
MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF TV COMMERCIALS IN TEACHING ADVERTISEMENT: STIMULATING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING

Ima Kusumastuti

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
(koesimaahmad@gmail.com)

Received: 15th March 2018; Revised: 25th May 2018; Accepted: 28th June 2018

ABSTRACT

Advertisement has a big influence in our life as it appears anywhere each day through magazines, newspapers, radio, and even television. The advertisers use writing, visual images, speech, or music as creative and persuasive use of multimodality to promote their products. One of the attractive targets to promote their products is teenagers which are identified as people ages 12 to 17. This makes the study of multimodality in advertisement for students, mainly TV commercials, becomes important to be conducted at school. Stimulating students' critical thinking to become aware of persuasive strategies through multimodality in TV commercial is needed. This study is focusing on the analysis of multimodality namely language, visual image, and music illustration used in TV commercials and its use to stimulate the junior high school students' critical thinking at English as Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

Key Words: advertisement; TV commercials; multimodal analysis; critical thinking

ABSTRAK

Iklan sangat berpengaruh besar dalam kehidupan kita sehari – hari karena iklan muncul dimana saja seperti dalam majalah, Koran, radio, dan bahkan televisi. Para pembuat iklan menggunakan, tulisan, gambar, kata-kata, ataupun musik untuk mempromosikan produk mereka. Penggunaan multimodal secara kreatif dan mengajak mendukung usaha mereka dalam menawarkan produknya. Salah satu dari pasar yang mereka bidik adalah para remaja yang berusia 1 sampai dengan 17 tahun. Hal ini membuat penelitian dalam hal multimodal pada iklan untuk para siswa, terutama pada iklan TV, menjadi hal yang penting untuk diajarkan di dalam kelas. Menstimulasi pemikiran kritis pada siswa agar mereka peduli akan strategi persuasive iklan lewat pengajaran analisa multimodal pada iklan TV sangatlah diperlukan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa multimodal dalam cakupan bahasa, gambar, dan ilustrasi music yang digunakan dalam iklan TV serta penerapannya dalam menstimulasi pemikiran kritis dari siswa sekolah menengah dalam kelas pembelajaran bahasa asing.

Kata Kunci: iklan; iklan TV; analisis multimodal; berpikir kritis

How to Cite: Kusumastuti, I. (2018). Multimodal Analysis of TV Commercials in Teaching Advertisement: Stimulating Students' Critical Thinking. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 5(1), 35-48. doi:10.15408/ijee.v5i1.

INTRODUCTION

Advertisements (Ads) as a kind of discourse, in general, can be divided into three types; printed (such as Ads in Newspaper or Magazine, poster), Audio-Ads (Radio), and Audio-visual Ads (TV or Internet). Basically, advertisement is intended to communicate a certain message through the appropriate use of language, visual image, and even sound to achieve its persuasive intention to make people join, buy, or use their product or service. Advertisement, in Indonesia, is used as one of the sample materials of short functional text which belongs to the curriculum aspect for the ninth grade. For that reason, then, it is important for the students to know better about the advertisement, especially for TV commercials, not only from its structural text, but also from other sides such as its language, visual image, and also music illustration used to support its performance mainly in audio-visual ads.

As the rapid improvement of information and technology, the students become global consumers of variety Media which exist in their everyday life. They begin to get used to audio-visual information including in learning. Today's teachers begin to face the choice of current teaching - learning development; Textbook-based class

which appear in question-answer session or Authentic Materials-based classes which reveal the students' creative and communicative way of learning. Karpova (1999, p. 18) affirms: "Many textbooks create a climate for socially isolated learning Teachers need more materials that help students to become thoughtful participants in a socially rich environment for learning and that feature everyday uses of English." It shows that there are many researchers who consider the benefits of authentic materials, including TV commercials, to be used in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Lawrence (1987, p. 837) states that TV commercials "provide a refreshing alternative to the traditional textbook". Authentic materials will be very helpful for the students to know more about the target language that they learn, not only in the form of theoretical structures but also how they are used in real life communication.

