

**Semiotic Analysis of Mentos Advertisement**

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**Abstract**

*This study aims at analyzing the myth within the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement. The data of this study was taken from Mentos NG on the YouTube platform. The data were collected by documentation method with note-taking technique and analyzed by the qualitative method using the theory of Semiotic by Barthes (1972). The analysis is presented in an informal method. The results of this study show that both verbal and non-verbal signs have implied meaning to persuade and influence the audiences through visual illustration. The meaning comes from the relation between signifier and signified. This has determined that the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement concerned with sharing, caring, togetherness, happiness, and making friends with people in real life.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Advertisement is one form of special communication to fulfill the function of marketing. Ads can be found everywhere, from radio, print media, outdoor media in the form of billboards up in ads on various platforms such as television and youtube. Advertisement has an aim to approach the target audience to attract their attention. Advertisement doesn't just work to provide information to the public, but more than that must be able to persuade audiences to behave in such a way according to the marketing strategy with profit-making purposes. The core distinguishing feature of the advertising discourse is its function, as it always

persuades people to buy a certain product.

As Dyer (2009: 1) states that the main function of advertising is to introduce various consumer goods to the public and thus support a free market economy. However, this is clearly not its only role, over the years he has become increasingly involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes and has been less concerned with the communication of important information about goods and services. In this case, it can be said that advertising currently fulfills a function that traditionally meets art or religion. Some advertising critics have even suggested that advertising operates in the same way as myths in

primitive societies, providing people with simple stories and explanations in which values and ideals are conveyed and through which people can organize their thoughts and experiences and come to make sense of the world they live in.

Based on Dyer (2009: 91) in order to gain a better understanding of the role advertising plays in our society, we need to ask how advertising organizes and constructs reality, and meaning is produced in advertising discourse and why some such images are, or how they can be constructed. Dyer (2009: 154) argues that this is why it is important to be aware of not only the content, but also of the structure of signs in ads, the signification of the way signifier and signified process, the way meanings are exchanged, and the way they structure us into the ad and call upon us to create meaning.

Advertisement as a means of representation and meaning through the intervention of external codes which are located in society (Dyer, 2009, p. 102). The ad will use pictures, concepts, myths, etc. which already available in the culture. An ad uses objects which are signified and thought that already exist and then makes them signifiers of another structure (the ad) to produce new meanings. Its connotation process depends on our knowledge. It also works through the linguistic message—Barthes's third level of meaning in an ad. The meaning of the sign-in ad produced by the ad creator would be different from the audience. Caused the sign is arbitrary, there is a specific agreement between humans and the meaning of the sign. Semiotic is the study of sign and meaning maker and other systems of communication. Basically, semiotic is concerned with how humans interpret things around them. Based on the researcher's observations, the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement has the

social value of being able to remind the audience of the importance of this, such as sharing, caring, and communicating with others. Mentos, which can break the awkwardness when meeting new people, by simply give them Mentos. When people share Mentos with others, they care about giving others happiness. People nowadays have forgotten to connect with people and make friends. Mentos not only created an advertisement to introduce and promote their product but also Mentos conducted a social experiment in their ad to prove that it can be really interesting to talk to people around and make new connections by simply offer them Mentos candy.

Therefore, the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement can be seen in the form of a verbal sign or a non-verbal sign. Verbal signs are spoken verbal messages uttered by the actor or narrator, as well as verbal signs shown through written text.

Meanwhile, non-verbal messages are indicated by scenes, graphics, pictures, colors used, and other forms of non-verbal messages. These two forms of signs will give a specific impression to television viewers so that it is hoped that television viewers will become aware, interested, or even encourage them to buy certain products or services.

