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The effect of Semiotics on Advertisement and Ideas Promotion

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Abstract

Semiotics of the most important means by which convey the idea involved or interested in the community to explain a simple and frank manner, but the phenomenon is the language can be used in the delivery of the meaning is to be a way to attract attention at the same time carrying with it the internal message. On this paper we will try to highlighting the importance of Semiotics in advertising by Pun and homophones which are the most common strategies in advertising. However, there still other concepts that effects on the human mind and that what we will discuss in this paper.

Key words: advertising, semiotics, homophones, strategies in advertising

II. Introduction

A. Background

Semantics is the study of the meaning behind words and phrases. The study of semantics focuses on how words relate to each other and to how the listener decodes the message.

Advertisers who employ semantics in their messages must be aware of how their target audience will interpret slogans, images and ad copy. With the advent of online search engines, marketers can also employ semantics to place relevant ads in a user's search results.

Advertising is a science but mostly it associated with marketing because it's a way to get money by using intelligence ways. Nowadays, advertising plays a vital role in the world of business. As noticed, people are interested in advertising languages and through studying semantics and understanding language features one can improve both the understanding and designing of successful advertisements. Semantic is one of the linguistic forms that propel advertising to the desired height. The uniqueness of the association and word choice makes the language of advertising a specialized field of study. The examination is made of the different word arrangements and manipulations, the choice of words, word order, denotative and connotative meanings of advertisement slots, and other deviations fore grounded on established English language code.

B. Statement of the problem

There is always a need for an attractive piece of advertisements in the market to attain the full attraction towards itself. So there is a usage of semiotics in signboards which reflects a nice picture of advertisements on the minds of the viewer. So, there is a basic study of the semiotics and its properties in the usage of advertising a product which has various applications related to the various marketing components. There is the effectiveness of semiotics in achieving the objectives of the advertising.

C. Objectives of the Study

The present study will attempt to answer the following objectives:

- 1- to show the relationship between signs and advertising;
- 2- what is the effect of ad in people?

D. Aim of the Study

The aim is to find out how writer creates awareness and to provide fuller understanding and appreciation of the texture, comprehension and meaning of the language employed. "In advertisement, the choice of diction involves exceptional skills" (1). This will surely help to find the right words combination for a given situation. This will help to find the right words combination for a specific situation. Wrong choice of words either will lead to misunderstand the

purpose of the advertisement or will convey the intended message. The most important factor in communication is to achieve the purpose of understanding the meaning (1)

III. Homophone and Pun

2. Semiotics Theory

2.1. The Concept of Semiotics

Umberto Eco stated that semiotics focus on everything that is perceived as a sign. Sign may be spoken or written words, images, gestures and objects. Semiotics is mostly used in advertising to signify an advertiser's message through the use of symbols. A sign can be better understood as a symbol that signifies another thing (Tsotra , Janson and Kecmanovic). Cook states that advertising is an essential rule in all societies and the most important thing is advertising function is because it is the way to persuade people to buy any product.

As Daniel states “Semiotic involves the study of not only what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else”.

2.2. Color Theory and Advertisement

Colors effect on the perception of the context. There are many studies that have shown that effect by doing many tests to see how people receive the message. Also, each color has a different meaning. For example, the red color represents the fire, force, sex, emotion, love, speed, danger, love of adventure, the motive of the movement, the color of the energy. An example of the use of the red color Coca Cola Company used red color because they wanted to send a message to its clients that its product, Coca Cola, is a product of energy, fun and excitement.

Yellow is a warm color because the color of the sunshine is yellow. It represents happiness and joy, fun, entertainment, optimism, creativity, Joy and curiosity. For instance, McDonald's company used the yellow color because the yellow color is a color of happiness and fun and therefore, most of the children like McDonald's simply because the brand used yellow.

Blue, demonstrates success and confidence. We will find most banks and financial corporations using blue because they need to convince their customer. Reliable financial institution for example the logo icon to VISA or PayPal used blue because blue is the color of confidence and reliability.

