

Sanders Pierce's Semiotic Study

Aqua Life Pack 1100 ml

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ABSTRACT

Almost all fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) use plastic-based packaging because it is easy to shape, can be colored, and raw materials are easy and cheap. Aqua bottle packaging uses PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) plastic, the problem occurs when the disposable packaging becomes waste, difficult to decompose, complex recycling process resulting in environmental pollution and even become one of the factors of climate crisis. Aqua presents Aqua Life products which are interesting to study semiotically what messages are contained in them. The method used in this research is qualitative, with a netnography approach, the instruments used are visual observations, news articles, and supporting data from various agencies and literature studies which are described and analyzed using Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory. In this study, it can be concluded that.... the results of this research are expected to add insight in terms of visual design and appreciation of the campaign to recycle plastic waste into new forms of packaging in Indonesia.

Keywords: plastic, packaging, recycling

INTRODUCTION

When viewed in visual design and branding, packaging is one of the important elements in marketed products, according to Ravindra in his journal entitled Emotions by Design: A Consumer Perspective, it is concluded that packaging can persuade potential customers to buy these products, especially for food or beverage products (Chitturi, R. 2009).

According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, the term consumer goods include all types of durable and non-durable goods used for household purposes (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022). Meanwhile, the term Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) according to Investopedia has more or less the same meaning as consumer goods, except that in general these products are not durable, made in large quantities, and relatively cheap (Clarine, S. n.d).

According to Statista, the consumer goods sector is one of the largest industrial sectors in Indonesia, with 8.8% growth in 2020, 19% of Indonesians' total household expenditure and major sales in traditional trade (Nurhayati-Wolff, 2021).

The main material of bottled drinking water packaging is generally PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) plastic, which is an ethylene compound derived from natural gas or crude oil. It has clear, solvent-resistant, gas and water-resistant characteristics, softens at 80°C, has a very light weight and has strong durability. The advantages of plastic compared to other materials are that it is cheap, easy to obtain, lightweight, easy to shape/print, can be given color or clear, has good durability, is stable chemical elements so it is relatively safe.

FMCG plastic packaging can quickly turn into non-biodegradable waste which damages the environment and is one of the contributing factors to the global climate crisis, hence the emergence of Indonesia's circular economy system (Anon, 2020).

The results of the research conducted by Dr. Jenna Jambeck from the University of Georgia, in 2015 named Indonesia as the second largest contributor to plastic waste with a total around 187.2 million tons, and around 4.8-12.7 million tons pollute the seas every year (Anon, 2019).

In 1993, Aqua had its first recycling program, Waste Recycling Development (PEDULI) to support local recycling and continues to do so today. Looking at the reality of increasing plastic packaging across all sectors and the lack of infrastructure and education, unmanaged plastic packaging can potentially be a big threat to our environment. Therefore, to answer the greater challenges of the times, the continuation of the Aqua PEDULI program, the Wise Plastic program, emerged. This program focuses on collection, recycling, education, and innovation (Anon, 2017).

In 2020, the Indonesian government in collaboration with the Packaging and Recycling Association for Indonesia Sustainable Environment (PRAISE) launched the Packaging Recovery Organization (PRO) program. This is an initiative of six PRAISE member companies, including Coca-Cola Indonesia, Danone Indonesia, PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, PT Nestle Indonesia, Tetra Pak Indonesia, and PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk.

As one of the supporters of the circular economy system, Aqua makes concrete steps to campaign for the issue of plastic waste with a creative campaign Wise Plastic which has a wide enough scope, one of which is through Aqua Life products.

Aqua Life packaging is unique and attracts attention because it is without color and its labels are attached like other packaging, it is interesting to explore the meaning contained in the packaging through the point of view of semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs in terms of linguistic language to visual language with various figures and perspectives. The word semiotics comes from the Greek “semeion” which means sign. It was pioneered by two main figures, American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) and French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).

The novelty in the research is an in-depth semiotic study using Sanders Pierce theory on the first bottled water bottle in Indonesia made from 100% recycled materials. This research aims to find out the meaning contained in the packaging.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative mode aimed at obtaining results in the form of the author’s interpretation and descriptive data regarding oral and written words, and observed behavior of the people studied. The approach taken uses a netnographic study approach, which requires fieldwork in the form of computer-mediated communication at a research site (Kozinets, 2010).