This study is conducted with the aim to analyze the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal sign-in "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement. The reason for conducting this study on this advertisement due to it contains lots of values and messages. Mentos advertisement reminds people as human beings and social creatures, how people could forget to not socialize each other. Mentos connects people to one another, also helps to break the ice in meeting someone new between strangers. "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement comes up with a brilliant idea, by giving a better

way to say hello. This advertisement has deeper messages that need to be interpreted in order to gain an understanding. Therefore, in conducting this study this used a Semiotic approach to answer the research problem. The theory applied is used to analyze the meaning of verbal and non-verbal signs found in the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement.

## METHOD AND THEORY

The data presented in this study were taken from the YouTube channel of Mentos NG titled "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement through the following link <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Vrh1kW9PJ38>. The verbal and non-verbal signs on this advertisement were analyzed in this study by the qualitative method of Semiotic theory by Barthes (1972). The writer analyzed the meaning of verbal and non-verbal signs used in the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement, then continued by the analysis of the myth. This study used the documentation method to retrieve the data and the note-taking technique was also applied. The data analysis is presented in an informal method.

In this section, the writer presented some previous studies that are related to this study. The first study review was taken from an article written by Suwitra (2018) entitled "Public Health Service Advertisement (PHSA); Semiotic Analysis". This research is qualitative research. In this study, the data used in the form of a video were obtained from the YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_VuF928jKQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VuF928jKQs) entitled Pencegahan Demam Berdarah' uploaded by Julia Rgds on 3rd May 2015. This study was conducted to analyze language style using the theory of Keraf (1991) with two basic elements, namely word choice (diction) and

sentence structure. Then, analyzing the meaning by using the theory of Barthes (1998) with two basic elements, namely denotative meaning, and connotative meaning, as well as analyzing ideology, using the theory of Storey (2004). The results of this study showed that; The Public Health Service Ads (PHSA) language style, diction, or word choice used tends to be informal, general, brief, and understandable by ordinary learned societies. Regarding the tone contained, the narrative text had a simple language style, usually suitable to give instructions, commands, lessons, lectures, and the like. From the point of view of meaning, semiotic meaning comes from the relationship between the signifier and the signified or connotative meaning. The ideology behind it comes from the connotations it produces. The way to express imperatively as well as the use of symbols, colors, backgrounds (sign) such as thermometers; for instance.

The second study review was taken from an article written by Cahyadiarta (2017) entitled "An Analysis of the Myth of Convenience on Three Traveloka Advertisements". In retrieving the data, this study used both observation and documentation methods also note-taking techniques. In analyzing the data, this study used Roland Barthes' theory of mythology. There are three data that used in this study they were, Traveloka Advertisements in version of "Susah cari tiket mudik Traveloka Dulu!", "Mudik tapi rumah penuh-Traveloka Dulu!", and "Liburan harus tertunda-Untung pakai Traveloka!" From these data, it is found that the myth of convenience from the three Traveloka advertisements can be divided into three aspects, namely ease of access, ease of saving, and comfort in reliable services. Inconvenience ease of access could be divided into five categories that are no space boundary, no time boundary, user-friendly interface,

and one-stop transaction. In the convenience of saving money, it is characterized by no cancellation fees, low prices for popular destinations, cheaper daily 'special offers' books, and honest prices with no service charges. The myth of reliable service is demonstrated by the guarantee of safe transactions and the new "easy reschedule" feature. Ease of accessibility at an affordable price, supported by features that pamper consumers, has succeeded in creating new value in order to increase public confidence in conducting online transactions in their daily activities.

The third study review was taken from an article written by Andriyanto (2017) entitled "Analisa Semiotik Denotasi, Konotasi Dan Mitos Iklan Indomie Versi 45th Anniversary Di Televisi". This study was conducted to construct the meanings and myths contained in the Indomie instant noodle advertisement version of "45th Anniversary". The data from this research are Indomie advertisement version "45th Anniversary" where this advertisement was made in celebrating Indomie's 45th Anniversary and coinciding with the independence month of the Republic of Indonesia in 2017 which was taken from Youtube.com. This study was carried out by qualitative method and descriptive approach. In analyzing the data this study used the tradition of semiotic communication proposed by Craig and particularly by Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The study result showed that Indomie wanted to include is the brand personality dimension which is the ruggedness dimension, which can display a strong, tough, and surviving character. It showed the character of the Indonesian nation is encouragement, openness and fairness, resilience and never giving up, glue and unifying the integrity of the nation. Regarding the myths contained in this