Orange, the color of the warmth and vitality and demonstrates optimism, fun, youth and comfort. It is of a great significance in implying reduction of costs therefore it is used by companies to give the consumer that impression of low prices compared to other products. Enervon brand for energy uses orange in its pills to give an impression of comfort.

Green which is the color of the nature, trees and grass, is a cool color that indicates, freshness, friendship and good environment. This is what green symbolize in nature. It also, demonstrates health, fertility, growth, and calmness.

White is widely recognized as the color of the purity, serenity, cleanliness, youth, clarity, innocence and simplicity. It is a very important element in declarations, where the use of white backgrounds is usual to legitimize simplicity of that declaration.

Black is known to be seen with two different perspectives so sometimes it is the color of excellency, practicality, officials, elegance, and seriousness. Other times it symbolizes mystery, darkness and evil. Many companies and institutions would throw "all black" parties to show the prestige of its staff.

Pink is the color youthful energy gives evidence of softness, calmness, femininity, sweetness. high sensitivity and tenderness. It also shows the tranquility and security. An example of the use of pink in feminine products is the Barbie brand because Barbie was addressing female children.

2.3 Analytical Framework

A two-step analysis was used to analyse the advertisements, these two steps included examining non-verbal and verbal signs. The non-verbal signs include signifiers, the denotative and connotative meaning and the general theme of the images. The verbal signs include the language that is used in the adverts. The first step. The non-verbal signs (the signifiers and the denotative and the connotative meaning) of the printed advertisement were examined through a semiotics analysis, stemmed from de Saussure and pierce theories of signs. In this respect, the visual images were studied from the point of view of factors such as the images themselves, colours of the images, font, size, color of the words, the choice of models to endorse the products, facial expression (signifiers) and the possible meaning are explored through these visual cues (the denotative and connotative meaning). Regarding the advertisement theme, it was examined through Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) theoretical framework in visual communication. To do so, the social meaning encoded by the producers (advertisers) into images, was investigated by considering two elements: eye contact, the social distance. In terms of eye-contact, looking directly to the viewers (customers) signifies demand to enter a relationship with the participants (the models) whereas looking indirectly implies offering the participants as a subject of information (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) social distance is related to the fact that the relation between the participants and the viewers could be suggested by determining the distance between them. Accordingly, the shorter distance means the more intimate relationship (Hall, 1964). The second step. The verbal signs (linguistic signs) was investigated. In doing so, several questions were addressed: Are slogans used? If so, what do these slogans mean? How is this language associated with a certain group of society? Do the words suggest something about the products?

2.4 Visual Discourse

“An image is a sign that has the particularity that it can and should be interpreted, but cannot be read.”²¹ The image is a visual perception, and the result of this perception is discovering what is inside the image as a meaning, expressed in the form of signs, i.e., looking at the image as the specular signifier that contains several signs, or the so-called “signifying chain”. This is possible through the content carried by the first image and the look of the receiver in coherence of the image's perspective. However, before that, can the image produce another meaning? And if so, how can this meaning be formed by the recipient? If there is a need for an additional meaning,

