Sign on Gojek Advertising Video Entitled *Jangan Sepelekan Kekuatan dari Sebuah Jempol* (Semiotic Study)

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze signs using Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics on Gojek advertising video entitled "jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempol." The aim of this research is to reveal how the thumb is not merely a part of body gestures but also holds profound semiotic implications within the context of Gojek advertisements. This analysis is critical as it offers new understanding of how companies like Gojek utilize symbols to effectively communicate with their audience. The data source is one Gojek advertising video entitled "jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempol" from the Gojek Youtube account. Data collection by: (1) searching for video advertising on the official Gojek Youtube account, (2) downloading advertising video, (3) watching video, (4) selecting and screenshotting scenes that are directly related to jempol, (5) coding the selected scenes. Meanwhile, the data analysis procedures are: (1) selecting scenes in the Gojek advertising video entitled "jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempol" that has been coded, (2) classifying the signs based on objects of Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics theory, such as icon, index, and symbol, (3) displaying data in the form of screenshots based on the signs found and the classification of the type of object (icon, index, or symbol), (4) drawing a conclusion. The findings are expected to provide insights for marketing practitioners in designing resonant advertising messages and enhancing brand awareness. Furthermore, this study provides an intertextual analysis that can add insight to English literature studies regarding the semiotic influence in contemporary visual and textual narratives.

Keywords: Charles Sanders Pierce; Gojek advertising; Semiotics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of delivering messages from communicators to communicants or audiences using various media, such as advertising media, with the aim of influencing behavior and attitudes. Advertising is a form of marketing communication that uses publicly sponsored messages to promote or sell products, services, or ideas using language, images, colors, and sound as communication tools. In advertising communication, signs or symbols are very important as they relate to meaning in semiotics and communication. Semiotics is the study of sign processes and meaning-making. Any activity, behavior, or process that involves signs can be studied in semiotics. A sign is defined as something that communicates something, usually referred to as meaning, to the receiver of the message. Pierce's semiotics is known as triadic sign, where a sign is something that brings something, namely the sign's interpretant A determined or created by it, into the same correspondence with something C, its object, as it exists in relation to C itself (Pierce, 1976). Semiotics can be used in mass media research, not only as a theoretical framework but also as a method of analysis. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the signs in video advertisements.

Kotler and Armstrong (Armstrong & Kotler, 2011) define video advertising as a form of promotion that involves the use of video to deliver advertising messages to an audience. With the rapid development of mass media, the use of video advertising has become more widespread, making mass media, especially video advertising, more interesting to research. One business area that is very active in creating video ads is ride-hailing companies. Fierce competition between online transportation companies makes companies compete to be creative in making video advertisements. PT Gojek Indonesia, as one of the online transportation companies in Indonesia, is also active in creating video advertisements to promote its products. Not only aims to sell its products, but Gojek also conveys values or ideologies through signs that appear in its video advertisements.

Gojek's advertising strategy is also quite unique and creative by incorporating deep meaning. Gojek was founded in 2010 in Jakarta, providing new solutions and ideas to ease daily life in the midst of urban congestion. Gojek's founder, Nadiem Makarim, initially wanted to create a means to make ojek transportation services more effective and efficient. The Gojek system works by directly connecting ojek drivers with ojek passengers, where previously ojek drivers spent more time waiting for passengers at the base.

This study specifically aims to identify and analyze the semiotic meaning of the use of thumbs in Gojek video advertisements, through the lens of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. The research question addressed in this study is: "How is the thumb used as a sign in Gojek's video advertisements, and what are its semiotic implications?" The importance of semiotics in advertising research lies in its ability to unravel the layers of meaning contained within the visual and verbal symbols used by brands in their communication. The researcher collected data by watching the video

advertisement repeatedly, taking screenshots, and identifying each sign in each scene. This research uses a qualitative approach to gain in-depth understanding and explore the sign in the Gojek advertising video entitled *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempo*l. Qualitative research is appropriate because semiotics as a method of sign interpretation has a subjective nature, and semiotic analysis is suitable for use in qualitative analysis to reveal invisible implied communication. The selection of Gojek as the object of research and the use of semiotics as an analytical tool were chosen because Gojek caught the researcher's attention as a millennial's favorite ride-hailing company and the Gojek advertising video entitled *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempo*l has a strong emotional side. This research fills a gap in knowledge by offering a deep understanding of how semiotics can be employed to comprehend communication strategies in digital advertising, especially for brands operating in the online transportation industry.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant theories, definitions, and previous studies related to the research. One of the related theories discussed is semiotics, which is relevant to this analysis. The primary source of data for this research will be the Gojek advertising video entitled *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempol*, which will be obtained from the internet.

