

INNISFREE'S BRAND IMAGE THROUGH JEJU ISLAND CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at revealing the message conveyed by the verbal and non-verbal expressions in cosmetics advertisement videos, in this case, two advertisement videos by a cosmetic brand called, Innisfree. In examining the message, firstly, the writer identifies the verbal and non-verbal expressions used in the advertisements analyzed. Secondly, she discloses the denotative and connotative meanings of those expressions. In so doing, she uses two main theories, namely, the process of signification and Peirce's triadic modes of sign. The findings reveal that the verbal expressions in the two advertisement videos show that Innisfree is a symbol of a natural beauty and an icon of cosmetic that use nature-based ingredients. Meanwhile, the non-verbal expressions in the two advertisements constantly highlighting on Jeju island's natural beauty, as the main source of Innifree's products that should be preserved. Thus, Innisfree encourages its customer to conserve natural environment. In conclusion, Innisfree is a company that produces an inner and outer-beauty.

Key words: Brand image, brand value, verbal and non-verbal expressions, Peircian triadic modes of sign, nature-based product.

INTRODUCTION

As consumers, people are exposed to a huge number of brands in the market. This happens because companies want to raise the customers' awareness of their brands. That is why they would like to commit their time, money and effort in advertising their products or brand. According to Bendixen (1993), an advertisement serves not only to create awareness of a new product or brand, but also to inform consumers of its benefits of the product or brand, create the desired perceptions and preferences of that product or brand, for the product or brand, as well as persuade customers to purchase the product or brand at once. In achieving the purpose of advertising, branding process is usually needed.

As a mean to build up a good image, branding process is very essential for a company. Usually, what a brand or company would try is correlating the company's product to a certain concept or image in the consumers' mind. Advertisement is also made to make the consumers always remember the products and easier to differentiate one brand to another. This is important because image of a brand works as a representative to tell people where this brand stands for. Therefore, brand associations are defined as anything linked in memory to a brand and brand image as a set of associations, usually in some meaningful way (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995).

Generally, images and language are the two main and important components in an advertisement. Image and language are shown in an advertisement as the representation of meanings perceived by people who watch and consume it. The function of language written in an advertisement is to influence and convey specific information through words, vocabulary and language structure that could be translated into certain meaning, or usually known for the verbal expressions. Meanwhile, images as the visual enhancer, or the non-verbal expressions, help the viewer to remember and connect the products to certain meaning.

In the cosmetics trading sector, one of the Asian countries that can export its products globally is South Korea. It is proven through the headlines of korea.net that the Korea Customs Service (KCS) recently announced that the export volume of Korean cosmetics recorded USD 1.45 billion in 2013. The exports number exceeds the number of imports, which is USD 0.99 billion. The term like K-beauty as one of genres of makeup style then invented as there are a lot of people start to perceive and admire of Korean beauty products. For example, one famous product in the beauty

market, which was invented and introduced by South Korea, is a cushion foundation. After a while of development, several Western beauty brands also try to make, promote and sell a cushion foundation as one of their best-seller products. For instance, worldwide brands like L’Oreal, Lancôme and Yves Saint Laurent have tried to adopt this new concept of foundation. This booming event is also supported by the Korean Wave. For the past few years, Korean Wave or more popular as Hallyu, has gone global. With the variety of culture including K-Pop, dramas and food have captured international attention. Thus, the strong influence of Korean Wave also affected beauty and fashion sectors in general. Using K-pop artists as their ambassadors, Korean beauty brands successfully embrace international markets. From young to adult nowadays try to “adapt and have” a lifestyle like Korean. It is proven that these days the Korean make up trend seems not foreign for both young and adult people. Generally, although the global beauty market is still dominated by the Western brands, Asian beauty brands at this moment are still making their way to be fully recognized as one of the trendsetters in the beauty industry. In their effort to do so, Korean makeup brands invest advertisements that attract the consumers.

The writer decided to conduct a research in the interest of understanding a global campaign advertisement by one of the popular beauty brands from South Korea, called Innisfree. As the first nature-based cosmetic brand from South Korea that established in 2000, Innisfree now has opened its store in more than 5 countries, like Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Innisfree’s focus is to share natural benefits of clean and pure energy taken from a volcanic island in the south sea of South Korea, called Jeju Island. Innisfree has a quite big range of products, including skincare to makeup for women and also men. Since Innisfree’s products used the ingredients from Jeju Island, the company creates an advertisement which featured the intimate and mutual relationship between the company and also Jeju Island. This intimacy reflects Innisfree’s image as a company which environmental friendly.

