

A SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS OF STREET HARASSMENT ACTS REPRESENTATION IN L'ORÉAL'S CAMPAIGN

ANALISIS SEMIOTIKA PADA TINDAKAN PELECEHAN DI JALAN DALAM KAMPANYE L'ORÉAL

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Abstract

Regarding the massive cases of sexual harassment, many companies tried to contribute to and support the stop sexual harassment movement by producing posters or video campaigns. Within those video campaigns released in the media, each has a profound meaning represented through graphic visualization, pictures, and sounds. Not only that, gestures, facial expressions, voice, or the language performed by the character in the illustration also brought many explicit meanings. Thus, this study aimed to reveal how the campaign video represents street sexual harassment and the messages to support each other or stand up against street harassment displayed by L'Oréal Paris in its campaign videos. From the analysis using Pierce's triangle of signs, the study revealed that street sexual harassment represented in the video into four types of street sexual harassment, namely suggestive comments, sexually explicit touch, inappropriate gestures, and being followed. However, society is not ready to face and combat street harassment. Thus, through the campaign video, L'Oréal brought some messages to educate society and encourage them to stand against street harassment.

Keywords: advertisement, campaign, semiotics, stop street harassment

Abstrak

Berkaitan dengan maraknya kasus pelecehan seksual, banyak perusahaan yang berkontribusi sekaligus mendukung gerakan penghentian pelecehan seksual dengan membuat poster atau video kampanye. Dalam video kampanye yang dirilis di media tersebut, masing-masing memiliki makna yang sangat dalam yang direpresentasikan melalui visualisasi grafis, gambar, dan suara. Tidak hanya itu, gerak tubuh, ekspresi wajah, suara, atau bahasa yang ditampilkan oleh tokoh dalam ilustrasi tersebut juga membawa banyak makna eksplisit. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap representasi video kampanye terhadap pelecehan seksual di jalanan dan pesan-pesan untuk saling mendukung atau melawan pelecehan jalanan yang ditampilkan oleh L'Oréal Paris dalam video kampanyenya. Dari analisis menggunakan segitiga tanda Pierce, penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa pelecehan seksual jalanan direpresentasikan dalam video menjadi 4 jenis pelecehan seksual jalanan, yaitu komentar sugestif, sentuhan seksual eksplisit, isyarat yang tidak pantas, dan diikuti. Namun, masyarakat belum siap menghadapi dan memerangi pelecehan di jalanan. Oleh karena itu, melalui video kampanye, L'Oréal membawa beberapa pesan untuk mengedukasi masyarakat dan mendorong mereka untuk melawan pelecehan di jalanan.

Kata kunci: hentikan pelecehan jalanan, iklan, kampanye, semiotika

INTRODUCTION

One of the media that contains many signs is advertising because advertising is a communication medium that persuasion and is composed of many images, words, colors, or signs that aim to send messages to consumers (Honouris & Sukendro, 2022). Of course, the scattered advertisements adapted to the situation of society at that time and used signs that were appropriate and understandable to the people of that era. Not only adjusting the situation in their time and introducing the products they offer, but companies are also competing to campaign to support social issues in society such as gender equality, anti-domestic harassment, anti-sexual harassment, or other social issues. For example, beauty products that campaign for courage, and confidence, or even products that support equal rights between women and men and also stand against sexual or domestic harassment. Through all kinds of technology and media, of course, companies are competing to create advertisements that are creative and contain interesting and very meaningful messages (Honouris & Sukendro, 2022). One of the most interesting issues to be analyzed is an act against sexual harassment that was presented through a campaign video by several beauty products companies.

The sexual harassment issue itself has always been in the spotlight in various parts of the world. Harry (2018) mentioned that female skyscrapers in Cape Town were harassed and the study found that women and girls were most likely experiencing street harassment because of their bodies. According to Arndt (2018), street harassment is an act of unfamiliar men approaching one or more women in a public place in an attempt to unpleasantly intrude on their attention using either language or action that is explicitly or implicitly sexual (Arndt, 2018; Harry, 2018). Because of the rising cases, many activists raise together with product companies to educate society and bring messages in the campaign videos they display in regards to the acts of gender equality and women's rights. One of which is L'Oréal Paris which stands up against street harassment by providing a campaign video about street harassment entitled "STAND UP Let's Act Together Against Street Harassment". Just like common advertisements and campaign videos, L'Oréal's campaign video also presented a lot of signs that brought a lot of hidden meaning. Thus, the purpose of this study was to discover how L'Oréal Paris's marketing films depict street sexual harassment and the messages to support one another to stand up against street harassment by using the semiotics theory of Charles Sanders Pierce of triangle meaning.

