Local Wisdom in Indomie and Demae Icchou Video Advertisements: A Multimodal Analysis

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Keywords: Concepts, Video Advertisements, Multimodality, Local Wisdom.

Abstract: The research focuses on the main concepts revealed in two instant noodle video advertisements; one is Indomie from Indofood Indonesia and the other one is Demae Icchou from Nissin Foods, Japan. Both brands are not only the most prominent instant noodles in Indonesia and Japan respectively, but they are also well known out of the countries. At present instant noodles are a serious business in the two countries; hence, how the products are advertised throughout the countries becomes highly significant as well. The research aims to find out these inherent concepts in the advertisements by using the Multimodality approach, focusing more on the visual and verbal modes. The research uses a descriptive qualitative method as well as a library research method as the data collection technique. The findings show that these Indonesian and Japanese video advertisements share some similar main concepts as they both assert their countries' local wisdom. This is a smart strategy for it can build the feeling of closeness to the product advertised and people will get to know the countries much better, which will eventually improve the two countries' economic growth and the people's standards of living, which is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

1 INTRODUCTION

Research on multimodality has existed for over two decades and it has grown very rapidly. Simply put, multimodality refers to the multiple means used in meaning making (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Pan, 2015, p. 206). Thus, in a multimodal analysis, it is possible and essential to pay attention to how such various modes as image, writing, facial expression, body posture, gesture, gaze, colour, layout, action, movement etc. are used to make meaning in a particular text.

Many scholars have explored multimodality in their research and some even use the multimodal approach in analysing other fields, such as "psychology, sociology, (social) semiotics, and anthropology" (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018, p. 3). Besides, multimodality has also been widely used within the linguistics field; for example, linguists have become considerably interested in using this approach in "Discourse Analysis, Conversational Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, as well as Cognitive Linguistics" (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018)

Multimodality indeed becomes a thorough and thus, suitable approach in analysing texts in the form of videos as practically all aspects can be discussed in the effort of interpreting the meaning made through the video. This is most probably one of the prominent factors why the use of video is more and more increasing at present. Advertising is one obvious evidence for this phenomenon as nowadays it has developed communication assisted into by multimedia. As such, advertising will depend a lot on the various possible modes to convey the main message to the audience so that in the end the main objective of promoting the product can be reached optimally.

According to Bezemer and Jewitt (2018), studies on multimodality have been developed for more than seven decades. In addition, in advertising these studies are extensively abundant (Forceville, 2017; Laurence & Hoek, 1991; Murray, 2020; Pan, 2015; Svetanant & Okuizumi, 2019). These studies also

512

Tanto, T. and Iriantini, S.

In Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Emerging Issues in Humanity Studies and Social Sciences (ICE-HUMS 2021), pages 512-522 ISBN: 978-989-758-604-0

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Local Wisdom in Indomie and Demae Icchou Video Advertisements: A Multimodal Analysis. DOI: 10.5220/0010755000003112

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show that the scopes of analysis are widely various, from unveiling the socio-cultural ideologies reflected in the advertising discourse to its relations to gender stereotyping and aggression when related to advertising to children as well as related to the field of marketing.

This research, despite taking similar directions as the previous studies which focus on uncovering the advertisement concepts, will use a different angle as it aims to compare two video advertisements of the same kind of product, which is instant noodle, but one is an Indonesian brand while the other is a Japanese brand. The research will try to find out how the two countries' local wisdom has any influence or impacts on the video contents.

Studies on the important roles of local wisdom inherently displayed in advertisements are quite extensive. Wahyuningsih (2014), using Barthes' Semiotics theory, analyses how Madurese local wisdom, such as the cow races or better known as *Karapan Sapi*, as well as the Madurese traditional clothes and Madurese language and dialect, is inserted in Samsung Galaxy video advertisement.

Another similar research is done by Wicaksono and Macaryus (2019), in which they believe that there are some deconstructive processes when the famous West Sumatra folklore, Malin Kundang, experiences a media change, from the oral media to video media, and it becomes the basic plot of two video advertisements, Cat Avian and Buka Lapak. This utilization of folklore events is regarded as part of an effective advertising strategy.

