UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

DISCOURSE OF COPYWRITING ON MALAYSIAN CELEBRITY TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT

NUR WIDAD BINTI ROSLAN

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DISCOURSE OF COPYWRITING ON MALAYSIAN CELEBRITY TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT

By

NUR WIDAD BINTI ROSLAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

September 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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By

NUR WIDAD BINTI ROSLAN

September 2018

Chair : Hazlina Abdul Halim, PhD
Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

Copywriting is the text created by copywriters to promote products. However, lack of creativity and awareness from the copywriters created a negative acceptance from viewers and listeners. Therefore, this study is to identify the elements of critical discourse according to Fairclough (1995) in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement and to analyse the impact of the element of critical discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement towards consumers. The samples of this study were 60 Malaysian celebrity television advertisements and 35 male and female students from University Putra Malaysia. The instruments of this study involve video observation and an interview. Malaysian television advertisements using Malaysian celebrity endorser are observed while the subjects are interviewed with a set of questions pertaining to their perception towards elements of critical discourse in Malaysian celebrity television advertisement. The video observation data is analysed through the first dimensions of critical discourse which is the textual analysis, while the answer from the interview are analysed on the second dimension which is discourse practice analysis. The results of the study revealed that the copies in advertisement have most of the elements from Fairclough (1995) theory. The results also revealed the subjects' perceptions towards critical discourse in Malaysian celebrity television advertisement are important and are needed in television advertisement in order to have full understanding of the message. The overall results of this study show support towards Fairclough (1995) critical discourse analysis and his two out of three dimensions of discourse that was present for both the objectives in the study. It is hoped that this study helps copywriters in Malaysia with quality wiring in their copies, increase product owner's knowledge on a quality copy for television advertisement.

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

WACANA DALAM PENULISAN IKLAN DI IKLAN TELEVISYEN SELEBRITI MALAYSIA

Oleh

NUR WIDAD BINTO ROSLAN

Septemer, 2018

Pengerusi : Hazlina Abdul Halim, PhD
Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Penulisan iklan adalah teks yang dibuat oleh penulis untuk mempromosikan produk. Walau bagaimanapun, kekurangan kreativiti dan kesedaran daripada para penulis iklan mencetuskan penerimaan negatif daripada penonton dan pendengar. Oleh itu, kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti unsur-unsur wacana menurut Fairclough (1995) dalam penulisan iklan televisyen yang melibatkan selebriti Malaysia dan membincangkan pengaruh unsur wacana tersebut dalam iklan televisyen selebriti Malaysia. Sampel kajian ini ialah 60 iklan yang melibatkan selebriti Malaysia dan 35 pelajar lelaki dan perempuan dari Universiti Putra Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan pemerhatian dan wawancara video sebagai instrument kajian. Iklan televisyen Malaysia yang menggunakan selebriti Malaysia dianalisis secara kualitatif manakala 35 subjek ditemuramah dengan satu set soalan mengenai persepsi mereka terhadap unsur wacana kritikal dalam iklan televisyen selebriti. Data pemerhatian video dianalisis melalui tiga dimensi wacana kritis yang merupakan analisis teks, manakala jawapan daripada wawancara dianalisis pada dimensi kedua yang merupakan analisis amalan wacana. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakkan penulisan iklan mempunyai elemen teori dari Fairclough (1995). Keputusan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa persepsi subjek terhadap unsur kritikal dalam pengiklan adalah penting untuk memahami sepenuhnya mesej yang ingin disampaikan kepada penonton dan pendengar. Hasil keseluruhan kajian ini menunjukkan sokongan terhadap analisis wacana kritis Fairclough (1995) dan dua daripada tiga dimensi wacana yang hadir untuk kedua-dua objektif dalam kajian ini. Diharapkan kajian ini membantu penulis iklan di Malaysia dengan peningkatan kualiti dalam tulisan iklan mereka serta meningkatkan pengetahuan pemilik produk mengenai penulisan yang berkualiti untuk iklan televisyen.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Hazlina Abdul Halim, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Mohd Azidan Abdul Jabar, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communcation
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Signature: _____
Name of Chairman of Supervisory Committee: Hazlina Abdul Halim

Signature: _____
Name of Member of Supervisory Committee: Mohd Azidan Abdul Jabar

