

Semiotic Analysis of the Pocari Sweat Ramadan Advertisement Minum Pocari Sweat Saat Sahur, IonTahanBocor Selama Berpuasa

Oktavia Eka Nurgianti¹, Dhanu Ario Putra², Eli Diana³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu, Indonesia

Received : 18 Desember 2025, Revised : 26 Desember 2025, Published : 2 Januari 2026

Corresponding Author

Nama Penulis: Oktavia Eka Nurgianti

E-mail: oktaviaekan02@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the types and meanings of semiotic signs found in the 2025 Ramadan edition of Pocari Sweat advertisement titled "Semiotic Analysis of the Pocari Sweat Ramadan Advertisement "Minum Pocari Sweat Saat Sahur, #IonTahanBocor Selama Berpuasa" on YouTube. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics theory, which classifies signs into three categories, namely icons, indices, and symbols. Data were collected through observation and documentation techniques by examining scenes containing visual and verbal signs related to the advertisement's message. The analysis results show that there are 6 icon data, 9 index data, and 6 symbol data in the advertisement. Index signs are the most dominant because they show a clear cause-and-effect relationship, such as the condition of a weak body due to dehydration and recovery after drinking Pocari Sweat. These signs are used to convey an educational message about the importance of maintaining body fluids during fasting in order to stay healthy and fit. Thus, the 2025 Ramadan edition of the Pocari Sweat advertisement successfully conveys an educational message about the importance of maintaining body hydration during fasting through a combination of complementary icon, index, and symbol signs.

Keywords - semiotic, icon, index, symbol, advertisement, pocari sweat

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis dan makna tanda semiotik yang terdapat dalam iklan Pocari Sweat edisi Ramadan 2025 berjudul "Analisis Semiotika Iklan Pocari Sweat Ramadan 'Minum Pocari Sweat Saat Sahur, #IonTahanBocor Selama Berpuasa'" di YouTube. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teori semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce yang mengklasifikasikan tanda ke dalam tiga kategori, yaitu ikon, indeks, dan simbol. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi dan dokumentasi dengan menelaah adegan-adegan yang mengandung tanda visual dan verbal yang berkaitan dengan pesan iklan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa dalam iklan tersebut terdapat 6 data ikon, 9 data indeks, dan 6 data simbol. Tanda indeks merupakan jenis yang paling dominan karena menunjukkan hubungan sebab-akibat yang jelas, seperti kondisi tubuh yang lemah akibat dehidrasi dan pemulihan setelah mengonsumsi Pocari Sweat. Tanda-tanda tersebut digunakan untuk menyampaikan pesan edukatif tentang pentingnya menjaga cairan tubuh selama berpuasa agar tetap sehat dan bugar. Dengan demikian, iklan Pocari Sweat edisi Ramadan 2025 berhasil menyampaikan pesan edukatif mengenai pentingnya menjaga hidrasi tubuh selama berpuasa melalui kombinasi tanda ikon, indeks, dan simbol yang saling melengkapi.

Kata kunci - semiotika, ikon, indeks, simbol, iklan, pocari sweat

How to Cite : Nurgianti, O. E., Putra, D. A., & Diana, E. (2026). *Semiotic Analysis of the Pocari Sweat Ramadan Advertisement Minum Pocari Sweat Saat Sahur, IonTahanBocor Selama Berpuasa*. *Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin Bangsa*, 2(8), 1355–1364. <https://doi.org/10.59837/jpnmb.v2i8.693>

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication system that is inseparable from human life. Through language, humans can interact, convey information, and build understanding in society. The science that studies language is called linguistics. According to Husin in (Chafri et al., 2024) says that Linguistics from a scientific point of view is the study of language. With language, humans can relate to other humans who eventually give birth to communication in society.

Advertising is a means of communication used to convey information or promotion about a product, service, or idea to the wider community. Advertising is a form of conveying information about products or services from producers to consumers, or as a way for sponsors to communicate messages through a medium (Krisnawati et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to Hasnatang in (Nurhasanah, 2021) says that advertising is a form of communication that utilizes various types of mass media as the main means, such as electronic media, the internet, online platforms, and print.