derived from any image, would it be in the form of analogy, as stated by Charles Sanders Peirce in the form of likeness to show the fundamental characteristic of the iconic signs in the image? Do the primary features of the image (any original signifier) impose themselves in the production of meaning or is the receiver the one creating the meaning? On what basis is the meaning of the image created? What is the difference between the meanings produced by the words or expressions in art (such as novels, poetry, theatre...) which are called suggestive metaphorical connotations, and meanings produced by images, which are called the real denotations? The reflection of the image on the consciousness of the recipient – in the form of a mental image, or so-called representations according to a specific vision – stems from the importance of the perception and the view of all corners of vision, to enable this view to produce a meaning. The image does so through the interaction of the receiver with what is seen in this image, so the interaction between perception and experience of reality is the only way to convert the visual perception model, “these models would merely remove the sense of reality, meaning somehow immersed in it.”²² Extracting any meaningful semantic components from the image depends upon recognizing the overlap between the visual significance of the image and the semantics of language associated with its interpretation, i.e. when we see an artistic image we transform its content to sentences or ideas. Therefore there is no visual understanding that can dispense with words but it is very difficult to turn every meaning communicable through language into an image. According to Barthes, the linguistic message, which is next to the image, has two functions: anchorage and relay; x Anchorage, the image is characterized by semantic plurality, it offers a large number of implications, “the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others by means of an often subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance.”²³ x Relay, a function associated with the linguistic message, which adds new semantics so that their meanings are integrated and fused in the context of a major unit. Any conclusion to a meaning, in any form, depends on the angles of vision, and diversity in its meaning, depending on the mental capacity of individual differences and depending on the individual successive psychological changes, and aesthetic values inherited, or acquired, and depending on the cultural change. If each image has a certain indicative meaning, it is imperative to denote a different vision from one person to another, when each and everyone seek to show an opinion. Add to that the visual language would create a sense of an image, before it depends on the pronunciation, it has to deal with the senses as a language

composed of the vocabulary of signs and symbols and forms, meaning that the receiver finds the angle of vision, and the general view of the image, lines, colour, space, and emptiness that help in forming the significance of the image. Expressing this varies from one individual to another, and from here the experience of the optical receiver is reflected through the responsiveness with the image, we believe that it is natural that these conclusions are different, depending on the tastes of viewers, and perhaps the previous example illustrates the difference of opinion. To produce a meaning of the image is not just to extract a range of connotations, or signs that indicate some of the meanings or ideas and perceptions only, it also requires knowing the complex relationship of shapes and perceptions that reflect peoples' point of view in general (whether creator or receiver), and their feelings and perceptions, in addition to the cultural formation. When the photographer makes an image, he expresses in a silent language a form of an image that carries connotative meaning. As Umberto Eco argues, "we are therefore in the presence of figures, signs and connotations and we will realize later that all those visual signs are actually iconic expressions."²⁴ Eco is one of the researchers who were interested in the analysis of this type of interpretation of the iconic sign and its relationship with language. The issue according to him revolves around those common features shared between the iconic expressions and visual signs, so that every visual sign implicitly carries meaning that stems from the vision. The receiver does not describe things silently as expressed by the photographer (in an image); he uses language as an instrument whether using ordinary words or more abstract and formal written language. In either case, he explains the iconic sign and converts the mental icons – as total visual images that transmit the sign – into the linguistic language – spoken or written – playing the role of communication: "to see an image is to explain it. In everyday language, "I see" is replaced by "I understand." "It is seen," means that there is nothing to add. Yesterday: "It's true; I saw it in the newspaper." Today, "I believed it, because I saw it in the television" (said the victim of a television). No one opposes between a speech and an image. Visual is not refuted by arguments. It is replaced by another visual."²⁵ If Eco has concluded that each image carries visual expressions that is because he saw in each image a group of icons that produces meaning according to codes or signs, at least for a large group of people. This applies to all forms of visual art in general, especially when we feel some of the visual stimuli pushing our understanding of mental consciousness to express what we see.

2.5 Ideas Promotion Using Semiotics

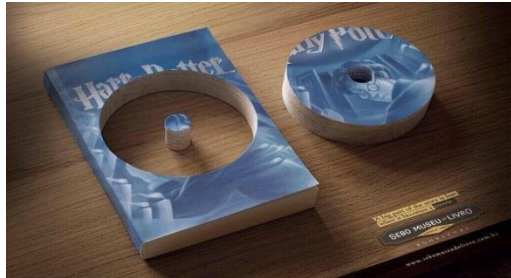
All what was mentioned until now was examples related to colors in advertisement. But this is not all. Colors are considered as semiotics because it delivers certain impressions. Other things give more meaning and speak much clearer than just colors. Semiotics include puns, word twists and signs. Sometimes words are not even needed to convey a specific message or sense. The usage of semiotics was not solely used to advertise products it was also used to promote ideas. An idea circulates among people, but there is no representation for that idea, then it comes in form of a photo or a pun then it goes viral and even more people become aware of this idea. Many campaigns used these tools to perform the best deliverance of their ideas. Such campaigns talked about social issues like domestic violence, over-sexualization of women and racism. Other campaigns were concerned about various topics and all of these campaigns chose to promote their ideas using semiotics.

