

A Semiotic Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs with Denotative and Connotative Meaning in iPhone 14 Advertisements

I Gede Jody Agastya¹, Ni Wayan Suastini²

^{1,2} Universitas Mahasaraswati, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Email: jodiagastya@gmail.com¹, suastini28@unmas.ac.id²

Published: 30/04/2024

How to cite (in APA style):

Agastya, I G. J. & Suastini, N. W. (2024). A Semiotic of Verbal and Visual Signs with Denotative and Connotative Meaning in iPhone 14 Advertisements. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 10(1), 474-482. DOI: <http://10.55637/jr.10.1.9881.474-482>

Abstract-Advertisements are a crucial tool for companies to promote their products, utilizing both verbal and visual signs. This study explores the verbal and visual signs in iPhone 14 advertisements, focusing on their denotative and connotative meanings. The research employs observational methods for data collection and qualitative descriptive methods for analysis, drawing on Saussure's (1983) theory for sign description and Barthes' (1967) theory for meaning interpretation. The findings reveal 12 verbal signs, 8 visual signs, 20 denotative meanings, and 16 connotative meanings across two advertisements. The study highlights how advertisers use verbal and visual signs to create distinct concepts and make their products known to the public

Keywords: Advertisement, Verbal Sign, Visual Sign, Denotative, Connotative

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is always used to communicate and interact in social life to fulfill one's needs from others (Maynard & Turowetz, 2013). Despite the diversity of cultures and races in the world, this does not change the fact that every human uses language to communicate. Language encompasses all the words that a person knows or uses, or all the words in a particular language, as well as the words people use when talking about a particular subject (Alqahtani, 2015).

In connection with semiotics, which examines everything that can be used as a sign in advertisements, such as images, gestures, sounds, and physical items, (Barthes, 1968) states that semiotics is a study that considers signs not only in words, pictures, gestures, and objects but also in daily conversations. Semiotics is crucial to

analyze because it reveals how signs communicate ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to us. It is the study of how meaning is created and communicated. Through the composition of signs, researchers can discern the feelings and expressions the author intends to convey to the audience.

Advertising is a powerful, highly visible communication force and one of the most important marketing communication tools that help sell products, services, ideas, and images (Chang et al., 2019). Many people believe that advertising reflects the needs of the times. Whether we like it or not, advertising is everywhere. Ads can be seen in newspapers, magazines, television, the internet, and heard on the radio. It seems almost impossible to remain completely neutral and not notice modern

advertising. The most visible part of the advertising process is the advertisements that we see, read, hear, praise, or criticize.

Moreover, advertising serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a cultural mirror that reflects the values and aspirations of society (Pollay & Gallagher, 1990). Through advertising, companies can build and strengthen their brand image, create awareness, and influence consumer behavior. Advertising is also often used to shape public opinion and influence political, economic, and social decisions (Ausat, 2023).

With the development of technology, advertising has become more sophisticated and segmented (Gao et al., 2023). Digital advertising, for example, allows companies to target specific audiences more precisely through the use of data and algorithms. This makes advertising more relevant and effective in reaching the right consumers at the right time. Nonetheless, advertising is also often the subject of controversy. Some critics consider advertising a form of manipulation that can mislead consumers or promote harmful values. Therefore, regulation and ethics in advertising are crucial to ensure that advertising is not only effective but also responsible.

There are two important elements in advertisements: verbal and visual signs. Verbal signs are the most common type used in communication and include spoken and written language. Meanwhile, visual signs consist of objects, logos, images, and colors that elicit different reactions to every advertisement (Crow, 2016). In advertisements, verbal signs are the words used to convey a message, while visual signs pertain to pictures.

Nowadays, almost everyone can access social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Numerous photos and videos are uploaded on social media every day. Advertisements are among the most direct and proven ways to reach potential customers. Each sign has a different meaning, including the original meaning, denotative meaning, and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning is the literal or basic meaning, while connotative meaning refers to the meanings influenced by context or hidden meanings.

