

## Representation of Health Messages in Bear Brand's Advertisement Series Using Barthes' Semiotics Analysis

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**Abstract.** In this digital era, advertisement is a form of communication. Messages can be included in advertisements. One example is the Bear Brand advertisement, which broadcasts health messages during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bear Brand is a milk drink brand. As a brand, it has several advertisements in media. The purpose of this study is to analyze health messages in the Bear Brand New Normal series advertisements. This study uses qualitative research methods. This study analyzes advertisements in the official channel of Bear Brand on YouTube. Purposive sampling is used in this study. This study examines the channel's New Normal ad series. This study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to explain the level of signification of the relationship between the signifier and the signified in the Bear Brand advertisement, as well as to describe the denotative and connotative forms and myths in the advertisement. This study also employs Stuart Hall's representation theory to examine the representation of health messages in advertisements that include both verbal and nonverbal cues. The findings of the study show how health messages are represented in advertisements related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Advertisement, Bear Brand, Health Messages, Roland Barthes, Stuart Hall

### Introduction

Technological developments have been a major influence on the dissemination of information. Advertising is no exception. It is the most popular media in society and has a significant influence in comparison to other forms of mass media. Advertising creativity is related to advertiser competition and the growth of media as an advertising vehicle. Advertisement is one of the best known and most discussed forms of promotion because of its reach (Andrianto, 2018).

The audience will feel directly involved in certain inner situations by presenting moving images, which can bring the audience closer to the broadcasted advertising program (Pondaag, 2013). Advertisements are also used by advertisers to take advantage of opportunities at any time and to convey messages in the advertisements displayed, one of which is health messages. Concerning advertisement, to examine an advertisement from a semiotic perspective, we can dissect it through a system of signs and markers in advertisement. Advertisement employs a sign system comprised of significations, both verbal and in the form of icons. Advertisement also uses index mockups, especially in radio, television, and film advertisements. The study of the sign system in an advertisement is the object. The object of the advertisement is the thing advertised, and the term sign in an advertisement is an object being advertised (Sopianah, 2010). In a series of new normal Bear Brand advertisements designed to follow the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bear Brand advertisements are expected to persuade the public about maintaining health in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors are interested in researching how the representation of health messages displayed in Bear Brand's new normal series advertisements on YouTube social media, on the Bear Brand

channel which has 33.3 thousand subscribers in the #jangankendor Keep Clean series with 11 million views, Keep Wearing Masks with 3.9 million views. This is followed by the Keep Your Distance ad clip series, which has 4.1 million views.

According to Zuhri (2010 p.2), advertisement based on its purpose is divided into commercial ads and public service ads. Commercial advertising is also known as business advertising because it aims to generate profits through increased sales. Additionally, public service advertisements are used to inform, persuade, or educate audiences. Many companies are serving COVID-19-related advertisements in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the Bear Brand advertisement is packaged in a very informative public service advertisement video that contains health messages. Bear Brand is displaying a health message to the public in order for them to stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers attempted to analyze health messages using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in the system of signs, markers, and myths in this study. The aim of this study is to answer the following question: How is the message representation in the Bear Brand new normal series, associated with health communication? The aim of this study is also to analyze health messages in the Bear Brand's new normal series of advertisement on from the YouTube platform of the Bear Brand product.

Advertisement is a form of marketing that aims to promote products to the target audience so that a product can be accepted and consumed by consumers. Advertisement displays a reality that is close to the target audience and brings out the good value of a product (Djamereng, 2018). Sponsors of advertisement are frequently companies who desire to promote their merchandise or services. Advertisement is differentiated from public relations. An advertiser normally will pay for and has control over the message. It is differentiated from private selling in that the message is nonpersonal, i.e., no longer directed to a particular person (Adhikary, 2017). Advertisement is communicated through a variety of digital media platforms such as YouTube, which can Advertisement engage audiences for product.