Material and Analysis

In this picture, a pun ,that suggests a rival company, was made to increase the reputation of Nesma Airlines and to show a difference between the two companies.



This picture is meant to promote reading, now that most of the young generation are depending on movies to learn about different books. The trick here is that movies do not show everything and most of the events are either cut -out or extremely simplified.



Another post was developed to raise awareness of the not-so-bright side of driving, that it could kill you or kill others if it is not driven safely.

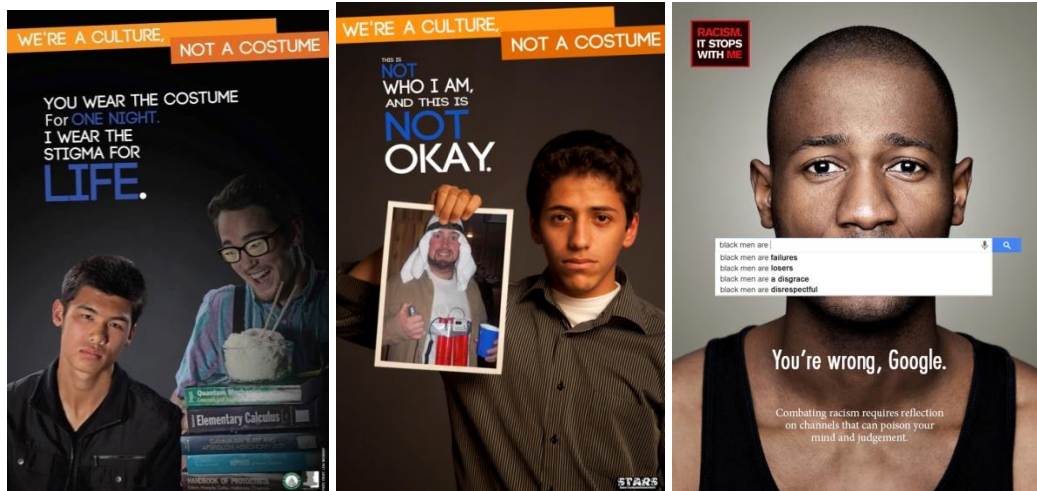


A funeral house also promoted both roads' safety and its coffins by this billboard ad.

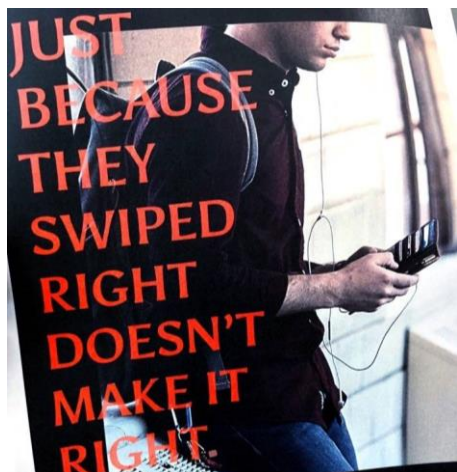


A student organization at Ohio University called Students Teaching About Racism in Society (STARS) created a series of posts that went viral and it was against racism, especially the type of racism that usually goes unnoticed. Their mission is “to educate and facilitate discussion about racism and to promote racial harmony and to create a safe, non-threatening environment to allow participants to feel comfortable to express their feelings.”

Another campaign was started by the UN to demonstrate the peoples' preceptives of different races through the research engine Google, and the results they came up with were astonishing.



Over-sexualization of women had been an issue since the dawn of man, which, in consequence, led to a great amount of sexual assaults against women, claiming that they wanted to be harassed. Due to such ways of thinking and misinterpreting any communication with women, actions had to be taken and campaigns started to bring such things into light with different slogans like "it's not a flirt" and posters like this one, suggesting that accepting to text or chat does not mean anything beyond chatting and it does not give you the right to cross your line nor that what is being done is right or acceptable.



