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A SEMIOTIC ON THE HEADLINES OF POLITICAL PARTY'S ADVERTISEMENTS IN *THE JAKARTA POST*

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Abstract: Language has a vital function in many different aspects such as social, military, economic, and even politics. Advertisement functions as media of promotion in transferring particular message from advertisers as the addressors to consumers as a target of the advertisement. The messages are meant to persuade consumers or people to choose a certain political party promoting its vision and mission. In addition, an advertisement covers all aspects of life as displayed in newspaper, television, direct mail, radio, magazines, internet and billboards. In this case, people can build a social community and use language as a means of delivering messages. This discusses one of the elements of political field as a subject matter of the discussion, the advertisements of political party in particular. In making advertisement, the political parties have to be creative in order to attract people's attention. With reference to the discussion of this research, the writer analyzes the advertisements of political parties major mass media.

Keywords: Semiotic, advertisement, political party, language, communication

INTRODUCTION

Language is a term used to refer to a very crucial instrument for people to communicate and to interact

among them. The word —language, according to Pateda, is meaningful sounds produced by human's organ of speech (1994: 5). As meaningful sounds, language can serve and

establish social relationship among people. The social relationship can be kept well if the people can perform good communication. Good communication can be characterized by looking at the level of people's understanding when having interaction.

It is obvious that good communication can keep social relationship well, because when people can communicate to each other well, every single intended message can be transferred and received well. When every single intended message or idea can be transferred and received well, the level of people's understanding increases.

The function of language in human life is very important. As the vehicle of thought from one person to another, language becomes a system of signs because Charles Sanders Peirce declared that every thought is a sign (1931:58). Moreover, the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand De Saussure, referred to language (his model being speech) as 'the most important' of all of the system of signs (Chandler, 2000:8). It teaches us that language

plays an important role in human life by its functions, both in spoken and written.

Sapir, states that —language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbol (Crystal, 1987:396). In the dictionary of meaning, —language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized sign, sound, gesture, or mark having understood meaning (Webster, 1981:355). In addition, Trager (see also in Crystal, 1987:396) states that a language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which the members of a society interact in terms of their total culture. Therefore language is a medium to share knowledge, information and experience and thus it is used to understand, persuade, convert, or control their fellows.

Language, Communication and Semiotics

Human being speaks and uses language. However, how much do we know about language, what is it and

how does it function? People sometimes give more attention to the language rather than to the environment which surrounds us such as atmosphere, the force of politics and other natural phenomena. Widdowson and Stork (1982: 9) said that language is not a natural phenomenon; it is a creation of man's social needs. Like all the other living creatures, we also depend on the air, water and earth around us, and in the same way our society depends upon language for its very existence. Communication comes from the Latin word *communis*, which means common. The definition of the term communication is a process of thoughts, desires, feelings as information to be revealed to other people. Commonly this process happens between a sender and receiver of a message. When we are discussing communication, it is inevitable not to discuss language, because human is capable of communicating both verbally and non-verbally in the process of communication with reference to this idea, Lyons (1977:32) agrees that

language and communication cannot be separated.

—To say that language serves as an instrument of communication is to utter a truism, indeed, it is difficult to imagine any satisfactory definition of the term 'language' that did not incorporate some references to the notion of communication.there is an intrinsic connection between meaning and communication, such that is impossible to account for the former except in the term of the latter (Lyons, 1977:32).

Another argument that shows the relation between language and communication is proposed by Wardhough (1986:1). He states that when two or more people communicate with each other in speech, the system of communication that they employ a code is called. In most cases that code means something, a language is called. In brief, it is clear that language is used by people to deliver their purpose of communication.

Saussure (1990:16) says that language is a system of signs that express ideas. This means that language is not only articulated in the

form of letters, numbers, etc, but also in the form of object of civilization. He further proposes that semiotics is a study that would take any system of sign, the coverage of which are images, gestures, musical sounds, etc. This coverage seems also to have a close relation with speech act to the language function as we saw in Sapir's ideas cited in Hawkes:

—every speech-act includes the transmission of the message through the language of a gesture, posture, clothing, hair-style, perfume, accent, social context, etc. Over and above, under and beneath, even at cross-purpose with what words actually say. Every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involve communication in either an explicit or implicit sense. (1977:125). Thus, a study of language and communication is also a study of semiotics.

