

Multimodal Analysis of People's Hectic Life in Apple Advertisement *The Whole Working From Home Thing*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out what kind of life is portrayed in the advertisement and how *Apple* products help people to cope with that life portrayed in the advertisement. This study analyzes *Apple* advertisement video entitled *The Whole Working From Home Thing*. This study uses multimodal theory from Paltridge (2012), semiotic mode from Chia & Chan (2017), Mercado (2011), Eiseman (2017), Ekman & Friesen (2003), and Pease (2004). The data analysis uses a qualitative method. The analysis reveals that *Apple* has successfully created a video that could portray the hectic situation people felt when they could only do their activities inside their home during COVID-19 pandemic. While being busy with their lifestyle, they use *Apple* products by utilizing its features to help them. Furthermore, this study opens new possibilities for other researchers to apply the same theory that has been used in this thesis to analyze film and video with different topics.

Keywords: advertisement; semiotic mode; semiotic; multimodal discourse analysis; hectic life

INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is a promotional medium carried out by a company to inform or sell their products to others. In general, advertisements have a message or invitation that aims to influence consumers to buy, sell, or do certain things to the products. Advertisement can be made through two media, printed and digital. Printed advertisements are published in many public places and can be posted in many printed media, such as newspapers, pamphlets, books, and etcetera (Danesi, 2004, p. 258). Digital advertisements can be found on the internet or television and formed using many elements, such as audio, visual, or graphics to enhance the advertisement (Danesi, 2004, p. 259). The existence of the advertisements can make a company better known by the public so that it can affect the brand and the product sales of the company.

The technology industries are one of the most competitive businesses for many brands. They keep innovating their products as well as showing their product uniqueness and features with an attractive advertisement that could grab people's attention to increase their prestige, keep up with the trends, or fulfill their needs. There are many popular brands in the technology industry, such as *Apple*, *Samsung*, *LG*, *Xiaomi*, *Sony*, *Oppo*, etc. One of the brands that is used for this study is *Apple*.

Apple is a gadget company located in California, United States, that is well known for its popular products, such as Mac, iPhone, iPod, iPad, and etcetera. In general, they create digital advertisements using videos. One of their successful campaign advertisement videos is the video entitled *The Whole Working from Home Thing* which was released in 2020. This advertisement video shows how *Apple* is creative to show their empathy about the current issue that happened during that year, that is, the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic. During that year, the government advised people to do their activities at home. Doing activities at home means that all people whether they are students or employees need to use online communication.

Unfortunately, since everything goes online, many people complain that their work is increasing because the online system forces them to finish every task given with tight deadlines. The result is that every day is like a workday. Even a holiday is spent by an employee to keep working on their task. *Apple* understands this situation and creates a unique advertisement video that lasts for six minutes and fifty-five seconds to portray people's life when working from home during the pandemic era.

The main theory used for this study is Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Paltridge (2012) supported by Chia and Chan's Semiotic Modes (2017). The method used for this study is qualitative content analysis. The main focus of this study is to find out the life portrayal and *Apple* products usage in the video entitled *The Whole Working from Home Thing*.

METHOD

I used qualitative content analysis as the main method of the study. Schreier (2012) explained that qualitative content analysis was useful to describe the meaning of qualitative data. Some of the data that could be used for qualitative analysis were magazines, advertisements, television programs, websites, brochures, and etcetera. Every data does not have a meaning that cannot be defined by itself. The meaning must be constructed by the researcher. The qualitative content analysis is suitable for my study because my study dealt with the data interpretation from the advertisement video which contained various interactions from each character. The type of interactions can be produced in the form of verbal conversation, body gesture, audio, etcetera. By using this method, I can understand the way I constructed the data meaning and how I can draw the conclusions from the data interpretation process.