Indomie advertisement, the researcher states that success does not always have to be related to previous failures. Success can be obtained with preparation, awareness, seriousness and upholding the spirit, togetherness, never giving up and unity Semiotic Roland Barthes's Theory Signs can be found in any aspect of life, every single thing in this world can be taken as signs and it is defined by human interpretation. In interpreting the signs, semiotic is a discipline of signs analysis that studies the function of signs system. Saussure is interested in the complex way sentences are formed and the way tenses define meaning but is less interested in the fact that the same sentence can convey different meanings to different people in different situations. Barthes continues this thinking by emphasizing the interaction between text and the personal experience and culture of its users, the interaction between conventions in the text, and the conventions that users experience and expect.

In Mythologies, Barthes's shows that pictures can be material for a mythological system, that is, a secondary semiotic system, which must be seen as inseparable wholes and where the distinction between the signifier, signified and the sign can be drawn only artificially, for analytical purposes (Barthes, 1972). Barthes also sees another aspect of meaning, namely "myth" which marks a society.

Myth is defined as a type of speech (Barthes, 1972, p. 107). It is located at the second level of meaning, after a system of markers is formed, the sign will become a new marker which then has a second marker and forms a new sign. Meaning is embedded in the culture of the text drawn up by the convention. The essence of the interpretation of the form that brought the myth in the context of meaning embodied in the ideological

representation of the narrative structure. The myth exists and thrives in the minds of the people because the interpretation of society itself will be something by paying attention to and interpreting the correlation between what is visible (denotation) and the implicit signs of it (connotation). A myth produced and developed in the wider community.

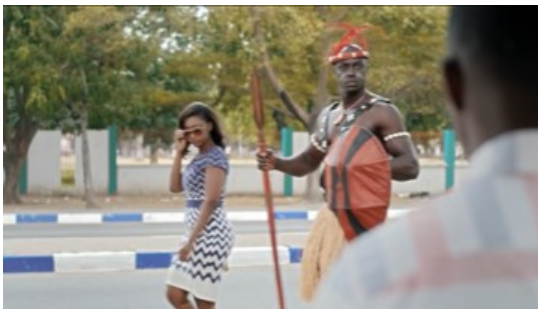
## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement, it found that both verbal and non-verbal signs as the main focus. The analysis of verbal and non-verbal, meanings as well as the myths that develop in society behind the data found in this study can be seen as follows.

In this study, all data are part of a snippet accompanied by narrative text from the advertisement "Who Says No to Mentos". After processing, the data is displayed in several quotations in the form of snippets of color images, sorted based on the flow of ad impressions, and with text transcripts which are ad content. All parts are the unified content of the broadcast. The data, which is sorted into sections of the narrator's text, is presented, specifically sorted into six sections. This is done so that the discussion becomes more detailed and structured.

The following are the results and discussion in this study which are presented in the sequence below.

### Data 1



Screenshot: Figure 1

Narrator: Share a Mentos make a friend

Based on the screenshot in figure 1 above, the verbal sign from the data above can be heard from the narrator "Share a Mentos make a friend" which means by sharing Mentos with other people gives us the opportunity to become friends. To make this happen, we are actually being persuaded to buy Mentos candy, with that we can share Mentos candy with everyone we want to make friends with people.

In terms of non-verbal signs, there is a man enjoying mentos and then another man who stops in front of him while looking at the Mentos being consumed by the young man. It can be seen here that the man who was stunned by the sight of Mentos clearly proves that the popularity of this candy is what everyone craves. This means that the attractiveness of Mentos can attract someone's attention even in the middle of a crowd so they can't take their eyes off.

