



A Multimodal Discourse Analysis in Roma Biscuit Advertisement

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ABSTRACT

The increasing influence of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) has significantly reshaped advertising strategies in Indonesia, where Korean celebrities are frequently employed as brand ambassadors to strengthen consumer engagement and emotional appeal. This study investigates the multimodal construction of emotional meaning in the Roma Kelapa television advertisement featuring the Korean actor, Lee Min Ho. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study adopts Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) based on the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen to analyze the interplay of linguistic, visual, gestural, and auditory modes. The data consist of a 30-second Roma Kelapa advertisement, with analysis focusing on verbal expressions, written text, gaze, facial expressions, gestures, camera techniques, color composition, and product representation. The findings reveal that emotional meaning is not produced by a single communicative mode but emerges from the integration of verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources. Linguistically, evaluative slogans and conversational expressions position Roma Kelapa as a symbol of appreciation, family affection, and product excellence. Visually, direct gaze, warm facial expressions, close-up shots, harmonious color schemes, and culturally recognizable celebrity imagery foster intimacy, trust, and authenticity. Furthermore, Lee Min Ho's public persona functions as a multimodal semiotic resource that enhances the advertisement's persuasive and emotional impact within the Indonesian cultural context.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the ongoing changes, the world of advertisement makes its appearance to be increasingly more comprehensive and engaging. Technologies have become at all time-highs the salience for many people working in a vast body of this field to raise their goals. It is noticeable in the state of conveying a meaning that can contain persuasive values, many people initiate and use visual images that are expected to later assist them in succeeding their products. To this direction, this research concern to scrutinize the underlying factors of the ads-based product success using visual literacy. As its name suggests, visual literacy is categorized as an influential tool to yield various-related meanings within each individual's mind, as it indicates the ability to interpret, negotiate and make meaning from the information presented in the form of image (Tran Thi Hieu Thuy, 2017).

Advertisement which is involved its product packaging will account for the potential persona creation to purchase the product. That is why nowadays, it comes as no surprise then that sometimes people are more interestingly-attached to buying a product or using a service by only looking at the packaging for

the appearance, as it sparks off which it can be through images, audio, animated slides, and graphics, and so on.

In this fast-paced era, texts are increasingly shifted into multimodal communication resulting from the combinations of words, images, and with two important aspects to see what the text is aiming to do and the effect it has on the thoughts and actions of people. In today's digital and globalized marketplace, advertisers increasingly rely on multiple semiotic resources to create persuasive messages that resonate emotionally with diverse audiences. Rather than merely presenting the functional benefits of a product, contemporary advertisements aim to construct emotional experiences that foster intimacy, trust, nostalgia, and cultural identification between consumers and brands. Meaning in advertisements is no longer produced through verbal language alone but emerges from the interaction of various communicative modes such as verbal expressions, facial expressions, gaze, gestures, background music, color palettes, camera angles, and editing techniques.

In Indonesia, many advertisements start to explore ways to promote their product by hiring models as brand ambassadors from other countries, especially South Korea, as the 'Hallyu wave' represents the trend of East Asia's cultural industries becoming more localized. An example of a South Korean artist who became the model for several local products is Lee Min Ho which in April 2023, he was introduced as the ambassador of the product Roma Biskuit.

The increasing popularity of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) has significantly influenced advertising strategies throughout Asia, including Indonesia. The global success of Korean dramas, films, and popular music has encouraged Indonesian companies to recruit Korean actors and actresses as brand ambassadors to enhance brand attractiveness and strengthen emotional connections with consumers. Beyond their celebrity status, Korean actors represent cultural values commonly associated with sincerity, warmth, elegance, family orientation, and modern lifestyles. These symbolic meanings become important semiotic resources through which advertisements construct persuasive narratives. Korean actors function not merely as endorsers but as multimodal communicative resources whose verbal and non-verbal performances contribute to the construction of emotional meaning.