To collect the data for the study, I downloaded the advertisement video from the *Apple* YouTube Channel. After that, I watched it several times to get the story idea. The duration of the video is 06.55 minutes, which is almost a 7 minutes mark. I chose it because the video was still relevant to be analyzed regarding current issues that happened in various countries, that is, COVID-19 Pandemic. After that, I divided my video into several scenes, took a screenshot for the scenes, and put the scenes into a small table containing the three modes used in this study: Visual, Gestural, and Spatial, based on the Six Semiotic Modes of Chan and Chia (2017) so that the analysis process was easier for me to do.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reflection of People's Life Portrayal in the Advertisement Based on Each Mode

First of all, the way I represent my analysis model is by providing the scenes with the summary to explain my analysis according to each mode itself. The sub-topic is based on each character's life in the video.

Dave



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

In Figure 1, the camera shot is a long shot which shows Dave and his surroundings. The purpose is to capture the situation that happened inside Dave's house at that time. It also concludes that the setting used in this video is Dave's house. In film or video, the long shot is used to frame the subjects and their surroundings entirely. The purpose is to capture the relation between the characters and their surroundings (Mercado, 2011, p. 59).. Since the discussion of this scene starts with a camera shot, therefore the discussion of this scene starts with spatial mode.

In Figure 2 and 3, the frame focuses on Dave by using medium long-shot. The purpose is to show the character's body language, facial expression, and his surroundings simultaneously which can create narrative context and give emotional connection for the audience (Mercado, 2011, p. 53). In Figure 2 and Figure 3, the camera shot uses the medium-long shot. The purpose of this shot is to show the character's body language, facial expression, and his surroundings simultaneously which can create narrative context and give emotional connection for the audience (Mercado, 2011, p. 53). The intention is to make viewers keep their focus on Dave's action and reaction only and not disturbed by the situation happening inside his house at that time. This is in accordance with the explanation from Paltridge that said the point of view can also contribute to the meaning making process (Paltridge, 2012, p. 172). Three layers of positioning are used in this frame. Dave's laptop is placed in the foreground to showcase the object that he used when working during the scene. Dave is positioned in the middle ground to showcase the connection between his action and the object used. The object around Dave and his laptop is placed in the background to emphasize specifically what room that Dave was in at that time during the scene, that is, the living room.

The next mode is visual mode. In Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, Dave wears a flannel shirt combined with a yellow t-shirt and brown pants. It creates an impression of casualness since the scene happened inside his house. Dave holds a food box and his laptop is placed in

front of him which signifies that he is busy working at that time. The monitor that he looks at has a bitten *Apple* logo below the screen. It signifies that the product brand that he uses in the scene is *Apple*. It was the way from *Apple* to remind people that the advertisement is made by *Apple*.

The next mode is gestural mode. In Figure 1, Dave swings his body forward while sitting on the sofa, looking at his laptop, and eating his food. During the gestures, he creates a choking sound. It signifies that he is in a hurry to enjoy his food. In Figure 2, he keeps looking at the screen while holding a food box. He doesn't show any facial expression but his eye contact is fully staring and not blinking at the screen when hearing Brian talks to him which signifies that he is paying attention to what happened on the screen and doesn't pay attention to what happens around his surroundings even though his children keep shouting while playing. People's real communication can be established when they look at each other by 'eye to eye' (Pease, 2004, p. 175). In Figure 3, he breaks his eye contact by looking away from the laptop screen. It signifies that he is distracted by his surroundings but creates an impression that he still cares about what is happening to his children at any time even though he is busily working. My argument is in accordance with Brian Paltridge's explanation. As Paltridge quotes from Jewitt, it explains that images, posture, and gaze have a contribution in making meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 171).

Based on the combination of three modes used in Dave's scenes, it portrays people's lives that are full of distraction when working from home. These distractions happen because of a work environment that is not optimal so it makes uncertainty in working hours. In this scene, Dave is annoyed by distraction, that is, his children's noise when doing other activities inside home. Children can become one of the factors that disrupts people when working from home because children need their parents' attention and they do not understand the working from home system yet. They think that if parents are doing work from home, it means their parents are on holiday.