2.1. Semiotics

Semiotics is a science that studies signs and their role in social life, and it has a close relationship with linguistics. The theory of signs can be traced back to ancient times, but it was not until John Locke's Essays Concerning Human Understanding that semiotics was explicitly mentioned as a branch of philosophy. The founders of modern semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure, have different views on the field of study, but they both consider signs to be an essential part of social life (Chandler, 2007). Semiotics can be divided into three branches of inquiry, namely syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, which respectively study the formal relationship between signs, the relationship between signs and the objects they refer to, and the relationship between signs and their interpreters or users (Wahjuwibowo, 2013). Semioticians use the three basic questions of what a certain structure means, how it represents what it means, and why it means what it means to identify the structure of the media.
The concept of code is essential in semiotics, and it organizes signs into a meaningful system by correlating between signifier and signified through the structural form of syntagms and paradigms (Chandler, 2007). Code conventions represent a social dimension in semiotics, and they are a set of practices familiar to media users operating within a broad cultural framework. The production and interpretation of the text in

semiotics depend on the code regarding the formation of communication, and no discourse can be understood without the operation of codes. Semiotics draws heavily on linguistic concepts, partly because of their influence, and also because linguistics is a more appropriate discipline than the study of other sign systems. In conclusion, semiotics is a broad and interdisciplinary field that encompasses various aspects of signs and meanings, and it has significant applications in fields such as media studies, cultural studies, and communication studies.

2.2. Charles Sanders Pierce's Theory

Charles Sanders Pierce's sign theory emphasizes that a sign is not an entity alone, but is composed of three aspects: the sign itself, its object, and the interpreter. The interpreter is a crucial element in associating a sign with its object, and the process of interpreting a sign is called semiosis. For Pierce, a sign is something that stands for something in some respect or capacity, and requires a ground in order to function (Lechte, 2001). This triadic relationship between ground, object, and interpretant forms the basis of Pierce's sign classification.
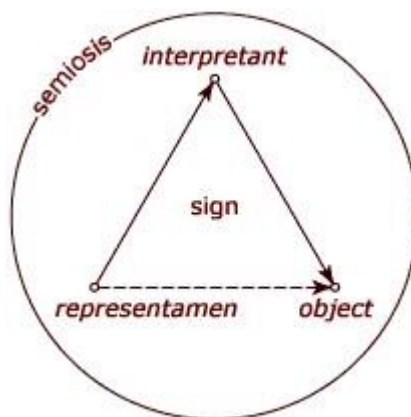
Figure 1. Semiosis process

2.2.1 Representament

This element is concerned with the form that the sign takes, regardless of its material composition. Peirce classified signs into three groups, based on the first trichotomy: qualisigns, sinsigns, and legisigns. Qualisigns single out some quality of the referent, like an adjective in language, while sinsigns represent a specific thing or event that exists in time, space, and context. Finally, legisigns are based on generally accepted rules or conventions, and every word in a language is an example of a legisign.

2.2.2 Object

Peirce's sign theory includes the element of object, which is what a sign refers to, and this relationship is one of determination where the object determines the sign. Peirce further divided the relationship between the representamen and object into three categories: icon, index, and symbol. An icon is a sign that is recognized by its users because it contains a similarity to its object, while an index is a sign that has a concrete and actual relationship with its object, usually in a sequential or causal manner. Finally, a symbol is an arbitrary and conventional sign that refers to its object based on an association of general ideas or a collective agreement within a society, and examples of symbols include flags, religious symbols, and linguistic signs.

