

MEANING IN AMBIENT MEDIA ADVERTISING; A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH (CASE STUDY: MIRACLE AESTHETIC CLINIC AMBIENT MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

Meaning does not contained in advertisements' visual signs, it is inside the mind of the beholder. References that have been read or experiences that have been passed will construct context which affects the depth of meaning. The signification purported to ambient media as an advertisement alternative affected by the environment of the ambient media. Physical environment as well as human actions became the part of ambient media's visual element. Right now, the signification is not bound by the advertisement media as a sole object, but it is being correlated with the advertisement field where the ambient media being placed. Miracle Aesthetic Clinic's "faceless" ambient media being visually represented in a hyperbolic-contradictive way by sinking a woman's face through a wall or a table top. Generally, face is the commodity in advertising, moreover in facial treatment commercial services. Responses from the target audiences are: some of them approached, some just curious about what happened with the model, and some of the target audiences frightened and left the ambient media. This critical analysis discourse study shows that the quality of participative responses by the target audiences shown depth to the formed signification. The creator sought to construct discourse by the ideology of 'righteously ashamed if having facial acne'. The gap of advertisement signification between target audiences and creator will be narrowed when the visual signage reference of the ashamed-caused-by-acne discourse made into a new myth in social practices.

Keywords: *ambient media, advertising, modality, beauty ideology, myth*

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising perform its functions to communicate information, to persuade the target audiences, and remind the target audiences about such message (Lee & Johnson, 2007:10). Advertisements keep on doing guerrilla advertisings by various means to persuade the target audiences to consume services and products offered. The influence of advertising on the target audiences works at the level of human subconscious mind. The brain is stimulated by images of a ideal beauty, masculinity, glamour, or other basic ideologies. When the target audience realized they are being trapped into the persuasive circle vortex, the audience will try to avoid, resist, or at least want to know more about the value offered by the advertisement.

Visual communication design in the form of ambient media is an art to deliver information or messages by the usage of visual representation language. Visual communication designs intended to inform, to affect, and to give behavioral changes to the targeted audiences based on the expected goals. Generally, the processes of the design emphasize on function and aesthetic aspects, as a result from a lengthy researches, thoughts, and brainstorming, as well as designs that already existed (Anggraini, 2014:15).

At first, the task of advertisement creators is how to make the target audiences interested to see, halt, approach, and understand the message that wanted to be transferred. This background makes ambient media chosen as an advertising alternative so that

the target audiences would approach.

Ambient media is an alternative way of advertising that utilize elements of the physical environment to enable stronger relationship (Snipes, 2012:1). Form of visualization processed as if it seen merged with the environment. Generally, it is because the target audience would avoid the advertising media and also its derivatives. As well as when the target audience keep away from sales promotion girl, or reluctant to linger to read a poster or billboard, or immediately change another channel when the advertisement in television appears. Essentially, advertisement tends not to be responded and shunned.

There are differences between ambient media and conventional advertising media in the way they deliver the message. Cleverness in processing similar form and character of the environment become the identity of ambient media. Ambient media turned the place they occupy into an advertising terrain, in an intelligent and unexpected way. The target audiences will be entertained and feel intimate with the ambient media. However, there are also target audiences that even disturbed by the presence of ambient media (Collins, 2014:118).

Ambient media sometimes create surprises and also have the power to attract public's attention. The public are invited to linger to pay attention on ambient media and being included as a visual element of the advertisement. Longer time to stare beyond the normal allows deeper message penetration in the minds of the target audiences (Green, 2006:1).

There's a phenomenon where the message that spoken is likely different from what is expected by the advertiser. What is considered to be funny is not funny at all. It occurs because of differences in values, culture, and knowledge. Actually, the difference in meaning is not only particular to the ambient media itself, it happens in other advertising media too. Ambient media possible to perform in a three-dimensional shape, massive size, and involving some members of the body to the entire body of the target audience. How do visual elements in the physical environment affect the target audience signification?

Advertising messages delivered by the ambient media in a wrong way as it does in a way to scare (horror), disgusting, sarcasm, it could be - instead of being a form of persuasion it evoked a traumatic

experience. As a result the advertising message is not readable, not interpreted. As a form of media, ambient media will not be responded positively.