The use of TV commercials in language teaching offers opportunities for students to analyze what they see, hear and read, develop ideas, and interpret the images. Students may also understand what the message is trying to communicate easier and search in their minds for what they already know and compare it with what they are seeing. During the thinking process, students decide what else they want to

know about the product, what to say about the product, and how to rationalize their opinion about the product especially in its persuasive purpose through language, visual image, and also the music illustration which the ads use. Besides, the students will become aware of their own reaction as consumers. There are several ways that are used by the ads to convey its persuasive messages such as true-life messages, scientific/technical facts, comparison, life evidence, animation, personality symbol, imagery, humor, dramatization, and the combination of these ways (Belch, 2012; Fill; 2009; Duncan, 2005). Therefore, those ways that discuss above indicates the existence of multimodality which is covered by message through storytelling, attention-getting, and memorable things in which the language, picture, and also music illustration is used. The students' critical thinking is also required during the classroom. TV commercials used in the learning process become the source of materials which can be explored by the students in order to get the deeper understanding of advertisement. Critical thinking skills are the form of ability to think pensively, to give opinion proficiently, and to decide what information is reliable and what action should be taken during

reasoning and problem solving as well (Ennis, 2002; Gut,2011).

There are many previous research studies which have studied about Multimodality used in TV Commercials and also The Role of Advertisement in EFL Classroom, but the research about Multimodality Analysis of TV Commercials and its use in EFL classroom are scarcely found. For that reason, then, the use of multimodality in TV commercial production took the researcher attention to study about the use of multimodality analysis of TV commercials which focused on teaching ads for EFL classroom. The language, visual image, and also the music illustration which used in TV commercials, especially in Fast Food ads, can be an interesting source of materials for the ninth grade students (age of 14 to 15 years old) to explore. Besides, by using multimodal analysis, the students can be able to explore deeper about TV commercials and to stimulate their critical thinking on their opinion of TV commercials' persuasive intention in persuading the customers.

Advertisement, nowadays, becomes a part of daily life. People can easily find the advertisement everywhere, such as; in newspapers, magazines, televisions, and also internet. As teenagers are the part of the attractive target of the advertisers,

the design of the advertisement itself becomes more and more creative and persuasive. Lutcavage (1992) also proposed that the language which is used in the advertisement is real and modern. This makes the teenagers, in which most of them are students, attracted and affected of what the advertisers are promoted. This situation makes an advertisement, especially TV commercial, being an attractive material to be analyzed and discuss at school. In television commercials, words are often repeated in the audio and visual channels, thus providing further support (Lutcavage 1992: 34). The subject matter of ads also ties in well with many common topics in language teaching, such as sports, transport, food, clothing, and environmental issues (Davis 1997: 13-4). By providing a visual context, ads make it easier for learners to understand the language (Davis 1997: 14). Related idea is that because ads are creative, they stimulate learners to be creative (Chee 1994: 155). For that reason, TV commercials can be a very interesting material used in teaching learning process, mainly in EFL classroom. Lawrence (1987, p. 837) states that TV commercials "provide a refreshing alternative to the traditional textbook". By using the authentic materials like TV commercials, the students can learn advertisement in an attractive way. They are able to have a

deeper understanding of TV commercials as audio-visual advertisement by using Multimodal Analysis. Gee (1999,2011) mentions that multimodality such as speech, visual image, and also music illustration probably emerge in commercials, music video, or video games. Furthermore, Iedema (2001,2003) identifies Multimodality as the means of showing up the significance of figuring out semiotics other than the language in use such as figure, motion, etc. Kress (2010) states that picture, words, layout, music, motion, speech moving image, soundtrack, and 3D objects are modes that contribute to take meaning and therefore, multimodality can tell the utilization of modes. Those matters, then, are used to analyze TV commercials and used for the teaching materials in Advertisement lesson in EFL. By using multimodal analysis, the students' critical thinking is hopefully revealed. Critical thinking skills are the form of ability to think pensively, to give opinion proficiently, and to decide what information is reliable and what action should be taken during reasoning and problem solving as well (Ennis, 2002; Gut,2011).

