

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Advertisements have existed for many years. We see them around us in various forms (written and spoken) and in various media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines or billboards). Even we are often forced to advertise a product, whether we realize it or not; for example, when we are bringing our shopping in our plastic bags having the name of the stores or supermarkets or when we are using souvenirs such as umbrellas, or T-shirts with the names of the products or brands. Yet, not all people are able to critically interpret the meaning conveyed in advertisements. Through the verbal, non - verbal and pictorial verbal texts used in advertising, the writers of countless texts – the advertisers – have conversations with a large number of people since advertising is actually an act of communication.

The language which is used to communicate the advertiser's idea or intentional meaning in the advertisement is in the form of a systematic way of combining smaller units for the purpose of communication. Therefore, in reading or understanding an advertisement, a person should pay attention to the lexical or word meaning and the relation with the context.

The definition of advertising is “the structured and composed nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature,

about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media” (Arens 1999:7). This definition carries the idea of the particular characteristics of advertisements. First, advertising is a *structured* form of applied *communication*, using both verbal and nonverbal elements. Second, advertising is *impersonal*, that is, it is directed to a group of people rather than individual; thus, it is *mass* communication. The group of people can be the consumers who buy the product for personal use, or businesspeople who own and manage shops, such as wholesalers and retailers who buy the product for resale. Third, most of advertising is paid for by sponsors using radio or TV station, magazine or newspaper as the media; yet, what is discussed in this thesis later is only the advertisements found in magazines. However, the advertising of some sponsors of national or social organizations that give no charge service is not paid for. Similarly, a poster on a school board promoting a dance recital is not paid for, though it is also an advertisement, a structured, mass and persuasive communication. Fourth, most advertising is intended to be *persuasive* because the purpose is to win converts to a product, idea, service, and etcetera. Since the aim of advertisement is to influence people to buy the advertised goods, through the advertisement advertisers should not only be able to create the idea that the advertised goods are having the best quality, but also that it is a necessity to buy the products. In their attempt to create this false idea, the advertisers use specific choice of words, that is, persuasive words in the advertisements.

This kind of advertisement is called persuasive advertising which plays on consumer’s emotions, anxieties, and psychological needs and desires such as

status and attractiveness. There are, however, some advertisements which are intended to inform, not to persuade - such as announcements in an airport. These advertisements, which are called informational advertisements, are also advertisements because they fulfill all the other requirements of the definition above.

Informational advertisement is viewed as acceptable and desirable advertising, while persuasive advertisement is considered as fostering dissatisfaction with a certain condition among consumers and encouraging them to buy the advertised products or services as the solution of the problem. Persuasive advertisement exploits consumers and persuades them to go beyond basic needs and necessities. It is difficult, though, to separate between the informational and persuasive advertisements because the main goal of advertisement is actually to persuade and a very informative advertisement is often very effective in persuading people to buy the product or service.

Advertisements, which come from Latin verb “advertere” meaning “to turn towards” (Goddard 1998:6), can also be defined as texts – in a broader sense that include both visual artifacts and verbal language – that do their best to get our attention or to make us turn towards them. Since written advertisements have to compete with each other and with all sorts of other texts, the advertisers try to find ways to shout at us from the page. The images given in the advertisements along with the verbal texts, have become the advertisers’ attention-seeking devices since readers will read the images with the reference of the verbal texts that accompany them.

As what has been stated above, advertisements can be seen in various media; however, in this study I prefer to choose advertisements written in magazines. It is because as mass communication, magazines attract people in terms of interest: there are men's and women's magazines, travel, fashion, sports, opinion, news magazines, et cetera; therefore, they are usually widely read by people. Besides, the advertisements in magazines are more attractive compared to those in newspapers since they are more colorful, bigger in size, finely illustrated or photographed and more varied.