2.2.3 Interpretant

According to Peirce, the interpretant can be divided into three categories based on its nature: rheme, dicisign, and argument. The rheme is a sign that allows for interpretation based on choice and understanding of the signified object. A dicisign is a sign that conveys factual information about the signified object, and its interpretation is in accordance with reality. Finally, an argument is a sign that directly gives reasons about something and is not about an object but a rule.

2.3. Advertising Video

Advertising is a marketing communication tool used to promote ideas, goods or services by a specific sponsor for a fee. According to Kotler, it is any form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services that must be paid for (Armstrong & Kotler, 2011). As stated by Davidson, advertising is included in the marketing communications section (Davidson et al., 2004). This means that advertising is an effective way to reach out to the public and create awareness about the products and services offered.

Wicaksana emphasizes that advertising is a news message aimed at encouraging and persuading the general public to be interested in the goods and services offered (Wicaksana et al., 2022). Thus, it serves as a powerful marketing tool that helps companies reach out to their target audience. However, Michman highlights that advertising requires different approaches and communication with a high level of cultural awareness (Michman et al., 2006). This is because cultural differences can impact the effectiveness of advertising in different regions.

Vivian emphasizes the importance of advertising in the consumer economy. It helps people know about the products and services available and make informed decisions. In addition, advertising is also important for the welfare of society as it promotes healthy competition among businesses. Advertising is also an important financial base of contemporary mass media (Vivian, 2013). Without advertising, media outlets would struggle to finance their operations, which could result in limited access to information for the public.

2.4. Previous Study

The two theses discussed the semiotics of advertising. The first thesis by Alfian Gilang Pramana analyzed the meaning of *jempol* or thumbs-up in the advertising of Gojek (Pramana, 2022). The study used Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis and a descriptive qualitative method to reveal that *jempol* has broad and ambivalent connotations. It can mean approval, support, satisfaction, but also sarcasm, and irony. The second thesis by Zahra Aufa Ramadhina analyzed the meaning of the phrase "*Hijab Bukan Hambatan*" or "*Hijab* is not an obstacle" in the advertising of *Hijab* Fresh Hand & Body Lotion by Unilever (Ramadhina, 2022). The study used Charles Sanders Pierce's model of semiotics and a descriptive qualitative method to reveal that the advertisement depicted Muslim women with *hijab* as active, free, and passionate women who can achieve freedom without violating boundaries. The women in the advertisement are described as sporty, confident, always happy, and comfortable with the clothes they wear. The advertisement promotes the idea that wearing *hijab* does not hinder women from pursuing their dreams and expressing themselves.

Another study that contributes to this discourse is the semiotic analysis of the cat food "Whiskas" advertisement. The research aimed to understand the semiotics in the Whiskas advertisement, emphasizing the brand's longstanding reputation for producing quality cat food since 1958. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's system of "signifier and signified", the study employed a descriptive qualitative method to understand the semiotics in the Whiskas cat food advertisement. The research focused on the sign and the characteristics of the Whiskas Advertisement, sourcing data from websites and YouTube (Damaiyanti et al., 2023).

This research has similarities and differences with the three previous studies in terms of the themes discussed and the theories used. Like Ramadhina's research, this research also uses Charles Sanders Pierce's Semiotics theory. However, in contrast to Pramana's research which only analyzed the meaning of signs in advertisements using Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory, and only found 18 data, an incomplete result. This study uses primary data in the form of Gojek advertising video entitled *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempo*l consisting of several scenes. Hopefully, by using Pierce's Semiotics theory, the analysis of signs in the advertisement will produce deeper analysis results.

3. METHODS

This research is a type of qualitative research that collects and analyzes data in the form of words (spoken and written) and human actions. Qualitative analysis, including semiotic research, is systematic and analytical but not as rigorous as in quantitative content analysis (Wahjuwibowo, 2013). This research uses Gojek advertising video entitled *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempo*l as the main data, which is analyzed using Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic framework to classify signs. The data used in this study consisted of visual and verbal data, which were obtained from

advertising videos taken from Gojek's official YouTube channel and then taken several scenes which became the unit of analysis. The selected scenes are scenes that contain the *jempol* sign.