Headline in political party's advertisement is a means of the communication in the economics field. Advertisement is a marketing tool used in communication process to send a message to receivers or people who will react or respond in a certain way. The language in

advertisement is used to convey the message which has the main purpose to persuade the people to choose and join. Some advertisements send a message indirectly, and use sign system to attract the people's attention.

In order to understand the communication of the advertisement, four basic concepts have to be taken into account namely: field of experience, meaning, sign and symbol as proposed by Dunn et al (1990:51-52) cited in (bezuidenhout:www). Field of experience refers to the receivers' experiences and background knowledge. Textual and contextual elements are used by the advertisers to refer to a specific group of consumers' experiences. Textual and contextual elements tell about custom or idiomatic language used by the advertisers in conveying the messages to the consumers or people. Meaning is produced by sign that makes certain understanding. The sign and symbol can convey denotative, contextual and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning refers to the literal

association with object of words. Connotative meaning refers to the personal or cultural association of the individual toward a concept or word. Contextual meaning refers to the place and situation surrounding the message of advertisement.

Language in advertisement is used to build a communication process. It means that the functions of language are very significant to make an effective advertisement. According to Halliday, there are certain functions of language which must be fulfilled in human cultures, regardless of differences in the physical and material environment. Here are the general functions of language as stated below:

1. Language has to interpret the whole of our experience, reducing the indefinitely varied phenomena of the world around us, and also of the world inside us, the processes of our consciousness, to a manageable number of classes of phenomena: type of processes, events, actions, classes of objects, people and intuitions, and the like.
2. Language has to express certain elementary logical relations, like

‘and’ and ‘or’ and ‘if’, as well as those created by language itself such as ‘namely’, ‘says’ and ‘means’.

3. Language has to express our participation, as speakers in the speech situation; the roles we take on ourselves and impose on others; our wishes, feelings, attitudes and judgements.

4. Language has to do all these things simultaneously, in a way which relates to what is being said to the context in which it is being said, both to what has been said before and to the ‘context of situation’; in other words, it has to be capable of being organized as relevant discourse, not just as words or sentences in a grammar-book or dictionary. (1978:21-22).

In fact, language plays a very important role in advertisement, which is as a means of conveying the messages and sending their purposes. In order to know the exact meaning about the message delivered by the advertisers, this research discusses and interprets sign used by the advertisers (political party) in sending the messages. The semiotic theory is used because it is a study of sign.

Language as a sign system is used to convey a message. In this case, sign system is studied in semiotics. The explanation of semiotic theory is stated by Winner (cited in bezuidenhout:www). He explains that Semiotics is a systematic study of signs, sign system or structures, sign processes and sign functions. A sign is anything that can be interpreted and must be physically and mentally perceptible. Language is one of many systems of signs (1978:337).

In political party's advertisement, sign is used to convey the purposes, because it is related to the regulation that forbids using the persuasive sentence on the advertisement. As a result, the researcher uses semiotic theory to interpret the political party's advertisement. De Saussure and Peirce are two of the most prominent leaders in the field of semiotics. While de Saussure was language oriented, by giving the highest priority to the verbal than the non-verbal, Peirce gives equal status to the verbal and the non-verbal signs. The difference of these theories is caused

by de Saussure's background as a linguist, while Peirce's background is a philosopher and logical expert. In order to apply the semiotic theory appropriately to this research, the differences and similarities between the two theories proposed by the De Saussure and Peirce will be compared as follows:

In conjunction with the technical term of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure (cited in Hawkes 1977:123), a father of semiotics, says:—a science that studies the life of sign within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology: I shall call it semiology (from a greek semeion _sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs what law governs them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics....||

De Saussure develops linguistic theory into a sign theory.

He claims that any language is a system, a coherent semiotic structure. He proposes the term semiology in order to give the general scope of a system of sign that has not yet existed before. This system of signs has meaning based on the 'sign' relation to one another. Every sign has a meaning based on place in the system. A sentence as a sign, which is combination of words as signifier, makes a certain meaning as a signified.