In this article, the writer wants to show how important to carefully create an advertisement’s contents since its verbal and non-verbal expressions involved also carry and eventually shape that brand’s image in the market. Brand image is very crucial in marketing products because it could persuade people to consume the products. In her analysis, she uses the semiotic theories, through which she reveals the message conveyed by the verbal expressions in Innisfree’s advertisement videos. Then, she examines the message conveyed by the non-verbal expressions. The non-verbal expressions serve as the peripheral aspects because they are supporting the verbal expressions.

In analyzing the data, the writer uses the theory of the process of signification for identifying signs used in the advertisement and finding out the meaning behind those signs. This theory is the one proposed by Chandler (Chandler, 2007), which is an adoption of Ferdinand de Saussure’s theory of signified and signifier (Saussure, 1974). After that, she uses metaphor because there are sentences or utterances consisting several layers that can be analyzed. Here, metaphor is important because, as described by Knowles and Moon (2006, p.3), “Metaphor is the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it “literally” means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things. She also uses Peirce’s triadic models of sign. Her discussion on Peirce’s triadic models of sign is taken from Peirce’s essay (1993-58), as expressed by Chandler (2007).

As a tool of references, the writer also gathers two of related studies as these could contribute and enhance a better understanding in applying the theories in a more accurate way. The first related study is a study titled Hidden Language of Advertising: A Semiotic Approach Maryam (Najafian & Dabaghi, 2011). These two authors propose a study of semiotics approach in which revealing the hidden language in a printed advertisement. The second related study is title A Linguistic and Semiotic Analysis of the Language of Advertisements of Beauty Creams and their Impact on the University Students. (Nazar, 2014). His study suggests a linguistic and semiotic study of language in a cosmetic advertisement and also its impact on female students.

METHODS

In analyzing the data, the writer used descriptive qualitative approach in interpreting and disclosing the meaning of two advertisement videos. The source of the data in this research were two advertisement videos taken from the Innisfree Korea’s official YouTube channel. There are two

videos, namely, the first one was *“Innisfree, The Story of Pristine Island”* which was uploaded on December 2, 2012 and *“Squeezed Green Tea Story with Yuki Kuramoto”*, which was uploaded on February 10, 2014.

In analyzing the data, firstly, the writer investigated the verbal expressions. Then, she continued her investigation on the non-verbal expressions. In analyzing the verbal expressions, the writer chose several scenes including narration, images and captions appeared that were related and potential to be analyzed. In other words, the writer did not analyze every second of the video advertisement, however, as a whole. Based on the data chosen, the writer determined the keywords from captions and narrations as the verbal expressions. After that, the writer proceeded to find its denotative level. In this case, the writer used Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 8th edition as a source of definition. After all of the denotative meanings had gathered, the writer continued to its connotative level applying the theories as previously stated above. The writer also gave a brief conclusion of the verbal expressions analyzed. As well as for the non-verbal expressions, she determined scenes or images that were supporting the verbal expressions. Although not all of the scenes were used, there were visual expressions that came and supported as a whole. The writer then proceeded to find the denotative and connotative meanings of the non-verbal expressions such as visual attraction, images and sound.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

1. The Message as Conveyed by The Verbal Expressions

In answering the first problem discussed in this paper, that is the message of the advertisements as conveyed by the verbal expression in the Jeju Island campaign by Innisfree, the writer finds that the two advertisements analyzed in this thesis has slightly different purposes. The first video is made mainly to emphasize the relationship that Innisfree has with Jeju island. As the main source of Innisfree’s products ingredients, Innisfree acknowledges Jeju island and its natural state. This is proven through the verbal expressions that are shown in the video. It shows that Jeju island is a pristine, natural and pure island, such as “A place filled with the pure energy of nature”, or “Discovering the gifts of nature in pure Jeju.” Through the verbal expressions, Innisfree also wants to show their promise to keep developing ways to solve skin problems; to be a leader of nature-based beauty company. Other than that, Innisfree wants to be the name that the customers trust for their skin. Since most of the customers of Innisfree are women, therefore, as it is obvious to the society, women usually have a deep concern about their look or skin. In another words, through the verbal expressions of the first video, it is shown that Innisfree is a symbol of a natural beauty. Besides that, Innisfree also shows that it is a company that adopts a fair-trade policy. Thus, customers who buy Innisfree’s products also participate in this policy, which means that they buy Innisfree’s products for a good cause. This reveals that Innisfree also encourages inner-beauty.