To analyze the message representation in an advertisement, researchers used Roland Barthes Semiotics. The first stage of signification is the relationship between the signifier in a signal to external reality. Barthes called it denotation, which is the most tangible means of the sign (Situmeang, 2017). Thus, in Barthes' concept, connotative symptoms now not only have additional meanings, but also include both parts of the denotative symptoms that underpin their existence. In this case, denotation is related to closed which means (Situmeang, 2017). Connotation is the value of the second layer in the order of signification; it describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the reader's emotions or thoughts, as well as the cultural values. In different words, denotation is what the sign describes to an object, whereas connotation is how it describes it. Myths are stories about some aspect of reality or natural phenomena. As a result, when a sign with a connotative meaning evolves into a denotative meaning, the denotative meaning appears as a myth. The authors determine the semiotic analysis according to Roland Barthes, specifically the "two orders of signification". This is because, according to Barthes, as cited by Situmeang (2017), semiotics "two orders of signification" is a science that studies the meaning or signification in language or symptoms that are divided into two levels of signification, particularly the levels of denotation and degree of connotation, as well as aspects of signification that have different meanings, particularly myths.

According to Djamereng (2018) in "Analisis Semiotik Periklanan Televisi (Iklan Wardah dan Total Almeera Advertising)," if someone is interested in conducting a study using the semiotic theory method, the main task is to observe a symptom or social phenomenon that occurs in society and people's lives, through the various signs they see, signs that are actually a representation of symptoms that have certain criteria. This is one

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of the authors' strategies in analyzing data through observations from Bear Brand advertisements to find findings that refer to the theory of representation of health messages in these advertisements.

According to Rahayu and Afrianto (2017), who studied the representation of the image of men in Gatsby pomade styling ads in Roland Barthes' semiotics study, based on the results of the analysis through the Semiotics approach to denotative and connotative signs in advertisements in television media, it can be concluded that they form a representation of the image of a man, that is masculine. The authors of the previous study discussed the use of denotative and connotative signs in the formation of health message representations.

According to Hall in (as cited in Arindita, 2017) in his book entitled "Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practice", Representation connects meaning and language to culture and "... Representation is an essential part of process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of culture through representation, a meaning is produced and exchanged between members of society." Therefore, it can be easily concluded that according to Hall in Arindita (2017), representation produces meaning through language. In addition, there are two processes of representation according to Hall. The first is mental representation, that is, the concept of "something" in everyone's mind (concept map). Mental representation remains abstract. The second is "language", which plays an important role in the construction of meaning. Abstract concepts that exist in the human mind must be translated into a common "language" so that humans can associate their concepts and ideas of things with certain symbols (Rahayu & Afrianto, 2017).

Representation can be defined as a photograph of something contained in a lifestyle that is described through a medium. According to Chris Barker, representation is a social construction that requires us to investigate the formation of textual meaning and how meaning is produced in a variety of contexts. Cultural representations and meanings have a materiality of their own. They are associated with sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, books, magazines, and television shows. They are created, displayed, used, and comprehended in specific social contexts (Manesah, 2016). Representation is a relationship between principles and language that refers to either the real world of an object, actuality, or the imaginary world of fictitious objects, people, or events. This means that it is created through language from concepts in the idea of a meaning giver (Manesah, 2016).

From the literature review, what makes this research significant is that it examines advertisements that package health representations, which are very important points to be proclaimed, and as a strategy in educating the public, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, by analyzing the signs implemented in advertisements. utilizing semiotic analysis

## **Methodology**

In this study, the authors used a constructivist research paradigm with a qualitative method. Constructivism opposes the positivist viewpoint, which separates the difficulty from the object of communication. Constructivism regards the subject as a central aspect of conversation, activities, and social relationships. Statements of purpose help to understand, prepare, and bring communication to life. Every announcement is essentially a meaning-making act, particularly one of self-formation and the disclosure of the speaker's identity. As a result, evaluation can be performed in order to dismantle the distinct intentions and meanings of communication. According to constructivism, reality is determined by the mind's construction. The research used in this study is descriptive in nature. Because advertisement is a signal given by a communicator, the writer focuses

on the signal in the Bear Brand's YouTube advertisement. The Bear Brand milk packaging product, which is the object of study, makes descriptive analysis easier.

