

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of several sections. It begins with the background of research, statement of problem, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms to clarify some major terminologies in this research.

1.1 Background of Research

Media used as the means of communication media varies, especially in recent times where technology and internet influenced the communication patterns of people. The signs in communication or language practices have two different levels consisting of the phonic and visual elements that further provide the language medium and the sign itself that convey meaning beyond the literal definitions (Amberg & Vause, 2009). In other words, language can be applied not only through written or spoken forms but also through visual images where the form of information is not directly stated. This also relates to the platform that provides interpersonal and mass communication that becomes more popular in recent society. One of the mediums that marks the modern ways of communication is internet. As the internet platforms promote wide-range communication, advertisements become one of the aspects that are benefitted from an effective way of promotion and followed by flexibility that online media provides.

Commercial advertisements are often found on the internet or online platforms as it is benefitted from how the internet is widely-preferred by a lot of

people (Janoschka, 2004). The efficiency and simplicity that the internet offers cause online websites and applications to keep developing for a better experience for the customers as well as a more effective way of advertisements. This is strengthened by the fact that most people in recent society access the internet in their daily life which further promotes online advertisement practices. The concept of online advertisement still follows the traditional way of advertisements that has the purpose of increasing sales of the advertised products (Janoschka, 2004). Therefore, the design of the advertised products has a major influence in providing the needed information about the products while also advertising them to the targeted customers. This is shown through the online advertisements that people can easily come through when they are on the internet platforms.

Online advertisements include several elements in providing the information and persuasion of the advertised products. The elements such as written texts, images, graphics, colors, and audiovisual media such as videos are involved in advertisements (Ijam and Abbaas, 2019). Through the mentioned elements, it is obvious that language and symbols are the main aspects of performing effective communication. Ijam and Abbaas (2019) advertisements in general do not only include details of the advertised products but also emotional engagements for the potential customers. This refers to how online advertisements maximized the use of visual representation in a way that engages the customers. It can be in the form of relatable representation or expectations gained by purchasing the advertised products. Meaning and interpretation identified from online advertisements are forms of communication. The meaning in advertising is often expressed through

language, and language is still the primary aspect used in advertising. Language in advertising is used to communicate between producers and consumers. Through pictures and words, an advertisement produces a sign. All of this forms a communication process that has an essential power as a marketing tool in the form of information.

The meaning and representation found in online advertisements are related to the concept of signs. It implies that advertisements achieve further meaning by the use of text, images, and sounds as the supporting elements. This kind of sign communication is addressed as semiotics. Semiotics refers to the field of study that focuses on the use of signs and symbols with the system of representation (Cobley & Janz, 2002). In this sense, Semiotics deals with how certain things can represent another being through the signs and symbols presented as the representation. Meanwhile, Peirce (as cited in Chandler, 2017) explained that the concept of signs refers to how a sign represents the ideas relating to the aimed meaning through the triadic model; representamen, object, and interpretant. Representamen refers to the signs or symbols that represent another thing which is the object. Meanwhile, the interpretant stands for the definition or the implied meaning. This relates to how online advertisements or advertisements in general present the products without depending on narratives but focusing more on the product representation that implies the persuasion and details regarding the aimed impression towards customers.

As previously mentioned, advertisements involve the use of semiotic resources such as text and images that have the function of representation and how

a certain idea is interpreted. Jewitt and Oyama (2014) explained that semiotics is known as a powerful tool in critical research as it includes the process of how something becomes meaningful only when the resources are used and associated with social contexts that comes with it. Thus, the concept of semiotics in advertisements aside from being a tool of communication also acts as a medium that represents a certain value or impression. This makes it possible for an advertisement to reinforce and reflected the ideal perception of certain qualities. It can be seen from the men's products that often include the idea of masculinity in advertisements whether it is through the design of the products and also from the use of a model that implies the expectation related to the products.

The visual representation of men and the quality that the products offered through the advertisement demonstrate how semiotics play role in providing masculine images to the customers. Pimenta and Natividade (2013) explained that the masculine representation and reinforcement through advertisement both reflect and preserve the ideal view of masculinity which is socially constructed over time. It refers to the expectation and the image that is directed towards men which further supports the advertising aspect of the advertisement itself. The semiotic elements display certain qualities and values that the product offers which fit the ideal presentation of masculinity that the targeted customers have.

