

SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS OF RUANGGURU ADVERTISING IN TELEVISION MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

RuangGuru is one of the most successful startups in Indonesia, which is engaged in online tutoring. The application user has reached up to 15 million students. This achievement is the result of the advertisements that often appear on television media, especially during new school academic year or new semester. This study examines advertisements on television media less than 30 seconds to attract customers. This study uses semiotic to analyze television ads for the product. The research method uses an interpretive descriptive approach to analyze the signs used in advertisements. The data resource is four video recording advertisements on television media. The analysis starts with transcription and making video screenshots to sharpen the analysis. The results indicate that to attract television viewers, RuangGuru uses signs that indicate superior features. The features such as animated learning videos, practice questions, discussion, and ease of learning through applications. The celebrity figures in the advertisement represent students and parents who will later become consumers of RuangGuru. The ad also has a sign indicating how easy it is to pay and how cheap it is to subscribe to the Ruang Guru application compared to conventional tutoring. The blue color, which is the dominance of advertisements, shows that the RuangGuru app is trustworthy and can increase students' confidence in facing classroom learning.

Keywords: *semiotics of advertising, television media, Ruang Guru.*

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INTRODUCTION

RuangGuru is one of the online education applications in Indonesia. This application aims to assist students in understanding the subjects in school. In other words, RuangGuru can also be called an online tutoring service that provides services to guide those who have subscribed to the RuangGuru application.

In the RuangGuru app, various contents can be enjoyed by students who have

subscribed. Starting from practicing doing questions, the subject matter in visual and audio form, and services for asking questions to the tutors in the application. The material provided by the RuangGuru has also been adapted to the national curriculum. It makes the materials available in the RuangGuru always in line with the material needs of the school. Exercise questions in the RuangGuru are arranged according to subject topics. In each subject topic, there are also interesting questions that help students understand the

material, and it also increases interest in learning.

Based on Rahmadani and Setiawati's research, the use of the RuangGuru application increases student interest in learning (Rahmadani & Setiawati, 2019). Therefore the RuangGuru has a positive impact on parents in helping children to follow lessons at school. In particular, students are also increasingly supported by learning styles that are more interesting and less boring. RuangGuru will undoubtedly help students in Indonesia to understand learning materials better. It will have a positive impact on future generations because students are increasingly able to compete in the future to face competition in the era of the industrial revolution.

RuangGuru is one of the most successful startups. However, the RuangGuru application is arguably a new application. It was founded in 2014. In the year 2019, the app already generated fantastic user numbers. As quoted from DailySocial, Adamas Belva Syah Devara, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of RuangGuru, said that his service was quite exploding in mid-2019 in terms of awareness among parents. According to DailySocial, in 2019, more than 15 million students and 300 thousand teachers have joined all over Indonesia.

Advertising on television plays a significant role in the development of the app. The app is indeed one application that is also aggressively promoting advertisements on

television media, especially while entering a new school year. In 2019, RuangGuru also plotted several television stations at the same time to communicate the application. RuangGuru also holds events such as concerts to attract attention. In addition to programs that are specially plotted to promote the RuangGuru, it also has television commercials that run with a short duration like other commercials.

Television commercials are advertisements that are very limited in duration. The ads on television media are no longer than 30 seconds. Thus, a functional and attractive ad arrangement is needed so that viewers can capture, understand, and are interested in the products offered. Therefore, advertising semiotics also plays an essential role in the success of product promotion using television media.

The term advertising comes from the Latin word *advertere*, which has the meaning of directing attention. This term describes anything in public intended to promote the sale of a commodity or service (Danesi, 2010). The word advertisement has a definition, namely, a message that offers a product to be addressed to the public through a medium (Triadi & Barata, 2010).

In an advertisement, actors or communicators have a positive influence on advertising. Research from Yunandashows that brand ambassadors' presence has a positive impact on product brand awareness (Yunanda, 2018). The study of Soesatyo and

Rumambi also shows that celebrity figures' presence has a positive influence on consumer response and interest (Natalia & Rumambi, 2013).