1. Research Philosophy: positivism.
2. Research Methodology: Deductive.
3. Research Strategy: Case Study.
4. Research Type: Quantitative.
5. Time Horizon: Cross-sectional.
6. Techniques and Procedures: Questionnaire and Statistical Analysis.



IV.Data

This section will represent the subject, the method and the steps that the researcher has followed to reach the goals of the study.

A. Sample

The sample of the study consists of both females and males. The survey has been answered by 257 participants but the researcher made an analysis just for one hundred of them because of the limitations in the Monkey site which used to form the survey.

B. Tools

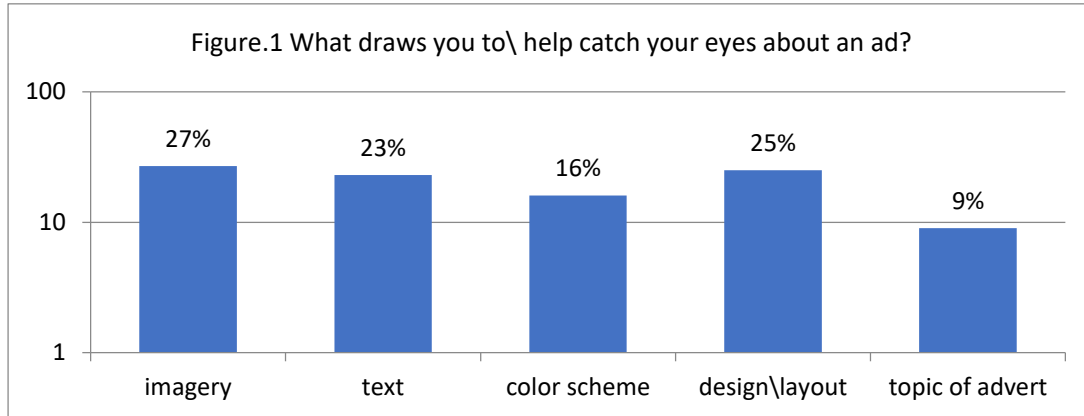
The methodology that has been used in this research is quantitative and qualitative. The focus is on the signs and the advertisement itself and how it will affect on people. The data collection instrument consists of a questionnaire and it contains six questions. (see appendix1). Also, the survey is sent to the participants through the social media.

C. Procedures

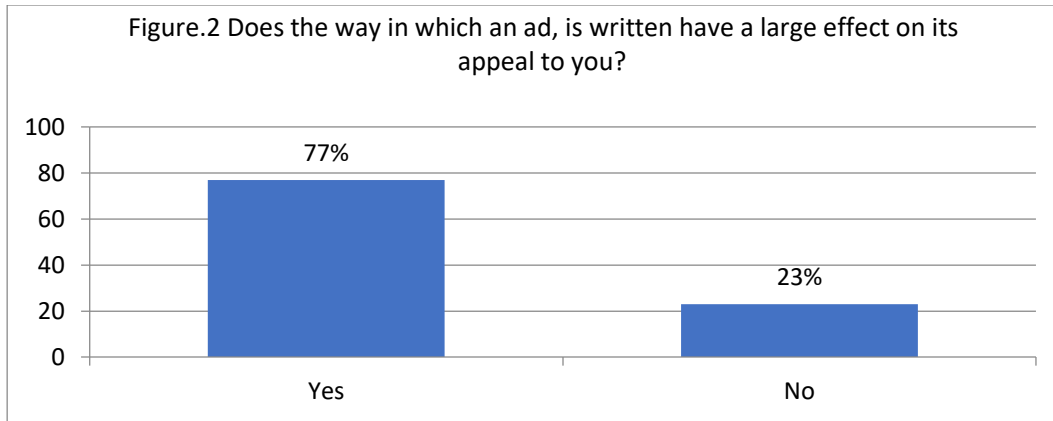
The survey has been designed by the researcher to study the effects of the advertisements on the people and the relation between the ads and the signs. Also, it published through the social media, then, the researcher extract just one hundred of the participants to analyse their answers.