In qualitative research, data collection is a crucial process to gather and analyze data. The data collection technique used in this research is documentation, where the advertising video is taken from Gojek's official YouTube channel. The procedure for collecting data is meticulously structured, beginning with the identification of the target video on GoJek's YouTube platform. Following this, the video is downloaded, scrutinized, and relevant scenes are captured via screenshots. These scenes are meticulously chosen for their explicit connection to the *jempol* concept, manifesting visually, verbally, or audibly. Subsequently, these captured scenes are systematically coded, with the first scene designated as V1 and the subsequent scene as V2.

Data analysis is an important part of the research process, which involves collecting, modeling, and analyzing data to find the necessary information. In terms of data analysis, the study employs content analysis and draws upon the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Pierce to examine and categorize the semiotic elements. The analytical process is sequential, initiating with the selection of previously coded scenes from the *jangan sepelekan kekuatan dari sebuah jempol* advertisement. These scenes are then dissected to classify the semiotic signs into Pierce's categorical triad: icons, indices, and symbols. The culmination of this analysis is the presentation of data through screenshots, delineated based on the identified signs and their respective classifications within the semiotic framework.

4.   RESULTS

In this study, the researcher focuses on the classification of signs based on Pierce's theory. The researcher collected 13 scenes from one video and explained the results of his study in detail.
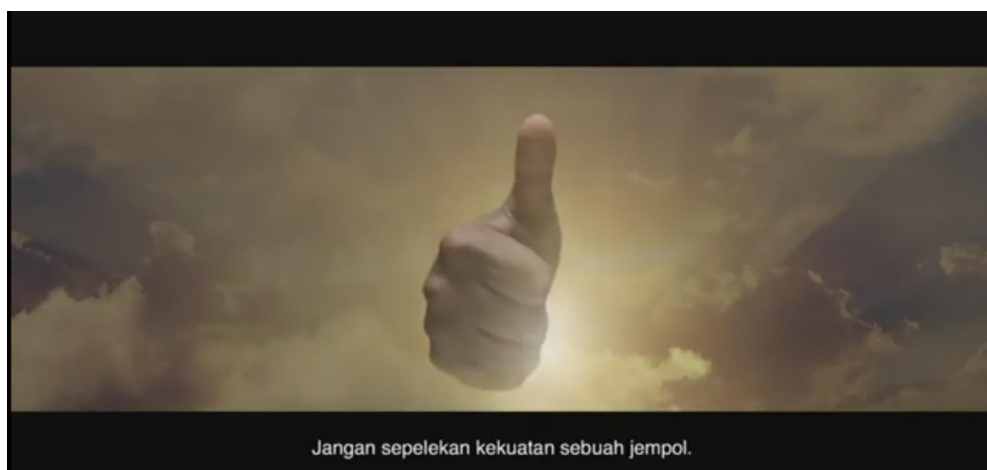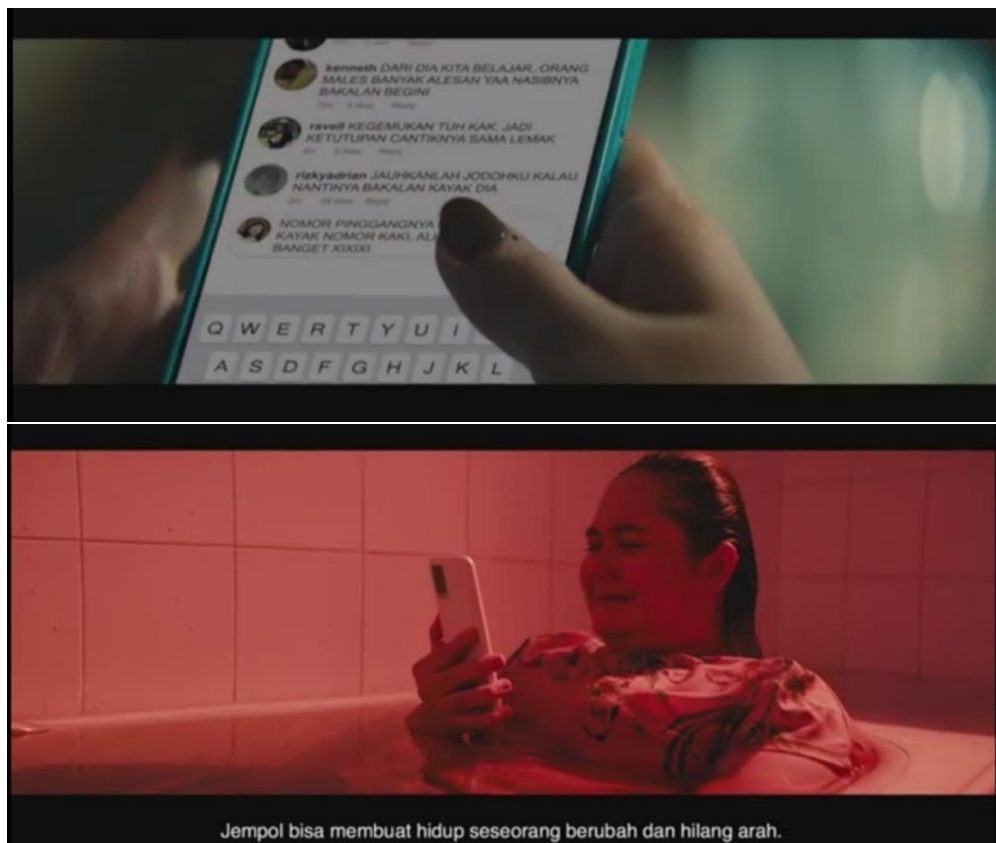
Figure 2. Data V1