Advertising quality can also affect the success of the ad, apart from figures. What appears in an advertisement, then that is the opportunity for producers to introduce and influence potential customers in less than a minute. The television advertisement for the teacher's room pays close attention to the time constraints so that they pay attention to what needs to be displayed in such a short time. And from this advertisement, RuangGuru can get quite a large number of customers at the beginning of the school year in 2019.

In this study, the author will try to examine the advertisement from the RuangGuru on television. In the study of communication science, a unique tool to analyze advertisement is the semiotic study.

Semiotics is a model of social science. It understands the world as a system of relationships with a basic unit called a 'sign' (Sobur, 2006). Meanwhile, the term semiotics was established in the late 19th century by an American pragmatic philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. It refers to the "formal doctrine of signs." The principle of semiotics is the concept of signs.

It is not only language and communication systems that are composed of signs. But, the world itself, as far as the human mind is concerned, consists entirely of signs because otherwise, humans would not

be able to intertwine to do with reality. The language itself is the most fundamental sign system for humans. In contrast, nonverbal signs such as gestures, forms of clothing, and various other conventional social practices, can be seen as a kind of language composed of meaningful indications communicated based on relations and relationships (Sobur, 2009).

Advertising on television is a form of semiotics in the form of moving images or films. The film has signs that are arranged in such a way as to create a specific meaning. Unlike static photography, a series of pictures in the movie establishes an imagination and a marking system. Therefore, together with architectural signs, especially indexical, iconic symbols are mainly used in the film, correctly signs that describe something. The feature of film images is their similarity to the reality they represent. The movie's dynamic image is iconic for the truth it denotes (Pawito, 2007).

Therefore, the semiotics of advertising in television media can be seen in the form of a verbal sign or a non-verbal sign. Verbal signs are spoken verbal messages uttered by the actor or narrator, as well as verbal signs shown through written text.

Meanwhile, non-verbal messages are indicated by scenes, graphics, pictures, colors used, and other forms of non-verbal messages. These two forms of signs will give a specific impression to television viewers so that it is hoped that television viewers will

become aware, interested, or even encourage them to buy certain products or services.

Similar to RuangGuru advertising, the signs that appear are also very diverse. Advertisements delivered are often at the time or moment of the new school year or the beginning of the semester. It encourages television viewers to download the application. The current research formulations will focus on the formulation of the problem, how is the semiotics of teacher room advertisements on television?

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research is qualitative research, which analyzes the data sources to be studied in-depth to find sharp conclusions. The approach in this research is interpretive descriptive. The writer discusses the problem with a clear description and is based on the author's ability and understanding to capture the intent of the object being studied (Andrianto, 2018).

The data source used is RuangGuru's television ad video in the early 2019 academic year and the initial semester of 2020. The documentations of the ad videos are downloaded from the Youtube platform. The video must contain the television station symbol in the upper right corner to ensure it is a televised version.

Four videos are containing several artists or public figures known to the public. The two artists are Iqbaal Ramadhan and Sarwendah Tan. The selection of the video

ads is based on research that artists or ambassadors in television advertisements affect viewers' perceptions (Retno, 2018), and ambassadors also provide considerable brand awareness of the RuangGuru (Yunanda, 2018).

The research stage began by collecting video advertising material to be analyzed. Then the next step is an in-depth observation of the data source. In communication, signs can be shaped in the form of verbal signs that come from spoken sounds and texts or non-verbal signs such as pictures, colors, and characters.

Thus, so that the observation can be more detailed, the writer transcribes the video advertisement so that the verbal message is more comfortable to be analyzed. For in-depth consideration of non-verbal messages, the writer also made several screenshots of the scenes in the advertisement. The next stage is to explain the signs, objects, and the meaning or interpretation of the symbols that appear in the ad.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Limited time in television advertising makes the sign that appears from an advertisement must be short, concise, and immediately acceptable to television viewers. The use of signs is so wordy, and it will be difficult for television viewers to understand the meaning of the advertisement. The advertisement uses a message sign that is

simple but still attractive while still conveying the product advantages of the teacher room application. The four videos will be discussed one by one how these signs are transmitted in television advertising media and the meanings and interpretations of the signs conveyed in television commercials.