Local wisdom again becomes the centre of analysis in Siregar's (2021) research. Using Barthes' Semiotics approach, she unveils the denotative and connotative meanings as well as the myth associated with Acehnese culture in the promotional video "The Light of Aceh". The research also focuses on the social changes that happen in the society which can be seen through advertising media. In the video some Acehnese cultural aspects are portrayed, such as its traditional house, *Rumoh Aceh*, the customs of honouring guests by eating together with them, and the horse race tradition or called *Pacu Kude*. It is concluded that the display of local wisdom is beneficial as it contributes a lot to the increasing attraction of Aceh as a place of interests for tourists.

Despite dealing with similar points as the abovementioned previous studies on local wisdom, this research is trying to see how local wisdom is used in food advertisements; to be more specific, instant noodle advertisements. Besides, it is also different as this research examines not only Indonesian local wisdom in an Indonesian advertisement, but also Japanese local wisdom in a Japanese advertisement.

Instant noodle itself is a serious industry both in Indonesia and Japan. In Indonesia, according to Mordor Intelligence (n.d.), the market of instant noodle is one of the biggest in the world with Indomie as "...the most selling brand in Indonesia with a market share above 45% in 2014. Indonesia is world's 2nd largest market for instant noodles with the sale of 13.4 billion units in 2014." A similar condition can also be found in Japan as the inventor of instant noodle. This country is claimed to be the third largest consumer of instant noodles in the world, with the sale of 5.5 billion instant noodle units in 2014. In addition, the report states that Nissin is one of the major instant noodle brands in Japan (Mordor Intelligence, n.d.).

Seeing that in the two countries instant noodle is an undoubtedly substantial business, instant noodle business must be one of the major businesses that have a huge contribution to the improvement of the economic growth of the countries as well as the people's standards of living. This becomes even more significant as this is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which in full says "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" (Nations, n.d.). The United Nations General Assembly first established the UN SDGs in 2015 and they are planned to be achieved by the year 2030.

In regard to this, how the two brands promote their products is equally serious so as to maintain the reputable condition and if possible, contribute more to the countries' sustainable economic growth and productive employment. Advertisement takes its important role in this case as it becomes a very effective medium to deliver whatever messages the producer has to the target audience.

Two advertisement videos of Indomie and Demae Icchou are analysed using a multimodal approach, focusing more on the visual and verbal modes. In the more detailed and specific analysis of the modes in the advertisement videos, C. S. Peirce's Semiotics theory will be applied.

Peirce (1839 – 1914) is an American philosopher who offers a triadic model of a sign; it consists of a sign, object, and *interpretant*. A sign could signify an object as long as it is interpreted as such. Based on this understanding, Peirce divides signs into three fundamental types, namely icon, index, and symbol (Atkin, 2010, p. 367).

An icon is a sign in which there are some similarities or resemblances to what it signifies. An

index is a sign having some direct physical or causal connection with the object. A symbol is a sign signifying something based on some convention, law, or general agreement that connects the sign with the object (Atkin, 2010). Unlike an icon, a sign could be a symbol when no resemblance between the sign and the object is found. Thus, the relationship between them must be learnt (Chandler, 2017).

Through the meaning interpretation analysis of the signs provided in the advertisement videos, it is expected that both the explicit and implicit messages will be clearly shown. Besides, it is also expected that the analysis will also find out the local wisdom inherently conveyed to the audience. In this way, the research will be able to lead to the fact that the two advertisement videos are produced through careful and thorough consideration so as to support the success of the promotion of these two instant noodle brands as well as promoting the two countries' local wisdom.

2 METHODS

This research aims to find out the explicit and implicit concepts of two instant noodle video advertisements of Indomie from Indofood, Indonesia and Demae Icchou from Nissin Foods, Japan. The research method employed is descriptive qualitative as it deals with concepts and meaning interpretation based on non-numerical data (Bhandari, 2020), Besides, in this research the interpretation of meanings will be connected further with social phenomena which will be described in an accurate and systematic way (Crossman, 2020; McCombes, 2019).