Icon: cloud, dark sky, and a thumb sticking out from behind the clouds.
Index: a light around the thumb, color change from dark to light, and thumbs up.
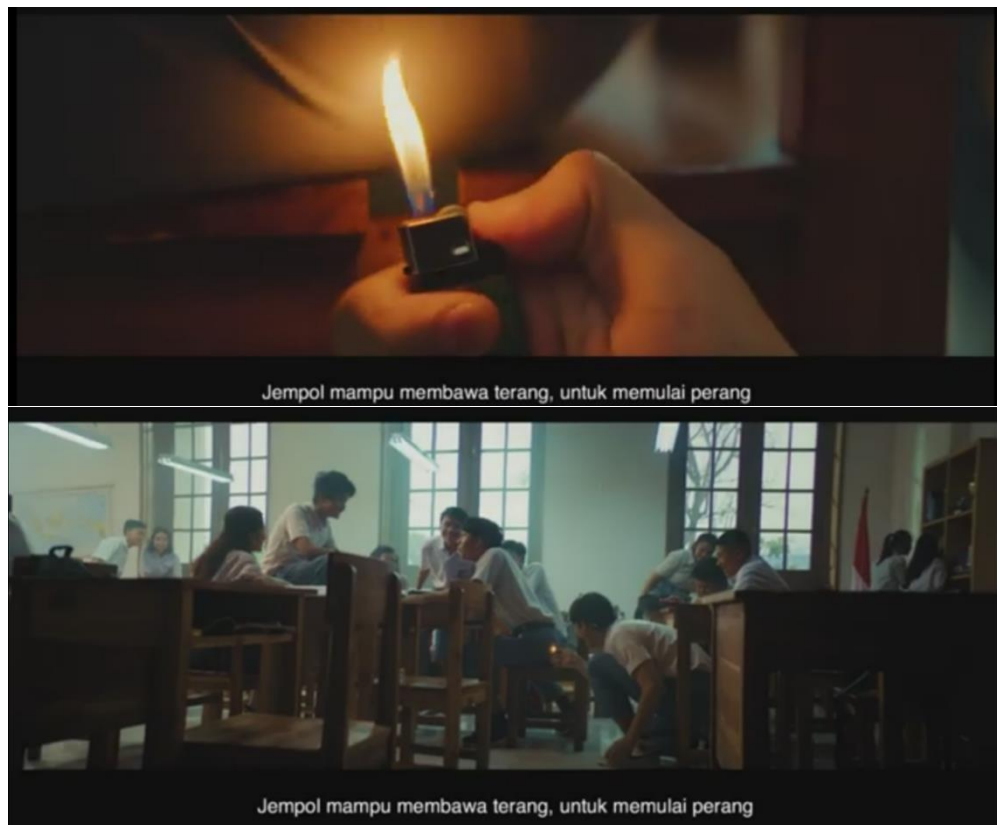Symbol: text *"jangan sepelekan kekuatan sebuah jempol"*.