McCracken (1993, p.125), who defines a brand as a "bundle or container of meaning," expanded on Barthesian analysis and developed a framework for understanding the cultural relationships that brands have in society. These ideas and values are articulated through the construction, maintenance, and preservation of beliefs to create certain images in the minds of audiences. A well-known brand called Mentos is believed to have provided ideas and value in making friends with new people or strangers, just by doing a very simple thing, namely giving them Mentos candy. When that person accepts the candy, it can give us the opportunity to become friends. Sharing those little things can give us reasons to start conversations and even opportunities to get to know each other. The popularity of mentos candy which is believed to everyone can easily grab someone's attention even in a crowd thus giving Mentos a greater chance of

being accepted when we offer them to others.

#### Data 2



Screenshot: Figure 2

Narrator: Stick together till the end

Based on the data above, the verbal sign term can be heard that "Stick together till the end" which means that Mentos can give us the opportunity to connect with each other. People can remain friends, in other words, they stay connected to each other at any time, not only when they meet when sharing Mentos, but continue forever.

In terms of the non-verbal sign, there are two men sitting next to each other while doing a high five. From their expressions, they look so happy after sharing Mentos together. From their appearance, they seem to come from different backgrounds. The young man is wearing casual clothes that appear from a modern background and the other man is wearing traditional clothes that seem to appear from a traditional background. From this, it can be seen that they both come from different backgrounds. This means that Mentos can still unite people with different backgrounds.

From the verbal and non-verbal signs above, the myth that is a correlation of denotative and connotative (Barthes, 1972) develops that by sharing Mentos, people who do not know each other even from different backgrounds do not rule out being able to become friends by sharing Mentos together.

#### Data 3



Screenshot: Figure 3

Narrator: Share a Mentos socialize

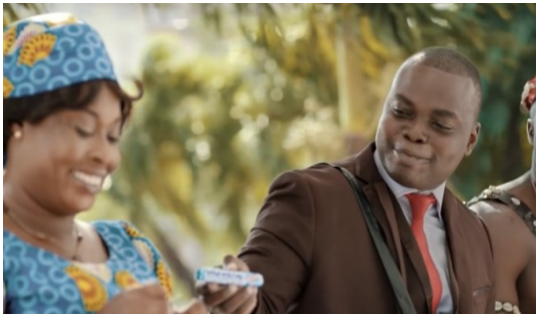
Based on the data above, the verbal sign can be heard that "Share a Mentos socialize" which means Mentos that can help people socialize with other people. In other words, Mentos can be used as a communication starter when meeting new people. By giving something to someone, can be used as an excuse to greet people and it tends to be more comfortable to start socializing with other people.

In terms of the non-verbal sign, it appears that there are two people sitting next to each other, giving Mentos and company cards. From their expressions, they look so happy after sharing Mentos together and giving something back. From their appearance, it seemed that they came from different social statuses. The man who wears traditional clothes appears to have medium social status while other men who wear suits and ties appear to have high social status. With a briefcase on his shoulder and he gave the company card to another man, he seems to have a high position and influence. Giving him a company card in return means that the guy might want to recruit the person next to him who gives him Mentos, or he implies that if in the future you need some kind of help, please contact me. This means that Mentos are not only able to connect people to become friends but can provide us with other benefits such as connections or even work. As in the picture above, the man in traditional clothes who is happy

to give his Mentos, without expectations, can get a company card for the little things he does.

The myth exists and thrives in the minds of the people because of the interpretation of society itself (Barthes, 1972). The signs then build a myth that Mentos accept all differences in people's social status and provide opportunities for them to be together and share Mentos with each other. Mentos never look at people's social status, whether they come from the high or low social status that the same person can share and enjoy Mentos.

#### Data 4



Screenshot: Figure 4

Narrator: Share Mentos and be nice

Based on the data above, the verbal sign can be heard that "Share Mentos and be nice" which means that sharing small things like Mentos candy with people is a positive thing. Sharing and caring for each other is a must for every individual who is basically a social scientist who in fact cannot live alone and need one another. We can share whatever we have with others because it is not measured by how big or small we give but how sincerely we give it to others.