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss on the background of the study to which is related to copywriting in Malaysian celebrity television advertisement. It also highlights on the communication between consumers and advertisers through advertisements. Other than that, this chapter will discuss the problem statement, significance of study, limitation of study, definition of terms and lastly the organization of this thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

As mentioned in the Economic Times (2017), advertising is a communication method with consumers of a product or service. Advertising is also a paid method by a brand to inform or influence customers and potential customers about their product or service. Advertising has been around for a long time, but not many are aware of it. In the olden days, advertising used mediums such as television, print (newspapers, magazines, journals etc), radio and many more. That is why, recently the olden days advertising is named as the traditional advertising, while at present advertising is more to using the digital era, contests, sponsorship, events, endorsements and many more (Karimova, 2011), hence the name digital advertising.

Advertising can also be defined as a communication method of information to disseminate towards consumers for the brands, products, services or ideas through various medias. Normally, advertisements should be persuasive and paid by the brand (Bovee, 1992). Kotler (2010) further expressed that advertising can be very expressive where it can signify the product through texts, sound and color, in order to become effective. It is also a long term medium to sustain a brand image as well as to increase sales.

There are 8 main categories in advertising. Sandage & Rotzoll (2001) classified these categories as the target market segmentation, target impact, distribution area, the way of transmission, method implementation, method of impact, method of addressing, and method or payment. Sandage & Rotzoll (2001) also further listed out the main types of advertising to which are brand, commerce and retail, political, advertising with a feedback, corporate, business and public or social advertising.

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In any advertisement, there is a copywriter involved. Copywriters are the content providers for advertisement for both broadcast and print which include tag lines and slogans, brochures, website, leaflets, direct mail, articles, marketing mails, users guide, video scripts and many more, just name it (Petri, 2012; Bergkvist, Hjalmarson & Magi, 2016). Petri (2012) also remarked that a copywriter is a reference to someone who creates concept and content for the advertisement they are working on. In other words, a copywriter is a person who writes the word, phrase, sentence structure that create a meaningful and persuasive towards readers or listeners thus, it is an art of copywriting that manages to arouse interest. Moreover, all forms of advertisement will be involved, no matter in the form of printed advertisement, what you hear in radio advertisement or even what you see in television commercials (Bergkvist, Hjalmarson & Magi, 2016). A copy writer is also the one who visualizes both words and pictures before preparing an advertisement (Encyclopedia International, 1976:65). This explains how a copywriter's job is not merely about writing script or copy, but also whom visualizes the advertisement beforehand. A copywriter needs to brain storm for ideas before putting it on the table thus, it is hard work to do in a short time with datelines on the table (Chang, 2012).

There are steps a copywriter should follow before getting the final advertisement out or explaining to the other creative team, to which are to understand the brief, deconstruct the brief, absorb the proposition, taking the creative leap, the communication idea as well as the communication (Bisoyi, Barua & Guha, 2013). Therefore, before a copy writer starts with the idea or concept of an advertisement, he/she must first understand the content briefly, in other words understand what client wants, think in both client and consumer shoes and the most effective way is to deliver the message on both sides (Schneider, 2008; Belch & Belch, 2013).

It is becoming a trend and popular forms these days on using celebrity to endorse brands through advertisements (Choi & Rifon, 2007). It can be seen that having celebrity endorsement is as a new platform for brands to promote their product or service. The platform that uses celebrity endorsement to represent the brand most is television channels (Olenski, 2016; Spry, 2011; Elberse, 2012; Erdogan et al., 2001). Consumers cannot deny that when you see a celebrity while watching television, he/she will be able to recall the brand that they are in, no matter which brand, as long as the celebrity is well known. The reason is that, the advertising industry opted and suggested to branding companies to use celebrity to endorse their brands.

On the other hand, pairing a celebrity with a brand helps to raise consumers' awareness and brand recognition since it will shape consumers' way of thinking towards the brand relating it to the celebrity. Moreover, consumers will remember more of the message of the advertisement with the celebrity (Olenski, 2016; Elberse, 2012; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). Brands and advertising agency must be thorough on choosing the celebrity that would represent the brand, and what consumers would perceive of the celebrity.