Previously, research about L'Oréal Paris advertisement has been conducted by Syahdini (2019), yet the research only focuses on the regular advertisement using Hjelsmlev's connotation theory. Besides, several studies performing Pierce's theory on advertising have also been conducted such as Marsheilo and Tamburian (2022) with semiotic analysis in the 2020 Aqua Kids Ad. In addition, a similar study was also conducted by Honoris and Sukendro (2022) which focused on the representation of safety in the Gojek advertisement "It's Okay to be Lebay". Another Pierce study was also conducted by Kunmei, et.al., (2022) that explores the difference between Indonesian and Chinese shampoo advertisements. Since there has not been found any research related to L'Oréal's semiotics features that build the representation of street harassment and how the sign conveyed messages within the campaign video has not been explored, the researchers found that this issue is worth studying.

Charles Sanders Pierce mentioned that the chain of signs will produce meanings that will then become interpretants (Yuwita, 2018). In his theory, Christian Sanders Pierce

describes a model called triangle meaning semiotics which consists of three things i.e., signs, objects, and interpretants (see Figure 1). In addition, Pierce also thinks that words are a form of sign. However, something can be called a sign if it can be perceived through the five senses, thoughts, or feelings and has a function as a sign by being able to represent something else (Yuwita, 2018).

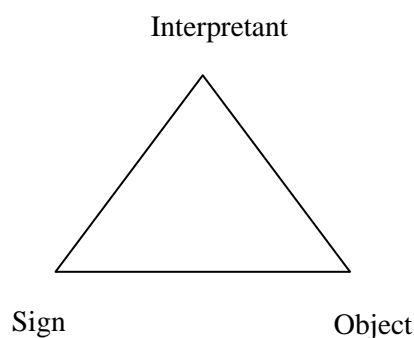


Figure 1: A Model of Triangle Meaning Semiotics from Charles Sanders Pierce

Through Charles Sanders Pierce's theory, this research intended to reveal how the campaign video represents street sexual harassment and the messages to support each other or stand up against street harassment displayed by L'Oréal Paris in its campaign videos. To specify the analysis, the researcher raised three research questions that are: (1) how do the signs displayed in the video represent street sexual harassment towards women? (2) how do the signs represent society's attitudes towards street harassment? (3) what does the message that L'Oréal tried to convey through the signs presented in the videos?

METHOD

This study performed a qualitative descriptive method that focused on the representation of street sexual harassment against women as well as the representation of messages to support the anti-sexual harassment act in public based on three following research questions: (1) how do the signs displayed in the video represent street sexual harassment towards women? (2) how do the signs represent society's attitudes towards street harassment? (3) what does the message that L'Oréal tried to convey through the signs presented in the videos?

The data source of this study focuses on a campaign video of the anti-sexual harassment act on the streets uploaded by L'Oréal Paris USA in October 2020 with a duration of 1:16 seconds entitled "STAND UP Let's Act Together Against Street Harassment". The purpose of the researchers in choosing the campaign video is that despite the novelty of the campaign video release date, this video presented various signs and messages that are conveyed either verbally or through the signs displayed in the video. Besides, this video has also yet to be analyzed by any researchers. For further analysis, the researchers performed Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory i.e., triangle meaning consisting of signs, objects, and interpretants (Yuwita, 2018; Honouris & Sukendro, 2022).

The data collection technique used by the researcher is a descriptive analysis that focuses on the observation and direct analysis of the video campaigns previously mentioned. To facilitate the analysis and elaboration, the researcher provides scenes of the campaign video in the form of images. Furthermore, the researcher interprets and analyzes the signs presented in the campaign video by referring to Pierce's theory and related studies. Additionally, the researcher presents the results of the analysis and elaborates the detail in the results and discussion section.

