

Ideology and Symbolic Meaning: Critical Discourse Analysis of Gudang Garam International Filter Advertisement

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NAUFAL MAHDI RAMEDA
Universitas Indonesia - Indonesia
IRWANSYAH
Universitas Indonesia - Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This research investigates how the Gudang Garam Filter Internasional cigarette ad, "The Greatest Choice," employs masculine rhetoric to shape consumer behavior and disseminate ideology. Utilizing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, the study explores three critical dimensions: text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice. The descriptive analysis reveals the ad's emphasis on masculinity, depicting a man's character through hard work, success, and luxury. The interpretation of meaning in the advertising text creates a dualism of meaning, forming two interpretation perspectives: one from the cigarette enthusiasts and another from the product itself. In socio-cultural practice, this dualism reflects how perceptions are constructed in society, aiming to build the product's identity by embedding ideologies and values into Gudang Garam Internasional cigarettes. The study concludes the advertisement is not just a technology for promoting products, but also a means of spreading ideology. With the formation of the product's image in society, it also becomes a tangible form that advertising has become an extension of human ability in persuasive communication.

Keywords: Advertising, Ideology, Persuasive Communication, Product Identity, Socio-cultural Influence, Symbolic Value

Author's email correspondent: naufal.mahdi@ui.ac.id
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INTRODUCTION

The development of industry has always driven the emergence of various forms of technology that facilitate human life. The convenience offered becomes a primary reason for humans to utilize and develop it, turning humans into beings dependent on technology. Due to this dependence, often unnoticed, technology's presence has shaped human life, influencing the dynamics of power and contributing to social transformation (Mahmud & Zaman, 2022)

The significant impact of technology in human life raises new suspicions about the values it carries. Frey (2019) explains how technological advancements will always have

direct effects on a social group. According to Pacey (1985), technology is never value-free; it is always influenced and conditioned by many factors such as political, cultural, economic, and scientific influences.

Advertising, as one form of communication technology, is widely used and consumed by the public. Advertising is a technology with clear subjectivity, as it is tied to certain groups. Since advertising functions as a medium for promoting products, it is evident that there will always be specific intentions from the product producers. However, the critical point to consider is whether advertising as a communication technology only promotes product values or if there are other agendas behind its use.

Marshall McLuhan (1994) explained the concept of Media as Extension of Man, where he views media not just as a tool used by humans but as an extension of human senses and abilities. In addition to enhancing and improving human capabilities, media also enhances humans' ability to change perceptions and interactions with the world. Just as written words expand human ability to store and convey information beyond what human memory alone can do.

The same applies to advertising, which functions as a medium. The presence of advertising serves as an extension of human ability to explain, offer, and influence society with a form of information. McLuhan (1994) reinforces this by stating that advertising expands humans' ability to influence others' thoughts and behaviors through the communication and persuasion skills presented by humans through advertisements.

Advertising no longer merely serves as a tool for selling products; it has become a form of culture that surpasses its initial capacity for selling. McLuhan (1994) acknowledged that advertising has evolved beyond just delivering messages; it has become a tool for shaping perceptions and desires, influencing behavior and culture in society. Unbeknownst to many, society is manipulated by advertisements consumed through various media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and even digital media (Logan, 2019).

Cigarette advertisements, in particular, often manipulate with various forms of intriguing rhetoric. Interestingly, cigarette ads rarely show the actual product but are highly successful in building and creating strong impressions in the minds of viewers. These ads often associate the product with qualities like independence, rebellion, and luxury, which contribute to shaping societal perceptions.

To gain deeper insights into the ideology embedded in the ads and their social impact, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach is necessary. CDA studies language and other semiotic systems used in communication, while also analyzing structures of dominance, discrimination, power, and control, both visible and hidden, as manifested in language (Catalano et al., 2020). In the context of advertising, CDA can be used to critically examine the relationship between language, ideology, power, and social structures or to understand how discourse plays a role in social processes, structures, and changes.