In line with the title and the background of the study, then, two research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How are persuasive language (spoken and written), visual images, and music illustration, as the components of Multimodality used in TV commercials?
2. How is Multimodality in TV Commercials used to teach advertisement and to stimulate the students' critical thinking?

METHOD

The study focuses on using multimodal analysis of TV commercials to teach advertisement in EFL classroom. The participants are the 9th grade of junior high school students. The researcher decides to take the data from four fast food TV commercials for analysis and uses them to teach advertisement in the EFL classroom. The following are the TV commercials which are selected to analyze the data:

1. Kentucky Fried Chicken (16 seconds). The video was published on December 29, 2017.
2. Wendy's (31 seconds). The video was published on January 2, 2018.
3. McDonald's (16 seconds). The video was published on April 6, 2018.
4. Burger King (16 seconds). The video was published on April 23, 2018.

After gaining the source of the data, the researcher watched a couple of time, analyzed each TV commercial separately and identified the multimodality used in those TV commercials. From each TV commercials, then, the researcher recorded them and divided them into spoken and written language, visual image, and music illustration. The collected data then are labeled with Ads 1's data; Ads 2's data; Ads 3's data; and Ads 4's data. Based on the data which have gained, the researcher then constructs the example of teaching procedure that will describe how TV commercial is used in teaching the advertisement of EFL classroom.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The analysis of Ads 1's Data

Language

Written text: There is only short written text at the end of the video which emphasized in the name of the product (KFC Pot Pie) and the price of the product (\$3.99). Those written texts give the people who watch this TV commercials message to be reminded of what is offered and its price which is considered as a low price for a high-quality food.

Spoken text: The monologue that used in this TV commercial highlighted the product, KFC Pot Pie, as the valuable food with the economic price. It is purposed to build consumers' perception that the product, with very nutritious and high-quality ingredients, can be bought only with a very cheap price. That is the reason why the last word which the narrator said in the ads is the name of the product and its price.

Visual Image

The first screen illustrates the founder of KFC, Colonel Sanders, who sat down in front of the hearth and had a talk with his wife about the newest KFC product Pot Pie. The next screen shows a KFC Pot Pie which is served freshly from the oven. It shows clearly how the food was made with very healthy and good quality of ingredients. On the next scene, the Colonel demonstrates the contrastive value of the product and the price that the consumers should know about in a humorous way of storyboards. The persuasive deliverance message is very well distributed in this TV commercial as the colonel has very great influence for most of the people who have known KFC. Besides, the healthy food visual image which uses in the ads can make the people interested to consume it since the healthy food is one of the primary needs of the people nowadays.

Music Illustration

The commercial uses instrument music illustration to build a classic atmosphere which describes a traditional food offered as the new menu in KFC. The sound of the music is very lower than the monologue brought by the colonel because they want to create an impression of what the colonel said of the new menu rather than attracted the people's attention by using music illustration. However, the music played in this commercial successfully builds a classic atmosphere for the new product; pot pie.

The analysis of Ads 2's Data

Language

Spoken text: The monologue of Wendy's TV commercial only focuses on their new menu package and its price (4 for \$4). The narrator gives the detail of the new package which cost only \$4 for 4 variances menu which are 3 prior menus and 1 optional menu. The commercial emphasizes in a low rate of price with many variances that the customers can get in a package of the menu. The monologue is successfully communicated since without watching the image, people can easily understand the price and also the variances of the menu which are offered.

Written text: There are only two kinds of written text which are displayed in the commercial. The first one is the new menu package (4 for \$4) that is written in the large font size with red color. This strategy is used to attract the people attention when they are watching this commercial. The other text is about the name of the optional menu that the people can choose if they take this package. There are several optional menus the people can choose for every package of prior menus. Many variances of the optional menu can make the people curious to try every single variance until they have tried all the variances given in the menu package.

Visual Image

The visualization of this commercial is purposed to give the people the real image of the menu which they can choose with only \$4. The clear image which displays one by one is aimed to invite the people to buy the menu that is appropriate with their want and needs. Besides, the image is displayed in a big scale picture that makes the people have an impression that the product is bigger than the other product at the same price. Many variances of the optional menus also look as if there are many products which they may get with a very minimum price. There is no actor

played in the commercial. This makes the people cannot compare the real size of the product in real life.

