



**CLASSIC TO MODERN:
A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF COCA-COLA POSTER IN THE
ADVERTISING WORLD**

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Advertising plays a vital role in shaping brand identity through the use of signs and symbols. Being one of the most recognized worldwide brands, Coca-Cola has always been ready to revise visual communication to make it correspond with the cultural trends. The purpose of the study is to examine the semiotic related issues in the old and new Coca-Cola advertisements to learn about how the brand has been building its message in various times and target publics. This study adopts the Charles Sanders Peirce theory of signs (semiotic) using qualitative research design in the study of icons, indexes and symbols. Three of the Coca-Cola posters were selected as the source of data; two of them represented modern posters, with one being the classic one, whereas the other two theme the posters upon collaborations with the online game League of Legends and the K-pop genre. The analysis of visual elements in both posters in order to discover the ways of encoding the meaning in terms of the cultural references and design strategies was carried out. It demonstrates that, in this case, Coca-Cola is able to maintain core symbolic values like red color and its logo and adjust its message to suit to the specific groups of audience. The energy and digital culture are the focal points of the League of Legends poster, whereas the K-pop one lacked it and focused more on creativity and identifying with youth culture. By using such strategies the Coca-Cola Corporation is also able to support both the traditional brand values and the contemporary subcultures themselves, and remain relevant in its global marketplace with the ever-increasing media fragmentation. This research provides a view of how semiotics is playing a critical role in brand developing its identity and heritage by looking at the way in which a brand uses signs, symbols and culture-specific messages.

Keywords: Semiotics, Icons, indexes and symbols

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