Miracle Aesthetic Clinic (Miracle), as one of the commercial services of body care, skin, and facial treatments clinic, promotes services specifically for facial acne treatment by ambient media. To choose ambient media as an advertising media oriented to invite target audiences' reaction, interested to see, observe, touch, read the message, and other possibilities. The central idea of ambient media is the face, but on this ambient media the face (as the visual element), is concealed.

Discourse is a way of organizing actions, as well as the identity of people who produce texts. Identity will show the position and characteristics of actions in the way they related. Identity may be taken for granted or as a new formation with a specific purpose. Hence, there are times when the identity is not neutral, constructed for specific purposes.

Visual construction describes sequence of event. In a social point-of-view, visual constructions collected as much as possible, sorted and selected, and then represented in a stylish way (Subandy Ibrahim, 2011:202).

Concealment of the face on the visual elements of ambient media does have an attraction to be approached by the target audience. By the hidden face visualization, it would make the target audiences curious to pay attention closer.

Otherwise, when a pretty face of a female doll exposed, then the target audiences will think no more than a mannequin to show off clothes in a fashion store. Obviously the target audiences respond to the female doll as something strange, naive, and no aesthetical treatment as an advertisement.

Miracle Aesthetic Clinic (Miracle) "faceless" ambient media design visually represented with two (2) versions. 1). A slim postured female mannequin with a face sunk into the lift's wall; and 2). A female mannequin, sat slumped with her face sunk into the lecturer's desk. Both of them applied at Trisakti University's Master Degree Class, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Miracle's ambient media visually represented in a hyperbolic contradictive way; by drowning a woman's face to the wall or a table that does not happen in real life. Generally, the face becomes an

advertising commodity, especially for commercial skin care services advertisements. Therefore, no matter how pretty a mannequin's face, it is 'naïve' if exposed.

Inside an advertisement's structure contained loads of messages to be conveyed to target audiences by the advertiser. To lead the target audiences to interpret deeper, those messages visualized in the form of a sign. This paper would seek answers: 1). Do sinking of face as a visual sign attract target audiences to stare, to approach, and try to identify longer? 2). What kind of response that emerged? 3). How do the myth of beautiful women ideology formed in the ambient media discourse? And what meaning can be understood by the target audiences?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research uses the theory of meanings from Ferdinand de Saussure. De Saussure in his semiotic theory offer 'arbitrary in linguistic signs' doctrine. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. There is no definite logical relationship between signifier and signified, which makes the text or signs into something interesting or even problematic at the same time. This idea rests on the argument that the signifier only has an arbitrary relationship to the signified.

In the term of communicating, someone uses a sign to send messages about object and the others will interpret these signs. For Saussure the images are called 'referent'. Saussure interpret 'object' as a reference and mention it as an additional element in the process of signifying.

Signifier and *signified* is an inseparable unity. The whole process of understanding of the signs partly based on social conventions and individual reactions (Danesi, 2004:7).

Signification and meanings need something to bridging the gap with the targeted audience. In this case, ideas from the ambient media transferred by Modality to the targeted audience. Modality generally defined as a way how signs transmitted. In this case, the signs may be words, gestures, attributes, and voices, to show attitude or emotion. Visual elements as form of modality may represent people, places, and objects as if they were real, even if they actually exist in such circumstances or not - even though they are in form of delusions, fantasies, caricatures, etc. Modalities target the process where

the conveyed meaning may be accepted, depending on the usage of codes or media that being used. Modality assessment tend to be social, depending on something that is considered real (or true, or holy) in social groups that designated as the primary representation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 156).

Mastery of science as a form of modality is not merely limited to the visual representation of the pretty face. Elements of education, morals, and passion in advertising turned into the form of modality.

Understanding of modalities began by the understanding of 'belief of the human body'. The usage of human body as ambient media object interpreted through the sense of sight. It is defined by Barthes as a system of signification; denotation and connotation. Denotation is a level of description of the lived meaning, whereas connotation is the meaning produced by linking a sign with matters of particular concern from a broader culture, or with a variety of beliefs, attitudes, frame, and ideologies which make up the certain social formations.