II. METHODS

The ads analyzed in this study are "Introducing iPhone 14" and "iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!" Researchers chose this ad

because there has been no research using iPhone 14 ads and this ad is very interesting to analyze. The data used in this study were taken from the internet, specifically downloaded from YouTube. In analyzing the verbal and visual signs in the advertisement, the researcher refers to the sign theory proposed by Saussure on signifier and signified (Stawarska, 2015). This theory helps in understanding how the elements in the advertisement function as signs that carry certain meanings. The signifier refers to the physical or visual form of the sign, such as the images or words used in the ad, while the signified refers to the concept or meaning associated with the sign.

In addition, the theory of meaning used in this research is based on Barthes' theory of denotative and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning is the direct or literal meaning of the sign, while connotative meaning is a deeper and more complex additional meaning that can include cultural, emotional, or ideological values associated with the sign (Ishar & Irawan, 2023). This research aims to reveal how iPhone 14 advertisements construct meaning through a combination of verbal and visual signs, and how these meanings can be interpreted by the audience. By using this approach, the researcher hopes to provide a deeper understanding of the communication strategies used in iPhone 14 advertisements and how these advertisements influence consumer perceptions.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher found 20 data in two advertisements of iPhone 14 based on verbal and visual signs, with detail 12 verbal and 8 visual signs. Those data were analyzed using Saussure theory to classify the types of semiotics. The denotative and connotative meaning were analyzed using Barthes semiotic theory to explain the denotative and connotative also hidden meaning. The researcher found 20 denotative and 16 connotative meaning in two video iPhone 14 advertisements.

Table 1. Verbal and Visual sign found in iPhone 14 Advertisements on video "Introducing iPhone 14"

No.	Advertisement	Verbal Sign	Visual Sign
1.	<i>Introducing iPhone 14</i>	10	1
2.	<i>iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!</i>	2	7

The table presents the result of the analysis verbal and visual signs. The researcher found 20 data in two advertisements of iPhone 14 based on verbal and visual signs, with detail 12 verbal and 8 visual signs.

Table 2. Denotative and Connotative meaning found in iPhone 14 Advertisements on video”
Introducing iPhone 14”

No	Advertisement	Denotative	Connotative
1.	<i>Introducing iPhone 14</i>	11	9
2.	<i>iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!</i>	9	7

The table presents the result of the analysis denotative and connotative meaning. The researcher found 20 denotative and 16 connotative meaning in two video iPhone 14 advertisement.

3.1 Visual Sign in iPhone 14 Advertisements on video “Introducing iPhone 14 and iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!”

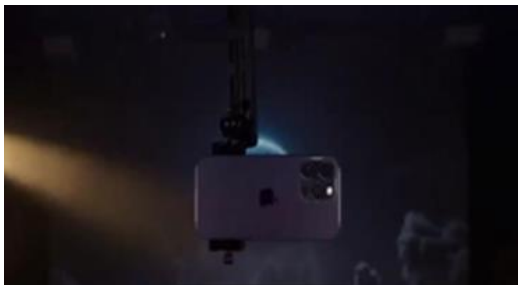


Figure 1. iPhone 14 with dark purple color

The first visual sign is iPhone 14 with dark purple color. This visual sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 0:11 seconds. In this scene shows the back of the phone in a tilted position held with a tripod. The denotation meaning of the first data is the phone with dark purple color but has a light shining on the phone. The color of the phone used is purple. The color is stunning and fits very well in the hand and for the first time the iPhone has issued purple as a design color. The connotation of the dark with a light shining the phone is there will be something new that appears and has a quite good function and can be said to be very sophisticated. The name of this smartphone is the iPhone 14 Pro Max which is the highest series, of course this

smartphone also has the best quality in its family. In appearance, the design of the iPhone 14 Pro Max itself is indeed similar to the iPhone 14 Pro, only slightly larger in size. The iPhone 14 Pro Max has larger dimensions and weight with a screen measuring 6.7 inches or 6 inches larger than the iPhone 14 Pro. But still using the same screen type and material.



Figure 2. Scene in duration

The second visual sign is a running dog. The visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 8:30 minutes. The denotation meaning in this data is a dog that runs very fast. The dog ran very agile between chairs and tables to show the movement of their phone cameras. The connotation in this sign is the recorded running dog is their way of convincing the audience that the iPhone 14 camera does not shake when used to record something that is so fast. Therefore, the iPhone 14 camera is very suitable for making videos and films.