Finally, this research aims to analyze how visual literacy construct emotional meaning through multimodal communication. This paper seeks to analyze the impact of Lee Min Ho's presence in Roma Biscuit's advertisements by using multimodal discourse analysis. The way the advertisement featuring Korean actors, which combines spoken language, facial expressions, body movements, gaze, costume, lighting, music, and cinematography in order to create a compelling narrative centered on family togetherness and popularity will be analyzed.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is a comprehensive framework for examining how meaning is created through the interaction of different semiotic modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Instead of treating language as the sole carrier of meaning, MDA considers visual images, gesture, gaze, movement, sound, typography, and spatial composition as equally important communicative resources. Through the metafunctions of representation, interaction, and composition, MDA enables researchers to investigate how multimodal resources collaboratively produce ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in various forms of communication, including advertising.

Numerous studies have employed Multimodal Discourse Analysis to investigate meaning-making in advertisements. Cheong (2004) proposed a generic structure of print advertisements by examining the interaction between linguistic and visual elements, demonstrating how textual and visual components cooperate to create persuasive meanings. O'Halloran (2011) emphasized that communication is constructed through the integration of multiple semiotic resources across various media. Further empirical investigation also was conducted by Feng and O'Halloran (2013), who analyzed television advertisements and demonstrated that speech, camera movement, visual composition, and background music collaboratively shape persuasive communication which their findings highlight the importance of multimodal interaction in influencing audience interpretation; nevertheless, emotional meaning itself was not the primary analytical focus which is also similar to Pérez-Sobrino research (2017). Abousnnouga and Machin (2021) also investigated multimodal communication from a critical discourse perspective, demonstrating how visual composition, body posture, typography, and spatial organization construct ideological meanings and consumer identities.

Meanwhile, some previous studies have considerably advanced multimodal advertising research, several gaps still remain. First, most previous studies have examined Western advertisements, international brands, or print media, while Indonesian audiovisual advertisements remain relatively underexplored. Second, existing research has predominantly focused on persuasive strategies, multimodal metaphors, visual grammar, or ideological representation, with comparatively limited attention given to the construction of emotional meaning through the interaction of verbal language, gaze, gesture, facial expression, music, and cinematic techniques. Third, despite the widespread adoption of Korean celebrities as brand ambassadors in Indonesian advertising following the rise of the Korean Wave, little research has investigated how Korean actors function as multimodal resources in constructing emotional engagement and interpersonal meaning within local advertisements. Consequently, the multimodal mechanisms through which foreign celebrity endorsements evoke emotional responses among Indonesian audiences remain insufficiently understood. To address these gaps, this study then investigates how emotional meaning is constructed in the Roma Biscuit advertisement by featuring Korean actors through multimodal communication. Drawing upon the Multimodal Discourse Analysis framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen, this research examines the interaction among verbal language, gaze, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, visual composition, color, music, and cinematographic techniques in producing meanings of warmth, intimacy, trust, and family togetherness. By focusing on the intersection of multimodality, emotional communication, and cross-cultural celebrity endorsement, this study contributes to the growing body of multimodal discourse research while extending current understanding of emotional meaning construction in Indonesian advertising. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on multimodal communication and provide practical insights for advertisers, media practitioners, and scholars interested in contemporary advertising discourse in an increasingly globalized media landscape.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design using the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) approach to examine how visual literacy construct emotional meaning through multimodal communication of Lee Min Ho's presence in Roma Biscuit's advertisements. In advertising, multimodality and global media discourse are two key concepts that can be used to understand how advertising creates meaning and operates in a global world. Both concepts above have their respective roles in the advertising landscape. An advertisement does not only rely on the written word but also combines various elements to create meaning and convey the message of the advertisement, such as audio (music, sound effects), visual (images, videos), and writing (captions, slogans). This is called multimodality (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

In the current era of globalization, multimodality and global media discourse are very important in advertising. This is because many target advertising consumers are exposed to global media, both through traditional and digital media. Therefore, advertisers need to understand and utilize multimodality and global media discourse to create effective product advertisements that are relevant to the global target market so that the message and purpose of the advertisement are achieved.

By using multimodality and global media discourse, on this research the impact resulting from Lee Min Ho's presence in advertisements of the products on the global consumers' target market will be analyzed. The researcher used multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) to examine each multimodality exhibited in the advertisement as well as the meanings behind those multimodalities. The study critically examines how the presence of Korean actor engage and constructed meaning through the combination of linguistic and visual modes.