One of the common CDA approaches for analyzing rhetorical elements is Fairclough's approach, which emphasizes the intrinsic relationship between language and social practice by analyzing and viewing discourse as a form of social action (Fairclough, 2013). Fairclough's CDA specifically focuses on the role of language in reproducing ideology and power, as well as how discourse is implicated in power relations (Janks, 1997).

Fairclough designed an analytical framework known as the three-dimensional model to explore discourse on micro, meso, and macro levels (Fairclough, 2013). On the micro level, Fairclough analyzes text linguistically, whether written or spoken. On the meso level, the process of interpretation encompasses the production, distribution, and consumption of

texts. On the macro level, analysis of discursive events is considered a manifestation of social and cultural practices.

Using Fairclough's CDA to analyze cigarette ads is intriguing, as the three dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing text, discursive practices, and the social and cultural practices manifested in the discourse (Ayuni & Darmayanti, 2022). This approach will be applied to the Gudang Garam Filter International cigarette ad to further analyze the embedded ideology and power relations within the advertisement.

Gudang Garam Filter International (GGFI) has five ads on its YouTube channel titled Never Ending Game, Berani, Race, Monaco Drift, and The Greatest Choice. However, this study will focus on the latest ad titled The Greatest Choice because it is the only one of the five ads that features a monologue from start to finish.

To analyze the visual elements within the ad, the research refers to a previous study by Rizaldi Mughni (2023), titled Representasi Maskulinitas Iklan Rokok Gudang Garam Versi Filter Internasional 2023 – The Greatest Choice Pria Punya Selera. In this study, Mughni analyzed the visual elements in the ad and found that The Greatest Choice ad used various signs and symbols to represent masculinity. The chosen actor is athletic, tall, and well-built, with a handsome face, and he is shown wearing a shirt and suit, driving luxury cars, while being portrayed as innovative and willing to take risks.

This study, however, will focus on the text produced from the ad's monologue script. According to Fairclough in Ghanizadeh et al., (2020), in discourse analysis, nothing is produced in a vacuum, but it is always influenced by social, cultural, and political contexts. Previously, Asnidar (2018) used the same method to analyze the text of a mobile operator's ad in a study titled Critical Discourse Analysis of Mobile Operator Advertisements. The analysis examined the discourse in four ads, uncovering symbolic ideology and power relations embedded within them. Asnidar (2018) found a persuasive effort to establish domination and submersion between the mobile operator and its customers by promoting the product while discrediting other products. However, Asnidar argued that this process was not destructive or purely profit-driven but a creative communication process.

This raises an intriguing point when examining, analyzing, and deconstructing the discourse in the GGFI The Greatest Choice cigarette ad. How does the text in the ad persuade society to establish a perception of the product itself? This study will explore how the ad engages in persuasive communication, resulting in a symbolic value change toward the product.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach that examines how discourse (the use of language) shapes and is shaped by power relations, ideology, and social practices (Van Dijk, 2015). Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model lies at the heart of CDA, offering a comprehensive framework for analyzing texts, discourse practices, and socio-cultural contexts (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

At the micro level, CDA involves analyzing linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and rhetorical structures to understand how meaning is constructed and conveyed. For example, in Gudang Garam Filter International advertisements, the choice of words and phrases evoking masculinity and strength can be critically examined to uncover underlying ideologies (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

Moving to the meso level, the analysis focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of discourse. This includes exploring how advertisements are created, marketed, and received by diverse audiences, revealing strategies used to target specific demographics and reinforce societal norms (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

Finally, at the macro level, CDA investigates the broader social and cultural contexts in which these advertisements operate. This involves understanding how GGFI ads reflect and perpetuate societal norms regarding masculinity, success, and consumerism (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

Through CDA, the ideological content of advertisements can be uncovered, highlighting how they construct and reinforce societal perceptions of masculinity. This analysis demonstrates that advertisements do more than sell products—they embed ideas and values that subtly influence viewers' self-perceptions and social roles (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Fairclough's model has been widely applied across various fields to analyze how language contributes to social inequality and power dynamics (Van Dijk, 2015).