Social situation and conditions affected by the Hegemony. Hegemony needs to be understood as a condition of dominance held by individuals in the back of the media regarding to the way of life and a certain thoughts. This way of thinking and living disseminated to the public through the planting of ideology. According to Gramsci, hegemony arises from the power elite who have 'the power and access' obtained through consent without any coercion. Ruling class has the legal rights to regulate public life in accordance with the ideas that they charge. Hegemony as the acquisition of supremacy through intellectual and moral leadership for the support of the power of ideas approved the audiences. Hegemony works through the idea that being echoed continually by visual signs, including visual signs in advertising (Simon, 2004: 19-20).

Domination over people without any coercive or violence is easily to embed inside the mind. Humans created the cognition of the environment in the realm of thoughts. Bandura hypothesize that humans learn life by watching people. Much of human behaviors are learned through modeling. Modeling is a direct and mechanical behavioral reproduction or imitation. A 'model' in the environment, (for example: friends, family members, public figures, and entertainers) will be emulated by other individuals just by looking at the model. Humans are realize and remember the

behavior of people who have been observed, which will be trained over and over mentally, and when motivated will be emulated physically (Collin & Benson, 2012: 288).

The behavior and attitude of people affect the way they perceive things. Theory of perception reveals the process of organizing and understanding of individual stimulus in order to get something meaningful and as an integrated activity within the individual. According to Berkeley, the perception is the origin of all knowledge. What is captured by the thought simply an idea not the object itself, since the material is outside the experience. The world consists of ideas and thoughts that capture those ideas (Buckingham & Burnham, 2011: 139). Perception can be used refer to the process and product of the process, which is the resulting experience. Visual perception is a paradigmatic perceptual process in the form of collection of human knowledge about objects, events, and facts in their environment (Jacob & Jeannerod, 2003: 135).

Visual representation in ambient media perceived as a vague territory between reality and simulation. Simulacra in a broader meaning defined as something resemble or made to resemble other things. The smallest form of simulacra is simulacrum, referred as a form of visual reconstruction by utilizing visual representation technology, which has correlation with the replicated object in reality or fantasy. The image is absolutely not related to any kind of reality, because the image is a pure simulacrum (Audifax, 2006: 104). Animated form of loosed-black hair on television advertisi, is a narrative representation of healthy hair sample. In a world of hyper-reality, there are uses of fantasy, fiction, nostalgic, and hallucinations elements that cause human difficult to distinguish between the real world and fantasy. People who enter it, eventually forgets to reflect the signs, messages, meanings, or norms in it. Visualization that generated in the realm of hyper-reality capable of generating real nature of simulation is so from the fantasy idea. The simulations have been uprooted from its representation, but able to enchant and bring people into a world of its own that detached from reality (Audifax, 2006: 22).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative study using Critical Discourse Analysis method as an empirical research that seeks

for relations between discourse and socio-cultural development. There are three analyzes in Critical Discourse Analysis, namely: 1). Textual analysis, to analyze the visual language of ambient media advertising as a text; 2). Practical discourse analysis, the study of how do signs produced and consumed; and 3). Social practice analysis, to analyze the socio-cultural practices that affects the textual meaning. Based on the study, these methodological approaches tend to criticize uneven social condition and to give contribution for such situation (Jorgensen, 2010:326).

There are four (4) elements that were studied in the research, such as: people who are involved, fields, relations, and interactions. How do involved people (advertiser, target audiences, and the physical as well as social environment) play a role as actors, following their proxies in a related field. Advertisement field is the physical environment that follows the movement of the target audience where the advertisement was placed. Furthermore, there is interaction between involved people. Interaction of the ambient media raises various response qualities regarding the depth of meaning. Target audiences' signification affected by myriads of discoursed references.

4. DICUSSION AND FINDINGS

This research is using critical analysis discourse method comprising of: 1). Textual analysis; 2). Practical analysis discourse; and 3). Analysis of social practices. This research's critical point is on the understanding that the presence of ambient media advertising as a deliberate form of text constructed with a specific purpose.

4.1. Textual Analysis

Miracle Aesthetic Clinic ambient media advertising aims to offer facial beauty treatment services, especially women with acne. Miracle Aesthetic Clinic "faceless" ambient media visually represented a female figure whose face was buried in the wall of an elevator and slumped on the desk of Master Degree class of Trisakti University campus.