The research location uses literature research, with the output being applied research, which aims to get a descriptive explanation of semiotics in t-shirts. Primary data was obtained through books and journals. Secondary data was obtained through supporting articles online. The focus of the research is on the visual observation of the 1100 ml Aqua Life packaging bottle which is described and analyzed with Sanders Pierce’s semiotic theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Pierce, semiotics is synonymous with logic which means that humans only think with signs while signs are the main elements of communication.

The essential function of a sign is as something to make inefficient relationships efficient (Sachari, Sunarya, 2000).

Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) was an American pragmatic philosopher and logician who began formulating his own model of semiotics, and a taxonomy of signs

around the 1860s with a triadic model consisting of representamen, object, and interpretant.

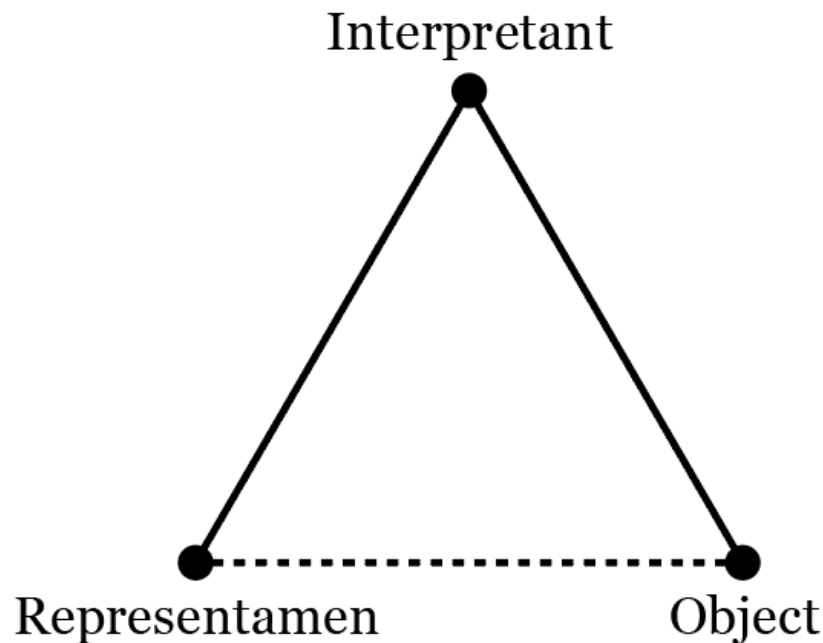


Figure 1 Pierce's semiotic triangle
Source: Chandler, 2017

Signs consist of three classifications, namely Firstness (representamen group), Secondness (object group), Thirdness (interpretant group). Representamen is a sign element which represents something. Object is something represented by the representamen. Interpretant is the sign which appears in the receiver's mind after seeing the representamen. (Cobley, Janz, 2012).

The group of representations consists of qualisign, sinsign, legisign. Qualisign is a representation based on its characteristics or nature (quality), for example the color green as a sign of the button is on, it is okay to walk, safe, shady, environmentally friendly, etc. Sinsign is a representation based on physical form, for example road signs, signboards, banners, etc. Legisign is a representation based on a general law, a generally agreed sign, a code, for example a referee's whistle, a red card, etc. (Cobley, Janz, 2012).

The object group consists of three types, namely Icon, Index, and Symbol. Icon is a sign which is based on resemblance or imitation (involving some recognizable quality such as appearance, sound, taste, or smell), for example cartoons, scale-models, onomatopoeia, sound effects, imitative gestures. Index is a sign which occurs based

on a direct causal relationship, for example natural signs such as clouds and rain, medical signs such as rashes and itching, signal signs such as the sound of house bells and guests, etc. Symbol is a sign which is based on an unmotivated, arbitrary, and purely conventional relationship not based on resemblance or direct relationship to physical reality so that it must be agreed upon and learned, for example language, numbers, morse code, traffic lights, state flags, etc. (Chandler, 2017)

The interpretant group consists of rheme, dicent, argument. Rheme is where the sign appears as a possibility, for example a concept or idea, messy hair could be just waking up, having a lot of thoughts, being blown by strong wind, forgetting to comb your hair, itching, etc. Dicent is a sign which appears as a fact, for example a descriptive statement, it is forbidden to stop so a no-stop sign is installed. Argument is where the sign appears as a reason about something or a rule, for example an agreed plan (preposition), a ban on smoking at Public Fuel Filling Stations (SPBU) because it is prone to burning, etc. (Cobley, Janz, 2012).

