

The Denotative and Connotative Meanings on the Advertisement of iPhone 13 *Relax, It's iPhone*

Verenia Vivian Yip, Setefanus Suprajitno

English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University,
Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, INDONESIA
Email: a11190060@john.petra.ac.id, steph@petra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

A creative and innovative advertisement is required by a company to attract customers. So, advertisers must utilize an attractive technique to convince the viewers to buy their products and they need to deliver the messages to the customers. To deliver the messages, advertisers employ semiotic modes such as visual mode, linguistic mode, and gestural mode. We analyze the denotative and connotative meanings as expressed through the semiotic resources used and the messages delivered in the iPhone 13 *Relax, It's iPhone* video advertisement. We use the theory of the process of signification by Chandler (2017) and semiotic mode as supporting theory. The denotative and connotative meanings of the advertisement is that the iPhone 13 has three features namely water-resistance, long battery life, and durability. The messages that these advertisements create is a brand myth, that is, people do not have to worry when they use iPhone 13 in an unfavorable situation.

Keywords: advertisement, connotative meanings, denotative meanings, semiotic resources

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a type of social strategy intended to persuade people to buy and consume certain products. Today, because of the growing sophistication of statistical information-gathering techniques, it is possible for advertisers to target audiences based on information such as where people live, how much money they make, their educational background, and other factors to verify whether they are susceptible to or inclined to buy particular products. Danesi (2004) explains that the word advertising comes from the medieval Latin verb *advertere*, which means to attract attention to something. This means that advertising is a kind of technique that helps a company to attract customers to pay attention to what they sell. Danesi (2004) further explains that advertisers are also one of the most innovative users of emerging technologies. Because young people are highly skilled Internet users, advertisers are utilizing this new medium in innovative ways that are pushing advertising techniques in novel and exciting directions. Advertising is the strategic promotion of products or services to the general public with the objective of attracting the attention of people and increasing the number of sales for the products or services in question (Petley, 2003, as cited in Rehman et al., 2019).

Nowadays, advertising uses various techniques to attract customers. One of the advertisements that uses attractive techniques is Apple's products. As one of the most famous brands in the world, Apple has its own ways to attract customers with its advertisements. Apple is always regarded as one of the world's most successful companies and brands because it continuously markets high-quality products (Luke & Emmett, 2021). According to Jobs (n.d.), as cited in Luke & Emmett (2021), Apple's advertising should portray their core values that "people with passion can change the world for the better" (p. 37). Jobs's first marketing campaign, called "Think Different," showed how he came up with his best products. It was the first of Apple's ground-breaking marketing campaigns and an emotional account of why Jobs produced the innovative products he did (Benedetto, & Kim, 2016, as cited in Luke & Emmett,

2021). “Advertising is simple and advanced, innovative, and very eye-catching. Normal advertisements are annoying to watch, but Apple’s ads do not make people feel that way” (He, 2021, p. 672). Thus, it is true that Apple is one of the most innovative companies in the world.

This paper deals with iPhone 13’s video advertisements. We choose to analyze iPhone 13’s advertisements because of its innovative company. Apple is consistently ranked as one of the most innovative companies on a global scale (Forbes, 2015, as cited in Zhang et al., 2016), Apple is consistently ranked as one of the most innovative companies on a global scale. In its ads for the iPhone 13’s *Relax, It’s iPhone*, Apple shows its innovation in promoting its products and the iPhone 13 is different from the previous iPhone series because of its amazing improvements. The new iPhone 13 series from Apple includes enhancements such as a longer battery life, incredible durability thanks to the front cover’s Ceramic Shield design, and a water resistance rating of IP68, which is the highest in the industry, and they are highlighting the iPhone 13’s features in their promotional videos (Apple, 2022). We think that these features are creatively promoted in their ads and whether or not the advertisements are capable of accurately depicting the idea that iPhone 13 owners can relax because they use an iPhone 13.

To analyze the advertisement, we use the semiotic theory proposed by Chandler (2017), which is the process of signification that involves denotative, connotative, and myth. Semiotic theory is suitable to analyze advertisements since semiotics theory deals with signs. Denotative is usually defined as the literal, obvious, basic, or commonsense meaning of a sign. Aside from denotation, there is connotation. Connotation usually refers to what a word means to an individual. Lastly, myth is the higher level of signification.

