

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

As a form of mass communication, advertising is closely linked with the world of commerce and marketing. Advertising, therefore, is a powerful tool for the flow of information from sellers to the buyers. It does not only influence and persuade people to act or believe but also reflects certain aspects of the society's values and structure. In this case, mass media, like newspaper, magazine, television, radio, internet, etc., is used to reach the mass amount of people.

Advertising and promotion are an integral part of our social and economic systems. In our complex society, advertising has evolved into a vital communications system for both consumers and businesses. The ability of advertising and other promotional methods to deliver carefully prepared messages to target audiences has given them a major role in the marketing programs of most organizations. Companies ranging from large multinational corporations to small retailers increasingly rely on advertising and promotion to help them market products and services. In market-based economies, consumers have learned to rely on advertising and other forms of promotion for information they can use in making purchase decisions (Belch, 2010: 5).

For the media, the language it also can be seen as a place of exchange of meaning. The message conveyed in the text will interact with readers so that the

meaning produced. Essentially, advertising is a sign that implied by the producer to the consumer to be, considered and subsequently taken into consideration to make a decision to purchase (use) or not a product. Life style increasingly consumerist society provides an opportunity for manufacturers to compete to offer their products, they are trying to mobilize all the expertise, creativity in advertising as a means of communication create and use a language that is attractive and convincing in order to lure consumers. In this society, the objects of consumption are seen as an expression of self or externalization of the consumer. According to Williamson (in Piliang, 2003: 148): "Consumption provides specific opportunities for creativity, as something toys where all parts have been determined, but the combination doubled Buy".

Semiotics is the study of signs and marking, so it is a discipline that investigates all forms of communication that occurs by means of a 'sign' (signs). The basis of semiotics is the concept of the sign, as far as relating to the human mind entirely composed of signs, so that man by the hand signs to communicate with each other. What kinds of choices make an advertisement highly effective are things worthy to be studied from a linguistic perspective because the language used in advertisement is not similar to the common language people normally find in the storybook, article or any other printed media. Furthermore, the interpretation towards the language of advertisement is not always the same for individuals. That is why people may have different interpretation toward the same objects. It is influenced by the different level of education, economical status, family background, and many else.

Advertising can be perceived and interpreted from different points of view because humans have a remarkable capacity to see things in different ways. A brand can be understood according to the terms of reference used and this refers to the nature or past experience. However advertisement is a set of signs which is interpreted freely. The resulting image can be positive or negative or both, because in principle arbitrary symbols or arbitrary. Verbal sign in the form of a word "car", for example, on an ad is a marker. For readers, this marker raises certain markers or mental concept of the object to which it refers. The object is probably a jeep, SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle), pick-up or car to public transport, depending on the understanding of the reader about the car. Brand used by each car is a sign of verbal symbols used to identify it. If the ad shows a visual signal in the form of an image "car" driving on the road with knee-deep water (flooding iconic sign), it will give a strong sense that the manufacturer has designed it to be able to hit flood (indexical sign). On the other hand, if the same object is pictured on a dusty and a long way run (symbolic sign), it will evoke the meaning of strong and tough car for a long trip. If the object is MPV (Multi Purpose Vehicle) driving with a family within it and it is placed in front of a house (iconic sign), it will give a knowledge sense that the car suits for family needs.

In the beginning, car ads, just like ads for almost every other product, were very informative and they were offering detailed descriptions of cars. A typical car ad from the 50's or the 60's described various car specifications, such as mileage, top speed, engine displacement, and so on. During the 1980's, adverts started to look like short movies, and they weren't just informative any more. Almost every commercial had a joke or two in it, and a funny slogan that would

stick in people's heads long after they've seen the commercial. In the 1990's, most car ads were promoting the technology that you could find in vehicles, describing certain innovations in headlight technology, new and improved suspension and brake systems, and other similar novelties. Throughout the history of the automobile industry in Indonesia, advertising has been an ever-increasing strategy for automobile marketing. In the 1970s, the increasing in various forms of advertising such as magazines, radio broadcasting, and television allowed advertisements to reach a wider audience (Pope, 2013: 3). Marketing gurus know their target audience and are able to construct advertisements that reach out to people based on specific marketing niches. Since people's purchasing behavior is influenced by desires for personal identification and social status, most automobile advertisements focus on cars as desirable self-images. They are selling people their own dream. When many people unite against a brand, a demand for an alternative is created. It is in many ways trendy to be against something, probably because it is a natural way of making a strong statement about who you are and what you believe in. Brands have become our way of talking with each other and we all want to say something and be someone (Engeseth, 2009: 138). The most important changes in automobile advertising started happening after the invention of the Internet. We all know that the Internet changed practically our whole lives, and it's no wonder that it affected the way car makers promote their vehicles. It's pretty easy for companies to advertise their products to millions of people using websites and various social networks. Nowadays, when you see a commercial that is fun and entertaining, and you like to see it again, you visit their website or you go to some video sharing site. On the

other hand, car printed advertisements included the changes on having more pictures or images and less detailed descriptions. People are lured with pictures of detailed pictures of a car, not only from outside view but also from inside to have real image of a car. Advertisers are challenged not only to present information as well as to promote the car through the signs without or less descriptions but also to make it meaningful to people.

This study then would investigate the people's interpretation toward present car advertisements in terms of their signs and patterns of symbolism' and present an analysis about the relationships between sign systems and the contexts of meaning in which they are encountered.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Given the limitations in conducting the research and to generate a focused research, this study is limited to these research problems:

1. How are semiotics used in car advertisements interpreted by people?
2. Why do semiotics used in car advertisements interpreted by people the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of study are

1. to describe and elaborate how semiotics used in car advertisements interpreted by people

2. to reason for why semiotics used in car advertisements interpreted by people the way they do.

1.4 The Scopes of Study

This study applies the concept of the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) proposed by Halliday by describing what thematic progression that can be realized in car advertisement especially in relation to the semiotics theory.

From the two major types of advertisement, broadcast and print advertisement, this analysis is aimed at automobile printed advertisement especially car advertisements taken from a car dealer.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be useful theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the findings are expected to enrich the theory of language communication by getting information about the use of semiotics in advertisement and the way people interpret it.
2. Practically, the findings are expected to be useful for other researchers to conduct research on the basis of SFL, especially in semiotics and interpretation, in which the finding can give significant input in linguistics.