Though advertisements can take various forms, they have the same goal, that is, benefiting the producers through the conscious intention behind the text, or the magnifying of status or image. For this reason, it is essential to know what image that an advertisement tries to give the readers; for example, in advertising a refrigerator, it is actually enough if the advertisement shows the picture of the various contents of the refrigerator so that the readers know how spacious the inside part of the refrigerator is. Yet, the advertisement would also present the picture of a happy family, to give a false image that the buyers of the specific brand of refrigerator above would also buy the family happiness. Since, society often never think of the truth contained in the advertisements and they are unaware of the given false image of the products, they just buy any products which are being advertised interestingly, although actually some people do not really need the things. This fact of course will benefit the advertisers or the producers, but will cause consumers spend money uselessly. Therefore, it is an interesting thing to investigate.

Advertisement as discourse is marketing communications using either written or oral discourse with persuasive intent. As a discourse, advertisements contain specific style for non literary texts, that is, mass media, and since the aim of advertisement is to persuade people to buy the advertised products, advertisers use persuasive style of writing in making the advertisements. In this case, the writing of advertisement is heavily slanted, that is, taking the priority on promoting and truth is secondary. Therefore, in analyzing advertisements, it is necessary to know what persuasive discourse is used in advertisements.

Besides, to understand the semantic content of what is said in the advertisement or the implicated meaning of an utterance in communication – in this case advertisement is considered as a means of communication - the knowledge of pragmatics is needed. Understanding pragmatic meaning involves identifying a context that will make sense of an utterance. Pragmatics which is a study of the distinction between what a speaker's words literally mean and what the speaker might mean by his words, can help an addressee to interpret what the speaker means. To understand the implicature of an utterance, context is very helpful since it can determine what is conveyed implicitly, and not just explicitly.

Thus, since it is assumed that the verbal language and visual artifacts in the advertisements have hidden messages, this study is conducted to interpret the semantic content of the advertisements and the implicit meanings based on the knowledge of pragmatics and discourse analysis so that inferences in the advertisements can be interpreted.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on what has been discussed above, this study has the major questions by trying to find the answers to the following questions:

- a. How could the verbal and pictorial verbal texts in written advertisements be attractive to and retained by consumers?
- b. What inferences and images do the verbal and pictorial verbal texts of written advertisements convey?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The study is intended to answer the statement of the problem by showing, and identifying:

- a. How the verbal and pictorial verbal texts in written advertisements could be attractive to and retained by consumers.
- b. The inferences and images conveyed by the verbal and pictorial verbal texts of written advertisements.

1.4 Significance of the Study

First, through this study, it is expected that there would be theoretical contributions to the readers. It is important for the readers to realize that although advertisements are really interesting to watch or to read, their messages contain unlimited inferences. The inferences of course cannot be seen directly and they are sometimes difficult to understand. By reading this study, hopefully readers will get insights of how to find the inferences or implied meaning and also

images made by advertisers in their advertisements so that they will not just easily believe in what an advertisement says explicitly.

Second, the results of the study are expected to help readers, especially students of English Department, to have more understanding of Sperber and Wilson's theory of relevance communication and cognition which states that "a single principle of relevance is sufficient to explain the process of utterance understanding" (Grundy 2000:101). In the theory, Sperber and Wilson conclude that in order to understand utterance, someone needs to recover explicature, higher level explicature, and implicature. This study would help the students to realize that in analyzing the inferences, such as the explicature and implicature of an advertisement, readers need to relate their idea to the context of the advertisement, although they are free to make any inferences. By considering the context of the advertisement, readers would be able to give relevant analysis and catch the right message intended by the advertisers.

Third, it is expected that through this study, students would get more understanding about culture because advertisement analysis cannot be separated from the knowledge of culture. Many advertisements are based on cultural background of society. Advertising reflects the advertisers' cultural values and more than that, effective advertising should have the match between the values in the advertising message and the values of the receiver. Therefore, to understand the meaning of advertisements, a person needs to have cultural understanding.

Fourth, the contribution would be the pedagogical contribution to the teaching of English as a foreign language. Learning a foreign language does not

merely include the mastery of the language, but also the understanding of the culture where the language is spoken so that the learner has the knowledge of a proper use of the language in the native country. Since advertisements are related to cultural values, it is expected that this study would give additional insights of cross cultural understanding.

