

A SEMIOTIC ADVERTISING ANALYSIS: DOMINOS PIZZA - AN UNSHARABLE FLAVOR

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Summary

Semiotics is utilized whenever products, services, or any form of communication are involved. Signs serve to concretize the meanings of the language being conveyed. It serves as a way to bring any thought, idea, or emotion to life in the recipient's mind. These signs facilitate this mental visualization by giving concrete meanings a specific form, thereby making them more attention-grabbing. Semiotic analyses are widely used in advertising and other communication efforts because they help interpret the codes used in advertisements correctly.

In this study, a semiotic analysis was conducted on the signs used in the Domino's Pizza ("A Flavor You Can't Share") advertisement to understand what messages the brand intended to convey to consumers, and the findings were interpreted. The advertisement was examined to determine its meaning in terms of the values and beliefs it conveys.

Keywords: Advertising, Semiotics, Domino's Pizza.

Introduction

Ever since humans first came into existence and began living together in communities, they have sought to communicate with one another—whether through language or symbols—and to convey meaning. In the modern age, visuals have become extremely important, and since ideas are often conveyed through images, people are constantly confronted with visual elements wherever they go and wherever they look. These visual codes are delivered to consumers through advertising.

Advertisements are among the most important cultural elements that shape and reflect daily life. It is inevitable for individuals, who are surrounded by advertisements everywhere and at all times, to be exposed to them. Whether walking down a street, watching television, reading a newspaper or magazine, or browsing the internet, people constantly encounter these advertisements. These advertisements are imbued with meanings in addition to their forms and product features. Furthermore, rather than evaluating advertisements solely as part of the economy or marketing, it is important to analyze them within a social context and from an ideological perspective (Ünlü, 2018: 185).

It is evident that advertising campaigns make extensive use of these signs. Individuals are born into these meanings and interpret their lives in accordance with them. Through the codes they contain, advertisements appeal to codes that already exist within individuals and construct these meanings in their minds (Özer and Yazar, 2019: 106).

Semiotics is a scientific framework that analyzes how meanings are constructed through interrelationships in narratives and texts, thereby creating a model of thought capable of revealing the process of production. In semiotics, which reconstructs and analyzes meanings, interpretation consists not so much of a new form of reading that supplements existing ones, but rather of prominent, refined, comprehensive, and systematic assumptions regarding the conditions of reading (Rıfat, 2002: 19).

Semiotics, as used in this study, is a significant field of science today. Semiotics offers numerous opportunities for visual analysis in various fields based on visual art, and analyses are also conducted in advertisements through the lens of semiotics.

This study examines how meaning is constructed, presented, and conveyed in the Domino's Pizza advertisement text used as an example of an advertising message. To this end, within the context of individual lifestyles and consumer culture, Arthur Asa Berger's checklist was utilized to analyze the arrangement and combination of linguistic and visual signs in the example advertisement.

Advertising

Advertising is the promotion of goods or services through mass media to facilitate or increase sales. Due to their nature, advertisements influence profound changes in technology and media, as well as the cultural, social, and economic structures of the culture in which they are produced, and public perceptions (Altay, 2000: 34).

According to İslamoğlu (2002: 318), advertising is the process of positively promoting and gaining consumer acceptance of a good or service—or the name of an institution or individual—through the media in exchange for a predetermined fee. (Kotler, 2000: 564) states that advertising is used either to establish the long-term image of a product or service or to prompt consumers to purchase products or goods immediately.

Advertising refers to the process of informing large audiences about a product or service through mass media. While fulfilling its informational function, advertising purchases space and time in the media (Elden et al., 2005: 62). Advertising or the advertising industry aims to inform consumers about products, services, and organizations while also seeking to persuade them, and it does so by utilizing mass media (Elden, 2015: 136–137).

The purpose of advertising is to inform and educate consumers about goods and services. That is, to provide information about the existence, purchaseability, purpose of use, and management of goods and services. However, in today's world, advertisements broadcast through media organizations are more focused on creating an image and directing the target audience towards purchase, rather than simply informing the consumer (Balkaş, 2006: 179). Advertising serves the purpose of increasing the sales and profitability of organizations. Advertising messages are closely related to the emotions and behaviors of consumers and are structured around the marketing objectives of organizations. Advertising is a much more comprehensive practice than simply making people aware of a product or service or drawing attention to its existence. Because advertising aims to sell a product, a service, or an idea (Balta P., 2010: 4). Furthermore, while the purpose of advertising is sales-oriented, its effectiveness also needs to be measured.

Advertising effectiveness is the measurement of whether the advertising plan has reached the target audience within the defined objectives, and if so, to what extent. Advertising effectiveness is divided into two categories: sales effect and communication effect. Since the general purpose of advertising is to increase sales, sales are controlled as a result of advertising effectiveness (Mucuk, 2012: 228-229). Advertising is one of the main marketing communication elements in promoting and increasing awareness of a product or service.