Music Illustration

The commercial is likely purposed to teenagers as the advertisers use pop-rock music for the illustration. The beat of music represents the soul of the youth. It helps the commercial enhance the attention of teenagers for the product. It also builds an impression that the product is proper for the youth's meal.

The analysis of Ads 3's Data

Language

Written text: The only text which written clearly in the commercial is 2 for \$4. The commercial emphasizes its message in the economic price that the consumers can get for more valuable foods. There are three variances that the customers can choose based on their own taste.

Spoken text: The monologue describes what the customers can get with only \$4. Two mixes and match stuff of the bun are offered as they want. The loud excited voice of the narrator creates a very great influence which convinces every people that everything that said by the narrator is real. The repetition, which is used by the advertisers, very well delivers so

that the people will easily remember the messages. This builds impression for the customers to be more likely to buy it.

Visual Image

The visual image of the video is very simple. The first scene shows the customers all variances that they can choose and the text which displays the name of the product. The next three scenes illustrate the variances in details, the crunchy bun and its stuff. The last scene shows all variances and the text of the product name. Since the visual image is simply set in this commercial, but it brings a very good persuasive message which can be easily seized by the people who watch it. People can understand the message effortlessly and simply take interest in the commercials. The scale of product which used in this commercials also gives big influence to the people as the scene is focused on the state of the foods that the advertiser makes it look bigger and make the product seems very tempting for the customers.

Music Illustration

The energizing beat of music represents a very fresh beginning of the day since the product is labeled as a breakfast menu. It builds people consideration that if they take the product as their breakfast, they will

start their day with a fresh meal from the product and it will make their day better. The music illustration also ends with McDonalds' jingle which has been familiar with the customers' daily life.

The analysis of Ads 4's Data

Language

Written text: The commercial starts their commercial with the name of their new products, King Collections; Bacon King and Double Quarter Pounds King, which are written in the large font size to attract people attention. Besides, the advertisers also use their jargon "My Way". By using this phrase, it seems like the advertisers try to convince the customers that if they do not consume this product means they are a nerd and left by the others who have consumed it. But in the middle of the scene shows a text which typed in very small and transparent font "Weight based on pre-cooked patties". The sentence is not mentioned in an oral way or written clearly in the scene because the commercial emphasized in the bigger performance of the product with the standard price. Repetition is also used in this commercial in the beginning and the end of the scene. The aim is to make the people always remember the product and its excellence.

Spoken Text: The advertisers use a monologue that focuses on rich stuff of

the product. Extra big patties which offered in the commercial become the prior thing to gain people's attention. Repetition of the product name used to familiarize it with the customers. By replicating it more and more, the customers will easily remember the product.

Visual Image

The commercial uses full-screen visual effect for the picture of the foods. The first scene shows the people two big patties grilled with plenty of seasoning as their new product is emphasized in extra big patties. The next slides still show the stuff of the burger which are heaped one by one in the very large size of scene. The big visual image used by the advertisers makes the people are able to see it clearly and being convinced to buy the product. Selective editing is also used for this commercial, as the stuff heaped one by one properly on the bun. It makes the product seems exciting to see and persuade the people to consume it as the stuff made from very fresh ingredients.

Music Illustration

The relax music illustration is chosen by the advertisers to represent how the burger lovers enjoy their new product. The product is made of the double stuff of 100% beef that the

customers who really like burger can enjoy the food.

Discussion

In brief, the analysis of Ads 4's Data, KFC TV commercial for the new product "Pot Pie", uses Multimodality components such as; written and spoken language, visual image, and also music illustration to express their persuasive purpose toward their marketing target. This commercial emphasizes its work in the value of the Colonel which represents the high quality of food ingredients in their traditional food "Pot Pie" in a low rate of price. It purposes to persuade the target market to have such nutritious food with economic price.

