"Louis Vuitton: Advertising Without a Word"

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Abstract

Visual communication, especially body language, play a compelling role in communications. People deliver information and messages over their body and accept them from others during the communication process. This study aims at identifying body language shown by the model of the advertisement, as well as discovering the meaning and the roles of body language in Louis Vuitton advertisements. Louis Vuitton, is a French luxury fashion house and company founded in 1854 by Louis Vuitton. The data was collected by observation method. The researchers watched the advertisement repeatedly and noted important findings related to the research questions. Then, the researchers classified the data based on types of body languages performed by the models, such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other interesting body movements like touching and dancing. Qualitative method was used to analyze the collected data. In analyzing the data, the researchers used theory of body signs proposed by Danesi (2004) as the main theory and supported by theory of body language by Pease (2004). The finding shows that Louis Vuitton perfume video advertisement uniquely deliver messages in a mysterious way without using any promising words.
Keywords: *body language, non-verbal communication, meaning, Louis Vuitton*

Abstrak

Komunikasi visual, khususnya bahasa tubuh, memainkan peranan penting dalam komunikasi. Orang-orang mengirimkan informasi dan pesan melalui tubuhnya dan sebaliknya menerima informasi dan pesan dari orang lain juga melalui tubuhnya, selama proses komunikasi berlangsung. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelaah bahasa tubuh yang digunakan oleh model iklan Louis Vuitton dan menemukan makna serta peranannya dalam periklanan. Louis Vuitton merupakan rumah mode mewah di Perancis dan sebuah perusahaan yang didirikan pada tahun 1854 oleh Louis Vuitton. Data pada penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan metode observasi. Peneliti menonton iklan Louis Vuitton berulang kali dan mencatat temuan-temuan penting yang berkaitan dengan rumusan masalah penelitian. Kemudian, peneliti mengklasifikasikan data berdasarkan jenis-jenis bahasa tubuh yang digunakan oleh model iklan, seperti kontak mata, ekspresi wajah, gestur, postur, dan gerakan tubuh lainnya yang menarik seperti sentuhan atau tarian. Peneliti menggunakan medote kualitatif dalam menganalisis data, dengan menggunakan teori dari Danesi (2004) tentang bahasa tubuh sebagai teori utama dan teori dari Pease (2004) sebagai teori pendukung. Temuan pada penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa video iklan parfum Louis Vuitton memiliki cara unik untuk menyampaikan pesan tanpa menggunakan kata-kata yang menjanjikan.
Kata kunci: *bahasa tubuh, komunikasi non-verbal, makna, Louis Vuitton*

I. Introduction

Communication is the most important part of human life, without it, people cannot make an interaction between one and another. So, the function of communication is as a media for a self-building and developing through social contact (Liliweri, 1994: 90). Humans convey over two-thirds of their messages through the body, producing up to 700.000 physical signs, of which 1.000 are different bodily postures, 5.000 are hand

gestures, and 250.000 are facial expressions (Morris et al, 1979). Across cultures, the body signs and the codes that regulate nonverbal behaviors are the result of a perception of the body as something more than physical substance. Winks, hand gestures, facial expressions, postures and other bodily actions all communicate something culturally relevant in particular social situations (Danesi, 2004: 46).

According to Danesi (2004: 53) body language plays a critical role in interpersonal relationships. The scientific study of body language is called kinesics. It was developed by the American Anthropologist Ray L. Birdwhistell, who used slow motion film of conversations to analyze speaker's behaviors. He borrowed many terms and techniques from linguistics to characterize the basic motions that made up meaningful body language. He reported the results of his findings in two classic books, entitled *Introduction to Kinesics* (1952) and *Kinesics and Context* (1970).

Messages made with body language can give a look and feel to a conversation remembered long after spoken words fade away. Body language can also be structured to lie or conceal something. For example, pressing the lips together may indicate disagreement or doubt, even if the person's verbal statements convey agreement. When verbal statements and body language conflict, listeners will more likely believe the latter more (Danesi, 2004: 53).

Borg (2009: 4) said that the perfect communication, meaning your words, tone, and nonverbal gestures are all dancing to the same rumba. They give out a matching message and they complement one another. Generally, if someone catches a message that the meaning does not match between verbal and non-verbal, people tend to believe the non-verbal messages. One reason is that non-verbal cues provide information about the purpose and emotional responses (Pease & Pease, 2004: 29). According to what Pease said, the non-verbal message is more influential in a process of communication than verbal message. This is because non-verbal message better represents psychological or emotional aspects, whether conscious or unconscious.

A lot of interactions and communications that happen in society use a non-verbal way (Borg, 2009: 49). Body language and non-verbal communication play a significant role in human communications. People constantly display a large number of non-verbal behavioral cues like facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, getsures, appareance, etc. (Knapp & Hall, 2002: 4). All human beings send messages through their body and receive them from others in the process of communication, whether intentionally or unintentionally. While the key to success in both personal and professional relationships lies in your ability to communicate well, it's not the words that you use but your nonverbal cues or "body language" that speak the loudest.

