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Visual Metafunction in Cigarette *A Mild* Advertisements: A multimodal analysis

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Abstract. Departing from multimodal approach, this study attempted to analyze the different semiotic resources used by *A Mild*, a giant Indonesian cigarette brand from *Sampoerna*, and to realize how these resources convey interpretations and messages in their billboard ads. The data of the study are three *A Mild* billboard advertisement images that analyzed using the visual grammar framework proposed by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) that consist of representational function, interactive function, and compositional function. The findings revealed that *A Mild* designed their billboard advertisements to create movements as to affect the viewer's emotion through the implicit use of representational features that utilized processes like narrative and conceptual, interactive features. They are realized in the gaze, power, social distance, and modality. In terms of the compositional features, they employed the important and less important elements on the image. It can be concluded that the involvement of the verbal elements on the image affect the interpretation of the image.

Keyword: *Multimodal, Image Metafunction, Visual Grammar, Kress and Leeuwen*

1. Introduction

Traditional analysis of text only concentrates on the written language. It excludes other source that may influence the sense of the entire meaning. Multimodal discourse analysis then emerges and involves how persons use the combination of various means of expression or source to establish meaning. Now, the multimodal discourse analysis begun to be applied by various scholar and researchers, that has acknowledged the value of different source of communication for making meaning [1]. The most common source that has greater attention in the discourse analysis, other than verbal text, is the visual text. Mainly it derives from the view of Kress and Leeuwen, that to them images can also be treated as a language [2]. They also argue that image also serve the same metafunction as verbal language that was first popularized by Halliday.

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Kress and Leeuwen proposed a theoretical framework that deals with the analysis of visual text which aims is to identify and interpret the structure embedded in an image, namely *Visual Grammar*. Derives from Halliday's systemic functional approach to language, Kress and van Leeuwen [3] argues that images, just like language, also have grammar structures that can be scrutinized to make meaning of the image. Systemic functional approach refers language as a metafunctionaly organized sets of inter-related systems of choice [4].

In his book *Language as Social Semiotics* Halliday proposed that language is a semiotic mechanism that produces meaning using semiotic resources [1]. He described language as organized in three configurations that operate simultaneously where each configuration represents a separate function, or usually named "metafunction", in the process of meaning making, namely; Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual. Consequently, Kress and Leeuwen [3] assumed in Visual Grammar that images also serves these three metafunction, as all semiotic forms. This relates with the notion from Halliday in [2] that text is "all practices that signify," implying that all that communicates information is "text," whether it is verbal, nonverbal, or even visual.

By integrating Halliday's ideas of language metafunction Kress and Leeuwen adjust the meta-function of image as; *representational, interactive*, and *compositional function*, [3]. The following section discusses briefly about the focus components consisted in Kress and Leeuwen framework.

1.1   Representational Function

This corresponds with Halliday's *ideational function* in systemic functional linguistic [3]. Here Kress and Leeuwen [3] proposed that there are two type of representations of the aspect of the world; "represented participant", which is all the elements inside the visual text, and "interactive participant" which essentially means the viewer. In representational function the process or structure of the visual text is divided to: narrative and conceptual. Furthermore, the analysis also identifies the sub-process employed in the image, whether it is actional and reactional, or classificational, analytical, and symbolic.

1.2   Interactive Function

This corresponds with Halliday's *interpersonal function* [3]. Here, there are four elements that affect the relation between the image and the viewer, namely gaze which classify the visual text into "offer" or "demand" type of visual, social distance which identify the relationship employed in the visual text to the viewer, angle which define the "power" of the represented participant, and modality which relate to the realism or the credibility of the visual text.

1.3   Compositional Function

This function corresponds with the Halliday's *textual function* [3]. It deals with the way the elements in image are organized to make the overall meaning of the image. Here, the analysis will focus on information value which deals with the placement of the elements in the certain part of the image that have a specific value [3]; salience which is the extent to which a certain element, due to its size, position, color, etc. attracts attention to itself; and framing which is the presence or absence of devices or lines that signify weather an element is connected and belong together with another element.