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Subsequently, celebrity can be closely related to an individual who are in the publics' eyes and famous in their field, for instance in sports, entertainment industries and others. With this, these people are used to endorse any brand offering products or services, idea or organizations (Spry 2011; Jay et al., 1995). It has also been well known that ever since celebrity endorsement has become prevalent, 20% of most of television commercials featured a well-known/famous person (Bergkvist, 2016; Spry, 2011; Sam, 1996).

The use of celebrity endorsement has also increased in Malaysia. Md. Zabid Abdul Rashid, Nallamuthu & Samsinar Md. Sidin (2002) mentioned that in Malaysia, advertisement has been using celebrities as their endorser, such as Erra Fazira for Lux, Sarimah and many more. No doubt that when they involve celebrities for makeup products, avid fans will buy it, because they have the urge to be just like their favorite model (Muda, 2014). Hakimi*et al.* (2011) further added that marketers would choose celebrity endorsers that are credible, attractive and at the same time experts on the brand that they are endorsing, therefore matching up to the brand image. With this, it would help boost both the brand and celebrity image. This is because, celebrities whom are well known to consumers have the power to persuade consumers on claims made by the brand (Olenski, 2016; Um, 2015; Ohanian, 1990).

The main reason to use a celebrity is to increase the level of celebrity recognition towards the brand, so people will associate the brand to the celebrity if the celebrity is well known (Md. Zabid Abdul Rashid, Nallamuthu & Samsinar Md. Sidin, 2002). Most recently, the budget on promotional activities using celebrity in advertisement was increased by Malaysian organizations (Freeman & Chen, 2015). This explains why there has been an increase on using celebrity in advertisements in Malaysia. Other than that, when using celebrity endorsement, it is a successful advertising strategy to increase awareness, increase the sales of the product or brand and differentiation between fellow competitors (Um, 2015; Muda, 2014; Hetsroni, 2012; Ohanian, 1991; Rosa, 2010; Schlecht, 2003; Solomon, 1996).

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1.3 Problem Statement

Petri (2012) claimed that the copywriting in advertisements is clichéd and predictable hence, a mimicking of the drivel absorbed from years of sitting in front of TVs and radios. It is also discovered that the actual quality of the writing is poor. Poor quality of copywriting means that consumer does not understand clearly of what message is being delivered in the television advertisement, instead feels that the copy in the television advertisement is not explaining on the product properly. Petri (2012) added that copywriters have lost their passion and interest and therefore, the writing ended being the writing of product driven advertisement. Copywriters need to understand that when there is no creativity and passion in a copy, consumer lose interest in watching the television advertisement. It can be seen that copywriting is at its crucial state where viewers will not be entertained nor understood on the messages being delivered, as Petri (2012) mentioned above, that the copy is being more clichéd. Burke (2015) agreed with Petri (2012) and claimed that copywriters have lost its art in copywriting. Due to the lack of creativity and awareness from the copywriters copy in television advertisement and making the copy too product driven, it has created a negative acceptance from viewers or listeners. Therefore, this study is to identify the discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement so that copywriters can get their interest back in writing television advertisement copy with their passion and interest.

Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Momeni (2010) claimed that in European countries the celebrity endorser has played a major part in the influence on attitude towards advertisement. This is because product owners use the fan base of the celebrity endorser to increase more consumers for the brand. However, it also showed that a number of people disagreed that celebrity endorsement influenced the attitude towards the advertisement because the fact that the product itself has a major influenced from the beginning. Ahmed, Seedani, Ahuja and Paryani (2015) agreed with Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Momeni (2010) and claimed that their study on the impact of celebrity endorsement has shown that consumer showed positive impact towards the product, because the celebritys' fans shift to liking the brand just for their favorite celebrities. However, the study also revealed that a number of the consumer have trust issues towards the products. They further explained that the brand the celebrity is endorsing does not match well with the celebrity's status and they had a bad perception towards a certain brand history. With this, the brand has not given them a full awareness towards the celebrity endorser. Therefore it has become a difficult task in choosing the celebrity since not everyone will like the same celebrity or the brand is not suitable for the celebrity (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). With this, this research helps to identify and analyse the critical discourse in advertising and how it will impact the advertisement using the Malaysian celebrity endorser.