Non-verbal communication and body language are unique lens to implement in advertising. Body language in advertising is able to deliver complicated meanings to customers which go beyond the obvious, literal meaning of the perceived advertisement. We can hardly find advertisements that appear on TVs or online videos without human models in them. When it comes to use models in promoting products and services, they must give appropriate facial and bodily expressions and if not-give symbolic cues to the target customers. Understanding and applying different aspects of body language is an essential step in creating and developing an advertisement.

Based on the background above, this study aims at identifying body language, as well as discovering the meaning and the roles of body language in Louis Vuitton advertisements. Louis Vuitton, is a French luxury fashion house and company founded in 1854 by Louis Vuitton. The label's LV monogram presents on most of its products, ranging from luxury bags and leather goods to ready-to-wear, shoes, watches, jewelry, accessories, sunglasses, perfumes and books. Even if you have no interest in the fashion industry, the

name Louis Vuitton is still impossible not to be heard of. In the world of luxury fashion, many names come and go, but Louis Vuitton seems to be stronger than ever. The brand remains classy, admirable, and instantly recognizable. Louis Vuitton used an advertising strategy for its products with the help of celebrity endorsements. Most ads revolve around celebrities and create an emotional connection with consumers. By seeing the ads, consumers believe they are also a part of the exclusive group.

There are some previous studies that closely related to this study. Febriani and Damanhuri (2016) in their article entitled *Gestures and Facial Expressions Used in "The Ellen Show"* discussed about gestures that are mostly used by Ellen during her show. They analyzed the data based on Pease (2002) theory. Those gestures are eye rolling, combination hand and eye, handshake and hugging, smile, rubbing palm, hand on hip, hand pointing, crossed leg, apostrophe, territorial, ownership, thumb display, eye-rub, chin stroking, nose-touch and raised steeple. According to their findings, it is concluded that gestures and facial expressions can help Ellen in delivering the meaning of what she tries to explain to her guests or audiences more effectively. Another similar study conducted by Wirasari and Indah (2018) which published in their article entitled *The Study of the Meaning of Body Language and Perceptions of Audience Garuda Indonesia Television Commercials Hands Version*. Their study aimed to understand the meaning of nonverbal signs that can be found in the ad and to understand perception of audience to the ad. This research used nonverbal semiotics and semiotics of Roland Barthes as basic theory to dissect the meaning behind the ad, and used perception theory to understand audience's perception of the ad. This research expected to provide an understanding to the meaning that implied in the ad thus the audience can be more easily to interpret nonverbal sign in the ad and understanding the message that the advertisers want to convey to the audience.

Both of the previous studies above analyzed body language in different perspectives, using different type of data and theory comparing to this current study. In this study, the advertisements were taken from Louis Vuitton YouTube channel. The audiovisual advertisements are more interesting to analyze since they show more various and attractive body language, which include eye contact, facial expression, and gesture of the models. So that the researchers can explore more data to find out the the meaning and the roles of body language in Louis Vuitton advertisements. The finding of the research can give new insight for the readers that body language can speak louder than words.

II. Research Method

The data were taken from the video advertisement of Louis Vuitton perfume for women which published on Louis Vuitton YouTube channel. It is starred by Emma Stone, an American actress. According to Wikipedia, in 2017 she was the world's highest-paid actress and named by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. The data was collected by observation method. The researchers watched the advertisement repeatedly and noted important findings related to the research questions. Then, the researchers classified the data based on types of body languages performed by the models, such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other interesting body movements like touching and dancing. There are 14 representative data presented in the discussion section. This study is a descriptive qualitative study. Descriptive qualitative case studies are exploratory research and play a very important role in creating hypotheses or people's understanding of various social variables (Bungin, 2007: 69). Descriptive qualitative study is designed to describe the case of the study by words or sentences rather than numbers. By so doing it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to process, meaning patterns and structural features

(Flick, et al. 2004: 1). In analyzing the data, the researchers used theory of body signs proposed by Danesi (2004) and theory of body language by Pease (2004).