1.4   Previous research

There have been several studies relating with analysis of visual text, like Ly and Jung [1] that analyzed two fashion photographs, focusing on the representational and interactive function of an image. Their work confirms that, just like verbal language image also has grammar that is rich of meaning potential which could be analyzed to decode the real meaning of the image. Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling [5] who provides an analysis about how several cigarette brand; like *Marlboro, Du Maurier, Player's, and Capri*, constructed the concept behind their branding advertisement by using semiotic resources. Ananda, et al. [6] which analyze the ideational or representational function of A Mild's billboard advertisement, that they found that A Mild's billboard advertisements were designed to implicitly persuade the viewer to buy their products through using narrative and conceptual processes. This research only focuses on the representational or the ideational function of an image.

Therefore, this study intends to extend the application of Kress and Leeuwen's framework by focusing on all three functions that is proposed by them. The objectives of this study are to find out: 1) the representation feature that is used in the visual text; 2) the way interactive features are applied; 3) the compositional feature that is embedded in the visual text; 4) and the way the verbal elements correlate with the visual text.

2   Research Method

The study uses descriptive qualitative method to analyze the elements that exist in an image. Qualitative research is an inquiry process to understand a social or human problem [7]. It includes the interpretation of a phenomenon in its natural settings [8]. In describing a phenomenon and its qualities, the description stresses more about 'what' rather than 'how' or 'why' everything has happened [9]. The data collection method uses document type and the interactive model by Miles, Huberman and Saldana [10] is applied as data analysis technique. Three A Mild billboard images have been used as data of this study, they are *Go Ahead* branding advertisement that A Mild launched from 2009 to 2019. Each image comes in different taglines or slogans, namely; *Cuek Bebek Go Ahead, Banyak Bingung Go Ahead*, and *Pikir*

Pendek Go Ahead, which have been named as GA 1, GA 2, and GA 3. The data source is taken from various Google search and downloaded from the https://www.behance.net/ webpage.

3 Results and Discussion

The following analysis of GA 1, GA 2 and GA 3 cover three components of metafunction as grammar of visual analysis, they are representational, interactive and compositional functions. In addition to the visual analysis, it also provides the verbal analysis of GA 1, GA 2 and GA 3.
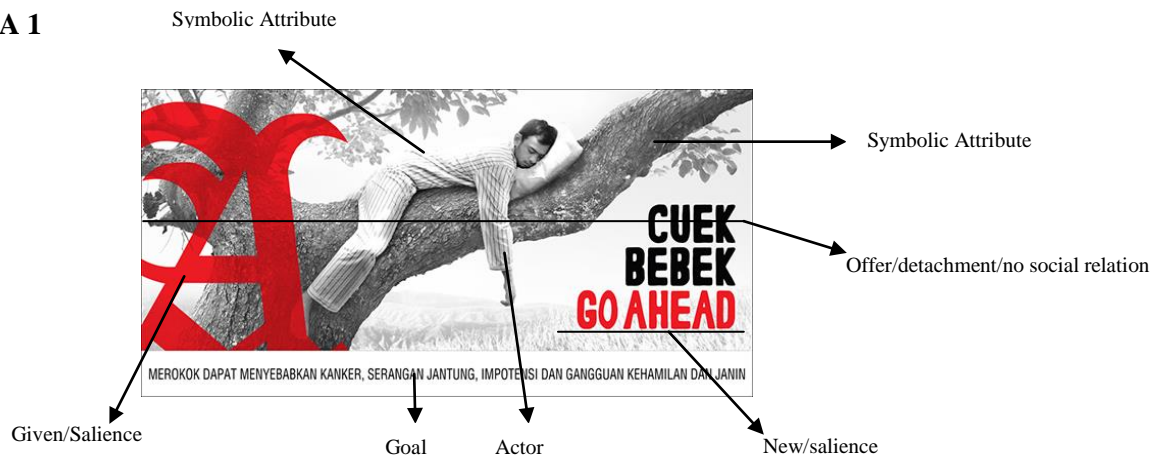
3.1 GA 1

Figure GA 1: A Mild Billboard Advertisement Cuek Bebek version.

3.1.1 Visual Elements

Representational Function

- **Narrative Process**: Transactional as the represented participant is doing something but he doesn't affect or doing anything towards something as he is sleeping. The Vector in this image is generated by the hand gesture (the actor) which move downward to the lower text (goal) in the image. The Setting also generates a secondary participant, in which the Setting is made in less detail making the foreground and the middle ground looks very contrast to the Setting.