The advertisement in the first video is an advertisement using the public figure Iqbaal Ramadhan. The verbal sign in this advertisement begins with a sentence, *"RuangGuru is the number one online learning application in Indonesia"* uttered by Iqbaal.

This verbal sign refers to the object of RuangGuru as the best application in Indonesia. The meaning of the interpretation that can be drawn is that the advertisement will show that the RuangGuru application is a trusted application, as evidenced by the number one ranking as an online learning application.

In the screenshot image, the verbal sign of the leading learning application is reinforced by contrasting white text. It enhances the meaning of the interpretation that the RuangGuru is the number one learning application.

Furthermore, to provide an overview of the app, the advertisement displays a sign of a verbal message, namely with the sentence "the subjects are arranged in subchapters, and this video chapter is animated." This verbal sign is also supported by non-verbal signs in the form of an example of moving animation video and writing in white with the words "Animated Learning Videos."

This sign refers to the RuangGuru application's object, which in its app, contains school material content presented in the form of animated videos. The animated video will make it easier for students to understand the material.

The interpretation of this sign, by using RuangGuru, the learning condition becomes more interesting. It contains material in the form of texts and images and exciting videos to increase the student's interest and understanding.

The next sign is a sign that describes the features that are also in the RuangGuru application. Verbal signs are indicated by Iqbaal's words, as there are practice questions and their discussion.

This verbal sign is reinforced by a video showing discussions when we are wrong in answering practice questions. The scene presented by Iqbaal is touching the wrong answer (as he chose it randomly), then



Figure 1. Sign of The Best App and Animated Feature of RuangGuru
Source: Ad Screenshot, 2020.

immediately there is a discussion under the item which discusses which answer is correct.

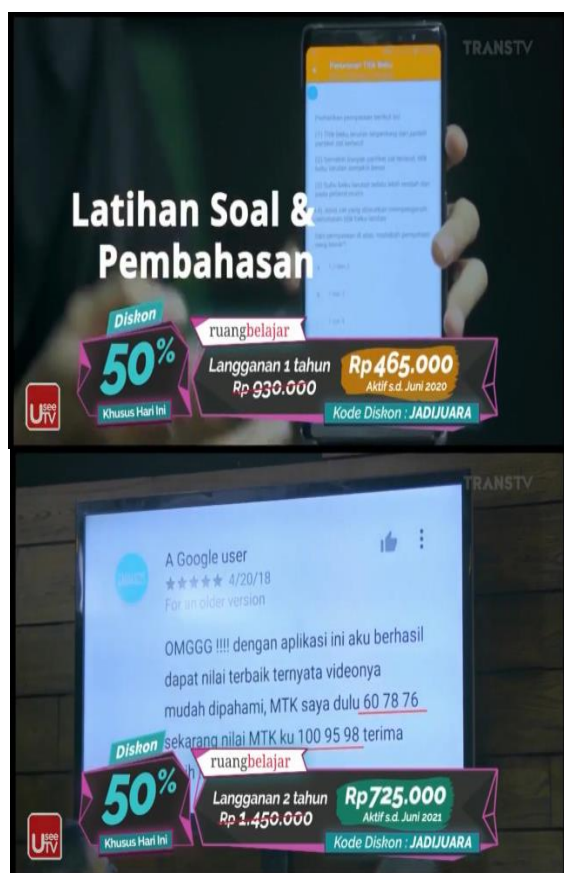


Figure 2. The Features of Questions, Discussions, and Customer Proofs.
Source: Screenshot of RuangGuru Ad, 2020.

The interpretation of this sign is that the teacher room application has a variety of features. RuangGuru provides practice questions and a detailed discussion of the answers to the questions that have been given. The answers can also be seen immediately below the items that were previously worked.

The signs mentioned above are the main features of the RuangGuru. The meaning captured from the signs presented is that the RuangGuru application has a myriad of features that are not inferior to

conventional tutoring—animated videos are rarely found in traditional guidance.