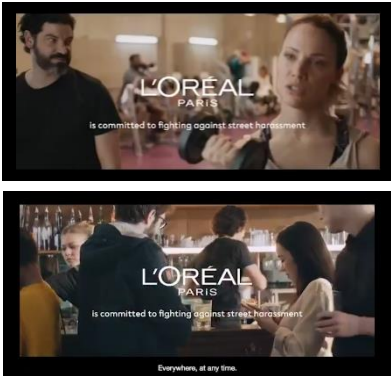

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



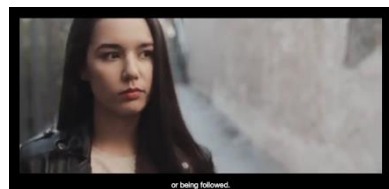
In this section, researchers will categorize sexual representations of harassment in videos and reveal the messages that this video campaign wants to convey. After intensive observation, interpretation, and analysis of the research subject, the researcher separated the discussion into three parts i.e., the representation of street sexual harassment, society's attitudes towards street harassment, and the messages conveyed through the videos.


The Representation of Street Sexual Harassment

Table 1 below represents the sign presented in the videos as well as the analysis using Pierce's theory. Further, the analysis of street sexual harassment representation will be provided later.

Table 1. The Representation of Street Sexual Harassment Types in the Video

No.	Sign	Object	Interpretant
1.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gym - Café - Crowd - Verbal sign: "Everywhere at any time" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two settings (gym and café) and the crowd in the video represents public space. 2. The text explains that sexual harassment can happen anywhere and anytime even among the crowd.
2.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A woman with an afraid expression, - A man whispers closely - Verbal sign: "Like a suggestive comment" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The woman (Asian woman) represents the victim that feels afraid and annoyed 2. The man represents the perpetrator that whispers something to the victim 3. The text explains the types of sexual harassment that tend to happen in public spaces i.e., suggestive comments.

3.	 <p>A woman in a bus is being touched by a man. The caption below the image reads: "a sexually explicit touch."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In a bus - A man plays on a mobile phone - A woman with a shocked expression - A man that stands too close (press the woman) - Verbal sign: "A sexually explicit touch" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The setting (in the bus) represents public transportation. 2. The woman (a black woman) represents the victim that is shocked but cannot do anything. 3. The man represents the perpetrator that sometimes acts like there is no more space in the public transport so that he can feel the victim's body by pressing their body to the victim's (sensitive parts). 4. The man on his phone shows that society sometimes ignores street harassment. 5. The text explains the types of sexual harassment that tend to happen in public spaces i.e., sexually explicit touch.
4.	 <p>A man's hand is holding a woman's hand. The caption below the image reads: "an inappropriate gesture."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A woman's hand holds onto a pole - A man's thumb on a woman's hand - Verbal sign: "An inappropriate gesture" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A man's thumb on a woman's hand that holding into a pole shows that in a public space sometimes the perpetrator sexually harassed the victim by touching or wiping the victim's hand without their consent. 2. The text explains the types of sexual harassment that tend to happen in public transportation i.e., an inappropriate gesture. By this text, it can be said that one of the inappropriate gestures that are mostly done by the perpetrator is touching or wiping the victims' hands without their consent just as illustrated in the video.
5.	 <p>A woman is walking in a deserted alley. The caption below the image reads: "or being followed."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A deserted alley - A woman walking in a deserted alley and looking to the other side. - Whistling sound - Verbal sign: "Or being followed" "And it threatens our self-worth" <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The woman in the picture is represented as a victim. 2. The woman's view of the other side indicates that there is someone paying attention to her. Besides, there is whistling in the videos which is also used to represent sexual harassment where women are mostly being cat-called even just a whistling sound. 3. The text explains that another type of sexual harassment that tends to happen in the street is being followed by a man.