Bridget



Figure 4



Figure 5

The discussion of these two scenes starts with the spatial mode. In Figure 4, the shot used is medium-shot which captures Bridget's actions, that is doing Yoga pose and looking on her iPad screen. It signifies what activities Bridget does during the scene. Medium-shot is used to show the character's body language and let the audience see the nuance of his facial expression and behavior through a slightly closer perspective (Mercado, 2011, p. 47).

In Figure 4, the setting used is Bridget's house. The camera shot used is a long shot. Long shot is used to frame the subjects and their surroundings entirely. The purpose is to capture the relation between the characters and their surroundings (Mercado, 2011, p. 59). In this scene, the long shot is used to capture Bridget's actions interacting with the object on the table and her surroundings during that time. A glimpse of Bridget's cloth near the camera is placed foreground to indicate viewers about what kind of object that Bridget mostly interacted with at that time. Bridget's body position is placed in the background to highlight her action to

the objects around her and give an idea to the viewers about what she is doing. Therefore, these two scenes are successful in creating a point of view that contributes in showing particular meaning to the viewers (Paltridge, 2012, p. 172).

The next mode is visual mode. In Figure 4, Bridget's iPad is visible on the frame which signifies that she is busy working on something while doing other activities. In Figure 5, Bridget is wearing a red jacket combined with a gray t-shirt inside it. Her right hand holds an iron and her left hand has a watch. Red symbolizes determination and gray symbolizes seriousness (Eiseman, 2017, p. 209). It signifies that Bridget has a high determination to keep connected with her working environment while she also tries hard to finish other things with full seriousness that are not related to her work environment. It also reflects her determination to keep active despite having a hectic life. Visual elements that have been shown in these two scenes, such as her clothing style, stuff around her body, or her iPad, support my argument in signifying particular meaning that is shown to the viewers because all of it have a contribution in signifying particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 170)

The next mode is gestural mode. In Figure 4, Bridget's eye gaze is staring at her screen without blinking while doing Yoga pose. Her eye gaze strengthened the significance of her action in doing something (Paltridge, 2012, p. 171). Based on her gaze, it signifies that she tries to multi-tasking by doing both activities at the same time, but she slightly prefers to pay her attention to work on something inside her screen rather than doing other activities.

In Figure 5, Bridget is ironing her clothes while saying "At 8.00 Am tomorrow, remind me to the team about..". Bridget's eye contact is looking at her watch when she says that. It signifies that she tries to focus on her watch to tell something important. Bridget's eyebrow is raised and her mouth shows a grinning smile when she says "to the team..". She raises their eyebrow and shows a grinning smile which indicates facial expression of happiness (Ekman & Friesen, 2003, p. 103). Figure 4 signifies her excitement that there is a unique activity the team will do on the next day. Moreover, it also initiates a surprising impression that is given to the viewers that there is a unique activity in the team that will be shown in the next scene.

Based on the combination of three modes used in these two scenes, it portrays the boundaries blurriness of home and work lifestyle during working from home. These Bridget's scenes portray people that are doing their routine but also try to keep their productivity with their office job at the same time. Without clear time boundaries to allocate times for each lifestyle, it makes the time management become too flexible. People feel difficulty in shifting their time to do other activities because they feel that they need to keep connected and productive with their job all the time. To solve this problem, people do multitasking. Multitasking is the action to perform more tasks or activities at the same time. People multitask so that they accomplish many things altogether which can increase their productivity.

Marie

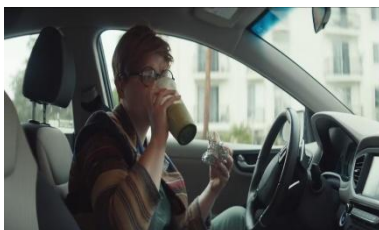


Figure 6



Figure 7

The discussion of this scene starts with the spatial mode. In Figure 6, the camera shot used is a medium-close up shot. Medium-close up shot is used to show the character's facial expression and body language so it can portray the small nuance of the character's behavior and make the scene more dramatic (Mercado, 2011, p. 53). In Figure 6, a glimpse of the apartment house is visible through Marie's car window which signifies that she is outside of her house at that time. Also, it signifies the activity that Marie does at that time. Marie's car interior is placed foreground which signifies her current place. Marie is positioned in the middleground which signifies Marie as a person that does activities inside the particular place. The glimpse of the apartment building is placed in the background which signifies her location at that time. The camera shot used supported by the glimpse of the apartment house and her car interior positions creates perspective that contributes to signify particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 172).