METHODS

This research used the qualitative content analysis method of Schreier (2012) to analyze the promotional videos for the iPhone 13’s *Relax, It’s iPhone*. The source of the data was from Apple’s official YouTube channel, and the data was limited to four videos of iPhone 13’s with the tagline *Relax, It’s iPhone* 2022 commercial videos. Then, we proceeded to take screenshots and analyze the data. We put it in the table to make it easier to analyze. The analysis table can be seen below:

Table 3.1

Analysis Table of iPhone 13’s *Relax, it’s iPhone* Video Advertisement

Time frame	Screenshot	Visual Mode	Linguistic Mode	Gestural Mode	Denotative	Connotative

After putting all the screenshots, we analyzed the data based on the process of significations by Chandler (2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section consists of our findings of the data analysis to answer the research questions which are to find out the denotative and connotative meanings in the iPhone 13’s Shake, Doin’ Laps, Run Baby Run, and Edge video advertisements as expressed through the

Yip; Suprajitno: The Denotative and Connotative Meanings on
the Advertisement of iPhone 13 *Relax, It's IPhone*

semiotic resources used, and lastly, to investigate what are the messages delivered by advertisement to the audiences.

The Denotative and Connotative Meanings Through the Semiotic Resources Used

Shake Video Advertisement



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

The visual mode is the first thing that we investigate since it is easier to analyze the other two semiotic modes, linguistic mode and gestural mode. We look at people, animals, objects, and colors in the visual mode. The opening ten seconds of the video show a woman and a dog. A swimming pool, an umbrella, a chair, and a tree are also available. Throughout the video, there is a prominent blue color from the swimming pool and the sky, as well as yellow from the umbrella. The picture shows a woman sitting under an umbrella and a dog jumping into a pool. The woman is fiddling with her phone while her dog swims in the pool. This video displays a woman and her dog relaxing on a hot day. Her gesture indicates that she is having fun with her phone and enjoying herself because summer is a time to have fun. The linguistic mode, which is the lyrics of the accompanying music, supports this viewpoint. The song's lyrics are "cold as ice, melt my heart away in the summertime." The lyrics contain the terms "cold" and "summertime." The definition of "cold" is a low temperature, especially in comparison to the temperature of the human body; it is neither hot nor warm, while "summertime" refers to the summer season (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). In addition to the lyrics, the video's prominent colors, blue and yellow, represent a calm ambiance. Blue is related to the sky and water, according to Cerrato (2012). Meanwhile, yellow is the color associated with the sun. The swimming pool represents the blue color in this scenario, while the sun represents the yellow hue. Denotatively, this video signifies that summer is a hot season and that it is appropriate to drink something cold to cool down. Because the water is chilly, a swimming pool is a nice place to cool off in the summer.

Connotatively, the colors blue and yellow create a nice and peaceful atmosphere in the video. Blue is connected with serenity and emotional relaxation, whereas yellow is associated with warmth (Braam, 2022). These meanings contribute to the video's overall mood. The use of blue in the sky and pool, as well as yellow in the umbrella, chair, and sun, contributes to a sense of serenity and warmth. The video emphasizes the refreshing and pleasurable features of summer by featuring a woman lounging by the pool on a hot day. Apple most likely wants viewers to feel at ease and relaxed throughout the entire advertisement, from start to finish.

In figure four, the iPhone 13 is shown in a close-up camera shot. According to Chandler (2017), a close-up camera shot's main function is to direct the audience's attention to the object. Thus, this scene tries to focus the audience's attention to the iPhone 13. Another close-up shot shows the dog shaking its body because it is wet. As a result, the water splashes onto the woman and the woman begins to shield herself with her iPhone 13. The woman's gesture in pictures five and six is the result of the dog shaking the water off, which causes the woman to shield herself with her iPhone 13 and her iPhone 13 is now wet. However, she plays her iPhone 13 again as if nothing happened in figure six. This time, Apple wants to convey that the woman does not even care or worry that her dog splashes the water on her iPhone in this particular scene. Hence, she is using it to protect herself from the water. The idea is shown by the color white of the text that appears at the end of the video. Another thing that depicts the woman not worrying about her iPhone 13 being wet is from the linguistic mode which are "splash resistant" and Relax, it's iPhone. The term "splash" refers to a little amount of liquid that has been dropped or that has fallen to the ground. Whereas "resistant" means not affected or damaged by something (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). "Relax" means to get someone to become less active, as well as calmer and happier (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Thus, denotatively, the ending of the video signifies a woman who is still calm after her iPhone gets splashed because her iPhone 13 cannot be damaged by water. She can still enjoy the day with a wet iPhone 13.