This multimodal analysis will focus on both the visual and verbal modes in the form of screenshots taken from the advertisement videos which will later be analysed in terms of signs. These signs will be interpreted using Peirce's Semiotics approach, and as such, more specifically, they will be related to the types of signs, namely icon, index, and symbol. In explaining the meaning interpretation of these signs, library research method is applied, as the research uses some supporting references, both printed and online ones, in order to produce a thorough yet logical description.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the analysis will show the meaning interpretation of the visual signs taken from some screenshots of the advertisement video of Indomie, which in total lasts one minute. The advertisement itself consists of some scenes, each of which contains icons and indexes that show the various parts in Indonesia with Indonesian people representing different professions, gender and ages: some fishermen at sea, some farmers in mountainous areas, some boys playing on the beach, some women making *batik* in a *batik* studio, some people having leisure activities in the street market, and some young men and women working in an office. The seven screenshots in Figures 1 until 7 below display these situations.



Figure 1: Fishermen at sea.



Figure 2: Farmers in a mountainous area.



Figure 3: Boys playing on the beach.



Figure 4: Women drying batik cloth.



Figure 5: People in a street market.



Figure 6: People in a night market.



Figure 7: People in an office.

What is also interesting to notice in the seven screenshots in Figures 1 until 7 above is the icons of the beautiful sceneries of various places in Indonesia being displayed. Despite the relatively short duration of the video, the advertisement manages to show the beauty of Indonesia. This is believed to be one main message of the advertiser that is inherently contained in the advertisement. This is a smart thing to do considering that people in many parts of Indonesia as well as overseas watching the video will realize how beautiful Indonesia is, and this obviously becomes the selling point in promoting Indonesia.

Besides, the scenes show some other icons and indexes in which people are seen eating noodle together. As this is a video advertisement of Indomie instant noodle, the noodle must certainly refer to Indomie. These scenes are also intriguing to pay attention to due to the fact that the people eating Indomie come from various professions. They are fishermen, *batik* makers as well as office workers, as seen in Figures 8, 9, and 10 respectively.



Figure 8: Three fishermen having noodle.



Figure 9: *Batik* makers eating noodle.

Furthermore, Figures 8 until 10 contain some icons which illustrate that the people eating Indomie are both male and female, adults and children. This indicates that Indomie is suitable to be consumed by people of any gender and all ages.



Figure 10: Office workers eating noodle.

This is also confirmed by the next screenshots in Figure 11, which contains the icons of a mother preparing Indomie for her daughter's breakfast, and Figure 12, in which the mother is accompanying her daughter who is wearing an elementary school uniform and eating a bowl of Indomie before going to school.



Figure 11: A woman cooking indomie.



Figure 12: Mother and daughter who is eating noodle.

The next three scenes illustrate people having Indomie in their leisure time. The first scene is displayed in Figure 13, in which the icons refer to some boys having Indomie. Prior to this is the situation illustrated in Figure 3 so that it can be understood that the boys are eating Indomie after they have finished playing on the beach. Through the icons of the boys' facial expressions in Figure 13, it is also clear that they are laughing and smiling widely. This suggests that they are enjoying their time together eating noodle.



Figure 13: Boys eating Indomie.

The next scene showing people in their leisure time can be seen in the screenshot in Figure 14, in which the icons show one food stall which sells Indomie.



Figure 14: A food stall selling Indomie.

Next in Figure 15, the icons refer to a man, a woman, and a girl who are having Indomie in the food stall. Besides, there are also two women who are serving them. This suggests that they are ordering some Indomie that the stall sells.



Figure 15: Customers having Indomie.

The next scene also illustrates people in their leisure time, which is in the night market. This is shown in the screenshot in Figure 16 below, in which there are a young man and a young woman having Indomie.



Figure 16: A man and a woman having Indomie.