Data Source

The primary data for this study is Roma Biscuit video advertisement, which is publicly available through Roma Biskuit Kelapa's official media platforms on YouTube. The advertisement is selected based on its explicit engagement with the use of the presence of Korean Actor and its popularity as a commercial piece with 27 million ++ view and 1600 numbers of like.

Data Collection

The advertisement is downloaded and watched for several times then transcribed to include both verbal (spoken/written language) and non-verbal (visuals, color, gestures) elements. Screenshots of key scenes are taken for detailed visual analysis, and the transcript is segmented for linguistic analysis.

Analytical framework

On analyzing the data, the writers follows some steps:

1. Textual analysis which focuses on the linguistic choices, including vocabulary and rhetorical devices used in the narration.
2. Visual analysis which utilizes Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar to analyze imagery, composition, color, gaze, and framing.
3. Discursive practice to examines how the advertisement draws on and contributes to broader global discourses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic Analysis

While visuals dominate the multimodal landscape, language remains a critical mode for conveying specific information and establishing brand identity. On this advertisement, Lee Minho's linguistic contributions, whether spoken or written, play a significant role in shaping the overall narrative. The Roma Kelapa advertisement by Lee Min Ho with duration of 0:30 seconds uses a combination of spoken and written language.

The dialogue in the advertisement goes as follows:

Woman: Rumah beres, kerjaan beres

Woman: (Closing her laptop) Lee Min Ho? Roma kelapa? (Surprised)

Lee Min Ho: Suggohaesso yo (you've done well). (Handed over a plate of biscuits) Biskuit nomor satu, untuk ibu nomor satu

Lee Min Ho: Masissda (delicious)

Woman: Apalagi kalau dicelup (handed a cup of tea)

Lee Min Ho: Jinjja? (really?)

[Both of them tried the biscuit]

Lee Min Ho: Hmmm masisseo (really delicious)

The narrator: Dari kelapa pilihan, roma kelapa gurihnya asli. Melelehh

Lee Min Ho: Roma kelapa, biskuit nomor satu, untuk ibu nomor satu

The meaning of this advertisement is contained and emphasized by the presence of writing text and the repetition of certain phrases by Lee Min Ho. Although visual elements dominate the advertisements, language functions as an indispensable semiotic resource that anchors interpretation, guides audience perception, and reinforces the brand's emotional identity. Within the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), verbal language does not operate independently but interacts with visual images, gestures, facial expressions, and auditory elements to construct coherent meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2002). In the 30-second Roma Kelapa advertisement, Lee Min Ho's spoken utterances and the accompanying written texts work together to position Roma Kelapa not merely as a biscuit but as a symbol of affection, appreciation, and family togetherness.

The advertisement employs several concise but emotionally loaded expressions that function beyond their literal meanings. The written expression **"Untuk Ibu Hebat" (For Great Mothers)** serves as an evaluative statement that acknowledges mothers' dedication and sacrifice. Rather than simply identifying the target market, the phrase constructs a positive interpersonal relationship between the brand and consumers by recognizing mothers as deserving of appreciation. Simultaneously, the phrase strengthens emotional identification because consumers are encouraged to associate purchasing Roma Kelapa with expressing gratitude toward mothers.

The subsequent slogan, **"Biskuit No.1 untuk Ibu No.1" (The Number One Biscuit for the**

Number One Mother) intensifies this emotional positioning through the repetition of the superlative expression *No.1*. Linguistically, repetition functions as a persuasive strategy that increases memorability while emphasizing product superiority. However, its persuasive force extends beyond product quality. The parallel structure establishes an analogy between the excellence of the biscuit and the excellence of mothers, thereby transferring positive attributes from one entity to another. This process represents what advertising scholars describe as emotional branding, in which consumers are encouraged to evaluate products based on emotional associations rather than functional characteristics. Consequently, the slogan simultaneously promotes product quality and constructs an affective bond between the brand and its consumers.

Another significant utterance, *“Apa lagi kalau dicelup” (It’s even better when dipped)*, performs a different communicative function. Unlike the previous evaluative statements, this expression functions as a conversational recommendation. The informal lexical choice creates a friendly and intimate tone, reducing the communicative distance between the celebrity endorser and viewers. Instead of appearing as a commercial spokesperson, Lee Min Ho is represented as someone sharing a personal experience. This conversational style enhances authenticity, making the recommendation appear spontaneous rather than scripted. The effectiveness of this strategy is reinforced visually when viewers immediately observe Lee Min Ho dipping the biscuit before tasting it, creating a direct correspondence between verbal instruction and visual demonstration.