III. Analysis and Discussion

Body language and commercial advertisement have a very strong relation. Additionally, the right advertising is all about finding the right body language cues to put the right brand messaging into every aspect of the campaign. The female model in this video advertisement performed many body languages which implied hidden meaning. At the beginning of this one-minute video, the model shows lazy gestures by lying down on the floor closing her eyes. She randomly shows the postures of 'lazy time' and looks unmotivated by sitting down lazily on the couch in a big room with nothing to do. In addition, she sits down on the floor with bare foot enjoying inaudible music in her head. Then she standing up and looking out of the window try to figure out what she can do out there. Those body languages and every single gesture represent the profile of the company as well as the excellence of the promoted product. The types of body language presented by the model such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other interesting body movements like touching and dancing. The more detailed data analysis can be seen as follows.
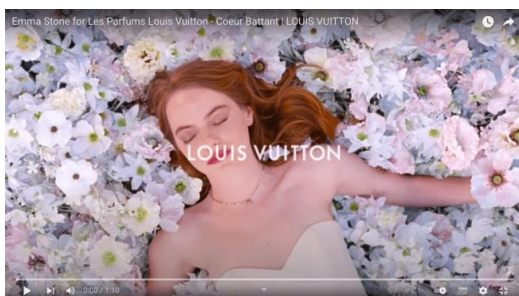

Figure 1   Figure 2

The pictures above show the model lies down on beautiful white flowers. On figure 1 the model closes her eyes and enjoy sleeping on the flower bed. When she closed her eyes, it indicates that she shuts out the world. This can mean 'I do not want to see what is in front of me, it is so terrible'. It represents that she didn't want to see the reality which probably gives her so much burden. She releases stress by throwing herself onto those beautiful flowers. By doing that, she can escape from the reality and enjoy the fragrance of the flower bed.

The eyes are one of the most important body parts involved in nonverbal communication. Experts say that people often use their eyes to communicate with others before they speak. As we can see on figure 2, her eyes are open and she looks happier and hopeful. It shows that the fragrance is able to change her mood. The fragrance makes her happy, relaxed and motivated.

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 3 & 4 shows the model walks and touches the flowers around her. As human we have an imperative need to touch things. As soon as something intrigues or fascinates us, our need to understand it by touching is natural and spontaneous. Having all our sense stimulated through nature is so beneficial to our wellbeing. Our sense of touch leads to increased sensations from the connection with plants and nature.

That's why our sense of touch is so important since it is designed to gather information about our surroundings. Information from our sense of touch enters the nervous system from every single part of the body. It is then processed through in two ways. Firstly, via a sensory pathway for basic facts and figures such as temperature or texture; and secondly via a route that determines the emotional or social meaning behind the touch. Touching plants is also a great way to practice mindfulness by concentrating your mind on the 'here and now'. The pictures represent how the woman really loves being surrounded by beautiful flowers and fragrant. It makes her feel as beautiful as roses and as alluring as its fragrance. It simply boosts her self-love and passion.

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 5 shows the model is standing in front of the big sized window. She is looking out of the window enjoying the beautiful view: the ocean, trees, giant rocks and clear sky. She tries to find something interesting outside her room, tries to figure out what she can do out there. Her pose indicates that she is brave and confident to face the world and find her happiness.

Meanwhile figure 6 shows the model is sitting down on the floor and pretending as if she was listening to the music and enjoying the beat. It can be seen that see closes her eyes, shake her head slowly and wave her hand gently. She looks relaxed by straightening her legs on the floor with the ocean view on the background. This pose represents her feeling and mood that she just wants to relax and enjoys her time with no stress.
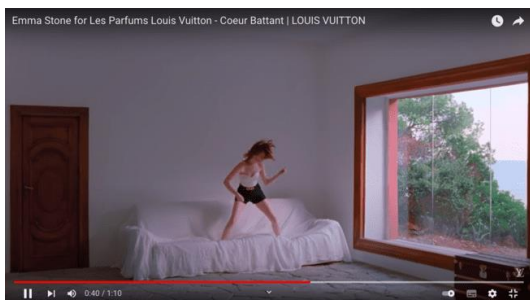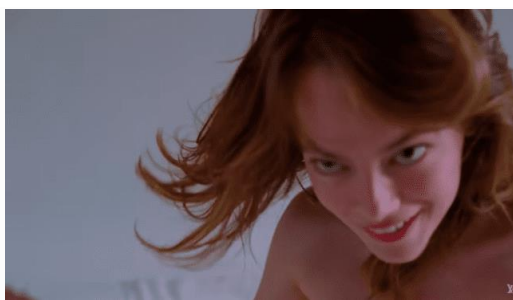
Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 7 shows the model is dancing like crazy on the sofa. Figure 8 shows her close up face and expression while dancing. Dancing is common to all peoples and cultures. It is a body art based on rhythm, movement and gestures connected to each other through pattern and musical ideas. It can be a form of recreation, serving various physical, psychological and social needs, or simply as an experience that is pleasurable in itself. Dance is especially important during courtship, which is the reason why it is so popular among young people. People dance as a way of attracting mates by displaying their beauty, grace and vitality.