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Other than that, not many researchers have done research on Malaysian celebrity endorsement. This is because, studies done on celebrity endorsement and consumers purchasing intentions are normally done in developed countries (Culbreath, 2012; Rada, Domgingues-Alvarez, 2014; Parker & Fink, 2012). Although Malaysia is a developed country, not many researchers are conducted on the use of Malaysian celebrity in Malaysian television advertisement. Celebrity endorsement does not come to a surprise in Malaysia as Malaysian organisations recently have increase in their investments to millions to use celebrity endorsement on just promotional activities (Freeman & Chen, 2015). Therefore, this study will discuss the influence of Malaysian celebrity endorsement in television advertisement and Malaysian's perception towards critical discourse in the copy of the television advertisements.

1.4 Research Objective

1. To identify the elements of critical discourse according to Fairclough (1995) in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement
2. To analyse the impact of the elements of critical discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement towards consumers

1.5 Research Question

1. What are the elements of critical discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement according to Fairclough (1995)?

2. To what extent the impact of the elements of critical discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement towards consumers?

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1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Copywriter

This study benefits copywriters in terms of writing effective copy for the advertisement through Fairclough's (1995) 3 dimensions on critical discourse analysis. To become a copywriter one must know deep knowledge on all the advertising words. A copywriter needs to understand in-depth of meanings and messages a client wants to portray in their advertisement. A copywriter must also understand what it is to be a consumer, in order to know if the message in the advertisement is understood by people reading it. Therefore, Fairclough's (1995) dimensions will help the copywriter in a way for better understanding on the content that is created for the television advertisement.

A copywriter also holds a big responsibility when consumers complain about the copy or message is not well delivered. This is because it is the copywriter who writes the messages within the advertisement so that people will understand. Copywriter also holds responsibility if there is any typing or grammatical error noticed by clients or consumers. Therefore, this study can help copywriters to be aware on how to communicate well through their copywriting for advertisement.

Not only that, since this study will be focusing on critical discourse analysis in copywriting in Malaysian advertisements, Malaysian copywriters can take into context Fairclough (1995) critical discourse analysis and on how Malaysians use their copywriting in their advertisements. Hence, Malaysian copywriters can further sharpen the design flow of the copywriting used, to highlight the difference in both copywriting and to adapt what is good so that there will be a difference between the copy before and after adapting to the style highlighted through the critical discourse analysis by Fairclough (1995).

1.6.2 Product Owner

This study will also benefit the product owner. Not only should the copywriter know about the discourse elements in copywriting in advertisements, but also the product owners too. This is because, it will make work easier between client and agency, as client will understand in depth of what the copywriter's needs to know in order for her to write the copy. When product owners are clear with their objective on what to portray in an advertisement and once they understand what copy writer does, then the copywriter will not have trouble in portraying the message to their customers.

Other than that, product owners should also know when to use celebrity's endorsement. This is because, the power of celebrity's endorsement is big, but

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not many product owners know how to use it. Not all celebrities are suitable to endorse an advertisement, depending on their background and lifestyle. That is why, it is always important to make sure that the celebrity endorsing a brand is suitable and their image is clean as it affects sales for the brand.

Besides that, products owners can take into context on how to understand what the consumers want and what to deliver in an advertisement in order to deliver the message successfully. This is because, the message that is delivered in an advertisement is very important, and if the consumer does not understand the message, then it would mean the copy is not received well by consumers.

Local business companies can benefit from this research because companies will know what are needed in order to have a good television advertisement and take into account on what other countries have done by using successful celebrities to endorse their brand. They will be using their fame and high number of fans base to help increase sales of the product/services that the business is selling.

A good example of a Malaysian advertisement using a celebrity endorser is having Dato' Lee Chong Wei when he was at the top of his game. All the products he endorsed managed to increase in sale because his fans would buy the product he endorsed. He endorsed 100 Plus isotonic drink, Yonex badminton racket and many other products and it is said that the endorsing for all the products increased up to RM2.5 million in 2012 (TCNW, 2016).

1.6.3 Consumer

Consumers will also benefit from this study. This is because in an advertisement, it is a two-way communication. The two-way communication is from brand to consumer and consumers back to brand. The consumer's feedbacks are very crucial for the brand. This is because the brands will know if the message they want to deliver is well received by consumers or not. Therefore, consumers must know the essence of the copy in an advertisement. Is it relatable to audience, easy to understand or consumers are still confused on the message that the brand is trying to deliver?