Advertisement

If we look back to the history, advertisement is used as a media to communicate to people. Typically it communicates a message including the name of the product or service and how that product or service could potentially benefit the consumers. However, advertising does typically attempt to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume more of a particular brand of product or service. Modern advertising developed with the rise of mass production in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The definition of advertisement is related to the term of advertising, Dirksen (1977:55) defines that advertising is any form of public announcement intended to aid directly and indirectly in the sale of a commodity or service. The success of advertiser in making advertisement in conveying the message will influence the total number of people's vote. Thus the advertisement should be made as attractively as possible in order to build up strong attraction.

Many advertisements are designed to generate increased consumption of products and services through the creation and reinvention of the "brand image". For these purposes, advertisements sometimes embed their persuasive message with factual information. There are many media used to deliver these messages, including traditional media such as television, radio, cinema, magazines, newspapers, video games, the carrier bags, billboards, mail or post and internet marketing. Today, new media such as digital signage is growing as a newly major mass media. Advertising is often placed by an

advertising agency on behalf of a company or other organization.

The most important element of advertising is not information but suggestion more or less making use of associations, emotions (appeal to emotion) and drives dormant in the sub-conscience of people, such as sex drive, herd instinct, of desires, such as happiness, health, fitness, appearance, self-esteem, reputation, belonging, social status, identity, adventure, distraction, reward, of fears (appeal to fear), such as illness, weaknesses, loneliness, need, uncertainty, security or of prejudices, learned opinions and comforts. —All human needs, relationships, and fears – the deepest recesses of the human psyche – become mere means for the expansion of the commodity universe under the force of modern marketing. With the rise to prominence of modern marketing, commercialism – the translation of human relations into commodity relations – although a phenomenon intrinsic to capitalism, has expanded exponentially. Cause-related marketing⁶ in which advertisers link their product to some worthy social

cause has boomed over the past decade.

Advertising exploits the model role of celebrities or popular figures and makes deliberate use of humor as well as of associations with color, tunes, certain names and terms. Altogether, these are factors of how one perceives himself and one's self-worth. In his description of mental capitalism⁷ Franck says, —the promise of consumption making someone irresistible is the ideal way of objects and symbols into a person's subjective experience. Evidently, in a society in which revenue of attention moves to the fore, consumption is drawn by one's self-esteem. As a result, consumption becomes work⁸ on a person's attraction. From the subjective point of view, this work⁹ opens fields of unexpected dimensions for advertising. Advertising takes on the role of a life councilor in matters of attraction. (...) The cult around one's own attraction is what Christopher Lasch described as Culture of Narcissism¹⁰.

For advertising critics another serious problem is that —the long standing notion of separation between

advertising and editorial/creative sides of media is rapidly crumbling and advertising is increasingly hard to tell apart from news, information or entertainment. The boundaries between advertising and programming are becoming blurred. According to the media firms all this commercial involvement has no influence over actual media content, but, as Mc Chesney puts it, —this claim fails to pass even the most basic giggle test, it is so preposterous.

In relation to this, we have to know the elements of *copy*, namely: *headline*, *sub-headline*, *body text*, *price*, *company's name and address*, *coupon* (if it is available), *slogan* (Jerkins, 1996:233). *Headline* is the most important part of the advertisement. It represents the whole text of the advertisement. As the significant element, this topic will be discussed in greater detail in the next sub-chapter. *Sub-headline* as the second element helps the copywriter to describe the visual advertising that they make. The purpose of sub headline is to keep the consumer's eye in order to follow and to read the whole text of advertisement. The third

element is *body text*. It consists of the content of advertisement or the main sentence as manuscript of advertisement which is printed with the smaller letter than the display. *Display* consists of headline, sub-headline, body text, price, company's name and address, and slogan. Therefore the copywriter has to use the imagination to determine each element of the advertisement. The forth element of copy is *price*. *Price* includes the advertisement in order to impluse the common interest because people are very sensitive with price. The next element is *company's name and address*. It is cited in advertisement in order to know the producer and take reaction of common people to their product. Wheateher coupon is available as the next element, it must include the company's name and address clearly. The last element of copy is *slogan*. It is a closing sentence that is used in order to create the brand image.