- **Conceptual Process**: Symbolic Attributive Process as the model's act (sleeping) is the Carrier while his outfit, the trees branch, and the setting of the image are the Symbolic Attribute that establish a concept of *abnormality* or *oddity* as with the circumstance or setting where the model is sleeping at is not a normal place where people like to sleep. The action and his outfit don't fit in the circumstance depicted in the image, implying the image's massage to be out of the comfort zones and do what normal people won't.

Interactive Function

- **Gaze** (demand or offer), Since the represented participant doesn't look to the viewer, this particular image "Offering" something to the viewer, which is the concept of abnormality to the viewer, rather than demand something.

- **Social distance**, the type of shot of the image is very long (very wide) shot which shows the represented participant's whole body. Thus, this image shows no social relation to the viewer.

- **Angle**, the image shown is using an "eye-level" angle and oblique horizontal point of view, which mean that this image aim is only to show something to the viewer. The image also show detachment, that is what the viewer sees is not part of the real world. The world inside the image, belongs only to the represented participant and the viewer is not involved with it.

- **Modality**, the image above has a high modality value. The color of the person looks plain, monochrome and almost black and white but the color of the verbal text is fully saturated that it become more salient as it is contrast with the actual photograph on the back. The background may also lose its detail and there is no depth. But, if the verbal elements are also taking into consideration, the image will have its three ground, in which the verbal element especially the letter "A" is the foreground as it is the most salient element, the photograph of the person is the middle ground, and the plain background behind the person is the background. Thus, the contextualization, representation, and depth have a high modality value. The only modality markers that have low value is the illumination and brightness as the image doesn't contain a shade or shadowy area, and there is also not so much differentiation of the color brightness.

Compositional Function

- **Salience**, the image salience is generated from the verbal elements and the Letter "A", in which those elements are the only saturated color and contrast to the plain photograph on the back.

- **Information Value**, the image also put the human action on the center of the image which than makes the human as the important concept of the image. The letter "A" and the phrase "Cuek Bebek Go Ahead" (Don't care at all) is placed on the left and right side of the image. Thus, making the letter "A" as the **given** and the phrase "Cuek Bebek Go Ahead" as the **new**.

- **Framing**, the framing generated around the phrase "Cuek Bebek Go Ahead" where the line of the tree branch separates the text to other elements like the human participant and the Letter "A". It gives a notion that the phrase is the message the image wanted to

convey. It also corresponds with the placement of other elements in which the viewer would see the image from left to right. The informational text on the bottom of the image also separated from the other elements, in which it is separated from the white color of the rectangle.

3.1.2 Verbal Elements

The verbal text on the left side however, support the concept of the image as it is the most salient elements on the image. *Cuek Bebek* 'Ignorant Duck' is an Indonesian personification that interpreted as *don't really care at all* in English. The thing that we shouldn't care is the normalization or the way average people thought, as depicted on the image, the represented participant is sleeping on a tree which is something no normal person would do. The verbal text serves an *Interactive Function* that guides the viewer's attention to the interpretation of the image's concept, as the verbal text is made salience to the overall setting of the image. This implies the campaign that A Mild want the viewer to don't care to what people say. They want their viewer to be a unique person that brave enough to change their usual perspective about cigarette. But in doing so, the level of demands is very low as the image don't have a direct gaze to the viewer.

3.2   GA 2

Figure GA 2: A Mild Billboard Advertisement Banyak Bingung version.

3.2.1   Visual Elements

Representational Function

- **Narrative Process**: Transactional as the represented participant is looking at the blackboard behind her. The Vector in this image is generated by the gesture (the actor) that facing to the background (goal) in the image. The secondary participant, which is generated by the *locative circumstance*. That is, the Setting which is filled by the blackboard covering all the image, contrast with the person on the foreground.

- **Conceptual Process**: Analytical process as the represented participant (carrier) depicted as a scholar, that is signified by the blackboard and all mathematical formula in it (possessive attributive). The concept that the image is trying to show is a *complexity* or *confusion* as the represented participant is looking at the blackboard while showing a gesture as if she is thinking about how to solve the problems depicted on the complexity of the mathematical formula on the blackboard.

Interactive Function

- **Gaze** (demand or offer), there is no gaze or eyesight, this particular image "Offering" something to the viewer, rather than demanding something.