The next mode is visual mode. In Figure 6 and Figure 7, Marie is holding a glass of drink and a sandwich while eating in the car. It signifies the way people can enjoy their food while outside of their house without going into the dining house or restaurant to avoid any contact with other people during the pandemic era. The visual elements used in this scene can contribute in making particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 170)

The next mode is gestural mode. In Figure 6, Marie gestures while eating her food in a slow-paced manner which signifies that she is still in a relaxed manner when enjoying her food. In Figure 7, Marie is choking after she drinks. It signifies that she is surprised and not prepared when she heard the utterance from Bridget's that said "Oh shoot! Vivian's calling". Her reaction after hearing Bridget contributes to signify her panic feeling (Paltridge, 2012, p. 171).

Based on the combination of three modes used in this scene, Marie portrays the lack of structure in time management during working from home in the pandemic era. It makes people don't have life boundaries to take care of themselves because they are always trapped in a "working zone" every time. Because of unclear time boundaries, people need to be prepared every time if there is something happening in their job, such as receiving a sudden update about their work or getting a particular call from someone that asked about the recent news or progress from the work that they do.

Brian



Figure 8



Figure 9

The discussion of these two scenes starts with the spatial mode. In Figure 8 and 9, the camera angle is a long shot. Long shot is useful to capture the relation between the characters and their surroundings (Mercado, 2011, p. 59). In this scene, the intention of using long shots is to create narrative information about what happened during the scene. In this scene, the camera shot signifies the working activities that Brian does during night until morning. The camera shot and the place used in these two scenes are able to contribute as a point of view that is shown to the viewers so it can signify particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 172).

The next mode is visual mode. In Figure 8, the lighting inside Brian's room is dark which signifies that it is late at night. Brian is working around many cardboard pieces scattered

on the floor. There is a pizza inside the box that is partially eaten. Then, in Figure 9, the lighting is changed into bright which signifies that it is morning. The visual elements used in this scene can contribute in making particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 170). These two figures signify that Brian is staying up late and to keep working on the project.

The next mode is Gestural mode. In Figure 8 and Figure 9, Brian shows gestures of working with cardboard pieces which signifies that he keeps committed to keep working on his project even though he needs to stay up late.

Based on the combination of three modes used in the Brian's scene, Brian's scene portrays bad habits that occur because of working from home during the pandemic era. These bad habits can affect people's routine negatively. Some examples of bad habits that often happen during work are eating food while working on the desk or staying up late to finish their work. The bad habits occur because there are no clear lifestyle boundaries which makes people to be productive in a negative way. The blurriness between home and work lifestyle combined with lack of structure in organizing home and work lifestyles makes it difficult for people to control their lifestyle and being trapped to keep productive and focused with their job all the time.

The Way *Apple* Product Help People in the Life Through the Relation on Each Mode



Figure 10



Figure 11

The discussion of this scene starts with the spatial mode. In Figure 10, the setting used is Bridget's house. It signifies the next character house that is used in the frame and gives viewers a portrayal of a particular character's lifestyle. The camera shot used is medium-shot which shows Bridget's action of doing Yoga. It signifies the general routine that Bridget does during the scene. In Figure 10, the camera shot is extreme close-up. The camera shot in this scene can contribute as a point of view that is shown to the viewers so it can signify particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 172). The camera shot used to show the display of her watch. It signifies that there is something important that Bridget noticed while she was still doing Yoga. Also, it signifies one of the features from the *Apple Watch*. Bridget's watch is placed foreground which signifies the importance of the object during the scene and to show the product that it has special features to attract the viewers.

