

# THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN INSTANT NOODLE ADVERTISEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Advertising is an activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services. In advertising, the messenger tries to build a communication with users of products or services. There are a lot of similar products, so the producers must think about how to promote their products in some effective ways. Instant noodles are one of the products that have a lot of variants and produced by different producers. We are interested in analyzing four instant noodle variants that have been advertised in almost similar time. Those instant noodles are Bakmi Mewah, Mie Sedaap White Curry, Indomie kuah and Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Telur. Those products have different brand ambassadors that deliver different message in their advertisement. This is a qualitative research using Pierce semiotic analysis that studies meaning from their icon, index and symbol. Bakmi Mewah with Indi Barends accentuates product hygiene. Mie Sedaap White Curry with Syahrini describes luxury. Indomie kuah in Nicholas Saputra edition portrays the adventurer and Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Telur advertised by Chicco Jerikho express masculinity. The characteristics of brand ambassador have been selected in line with the message to be conveyed.

**Keywords:** Meaning, Instant Noodle, Advertisement, Brand Ambassador

## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is an activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services. In advertising, the messenger tries to build a communication with users of products or services by non-personal through paid media. The aim of advertising is to stimulate market demand advertising, it helps to form a long-term sustainable image of the product. The origin of the ad word is from the Latin *advertere* (advertising) that is to run toward, while the functional translation of the advertising target is changing the minds of consumers to buy (Boove & Arens, 1992; Kasali, 1992; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). There are a lot of similar products, so the producers must think about the way to promote their products in different ways. Instant noodles are one of the products that have a lot of variants and produced by different producers. We are interested in analyzing four instant noodle variants that have been advertised in almost similar time. Those instant noodles are Bakmi Mewah, Mie Sedaap White Curry, Indomie kuah and Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Telur. Among many instant noodles that are sold in the market, there are three big companies that compete in the instant noodle selling and advertisement. Those companies are PT. Indofood Sukses Makmur, Tbk., PT. Wingsfood, Tbk. and recently there is a newcomer which is PT. Mayora Indah Tbk with their product Bakmi Mewah.

Based on the data collected by the World Instant Noodles Association (WINA), the total consumption of instant noodles in Indonesia is estimated to reach 14.8 billion packs in 2016. This figure increased from previous year of consumption which is 13.2 billion packs. In addition, in 2017 is projected to increase again up to 16 billion packs (Katadata, 2017). Indofood Sukses Makmur is still the leader of instant noodle market in Indonesia. Based on Bloomberg data, Indofood Sukses Makmur controls the market share of approximately 70.7 percent of instant noodles. Although Mie Sedap (Wingsfood production) began to

take the attention of local instant noodle lovers, its market share is still far below Indomie Indofood production (Katadata, 2017). Although Indomie market is far above the others, Indofood still advertises their products. Thus, the function of advertising is not only a brand awareness for marketing function but also can become a media for social, economic and communicating function (Kotler, 2002).

The interesting thing about these advertising are those products have a different brand ambassadors that deliver the different message in their advertisement. Brand ambassador is a person who is hired by a company to endorse a products. The selection of ambassador to represent the product should be considered carefully. There are at least six characteristics of a successful brand ambassadors which includes having knowledge about product marketing, established online presence, high level of professionalism, natural leadership skill, enthusiasm of building and growing relationships and the ability to collect feedback and provide innovative insight (Kapadia, 2015). The importance of brand ambassador is not only to promote the product but also to communicate something meaningful. Therefore, instant noodles are no longer products that are purchased to meet basic needs of food. Consumers are tempted to try new products or even to leave their old products. Due to the tight market competition, producers creatively create messages that are expected to be remembered and appealing to consumers. The purpose of this study is to reveal the construction of meaning in instant noodle advertisements that mostly taken for granted and also the communication that being delivered by brand ambassador.

## **METHODS**

This research is qualitative research using Charles Sanders Peirce semiotic analysis that studies meaning from their icon, index, and symbol. Peirce identified three levels or properties for signs, which can be mapped on to his triangular model. He labels these properties firstness, secondness and thirdness. When we see from the representamen relationship with its object, namely "standing for" relation, signs are classified by Peirce became an icon (icon), index (index), and symbol (symbol). According to Peirce, this is the second triconomy. Secondness is the level of fact. It is the physical relation of one thing to another (Budiman, 2005; Budiman, 2011).