Figure 3. Data V2

Icon: finger, smartphone and fat woman.
Index: someone typing on smartphone, light and red background, and a woman crying
in the bathtub while looking at the smartphone she is holding.
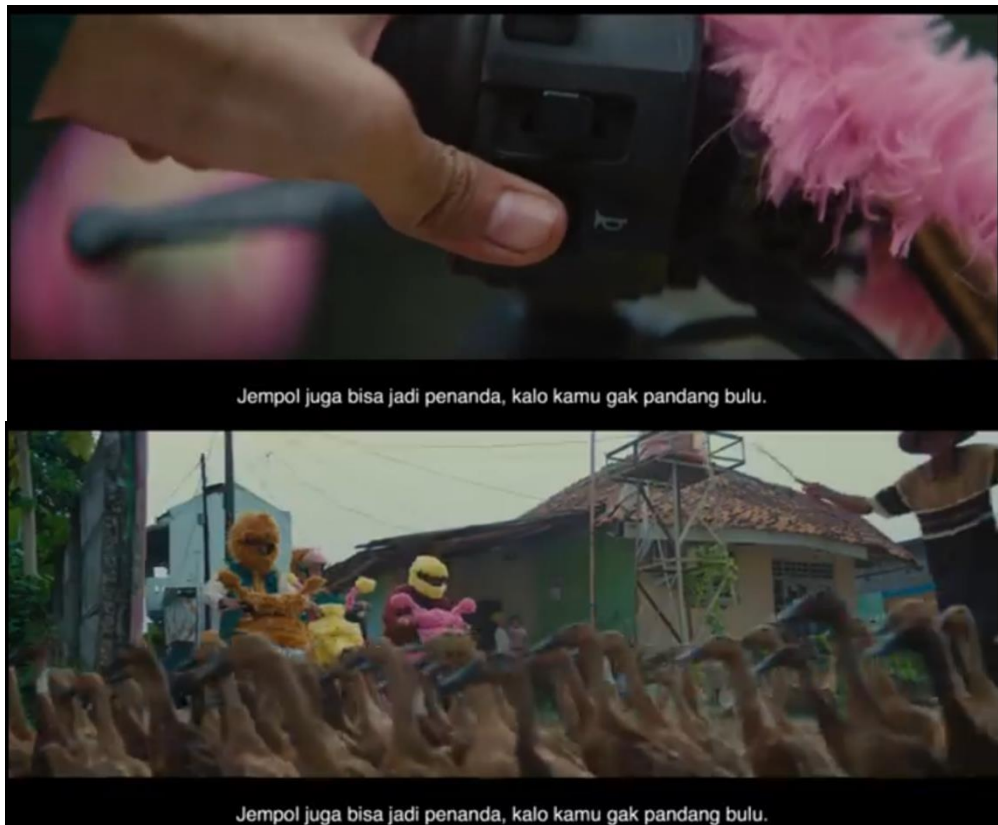Symbol: text "*jempol bisa membuat hidup seseorang berubah dan hilang arah*".

Figure 4. Data V3

Icon: finger, fire, match, senior high school students, and a classroom.
Index: a burning match, and gathered students in classroom.
Symbol: text "*jempol bisa mampu membawa terang, untuk memulai perang*".

Figure 5. Data V4

Icon: motorcyclist, motorcyclehorn button, and ducks.
Index: sound of motorcycle horn, someone is herding ducks.
Symbol: text "*jempol bisa jadi penanda, kalo kamu gak pandang bulu*".

Figure 6. Data V5

Icon: a man with a backpack, and someone is driving a car. Index: someone up his thumb.