Connotatively, according to Cerrato (2012), white is a calming color because it suggests simplicity; hence, people often use it to imply simplicity in high-tech products. Both blue and white are colors of tranquility. That is the reason why Apple chooses to combine both colors in order to produce a calm feeling. Apple intentionally causes the iPhone to become wet in order to demonstrate to consumers that the device is water resistant. Splash resistance indicates it will not be damaged by water. So, this scene signifies that the woman knows that her iPhone is water resistant, which is why she uses it to cover herself. After that, she merely shakes the leftover water off and does not wipe the water away because the water will not damage her iPhone 13. Another thing that supports her nonchalant gesture is from the lyrics of the song which is "cold as ice." "Cold as ice" does not talk about the swimming pool anymore. The phrase "cold as ice" is sometimes used to characterize a person's feelings, or more accurately, the lack of emotions that they are experiencing (Madison, 2023). As a result, when her iPhone gets wet, the woman does not experience any negative feelings such as fear or panic. Instead, she is calm. She is unconcerned about the possibility that the water would ruin her iPhone in any way. Therefore, the tagline Relax, it's iPhone is an accurate representation of the fact that people do not need to be concerned or worried because they are using an iPhone 13.

Doin' Laps Video Advertisement



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

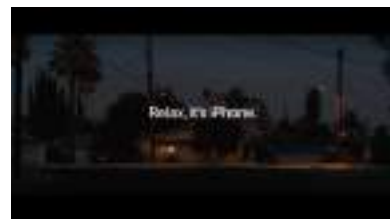


Figure 6

Yip; Suprajitno: The Denotative and Connotative Meanings on
the Advertisement of iPhone 13 *Relax, It's iPhone*

In the first twenty-one seconds of the scene, there is a boy, an iPhone 13, and a bicycle as the visual mode. Again, Apple is drawing the viewer's attention to the object by using a close-up shot. In this case, the camera takes a close-up shot of the iPhone 13 and the color is red. When the camera shows the iPhone 13, that is also when the boy starts to record himself and starts cycling. The accompanied song also starts to play in the background. The lyrics of the song are, "I look real good today." The keywords from the lyrics are "look" and "good." The word "look" has various meanings; however, in this song, the definition of "look" is to show up or seem, while the definition of "good" is extremely pleasing, delightful, pleasant, or interesting (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Based on these definitions of the linguistic mode and his gesture, this scene denotatively says that he feels and looks good that day. That is why he wants to show off his condition by cycling around the neighborhood, and he records himself using his iPhone 13, which is in red color.

The fact that the iPhone 13 that the boy uses is red implies that this scene wants to attract people's attention to the iPhone. Cerrato (2012) says that if people wish to gain attention, they should use the color red. Because of that, connotatively in this scene focuses on the iPhone 13 that is used for recording the boy's action. Thus, Apple wants the audience to pay attention to or notice the iPhone 13 in the video. In picture three and four, the visual mode shows the sky has changed from bright to dark, meaning that the time has changed from noon to evening. In addition, from the title of the advertisement, "laps" means one complete rotation of a track that is used for running, starting at one end and going all the way around (Oxford University Press, n.d.), meaning that he has been recording himself for a long time.

The linguistic mode of this scene is also from the lyrics of the song which are "Jumpin' out of the Bentley, Rollie in the casa, new Balenci's," "Walkin' with a pocket full of benjis And my ten pieces," and at the end of the video shows a "Looooonger battery life," and Relax, it's iPhone. The lyrics talk about luxury brands which are Bentley, Rolex and Balenciaga. The song also mentions "benji" which means US Hundred-Dollar Bill. It is called a BENJI (or Benjamin) because it has a picture of Benjamin Franklin on it. So, when a pocket full of a hundred-dollar bill and luxurious brands are combined, it conveys a rich person, or in this case, the boy in the video. He feels good because of the luxurious brands. People feel good when wearing luxury brands because, according to Dubois et al., (2020), a big part of what keeps people wanting luxury is their need for status, which means respect, recognition, and being treated with deference. Furthermore, it boosts their self-esteem. A study found that the association between self-esteem and self-directed pleasure is quite significant, which suggests that treating oneself to luxury items as a form of self-reward may be an effective approach to fulfilling the desire for self-esteem that many people have (Truong & McColl, 2011). Thus, denotatively, this scene depicts that the boy has been cycling and recording himself around the neighborhood from day to evening as shown by the visual mode. The reason why he is doing this is because he looks and feels good today as he wears luxurious brands and has a lot of money which boosts his self-esteem and happiness. Second, his iPhone 13 has a long lasting battery. This is supported by the "longer battery life" and Relax, *It's iPhone* at the end of the advertisement. The word "longer" means going on for a very long time (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) and when it combines with "battery" and "life" it means the device that generates electricity to supply energy can last for a very long time. In this case, the iPhone 13 has a long lasting battery. Therefore, not only that he feels happy that day because of his luxury brands but also because of his iPhone 13.