Table 1 Firstness, secondness, thirdness
Source: Cobley, Janz, 2012

	Quality (Firstness)	Brute Facts (Secondness)	Law (Thirdness)
Representamen (Firstness)	Qualisign	Sinsign	Legisign
Object (Secondness)	Icon	Index	Symbol
Interpretant (Thirdness)	Rheme	Dicent	Argument

The following in figure 2 is an overall view of the bottle.



Figure 2 Aqua life packaging
Source: Cobley, Janz, 2012

Table 2 Firstness
Source: Cobley, Janz, 2012

	Qualisign	Sinsign	Legisign
Representamen (Firstness)	<p>Colorless, clear, transparent packaging display.</p> <p>The impression is of purity, cleanliness, sincerity.</p>	<p>The physical shape of the bottle is simple (basic), with rounded corners.</p> <p>The impression which emerges is natural, minimalist, calm, pure.</p>	<p>Common marks include the Aqua logo, circular economy logo, and alphabetic letters and numbers.</p>

Table 3 Secondness
Source: Cobley, Janz, 2012

	Icon	Index	Symbol
Object (Secondness)	<p>The image of the mountains in the Aqua logo gives a fresh impression and is sourced from mountain springs.</p> <p>The tail of the letter Q in the Aqua logo is like a cloth blowing in the wind, giving the impression of serenity and freshness.</p> <p>In the circular economy logo arrow, there is a line shape which looks like the middle stem of a leaf so that the arrow resembles a leaf. Gives the impression of being environmentally friendly.</p>	The words "Made from 100% Recycled Plastic"	Aqua logo, circular economy logo, and alphabetic letters and numbers.

Table 4 Thirdness
Source: Cobley, Janz, 2012

	Rheme	Dicent	Argument
Interpretant (Thirdness)	<p>The bottle design concept and minimalist graphics make it easier to read the words "Made from 100% Recycled Plastic".</p> <p>Without color to show the quality and</p>	Factually, the purity of the 100% recycled concept is clearly felt and seen by not including any stickers, labels, or decoration.	<p>The Aqua logo refers to purity and care for the environment.</p> <p>The circular economy logo clearly depicts the iterative process (from bottle to bottle again).</p>

	<p>purity, because the clearer without color, the better the quality of recycling is.</p> <p>Plain appearance can reduce production costs and speed up the production process.</p> <p>Plain appearance makes a difference, gives the impression of luxury, elegance, and is easy for customers to remember.</p>		<p>Reinforced by the words "Made from 100% Recycled Plastic".</p>
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The impact of the study on the scientific field of visual communication design is to understand the meaning in a packaging design in which in designing it is necessary to pay attention to several factors, including continuity with the basic concept, function, and appearance (aesthetics).

Previous research was conducted by Asima Oktavia Sitanggang with the title Construction of the Meaning of Aqua Advertising "Aqua Life" Edition #WisePlastic, the First Innovation in Indonesia in the form of a Roland Barthes semiotics study on Aqua Life video advertisements (Sitanggang, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The study of semiotics with the theory of Sanders Pierce on Aqua Life packaging is expected to be able to find visual signs of unique and attractive packaging to be discussed and guided in designing packaging.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the packaging design consistently carries the basic concept of recycling and environmentally friendly. The recycling concept can be seen from the transparent packaging without color or clear because the best recycling process is the recycling process of colorless plastic. The environmentally friendly concept can be seen from the packaging without sticker labels and the like so as not to create new plastic waste.

Without color and without sticker labels and the like do not make the packaging unattractive, the modernism style of form follows function by carrying out the

concept of less is more but still attractive and functional is felt in the packaging design.

The simple straight to the point look featuring only the Aqua logo, circular economy logo and the bold “Made from 100% Recycled Plastic” immediately gives the core message of the uniqueness of the product packaging (Anggraeni, 2019).

With the example of a large AMDK brand which dares to be different and break old habits in packaging design, it is hoped that it can have an impact on packaging design so that it can be creative and display something with a different concept and good purpose.

The limitation of this study is that no photos were found showing the back, top, and bottom of the packaging, limiting the study conducted.

Studies with other semiotic theories need to be carried out so that there are comparisons and discussions, and it is hoped that there will be other environmentally friendly packaging so that it can be visually studied whether there are new things or trends both in terms of the manufacturing process, the technology used to design concepts which can add insight into the design of visual communication design, especially packaging design.

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