Symbol: thumbs up, and text "*Dia bisa menjadi alasan sebuah pertemuan yang disebut jodoh, atau bukan*".
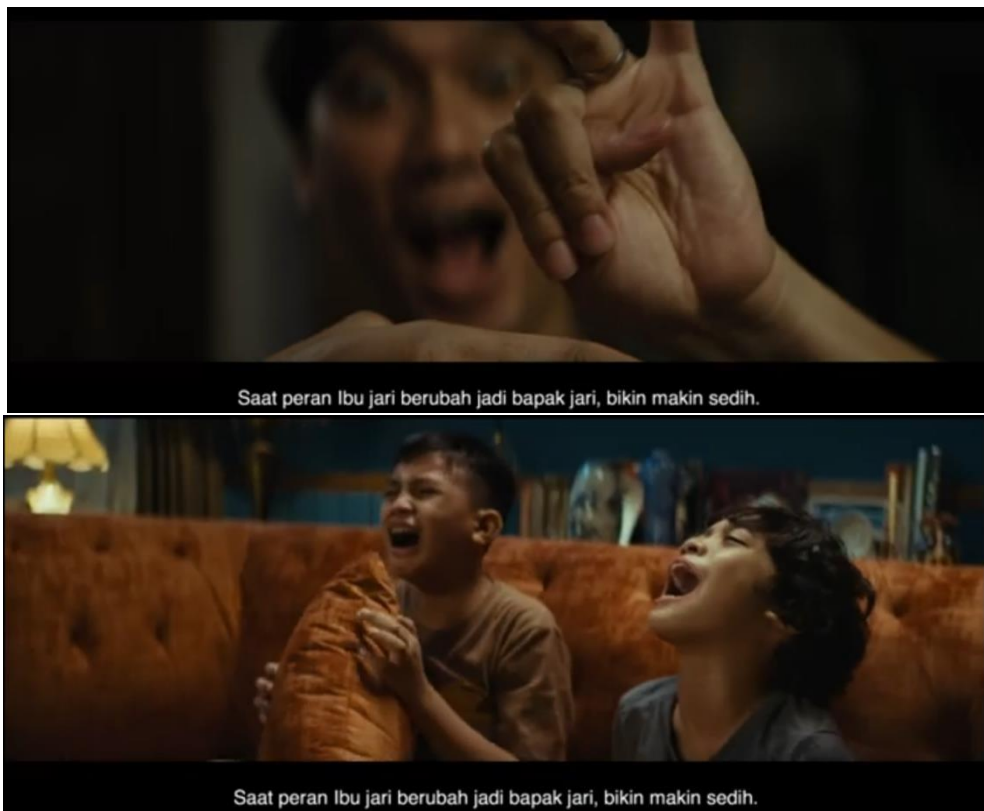

Figure 7. Data V6

Icon: a father with two children.

Index: father is making shapes out of his fingers, and his two children is crying Symbol: text "*Saat peran Ibu jari berubah jadi bapak jari, bikin makin sedih*".

Figure 8. Data V7

Icon: football players and supporters.
Index: a supporter and someplayers players giving thumbs up each other. Symbol: thumbs up and text "*Jempol bisa membangkitkan semangat*".

Figure 9. Data V8

Icon: a couple is walking in the rain and open an umbrella
Index: the man's thumb plugged the hole on umbrella.
Symbol: text "*Jempol itu Inggrisnya thumb, Indonesianya thumb-elan*".

Figure 10. Data V9

Icon: a music concert, singer, and audience.
Index: audience is dancing, singer and all audience giving their thumbs up.
Symbol: singer giving her thumbs up and text "…*bahkan sampai menggerakkan massa*".

Figure 11. Data V10

Icon: someone who sticks his thumb up his nostrils. Index:
a thumb sticked into the nostril.
Symbol: text "*Seberapa bijak kita menggunakannya?*".

Figure 12. Data V11

Icon: Gojek driver and a woman.

Index: woman gave the helm and gave thumb up to driver. Symbol:

Gojek attribute and woman voice "*bapak hebat*".

Figure 13. Data V12

Icon: a man and a woman.

Index: a man open Gojek application on his smartphone, the woman is holding plaque award and look at that, and the woman smile.