Medium as an Extension of Man

Marshall McLuhan's pivotal idea that "the medium is the message" highlights the inseparable relationship between the form of media and its content, creating a symbiotic connection where the medium shapes how the message is perceived (McLuhan, 1994). McLuhan argued that media serve as extensions of human senses and capacities, fundamentally altering our perception of and interaction with the world.

Advertisements, as a form of media, go beyond their primary function of promoting products; they influence societal behavior and embed ideologies (McLuhan, 1994). In the context of Gudang Garam Filter International advertisements, the medium (advertising) not only markets the product but also extends its influence by embedding cultural narratives and ideologies tied to masculinity, success, and social status.

Through idealized images and scenarios, these advertisements shape societal behavior and perceptions, instilling particular ideologies that influence how individuals view themselves and their roles within society. This perspective aligns with McLuhan's assertion that media reshape human experiences and societal structures by amplifying the reach and impact of human senses and cognition.

Semiotics and Symbolism

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior, provides a framework for understanding how advertisements convey meaning. Jean Baudrillard's concepts of sign value and hyperreality are particularly relevant in analyzing advertisements. Baudrillard (1994) argued that in consumer societies, products acquire a sign value—a symbolic meaning that transcends their material utility.

In the case of Gudang Garam Filter International advertisements, cigarettes are not merely products; they carry symbolic meanings associated with masculinity, strength, and social status. The concept of hyperreality, where the distinction between reality and representation becomes blurred, is also pertinent. Advertisements often create idealized depictions that appear more real to viewers than reality itself (Baudrillard, 1994).

GGFI advertisements likely present an idealized image of masculinity that influences how viewers perceive and aspire to construct their own identities. By embedding these symbolic meanings, advertisements shape consumer identities and perceptions, crafting a reality where products become synonymous with desired traits and lifestyles.

Masculinity in Media Representation

The representation of masculinity in media is a significant area of study within gender studies and media analysis. R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity is particularly useful in understanding how media constructs and reinforces certain ideals of manhood (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity refers to culturally dominant ideas of masculinity, often associated with traits such as strength, authority, and emotional restraint.

In the context of Gudang Garam Filter International advertisements, these ideals are likely conveyed through visual and textual elements that link the product to symbols of success, luxury, and resilience. Advertisements frequently employ these symbols to create and perpetuate a specific image of masculinity that aligns with societal expectations and norms.

By doing so, they reinforce traditional gender roles and contribute to the maintenance of existing power structures. This analysis underscores how media, through its portrayals of masculinity, plays a crucial role in shaping and perpetuating gender identities.

Persuasive Communication Theory

Persuasive communication theory explores how messages are crafted and delivered to influence attitudes and behaviors. Aristotle's rhetorical principles—ethos, pathos, and logos—provide a foundational framework for understanding persuasion (Kennedy, 2007). Ethos refers to the speaker's credibility and authority, pathos to emotional appeal, and logos to logical arguments.

In modern advertising, these principles are often integrated with advanced techniques to create compelling narratives. For instance, in Gudang Garam Filter International advertisements, ethos can be established through the brand's reputation and the use of authoritative figures. Pathos might emerge through emotionally charged imagery and language that evoke feelings of confidence, strength, and success. Logos can be conveyed through logical arguments highlighting the product's quality and benefits.

Advertising experts such as Kasali (1998) and Gilson & Berkman (1987) emphasize the importance of understanding consumer psychology and behavior to craft effective persuasive messages. By analyzing GGFI advertisements through the lens of persuasive communication theory, we can uncover how rhetoric and narrative structures align to influence consumer perceptions and behaviors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative study using a descriptive qualitative method. The analytical tool employed is Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, which examines three critical dimensions of discourse: text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practice. The material analyzed in this study is the text from the GGFI cigarette advertisement titled *The Greatest Choice*. Data was collected using text analysis techniques, and the discourse analyzed in this research is the monologue dialogue in the advertisement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Textual Analysis of the Advertisement Script

The analyzed text is a transcript from the GGFI *The Greatest Choice* advertisement, delivered in a monologue with a third-person perspective. This creates the impression that the dialogue is the inner voice of the main character.