Figure 3. The hand holding the iPhone 14 data cable

The third visual sign is showed the hand holding the iPhone 14 data cable. This visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 12:54 minutes. The denotation meaning in this visual sign is the man holding the cable with strongly. This cable is very elastic and strong when rolled up. The connotation meaning in this sign is clearly showed the man holding the cable with strongly and then he convinced the viewer

that the iPhone 14 data cable is very strong compared to others smartphone and easy to carry anywhere.

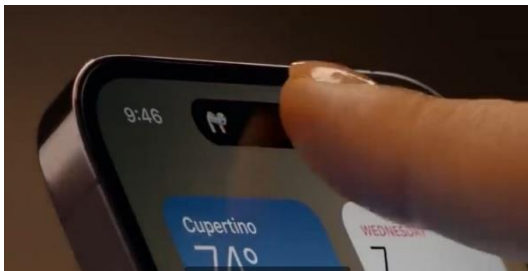


Figure 4. The finger pointing new feature in iPhone 14

The fourth visual sign shows the finger pointing new feature of iPhone 14. This visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 0:55 seconds. The denotation in this sign is Apple calls the cutout on the screen shaped like an oval as Dynamic Island. The Dynamic Island provides new ways for users to interact with iPhone. Our goal was to design a space that displays notifications and background activity in a fun way. When a user receives a notification, Dynamic Island will notify them, Apple said when releasing the iPhone 14 Pro and iPhone 14 Pro Max. Dynamic Island combines hardware with software. The connotation meaning is the black part on the top screen of this iPhone can display notifications and activities carried out by the user in real time.



Figure 5. The object is WUCC 2022

The fifth visual sign is showed the result photos from iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 with object WUC 2022 sticker. This visual sign found in video” iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 5:09 minutes. The denotation in this visual sign is result photos from iPhone 14 with object WUC 2022 sticker. The result of this visual sign is to show iPhone 14 camera clearly proven that the focus with the object. The connotation meaning is the camera iPhone 14 produces sharper images than the iPhone 13 with a smoother blur effect.

Beside that, the results of the iPhone 14 camera are brighter than the iPhone 13 camera.



Figure 6. The object is the face of the content creator

The sixth visual sign is showed result photos from iPhone 13, iPhone 14 and Pixel 6 Pro with object the face of the content creator. This visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 6:06 minutes. The denotation meaning in this verbal sign is result photos from pixel 6 Pro, iPhone 14 and iPhone 13. The results showed pixel 6 Pro are whiter and brighter, while the photos on the iPhone 14 are clearly and natural than the iPhone 13. The camera iPhone 14 results are still the best and clearly you can see from the content creator face.

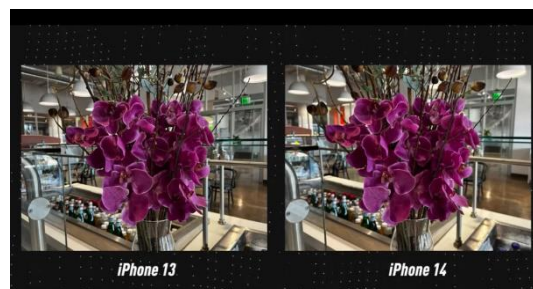


Figure 7. The object is Orchid flower

The seventh visual sign is showed photos from iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 with object orchid flower. This visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 8:01 minutes. The denotation meaning in this visual sign is result photos of iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 with object orchid flower. The result in this sign is beautiful orchid flowers with purple color. Meanwhile, the connotation meaning is iPhone 14 takes a brighter picture than the iPhone 13. So, the results of the iPhone 14 camera are clearer than the iPhone 13 camera and still be better. You can see it from the visual sign of the orchid flower above.



Figure 8. The object is Air Jordan shoes

The eighth visual sign is showed photos from iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 with object Air Jordan shoes. This visual sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 8:04 minutes. The denotation meaning in this visual sign is result photos of iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 the shoes with black and red colors. The result showed the shoes very clearly. If the object is exposed to the sun, the iPhone 14 results are brighter. Meanwhile, the connotation meaning in this visual sign is iPhone 13 looks brighter, but the iPhone 14 can capture a higher level of detail in dimmer light. Besides that, the iPhone 14 camera can be used in dark or low light places.

3.2 Verbal Sign in iPhone 14 Advertisements on video “Introducing iPhone 14 and iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!”