- **Social distance**, the type of shot of the image is "medium close shot" that shows the represented participant from head to waist, thus it shows a personal relation to the viewer.

- **Angle**, the image shown is using an "eye-level" angle and frontal horizontal point of view, as the blackboard and its complexity is facing toward the viewer. This mean that the image's aim is not only to show something, but also to show involvement to the viewer. The image shows as if the represented participant is "one of us" and the world or confusion represented in the image belongs also to the viewer. The angle and the shot distance of the image implies the personal relation and involvement between the represented participant and the viewer.

- **Modality**, the image above has a high modality value. Most of the modality markers depicted with the highest modality value, such as the colors, contextualization, representation, illumination and brightness, that makes the image have a high degree of realism or credibility under the sensory coding orientation. The only modality markers with lowest value is the depth, as the image background is the blackboard that covered the whole image.

Compositional Function

- **Salience**, the salience elements on the image are the verbal elements, the Letter "A" and the human figure, in which those elements are the only saturated color and very contrast to the blackboard that fills the entire frame and act as the background.

- **Information Value**, what is put on the centre, and is also very contrast to the background is the human figure that makes her the ***important information*** of the image. The human gesture in the image implies the confusion of the people in dealing with problems as represented by the mathematical formula on the blackboard. The verbal elements are placed on the margins, making them as ***less important information***, but it acts as the interpretation of the concept represented from the image.

3.2.2   Verbal Elements

The phrase ***Banyak Bingung Go Ahead*** or in English translation is *A Lot of Confusion Go Ahead* implies the message that we don't have to be confused of the problems, we just need to work on it, i.e we need to "start" or the problem will get bigger and bigger. This Symbolized by the large blackboard filled with complex and detailed mathematical formula in it. The message of the verbal text in this image arguably have the same purpose as in the Figure GA 1. The representation of the verbal text is made salience with a very contrast color to the background. This made the verbal text not only as a complement of the overall meaning of the image, but also as the interpretation of concept of the image itself.
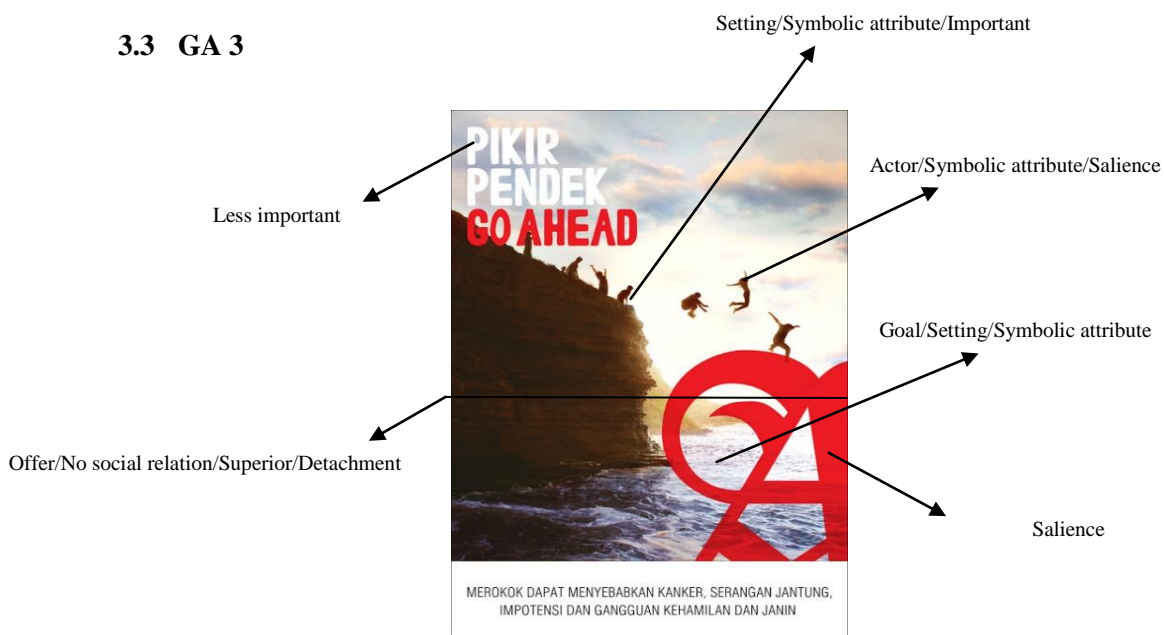
3.3   GA 3