The portrayal of the ad is taken from Mughni (2023) description, which illustrates the ad featuring a young, experienced businessman in a real estate company, with a strong and athletic build, and a handsome face. He appears in the setting of a large, luxurious house. The man is seen wearing an elegant black suit and driving a Mustang Boss 429 sports car, showcasing a luxurious lifestyle. He is preparing to attend an exhibition where he will present a building project he is working on.

Meanwhile, the transcript from the ad reads:

[music]

Pria sebenarnya

[music: i know where i'll go]

selalu percaya akan pilihan yang diambilnya.

[music: see you in my place]

Aku pria yang memilih hanya yang terbaik

dengan karakter yang berkelas,

untuk terus membuatku terpacu

fokus melaju

berpikir jauh ke depan

bukan menatap ke belakang.

Penting buatku datang dengan terobosan.

Kupilih menjadi yang teratas

dengan pengalaman dan benturan,

karena itu yang menyulutku maju

membangun kesuksesan.

Kenalkan, aku

pria punya selera

Gudang Garam Filter Internasional."

The opening line, "*pria sebenarnya, selalu percaya akan pilihan yang diambilnya,*" starts with the word *pria* instead of *laki-laki* or *cowok*, where *pria* refers to an adult male, indicating maturity in behavior, thinking, and actions. The word *pria* is paired with *sebenarnya*, reinforcing a sense of masculinity.

"*Selalu percaya akan pilihan yang diambilnya*" conveys confidence, self-assurance, and decisiveness. Through this early message, the ad creators are trying to shape the perception of an ideal masculine figure using the word *pria* and its supporting statements. This is further emphasized by the background lyrics, "I know where I'll go," inserted between the gap in dialogue. The lyrics, meaning "*aku tau aku akan pergi kemana*" add a sense of confidence and certainty in the decisions being made.

"*Aku pria yang memilih hanya yang terbaik*" represents selectivity and concern for quality. This message suggests that the various products chosen are of the highest quality, and it can also imply that all efforts made are the best. The phrase "*Dengan karakter yang berkelas*" supports the previous line by implying that with the best quality comes high standards. Through these two sentences, the ad creators are instilling an image of a mature man who is always committed to delivering and maintaining the highest quality.

"*Untuk terus membuatku terpacu, fokus melaju, berpikir jauh ke depan*" reinforces the commitment to always delivering the best, becoming both a motivation and a necessity for the ad creators to maintain the promised quality. This is presented as a long-term goal,

to keep improving and preserving the quality they possess. Caution and fear of regression are expressed in the phrase *"bukan menatap ke belakang"* which conveys a clear message about maintaining or enhancing quality, avoiding any form of decline. This phrase also reflects past achievements and failures, emphasizing that past failures should serve as lessons for the future, to prevent them from hindering current efforts. Likewise, past successes should not breed complacency but serve as motivation to continue improving.

"Penting buatku datang dengan terobosan" strengthens the masculinity constructed in the earlier lines. This statement explains that a man must present innovation and provide solutions. One of the characteristics of a man presented in the ad is being a pioneer in solving problems rather than causing them. The word *penting* or important is used to stress the qualities that a man must possess.

"Kupilih menjadi yang teratas dengan pengalaman dan benturan, karena itu yang menyulutku maju membangun kesuksesan." The ad creators are asserting the character's position through the word *teratas*, indicating that he has reached the pinnacle and become the best. This position was not easily obtained; the use of word *kupilih* and *pengalaman dan benturan* suggests that this peak was achieved through a process of struggle, overcoming various obstacles and difficulties. The next line, *"karena itu yang menyulutku maju membangun kesuksesan"*, emphasizes that his perseverance in overcoming challenges has led him to his current position.