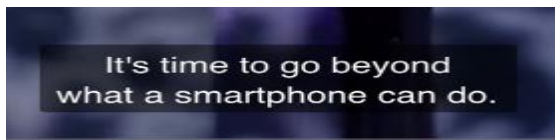


Figure 9. The verbal sign in introducing iPhone 14 video advertisement

The first verbal sign is the word “It’s time to go beyond what a smartphone can do”. This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 0:11 seconds. The denotation meaning in this first verbal sign is based on the Oxford Dictionary the word “beyond” means that outside the physical limits or range. Meanwhile, in context of this research is smartphones have emerged into the world and surpassed ordinary smartphones. The connotative meaning in this verbal sign is mean there will be a very sophisticated smartphone emerging into the world even more than ordinary smartphones even unmatched. The iPhone 14 Pro Max is the best iPhone series coming towards the end of 2022. This smartphone is the highest series in the iPhone 14 Series family. Its feature support is superior compared to the three iPhone 14 series below.

One of the specifications of the iPhone 14 Pro Max is that it is equipped with a camera that has increased 4 times compared to the iPhone 13 Pro Max.



Figure 10. The word “Supercharged by nearly 16 billion transistors”

The second verbal sign is the word” Supercharged by nearly 16 billion transistors”. The word of verbal sign is white color and black color for the background. This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 3:50 minutes. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “supercharged” means extremely powerful or fast. Meanwhile, the word “nearly” means that very close or almost. The connotation meaning in this video is the iPhone 14 has 16 billion transistors, that means iPhone 14 has a very strong supercharged and quite a lot compared to other smartphones, so the iPhone 14 has a good function.

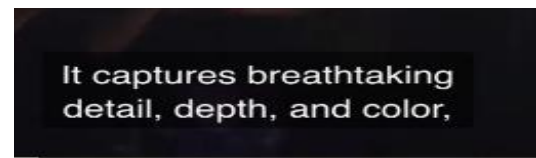


Figure 11. The verbal sign is the result of camera iPhone 14

The third verbal sign is the word” It captures breathtaking detail, depth, and color”. This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 1:28 minutes. The word is white color and black color for the background. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary are “breathtaking” means astonishing or awe-inspiring in quality, the depth mean that the quality of being intense or extreme, and color means that the property possessed by an object of producing different sensations on the eye as a result of the way it reflects or emits light. The connotation in this verbal sign means the camera on the iPhone 14 Pro Max has undergone a significant improvement leap. Where, the resolution of the main rear camera is 4 times larger than the iPhone 13 Pro Max series. If the 13 Pro Max still has a 12 MP main camera, then the 14 Pro Max is equipped with a 48 MP camera. There is also another camera on the back, namely

a 12MP ultrawide lens and a 12MP telephoto. Meanwhile, the front camera has a 12MP resolution for clear and sharp selfie quality. iPhone 14 Pro Max has a number of video capture modes for better results. A cinematic mode uses Dolby Vision 4K technology at 30fps and an action mode for more stable video results. All of these features are ideal for users, especially those who work as content creators.

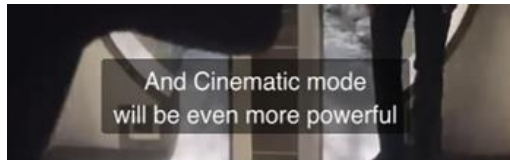


Figure 12. The word “Cinematic mode will be even more powerful”

The fourth verbal sign is “Cinematic mode will be even more powerful.” This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 2:32 minutes. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “cinematic” means the visual qualities or aesthetics of a film or video mode. Cinematic mode applies an effect that keeps the object of your video sharp while creating a beautifully blurred foreground and background. Meanwhile, the connotation is the iPhone automatically identifies the object of the video and keeps it in focus throughout the recording. The iPhone automatically transitions the point of focus. You can also manually adjust the point of focus while you record, or change it later in the Photos app. Cinematic mode is available on all iPhone 13 models and iPhone 14 models.