Visual elements of Miracle's ambient media constructed into three forms, namely: *First*, to forming the identity – that ambient media is a figure of a female body - a black long-haired, slim figure, and curvaceous waist and breast. She wore a green cardigan, orange scarf, light-blue-colored long skirt, high-heeled boots, leather handbags, and perfume.

Visual representation of ambient media deliberately realist, meant that it is synonymous with the identity of the target audiences as the advertising orientation, so that the target audiences would not avoid the ambient media as an advertisement.

Second, to forming the subjectivity of an 'unhappy', sad, embarrassed, stressed, and sleepy female, therefore characterized by a narrative representation that hides the face. Advertisement appeal boosted by a contradictive hyperbolic manner narration where the model's face embedded on a hard object in which it is impossible to do. Furthermore, a motionless advertising model also evoked a curious attraction whether this female died or just a doll.

Third, to forming the domination over time and space. The placement of ambient media has the hegemonic power over space and time where it invites target audiences to respond the ambient media. Physical proximity to the advertisement object allows the advertisement object to be responded so it will be seen who is in the power over the relations that formed.

4.2. Practical analysis discourse

Miracle Aesthetic Clinic promoted the service by utilizing the potential where the target audiences are concentrated. In the first advertisement, it was placed in an enclosed space inside a 2x2m² lift, and the second one placed on a table inside a 6x15m² classroom with lightings brighter than the one in the elevator.

The reason why the ambient media being placed in Trisakti University Master of Communications class because it is a high classed educational institution with high tuition fee. The ambient media is identical with the students and their parents' of the program's social strata. It classifies the identity of the target audiences.

Trisakti University as an elite educated area is prevalent to high-class society. The social class situation that arose in the Master of Communication class of Trisakti University is identical with Miracle's advertising target.

4.3. Textual producing process

The emergence of signification of the target audiences purported to the ambient media advertising is influenced by how the text was produced and consumed. The quality of how ambient media visually represented, whether the

ambient media formed conceptually or not, influenced target audiences' impression against the ambient media. In the process of production, the seen visual elements are results of the creation of the creators which influenced by social cognition factors. How the creator's empirical experience affects the arrangement of the discourse that will be embedded in the advertisement. The identity of the creator as an actor is a representation of the advertiser and the advertising agency. The social cognition about the understanding of what is actually expected by a woman and what feelings that made women anxious are the background of an advertisement visual touch. Female figured mannequin designed identic with female students of a high-class educational institution.

Visual representation of ambient media is strongly related by its physical environment. The wall of an elevator and the top of a table have a character as a hard concrete object - as an element of the environment - deliberately chosen as a medium for buried face advertisement.

4.4. Textual consumption process

Ambient media placement is constructed in order to form a relation with its environment. Ambient media visually represented with narration that rose discourse.

The target audiences' perception of the Miracle's ambient media began with sensor stimuli caused by the visual elements of ambient media. Through sight, ambient media dressed fashionable, slim-bodied, straight long haired, and face down. The target audiences perceive these female figures as traits of 'human semblance'.

Responses came as a form of message consumption quality. The target audiences' response to the Miracle's ambient media is varied. Some of them did not look, glimpsed, long stared, frightened, and wondered whether the advertisement model a real object or not. The emergence of a woman who behaved empathic and humanist is one of the target audiences' responses. This woman's dialogue inspired much by the soap opera in the television program.

It is contrasted to men where they ventured to interact with the ambient media. They treat the female model with domination behaviors, such as: touched her back, held her head, reached into the bag, stared into her clothes, spun, and pulled her arm. Patriarchal ideology and men domination against women is still entrenched. Motionless

mannequin, head bowed, and smaller body size than a normal person – as the visual elements constructing the ambient media - are the reason why the mannequin is easily to be ‘overcome’ by men.

Response of men target audiences who behaved to marginalize woman due to cultural image where a father or a man is more dominant in the life of a family.

4.5. Social practice analysis

Ambient media is an advertising discourse which depicting, projecting, and stimulating a world what is called hyper-reality. Advertisement does not present a true social reality, but merely an artificial reality. In the mechanism of how an advertisement works, the advertisement operates by reflecting a particular culture to the public. Advertisement trying to represent the fact that live in society through certain signs, so it is able to turn on the impression in the minds of consumers, that the image of the displayed product is also part of the cultural consciousness; although it is just an imaging.