The masculine quality that is found through online or conventional advertisements commonly involves several aspects. Masculine representation is reflected through the ideal image or aesthetic that is stereotypically defined for men which further celebrates masculine hegemonic identity (Pimenta and Natividade,

2013). This refers to how men's appearance such as skin and how they dressed is so distinct when compared to the set of qualities for women. Masculine representation stresses manliness in its impression. Moreover, masculine power and emotion are also represented through the image that is often included in advertising practices. Pimenta and Natividade (2013) explained that masculine power and emotion are seen from the construction reflected in the image. This is related to how masculinity is less likely to be represented by mellow emotions and the color choices are carefully curated as the representation of men needs to be related to the concept of being 'masculine'. The choice of colors, clothes, and emotions present the expectation of a man that is strong, self-assured, competitive, and successful (Pimenta and Natividade, 2013). Therefore, the representation of men through the advertised products indirectly promotes masculinity through the implied meaning.

The phenomenon that involves sign relationships between the representamen, object, and interpretant as well as social reinforcement of masculinity becomes an interesting topic to be taken into scientific study. Further analysis of how the triadic model achieves certain meanings and impressions of the products that are being advertised also determines the persona for which the products stand for. Thus, this study specifically aims to determine the sign interpretation through the representamen, object, and interpretant in Peirce's triadic model that further represented masculinity in men's skin and hair products online advertisements. The guiding theory of signs by Charles Sanders Peirce which contains the concept of triadic or triadic model is used in analyzing the data.

Moreover, the perception of masculinity by Raewyn Connell is also used in completing the analysis.

Additionally, there are several previous studies in the form of article journals and thesis found with the related issues taken as the main concern in the research. The first previous study by Pimenta and Natividade (2013) entitled “The Semiotic Construction of Masculinity and Affect: A Multimodal Analysis of Media Texts” is aimed to determine the semiotic construction of masculine identities as dynamic social representation from selected *Veja* magazines. The data were in the form of magazine articles published in 2003 and the cover pages of the magazines in 2005 and 2008 editions. The theories applied in this study are social semiotic by Kress (2010) and the masculinity theory perceptions. The result showed that the masculinity incursion towards the feminine universe is only depicted to maintain the masculine hegemonic identity projects which are reflected in the analysis of *Veja* magazine 2003. Meanwhile, the adverts of the 2005 edition magazine showed that masculine emotions are hidden in the image of masculine power. Lastly, the 2008 edition adverts showed that masculinity in men was defined by a certain persona of being strong, self-assured, competitive, and successful. This stands for the stereotyped sets of behavior related only to men.

The second previous study by Saz-Rubio (2018) entitled “The Pragmatic-Semiotic Construction of Male Identities in Contemporary Advertising of Male Grooming Products” is aimed to unveil how male identity is constructed through TV advertisements for male grooming products through pragmatic-semiotic analysis. To support the analysis, this research included ten male informants

regarding the advertisements and its impression of them. This study applied the critical analysis method and the guiding theory of semiotic or visual representation by Kress (2010). The result showed that the advertisements still relied on the traditional construct of masculinity. This is seen from how the advertisements were convinced to groom themselves but to do it in men's way. The result also showed the TV ads reinforced the ideal of men who are considered to have the power to win over women. The last result included the body image of men that was heavily related to the concept of manliness.

The last previous study by Rogate (2017) entitled "A Semiotic Analysis of Men's and Women's Representation in Royco and Masako Television Advertisements" is aimed to determine the representation of men and women through semiotic analysis. Moreover, the meaning of the representations is further explained in this study. This study applied the guiding theory by Kress and Leuwen (2006) regarding semiotic and visual representation. The result showed that men and women are represented with distinct physical appearances. The women are portrayed as beautiful individuals while men are portrayed as healthy. In terms of profession, women are portrayed to do the house chores and take care of the children while men are portrayed with instrumental work such as professionals and chefs. These traits are known to celebrate traditional masculinity and femininity yet other elements shown in the advertisements also confront this stereotype. It is seen from how women are portrayed as independent while men are portrayed as individuals with warm and affectionate qualities. This promotes that some qualities

of traditional gender roles are still found through the semiotic analysis of the advertisement yet it is less stereotypical.