Through the three scenes of people enjoying Indomie in their leisure time, it can be indicated that Indomie is a suitable kind of food to enjoy in leisure time activities.

The next discussion concerns the meaning interpretation of the verbal signs in this video advertisement which can be obtained from the screenshot at the end of the video advertisement that contains some verbal signs. This screenshot can be seen in Figure 17.



Figure 17: Verbal sign of Indomie.

In this screenshot the writing says "Ada semangat dan kehangatan yang menemani Indonesia" or "The spirit and warmth that accompany Indonesia." The background of this text is the geographical map of Indonesia with the many islands. Obviously, this icon supports the idea of the textual sign that Indomie is produced in Indonesia and is ready to be distributed to all parts of Indonesia so that it can be consumed by Indonesian people so as to create the high-spirited and warm atmosphere. Besides, the verbal sign can also be found in the lyrics of the song that becomes the theme song of the advertisement. The lyrics are in Bahasa and it is translated into English as follows:

From Sabang to Merauke, Starting the morning in high spirit Always bringing cheerfulness and warmth all day long, Indomie, Indomie, my taste, Indomie from and for Indonesia Indomie, my taste.

The lyrics basically points out two important things. The first is that Indomie is produced in Indonesia with the taste of all Indonesian people, from Sabang, the northernmost and westernmost of Indonesia, until Merauke, the southernmost point of Indonesia. The second is that having Indomie in the morning will also bring cheerfulness and warmth all day long. Thus, the lyrics also fully supports the text in Figure 17 which says "The spirit and warmth that accompany Indonesia."

Having analysed the visual and textual signs of the video advertisement of Indomie, there is one concept that is inherently inserted, which serves as a symbol. The symbol can be interpreted as the philosophy or culture of togetherness adopted by Indonesia. This spirit of togetherness is emphasized a lot throughout the video advertisement of Indomie, as shown in many screenshots above, particularly Figures 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 16, which clearly show Indonesian people eating Indomie together. As argued by Minty (2017), this concept refers to "...the collectivization of Indonesian cultural ecosystem, understanding it as a method of addressing the challenges of resource challenged contexts rooted in the concept of bersamasama, a Malay word meaning togetherness, which also refers to the idea of having a shared goal or aspiration, collectivization is common throughout Indonesia and is an integral part of city change through culture."

This spirit of togetherness is Indonesia's local wisdom that is conveyed in the advertisement. This is a clever thing to do in order that the audience can be aware of this great value of Indonesia. Compared with the studies on local wisdom done previously, this local wisdom is more covertly displayed. Thus, understanding the local wisdom in Indomie advertisement video needs a more scrutinous examination.

The next part deals with the analysis of the second instant noodle video advertisement, which is Demae Icchou produced by Nissin Foods, Japan. The video is almost five minutes long, which is quite long for an advertisement, especially compared to the previous Indomie advertisement. This Japanese advertisement contains a storyline about a noodle stall owned and run by a family consisting of a father, mother, two children and a grandmother, as shown in Figure 18.



Figure 18: The Family Owning a Noodle Stall.

Figure 18 contains the icons of the family members as well as a textual sign saying "Demae Icchou". As a family business, each member of the family has their roles. Except for the youngest member of the family, the other four members have their roles. The father, as the head of the family, is the chef who cooks and serves customers. This is shown in several parts of the video advertisement, as is clear in one of them shown in Figure 19 below.



Figure 19: The father and son serving a customer.

This screenshot in Figure 19 contains a textual sign as well. After the customer finishes his bowl of noodle, he says:

Customer: Kokoro ni shizundeiru kaori.

(The aroma of the ramen deeply touches the heart.)