The image of a female in the context of advertisement is built by manipulating the female body as a sign of certain symbols. Stereotypes that inhere on female such as: elegance, softness, agility, spoilt, and others. Conception of the body is constantly changing to fit into the modern realm, which is known to define an imaginary body. This imaginary body notion is defined that the body is reproduced continuously, so that the body ultimately identical to the image.

Apparently, Miracle attempted to establish that the ideal female body was imaged as a woman who ‘embarrassed’ when she has facial acne. Constructed visual signs seek to embed new myth. Why it is named as a new myth? It is because the respondents felt there was no cultural value where they should be embarrassed when they had facial acne.

4.6. The shifting of beauty ideology

A woman said to be ‘beautiful’ when she has a slim body, beautiful hair, white skin, and a clean face. This idea of beauty refers to the appearance of models which often to appear on soap operas, catwalk fashion shows, body care treatments advertisements on television, or on the cover of magazines and outdoor medias. Women suggested

and oppressed with images of beauty ideology contained in various media; but on the other hand, women need referent when they need to look more beautiful.

Media has the ability to hegemony public mind until it identical to the image of the models shown on television. It suggests further that women will look more beautiful when it has a slim body and a clean face. This image certainly will motivate women to be always looked beautiful and seek to enter the zone of beautiful ones. Inevitably, women become anxious when they have to deal with facial acne situation. The flawless-looking face despite to not having proportion and physical character beauty (sharp-edged nose, thin lips, egg-shaped face, and white skin) has become the new image of ‘look-more-beautiful’ women.

Hegemony or ideas raised on this ambient media are ‘women are embarrassed when not performed pretty’. This hegemony dragged women into the identity of a certain social status as high-classed women. Facial treatment is a routine that must be done. When women are not familiar with facial treatment and having a facial acne problem, it is impossible for them to socializing and will be removed from the society.

Ambient media as a representation of the beautiful woman concept - although displayed by woman who is not beautiful - build an idea that arouse the public mindset where in order to look beautiful then there must be a contradictive way. The advertisement showed the image of a woman who does not look pretty and embarrassed to appear in public. Despite having the power and access in society, women still considered not dominant yet if they do not have smooth faces without acne. This is the ideological content that brought by the ambient media in order to influence target audiences.

4.7. Ambient media signification gap

The visible visual representation brought a frightening woman signification. The aesthetic elements of the elevator field built a horrifying atmosphere context. The placement of ambient media constructs the target audiences to confront with someone who does not show her face along with dimmed lighting.

Delusion or hallucination brought the target audiences’ mind into the realm of imagination. Empirical experience about bizarre or intimidating things make people learn and try to keep distance from what terrifies them.

Target audiences' signification affected by the field in which the ambient media is placed. Physical environment builds a different contextual discourse. When it is placed in a dim-lighted narrow space, the myth of a frightening woman dominates the response that led to unsuccessful message transmission of advertisement. Women are legible as a figure of inferiority. Women who are not confident are ashamed to appear in public when having facial acne.

Contrasted to the field (space and time) constructed where it is possible for the ambient media to be responded comfortably, it built relations that give possibility to different advertisement meaning. Ambient media in the classroom, where the field is brighter, and a more spacious room, the model is not perceived as a doll who ashamed to appear in public because of acne, but a woman who tired of working or sad.

Differences in the signification of beauty occurred because the female doll did not show any form of beauty ideology. Most of the target audiences', perceive that the female figure is a ghost, seen by the emotion of surprised that led to feelings of fear. The emergence of this discourse awakened when the daily lives shown many signs of frightening visual references.

5. CONCLUSION

In the textual analysis study, visual elements forming the structure of Miracle Aesthetic Clinic's ambient media read by the respondents as the female body. At first, the female mannequin ambient media as simulacra - a series simulacrum of mutual support to form a reality - has managed to manipulate the views of respondents whether ambient media models are real or not as a human figure. Ambient media is formed identical to the human body for the purpose in order not to be regarded as an advertisement which sometimes shunned by target audiences. At a later stage when the mannequin is motionless, it brings out realization that what is displayed is a form of advertising. Attribute accessories pinned on the mannequin showed a social identity of a model. The textual study found that: *First*, the visual elements of the hidden face become the idea that construct the meaning structure of an uneasy or embarrassed woman. *Second*, face drowned into a wall or table became a 'visual irregularities'. Contradictive-expression technique with hyperbolic stylization became the creative strategy of ambient media advertising. The relation between ambient media facial visual element that merged with the physical

environment in which ambient media embedded become the visual appeal of advertisement.

