participate in ideological ways of considering themselves and the world (Williamson, 1978, cited in Najafian, 2011). Those statements show that advertisement also functions as the media to convey ideologies to the society.

Ideologies usually can be conveyed through representation in the advertisement. Representation is the construction of aspects of reality in any medium (Chandler, 2002). Representation may reflect ideologies because it constructs the

aspects of reality which in turn will be the set of beliefs or values in the society. The aspects of reality can involve people, objects, events, cultural identities, and other abstract concepts.

Youth is one of the subjects who is usually represented in advertisement. Youth is represented in advertisement because youth is sometimes an interesting and complicated group in the society. It is also sometimes an interesting and complicated period in people's lives.

There are also other reasons why youth is interesting to be represented in advertisement. Those reasons are related to some issues and statements about youth, for instance, youth is the future of their countries development (Shafik, 2010), youth often reports that they are not given opportunities to participate in the activities that affect their lives (Emry, 2010), and youth is a group which face many challenges such as youth unemployment and other social problems (Baer, 2009).

Research about the representation of youth in advertisement has been conducted by

some researchers, for instance, Widaningsih (2011) discusses how the oppression against youth is represented in *A Mild* television advertisements and Martiana (2012) discusses how the spirit of youth is represented in *A Mild* television advertisements.

The research above analyzed the representation of youth in two *A Mild* television advertisements. It does not expand the numbers of advertisement's versions which become the object of investigation. The research also analyzed the representation of youth in a cigarette advertisement. It does not analyze the representation of youth in other kinds of advertisement. In addition, the research just analyzed the representation of youth in that advertisement without revealing the ideologies behind that representation.

Based on the matters above, this study aims to analyze more about the representation of youth in the television advertisement by investigating another kind of advertisement with expanded numbers of advertisement's versions

and by revealing the ideologies behind the representation.

Pocari Sweat is one of the brand names for packed isotonic drink. A brand is a system of signs and symbols which engages the consumers in a symbolic process that contributes real value to a product offered (Ranjan, 2010). A brand is made to influence the consumers so that they will buy the product. In relation to this brand, there are many *Pocari Sweat* advertisements found in electronic and mass media. One of the concepts represented in *Pocari Sweat* advertisements is youth.

It appears interesting to analyze how youth is represented in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements because those advertisements are usually represented with attractive and trendy ways. It also uses young models as the actors or actresses in the advertisements, for example, *Pocari Sweat* television advertisement (version: *Build the Dream*) uses the members of JKT48 as the actresses in that advertisement. JKT48 is a girl band which consists of young people. In that

advertisement, the members of JKT48 become the actresses who represent youth in that advertisement.

The representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements was analyzed through the visual elements found in those advertisements. There are some visual elements of television advertisements: actor, setting, property, product offered, frame size, camera angle, color saturation and video editing (Dyer, 1996; Selby and Coedery, 1995). However, the visual elements analyzed in this study are actor, setting, property, frame size, camera angle, color saturation and video editing. Those visual elements were analyzed because they belong to the visual signs in Semiotics. Moreover, this study revealed the ideologies behind that representation.

The theoretical foundation applied in this study is a semiotic theory about the orders of signification proposed by Barthes (1957). According to Barthes (1957), there are three levels of representation or three orders of signification. The first order of

signification is denotation consisting of a signifier and a signified, the second order of signification is connotation consisting of a signifier and an additional signified attached to it, and the third order of signification is a myth or ideology

which is viewed as a combination of denotation and connotation. Below is the picture which shows Barthes' orders of signification:

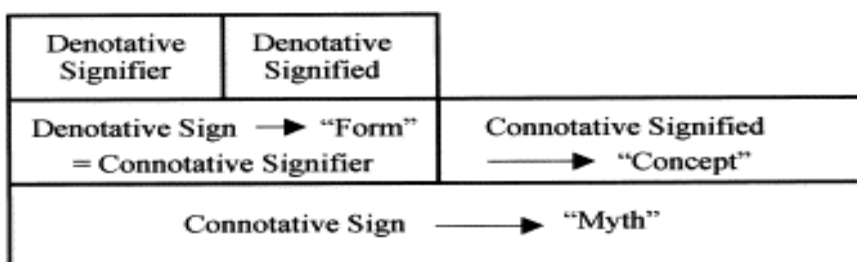


Figure 2.1 Barthes' orders of signification

Adopted from:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160738300000633>

Denotation refers to the literal or common meanings of a sign (Chandler, 2002). Meanwhile, Berger (1995, cited in Alozie, 2010) also states denotation as the clear and common sense meaning attached to an object. In that definition, he makes reference to the type of meaning commonly known to laymen.