This scene actually contains a symbol as it illustrates a Japanese way of thinking concerning the concept of *omotenashi*, which reflects the Japanese manners of serving their guests wholeheartedly (Gani, 2019). The customer's satisfaction as verbally expressed in this scene is the ultimate goal of doing a business for Japanese people. Furthermore, it is also interesting to notice that the father is shown to have the duty to teach his eldest son to be his business successor. In Figure 20 the icons refer to the father teaching his son to cook noodle. In this scene the father says to the son:

Father: *ookiku nattara, tsuzuku n da zo* (When you grow up, you continue running this

business, ok.) This scene also portrays the fact that in Japan there are a lot of family businesses like this noodle stall. As confirmed by Finnigan (2017), Japan is a nation which "...through exceptional circumstances has allowed several thousand firms to remain in family hands for more than a century." He adds that Japan is "...home to some of the world's oldest family businesses. One of the most notable, Nishiyama Onsen Keiunkan, a hot spring in the Yamanashi Prefecture, has been operating since 705 AD. It is a country with such a prolific history of family-run businesses that today it lays claim to eight of the world's 10 longest running" (Finnigan, 2017)



Figure 20: The father teaching his son to cook noodle.

There are also two scenes in which the father is teaching his son to be careful with handling things. In Figures 21 and 22, it can be seen how the father is teaching his son quite hard when the son admits he does a mistake about some change.



Figure 21: Wrong change.

Then in the scene shown in Figure 22, when the son admits having made a mistake with the change, the father is seen upset and he slaps his son's face and he says, "Kono mise, yameteyaru zo..." (I will close the business). This scene perfectly uncovers the Japanese attitudes towards money which in principle state that the small value of money does matter due to the fact that a big value of money will not be reached without the small one (Watanabe & Satou, 2010).



Figure 22: The father slapping his son's face.

A similar scene takes place again, as seen in Figure 23, in which the icons refer to the son not being careful when handling a big pot of *gomaraayuu*, which is the signature oil made of sesame seeds used to give a good taste of their noodle. The pot falls down so that it breaks and the oil spills.



Figure 23: The big pot of gomaraayuu falling down.

Next in Figure 24, the icons refer to the father being seen slapping his son's face again for having dropped the pot and made the *gomaraayuu* spill. This confirms the indication that this is how the Japanese father teaches his son not only to be careful with small things but also to be tough.

The son's role itself in the family business is apparently as the one who delivers food. This is shown in the next screenshot in Figure 25, in which the icons show the son coming back to the stall after delivering the food. On the glass window there is a verbal text saying *Ramen nara, Demae Icchou* (If looking for noodle, Demae Icchou is the best).



Figure 24: Father slapping his son's face.



Figure 25: The son delivering food.

In the advertisement video, it is obvious that the son is taught how to run the business by helping his father run it. It is also seen in the screenshot in Figure 26 below that he works very hard so that he is very tired and sleeping.



Figure 26: The son sleeping.

How the father teaches the son and how the son works hard in helping the father running the business refer to the concept of *doryoku*. This is an ideology which refers to the fact that great efforts are essential to achieve one successful end goal as expected. This ideology has been instilled since young children. *Doryoku* is also applied in business, which concerns the Japanese way of thinking that a successful business will indeed be fulfilled when one keeps on working hard (Kobayashi, 2017).

A part of *doryoku* is *gambaru*, which is always said to give encouragement to people so that they will not easily give up; on the contrary, they will reach the best result. This is closely related to the wise words *"gambareba dekiru"*, which basically means that one must be able to get something if trying hard.

Besides, it is interesting to notice the headbands worn by the father and son that appear in many scenes in the advertisement video. In Japanese that kind of headband is called *hachimaki*. This is a symbol of the Japanese spirit of working. This headband is often worn around the head in festivals as a symbol of the spirit of working hard. Moreover, wearing a *hachimaki* is believed to be able to concentrate well in working or studying (Jinjakyosiki, n.d.).

In the next screenshots in Figures 27 and 28, the icons show that the mother has two jobs in the family business. She helps serve the food to the customers, as can be seen in Figure 27. Besides, she helps making *origami*, which is used as a decoration for chopsticks. This is clear as the video advertisement shows a scene in which the mother is making a lot of origami, which can be seen in Figure 28. Making decorations like this is connected with the concept of *omotenashi* previously described. In this case, when all the things are decorated in such a way that they look beautiful, this becomes part of the service to please the customers so that it is expected that they will be satisfied.