The closing ad in the first video displays an alert about the teacher's room app users' response. The advertisement shows the respondent's sentence, *"OMGGG!!! MTK saya sebelumnya 60 78 76, sekarang nilai MTK ku 100 95 98, terima kasih RuangGuru."*

This sign refers to customer proof in an advertisement. The customer proof serves as a credibility enhancer of the ad, as evidenced by its users' testimonials. The interpretation of this customer proof is that RuangGuru can upgrade its users' understanding and values.

It is reinforced by the use of signs in the form of Mathematics subjects. Mathematics lessons are the most difficult subjects and less demanded by the students. However, in the video, the customers can get the perfect 100 in Mathematics.

The second advertisement shows a sign of how the RuangGuru application provides convenience and comfort to students. The signs are displayed with a conversation sentence between mother and child. The mother said *"mana pada main hape mulu"* then the child, played by Iqbaal Ramadhan, answered *"kita gak lagi main bun. kita lagi bimbil online di aplikasi RuangGuru"*. This sign refers to an incident where the mother complained that her child was playing on the cellphone.

However, the child answered the concern that they were not playing but learning online in the RuangGuru application. This verbal sign is supported by non-verbal

signs, a scene where children who are learning look relaxed and happy while using the app. In this scene, the actors can also be seen wearing simple clothes like clothes at home when they are relaxing.



Figure 3. Relaxed Learning Scene and Easy Payment Feature.
Source: Screenshot of RuangGuru Ad, 2020.

The interpretation of this sign is that by using the RuangGuru, learning activities become more enjoyable and can be carried out in a relaxed manner. You don't have to go here and there and can be accessed easily anywhere, even in the family room. There is no burden to students because they can study anywhere, without going to a tutoring place. Besides, students can also study without having to prepare neat clothes, such as when going to a traditional tutoring place.

In addition to signs regarding the ease of learning by using the teacher room application, another sign shown in this second advertisement is that it raises a sign regarding financing in tutoring. At the beginning of the video, an introduction is given from a video sign where a mother is worried about school fees and tuition fees.

This sign is indicated by a mother figure dressed in a negligee who is concerned about school funding and tutoring. This sign refers to the object of parents who have to think about school fees and tuition fees for their children. This sign of concern is then answered in the advertisement that there are several conveniences when using the RuangGuru application as online tutoring.

These conveniences are its easiness to access the payments and low subscription fee of RuangGuru. The sign for easy payments is the display of an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) and a minimarket waiter. This sign indeed refers to objects, namely ATMs, which are easy to find everywhere. The minimarket sign refers to minimarket objects that are already scattered and well-known in Indonesia because they are displayed in colors that already have associations with these minimarkets such as Indomaret and Alfamart.

The second concern is about costs. At the beginning of the advertisement, a scene was given about concerns over tuition financing. This concern was then answered by a sign that was highlighted, "10x lebih murah". This sign refers to the subscription

fee, which is ten times cheaper than the general tuition fee.



Figure 4. Low-cost Sign and Discount.
Source: Screenshot of RuangGuru Ad, 2020.

This interpretation is that when participating or subscribing to the RuangGuru application, parents do not need to worry about funding because the funding for joining the RuangGuru online tutoring is very cheap. So that this can be a solution for parents when facing the problem of high tuition fees. Moreover, at the end of the advertisement, it is also strengthened by a sign, "*bimbel Cuma Rp.2000-an per hari*".

In the two video advertisements above, there is always a sign of discount on RuangGuru payments if you subscribe immediately. Some advertisements provide

awareness about a discount without showing its features.

In the third ad video, the sign used to promote this discount is to feature a celebrity, Iqbaal Ramadhan, whose body is half missing. Then this sign is then followed by a verbal sign in the form of a saying, "*Loh kok badanku cuman setengah kok ini kayak diskonnya RuangGuru yang setengah harga di awal tahun ajaran baru sih hah udah ayo langganan RuangGuru sekarang juga ayo.*"

The non-verbal sign of Iqbaal Ramadhan's disappearance's body also refers to the object of a film that has recently become a hot topic of conversation, namely the cinema movie entitled "Avengers: End Game." In the film, the loss of half of humanity disappearing like dust, as seen in the advertisement.

