

Interrelation of Verbal and Visual Signs Effectively Increases Engagement in @barenbliss_id Instagram Posters

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Abstract. This research discusses the semiotic signs used in the @barenbliss_id Instagram posters. This research aims to identify the verbal and visual signs used in Barenbliss Indonesia Instagram posters and explain how these signs shape consumer perception to increase brand engagement. This research used a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected from two Instagram posters published by @barenbliss_id in November 2024. These posters were documented and analyzed by identifying their verbal and visual elements. Afterward, the interrelation of the signs to increase engagement was explained. Afterward, the interrelation of the signs to increased engagement was explained. The analysis applied Barthes's semiotics theory and supported by Chandler's signs framework. The findings of this research show that visual signs are more dominant than verbal signs, with a total of 13 visual signs and 7 verbal signs. The signs used are texts containing information about the product, bright and soft colors, images of the product, and models that help visually show the product's use. The verbal and visual signs used on the posters are interrelated and complement each other. These results show that well-coordinated use of verbal and visual elements can effectively shape positive consumer perceptions and increase brand engagement.

Keywords: Consumer Engagement, Semiotics, Verbal, Visual Sign.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed communication by enabling users to actively select and share content that fulfills their informational, social, and identity needs. Instagram, with its emphasis on visual content and interactive features such as posts, stories, reels, and live broadcasts, has become a critical marketing platform worldwide. By 2024, Instagram reached 1.21 billion monthly active users globally, including 100 million users in Indonesia, offering brands vast opportunities to engage diverse audiences and build loyalty through visually driven narratives (Scott & Sterne, 2013). The cosmetic industry leverages Instagram's visual-centric platform to enhance consumer engagement. Brands use a combination of verbal and visual elements in promotional materials like posters to communicate product information and evoke emotional responses. Posters integrate slogans, product images, and design elements to convey brand messages effectively, improving comprehension and influencing consumer behavior (Kristanto, 2016).

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, provides a framework to analyze how meaning is constructed through verbal and visual signs. Saussure's dyadic model distinguishes the signifier (physical form) from the signified (concept), while Barthes differentiates denotative (literal) from connotative (cultural/emotional) meanings. These meanings are shaped by social and cultural contexts, making typography, color, imagery, and wording strategic tools for

guiding consumer perception (Barthes, 1968; Chandler, 2007). Barenbliss Indonesia, a clean beauty brand launched in 2021, effectively uses Instagram by combining clear verbal messages with strong visual designs. Despite its commercial success, academic research on how Barenbliss's Instagram posters utilize semiotic signs to communicate brand identity and engage consumers remains limited. This study aims to fill that gap by (1) identified the verbal and visual signs used on the posters and (2) explain the interrelation between the verbal and visual signs in @barenbliss_id's Instagram posters and how they shape consumer perception to increase the brand engagement.

2. THEORY

Semiotics, derived from the Greek words *semeio* (interpreter of signs) and *tikos* (pertaining to), is the study of signs and their meanings across various disciplines (Kurniawan, 2007). Saussure introduced a foundational dyadic model of the sign, consisting of the signifier, the physical form such as sound or image, and the signified, the mental concept, both of which are psychological constructs that together form a sign (Chandler, 2007). Barthes expanded Saussure's linguistic theory to include broader cultural phenomena such as images, body language, and symbols. Barthes emphasized that the signifier is always material, whether sounds, objects, or images, while the signified is a mental representation linked inseparably to the signifier (Barthes, 1968). This relationship forms the basis for understanding how meaning is constructed.

Barthes further distinguished between two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the first-order, literal, and universally accepted meaning of a sign, describing the direct relationship between the signifier and signified without ideological influence (Barthes, in (Chandler, 2007)). Connotation, on the other hand, is the second-order meaning shaped by cultural, emotional, and social contexts. It is more subjective and open to interpretation, reflecting the user's background and societal conventions. Barthes introduced the concept of myth as a second-order semiological system where everyday signs acquire deeper ideological meanings within cultural contexts. Myths naturalize specific ideologies by presenting them as universal truths, subtly reinforcing dominant societal beliefs and power structures (Barthes, 1968; Chandler, 2007). This layered system reveals how signs not only communicate but also shape perceptions and maintain cultural power.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, a descriptive-qualitative method was used to analyze and present the data. Creswell (2014) stated that the qualitative data can be in the form of audiovisual data, which aligns with this research. The data in this research was taken from @barenbliss_id Instagram, the data contain two posters posted on November 2024. Documentation method and note-taking technique were used to collect the data, then the data analyzed based on Barthes and Chandler's semiotic theories. The analysis of the data was presented in informal method as the results conveyed through words or descriptive explanation (Sudaryanto, 1993).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Verbal and Visual Signs Used in @barenbliss_id Instagram Posters