The advertisement also concludes with the slogan, *“Dari kelapa pilihan, Roma Kelapa gurihnya asli. Melelehh.” (Made from selected coconuts, Roma Kelapa’s authentic savory taste. Melts in your mouth.)* This statement shifts the discourse from emotional appreciation to product credibility. The phrase *“kelapa pilihan”* constructs an image of premium ingredient selection, thereby increasing consumers’ perception of quality. Meanwhile, the elongated pronunciation of *“Melelehh”* functions as a form of sound symbolism that imitates sensory experience. Rather than merely describing taste, the vocal expression invites audiences to imagine the texture of the biscuit, activating sensory perception through auditory representation. This multimodal integration between speech, facial expression, and close-up imagery enables viewers to experience the product imaginatively despite not physically tasting it.

More importantly, the linguistic resources cannot be separated from the accompanying visual elements. Every verbal expression is synchronized with Lee Min Ho’s smiling facial expression, direct gaze, relaxed gestures, and close-up product shots. This synchronization exemplifies what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe as multimodal cohesion, where verbal and visual modes mutually reinforce each other to produce coherent emotional meanings. Therefore, language in this advertisement functions not only to deliver product information but also to establish interpersonal relationships, evoke emotional responses, and strengthen the overall persuasive narrative.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

The visual in this advertisement is displayed in three visual stages which are the model, Lee Min Ho, the visual of the product, and the visual of the main ingredient in the product. From a visual perspective, the Roma Kelapa advertisement strategically combines multiple semiotic resources to construct emotional intimacy between the celebrity endorser, the product, and the audience. According to Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) visual grammar, meaning is realized through representational, interactive, and compositional dimensions. These three dimensions operate simultaneously throughout the advertisement to communicate warmth, trustworthiness, and family affection.



Figure 1. The scene picture appeared on the advertisement

The representational meaning is primarily realized through the actions performed by Lee Min Ho. Rather than simply posing beside the product, he actively interacts with the biscuit by picking it up, dipping it into a cup of tea, tasting it, and expressing enjoyment through facial expressions. These narrative actions portray the product as part of an everyday family routine rather than an isolated commercial object. The sequence creates a symbolic representation of domestic comfort in which consuming Roma Kelapa becomes associated with relaxation, togetherness, and emotional warmth.



Figure 2. The scene picture appeared on the advertisement

The interactive meaning is established through Lee Min Ho's frequent direct gaze toward the camera. In Kress and van Leeuwen's terminology, this constitutes a demand image, where the represented participant establishes visual contact with viewers. The direct gaze creates an imaginary interpersonal relationship, inviting audiences to become participants in the communicative event rather than passive observers. Combined with his gentle smile and relaxed facial expressions, the gaze conveys friendliness, sincerity, and trust. These non-verbal cues reduce psychological distance and increase viewers' emotional engagement with both the celebrity and the product.



Figure 3. The scene picture appeared on the advertisement

Camera techniques further reinforce interpersonal meaning. Close-up shots of Lee Min Ho's face allow audiences to clearly observe subtle emotional expressions, while medium shots depicting his interaction with the biscuit create a balanced relationship between the endorser and the product. These camera choices ensure that viewers simultaneously attend to the celebrity's emotional reactions and the product itself. The repeated close-up shots of the biscuit, particularly when it is dipped into tea and broken apart, stimulate viewers' sensory imagination by emphasizing texture and freshness.

Color also contributes significantly to meaning construction. Warm tones dominated by shades of brown, red, cream, and golden coconut colors evoke feelings of comfort, naturalness, and home. These colors correspond directly with the product's primary ingredient—coconut—and reinforce perceptions of authenticity and quality. The visual harmony between the actor's clothing, the product packaging, and the surrounding environment further strengthens the compositional unity of the advertisement.