An icon resembles a sign. A photograph of someone could be described as an iconic sign in that it physically resembles the thing it represents. It is also possible to have iconic words, where the sound resembles the thing it represents. An index represents direct link between the sign and the object. Traffic signs in the street are index signs: they have a direct link to the physical reality of where they are placed. In symbol, these signs have no logical connection between the sign and what it means. The arbitrary and conventional signs by Peirce are referred specifically as symbols. They rely exclusively on the reader's ability of understanding the connection between the sign and its meaning (Noth, 1995; Chandler, 2007; Budiman, 2005; Budiman, 2011).

Semiotic is included in constructionist approach. This approach recognizes the public, social character of language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of the language can fix the meaning of the language. In this analyses, we choose instant noodle advertisement because we see the strength of the message, the ambassador selection and also the construction of meaning. Even though in semiotic individual users of the language can fix the meaning but we take this instant noodle advertisements as a study case in visual semiotics class. This could be an interesting topic for students since all of them eat instant noodle and they all know the brands of instant noodle. Moreover, in the era of 2016-2017, those advertisements become booming and compete with each other. The first analyses, we ask students in a group of five to six students to analyse one of instant noodle advertisements in about 30 minutes. They

categorise which one is the icon, index, and symbol and what kind of message that the producers try to deliver. The result of these analyses was not so satisfying because students have difficulties in classifying the icon, index and symbol, so we try the second method. We watch one of the advertisement together and have a big class discussion, and we as lecturer guide them to categorised which one is the icon, index, and symbol. This method is quite successful since they are very enthusiastic to analyse the meaning and very active to answer the question. Then, we found out that our analysis is matched to our discussion.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Bakmi Mewah Advertisement

In the first analysis, we take a look at the Bakmi Mewah advertisement. Indi Barends shows in the first scene of advertisement introducing about Bakmi Mewah. She asks the audience to come into one house which looks nice and clean. Inside the house, there is a man, woman and a girl who seems to be their daughter. These three people represent the family. The interior of the house is painted in white, symbolize the cleanliness. Indi Barends then hold Bakmi Mewah packaging and the picture depict the fresh meat from the impermeable packaging. Then there is an icon of ready-made instant noodle. The smoke that comes out from the noodle is an index that the noodle is fresh and warm. They eat it with the chopstick which is practice and similar with eating noodle in the restaurant, particularly a Chinese restaurant. If we take a look at the father shirt which is white and mother and daughter shirt which is pastel, it is signifying something clean. Moreover, this meaning is supported by the shade of white, and the clean kitchen and dining room. There are also a voice-over “*Nggak Ninggal di Tenggorokan*”, “*Jadi Tenang Ngasih ke Keluargaku*” and “*Enak Ma*”, the overall meaning seems to tell that the Bakmi Mewah is a hygienic and delicious noodle. At the end of the advertisement, there is a tagline “*Pertama dengan Daging Ayam Asli Seenak Restoran*” means this noodle as delicious as restaurant noodle. They equate the delicious taste of a Bakmi Mewah with a restaurant noodle because the menu is similar to chicken noodles at a restaurant. If we take a look at Indi Barends as brand ambassador, we can relate her with other healthy product, professional master of ceremony and a house wife which prioritize her family health and well-being.



Figure 1. Bakmi Mewah Advertisement

Table 1. Icon, Index, Symbol in Bakmi Mewah Advertisement

ICON	INDEX	SYMBOL
Packaging	Clean and white house	Indi Bahrends
Ready-made instant noodle	Modern and clean kitchen and dining room	Chopstick
	Father, mother, daughter	White color
	Natural color	<i>“Nggak Ninggal di Tenggorokan”</i>
	Smoke	<i>“Jadi Tenang Ngasih ke Keluargaku”</i>
		<i>“Enak Ma”</i>
		<i>“Daging Ayam Asli Seenak Restoran”</i>