Every advertisement aired in various media has a specific purpose, namely to introduce products and attract the interest of the wider community. In delivering messages, advertisements use communication elements that are strategically designed to attract audiences. Visual elements, such as colors, images, and symbols, as well as verbal elements, such as words or writing, function as signs that form meaning in advertisements. In this context, a semiotic approach becomes relevant to analyze how signs in advertisements shape meaning for the audience.

One way that is often used to read or reveal the meaning of messages in advertisements is the use of semiotic studies. Sudjiman in (Rohmaniah, 2021) states that "semiotics is the study of signs and everything related to them, including how they function, their relationship with other signs, their transmission, and their reception for those who use them". Signs in semiotics can represent anything, such as words, images, symbols, or objects. Anisti in (Nadia Khoirunnisa, 2024) defines semiotics as the study of signs, the functions of signs, and how signs produce meaning. In other words, the concept of semiotics can be applied to various aspects of life as long as there are no preconditions that limit its meaning and interpretation.

Pocari sweat is one of the most popular packaged isotonic drinks in Indonesia, as reported by retizen.republika.co.id. This drink is produced by PT Amerta Indah Otsuka and is one of the isotonic drinks to replace body fluids lost due to daily activities, such as sports, fasting, or recovery after illness.

There are 5 previous researches related to this research. The first was conducted by (Putri et al., 2022). This study analyzes the semiotic elements in a one-minute Ultra Milk commercial, using Charles Peirce's semiotic theory to explore the signs and symbols in the commercial. The findings underscore the importance of semiotics in understanding advertising messages and their influence on consumer perceptions, as well as highlighting the broader marketing communications mix as critical to conveying customer value.

The second research was conducted by Nur Fadillah, et al (2024). The purpose of this study is to find out what visual signs are contained in the Outside brand beverage advertisement. The theory used in this research is Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The results of this study found 14 scenes of visual signs in Outside advertising ads that were interpreted to convey messages and information to consumers well that the product has an extraordinary taste.

The third research was conducted by (Yasa, 2023). This study uses the theories of Ferdinand De Saussure and Roland Barthes. The results of the analysis show that the caterpillar, which is the focus of the advertisement, signifies that the animal knows the best part of the tea leaves, so advertisers use

this method to attract consumers' attention.

Fourth, this research was conducted by (Hakim & Monalisa, 2022). The purpose of this study was to analyze the audio-visual aspects. The theory used in this research is Roland Barthes' theory. The results of this study indicate that the Ramadan 1442 H edition of Pocari Sweat advertisement aims to improve the company's image by using television advertising media and using rising actresses as advertising stars.

The last research was conducted by (Wina Damayanti & Pratiwi, 2023). The theory used in this research is Roland Barthes' theory. The results of this study show that both verbal and non-verbal have implied meanings to persuade and influence the audience through visual illustrations. It has been determined that the advertisement "Who Says No to Mentos" relates to sharing, caring, togetherness, happiness, and making friends with others in real life.

Based on the five studies above, the researcher found similarities and differences between the studies reviewed and the study to be conducted. The similarities between this study and previous studies lie in the use of a semiotic approach to understand meaning in advertisements

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word semiotics comes from the Greek word "Semeion," which means sign. Anisti in (Nadia Khoirunnisa, 2024) defines semiotics as the study of signs, the functions of signs, and how signs produce meaning. In other words, the concept of semiotics can be applied to various aspects of life as long as there are no preconditions that limit its meaning and interpretation. Meanwhile, Ardiansyah in (Handayani & Nuzuli, 2021) says that semiotics is the study of semiology, which can be found in language, art, mass media, music, and everything created to be conveyed to others. Simply put, semiotics studies how signs are used to reveal hidden meanings in communication and how those meanings are understood or interpreted by the audience. In the context of semiotics, signs include anything that can convey information or messages, both verbally and nonverbally, such as images, words, symbols, colors, body movements, sounds, or specific objects.

In semiotics studies, there are three figures known as the pioneers or main founders of semiotics, namely Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Charles Sanders Peirce (Dayu & Syadli, 2023). Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) was a linguist from Switzerland. According to Saussure, semiotics is the science that studies signs in human social life, including what these signs are and the laws that govern how these signs are formed (Wulansari, 2020). This shows that signs and their meanings are formed through interactions in social life and are influenced by prevailing systems or rules. Saussure divides signs into signifiers and signifieds, both of which are arbitrary, meaning that there is no natural connection between the form of a sign and its meaning. Signifiers refer to the physical form of a sign, which can be an image, a scribble, a line, a color, a sound, or various other signs (Fanani, 2013). In semiotics, the signifier plays an important role as the initial link in communication; without the signifier, the message cannot be conveyed or understood. Meanwhile, the signified is the concept or meaning of a sign (Tanti & Khaerunnisa, 2022).

Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) was an American philosopher, logician, and scientist known as one of the founders of semiotics and a pioneer of pragmatism (Firmansyah, 2022). Pierce had a background in various fields, such as logic, philosophy, and linguistics. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics is based on logic because the reasoning process always takes place through the use of signs (Hoseani & Yohana, 2020).

Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics is called the "Grand Theory" because of its broad and comprehensive ideas, which describe the structure of the entire signifying process with the aim of discovering the foundations of signs and reuniting their components into a single coherent framework (Nursia, 2023). Pierce is known for his triadic concept, often referred to as the triangle meaning semiotic or the triangle of meaning theory. In the sign triangle, it is explained that a sign is used in the

communication process through three main elements that are interrelated. First, the representamen is the form of the sign itself, which can be words, images, or any symbols used to represent something. Second, the object is the reference or reference point of the sign, which can be something real and outside the sign. Third, the interpretant is the understanding or meaning that arises in a person's mind when interpreting the sign. Thus, this triangle theory shows that meaning is not only attached to the sign directly, but is formed through the relationship between the representamen, the object, and the interpretant in the process of meaning by the recipient of the sign. In the process of meaning formation, these three elements work together and interact, so that there is no one-way communication (Ridho et al., 2025). Peirce himself divides signs into three main elements:

Icon

Peirce in (Wulandari, 2020) states that an icon is a sign that has a scientific similarity in form between the signifier and the signified. In other words, an icon shows a relationship between the sign and the object based on a similarity in form. Simply put, an icon can be understood as a sign that resembles the original object or depicts something with an appearance similar to its actual form. Meanwhile, according to (Pandie, 2025), an icon is a relationship between a representamen and an object that has similarities, resemblances, or “non-identical imitations” with the apparent form of the object. This means that an icon is a sign that is easily recognizable because it has a visual form similar to the object it represents.

Index

Sobur in (Siregar & Wulandari, 2020) states that an index is a sign that directly refers to reality, or a sign that shows a relationship between the sign and the referent which has a cause-and-effect connection. Indexical signs show a direct connection with the reality they represent. Liani in (Nensiliati et al., 2023) says that indexes show a connection or closeness between the sign and its object, which usually occurs because of a cause-and-effect relationship. Not by resembling the object, but by showing something that hints at its existence. This sign appears because of the existence of a certain object, so the presence of the index indicates the existence of the object.

An index is a type of sign that has the broadest scope of existence (Pandie, 2025). This sign forms a direct relationship between the signifier and the object it represents, indicating a real connection between the two. A simple example of an index is smoke, which is a sign of fire. Smoke appears as a direct result of the presence of fire, so it can be said that smoke is an index that indicates the presence of fire. Therefore, it can be concluded that an index is a sign that has a direct relationship with its object through a cause-and-effect relationship.

Symbol

A symbol is a sign that relates the signifier to the signified, based on social agreement (Firmansyah, 2022). The relationship between the two must be studied culturally. In other words, symbols are signs whose meanings are understood based on generally accepted agreements or conventions. Symbols play a role in representing certain meanings that are not explicitly expressed, but can be understood through customs or associations formed within a culture. Meanwhile, according to (Sakinah et al., 2020), a symbol is a sign that represents and describes thoughts, ideas, or objects.

A symbol is a form that represents something beyond its own symbolic form. A symbol can be understood as a form that represents something beyond itself, which is not only a symbolic manifestation but also refers to facts and conveys a certain image through an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified (Fadillah et al., 2024). Examples of symbols include flags as symbols of a country and other symbols such as the color red, which indicates prohibition or danger. Thus, it can be concluded that symbols are signs whose meanings are formed through social agreement and are used to represent certain ideas, concepts, or objects.

METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. According to Cresswell in (Nabila & Sakinah, 2023) qualitative research is a process for understanding human social problems by compiling a complex and comprehensive picture, this research is conveyed in the form of words, reflects the in-depth views of informants, and is conducted in a natural environment. This research uses Sanders Peirce's which includes three levels of analysis icon, index, and symbol. The object of this study is a Pocari Sweat video advertisement aired on YouTube with the title "Drink Pocari Sweat During Suhoor, #IONTahanBocor During Fasting!". Data collection is a technique or method that can be used by researchers to collect various data which are processed qualitatively or quantitatively, then arranged systematically (Sukmawati, 2023). The data collection technique in this research was conducted through observation and documentation.

DISCUSSION

the researcher has collected data based on Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Peirce's theory divides signs into three main categories, namely icons, indices, and symbols. The results of the analysis are presented in the following table:

Tabel 1.

The Result of Type of Semiotic in Advertisement

Type of Semiotic	Data
Icon	6
Index	9
Symbol	6

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on the table above, there are 21 signs consisting of six icon data, nine index data, and six symbol data from the advertisement, the detail description is explained below

Icons in the Pocari Sweat Advertisement

In this Pocari Sweat advertisement, various icons are used to convey important messages related to physical condition during fasting, particularly regarding the dangers of dehydration. Each icon displayed has its own meaning and helps convey the story in the advertisement. The following section will discuss several key icons that appear in the advertisement:

1. Sundel Bolong



Figure 1.

Sundel Bolong as an Icon

In this section, the icon displayed is an image of a woman with long hair, a pale face, and wearing white clothes similar to a Sundel Bolong. This figure resembles a supernatural creature widely known by the Indonesian people. In this advertisement, the presence of this icon serves as a visual means of emphasizing the importance of maintaining body fluids during fasting. In the context of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, the figure of Sundel Bolong functions as a

representamen that depicts the real condition of a person experiencing severe dehydration, weakness, thirst, and paleness. The figure of Sundel Bolong is categorized as an icon in advertising because its visual appearance directly resembles the actual form of a supernatural creature understood by the community, namely a woman with long hair, a pale face, and wearing white clothes. In semiotics, an icon is a sign that has a direct physical resemblance to the object it represents, so that the relationship between the sign and its meaning can be recognized through this similarity in form.

2. Father Figure



Figure 2.
Father Figure as an Icon

The second iconic figure in this advertisement is a father. The father character in this advertisement falls into the category of icons according to Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of semiotics. Peirce explains that an icon is a sign that bears a resemblance to the object it represents. It is this visual and character similarity that makes the father character function as an iconic sign in the Pocari Sweat Ramadan 2025 advertisement. The father is depicted as a mature man dressed simply, selling goods at a kiosk with his child. The father character in this advertisement shows that he is responsible, hardworking, and warm, reflecting the role of the father as a dedicated and loving head of the family. Although initially depicted as a fearful and easily panicked figure when faced with tense situations.

3. Boy Character

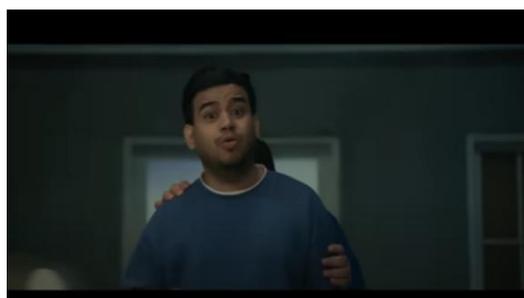


Figure 3.
Boy Character as an Icon

The boy in the advertisement is portrayed as intelligent, humorous, calm, and health-conscious. In this Pocari Sweat advertisement, the boy acts as a mediator between the educational message and the humorous elements, making him an icon of awareness of the importance of maintaining body fluids during fasting.

Index in the Pocari Sweat Advertisement

The Pocari Sweat Ramadan advertisement uses various indexical signs to clarify the relationship between events and the meaning it wants to convey. The indices in this advertisement not

only indicate certain physical or emotional conditions, but also contain a deeper meaning about the necessity and importance of hydration during Ramadan. The following section will discuss several indices that appear in the advertisement:

1. Flashing Lights



Figure 4.
Flashing Lights as an Index

At 0.18 seconds into the commercial, a light can be seen flashing repeatedly, occasionally turning off and then back on again. The flashing light is an indexical sign that indicates unstable energy or atmosphere. The lights going out and coming back on depict a tense, anxious, and unstable situation. In addition, the lights continuously flashing also signal that there is a threat or something abnormal happening, thereby increasing the audience's fear and anxiety.