The final line presents a plot twist. The closing sentence, *"aku, pria punya selera Gudang Garam Filter internasional"* is the product's slogan. *"Pria punya selera"* (A man with taste) is the slogan of the product, and *Gudang Garam Filter Internasional* is the brand name. Thus, this closing statement conveys that the *pria* mentioned in the earlier part of the text is an analogy for the cigarette product itself.

By analyzing the microstructure of the text, the explicit content appears to simply describe the character of a highly masculine man. However, upon closer examination, the text serves as a powerful representative form of the product's ideology. The text attempts to shape perception by embedding ideology within the image constructed around the product.

Interpretation of Discourse Practice in the GGFI Advertisement Script

Perception arises from interpreting the meaning within the text, but the interpretation of meaning in this cigarette advertisement text generates a dualism of meaning. This occurs because, at the end of the text, an analogy is created around the product's masculine characteristics, leading to ambiguity in the text's interpretation. This dualism of meaning refers to the presence of more than one perspective in understanding the embedded meaning: the perspective of the cigarette consumer and the perspective of the cigarette product itself.

In the first interpretation, consumers who enjoy the cigarette product are perceived to possess the characteristics described in the advertisement text. They are portrayed as mature men with confidence, persistence, determination, and resilience. This imagery is also associated with achievement and success, thus instilling in consumers the perception that the cigarette is designed for individuals who have reached certain accomplishments. In other words, the product aims to present itself as a cigarette for men with a high sense of masculinity.

In the second interpretation, the analogy at the end of the text is worth highlighting. This leads to the perception that the perfect character described in the ad text serves as an analogy for the cigarette product itself. Therefore, the achievements, success, and struggles

depicted in the advertisement represent the journey of the cigarette product. The long process of building the cigarette product has allowed it to possess high quality and reach the top of its class. Thus, this cigarette product not only embodies masculinity but also conveys various philosophical meanings embedded within it.

Socio-Cultural Practice of the GGFI Advertisement Text

The text in the advertisement reveals that advertising serves not only as a technology for promoting products but also as a medium for disseminating ideology. The Gudang Garam Filter International cigarette product presents its ideology by constructing a meaning of masculinity around the cigarette. It conveys an idealized image of masculinity in men.

This duality of meaning—from both the perspective of the smoker and that of the product itself—becomes a mechanism for shaping societal perception. The advertisement seeks to build a product identity by embedding certain ideologies and values into the Gudang Garam International cigarette product. Once this identity is established, the company engages in a process of social cultivation using the ad as a persuasive tool, aligning with McLuhan, (1994) concept of influencing others' thoughts and behaviors. The goal is for the product's identity to embed itself in society's perception, leading to Gudang Garam International being labeled as a cigarette for "real men," with masculinity ingrained in both the product and its consumers.

As the product's image becomes entrenched in society, it exemplifies that advertising has indeed become an extension of human capacity for persuasive communication. By influencing society to consume the product, the advertisers and product owners effectively perpetuate a form of dominance and hegemony over the public. Through persuasive means, they attach what Baudrillard, (2005) refers to as a sign, transforming the way society consumes products. People no longer consume merely for the enjoyment of the product itself but also out of a desire to consume the sign that is embedded in the product. Baudrillard (1999) asserts that consuming an object is not merely about using a product but about consuming the meaning attached to that object.

Advertisement as A Persuasive Tool In The Spread of Ideology

In line with McLuhan's concept of "media as an extension of man," the GGFI The Greatest Choice advertisement aligns closely with this idea. The ad effectively extends human psychological and emotional capacities by tapping into the subconscious, influencing how society thinks and feels about certain products or ideas (McLuhan, 1994). In the context of the GGFI ad, the advertisers have successfully used the ad as an extension of their persuasive capabilities to shape perception in society's mind.