The next mode is visual mode. In Figure 10, Bridget wears a headset on her ears and bracelet watch on her left hand. The watch is heard talking to Bridget by saying, "Close your eyes, gently deepen your breath". The headset and the watch are a product from *Apple*, named *Apple Watch*. There is one special feature inside the *Apple Watch*, that is, *Apple Fitness+*. The visual elements used in this scene can contribute in making particular meaning (Paltridge, 2012, p. 170). In this case, the visual elements help in showing the uniqueness of *Apple Fitness+* inside *Apple Watch*. *Apple Fitness+* is the special feature from *Apple* that helps people during body workout and keeps track of their healthiness. The features inside *Apple Fitness+* including: body metrics that focused on tracking heart rate and calories which motivates the users during workouts, workout movements that focused on provide users about new body

workout from various category every week, such as meditation, yoga, HIIT, strength, cycling, pilates, and etcetera, providing different body workout programs for people, such as workout for beginners, workout for older adults, workout after pregnancy, meditations for beginners, and etcetera.

Another feature from Apple Watch is shown in Figure 11. The camera shot used in this figure is the extreme close-up shot. It captures the watch perfectly. The watch shows a notification message on the screen. It shows an important notification for Bridget. This is another special feature from Apple Watch that is named Cellular. The function of this feature is to make users stay connected with the message, calls, or notification that has been sent by other people without being bothered to bring their iPhone. Another feature from Cellular is providing new updates to users about the recent music or podcast update, GPS system to aid users in finding location, and Emergency SOS which automatically activates if the users need life emergency help because of falling hardly into somewhere. Bridget's Apple Watch has white color which symbolizes modern minimalism and simplicity (Eiseman, 2017, p. 233). The Apple Watch that Bridget wears signifies the practicality of their product even though the design is simplified so it can help people in daily life efficiently. Moreover, it signifies the method from *Apple* to attract viewers by showing a glimpse of the features in the product so that they are interested in buying it in the future.

Based on the modes used in this scene, it portrays how *Apple* products could help people live in to cope with the life situation portrayed in the advertisement. The two special features inside Apple Watch portrays that *Apple* wants to show their product can be useful for people to support their working from home lifestyle during the pandemic era. Apple Watch can help someone to feel motivated in applying a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic era so they can keep their healthiness and be productive despite the blurring of boundaries between home and work lifestyle. Not just supporting a healthy lifestyle, *Apple* also supports people that are trapped in the hectic life of working from home. With particular features that are similar to smartphones, people can stay connected with their activities or their job so that they can have control of their life despite the hectic life that they experience while working from home.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the video advertisement from *Apple* entitled *The Whole Working from Home Thing*. In general, the video advertisement is about the portrayal of people's life during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The purpose of this study is to find out the kind of life portrayed in the *Apple* advertisement through semantic resources/modes and how *Apple* products assist people in life portrayed by the advertisement. I applied multimodal discourse analysis from Paltridge (2012) supported by Chia and Chan's (2017) six semiotic modes. I only use three semiotic modes in this thesis: spatial, visual, and gestural. I use qualitative content analysis as my main method in analyzing the data.

From the analysis that I have done, I learned that *Apple* is successful in showing the working from home situation during the pandemic era. There are things that contribute to creating a hectic life situation during working from home, such as various distractions, the blurry of boundaries between home and work lifestyle, lack of structure that could organize people's life, and etcetera. The video is not just focusing on showing people's life while working from home in the pandemic era, it also shows how *Apple* products contribute to help people during the circumstances. *Apple* products show that they can help people to build a good lifestyle and show practicality in solving some issues related to their work so that they could keep productive and gain control of their life despite the blurry boundaries of lifestyle that they experience in daily life.

In the end, the theory that has been applied by this study can open other possibilities for other researchers to apply the same theory for their study in analyzing film and video. This thesis only uses three semiotic modes from Alexius Chan and Caroline Chan which means that there are other three semiotic modes that can also be used by other researchers, that is, Audio, Oral, and Linguistic.

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