Connotatively, Apple emphasizes the idea that when people are feeling so good and happy about themselves, they want to maintain that feeling for as long as possible. Therefore, if someone wants to make a video of themselves for a long time, they should use the iPhone 13. *The Relax, It's iPhone* 13 comes next because Apple wants to reassure the audience that they do

not have to worry about using the iPhone 13 without charging for hours as the battery will not die in a short period of time. This shows that the boy has been cycling from noon until night while recording himself with his iPhone 13 because he knows that his iPhone 13 will not die. As a result, his confidence will also not end until his iPhone 13's battery runs out.

Edge Video Advertisement



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

The visual mode in the first four seconds of the video shows a woman, a night lamp and a pink iPhone on a desk. The woman is staring out the window by herself in the darkness. Darkness is the color characteristic of being closer to black than white and a condition in which there is either very little light or none at all (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). In this video, the night lamp is the only source of light in that house. According to Cerrato (2012), the color black in most contexts carries a negative connotation such as terror, evil, and sorrow. Next, after showing the woman, the camera focuses on an iPhone 13 and someone is calling. The color of the iPhone 13 is pink which is in contrast to the surrounding. Cerrato (2012) concludes that pink represents passion, love, and friendship. It represents tenderness and passivity. However, instead of showing any romantic scene, this video shows a woman ignoring a phone call. Therefore, this scene denotatively signifies that the woman is sad and that is the reason why she does not pick up the phone from her partner. Connotatively, Apple wants to make the iPhone 13 stand out because of the contrast between the black and pink colors. They utilize a black or gray background to highlight other colors (Cerrato, 2012). Thus, Apple wants the audience to only focus on the iPhone 13 on the desk instead of the surrounding.

In figure three, just like the title edge, the iPhone 13 is shown to be on the edge of the desk caused by the vibration from the incoming call. Denotatively, it only shows that the iPhone 13 fell off the desk because of the vibration which is something that may be expected. However, Apple wants to show that those who buy the iPhone 13 should relax. The reason is because when their iPhone 13 falls from high places, their iPhone 13 will not be broken.

Messages Delivered by the Advertisements to the Audiences

In the previous part, I analyzed the denotative and connotative meanings found in the four video advertisements of iPhone 13 Relax, it's iPhone. The denotative and connotative meanings convey the idea of relaxing when using an iPhone 13. Both denotative and connotative meanings create a myth that people who use iPhone 13, do not need to worry when they are in an unfavorable situation. This happens because iPhone 13 has new amazing features. These amazing features are splash-resistance, long battery life, and durability. Naturally, these features are inseparable from iPhone 13.

Yip; Suprajitno: The Denotative and Connotative Meanings on
the Advertisement of iPhone 13 *Relax, It's iPhone*

From this analysis of the advertisements, Apple never forgets to put *Relax, It's iPhone* at the end of the videos. The reason is because Apple wants to emphasize that there is nothing to worry about when people have an iPhone, especially the iPhone 13 that has amazing new features such as splash-resistance, long battery life, and endurance. In these advertisements, Apple creates a real-life situation in which the viewers can see these features. The semiotic resources in these advertisements, which are employed through the process of signification at denotative and connotative level, highlight the features that iPhone 13 has. The semiotic resources in the form of visual modes, namely people in the swimming pool, cycling around, a toddler dropping an iPhone, and an iPhone falling from the desk as well as the colors and objects. The linguistic mode, which is the tagline *Relax, it's iPhone*, and lastly the gestural mode of the people, emphasizes the idea that people can keep calm, feel at ease, and take it easy with every situation they are in.

In conclusion, through the process of significations, at the denotative and connotative level, Apple creates a myth, that is, the message that these advertisements deliver. Myth naturalizes the ideas, ideologies or practices. It makes everything seem natural and normal (Chandler, 2017). The denotative and connotative meanings through the semiotic resources, namely, visual, linguistic, and gestural mode on the advertisement repeatedly shows the idea of not having to worry when a person is using an iPhone 13. As a result, Apple successfully creates a culture or a norm that iPhone 13's users are able to keep calm, feel at ease and take it easy in an unfavorable situation. In short, it is normal for iPhone 13 users to relax when they use iPhone 13. Apple formed a myth that if people wish to have a peaceful life, they should buy an iPhone 13. Therefore, the message that Apple wants to deliver is that the iPhone 13 is worry-free. In other words, when people buy an iPhone 13, they do not have to worry about their phone because the iPhone 13 has three amazing features, namely, splash-resistance, long battery life, and durability. Through the iPhone 13 advertisements, Apple creates a brand myth, defined as consumers' belief that the brand offers them a way of resolving a problem or situation (Chandler, 2017, p. 172). Thus, the brand myth that Apple wants to create is that iPhone 13 is safe to use when people are in an unfavorable situation that needs three features above. In this way, iPhone 13 users can keep calm, feel at ease, and take everything easy.