Dance can be a form of aesthetic communication, expressing emotions, moods, or ideas, or telling a story. In this case, the woman is dancing to express her feeling of happiness and freedom. She moves her body randomly and wildly like nobody sees her. She acts like a happy little kid jumping and dancing on the sofa. It represents her innocence and puerility which rarely seen as an adult. Since she got her self-confidence, she feels free to express her feeling in her own way.
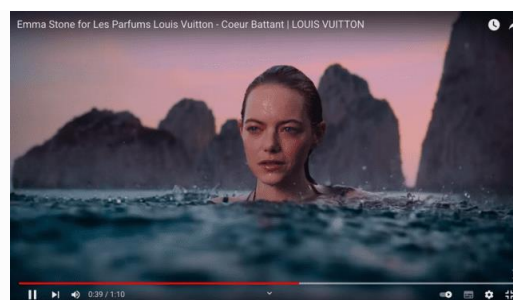

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 9 shows the model is walking down the stairs to the ocean. Her face and expression shows excitement and curiosity to explore the nature closely. She walks alone with no companion. It shows her characters as a woman who is brave, strong, confident, free and independent. She can do anything by her own and freely decide what she wants to do and what feels right for her.

Figure 10 shows the model is swimming in the ocean with beautiful sunset view as the background. This picture emphasizes that the woman can jump to the wild life alone with no fear at all. Although it is almost dark, she keeps swimming and enjoying the nature like nothing can stop her. Her eyes look so optimistic and passionate.
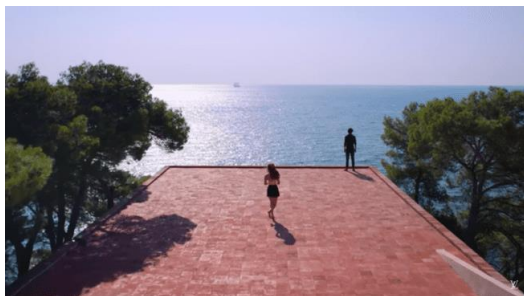
Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 11 shows the model got back from the ocean at sunset. She finished swimming and walked up to the rooftop of a building which stand in front of the ocean with beautiful sunset view. She runs toward a man who's standing and looking at the ocean. The beauty of the ocean view and the perfect figure of a man represent her dream, her dream life partner and beautiful future. It indicates that she gets closer to her dream.

Figure 12 shows the model kissed the man. It shows that the woman has power over the man. She is the one who starts holding the man face and kissing him intimately. She has a courage to initiate a brave action. By having self-confidence, she can make her dream come true. She is bravely and confidently expressing her feeling and pursuing her dream.
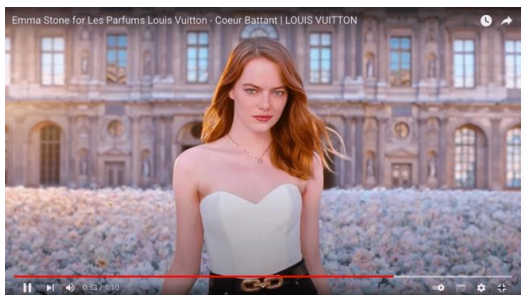

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 13 shows the model smiles victoriously which indicates that she is happy for what she had done and achieved in life. The roses behind her show what behind her success. The fragrance which boosts her confidence made all happens. At the end of the video, it finally shows the Louis Vuitton perfume (figure 14). Louis Vuitton perfume is formulated to bring out women's inner beauty by giving them exclusive taste which make women feel special and valuable since all starts from self-love. When you love yourself you attract all positive energy toward you. It implies that when you have an innate sense of unconditional self-love and acceptance, you have a firm foundation from which healthy living and career success all come in an effortless, safe and amazing way. Learning to truly love yourself for who you are will be one of the most important undertakings in life.

IV. Conclusion

Louis Vuitton perfume video advertisement is very unique since it does not use excessive words or persuasive sentences like typical advertisements. It simply uses pictures, music and model to deliver the messages. It is much more interesting and effective in advertising especially because humans respond to and process visual data better than any other type of data. Louis Vuitton perfume video advertisement uniquely deliver messages in a mysterious way without using any promising words. From the beginning of

the video, the model said nothing at all and no text attached on the video. The model plays crucial role in this advertisement because the company speaks through her movement, eye gaze and body language. The body language that dominantly seen on the advertisement is the eye gaze since eyes are powerful representation of human emotions. Humans determine how others are feeling by analyzing their eyes. Eye gazing also creates an opportunity for emotional connection, increase intimacy and build trust. Louis Vuitton exactly knows how to communicate effectively with their customers because visual content is going to "speak to them" in an efficient and effective way especially by using model who perfectly act and through the complexity of her body language secretly sending messages to the customers. It enables the prospective customers to digest and hold on to the message and most importantly it plays to their long-term memory. The way to ensure that they store information in their long-term memory is to pair the marketing content with meaningful images. Visuals work since they help people make sense of the content and direct their attention, increasing the possibility that the audience will remember the intended message.

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