Meanwhile, the second video is made particularly for a newly-launched product of Innisfree. Even though as mentioned earlier that the purpose is different, both of the advertisement videos show the same message or consistently in-line. Using the Peirce’s triadic modes of signs, it could be understood that Jeju island with Innisfree as the brand are an icon of a nature-based cosmetic and skincare for skin. All of the verbal expressions mentioned in the two videos, such as “An island full of nature’s vitality, JEJU!”, “Using only environmentally-friendly ways” or “And honest fair trading to share happiness with the local community of JEJU”, show that Innisfree as a symbol of natural beauty, and an index to inner and outer-beauty as well.

Based on the analysis, the writer finds that the verbal expressions indeed send several messages. Firstly, Innisfree has a close and intimate relationship with Jeju island as the main sources of ingredients in Innisfree’s products. Therefore, Innisfree wants the audiences to always relate the company with the natural beauty of Jeju island. Innisfree puts the global recognitions as means to make the audiences trust Jeju island’s ingredients. This global recognition also suggests that Jeju island with its natural ingredients is reliable. Secondly, after the relationship is built, Innisfree wants the audience to always think of Innisfree if they want to purchase natural beauty products. This is proven as well from the second video that specifically made for a newly-launched product by Innisfree. The message is consistently in line with the first video, that is, to make the audiences have the impression of a natural beauty, both inner and outer-beauty, if they hear a brand called Innisfree.

2. The Message as Conveyed by The Non-verbal Expressions as The Peripheral Aspects

In answering the second problem in this paper, that is, the message of the advertisements as delivered by non-verbal expression as the peripheral aspects, the writer finds that, the visual expressions of the first video are mainly about Jeju island's natural side, like the sceneries and variety of plants. By showing these, Innisfree gives the audience the image of Jeju island as a pristine island. The non-verbal or visual expressions in this video also relate the image of Innisfree as a nature-based cosmetic company, a company that is deeply rooted in Jeju island, as well as a company that supports an eco-friendly lifestyle. These scenes also play as means to make the audiences believe that Jeju island deserves to be compared to a paradise. In the second advertisement video, all the scenes give a glimpse of a natural serum making process. By showing the process to the audiences, Innisfree tries to be 'transparent' and 'honest' in its ingredients. Therefore, the writer believes that the second video serves as an advertisement that highlights Innisfree's core belief to preserve nature and as a nature-based cosmetic company.

To sum up, the writer finds that all of the scenes in both of the video advertisements constantly give an impression of Innisfree as a natural and organic-based cosmetic company. It is proven and seen through the scenes portrayed in the video, such as plants, flower, spring-breeze, and sunshine. In conclusion, the visual expressions both in the advertisement videos support the verbal expressions or statements in order to make the audiences always relate the brand, Innisfree, to natural beauty.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing Innisfree's advertisements, the writer finds that Innisfree is a symbol of a natural beauty, an icon of cosmetic and skincare, and an index of inner and outer-beauty. This can be seen through verbal expressions such as "using only environmentally-friendly ways"; "and honest fair trading to share happiness with the local community of JEJU"; "make your skin moist through our Squeezed Green-tea"; "we are all about completing your beauty." Those verbal expressions are supported by the visual expression. Throughout the videos, Innisfree uses green color, which is not an artificial color, but the lively, natural, and healthy green color. This implies that Innisfree is indeed a nature-based cosmetic company that its ingredients are good for skin, as well as a company that invite its customers to conserve the nature and environment.

In short, Innisfree's brand image is shaped by the verbal and non-verbal expressions in the two videos. First of all, words that Innisfree uses as the verbal expressions have been carefully chosen as they are not only carrying the message that Innisfree wants to deliver, but also what kind of image or value that attached to the brand. Then, those words or verbal expressions are visualized into motion images or pictures to make the advertisements livelier and impactful. In that sense, by understanding the meaning of verbal and non-verbal expressions of an advertisement, we can understand and grasp the image that attached to certain brands. In this case, Innisfree as a company that produces both inner and outer-beauty.

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