Connotation refers to personal and socio-cultural interpretation of the sign (Chandler, 2002). Potter (1996, cited in Alozie, 2010) also explains that connotation

admits subjective interpretations and meanings joined to an object. Those definitions show that connotation refers to the meaning which is interpreted differently by people.

In addition, Sukyadi (2011) also states something related to denotation and connotation. There are many different interpretations in the society, so if denotative meanings cannot be accepted by all societies, they need connotative meanings to express their individual subjectivities (Sukyadi, 2011).

In terms of myth, Chandler (2002) mentions that myths are extended metaphors within culture that exists in the society. People usually use metaphors to make sense their experiences. For instance, people sometimes say that “the mind is an ocean”. They say it because the mind and an ocean have the same characteristics. The wide ocean is same as people’s minds which can think and understand something widely. Like metaphors, myths are also used to make sense people’s experiences.

According to Fiske (1990), there are two categories of myths: primitive myths and sophisticated myths. Some examples of primitive myths are myths about life and death, men and gods, good and evil. Meanwhile, some examples of sophisticated myths are myths about masculinity and femininity.

For Barthes, myths are the way of thinking, conceptualizing, and understanding something in the society based on culture (Fiske, 1990). Barthes (1957) believes that myth can function as the dominant ideology of the time.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The data were in the form of videos of *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements. There were seven *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements selected in this study. The versions of those advertisements were “*Build the Dream*”, “*Love Letter*”, “*Movie*”, “*Presentation*”, “*Riding Bicycle Part 1*”, “*Riding Bicycle Part 2*”, and “*Jogging*”. Those advertisements were downloaded from www.youtube.com. In terms of data analysis, those advertisements were transformed into the scenes containing the issue of how youth is represented in those advertisements. There were 42 scenes selected from those advertisements. Those scenes were analyzed based on the visual elements of those scenes (actor or actress, setting, frame size, setting, property, frame size, camera angle, color saturation, and video editing) to reveal the representation of youth in those advertisements and the ideologies behind that representation.


FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Representation of Youth in *Pocari Sweat* Television Advertisements

Youth is represented through some ways in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements. Those ways are revealed from the analyses

of the visual elements of television advertisement from each scene.

First, generally, youth is represented through the use of young actors and actresses who have Japanese oriental faces and white or bright skin. That signification derives from the analysis of actors and actresses in those advertisements, for example:

Actor and Actress		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
-Japanese oriental faces -White or bright skin	-Japanese oriental faces show that the actresses are the Japanese or have Japanese descent. -White or bright skin signifies beauty and healthiness.	-Japanese oriental faces are the symbol of Japan. -Beautiful and healthy youth is the youth who has white or bright skin. In terms of the product, the youth who drinks <i>Pocari Sweat</i> will be beautiful and healthy.


Japanese oriental faces possessed by the actors and actresses may be related to the product offered by that advertisement. *Pocari Sweat* is an isotonic drink which comes from Japan, so the advertiser uses the actors and actresses who have Japanese oriental faces as the symbol that this product is a Japanese product.

Pocari Sweat is represented as a good product which can raise the spirit, hope, and happiness, lose the nervousness and sadness, and also create or strengthen a friendship. Thus, the symbol and that representation help the advertiser to build the image that the Japanese product especially *Pocari Sweat* is good. That idea is supported by the activities undertaken by the actors and actresses in the advertisements.

The actors and actresses (youth) feel happy, spirited, hopeful, and calm after drinking *Pocari Sweat*.

Meanwhile, white or bright skin owned by the actors and actresses signifies beauty and healthiness (Barnard, 2006). Thus, the use of actors or actresses who have white or bright skin are in line with the aim of advertisement which intends to build an image that anyone who drinks *Pocari Sweat* will be handsome or beautiful and healthy.