This research used documents as the primary source of data. The documentation is completed by downloading a video from the Bear Brand serial advertisement, which is 48 seconds long and is divided into three scenes, each of which lasts 16 seconds and is broadcast on Indonesian private television. The authors obtained the video from the website [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and used it as data for analysis. The Bear Brand advertising video explains and describes what steps and methods need to be prepared to deal with the new normal era situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the secondary data, the author conducts a literature study by reading, understanding, studying, and analyzing existing documents and data sources through scientific works, the internet, and forms of scientific publications and studying the thesis of other authors to support the results of this study.

The analytical method used in this study is a purposive sampling technique, with the advertising selection criteria being Bear Brand product series ads with the hashtag #jangankendor because the ads sampled must provide education about health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Renewal of advertisements is one of the criteria because these advertisements are broadcast during the pandemic to remind the public about health protocols. This Bear Brand product advertisement is not only broadcasted on the YouTube platform, but it is also broadcasted on television media, ensuring that the information is distributed evenly throughout Indonesia. This study then employs semiotic analysis. Semiotics is the study of signs, their functions, and the production of meaning. (Tinarbuko, 2008).

## **Results and Discussion**

The authors describe the findings and discussions using several versions of the Bear Brand advertisement series issued by YouTube Bear Brand itself in this COVID-19 pandemic situation, with the results of the explanation of the findings that preceded the discovery of the previous signs in the advertisement. The analysis of the advertisement is then discussed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The discussion then moves on to the representation of the health messages contained in the Bear Brand commercial advertisement itself. The study aims to identify the signs shown in the Bear Brand series advertisements during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the representation of health messages in the ads. This study used qualitative methods to approach Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis with the results of research, through three stages of Roland Barthes semiotics, namely the stages of Messages linguistics or the word in the ad, messages encoded or connotations, iconic messages that are not encoded (denotation) as seen from the signified and signifier, and then myths. The authors discovered health messages based on their findings about the meaning of these signs. The first is the health message highlighted in the advertisement, which is about the implementation of social distancing "keep your distance." The second is that health messages are conveyed in these Bear Brand ads commercials by instructing viewers to "keep wearing a mask." The third message is the intention of washing hands as an implication of the importance of always "keeping clean." The fourth message is that health communication campaigns could play a central or significant "do not slack off" role in maintaining health throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the last health message is to follow health protocols and to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes Bear Brand Advertisement "New Normal Series Advertisement" is discussed below.

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Figure 1: Bear Brand ads: keep your distance!

### *Always Keep Your Distance*

The health message highlighted in the advertisement is about the implementation of social distancing, such as the Indonesian Minister of Health's regulation that public places and facilities are one of the loci of community activity that will support the economy's sustainability and can potentially become the locus of COVID-19 spread. As a result, a health protocol is required when conducting activities in public places and facilities (Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020)<sup>1</sup>. The meaning of denotation based on the denotation that is interpreted is a group of people waiting at the bus stop while keeping their distance and wearing masks. The connotation in this scene explains that the scene depicted in the advertisement is to explain the new atmosphere that occurred when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, namely the rules for implementing health protocols in daily activities, such as in the scene where three people are waiting at the bus stop. by following health protocols and keeping a distance specified in the ad's screenshot image

Then, there are scenes that show that there is no difference between them in terms of the clothes they wear. The three people were seen carrying out the government's appeal to follow health protocols by keeping a safe distance from each other in public spaces near bus stops. Behind the three people is a signifier, a Bear Brand milk advertisement poster that explains that people must keep their distance, wear a mask, and carry out daily activities that comply with the health protocol. They must also maintain their health by consuming packaged milk Bear Brand. The myth is that even if you have worn a mask in accordance with the Indonesian Ministry of Health's standard health protocol, you must still maintain a distance of one or two meters to avoid the COVID-19 virus and to avoid being slack in complying with the health protocol regulations (Kemenkes RI as cited in Handayani, Hadi, Isbaniah, Burhan & Agustin, 2020). COVID-19 can be transmitted from human to human through coughing or sneezing droplets, according to Indonesian health minister rules based on scientific evidence. Individuals who have close contact with COVID-19 patients, including those who care for COVID-19 patients, are most at risk of contracting this disease (Kemenkes RI as cited in Handayani, Hadi, Isbaniah, Burhan & Agustin, 2020). One of the most important things to do to prevent transmission is to keep our distance. This is frequently echoed by the government, which took one of the first steps by disseminating information to the public on Social Distancing and Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement. This step aims to break the chain of transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic by requiring individuals to maintain a safe distance of at least two meters from other people, avoid direct contact with other people, and avoid mass social events (Buana D.R. as cited in Handayani, Hadi,