### Mie Sedaap White Curry Advertiserment

The close up face of Syahrini become the initial appearance of Mie Sedaap White Curry advertisement. The camera is zoom out showing that Syahrini is walking on a desert. In front of her, there are marching soldiers in armor but wearing shorts. The army's outfit symbolizes the formality but the shorts represents a relaxed outfit. Meanwhile, Syahrini is wearing formal white long shirt with high shoulders and tail. This kind of cloth depicts luxury. She is also wearing a sailor hat which means that she is the leader. Syahrini gesture pointed to the Mie Sedaap packaging. Then, the picture shows the ready-made instant noodle with meat and vegetables which of course doesn't exist in real white curry instant noodle. Then, there are some ingredients like chili, herbs that become an index of spicy food. A coconut sauce become an index of curry ingredients. The background of desert which is dry, hot support the construction of meaning from spicy food.

Then, the camera take a picture of Syahrini with the soldiers that serve her white curry instant noodle. First, Syahrini eat them with pleasure, then followed by another man that wearing a suit that simbolizes luxury. There is also western man eating instant noodle which emphasize east and west culture. The way they eat shows that the instant noodle is very delicious, to a point when the man rise up his bowl as if he wants for some more noodle. Then again there is a picture of ready-made instant noodle and the camera shows that Syahrini eats the instant noodle together with the soldiers that resembles togetherness. The tagline *“Bikin Lidah Menari-Nari”* as if to strengthen the meaning that the noodles sedaap white curry is delicious and spicy. Mie Sedaap White Curry Advertisement is the only advertisement that uses a jingle that that the lyric describes about the taste of white curry. Syahrini as brand ambassador have to sing the jingle in the entire advertisement. All over the advertisement, producers put Mie Sedaap logo to emphasize the brand and at the end of jingle Syahrini mentions *“dari Wingsfood”* as the source of authority while she is holding Mie Sedaap flag and her left hand in the position of salute. We can see that Syahrini as brand ambassador is phenomenal, as she always tries to show her luxurious manner anytime and anywhere. Overall, even though this advertisement is trying to deliver a message about the deliciousness of Mie Sedaap White Curry, in our point of view, Syahrini is successful in showing the luxury of the product through her appearance.



Figure 2. Mie Sedaap White Curry Advertisement

Table 2. Icon, Index, Symbol in Mie Sedaap White Curry Advertisement

ICON	INDEX	SYMBOL
Car	Desert	Syahrini penyanyi
Properties	Smoke	Men in army uniform
Packaging	Herbs	Short pants
Ready-made instant noodle	Chili	White shirt
		Sailor hat
		Suit
		Flag
		Mie Sedaap Logo
		“Bikin Lidah Menari-Nari”
		“dari Wingsfood”

### Indomie Kuah Advertisement

The sunrise in the mountain describes the beauty of Indonesian nature. There are a couple of young man and woman who are running for a break to the trees, towards the lake. It can become an index of the dynamic and beauty of nature. Then, the camera highlight a close up at Nicholas Saputra who is sitting on public transportation called *bemo*. Along the street to the mountain there is an Indomie banner, it shows that Indomie can be found everywhere even in remote areas. Nicholas Saputra who is sitting in the *bemo* with his friends shows simplicity. There are also traditional puppet, *wayang golek* inside the *bemo* and also a sticker that is written about one area in West Java. It shows us that they are going to a mountain area around West Java. They are also shows the mountain climbing activity and enjoying the sunrise.



In the next scene, Nicholas Saputra is drawing the mountain. There is one package of Indomie kuah next to the drawing. It means that Indomie is a faithful accompany. Then in the luxurious kitchen, Nicholas Saputra cook the Indomie kuah, then he also cook Indomie in open air area. It tells us that Indomie is easy to be cooked anywhere even though for a man. Indomie is easy to enjoy for travelers. Then at the end of the scene it shows that Nicholas Saputra consumes Indomie kuah with his friends and alone. There is also a bicycle that accompanying him, that represents an adventurous personality. Nicholas Saputra, in this advertisement telling about himself and Indomie kuah is successful in bringing himself as a figure of an adventurer. The tagline “*Bikin Santai Makin Hangat*” displayed simultaneously with several variants of Indomie kuah describes that Indomie kuah is delicious if it is served warm. This tagline also seems suitable with Nicholas Saputra whose personality is calm and cool.