In analysis of Ads 2's data, Wendy's TV, by using Multimodality components (Spoken and written language, visual image, and music illustration), persuasively invites the target market, the children and teenagers in case, with their varied menu in one package with economic price. The visual image dominates the commercial as they want to emerge from their variances of the menu that the target market can choose. By providing a visual context, ads make it easier for learners to understand the language (Davis 1997: 14).

Eventually, the advertisers of McDonalds' TV commercial in Ads 3's data, use Multimodality components such as; Spoken and written language, visual image, and also music illustration, in their ads of the new product 2 for \$4. This commercial put emphasis on the variances of the stuff which represented with a very good visual image which describes fresh ingredients of the new breakfast menu. This way successfully brings an impression of the healthy menu that persuades the target market to take for their breakfast to start their day.

In time, Ads 4 also uses Multimodality components (written and spoken the language, visual image, and also music illustration) in promoting the product. Kress (2010) states that picture, words, layout, music, motion, speech moving image, soundtrack, and 3D objects are modes that contribute to take meaning and therefore, multimodality can tell the utilization of modes. Visual image and spoken language dominates this TV commercial and effectively gets the people attention even persuade them to buy this product. Full visual image of the product and the explanation of the

ingredients make this TV commercial persuasively offering the product, particularly to the burger lovers.

From all the discussion above, it is clear that TV commercials, as authentic materials for learning, have become attractive media in teaching advertisement in EFL classroom. Besides, the multimodality analysis which used in the learning process will give deeper understanding to the students about advertisement especially TV commercials. By understanding it deeper, the students are able to reveal their critical thinking in giving their opinion of the persuasive strategy used by the advertisers to promote their product. Related idea is that because ads are creative, they stimulate learners to be creative (Chee 1994: 155). For that reason, TV commercials can be a very interesting material used in teaching learning process, mainly in EFL classroom. For more understanding, below the researcher includes the example of teaching procedure which the teacher may use in their learning process.

Tabel 1. The Example of Teaching Procedures

Level	:	Grade 9 (Junior High School)
Overview	:	This teaching procedure helps students become more aware of the language and persuasive technique used in TV commercials along with its impact on their everyday life.

Level	:	Grade 9 (Junior High School)
--------------	---	-------------------------------------

Objectives	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a distinction between information and promotion• Identify the conventions of the same categories of TV commercial from different product• Differentiate between illustration and reality• Become aware of their reactions as consumers
Materials	:	Four same categories of TV commercial from different product
Procedures	:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) What do the students know about Advertisement (Ads)? Have the students write their responses based on these following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is advertisement/commercial?- Why should a product be advertised?- What kind of commercials/advertisements do you know? 2) Differentiate between TV commercial and information Present the class with TV commercial in which the words are likely giving information and provide the students with these following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is this the kind of ads or information?- Why do you think so?- Are there differences between ads and non-ads?Present the other ads which clearly present a persuasive message. Discuss it with these following questions as a guideline.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the difference between the previous ads?- What is the similarity?- What message are the advertisers trying to deliver?<p>(Whole class working in small group discussion and each group discuss one ads)</p>3) Analyzing Multimodality components Provide the students with several same categories of ads and discuss with these questions as a guideline:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The advertisement is in FL, can you tell what the advertisement is saying?- Do the words and visual image say the same thing?- Is it live or cartoon?- Is it the direct message or storyboard?- Is there any logo/slogan which attracts attention? What are they?- Analyze the color; layout, words, and music illustration. How do those elements make the ads more appealing? 4) Identifying the hidden persuasive message Provide the students with common strategies used in Ads, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Bandwagon: Everyone is buying it/ using it/doing it✓ Testimonial: A famous person or authority claims the product is good✓ Image Advertising: A product is associated with certain people, places, and activities.✓ Weasel: A promise is implied by using words like “usually” or “chance are”✓ Omission: Facts about the product are not told

Level	: Grade 9 (Junior High School)
--------------	---------------------------------------

✓ Repetition: Saying it again and again ✓ Scale: Making a product bigger or smaller ✓ Association: Promising adventure, attractiveness, quality ✓ Name-calling: Making the product seem better by using unpopular terms about the competition	Then, discuss the following questions: – Mention one important thing about the advertisement! – What message is being conveyed? – Which persuasive technique does the advertisement use to offer their product? – Does the advertisement attract your attention? Why is it so? – What would you do after watching this advertisement?
--	--