Wright et al., (1971) emphasized that advertising is a unique communication process, possessing inherent power as a marketing tool that plays a key role in selling, providing, and promoting goods or ideas through persuasive media. Gilson & Berkman (1987) similarly argue that advertising is a medium of persuasive communication designed to elicit responses and help achieve marketing goals. Kasali (1993) further explained that advertising is a creative process with the purpose of influencing consumer behavior and perceptions. The analysis of GGFI The Greatest Choice supports these points, showing that advertising becomes a tool for persuading and shaping public perception about an object—in this case, embedding symbolic value in the GGFI cigarette product.

According to Muyassaroh & Ihsan (2022), persuasive communication used in advertising is designed to implicitly or explicitly influence the audience to follow the ad's

message. By employing attractive words, symbols, and signs, the ad creates positive associations, entering the viewer's logic and giving them a reason to accept and use the advertised product (Kasanova, 2016). The rhetoric in GGFI The Greatest Choice is crafted to present masculinity in every line, so, as Kristiana Dewi (2021) noted, the signs and symbols embedded in the ad evoke a natural desire to connect with it. This creates a primary urge to become part of the symbolic value embedded in the GGFI product, beyond just the product's taste or quality. The ad's impact demonstrates that advertising can significantly alter social systems, not merely conveying information but actively shaping societal norms.

The visual of a handsome, successful man surrounded by luxury (Mughni, 2023), paired with text emphasizing hard work, success, and effort in the GGFI ad, raises expectations within society. The symbolic meaning attached to the object shapes individual identity. Each object embodies symbolic meaning, and the value it holds precedes its actual definition. This aligns with McLuhan's "medium is the message" concept, in which the medium shapes content understanding, embedding symbolic meaning, and shaping public perception even before content is conveyed. Thus, in advertising, the object's ad inherently contains a message that reaches society and creates perceptions of the object before the ad's explicit message is even communicated.

McLuhan (1994) further explained that the medium serves as a channel for messages to flow, but embedded within this channel are elements that significantly shape the message. The perception built within society through this medium is then confirmed by the ad's content. For instance, the line "I am a man who only chooses the best" is reinforced by the visual of a handsome man entering a garage filled with luxury cars, followed by "with a classy character", as he selects an old sports car among the luxury vehicles. The symbols embedded here convey that the GGFI product is special and one of the best in its class, giving consumers the impression of being the best with a unique taste. This symbolic message reaches viewers' minds even before they fully grasp the deeper meaning. This is because the elements embedded in the object are portrayed in idealized terms, rather than in the reality of the object itself. Consequently, advertising in contemporary culture has crafted a sense of perfection around objects, influencing and embedding perceptions within society.

This implied perfection generates a sign value in a consumable object, constructing social meaning and identity (Baudrillard, 2005). Wolny (2017) explains that idealizing the product's context adds value to it, creating an overshadowing effect that obscures the product's actual substance. This happens because ads strongly influence human perception, to the point where people can no longer differentiate between reality and representation, ultimately blurring or replacing meaning with symbols and signs detached from reality (Antony & Trambo, 2020; Baudrillard, 1994).

This blinding idealization leads consumers into a hyperreal world, where Baudrillard (1994) describes reality and representation as indistinguishable. In advertising, this creates representations more appealing than reality itself, embedding these representations in the public's mind and replacing reality. Baudrillard's concept provides a critical lens to examine advertising's pervasive role in contemporary society (Antony & Trambo, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Advertising serves not only as a tool for product promotion but also as a medium that conveys ideology and influences societal perceptions and behaviors. Fairclough's CDA model demonstrates that the *GGFI* cigarette advertisement successfully constructs a meaning of

masculinity that reflects not only consumer characteristics but also the product's philosophy. This also illustrates how advertising acts as an extension for capital owners to engage in persuasive communication with society, influencing psychological and emotional capacities through idealized imagery. Ultimately, this establishes the product's identity and ideology and affects consumer behavior. In this case, consumers do not merely see the cigarette as a product; they perceive it as having symbolic value. Thus, *GGFI's "The Greatest Choice"* ad exemplifies how advertising can serve as a vehicle of dominance and hegemony, directly and indirectly influencing social and cultural structures within society.

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