Based on the related previous studies, similarities and differences are found. The similarities are laid in the focus of how semiotics reveals the masculine and gender representation. Moreover, the object that becomes the main focus, which is advertisements are also identified as similarities. However, the guiding theories and the kinds of advertisements differ from this study. Thus the gap in the research is laid on the applied theory and object which further provide deeper analysis in a similar field. This study particularly aims to investigate the triadic model and the masculine representation from online advertisements for men's skin and hair products of Vaseline Men, Garnier Men, Men's Biore, and Shiseido Men which are the most used and well-known men's products brands retrieved from online e-commerce websites. This gives a wider perception of how online advertisements apply semiotic elements and how it widely reinforces the idea of masculinity through men's products.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The topic of the triadic model is known to be applied in various media. This study especially focuses on the representamen, object, and interpretant of the selected men's skin and hair products online advertisements and its relation to masculine gender representation. Based on the research background above, the problem of this study is formulated in the following:

1. What are the triadic model of the selected brands consisting of Vaseline Men, Garnier Men, Men's Biore, and Shiseido Men online advertisements?
2. How do the triadic model in Vaseline Men, Garnier Men, Men's Biore, and Shiseido Men online advertisements represent masculinity?

1.3 Research Objective

Related to the formulated research problems above, some research objectives are presented in the following:

1. To define the triadic model and meaning interpretation from the selected men's skin and hair products online advertisements.
2. To determine how triadic model and meaning interpretation on men's skin and hair products online advertisements represent the concept of masculinity.

1.4 Research Significance

According to the explanation about this research in background of the research, research questions and research purposes. This analysis is very important for a better understanding semiotics . Therefore, the significances of research are divides into two significances; they are theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this study applies the theory of signs by Charles Sanders Peirce. The theory of sign includes the concept of semiotic that deals with meaning interpretation from icons, symbols, and index. The relations of the three are based on the dynamic from the sign and its object. In semiotics, the triadic model which

refers to how each element achieves its meaning is determined through the concept of triadic models; representamen, object, and interpretant. Thus, this study applied this theory in determining the triadic model of online advertisements for men's skin and hair products. As semiotics deals with the representation of certain objects and qualities, this study specifically analyzes the representation of masculinity determined from the selected online advertisements. The guiding perception of masculinity by Raewyn Connell is also used in supporting the analysis.

Practically, this study is aimed to be significant for the academic readers and public readers. The explanation of this study's contribution in practical aspect is provided in the following:

1. Academic Readers

This research is expected to give deeper analysis and new contributions, especially in the field of linguistics that deals with the concept of semiotics. This study is expected to become a reliable source that enriches future research in the same field. The result of this study that involves how triadic model in online advertisements play role in representing the idea of masculinity is expected to give broader analysis and insight on a certain issue.

2. Public Readers

This research is expected to become the source of deeper knowledge, especially in linguistic phenomena found in online advertisements that everyone from all over the world is familiar with. Aside from giving deeper comprehension of how triadic model achieves deeper meaning from

symbols and signs from online advertisements, this research also enlightens people about the social context, and reinforcement is reflected through persuasive platforms not only to emotionally engage the possible customers but also reflect the concept of masculinity in society.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

In this section, to make this research more obvious and to avoid misunderstanding some key terms which use in this research. The writer presents a brief explanation of key terms regarding the topic. The details are described below.

a. Semiotics

Semiotics is generally known as a study of signs or sign processes. Semiotics is an analysis of signs by interpreting them to find their meaning. Everything can be said as a sign, so semiotics appeared to find the meaning. Consciously or not, semiotics has been widely used by the community. The sign is commonly used by the public to convey a certain meaning and message.

b. Triadic Model

Triadic model or triadic relation is a theory of signs created by Peirce in the study of semiotics, and it consists of representamen, interpretant, and object. Triadic model is often also referred to as "triangle meaning semiotics" or known as the triangle theory of meaning, which is explained simply: "a sign is something or a capacity that is associated with someone. The sign creates something in people's minds that refers to a more developed symbol, the

sign it creates is called the interpretant of the first sign. The sign indicates something called an object” (Fiske, 2007: 63).

c. Advertisement

Advertisement is one of the marketing strategies that use to persuade people through the message delivered to the audience to buy or consume some products. Advertisement is a medium way to convey messages to the public. Therefore, advertisement can also be referred to as a medium of communication between producers and consumers. One of the functions of advertising is to affect society. This shows that advertising not only provides information but also instills social and cultural perceptions.

d. Masculinity

Masculinity refers to the set of attributes that are considered appropriate for men. The attributes that are stereotypically defined by society is used as men’s ideal images and aesthetic (Pimenta and Natividade, 2013). Thus, masculinity represent the appropriation for men including their appearances, behaviors, and traits.