VI. Data Analysis

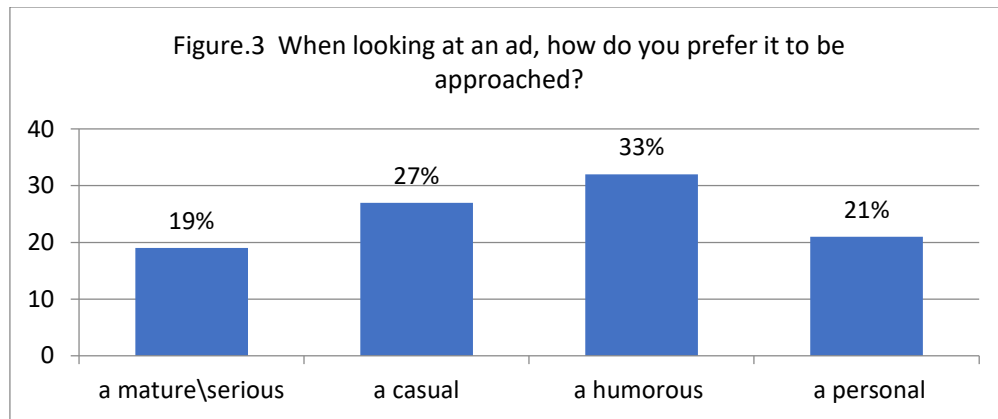
This section will present the questions in the survey and the percentage for the whole answers.



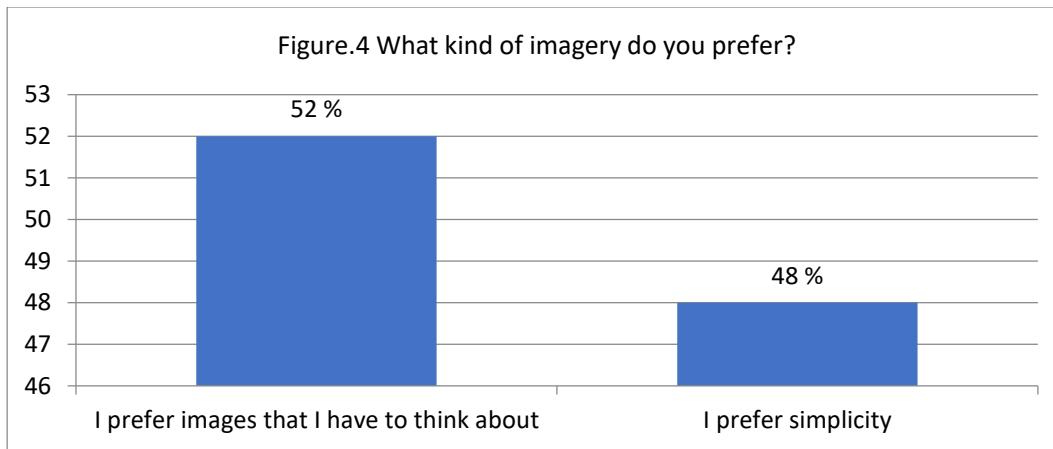
we observe here the most of the answers chose imagery while the second highest answer are choosing design\layout. Also, the topic advert got the lowest present which is 9%.