Second, youth is represented through the use of light blue and white as the dominant colors found in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements. Those colors are found in the clothes of actors and actresses, and also properties and background settings of the advertisements. For example:

Light Blue and White as the Dominant Colors		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
<p>-Light blue</p> <p>-White</p>	<p>-Light blue signifies peace, spiritually calm, young, and sportiveness.</p> <p>-White signifies pureness, naivety, peace and goodness.</p>	<p>-Light blue indicates a suitable color for youth because it signifies some characters of youth, namely, calm, young and sportive.</p> <p>-White represents the youth who likes peace, acts as the way they are, and has morally some good characters.</p>

According to Wilfred (1962), light blue signifies peace, young, and sportiveness. Light blue also connotes calm (Kress and van Leuween, 2002). This color shows the positive characters of youth, namely calm and sportive. This color is also a suitable color for youth because it signifies young. Previous studies conducted by Widaningsih (2011) and Martiana (2012) also show that light blue is mostly found


in the advertisements to represent youth.

Next, white signifies pureness, naivety, peace and goodness (Wilfred, 1962). In addition, Gage (1999, cited in Kress and van Leuween, 2002) also mentions that white represents cheerfulness. Therefore, this color indicates the idea that youth is the group of young people who like peace, act as the way they are, and have morally good characters.

“Act as the way they are” here means that youth is happy by being themselves. Meanwhile, white is said as a color that signifies good characters of youth because white is a color of purity which reflects the positive characters. Those positive characters are the characters which are suitable with the societal values. Thus, the use of white as the dominant color in these advertisements can cover the positive significations of other colors in terms of representing the youth’s characters.

The use of white as the dominant color in these advertisements is also related to the drink offered by this advertisement. These advertisements use white as the symbol that the water contained in *Pocari Sweat* is pure and safe for the human bodies.

Third, youth is represented through the use of settings which signify different characteristics of youth. That signification derives from the analysis of settings in those advertisements, for example:

Setting		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
-Indoor setting (bedroom) -Outdoor setting (road)	-Indoor setting (bedroom) shows the youth who has a sensitive emotional feeling. -Outdoor setting represents the youth who likes doing a physical and challenging activity.	-Youth is a sensitive group who can feel other people’s emotions. -Youth is an active, brave, and sportive group in the society.

Indoor settings, such as school, office, and bedroom tend to represent youth as the group of people who have emotional feelings, such as love, nervousness, and sensitiveness. It is viewed from the activities undertaken by the youth, such as giving the love letter, delivering presentation in front of old people, and crying when watching a romantic movie.


According to González and Pinilla (2012), there are some psychological characteristics of youth: incompleteness (in the process of constructing an identity), transition (in transit between childhood and adulthood), vulnerability (risk-bearing), and danger (youth is prone to violence). Therefore, what youth feels in the advertisements is related to those characteristics.

Meanwhile, outdoor settings, such as beach and road tend to represent youth as the group of people who like doing physical and challenging activities. It is viewed from the background setting, such as high hill and the activities done by

the youth, such as riding bicycles and jogging.

The use of outdoor settings in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements also tend to represent the success of youth in overcoming their problems, for example, when the youth is successful in giving a love letter to someone, the youth gathers in the bridge to celebrate their success, when the youth is successful in entertaining their friend who is crying because of the romantic movie, the youth gathers in the garden to celebrate their happiness, and when the youth is successful in delivering the presentation in front of old people, the youth gathers outside the office to celebrate their success.


Fourth, youth is represented through the use of long shot and extreme long shot as the dominant frame sizes found in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements. That signification derives from the analysis of frame sizes in those advertisements, for example:

Frame Size		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
<p>-Long shot (taken from head to thigh)</p> <p>-Extreme long shot (taken from head to foot)</p>	<p>Long shot represents a clear description of the object with the public or environment.</p> <p>Extreme long shot represents a wide and tremendous impression of the object and its relation with the environment.</p>	<p>Long shot shows that youth is active, productive, and creative.</p> <p>Extreme long shot is used to emphasize that youth is active and sportive.</p>

Long shot and extreme long shot are used to show the physical appearances of youth, their actions, and the environments around the youth. The use of these shots indicates the idea that youth is an active, productive, sportive, and creative group in the society. The use of these shots also shows that youth is the group that should be respected because of their actions which can change the world.

Fifth, youth is represented through the use of low angle as the

dominant camera angle used in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements. That signification derives from the analysis of frame sizes in those advertisements, for example:


Camera Angle		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
Low angle (taken from the position below the object)	Low angle represents being dominated, controlled, and unauthorized.	Low angle is used to show a power difference between youth and other people in this life.