Symbol: thumbs up acrylic plaque award, Gojek logo, and text "*Kalo jari punya ibu yang OK, Aku punya ibu yang HEBAT!*" on thumbs up acrylic plaque award.

Figure 14. Data V13

Icon: sky and clouds, thumb up, and pingky finger. Index:
thumb and pinky finger next to each other.
Symbol: thumb up, pingky finger, and text "*Kamu semua jempolan, kamu hebat!*"

5.   DISCUSSION

 Based on the advertising video that have been analyzed, 13 scenes are found that are
directly related to the jempol. There are 2 *jempol* as an icon, 4 *jempol* as an index and
7 jempol as a symbol. Of the 7 jempol as symbols, verbal signs appear more frequently,
in 4 scenes, while the remaining 3 are non-verbal signs in the form of gestures or sign
language. Verbal language in the form of words, labels and sentences in Pierce's view
is indeed classified as a symbol (Pierce, 1935).

The *jempol*, as an icon, is represented through visual resemblance found in Scenes V1
and V13, where its occurrence signifies the beginning and the end of a sequence, often
linked to the concept of approval or acceptance in visual communication.

As an index in Scene V8, the *jempol* serves a more dynamic and contextual function,
where its presence not only represents the object but also conveys information about
the state of that object, such as a leakage in an umbrella. Peirce argued that an index
has a direct connection to its object through causality or contiguity (Peirce, 1935).

In terms of the *jempol* as a symbol, there is variability in its manifestation, between
verbal and non-verbal forms. The verbalization of symbols in the form of words, labels,
and sentences provides a more specific and conventional context within a particular
community, as seen in Scenes V5 and V9. The *jempol* in this form indicates a social
agreement that has been established and communicated through language.

The non-verbal thumb, in the form of gestures or body language, reflects the use of
signs that are more intrinsic, often associated with emotional expressions or
spontaneous responses that do not require verbalization. This can be seen in the context
of Scenes V5 and V9.

To enrich the discussion, research by Eco on Cultural Codes can be integrated, considering that *jempol* can be seen as a code whose meaning is influenced by specific cultural contexts (Eco, 1979). For instance, in some culture, a thumbs-up is often interpreted as a positive sign, while in other contexts it may not hold the same meaning. Further research by Barthes on Mythologies and semiotics can also provide insight into how the *jempol* is turned into a myth or ideology in advertising, representing a social reality constructed through signs (Barthes, 1972).

6.   CONCLUSION

Based on the advertising video that have been analyzed, 13 scenes are found that are directly related to the jempol. There are 2 *jempol* as an icon, 4 *jempol* as an index and 7 jempol as a symbol. Of the 7 jempol as symbols, verbal signs appear more frequently, in 4 scenes, while the remaining 3 are non-verbal signs in the form of gestures or sign language. Verbal language in the form of words, labels and sentences in Pierce's view is indeed classified as a symbol (Pierce, 1935). The *jempol* icon only appears once in the opening video (V1), and once at the close (V13). The *jempol* as an index has a story context, there is an element of cause and effect, for example like in V8 a person closes an umbrella with his thumb which indicates a leak in the umbrella, in contrast to the appearance of the *jempol* as an icon which emphasizes similarity like V1 and V13, *jempol* as symbols which emphasize something arbitrary and community conventions like in V5 and V9 as examples.

The research shows that the appearance of *jempol* as an icon emphasizes similarity, while *jempol* as an index has a story context, cause-and-effect elements, and *jempol* as a symbol emphasizes community agreements and conventions. The results of this study provide important insights into the use of *jempol* in communication. The discovery that *jempol* can function as icons, indices and symbols also illustrates the richness and complexity of language and shows that it has a remarkable ability to express ideas and emotions.

While this study has shed light on the intricate interplay between semiotic elements in Gojek's advertising video, it also opens up several avenues for further research. The insights gained prompt additional questions that merit exploration in the field of advertising and semiotics. The interpretation of semiotic signs can vastly differ across cultural contexts. Future research could examine how Gojek's advertisements are tailored to diverse cultural audiences, particularly how semiotic elements are adapted to resonate with local sensibilities in the Southeast Asian market.

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