Semiotics

Semiotics is a branch of science whose development was initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure in his work "Lectures on General Linguistics" (Cours de Linguistique Generale), and further developed by figures such as Charles Sanders Peirce, Pierre Guiraud, Roland Barthes, and Claude Levi Strauss. As a science, semiotics was developed after linguistics, and while it was initially considered within linguistics, it was later decided that it was more general than linguistics and was seen as a higher unit (Yılmaz O., 2013: 357). Saussure (1998: 72) defined the combination of the concept and the heard image as a sign. To unify the whole, he used the terms "sign" instead of "concept" and "signified" instead of "heard image".

Interest in signs and their means of conveying meaning has existed for a long time. This period extends back to medieval thinkers like John Locke, and Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Saunders Peirce are considered the two founders of semiotics. Peirce defines a sign as anything that replaces anything else in any quantity, in relation to anyone. The thing that the sign replaces becomes the object of the sign. Peirce uses visual signs from various media forms such as dress codes, traffic signs, advertising images, hand and arm gestures, newspapers, and TV programs. In linguistic signs, the signifier-signified relationship develops normally. A cat is called a cat without reason. However, in visual cinematic signs, the signifier-signified relationship is one of similarity, and the sign of a cat signifies a cat (Parsa, 1999: 16). Göstergebilim, içeriği ve sınırları ne olursa olsun, her çeşit gösterge sistemini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Jestler, müzik, ses, nesneler ve bütün bunların karmaşık çağrışımlarını anlamlandırmaktadır (Barthes, 1967: 9).

A sign is defined as any form, phenomenon, object, etc., that represents something on its own and that can stand in for it. A sign is a system composed of natural languages, sign language, various gestures, traffic signs, flags of certain professional groups, fashion, advertising posters, architectural works, literature, music, painting, etc., that people create to communicate during the socialization process. The

scientific discipline that studies the workings of sign systems is called semiotics (Rifat, 2009: 11,12). Semiotics, which examines the mechanism by which an individual creates signs, forms systems with signs, and communicates through them, uses language as the first example system in this process. Since the signs in language are signs, their emergence occurs through the process of an individual observing, distinguishing, classifying, and naming things around them. Language, through the models and systems it creates, provides individuals with the opportunity to make sense of the world (Erkman, 1987: 22).

Visual signs are predominantly used when promoting a product, service, or place. It is generally believed that visual elements can replace or reflect reality. However, compared to verbal or written signs, visual signs are considered much more attention-grabbing and more concrete in terms of the elements targeted for promotion (Çulha, 2011: 410). Charles Sanders Peirce divides signs into three categories: visual signs, symbols, and emblems. Visual signs represent the object through its resemblance and also include the symbol of the type. For example, the fedora hat and raincoat are symbols used in detective films (Kabadayı, 2013: 66).

Table 1. Peirce's Triad of Semiotic Relations.

	First	Second	Third
its relationship with the sign itself	Qualification	Symbol	Symbol
The relationship of the signifier to its object.	Symbol	Indicator	Sembol
The relationship of the sign to its interpreter.	Period	Recommended	Indicator

Regarding how signs relate to their objects, Peirce's schema of (similarity), index (signification), and symbol (convention) has often been used as if it comprised the entirety of Peirce's classification of signs. However, Peirce noted that individual signs, such as maps, blend iconic, indexical, and symbolic dimensions, but that one or two are likely to be dominant (Prior, 2014: 3).

Semiotics is used in situations involving products, services, or any communication effort. Signs are used to concretize and present the meanings of the language being conveyed. They serve as a way to evoke any thought, idea, or feeling in the mind of the recipient. These signs facilitate the visualization of concrete meanings by giving them a specific form, making them more attention-grabbing. Semiotic analyses are widely used in advertising and other communication efforts because they help in correctly interpreting the codes used in advertising.

This study uses semiotic analysis to understand the messages Domino's Pizza (Unshareable Taste) advertisement aims to convey to the consumer through the symbols used, and the findings are interpreted. The study attempts to decipher the meaning and beliefs conveyed by the advertisement.

Method

In the application part, which is the final section of the research, the commercial titled "The Taste That Separates Lovers of Domino's Pizza" was analyzed using the semiotic analysis method. The reason Domino's Pizza was chosen for the semiotic analysis is that the commercials tragically depict friends, married couples, and families engaging in a fierce struggle to obtain the pizza, rather than sharing their semiotic methods.