Figure 13. The verbal sign is new feature in iPhone 14

The fifth verbal sign is the word “Crash detection, satellite, extra pixels, e-SIM, color, thermals, repairability, main camera, selfie cam.” The denotation meaning is the feature of iPhone 14 are complete. The verbal sign found in video

“iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 2:50 minutes. The first is crash detection, if your iPhone detects a severe car crash, it can help connect you to emergency services and notify your emergency contacts. Satellite in iPhone 14, you can use satellite to text the emergency services when you’re outside mobile and Wi-Fi coverage. You can also use the find my app to share your location with people via satellite. Extra pixel is the focus of camera in iPhone 14, iPhone 14 have 100% extra pixel. Next is e-SIM, in iPhone 14 e-SIM is dual SIM. The iPhone 14 come in 6 stunning colors: midnight, starlight, red, blue, purple and yellow. Thermals in iPhone 14 are. Thermals in iPhone 14 taken by Apple would be handy in transferring heat more effectively to prevent overheating of the iPhone, and thermal throttling when it is running at its maximum potential. Repairability is the degree of consistency of a measure. Main camera in iPhone 14 is have the main wide angle, ultrawide angel and a 3x telephoto camera for portrait and optical zoom. Selfie cam in iPhone 14 has a 12MP front-facing camera with a wide-angle lens that is perfect for taking selfies. It also has an improved image stabilization technology that helps to eliminate camera shake and blurriness. To get the most out of your selfies, you need to know how to position your iPhone 14 correctly. The connotation meaning in this verbal sign is iPhone 14 Pro Max is the best iPhone series coming towards the end of 2022. This smartphone is the highest series in the iPhone 14 Series family. Its feature support is superior compared to the three iPhone 14 series below. One of the iPhone 14 Pro Max specifications is equipped with a camera that has jumped 4 times better than the iPhone 13 Pro Max. Apart from the camera, the best and newest features accompany the iPhone 14 Pro Max. Before you decide to own this smartphone, it’s a good idea to understand more about the other specifications of the iPhone 14 Pro Max.

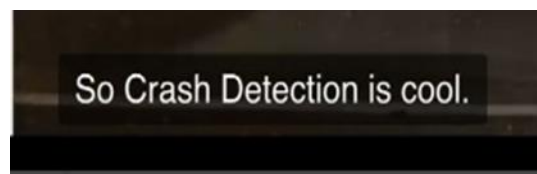


Figure 14. The word “So crash detection is cool”

The sixth verbal sign is the word “So crash detection is cool.” This verbal sign found in video “iPhone 14 Review: Repackaging 101!” at 2:54 minutes. Based on Oxford Dictionary the word

“cool” means a fairly low temperature. Meanwhile, the connotation meaning in context of this research is “So crash detection is cool” means the iPhone 14 Pro Max are also equipped with safety features to help users in dealing with dangerous conditions. Collision Detection and Emergency SOS features with Collision Detection capabilities allow smartphones to make emergency calls when the user cannot do so. Then, SOS Emergency is a feature that allows users to send and receive SMS using a satellite network where there is no signal or internet.



Figure 15. The word “Pro Display”

The seventh verbal sign is “Pro Display.” This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 0:34 seconds. The word is yellow, there is someone in front of the writing observing the performance of the pro display. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “pro” means professional and then “display” means a performance, show, or event staged for public entertainment. The appearance of the phone is classy. The connotation is pro display on the iPhone 14 is an OLED Super Retina XDR display with a typical maximum brightness of 1,000 nits. However, the brightness can increase up to 1600 nits when watching HDR videos, and 2000 nits outdoors.



Figure 16. The word “Pro Photo”

The eighth verbal sign is “Pro Photo.” This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 1:15 minutes. The word is purple color the same with the iPhone 14 color and the background is someone with a tripod. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “pro” means professional and “photo” means take a picture.

Meanwhile, the connotation meaning in this sign is the phone automatic properly set up and you are ready to take some photos. Even though it looks easy, there are several ways to do this. You can tap the spherical button on the camera screen and many people already know that you can also use the volume buttons as take a picture button.



Figure 17. The word “Pro Video”

The ninth verbal sign is “Pro Video”. This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 2:15 minutes. The word is purple color the same with the iPhone 14 color and the background is someone with an object video. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “pro” means professional” and video means the recording, reproducing, or broadcasting of moving visual images. In this iPhone 14 video recording is have many features. When you switch to video mode, you will see the resolution and you can change with a tap. The connotation is if you want to change the shoot at cinematic mode if you want a smooth video which emulates cinema film. You will also see how much time you can record below the time lapse if you are shooting with iPhone 14.