Low angle signifies being dominated, controlled, and unauthorized (Selby and Coedery (1995). However, in these advertisements, low angle is used to show a power difference between youth and other people.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), low angle shows a power difference between the represented participant and the interactive participant. In this case, the power difference between youth and other people are in the form of spending their lives. Youth is spending their lives by doing some

activities together with their friends, such as working, riding bicycles, watching a movie, and exercising. The ways of youth spend their lives make youth powerful because they appear to be really enjoying their lives by doing those activities.

Sixth, youth is represented through the use of warm color saturation (grey and red). That signification derives from the analysis of color saturation in those advertisements, for example:

Color Saturation		
		
First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
Warm color saturation (Grey and red)	Warm color saturation signifies optimism, hope, desire, and agitation	Warm color saturation shows that youth is optimistic, hopeful, and full of desire in their lives.

Warm color saturation (yellow, orange, red, and grey) signifies optimism, hope, desire, and agitation (Selby and Coedery, 1995). According to Mayo (2011), there are some characteristics of youth: bright and creative, optimist, good at sharing, global learner, active participant, question asker, and wanting to change the world. Therefore, warm color saturation is appropriate to represent youth because it is related to the characteristics mentioned before.

Lastly, youth is represented through the use of cut-video editing as the dominant video editing found in the advertisements. The use of this video editing is used to convince the

viewers that something represented in the advertisement is real and right.

It can convince the viewers that something represented in the advertisement is real and right because the viewers view the fast movements of scenes in the advertisements containing the stories about youth. Therefore, the viewers will focus on the youth and their stories represented in the advertisements. *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements represent the scenes containing the beautiful stories of youth, so that the use of this video editing shows youth as the group of people who have beautiful stories in their lives.

The Ideologies behind the Representation of Youth in *Pocari Sweat* Television Advertisements

Based on the findings of the representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements above, there are three ideologies found behind that representation: feminism, nationalism, and commercialism.

First, feminism is found in the representation of youth in *Pocari*

Sweat television advertisements. *Because* these advertisements use representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* more actresses than actors as the television advertisements because these representatives of youth in those advertisements use actors and actresses who advertisements. It is seen from the have white or bright skin. According to data about the number of youth in Barnard (2006), white or bright skin these advertisements. The young signifies beauty and healthiness. White or actresses used in these advertisements bright skin in these advertisements are used are 84.4 % from the total number of actresses and actors, while the young *Sweat* will be handsome or beautiful and actors used in these advertisements healthy as the actors and actresses are 15.8 % from the total number of represented in these advertisements. That actresses and actors.

Second, nationalism is found in the and actresses who have good postures, such representation of youth in *Pocari* as slim, tall, and athletic because a *Sweat* television advertisements handsome or beautiful and healthy person is because the advertisements use actors a person who has a good posture too. and actresses who have Japanese. Therefore, by building that image, the

oriental faces. The use of Japanese oriental faces is related to the origin of the product offered. *Pocari Sweat* is a product coming from Japan, so by the use of Japanese oriental faces, the advertiser intends to maintain the symbol of Japan in the advertisements. Because of the pride of the advertiser to Japan, the advertiser also seeks to build an image that the Japanese product is good by showing the superiorities of *Pocari Sweat* in the advertisements.

advertiser hopes that people will buy *Pocari Sweat*.

The representation of youth who has good characteristics in this life is also the attraction used by these advertisements to sell the product offered. The representation of youth who likes physical and challenging activities and the representation of youth who has great spirit, optimism, hope and desires in this life are in line with the product offered. *Pocari Sweat* is a kind of isotonic drink. One of the images which attempts to be built by *Pocari Sweat* advertisements is that people who drink *Pocari Sweat* will be spirited in doing anything in this life. Therefore, such representation helps the advertiser to sell the product too.

CONCLUSION

By using a semiotic analysis especially *the orders of signification* proposed by Barthes (1957), this study investigated the television advertisements. In this case, this study investigated how youth is represented in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements and the ideologies behind that representation.

From the ways of *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements represent youth, the writer infers that those advertisements tend to represent youth as the group of people who have positive characteristics, such as they have handsome or beautiful faces, they are calm, but they are active, energetic, and sportive, they are spirited in doing the activities in this life, they have their own ways to spend their lives, and they are optimistic, hopeful, and full of desire in this life.

Meanwhile, from the ideologies (feminism, nationalism, and commercialism) found in the representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements, the writer concludes that the dominant ideology in the representation of youth in *Pocari Sweat* television advertisements is commercialism because the main aim of making and publishing an advertisement is to attract people's attention, so that they will buy the product offered.

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