Other than that, consumers should also have knowledge on the types of celebrity endorsing a brand. Is the brand suitable for the celebrity? Is the celebrity accepted by consumers? With this, consumers have the right to voice out their opinions on the advertisement, but for them to do that, they need knowledge on the use of celebrity's endorsement as well as the copy used in the advertisement.

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1.7 Limitation of the Study

1.7.1 Celebrity endorsement in Television Advertisement in Malaysia

This study only takes into account the celebrity's endorsement in television advertisement in Malaysia. This is because this study will only be taking advertisements using Malaysian celebrities. Therefore, not all advertisements in Malaysia can be used for this study because many other international brands do not use Malaysian celebrities. With this, it becomes a limitation, as in Malaysia, it has only started to use local celebrities to endorse the brand, and the numbers of advertisement available using Malaysian celebrities are also a limitation.

1.7.2 The three dimensions in the critical discourse theory by Fairclough (1995)

The theory used in this study is Fairclough (1995) critical discourse theory and the theory highlights the three dimensions of the theory which is textual, discourse practices and social practice analysis. The limitation in the theory can be seen as this study will only focus on two dimensions in which is textual and discourse practice analysis. The third dimension which is social practice analysis will not be used in this study as it is not suitable for the objectives of the study and it is a repetition for content from the second dimension which is discourse practice analysis. The sub-categories in social practice theory are economy, education and politics. Also, this study focuses on the context of the copy in television advertisement, the categories of economy, education and politics are deemed sensitive in Malaysia, and it is best not to touch any sensitive issues. Otherwise, there will be problems when going through and applying for a censor certificate to be allowed to air it on television.

1.8 Conceptual definition

1.8.1 Elements of Discourse Analysis

Chubarova & Rezepova (2016) mentioned in their study that there are many ways of connecting elements of discourse as there are different meanings in the academic literature. Terms of connecting elements in discourse as mentioned by them are discourse markers, linking signals and many more. With this, it shows that there is no exact conceptual definition for elements of discourse analysis as it varies.

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1.8.2 Copywriter

According to Merriam Webster (insert year retrieved) dictionary, a copywriter is a writer for advertising or publicity copy. They are in charge to produce copy for advertisements in any forms. They also need to translate and proof read copies.

1.8.3 Copywriting

In advertising, copywriting is a creative profession to showcase uniqueness. However, copywriting comes in a number of aspects where it needs to consider the consumer and understand the target audience. With understanding the target audience, it carries as a guideline on how the copy should be written (Bisoyi, Barua & Guha, 2013).

1.8.4 Malaysian celebrity

Malaysian celebrity in Malaysia are those who are well known for their acts in famous television dramas, TV hosts, singers, bloggers and many more that the general audiences deem as Malaysian celebrity.

1.8.5 Celebrity endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is an advertising method which involves a celebrity or well-known person by using their famous image to help promote the brand and also by using the persons fan base to capture their attention.

1.8.6 Product owner

Product owners represent as the brands company. For example the brand is OPPO, therefore in this study, product owner refers to the OPPO company.

1.8.7 Consumer

Consumers are the audience of the given brand. Consumer in this study does not only mean the users of the brand and focus only on a certain target audience, but in this study case, the consumer means that it can be their existing, future or non-consumers to attract them to use the brand, as well as inform others with what they know of the brand and because of the consumers' word of mouth.

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1.9 Conclusion

Copywriting is an important element in any advertisement. This is because the main message of any advertisement is portrayed through the copy. Besides the copy, the celebrity endorser is also one of the important elements. Hence, in this chapter, the objectives of the study are to identify the discourse in copywriting on Malaysian celebrity television advertisement and to discuss the influence of Malaysian celebrity endorsement in television advertisement.

The next chapter will discuss on the literature review related to the discourse on copywriting of Malaysian celebrity television advertisement.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Nur Widad Roslan is working at Hakuhodo Malaysia Advertising agency as a Senior Account Executive in the Client Servicing Department. She involves in communicating between the clients and the creative agency. She also works closely with the creative department to propose new ideas that can be executed by client in the future for their advertising campaigns. She pursues her study in Masters of Arts in Discourse Analysis at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She has written an article on Colgate Palmolive advertisement, which is one of her clients. She hopes that her study will help copywriters in the advertising industry in writing quality copy.

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