In textual production analysis and textual consumption, ambient media regarded as the practical usage of language, which carries meaning. In this case, ambient media categorized as not a system follower, but the ambient media damage the system or it is merely disrupt the system. In a study of the usage of "faceless" ambient media stunned to shock response appeared. However, excessive shock shows that ambient media do not work optimally as a messenger.

In social practice study, it appears that modalities working with the human memory mechanism. Modalities work to deliver a signifier in which humans often to be linked by the objective and the subjective side of the human experience in his body. In this study, audiences intersect with ambient media, appreciate themselves as a subject in basic form, and at the same time support the human body in relation to other human beings. Modalities compiled by visual elements managed to hegemony target audiences to come closer and interact, but not optimally to hegemony the ashamed of facial acne notion.

The modalities of ashamed figure when having facial acne modalities successfully invite attraction but its meaning is not understandable because of the reference gap. By the observation, there is a difference of meaning which is affected by the terrain. In the sample of advertisement placed in the elevator field, myth of horrible woman dominated. It is contrasted to target audiences by the advertising field at classroom. The target audiences saw that this ambient media model is not the representation of their identity. Their identity is already at the level of a social order where dominantly has a sense of pride, confidence, and bold to appear in public.

The reference meaning gap is narrowed by advertisers by means of repeated visual elements exposure so that it evoked a new discourse ideology, which is 'ashamed if having facial acne'. Views of visual elements will be optimized by the use of three-dimensional elements of ambient media advertising.

In this study also found that the ambient media has been able to dismantle the conventional ways to advertise. The target audiences are invited to participate responding to advertisements in order to form a new discourse in advertising.

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Figure 1. Miracle Aesthetic Clinic “faceless” ambient media advertisement Version 1, with the idea of a female who sunk her face into an elevator wall on Trisakti University, Master of Communications Program. Photography source: Wegig Murwonugroho, July 2012.



Figure 2. Idea of a shameful female as a narrative representation of Miracle Aesthetic Clinic “faceless” ambient media. Photography source: Wegig Murwonugroho, July 2012.



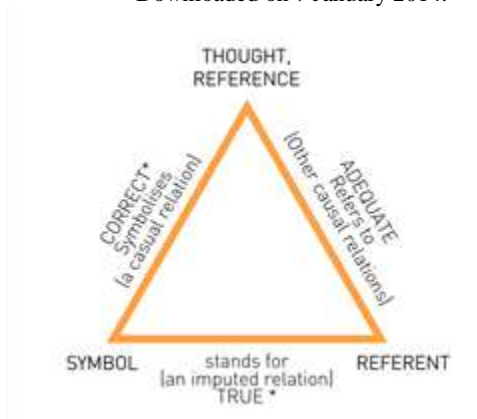
Figure 3. Target audiences’ interaction as a form of signification towards ambient media. Photography source: Wegig Murwonugroho, July 2012.



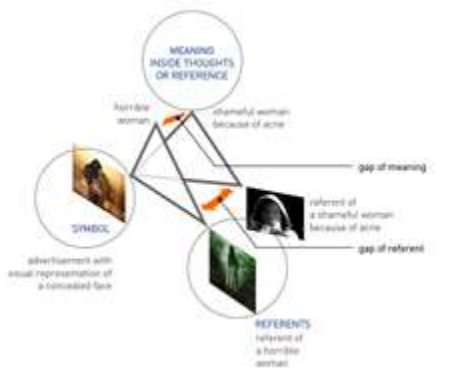
Figure 4. Women target audiences’ responded to the model as a form of sad and jaded woman. Photography source: Wegig Murwonugroho, July 2012



Figure 5. Reference image of a horrible woman
 Source:[http://www.21cineplex.com/kuntillan-kesurupan-\(kunt\),2507.htm](http://www.21cineplex.com/kuntillan-kesurupan-(kunt),2507.htm).
 Downloaded on 7 January 2014.



Scheme 1. Triangle of Meaning
 Ogden, C.K. and Richards



Scheme 2. Gap in meanings