**Figure 2: Bear Brand Ads: Keep Wearing a Masks!**

### ***Always Keep Wearing a Mask***

The second picture depicts the meaning of the signified denotation through a young man who is between the gaps in the pile of Bear Brand milk products and is still wearing a mask. The connotation discovered that the meaning of the young man is clarified through the screenshot image, and in this signifier is that a mask worn as a guide when going shopping or doing other activities in daily life must still use a mask as a form of complying with health protocols. The myth is that if people do not wear masks while shopping, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted and spread easily. The use of clinical masks is one of the preventive measures that can help to limit the spread of certain viral-caused respiratory diseases, such as COVID-19 (WHO as cited in Putri, 2020). Therefore, the campaign for health communication is important to influence the audience especially for Bear Brand commercial ads. With the World Health Organization's recommendations that have been channeled through Bear Brand advertisements through explanations in commercial broadcasts to continue to wear masks, it has indirectly implemented the function of health communication from an intrapersonal point of view in health conversations by providing views of special orientations, expectations, and personal tendencies to adapt. with current conditions. Thus, this will be a different method in providing health communicator orientation (Skemen as cited in Junaedi, 2018). This is as described in this study to find out about the health messages implied in Bear Brand advertising, where the product serves as a communicator of health messages about the new normal era.



**Figure 3: Bear Brand Ads: Keep Clean!!**



### ***Always Keep Clean***

The signification that can be seen from the third scene in the picture is washing hands in the sink with running water. The intention to wash hands is an implication as a frame of awareness of the importance of maintaining health, particularly by maintaining cleanliness, as outlined in the writing-style pictures. This is due to the importance of cleanliness in maintaining personal health. Washing hands after shopping outside the home may now be required as a form of health compliance. The drawing's invention clearly shows that washing hands with soap under running water can mean following and complying with health conventions. The myth is that people can avoid the COVID-19 virus and stay healthy by washing their hands. These myths are supported by the Ministry of Health PADK (2020). People are expected to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and running water. They must thoroughly wash all parts of their hands, including the backs of their hands, wrists, between fingers, and nails.



**Figure 4: Bear Brand Ads: Product Sign (Do not slack off)**

### ***Do not slack off***

There is a sign denotation in the fourth scene of the picture that shows a woman shopping with a trolley and looking at Bear Brand dairy products and added the words do not slack off. The condition of the woman carrying a trolley in the market represents the connotation. The myth is that in order to draw attention to the packaging shown to make it easier for shoppers to find the product among other packaged dairy products, she must wear a mask even if she is shopping alone and not in close proximity to many people. The product packaging for Bear Brand milk is red and white. This is a myth that has arisen as a result of a health communication campaign with the message of the importance of maintaining a healthy body by drinking Bear Brand products. Campaigns for health communication can play an important or significant role in health education and social promotion. The relationship between the red and white packaging color and the myth is that the color describes the characteristics of Bear Brand beverage products, with the myth that red easily attracts attention because it is one of the brightest colors, and is combined with white which represents the color of Bear Brand milk drinks. Communication campaign activities are not present in all health education and social promotion programs. In other words, health education, social promotion, and health communication campaigns are frequently interchangeable; however, they are not always. As a result, the specific considerations of communication campaigns must not be obscured or overshadowed by broad principles of health education or social promotion (Zhao, 2020).



**Figure 5: Bear Brand Ads: Vaccine Card**

### ***Do Not Forget to Vaccinate***

In the fifth image, the scene depicts a woman raising her hand and sitting on a chair, which can be seen from the scene. The scene's connotative meaning is that on the right side of the woman's chest, she lifts a vaccine card that is red and white as a marker that explains that she has been vaccinated. The myth is that even if people have been immunized, they should not slack off. People who do not follow health protocols are still at risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. According to Kemenkes RI (as cited in Handayani, Hadi, Isbaniah, Burhan, and Agustin, 2020), vaccines do not provide us with complete immunity to COVID-19. However, if we contract COVID-19, the impact will be mitigated. As a result, even though they have been vaccinated, we advise the public to continue doing 3M (mask wearing, hand-washing, social distancing).