Setting/Symbolic attribute/Important

Less important

Actor/Symbolic attribute/Salience

Goal/Setting/Symbolic attribute

Offer/No social relation/Superior/Detachment

Salience

Figure GA 3: A Mild Billboard Advertisement Pikir Pendek version

3.3.1   Visual Elements

Representational Function

- **Narrative Process**: Transactional as the represented participant is jumping off the cliff to the ocean, that is they are doing something. The Vector in this image is generated by the falling action of the people in silhouette (the actor) that moves toward the ocean on its lower part (goal) in the image.

- **Conceptual Process**: Symbolic Attributive Process as the big red letter "A" act as the Carrier while the human actions in silhouette and also the setting which the action was taking place at are the Symbolic Attribute that symbolizes *freedom* and *Bravery* as if the people in silhouette doesn't really care about what is under the ocean, i.e. the danger. The waves on the ocean symbolizes the danger and the silhouette of the people falling down establish the interpretation that those people brave enough to enter a danger

Interactive Function

- **Gaze** (demand or offer), Since the image don't have any gaze or eyesight, this particular image "Offering" something to the viewer, rather than demanding something.

- **Social distance**, the type of shot of the image is very long (very wide) shot that shows the represented participant as a whole, e.g., all the human figure and also the cliff and ocean. Thus, this image shows no social relation to the viewer.

- **Angle**, the image shown is using a "low" angle and oblique horizontal point of view, as if we as the viewer see the action of the people jumping of the cliff from a long distance. This mean that the represented participant is superior as with the action they did. The image also show detachment, that is what the viewer sees is not part of the real world. The world inside the image, belongs only to the represented participant and the viewer is not involved with it.

- **Modality**, the image above has a high modality value, where all the modality markers like the colors, contextualization, representation, depth, illumination, and brightness shows high modality that makes the image appear more than real under the sensory coding orientation.

Compositional Function

- **Salience**, along the big red letter "A" on the foreground, the silhouette of the people jumping off the cliff is also very salient as they are very contrast with the color and brightness of the sky.

- **Information Value**, what is put on the centre, and is also very clear to see is the cliff of which makes the height and the distance of the ocean and top of the cliff as the *important information* of the image. This imply that action of the people not only is very dangerous but also what most people wouldn't do. The verbal elements are placed on the margins, making them as *less important information*. The verbal acts as the complement of the concept represented from the image.

- **Framing**, if we ignore the warning on the bottom and other verbal text on the image, there are three section of the image that is separated by the color and its representation. Those section are the cliff where there are 5 people on it, the air where there are 3 people portrayed, and the ocean where there are still no people in it. This separated section of the image implicitly shows the progression of the human action, where they are first stayed on the cliff which is a "safe place" and then jumping down to the ocean which is a "dangerous place".

3.3.2   Verbal Elements

The complement of that notion, that this image is portraying and offering a concept of freedom, is from the verbal text on the margin that says ***Pikir Pendek Go Ahead*** '*Think Short Go Ahead*' which contextually asking the viewer to don't think heavily about danger of something and be extraordinary. This symbolized by the action of jumping off the cliff portrayed in the image. The phrase suggests the viewer to imitate the concept of freedom that is portrayed by the silhouette of people jumping off the cliff. But again, just like the figure GA 1 and GA 2, the level of demands in this image is very low as there is no direct gaze to the viewer. Hence, the image and the concept behind it act only as an object of contemplation.

4   Conclusion

From this analysis it can be concluded that *A Mild* have employed multimodal features on their advertisements under the *Go Ahead* tagline to create a sense of movement, in which they try persuade the viewers to 'always move forward'. The campaigns focus heavily in the "human action" that it is point out by the presentation of each image depicted as 'salience' and 'centered' among other elements. The images also constructed more on the conceptual process rather than narrative process, which implies that the images have heavier focus on the concept of the campaign that they "offer" to the viewers, which identified by the symbolic value from various elements. However, it is suggested to other study to develop the multimodal discourse analysis field, as this study only limit the analysis on a small amount of data, and to also apply the theoretical framework by Kress and Leeuwen in other form or genre of text in order to extend the scope of analysis of visual grammar.

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