5)	Presenting ideas – Every group present the conclusion of their discussion – For the whole class, the teacher takes a conclusion based on all presentation and give feedback to the discussion.
----	--

Implication

This study focuses on teaching Advertisement, especially TV commercials, which previewed by using Multimodality Analysis as the basic material for 9th grade students of Junior High School. Teaching advertisement is commonly conducted by analyzing its generic structure and social functions by using printed commercials such as newspaper or magazine advertisement. In fact, the students need more knowledge and understanding about advertisement itself as it becomes the part of their daily life and gives very big influence for their mindset. By using the multimodality analysis in teaching advertisement, then, will give the students more knowledge about how language, visual image, and music

illustration that the advertisers set in TV commercials can be a kind of persuasive discourse which influences the people thinking and view in their life. In this way, the students will understand more about advertisement's persuasive strategy; think critically about the attractive advertisement in which they meet in their everyday life and become aware of their decision as the consumers.

CONCLUSION

Advertisement, nowadays, cannot be separated with people everyday life. The rapid improvement in information and technology make advertisement becomes more creative and innovative. Visual, audio, and even audio-visual advertisement like TV commercials become an important part of people life,

mainly in the decision making of buying, using, or consuming something. As advertisement is also the part of the material in EFL classroom, the students should have more knowledge in that matter. TV commercials can be attractive materials to use in teaching and learning process as it contains spoken and written language, visual image, and also music illustration which can be analyzed deeper by using multimodality analysis. The students' critical thinking is able to be explored more by using this method. By understanding more about persuasive strategy which revealed through language, visual image, and music illustration, the students will have their own opinion in viewing an advertisement from a different point of view.

REFERENCES

- Belch, G. E. (2012). Advertising and promotion: an integrated marketing communications perspective (9th Ed.). *New York: McGraw-Hill/Irvin, Inc.*
- Davis, R. S. (1997). TV commercial messages: An untapped video resource for content-based classes. In Picken, Jonathan. (1999). State of the ad: The role of advertisements in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal Volume 53/4: Oxford University Press*
- Duncan, T. (2005). Principles of advertising. *New York: McGraw-Hill/Irvin, Inc.*
- Ennis, R. H. (2002). Goals for a critical thinking curriculum and its assessment. In Kong, Siu C. (2014). Developing information literacy and critical thinking skills through domain knowledge learning in digital classroom: An experience of practicing flipped classroom strategy. *Computer & Education 78 (2014) 160-173.*
- Fill, C. (2009). Marketing communication: interactivity, communities and content (5th Ed.). *England: Prentice Hall.*
- Gut, D. M. (2011). Integrating 21st century skills into the curriculum. In Kong, Siu C. (2014). Developing information literacy and critical thinking skills through domain knowledge learning in digital classroom: An experience of practicing flipped classroom strategy. *Computer & Education 78 (2014) 160-173.*
- Gee, J.P. (2011). How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit. *London: Routledge.*
- Iedema, Rick. (2001). Analyzing film and television: A social semiotic account of hospital: An unhealthy business. In Srikandiati, Novita M & Prijambodo, V. L. (2015). The use of multimodality in "AXE" TV commercials to communicate masculinity. *Magister Scientiae 38: 151- 164.*
- Iedema, Rick. (2003). Multimodality, resemiotization: Extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice. Vol. 2(1): 29-57. *Visual Communication, London: Sage.*

- Kress, Gunther. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London: Routledge.
- Karpova, L. (1999). Consider the Following when Selecting and Using Authentic Materials. *TESOL Matters*, 9 (2), 18.
- Lawrence, K. (1987). The French TV commercial as a pedagogical tool in the classroom. *The French Review*, 60 (6). 835-844.
- Lutcavage, C. 1992. 'Authentic Video in Intermediate. In Picken, Jonathan. (1999). State of the ad: The role of advertisements in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal Volume 53/4: Oxford University Pres.*