Political Party's Advertisements in The Jakarta Post

Political parties no longer play such a central role in

determining election outcomes in the Indonesia. Since the early decades of the 20th century, the influence of primary elections, the mass media, and lobbyists for special interests has gradually weakened the ties of parties to both candidates and voters. The proliferation of primaries, for instance, has given individual voters the power to select candidates—a power that once resided with the party organization itself. The media also places more emphasis on candidates as individuals than as agents of parties and party platforms. Public attention now focuses on the personalities and ideas of candidates, rather than the benefits that the party as an organization can offer party loyalists. To that extent, little incentive exists for voters to support the choice of the party establishment or for candidates to adhere to a –party line.

Individuals are also less likely to work as party activists because of the limits to the benefits parties can provide them. Where they were once pragmatic vehicles for electing candidates and offering

benefits and services to supporters, parties have become more programmatic and issue-oriented. Party leadership positions, especially at the state and local level, have increasingly gone to –programmatic ideologues, party activists whose views on issues tend to be more extreme and intense than those of most party supporters. Examples of programmatic ideologues in party organizations include environmental, gun rights, and abortion activists.

Advertising is a form of communication used to influence individuals to purchase products or services or support political candidates or ideas. Frequently it communicates a message that includes the name of the product or service and how that product or service could potentially benefit the consumer. Advertising often attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume a particular brand of product or service. Modern advertising developed with the rise of mass production in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Commercial advertisers often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through branding, which involves the repetition of an image or product name in an effort to associate related qualities with the brand in the minds of consumers. Different types of media can be used to deliver these messages, including traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards or direct mail. Advertising may be placed by an advertising agency on behalf of a company or other organization.

Organizations that spend money on advertising promoting items other than a consumer product or service include political parties, interest groups, religious organizations and governmental agencies. Non-profit organizations may rely on free modes of persuasion, such as a public service announcement. Political advertising plays a key role in modern electioneering and has been part of political campaigns since the earliest federal elections were held in the United States. The experiences of

Dennis Moore and Lois Capps with negative and attack advertising and with ads run by special interest groups are typical of the challenges facing candidates in modern American elections. As the modes of mass communication have changed, so have the venues for campaign advertising by candidates, political parties, and interest groups. First newspapers, then radio, and then, in the early 1960s, television entered the process. Early in the next century the Internet likely will be added to the list. Not only have the outlets for political advertising expanded over the past twenty years but so have the users of political advertising. Political advertising once was used primarily by candidates; the most recent elections have seen an explosion in the use of advertising not only by candidates but also by political parties and interest groups. As political advertising becomes a more pervasive medium for delivering messages from a variety of sources, understanding the role of political advertising in election campaigns becomes all the more important.

The Jakarta Post is a daily English language newspaper in Indonesia. With an average circulation of around 50,000 copies, it is the largest English language newspaper in Indonesia. The Jakarta Post as mass media is used by political parties to deliver message and to communicate to other people. The politician must be creative to make advertisement in order to attract the response of people. The setting of advertisement should be impressive, so clear in order to avoid the possible misunderstanding. In this case, the writer studies political party's advertisement. In this advertisement, the political parties have to send the persuading message indirectly, in connection to regulation that governs the political party's advertisement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher had found some metaphorical cases in this novel. The researcher found 18 data about metaphorical cases. The data were in the form of sentences. Then, the researcher found the sentence in the metaphors that had non-literal

meaning or unreal meaning that dominant in this research. Example, in one of the data "Most days I wish I was a British pound coin instead of an African Girl.", the researcher thought that British pound coin most had a value than African girl, because in British pound coins is decorated by the face of queen. After that, the researcher saw the context culture of queen in the British that in British culture queen as a symbolize the great country and power of the queen.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The Jakarta Post is a daily English language newspaper in Indonesia. With an average circulation of around 50,000 copies, it is the largest English language newspaper in Indonesia. The Jakarta Post as mass media is used by political parties to deliver message and to communicate to other people. The politician must be creative to make advertisement in order to attract the response of people. The setting of advertisement should be impressive, so clear in order to avoid the possible misunderstanding. In this case, the writer studies political

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