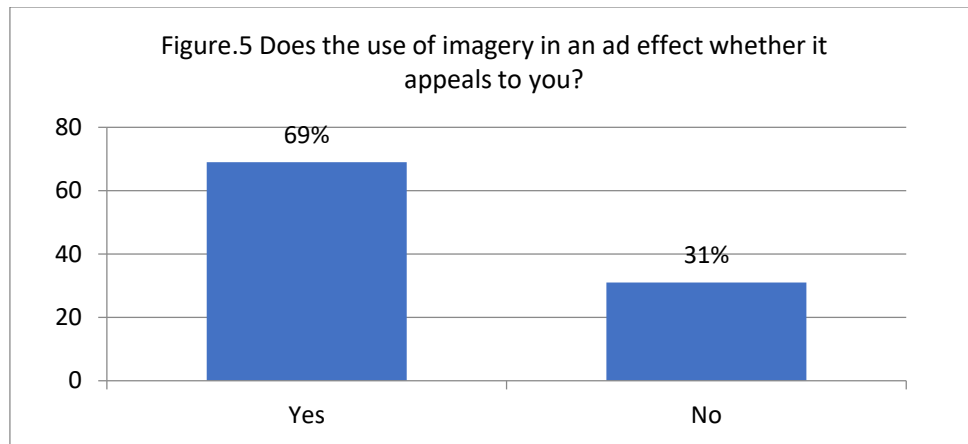
More than a half of the participants prefer the way in which an ad is written have a large effect on its appeal.



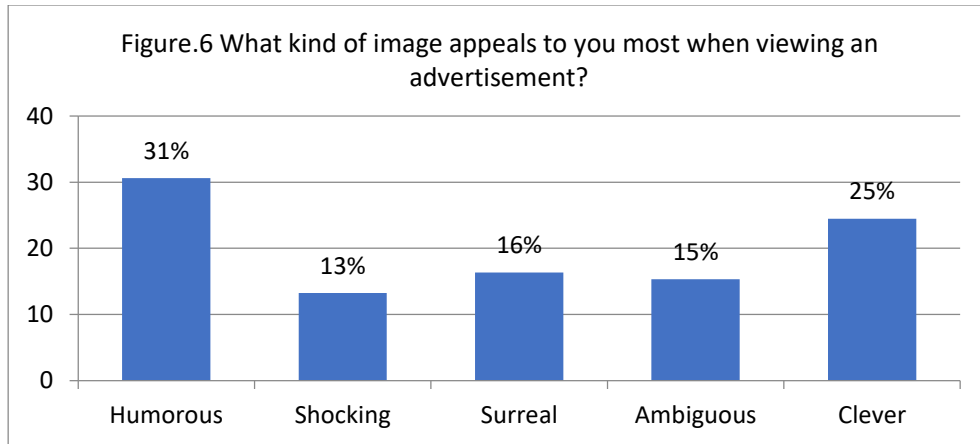
Here we observe that 33% of participant looking at an ad and prefer it in a humorous manner while the causal manner got 27%.



Here we got approximate ratio 52% of participants prefer images that they have to think about while 48% prefer simplicity.



In this part of questionnaire more than 69% of participants answered yes, the use of imagery in an ad effect whether it appeals to you, on the other hand 31% selected no.



The highest numbers of the participants prefer the viewing an advertisement in a humorous way, while it is comes in second place the clever way of viewing an ad. While the lowest percent was for the answer "Shocking" it got 13 percent.

4. Conclusion

The major conclusion to be drawn from this paper is that, by using signs, colors, puns and objects, the advertisers and promoters can better communicate with the consumer and make the product more popular among them in order to achieve the goal of ever-lasting purchase and popularity. There is regularity to be found in the advertising phenomena, sets of signs organizing, constraining choice, and these choices are part of social meaning. These sets of signs don't make up a single, comprehensive and coherent meaning, and the meaning of particular signs is always targeting specific audience, on specific occasions and situations. So, semiotic analysis occupies an important place within the framework of critical discourse analysis of advertising and promoting. Here, the attention is on different types of signs as a carrier of an ideological meanings. What is required is a form of close semiotic description that is at the same time a precise account of the transactions that constitute to social meanings. This paper is only a step along the way. There is one further, last point. Image, word and color, seen in this way as the product of social practices, are just three of the many semiotic modes through which social meanings of ads are coded. Semiotic references occupies a pivotal point in the relationship between advertising discourse and ideology. Semiotic analyses like those examined in this paper are perhaps basic building block in constructing ideologies.

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