Figure 27: The mother serving noodle.

In addition, it seems that the grandmother also helps in the family business as in Figure 29 the icons refer to the scene where she is seen holding a broom. This indicates that she helps clean the food stall.



Figure 28: Mother making origami.



Figure 29: Grandmother helping clean the room.

One more point that cannot be ignored is the gomaraayuu scene which can be seen in Figure 30. This scene is displayed very often in the video advertisement with the voice at the background "Gomaraayuu Demae Icchou". The saying gomaraavuu sachet is always portrayed in a close-up shot. In the total length of 4 minutes 43 seconds, the advertisement displays this particular scene of gomaraayuu as the secret recipe for twelve times. It is very obvious that the video advertisement wants to grab the audience's attention to this scene as this is considered a very important message. Related to the product, gomaraayuu becomes the signature oil which makes this instant noodle product tasty and different from other brands.



Figure 30: Gomaraayuu sachet.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The two video advertisements, despite promoting the same type of product, differ quite significantly in the length. Indomie video advertisement lasts 1 minute, whereas Demae Icchou video advertisement lasts 4 minutes 43 seconds. Technically speaking, this explains why Indomie advertisement is just a collection of photos of people eating Indomie together while doing their activities. However, although Indomie advertisement is short, it is successful in conveying the main message that it is the perfect food for all types of people and it can be consumed in any place and at any time.

Demae Icchou advertisement, on other hand, contains a story of a family who owns a ramen stall. The story itself is quite detailed as it shows how the father and the other family members work together in running the business. Through the story, the main message about the tastiness of Demae Icchou, thanks to *gomaraayuu*, is perfectly portrayed.

This proves that the length of a video does not hinder the success of the conveyance of a particular theme or message. What is more required is a mature preparation of the video making. By using the perfect storyline and the right technique, a good video can be produced.

Furthermore, the long duration of Demae Icchou advertisement video explains why there are a lot of aspects of Japanese local wisdom that can be conveyed. Compared with Indomie advertisement video and also the other advertisements analysed in the previous studies, Demae Icchou can be regarded as the most complete, in the sense that the local wisdom aspects are both overtly and covertly displayed.

The two video advertisements, Indomie and Demae Icchou, are special as they contain their countries' local wisdom. Indomie advertisement portrays the beautiful sceneries of some parts of Indonesia while at the same time showing the Indonesian culture of togetherness.

Demae Icchou advertisement, most probably due to the long duration of the video, contains quite a lot of Japanese ways of thinking, which become the local wisdom illustrated in the advertisement: how businesses in Japan are inherited from one generation to the next as well as the concepts of *omotenashi*, *doryoku*, and the Japanese attitudes towards money.

Inserting the countries' local wisdom in the advertisements is obviously a smart strategy. In this way, not only do people know the good points about the products being advertised, but also the good points about the countries. The logical implication is that people will get to know the countries better, and most importantly the positive things about them. The feeling of closeness will definitely help the promotion of the product.

When related to Peirce's Semiotics theory, it can be said that the advertisements have two layers of meaning. The first layer is the explicit meaning of the advertisement, which basically deals with the main objective of an advertisement, which is to promote a product. This first layer of meaning is gained through the use of icons and indexes. This is made simple and easy to understand. Furthermore, the second layer of meaning or the implicit meaning of the advertisements use symbols that refer to the local wisdom of each country. The use of two layers of meanings in the advertisement is another outstanding strategy.

The research is expected to be able to enrich the literature of linguistics studies, especially in the area of multimodality. Nevertheless, the findings of this research are still limited in scope as it is based only on two advertisements. There are in fact a lot more advertisements of both Indomie and Demae Icchou. Thus, for future research, this research can be expanded so as to gain more accurate findings. Besides, the research can also be made deeper by relating the findings of the multimodal analysis to people's purchase intention in order to really find out whether or not these advertisements as a marketing tool are successful.

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