Figure 18. The word “SOS Via Satellite”

The tenth verbal sign is “SOS Via Satellite.” This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 2:53 minutes. The word is purple with an orange sky. The denotative based on Oxford Dictionary is “SOS” means an international code signal of extreme distress, used especially by ships at sea. Via satellite to send SMS to emergency services when you are out of cellular and Wi-Fi coverage. The SOS track app to share your location with others via satellite.



Figure 19. The word “A16 Bionic”

The eleventh verbal sign is “A16 Bionic”. This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 3:47 minutes. The word is yellow and the image behind it is a road. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “bionic” means having or denoting an artificial, typically electromechanical, body part or parts. A16 Bionic fastest processor currently, 40 percent faster than competitors. The A16 Bionic announced for iPhone 14 Pro and iPhone 14 Pro Max. The Apple has launched the new A16 Bionic SoC alongside the new iPhones.

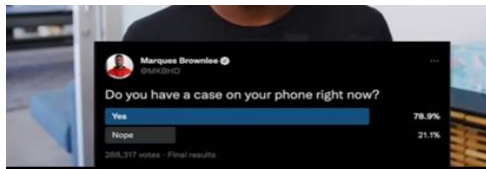


Figure 20. The man with percentage

The last verbal sign is “Do you have a case on your phone right now?” This verbal sign found in video “Introducing iPhone 14” at 4:05 minutes. The denotation meaning based on Oxford Dictionary is “case” means a person or their particular problem requiring or receiving medical or welfare attention. Meanwhile, in context of this research is that problem with your phone. The man made a percentage which resulted in most people answering yes with 78,9% and nope 21,1%. This indicates that many iPhone users still use cases to avoid damage when the phone is dropped. The connotative meaning is “Do you have a case on your phone right now?”. This means that iPhone 14 no longer needs to use a case, it already has beautiful colors.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research highlights the analysis of two types of signs, verbal and visual, within the iPhone 14 advertisements. Using Saussure's theory to describe these signs, the study identifies 12 verbal signs and 8 visual signs across two iPhone 14 advertisements. Furthermore, the meanings of these semiotic

signs are explored through both denotative and connotative lenses, employing Barthes' semiotic theory. The research uncovers 20 instances of denotative meaning and 16 instances of connotative meaning within the advertisements.

The primary purpose of the iPhone 14 advertisements, as revealed by this study, is to introduce new design features and functionalities that set the iPhone 14 apart from other smartphones. These advertisements effectively encourage consumers to consider the iPhone 14 as a superior choice, potentially leading to purchase decisions. The detailed analysis demonstrates how the combination of verbal and visual signs in advertisements serves to convey complex meanings and engage the audience on multiple levels, ensuring that the product's unique qualities are prominently featured and well understood by the viewers.

REFERENCES

- Alqahtani, M. (2015). The Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning and How to be Taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, III(3), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.20472/TE.2015.3.3.002>
- Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Its Influence on Economic Decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v1i1.37>
- Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology*. Farrar.
- Chang, C., Lee, W. N., & Liu-Thompkins, Y. (2019). Advertising in Asia: Theories and Implications for Practice. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(5), 417–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1675103>
- Crow, D. (2016). *Visible Signs*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474232432>
- Gao, B., Wang, Y., Xie, H., Hu, Y., & Hu, Y. (2023). Artificial Intelligence in Advertising: Advancements, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations in Targeting, Personalization, Content Creation, and Ad Optimization. *SAGE Open*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231210759>
- Ishar, A., & Irawan, A. M. (2023). Semiotic Analysis of the Denotative and Connotative Meaning on the Beatles' Song Lyrics. *E-Journal of English Language & Literature*,

- 12(1), 152–167.
- Maynard, D. W., & Turowetz, J. (2013). *Language Use and Social Interaction* (pp. 251–279). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6772-0_9
- Pollay, R. W., & Gallagher, K. (1990). Advertising and Cultural Values: Reflections in the Distorted Mirror. *International Journal of Advertising*, 9(4), 359–372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.1990.11107165>
- Stawarska, B. (2015). The signifier and the signified. In *Saussure's Philosophy of Language as Phenomenology* (pp. 23–70). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190213022.003.0002>