The analysis implemented Barthes's (1968) and Chandler's (2007) semiotic theories, this chapter identified the meanings conveyed by the verbal and visual signs, and their interrelation to shape consumer perceptions to increase brand engagement. The table below shows the total number of signs used on the posters to help understand the data easily and allows direct comparison between verbal and visual signs.

Table 1. Verbal and visual signs utilized in Barenbliss Indonesia Instagram posters

No.	Signs	Total	%
1	Verbal Signs	7	35%
2	Visual Signs	13	65%
Total		20	100%

Table 1 shows the total number of verbal and visual signs used in Barenbliss Indonesia Instagram posters. In total, 20 signs are identified from the selected data. Of these, 7 signs (35%) are verbal, while 13 (65%) are visual signs, this shows the visual signs are used more than the verbal signs. This finding is not surprising, as Instagram is a visually oriented platform where images, graphics, and visual aesthetics significantly attract audience attention. However, the presence of verbal signs is also significant, it conveys specific information, such as product descriptions, promotional messages, and calls to action, supporting visual elements.

Data 1

Data 1 is a promotional poster that was promoted Barenbliss Indonesia's LockLook Primer which launched on November 2024. This poster utilized seven dominant visual signs and two verbal signs to introduce its new makeup base, emphasizing visual communication strategy (Chandler, 2007).



Figure 1. The First Verbal Sign

The first verbal sign, the headline “LockLook Primer,” denotatively names the product, a primer designed to “lock” a wearer’s makeup looks, and connotatively suggests reliability and long-lasting wear (Chandler, 2007). The second verbal sign, the slogan “Satin Flawless Pore Free Perfection!” denotatively promises a smooth, poreless finish with a satin sheen and functions as a product slogan; connotatively, it reinforces elevated beauty ideals aligned with Korean standards of luminous, poreless skin associated with youth and health (Nagara & Nurhajati, 2022). Visually, the poster centers on a close-up of a youthful female model holding the primer tube against a pastel pink background. The model’s soft, glowing skin and the prominently placed tube together create an indexical link between product use and result. The pastel pink backdrop denotes softness, femininity, youthfulness, and approachability, qualities known to attract young consumers (Cerrato, 2012). The model’s wink adds a gesture of confidence and playfulness, fostering an intimate brand’s consumers connection. Typography further reinforces message hierarchy: a large, bold elegant font for “LockLook Primer” enhances online readability and recall (Rello et al., 2016), while a smaller font size for the slogan positions benefits claims as secondary yet supportive (Katzir et al., 2013). Through this semiotic interplay, model portrait, product image, lighting, color palette, typography, gesture, and background, Barenbliss taps into deep-seated desires for flawless, youthful skin. The promotional poster aligning with Korean beauty ideals and demonstrating inclusivity for Indonesian consumers seeking smooth, pore-less complexions, the poster constructs a myth of empowerment and self-assurance, effectively introducing LockLook Primer as both a cosmetic and a confidence-boosting make-up base (Arsitowati, 2018).

Data 2

The data 2 is also a promotional poster for Barenbliss Indonesia's new product, LockLook Primer, that launched in November 2024. This poster was in the same post with the first data, as it is part of the same campaign to introduce the product. Different with the first data, the verbal elements are dominating on the poster, showing the types of the product and the ingredients contained in the LockLook Primer product.



Figure 2. Promotional Poster for Barenbliss Indonesia's

Based on Barthes's dissimilarity between signifier and signified, the primary verbal signifier "YOUR PERFECT MATCH PRIMER" serves as a heading that denotatively promises an optimally blending primer and connotatively evokes personalization and emotional fulfillment, akin to finding a "cosmetic soulmate" (Barthes, 1968). The wording is addressing the consumer directly with "your," the text reinforces a consumer-centric philosophy consistent with modern personalization strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Secondary verbal signifiers "Tinted Primer" and "Poreless Primer" accompanied by descriptors such as "Lightweight Creamy Liquid Texture" and "Soft Blur Finish," denotatively communicate formula characteristics (texture, finish, skin suitability) and connotatively construct layered associations of comfort, efficacy, and skin-perfecting luxury (Barthes, 1968). These descriptive phrases create an interpretive field that guides consumer expectations about product performance.