Figure 4. The scene picture appeared on the advertisement

One particularly noteworthy visual element is the slogan “**Biskuit No.1 untuk Ibu No.1**”, displayed while Lee Min Ho smiles warmly toward the audience. Rather than functioning solely as written information, the slogan gains persuasive force through its synchronization with the actor’s facial expression and eye contact. His smile serves as a visual realization of appreciation, making the verbal compliment appear genuine rather than merely promotional. Consequently, viewers are encouraged to interpret the product as a symbolic gift of gratitude toward mothers.

The choice of Lee Min Ho as the brand ambassador also carries substantial cultural significance. His popularity, cultivated through internationally successful Korean dramas such as *Boys Over Flowers*, *The Heirs*, and *The Legend of the Blue Sea*, allows him to function as a multimodal sign representing warmth, reliability, romance, and family-oriented masculinity. These meanings are not explicitly communicated through dialogue but emerge through audiences’ prior cultural knowledge of his public persona. By using the charm of Lee Min Ho’s face and his popularity due to the Korean Wave in Indonesia, Mayora Group hired him as the ambassador to promote the product to a larger audience. In other words, his celebrity identity becomes an additional semiotic resource that extends the advertisement’s emotional appeal beyond its verbal and visual content.

Furthermore, this finding demonstrates that the persuasive power of the advertisement and emotional meaning is constructed through the orchestration of multiple communicative modes such as language, gaze, gesture, facial expression, camera movement, color, music, and cultural symbolism that operate simultaneously. Together, these semiotic resources transform Roma Kelapa from an ordinary food product into a symbol of affection, appreciation, and family intimacy. Such findings extend previous multimodal advertising studies by showing that celebrity endorsement functions not merely as a marketing strategy but as an integrated multimodal resource through which emotional meanings are systematically constructed in contemporary Indonesian advertising.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how emotional meaning is constructed through multimodal communication in the Roma Kelapa’s advertisement featuring the Korean actor Lee Min Ho by employing the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). The findings demonstrate that the advertisement communicates its persuasive message not through language alone but through the integration of multiple semiotic resources, including verbal language, visual imagery, gaze, facial expressions, gestures, camera techniques, color, and cultural symbolism. These modes work interdependently to construct a coherent emotional narrative that associates Roma Kelapa with warmth, appreciation, family togetherness, and product quality.

From the linguistic perspective, the advertisement employs concise yet emotionally charged expressions such as “*Untuk Ibu Hebat*” and “*Biskuit No.1 untuk Ibu No.1*” to establish an interpersonal relationship between the brand and its consumers. Rather than functioning solely as promotional slogans, these expressions position mothers as valued individuals while simultaneously framing the product as an expression of gratitude and affection. In addition, conversational utterances and sensory descriptions strengthen and reinforce consumers’ emotional engagement with the product.

From the visual perspective, the advertisement strategically utilizes direct gaze, warm facial expressions, natural gestures, close-up camera shots, harmonious color composition, and product-focused cinematography to reduce the interpersonal distance between the celebrity endorser and the audience. These visual resources not only increase the credibility of the endorsement but also evoke feelings of intimacy, trust, comfort, and familiarity. Furthermore, Lee Min Ho’s established public image as a prominent Korean actor serves as an additional semiotic resource that enriches the advertisement’s emotional appeal, the attraction, and brand identity reflecting the influence of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) in shaping contemporary advertising discourse in Indonesia.

More importantly, this study reveals that emotional meaning emerges from the interaction among semiotic modes rather than from any single communicative element. The synchronization of verbal messages with visual performances, gestures, music, and cultural references creates a multimodal cohesion that strengthens the persuasive power of the advertisement. Consequently, the Roma Kelapa advertisement positions the product not merely as a food item but as a symbolic representation of family affection, appreciation for mothers, and shared emotional experiences.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the growing body of Multimodal Discourse Analysis by demonstrating how interpersonal and emotional meanings are collaboratively constructed through the integration of linguistic and non-linguistic resources in audiovisual advertising. It also extends existing studies by highlighting the role of cross-cultural celebrity endorsement, particularly Korean actors, as multimodal resources that shape emotional engagement in Indonesian commercial advertisements. From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the use of a multimodality approach and global media discourse in the *Roma kelapa* advertisement taken Lee Min Ho as the model shows that the advertisement effectively uses the interaction between language and visuals to strengthen its message.

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