CONCLUSION

This paper discovers that advertisements utilize semiotic mode to produce messages and attract customers. These modes are creatively and innovatively applied to produce a relatable situation for the audiences. The advertisers should be able to make their products look better than their competitors. Therefore, the use of modes such as visual mode, linguistic mode, and gestural mode in advertisements are important in order to convince the customers to buy their products.

After the analysis of the video advertising, we are finally able to find the denotative and connotative meanings in the video and what messages that Apple hopes to convey. The ads are consistent with the tagline *Relax, it's iPhone*, according to which the company provides customers with an experience that can only be obtained through the use of iPhone 13. The denotative and connotative meanings of the advertisements is that the iPhone 13 has three awesome features which is splash-resistance, long battery life, and durability. All video advertisements deliver a message that iPhone 13 users can keep calm, feel at ease, and take it easy because their iPhone 13 is splash-resistant, has long battery life, and an amazing durability. This is due to the fact that the iPhone 13 will not be harmed if it comes into contact with water or falls into the water, can be used for a long time, and safe if it falls to the ground.

In conclusion, each feature tells the audience that, if they use iPhone 13, they can keep calm, feel at ease, and take it easy in various situations. Therefore, through the denotative and connotative meanings, Apple constructs a myth, which is the message that Apple wants to deliver to the audiences. The message is that if people use an iPhone 13, they will have a great new experience of never having to worry about anything ever again. This is made possible by the new features that are added to the iPhone 13. Apple also creates a brand myth through the advertisement. The brand myth is that it is safe to use an iPhone 13 when people are in an unpleasant situation that requires the three features listed above. So, the messages from the four videos are, first users of the iPhone 13 may keep calm. Second, by using the iPhone 13 people may feel at ease. Lastly, when using an iPhone, people can take it easy in unpleasant situations.

REFERENCES

- Apple. (2022, November 2). *Apple introduces iPhone 13 and iPhone 13 mini, delivering breakthrough camera innovations and a powerhouse chip with an impressive leap in battery life*. Apple Newsroom. <https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2021/09/apple-introduces-iphone-13-and-iphone-13-mini/>
- Braam, H. V. (2022, May 15). *Meaning of blue: psychology, symbolism, and personal traits*. Color Psychology. <https://www.colorpsychology.org/blue/>
- Braam, H. V. (2022, October 30). *Yellow color psychology, symbolism, and meaning*. Color Psychology. <https://www.colorpsychology.org/yellow/>
- Cambridge Dictionary*. (n.d.) Cambridge University Press. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>
- Cerrato, H. (2012). *The meanings of colors*. <https://blocs.xtec.cat/gemmasalvia1617/files/2017/02/the-meaning-of-colorsbook.pdf>
- Chandler, D. (2017). *Semiotics: The basics* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Danesi, M. (2004). *Messages, signs, and meanings: A basic textbook in semiotics and communication* (3rd ed.). Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- He, M. (2021). Analysis of iPhone's marketing strategy. *Atlantis Press*, 2352-5428. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.210319.124>
- Luke, T., & Emmett, B. (2021). Critical review of Apple's advertising strategies in North America. *Journal of Marketing and Communication*, 4(1), <https://stratfordjournals.org/journals/index.php/journal-of-marketing/article/view/820>
- Madison, N. (2023, March 7). *What does it mean to be "as Cold as Ice"?* Language Humanities. <https://www.languagehumanities.org/what-does-it-mean-to-be-as-cold-as-ice.htm>
- Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary*. (n.d.) Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>
- Rehman, F., Javed, F., Md Yusoff, R., Harun, A., Khan, A., & Ismail, F. (2019). What is advertising? A short review of historical development. *SAVAP International*, 10(4), <https://www.journals.savap.org>
- Schreier, M. (2012, March 5). *Qualitative content analysis in practice* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- The psychology of colors in interior design*. (n.d.). Foyr. <https://foyr.com/learn/psychology-of-colors-in-interior-design/>
- Truong, Y., & McColl, R. (2011). Intrinsic motivations, self-esteem, and luxury goods consumption. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 18(6), 555–561. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2011.08.004>
- Zhang, H., Liang, X., & Wang, S. (2016). Customer value anticipation, product innovativeness, and customer lifetime value: The moderating role of advertising strategy. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(9), 3725–3730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.09.018>