### ***Health Message Through Advertisement***

The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many societal lifestyle changes, particularly those related to health. The community is dealing with a pandemic situation that has no end date. Although this virus may not last forever, the current changes have the potential to be incorporated into new systems and norms prevailing in society. One of the changes that occur in society is the implementation of health protocols. To prevent the virus from spreading, health protocol rules are put in place. The government employs a variety of methods to disseminate health protocols to the public, which include the 5M, namely social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, crowd avoidance, and mobility limiting (Kemenkes RI as cited in Fadhli, 2021).

The purpose of public service advertisements is to benefit public education. The message to be conveyed in this case is how to apply health protocols in pandemic situations. In practice, many people still believe in advertisement myths about health protocols during the pandemic. Health protocols are frequently considered as a way to avoid the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission, despite the fact that there are still many points of COVID-19 transmission that the public must consider. According to Dr. Yulia Sofiatin, dr., SpPD, Lecturer of the Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Padjadjaran, several indicators, in addition to health protocols, must be considered to minimize virus transmission, such as ensuring that air circulation around us is not disrupted. This is to prevent viruses from surviving longer in aerosol processes, particularly in enclosed spaces (Maulana, 2021). The use of masks and hand washing cannot completely eliminate the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. According to research, washing hands diligently can reduce the risk of transmitting viruses, including the Coronavirus, by 35%, and wearing a mask can reduce the risk of transmission of the Coronavirus by 45%-75% depending on the type of mask we wear (Handoyo, 2021).

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Aside from the government's efforts and the growing myth of health messages, all aspects of society are competing to contribute to the spread of health protocol rules. One of them is Bear Brand packaged milk products' information dissemination in the form of product advertisements packaged in the 2021 new normal series. The advertisement is made up of several short videos ranging in length from 7 to 16 seconds, each with a narration in the form of a health message explaining the rules of health protocols. Each advertisement conveys a different health message. As the narrator says in the short video "Keep Wearing Masks!" with a duration of 7 seconds, "Do not slack off," keep wearing a mask. This expression means that no matter what happens, we must remember to wear masks in the midst of a pandemic situation like today. Following that, a video of the same length with the title "Keep Wearing Masks" reveals nearly the same narration, namely "Do not slack off, keep Clean." The health message that Bear Brand wishes to convey through the advertisement is that, regardless of the situation or condition, people should remember to follow the health protocol rules as a preventive measure in order to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

### Conclusions

Denotative meaning can be simply defined as the true meaning of a word, or according to Barthes, it is the process by which a sign describes an object. Health messages are packaged in the form of public service advertisements in Bear Brand product advertisements released in 2021 in the new normal series. The denotative meaning displayed in this advertisement is a description of the pandemic atmosphere by implementing health protocols in the advertisement's narrative of health messages. Health messages in advertisements take the form of narratives that educate the public on how to implement health protocols to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The story takes the form of advice to the audience to keep their distance, wear masks, and always be clean. Every scene in the advertisement that follows health protocols becomes the true meaning (denotative) that the advertiser wishes to communicate to the audience.

Furthermore, the researchers began to analyze the meaning further up to the connotative stage, which is the process of how the sign provides a description to show the value of the second stage after the denotative, according to Barthes' description in the first stage in the signification of the relationship between the signifiers. Complementary meanings demonstrate that the relationship between the signifier and the signifier in a signal with external reality is the first stage of signification. Meanwhile, the second stage of content signification, in this case the Bear Brand new normal series, is demonstrated by the myth that implementing health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic will prevent the public from spreading the virus. The current health protocol serves only as a precautionary measure to reduce the risk of infection from the virus. As a result, the community is still at risk, albeit with a lower probability ratio. As a health communication program, the ideas or information conveyed must be clear and unambiguous. Narrative messages must be organized in such a way that they have the same meaning to a broad audience.

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