6.		<p>- A man following a woman in a deserted alley</p> <p>- Verbal sign: "And it threatens our self-worth" "It takes over who we are"</p> <p>1. The illustration of a man following a woman along with the text "And it threatens our self-worth" indicates that being followed by a man makes the victim feels threatened. The word 'threatens our (women) self-worth' itself referred to a woman's right to be treated properly. Whereas the second verbal sign indicates that the harassment might take over or make the victims act differently (unlike their usual attitude).</p>
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According to the above analysis, it can be concluded that the video represented 4 types of street sexual harassment that mostly happened in the USA i.e., suggestive comments, sexually explicit touch, inappropriate gestures, and being followed. In suggestive comment harassment, the video shows that the man whispers in the woman's ear that makes her feel uncomfortable, annoyed, or afraid which can be seen from her facial expression (Arndt, 2018). Further, sexually explicit touch and inappropriate gestures were represented through the illustration of a man pressing a woman's body on public transportation. This kind of harassment sometimes happened when the public transportation is full so the perpetrator can take benefit from the crowd where he can touch the victims' bodies without their consent like in the picture in number 4. The last type of harassment presented in the video is being followed. The illustration was set to be in deserted alleys since most rape cases happened in deserted alleys. This scene was followed by the sentence "And it threatens our self-worth" and "It takes over who we are". As a verbal sign, these sentences indicate that this kind of street harassment was the worst because it threatens women's self-worth and takes over who they were. If we only look at the surface, this sentence indicates that as a woman we also have the right to be treated properly and comfortably. Whereas the second verbal sign indicates that the harassment might take over or make the victims act differently (unlike their usual attitude). For example, a woman can be brave, but if she faces such a situation, she might still be afraid and lost their bravery. Yet, if we look at the meaning behind this sentence, this sentence might refer to the possibility of rape that sometimes started with such kind of street harassment. When a woman is followed, she might be raped so the campaign brought the sentence "And it threatens our self-worth" into the scene. Additionally, if the rape happened, means that the victim lost their virginity that in the sentence "It takes over who we are" was represented in the phrase "who we are".

Interestingly, if we take a deeper analysis into the scene, the video used three different actresses in illustrating the victim i.e., an Asian woman (pic no 2), a Black woman (pic no 3), and an American or white woman (pic no 1 and 5). Thus, by performing these actresses, the campaign intended to tell society that anyone can be a victim of street sexual harassment no matter what their ethnicity is. Further, the sign brought in the videos represents that sexual harassment can happen anywhere at any time no matter how crowded a public place (pics no 1) or public transportation (pic no 2) is. Sadly, the campaign represents that street sexual

harassment has never been a social concern which makes them more likely to be ignored if such kind of harassment happened in front of their face. Just like how the campaign represents society's attitude toward street harassment (see Table 2).

Society's Attitude Representation towards Street Harassment

According to the resulted data, the campaign video shows a similar representation of society's attitudes towards street sexual harassment. The data and the analysis can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Society's Attitude towards Street Sexual Harassment

No	Sign	Object	Interpretant
1.	(a)	<p>1.</p> <p>(a) A man saw the accident, but then look away by looking down</p> <p>(b) A woman looking down</p> <p>(c) A man looking down</p> <p>(d) A woman saw the accident, but then look away by looking down</p> <p>2. Verbal sign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "We see it happen but stay cautiously silent" - "And we uncomfortably look away." - "Maybe because we don't know what to do" - "How to help or how to combat the situation." 	<p>1. society is somehow ignorant, discomfort, and confused, about street harassment.</p> <p>2. The verbal sign represents society's attitude and feeling towards street harassment. Their common attitude was ignoring the accident, by looking away and pretending that they did not see anything. Yet, deep down in their heart maybe they do not know what to do and have no power to defeat the street harassment act.</p>

As can be seen in Table 2, society's attitude in the video was mostly presented as ignorance, discomfort, or confusion facing such kind of harassment act. This perception was taken as the campaign illustrate society's feeling through their facial expression. In the video, all of the witnesses of street harassment were looking away even though they were aware of street harassment in front of their faces. This kind of gesture and facial expression shown by

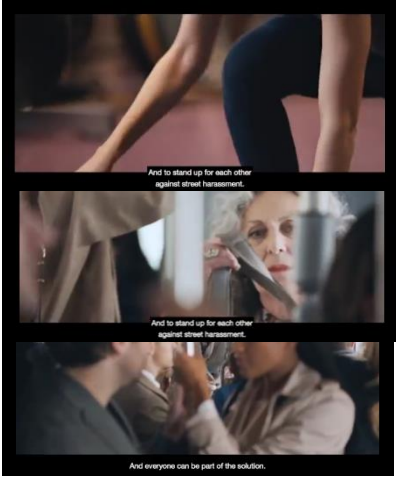




the actors represented ignorance, discomfort, or may be confused as supported by the verbal sign which said, "We see it happen but stay cautiously silent and we uncomfortably look away." From this description, the video represented that society was uncomfortable with such kind of harassment and leads them to take their eyes off and simply pretend they do not see the accident. Yet, the following verbal sign that sounds "Maybe because we don't know what to do. How to help or how to combat the situation." represents that even though the society acted like they do not care, deep down in their heart they just confused and have no idea what to do, how to help or how to defeat the acts. Thus, along with this campaign, L'Oréal also presented a message for society to bravely stand up against street harassment that will be elaborated on in the following section.