Figure 3. Indomie Kuah Advertisement

Table 3. Icon, Index, Symbol in Indomie Kuah Advertisement

ICON	INDEX	SYMBOL
Packaging	Mountain, lake	Nicholas Saputra
Ready-made instant noodle	Sunrise	Backpack
	Trees	Mountain climber
	Jacket and scarf	Public transportation ( <i>Bemo</i> )
	Drawing	Indomie with the drawing
	Smoke	Bicycle
		Sofa
		“ <i>Bikin Santai Makin Hangat</i> ”

## Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Advertisement

Chicco Jerikho is seen sitting on a big motorcycle, he is wearing black leather jacket that symbolise masculinity. His appearance with his long hair and thin mustache support his macho looks. He is holding a white chicken and try to remove her egg. He wink which indicates that he is succeeding. He emphasizes that special instant noodle must have eggs. Then, with the open packaging, he smells the noodle to show that it taste good and fresh. A boiled chicken and a red onion become an index of the two main ingredients.

In the next scene, Chicco Jericko is cooking the noodle with his exaggerated style. He seems to show that cooking instant noodle is an easy things to do. He breaks the egg, and suddently in the bowl there are several eggs. The eggs are processed to be like the one in the instant noodles. Then there is a picture of ready-made Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang with more variety of topping like chicken, onion, tomato, etc. that doesn't exist in real intant noodle. Then, the advertisement shows again Chicco Jerikho eating noodle in the extreme way. The smoke becomes an index of warm and fresh. He clached hands and say "Recommended", it strenghtens the message for the consumers to consume the noodle. Chicco Jerikho mentions "*dari Wingsfood*" as the source of authority while the pictures show a white chicken and packaging of Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang in a flexible packaging and also a cup. The tagline "*Sedaapnya Tak Tergantikan*" have two meanings, one is describe about the brand and second about delicious taste of Mie Sedaap which is irreplaceable. With the dominant color tone which is black and also the figure of Chicco Jerikho in his appearance, we can say that he tries to express his masculinity.



Figure 4. Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Advertisement

Table 4. Icon, Index, Symbol in Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Advertisement

ICON	INDEX	SYMBOL
Packaging	Chicken	Chicco Jerikho Actor
Ready-made instant noodle	Eggs	Big motorcycle
	Smoke	Leather Jacket
		Winked
		Long Hair
		Thin Mustache
		Chopstick
		Clenched Hands
		“Recommended”
		“ <i>dari Wingsfood</i> ”
		“ <i>Tak Tergantikan</i> ”

## CONCLUSION

All instant noodle advertisements run within 30 seconds. Most of visual and verbal elements serve as symbols. There are visual elements that always appear on all instant noodle advertisements, like logo of the instant noodle or company logo, packaging of instant noodle, brand ambassador that appears in the beginning of advertisement and tagline at the end of advertisement. There is always a scene in which the brand ambassador is eating instant noodle preceded by scenes of smelling the warmth of instant noodles or vice versa. The noodle dish is exaggerated with the addition of chicken meat, chicken eggs, onions, vegetables that are mostly not available in instant noodles. Color influences a nuance to the meaning construct. The characteristics brand ambassador has been selected in line with the message to be conveyed. Uniquely, there is no female brand ambassador who is described cooking, the cooking scene is portrayed by male ambassador. This illustrates that instant noodle cooking is practical, easy to do even by men who living independently and seldom cook.

Bakmi Mewah’s tagline is “*Pertama dengan Daging Ayam Asli Seenak Restaurant*”. The tagline of Mie Sedaap White Curry is “*Bikin Lidah Menari-Nari*”. Indomie kuah with the tagline “*Bikin Santai Makin Hangat*”. Meanwhile, Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang presents with the tagline “*Sedapnya Tak Tergantikan.*” All the taglines try to say that the noodle taste delicious. However the construction of meaning visually is not always in line with the construction of verbal meanings. Bakmi Mewah with Indi Barends accentuates product hygiene. Mie Sedaap White Curry with Syahrini describes luxury. Indomie kuah in Nicholas Saputra edition portrays the adventurer and Mie Sedaap Ayam Bawang Telur advertised by Chicco Jerikho expresses masculinity.

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