Semiotics, while generally contributing to the understanding of communication phenomena and the functioning of messages, is also considered a specialized field of study today. Used in the analysis of advertising communication, semiotics analyzes the linguistic and visual elements of the message. Semiotics examines how the creator of the advertising message realizes the signifier-signified plane; it investigates how the message is presented clearly and explicitly through visual elements and verbal signs (Özcan, 2007: 133).

The materials used and the impact of the way cultural and social events are examined on meaning-making have been analyzed. For the analysis, the following checklist created by Arthur Asa Berger (1993:37-38) was used as a semiotic analysis chart.

- Identifying and analyzing the key indicators in the text.

1. What are the key indicators and what do they indicate?

2. What system makes these indicators meaningful?

4. What intellectual structures and sociological issues does it encompass? - How does cinema itself influence the text?

1. What types of shots, camera angles, and editing techniques were used?
2. How were color, light, music, and sound indicators used to give meaning?

The list above consists of some important and necessary processes to examine when conducting a semiotic analysis, and can be used in all media texts, including advertisements (Berger, 1993: 37). In the analysis of commercials, cultural and cinematic codes are particularly emphasized. Cinematic codes provide the contribution of the director's shots, camera angles, and editing techniques, as well as light, color, music, and sound, to the meaning (Monaco, 2002: 172).

The Subject of the Commercial

In the first scene of the commercial, a delivery driver bringing a Domino's pizza order witnesses a fierce struggle between two friends who are fighting to be the first to grab the pizza. The driver, watching this struggle from behind a glass door, is visibly surprised and worried. The commercial continues with an elderly couple engaged in a deadly fight for the pizza on the table. The woman's face is filled with anger and hatred as she tries to overpower the man by grabbing his throat and claiming the pizza for herself. Next, a young couple appears, also fighting for the pizza. As they tug at it, the woman grabs it and, despite sitting on the same couch, she enjoys the pizza, ignoring the unhappiness on the man's face.

Findings and Commentary

Domino's Pizza: The Flavor That Divides Lovers



Image: 1

The commercial opens with a dramatic operatic melody as a delivery man rings the doorbell. The dramatic music evokes a sense of sadness rather than excitement and happiness, because the following scene shows two friends struggling to be the first to grab the pizza they ordered. The delivery man, watching this struggle from behind the glass door, shows surprise and fear on his face. This suggests he's tense because he's never witnessed such a scene before with a pizza delivery. While friendships grow through sharing, this commercial emphasizes individual possession and pleasure. The lighting isn't bright; a dim light is used to create tension in the struggle between the two friends for the pizza.



Image: 2

In the second scene, two elderly couples are seen fighting each other to the death to reach the pizza on the table. In this scene, the furniture in the house appears to be old, relics, indicating that the couple has lived together in this house for a long time.

This couple, who have shared a life together in the same house for so long, have engaged in a deadly struggle rather than sharing a pizza. This illustrates the importance of individualism and the pleasure derived from consumption, as imposed by the capitalist system. It shows that even those closest to them can engage in a deadly struggle for the pleasure of possession and consumption. The anger and hatred on the woman's face reveal her indifference and disregard for her husband when it comes to the desire for possession. The dramatic opera music continues in this scene, attempting to add tension.



Image: 3

The third scene of the commercial again shows a young couple struggling to share a pizza. The woman, having won the battle, is happily focused on her pizza, while the man sitting next to her seems unconcerned and indifferent to her sadness. This again highlights the dominance of an individualistic lifestyle. It shows that this self-centeredness leads to a lack of empathy. Dramatic opera music continues to create tension, and a dark lighting system is used. In the final scene, low lighting and dark objects are used to create an unsettling atmosphere for the viewer. This demonstrates that an individualistic lifestyle does not bring happiness.

Conclusion

In this study, the commercial released by Domino's Pizza with the theme of "taste that separates lovers" was analyzed semiotically. Advertisements implement marketing strategies to push their target audiences towards greater consumption. Advertising campaigns based on the idea that consumption brings more happiness create voluntary activists of the consumer society ideology. Thus, in the triangle of social structure, culture, and the individual, consumer society has become the fundamental characteristic of today's societies (Demirzen, 2010: 98). As can be understood from this commercial, the individual is built on pleasure. In the messages intended to be given to the individual, instead of the happiness of sharing, the individual is manipulated through the sense of possession and pleasure. The slogan "The taste of pizza separates friends, married couples, and friendships" is used to try to convey this. In conclusion, the analysis of the signs used in this advertisement shows that a message focusing on struggle and consumption is attempted to be conveyed. The advertisement emphasizes that there are obstacles in front of shareable pleasure with scenes supported by dramatic music. The struggle of the elderly couple and the individualistic approach of the young couple reveal the underlying messages of the advertisement. In this context, it can be said that advertising carries a meaning where consumer culture and individual pleasure are emphasized.

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