In terms of non-verbal signs, it can be seen that there are two people, namely a man and a woman who sit next to each other and a man offers her Mentos. This means that both men and women respect each other and we can still be kind to anyone. Whether he is a man or a woman, we can still share and spread kindness to anyone regardless of their gender.

The signs above have created another level of meaning which is then believed by society as a new sign (Barthes, 1972), that is a myth about gender differences that will not stop people from being able to act the same way we care about people. We can share Mentos with anyone, whether male, old or young, all of whom can enjoy Mentos together. Because basically both men and women all have the same equality and deserve it.

#### Data 5



Screenshot: Figure 5

Narrator: Enjoy Mentos have some fun

Based on the data above, the verbal sign can be heard that "Enjoy Mentos have some fun" which means that it is happier when we enjoyed Mentos together. We know that everything we can do and enjoy together is the happiest thing. As human beings, social creatures, we could not live alone and act individually, we all need each other.

In terms of the non-verbal sign, it can be seen that all the people dancing together with the happiest expression. It means that Mentos can turn down the gap between people and can make them closer. There is no more awkwardness between them.

Barthes (1972) mention that Myth derives from the connotative meaning which is accepted as denotative meaning Mentos denotatively is a product of candy which connotatively can help people to connect to each other. It may change people from nobody into somebody. Mentos which is known as

candy no longer means a "candy" anymore, but it has changed its meaning into "a tool for making a friend".

#### Data 6



Screenshot: Figure 6

Based on the data above, the verbal sign can be read that "Who says no to Mentos?" which means that nobody will resist if someone offers them a Mentos. The question mark in the end mark showed that this phrase is actually a rhetorical question which a question that no need to answer by the audience but it gives a particular effect. It means that Mentos want to influence the audience to try the product in order to share it with others. To be able to share it people need to buy the product first. This phrase also considers the slogan of Mentos advertisement it always appeared on Mentos advertisement.

In terms of the non-verbal sign, it can be seen that there is a figure of a hand giving a Mentos. It means that Mentos which already has designed its product becomes shareable. There is also a small figure of Mentos candy in the smaller pack which means that the smaller pack can be consumed individually and is easier to carry everywhere. The background of the figure is mostly dominated by blue, Mentos which is known as mint candy which has a cool sensation and refreshing it is related to the used of blue color as the background to represent the cool sensation that Mentos can give toward people.

The signs are in the form of phrase, sentence, the product, and the blue colors (denotative) which represent that people cannot resist this product because of the familiar flavor it has. Therefore as stated by Barthes (1972) those meanings of signs have developed another level of meaning called myth that tells Mentos can refresh people and raise the mood by the cool sanction of Mentos candy. The shareable pack of Mentos which people can able to share with others. Mentos has a mint flavor and refreshing that is liked by everyone, therefore people tend to accept the offer of the candy called Mentos, because there's nothing like Mentos.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn;

As on the analysis, it can be concluded that the meaning of verbal and non-verbal signs in the "Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement are forming a myth that developed on the society. The advertisers actually tend to convey their message implicitly in this advertisement. The advertiser forms a myth that glorifies the advertised product where they want to convince the audience that the product is able to give various advantages as described in the ad and it is a must to be shared. In other words, advertiser actually influenced their audience to buy their products so they can share with others and feel the benefit of their product.

"Who Says No to Mentos" advertisement contains the meaning to attract the attention of the costumers to sell or promote their product and also to create a brand image as well as capable consumers understand the meaning of the advertisement. It is supported with various rhetorical sentences to persuade the audience. Moreover, this



advertisement used great social experiment illustrations as visual understanding that make people realize that we are as a human being, social creature, how can saying hello now become so meaningless. People are too proud and confused about how to start the conversation with others, from this advertisement people learn that it can be done in small things by just sharing Mentos candy. Mentos grows and increases the enthusiasm of audiences to do positive things everywhere with anyone.

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