The Messages Conveyed through the Videos

Just like the title that is "STAND UP Let's Act Together Against Street Harassment", through this campaign video, L'Oréal tried to educate society about how to combat street harassment by conveying messages through this video by the mean of signs, gestures, and verbal signs.

Table 3. Messages Conveyed through the Videos

No	Sign	Object	Interpretant
1.	(a)	- (a) An old woman closes her book - (b) A man raises his head - Verbal sign: "The time has come to keep our heads up"	- A book that is closed is the representation of an old habit that society needs to get rid of. - A man that is raised his head represented a call for society to take bravely face the street harassment act. A sign for "do not look away anymore, face it"
	(b)		- The verbal sign brought the literal message for society to begin to care about street harassment acts and stand against them. Yet, it is also supported by the scenes i.e., "time has come" supported by the closing book gesture, and "to keep our heads up" supported by the gesture of the man that is ready to face street harassment.

2.	(a)		-(a) A woman stands up -(b) An old woman stands up from her seat -Verbal sign: “And to stand up for each other against street harassment” “And everyone can be part of the solution”	- Stand-up gestures presented by both actresses represents an action against street harassment. - The verbal sign explains the message to society to stand up against street harassment. Besides, the second verbal sign was represented by different actors that helps the victims.
3.			-A man pretending to pay his bill -Verbal sign: “Sorry, I’m going to pay”	-The man action represents one of the examples of how to help street harassment victims by making a distraction. -The verbal sign indicates the man (helper) action.
4.			-A woman pretending to give back the victim's stuff - Verbal sign “Is this yours?”	-The women's action represents another alternative of how to help street harassment victims by making a distraction. -The verbal sign indicates the woman's (helper) action.
5.			-An old woman pretending to hold the pole	-The old women's action represents other examples of how to help street harassment victims by making a distraction.
6.			-A man pretending to ask for directions to the perpetrator. -Verbal sign: “Can you help me, please? I’m looking for this direction.”	-The man action represents another example of how to help street harassment victims, by making a distraction.

According to the above analysis using Pierce’s theory, it can be concluded that the message that tried to be conveyed by L’Oréal through society is that society needs to stand up against street harassment and be brave enough to do something if they see such harassment even though just through a small distraction. Besides, the scene also represented some examples of how to help the victims without violence. Those examples presented in the video

were a small thing, but it does give a big impact to save the victims from being sexually harassed.

Interestingly, the casts of the witness in the video were varied (from young to old, from white, Asian, to Black) which can well represent the word "And everyone can be part of the solution". In other words, everyone can help the victim, no matter their age, gender, or ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

All in all, after analyzing semiotics features presented in L'Oréal's video entitled "STAND UP Let's Act Together Against Street Harassment" using Pierce's triangle meaning theory, the study found that street sexual harassment was represented in 4 types of street sexual harassment that mostly happened in the USA. Those types were suggestive comments represented by a man that closely whispered in the woman's ear and touched her shoulder. Further, the videos also mention the sexually explicit touch represented by a man pressing his body to a woman's body on public transportation. Besides, an inappropriate gesture is also mentioned as street harassment represented by a man's thump that touching a woman's hand without her consent. Lastly, the mentioned type was being followed represented by a woman followed by a stranger (man) in a deserted alley. Further, the video also presented that such kind of street harassment might happen anywhere at any time to anyone without seeing their appearance or ethnicity.

Furthermore, the video also represented that society was mostly ignorant, discomfort, or sometimes confused when they face real sexual harassment in front of their eyes. The sign presented in the video also shows that sometimes society wants to help but they don't know how to do to combat the harassment that is represented through the verbal sign. Thus, along with this video, L'Oréal also presented some messages to educate society about how to combat street harassment as well as encourage the society to stand up against street harassment and put their heads up to help the victims even just by making a simple distraction.

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