Fifth, it is expected that this study would give a better understanding to the students of English Department on their study of pragmatics concerning the advertisement analysis such as the theories of metaphor, inferences, and the discourse of advertising which are used in this study.

Sixth, the next pedagogical contribution is for reading class. This study is hoped to inspire teachers to help students think critically in doing their reading comprehension and not just look for the literal meaning but also the implicit meaning of a text. Teachers can give various reading materials; however, it would be better if they can give authentic materials. They can use advertisements taken from newspapers or magazines as authentic reading materials and train the students to find the inferences and images of the advertisements.

Seventh, the thesis writer hopes that this study could inspire teachers of writing class to dig students' creativity in writing. As additional material for students, teachers can assign students to have free writing or writing for enjoyment by writing advertisements in words, phrases, clauses or graffiti after teaching them how to find the implicit meanings of advertisements.

At last, it is expected that this study would trigger other students of English Department to know more about advertising. What has been discussed in

this study is only a small aspect concerning advertisements. There are still chances to make other researches concerning advertisement by looking at other angles of the advertisement discussions.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Since advertisements have various aspects to discuss, the writer thinks it is essential to limit the analysis in this study. This study is based on the perspective of didactic approach of analytical study. It is focused on the interpretation of the inferences based on pragmatics theories and based on the association of the verbal and pictorial verbal texts in written advertisements so that both the inferences and images of the written advertisements can be found.

Although the goal of an advertisement is to attract consumers so that they finally buy the product, the thesis writer limits the research only to find how the advertisements could be attracted to consumers and not to find whether finally they buy the product or not. It is because based on the field of study, a research on whether consumers buy the product or not deals with the economics department, not the language department.

Therefore, the analysis is limited to the following aspects:

- a. advertisements on cosmetics, clothes, food products and dinnerware found in women's Australian magazines from the year 1992 up to 2000: *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *Woman's Day*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Family Circle*, and *Seventeen*. The chosen advertisements are in English instead of in Indonesian so that the thesis writer does not need to translate them. The

advertisements are limited only to ten advertisements which are problematic, that is, the ones that are not straight forward in giving the message so that they cause people to think. They are also the ones that have eye-catching, puzzling, and attractive pictures.

- b. the syntactic pragmatic level; that is, by justifying the relationship between syntax and textual effect.
- c. the study is qualitative in nature and is based on content analysis.
- d. the triangulators chosen for triangulation are limited to the advisor, twenty S2 students of MPBI, Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University, two Indonesian people who have lived in Australia for more than seven years, and three native speakers – Australians.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 communication theory

1.6.2 pragmatics

1.6.2.1 The discourse of advertising

- a. persuasive style in advertisements
- b. deviation
- c. parallelism
- d. cohesive devices
- e. pronouns
- f. comparative reference
- g. problem-solution discourses

- h. polysemy (pun)
- i. metonymy
- j. metaphor/pictorial metaphor
- k. simile/pictorial simile
- l. image

1.6.2.2 Sperber and Wilson's theory on Relevance Communication and Cognition

1.6.2.3 cultural values and advertising

1.6.3 psychological theory on consumer behavior

1.7 Assumptions

This study is based on some assumptions. These assumptions are necessary because they would become “well-founded justifications which guide the selection of material without becoming involved in statistical aspects or questions of representativity” (Titscher et al. 2000:41). The first assumption is that advertisements are problematic and not straight forward in giving the message so that not all people realize that advertisements have more to say than what is explicitly stated. Second, advertisers give verbal as well as pictorial verbal texts to convey implicit meanings. Third, the implicit meanings or inferences as well as images in the advertisements can be extracted by using pragmatics theory which includes the discourse of advertising. Fourth, one's understanding of both the explicit and implicit meanings of advertisements depends on his / her level of education. Fifth, advertisers try to attract people's attention and make the message

in the advertisements retained in the readers' mind. Sixth, advertising contains the advertisers' cultural values and effective advertising needs the shared culture of the advertisers and the consumers.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms to be understood in this study:

- a. **advertisement:** according to The Random House College Dictionary, it is an announcement description, or presentation of something - such as goods for sale - in newspapers, magazines, on television, etcetera.
- b. **claim:** "a statement that something is true, even though it has not been proved" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 2001:230).
- c. **explicature:** an inference which demands a great deal of real world knowledge. It is "an explicitly communicated assumption" (Sperber et al. 2nd ed. 1995:182). (For further discussion see Chapter II).
- d. **image:** According to Webster's 1913 Dictionary, an image is "a representation of anything to the mind; a picture drawn by the fancy; a conception; an idea" (<http://www.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/image>). Based on Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, image is "the general opinion that most people have of a person, organization, product, etcetera" and "a picture that you have in your mind, especially about what someone or something is like or the way they look" (2001:709).

- e. **implicature:** an inference based on a lot of contexts or implied contexts. It is “an implicitly communicated” assumption (ibid. 182). (For further discussion see Chapter II).
- f. **inference:** a conclusion derived from premises. There are two kinds of inferences: deductive and inductive inferences. A deductive or ‘logical’ inference is necessarily valid; inductive inferences are ‘project beyond the known data’ (Honderich 1995 in Grundy 2000) and are probabilistic. An inductive inference may not yield the same conclusion when additional premises are mentioned. Pragmatic inferences are presumed to be inductive, although Sperber and Wilson argue that explicatures and implicatures in relevance theory are deductive inferences. A hearer will frequently be led to infer a meaning as the result of a ‘trigger’, a feature of the utterance or its correspondence to known facts that leads the hearer to suspect that the literal meaning is not the (only) meaning that the speaker seeks to convey. Thus, inference in this study involves explicature and implicature.
- g. **magazine:** a publication that is issued periodically, usually bound in a paper cover, and typically containing stories, essays, poems, etc., by many writers, and often photographs and drawings, frequently specializing in a particular subject or area (The Random House College Dictionary. 1988). Magazines focus on interest groups; therefore, there is a magazine for every taste, hobby, and activity (Lowery 1983:13). Readership of magazine is high since issues are often passed on to others to be read again

and again. Magazines set up a major mass medium though their readership is scattered across thousands of specialized topics and interests.

- h. **personal/individual determinants of attention:** "the characteristics of the individual that influence attention" (Engel et al. 1990:367). The personal determinants of attention include the need or motivation, attitudes, adaptation level, and span of attention. (For further discussion see Chapter II).
- i. **persuasive style:** the choice of specific verbal and pictorial verbal texts in advertisements as a means to persuade people to believe in the advertisements and to buy the advertised product (For further explanation see Chapter II).
- j. **stimulus determinants of attention:** stimulus characteristics that "represent controllable factors in the sense that they can be used for gaining and or increasing attention" (Engel et al. 1990:370). It includes the size, color, intensity, contrast, position, directionality, movement, isolation, and novelty. (For further discussion see Chapter II).
- k. **text:** Based on Goatly (2000), a text is the physical form which the writing (speaking) takes on the page (in the air) and the meanings which this physical form encodes. Titscher et al. quoted the idea of de Beaugrande & Dressler of a text as: "a communicative event" (2000:21). Since written advertisements also have meanings and as a means of communication between the advertisers and the society, the written advertisements can be

considered as a text. In this study, the texts have two forms: verbal texts and pictorial verbal texts.

Verbal text: a text in the form of words.

Pictorial verbal text: a text using both words and picture.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction which contains some explanation on the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, the definition of key terms and the organization of the study. Chapter II is about the review of related literature which consists of two parts, that is review of related studies and review of related theories. Chapter III is the research methodology which discusses the research design, the source of data and data, the instruments, the procedures for collecting the data and the procedures of the data analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings and discussion of the findings. Chapter V as the last chapter is the conclusion which consists of summary and conclusions, implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.