2. Flying Leaves



Figure 5.
Flying Leaves as an Index

In the advertisement scene at 0.19 seconds, several dry leaves on the sidewalk fly away along with a dark shadow passing quickly. This sign serves as an index, because there is a clear cause-and-effect relationship³¹ between the movement of the leaves and the presence of the mysterious figure. The sudden movement of the leaves indicates the presence of energy or force passing quickly through the location. This sign also indirectly points to the presence of an invisible creature disturbing the peace. Thus, the flying leaves serve as an index marking the presence of something unusual and creating a mysterious atmosphere in the commercial.

3. Covering the Face with Hands



Figure 6.
Covering the Face with Hands as an Index

In the advertisement scene at 0.35 seconds, when the Sundel Bolong suddenly appears in front of them, the father character spontaneously covers his face with both hands while saying "Astaghfirullah." His expression shows fear and surprise. In Peirce's theory, an index is a sign that appears because of a direct relationship between cause and effect. Thus, the father's action of covering his face is a natural reaction to the fear and shock he experiences. This indexical sign shows a human response that describes a person's natural reflex when faced with something frightening and surprising.

Symbolic in the Pocari Sweat Advertisement

Pocari Sweat advertisements also use symbols as important elements to reinforce the message they want to convey. Symbols serve to represent certain meanings that are not explained directly, but can be understood through the associations or cultural habits of the audience. The following are some of the symbols that appear in Pocari Sweat's Ramadan edition advertisements:

1. Cactus



Figure 7.
Cactus as a Symbol

The symbol in this advertisement is a cactus, which appears at 1:15. The cactus serves as a symbol of balance and physical endurance. Symbolically, cacti are known as plants that can survive in dry and hot environments because they store water in their stems. In the context of the advertisement, the cactus symbolizes the human body remaining fresh and strong, even when experiencing dehydration or heat, as long as its fluid and ion needs are met. This symbol reinforces the main message of the advertisement that Pocari Sweat drinks can help maintain the body's fluid balance to stay hydrated.

2. Text "ION TAHAN BOCOR"



Figure 8.
The text ION TAHAN BOCOR as a Symbol

The next symbol appears at 1:15. This text is a campaign symbol because it contains the main message of the product, which is its ability to maintain ion balance in the body so that fluids are not lost during fasting. The sentence was created as a slogan to emphasize the product's superiority, while also serving as an easy-to-remember educational message that strengthens the brand. As a symbol in the context of advertising, this text is not only an identity, but also a medium of communication that aims to attract consumers' attention and reinforce the main message that Pocari Sweat helps keep the body hydrated, especially during fasting.

The Pocari Sweat Ramadan 2025 advertisement features a unique approach by combining elements of humor and horror in a light-hearted yet meaningful storyline. This advertisement serves not only as a medium for product promotion, but also as an educational tool that reminds the public of the importance of maintaining fluid balance in the body during fasting. The educational message in this advertisement is conveyed through depictions of the body's condition when it is dehydrated and the importance of consuming the right drinks while fasting. Additionally, this message emphasizes that maintaining health is not just about drinking large amounts of plain water, but also about consuming beverages containing ions to replace lost electrolytes. In a lighthearted and entertaining way, this advertisement provides health education that is easily understood by the general public. Thus, all the messages in the Pocari Sweat Ramadan 2025 advertisement emphasize the importance of staying hydrated during fasting, positioning Pocari Sweat as a practical solution for maintaining the body's ion and fluid balance so that you can stay strong and refreshed while observing Ramadan.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to identify semiotic signs in the form of icons, indices, and symbols in the Pocari Sweat Ramadan 2025 advertisement, as well as to explain the meanings contained therein. This research found 6 icon data, 9 index data, and 6 symbol data. Through these signs, the advertisement emphasizes the importance of maintaining body fluids by consuming Pocari Sweat. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the Pocari Sweat Ramadan 2025 advertisement uses a combination of icons, indices, and symbols to convey an educational message about the importance of maintaining body hydration during fasting. The dominance of index signs indicates that this advertisement uses a realistic approach that is easy for viewers to understand in order to communicate its health message. The main purpose of this advertisement is to encourage viewers to buy Pocari Sweat products as a solution for maintaining fluid balance during fasting.

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