The interpretation of the 50 percent discount means a massive discount for those who register early in the school year. The discount can attract the attention of customers as it provides a more buying effect. For this reason, buyers will begin to be interested in subscribing because they are currently "*sedang ada diskon.*"

The fourth video ad is an ad in the middle of the semester (not a new school year). This ad stars an artist, namely Sarwendah Tan. The advertisement features a conversation between two people (one of whom is a school student) who talks about expensive tutoring that does not have a positive effect on their children. This conversation refers to the anxiety of parents who have followed their child to education.

The child does not have significant development, even though the tutoring that is followed is not cheap. Sarwendah then answered this concern by recommending RuangGuru.

RuangGuru feature that provides learning material accompanied by an explanation from the tutor and the assistant's animation.

The interpretation of this sign is that by using RuangGuru application, the material is delivered by the tutor, as is conventional tutoring. Besides, some tutors provide the content. There are also supporting animations that certainly add to the understanding and become more attractive. So that means, when compared to conventional tutoring, tutoring through the RuangGuru is more interesting.

In previous advertisements, the problem of financing was in a separate ad. In this advertisement, the issue of the funding was also discussed by Sarwendah. The point of cost is answered with a scene at the end of the video. Namely in the form of calculations of tuition fees if reduced in daily units. The video shows that subscribing to the RuangGuru, and per day only costs 1000 rupiah.



Figure 5. Mothers' Conversation and Tutors' Explanation.

Source: Screenshot of RuangGuru Ad, 2020.

Almost the same as the first video ad, signs that are displayed to attract buyers include a sign in the form of a learning video supported by animation. But this time with a different sign.

The sign that appears is a video where the content of the learning material is a video of a tutor who explains the material, which is also supported by animation to make it easier to understand. This sign refers to the



Figure 6. Celebrity's Explanation.

Source: Screenshot of RuangGuru Ad, 2020.

The interpretation of these signs is that using RuangGuru will benefit a lot. In addition to the learning materials that are

made interesting, parents will not be burdened with expensive tutoring fees. It is because if it is calculated, it turns out that the subscription costs only one thousand Rupiahs per day. One thousand Rupiahs per day is indeed a very small nominal. With the shape of a sign like this, it will cross the mind of parents that RuangGuru is very cheap.

Discussions

From some of the videos discussed above, the actors who become advertisements are children and parents. They are a sign of the parties involved in tutoring problems. Parents like Sarwendah, a mother who wears a negligee, are the imagined parents who will later buy or subscribe to RuangGuru. Because after all, parents have an essential role in financing. Meanwhile, the children sign symbolizes students who will enjoy learning through the RuangGuru application.

The sign that appears when advertising is often using discount messages. It seems to be due to the moment of the new school year or the new semester. The discount is one of the attractions and gives a sign to television viewers that RuangGuru was very cheap at that time.

Besides that, the dominant color sign is blue. This color does refer to the symbolic object or symbol of RuangGuru application, which is also dominated by blue. But on the other hand, blue also has its interpretation. The blue color means trust, loyalty, wisdom, self-confidence, and intelligence (Basuki, 2015).

It says that in each advertisement, RuangGuru also wants to give a message that

online guidance application can increase knowledge and increase self-confidence in undergoing the teaching and learning process. Especially as support for existing school materials so that students can be more confident when facing learning in class.

CONCLUSIONS

The semiotics of RuangGuru advertisements on television media use signs that refer to superior features in the RuangGuru application. Besides, there is also a message sign, which means that subscribing to the RuangGuru application is inexpensive and cheaper compared to conventional tutoring. Iqbaal Ramadhan figure as a sign that refers to young people who later use the RuangGuru application.

Meanwhile, a mother figure, such as Sarwendah, is a sign that relates to parents who always pay attention to their children's learning guidance. The blue color that dominates the advertisement also means that the RuangGuru application is trustworthy and can increase students' confidence in facing classroom learning.

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