Visually, pastel-toned tubes, soft background swirls, and close-up product textures function as visual signifiers that reinforce the verbal promises. The pastel palette denotes femininity and approachability, while the swirls suggest fluidity and seamless application. The layout, prominently centering text amid product imagery, ensures that verbal claims drive

viewer attention, with visual elements supporting rather than dominating the message. Together, these interlocking verbal and visual signifiers employ denotation to transmit clear product information and connotation to tap into cultural desires for personalization, perfection, and sensory pleasure. In Barthes's terms, this semiotic interplay naturalizes the primer's cultural myth: that makeup can be both a practical necessity and an intimate form of self-expression (Barthes, 1968).

Interrelation between Semiotic Signs in @barenbliss_id Instagram Posters to Increase Brand Engagement

Hollebeek (2011) defines customer brand engagement as a multi-dimensional state involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in brand interactions. In social media, engagement is often measured by actions like likes, shares, and especially comments (Lies Setyawati & Anindita, 2022). Chan, et al. (2010) also note that the number of comments on a post reflects how widely a brand is noticed. Engagement on social media is data that can be accessed freely by many people, especially on a brand's Instagram account because it is the type of account that is public, showing how users respond or feel about the content. Dekay (2012) likewise emphasizes the strategic importance of how brands handle consumer comments, underlining that comments signal active audience interest. Thus, analyzing comments provides insight into users' cognitive interest (questions about product), emotional reaction (praise, excitement), and behavioral engagement (choosing to comment). This research uses these engagement concepts to interpret the comments under the posters from data 1 and data 2.

Research by Rietveld et al. (2021) demonstrates that high visual content, especially posts featuring faces, drives more engagement on Instagram than text-only material. In the first poster, the smiling model carrying LockLook Primer against a bright pink color palette immediately catches the eye. Consumers can see the model's healthy, glowing face and the prominently displayed product tube, which together create a direct visual connection to the new launched product. The Headline "LockLook Primer" makes it clear that this is a face primer, and the subheading "Satin Flawless Pore Free Perfection!" informs viewers of its benefits and finish (Rietveld et al., 2021). The consumers comments under the post reveal multiple layers of engagement. Many express excitements, such as *Wah ada yang baru lagi nih, Huaaaa akhirnya, BNB ngeluarin primer, Yeaay akhirnya ada primernya*. Others show evaluative interest, referring to product variants, *Aaaaa sepertinya saya butuh yang pink, Poreless*

Primerrr cocok beut buat aku yang pori-pori besar berminyak, Paling sukak pake yang Poreless Primer.

These evaluative remarks mostly respond to the second poster's detailed breakdown of types and benefits. They illustrate that consumers pay attention to multiple slides in a single post and actively compare options. According to Hollebeek's (2011) tripartite model of customer brand engagement, this comment activity spans three dimensions:

- Cognitive: Viewers are processing information, asking questions about the new primer, and thinking about which variant best suits their skin type.
- Emotional: Enthusiastic comments, excited expressions, and heart emojis reflect affective investment in the brand.
- Behavioral: The act of commenting demonstrates active participation and investment in brand interaction.

Dekay (2012) further states that user comments form a Brand–consumer dialogue. The lively comment section here shows Barenbliss's strong community reach. Although the first and second posters are visually dominant, through model portrait, color palette, and layout, it is the verbal signifiers in the second slide (“Tinted Primer,” “Poreless Primer,” and benefit descriptions) that spark the most discussion. Consumers explicitly reference these textual cues when stating their preferences or asking follow-up questions, confirming that while Visual content secures initial attention, Verbal signifiers sustain deeper engagement. Rietveld et al. (2021) note that “effective facial expressions enjoy an unusual advantage” in eliciting likes and comments. The model's inviting expression not only captures immediate focus but also primes viewers for further Cognitive processing of accompanying text. In terms of Visual hierarchy, the model's face and pink palette dominate what viewers see first, while detailed text guides their subsequent attention. In results, Barenbliss's campaign leverages complementary Semiotic layers, striking visual content to draw viewers in and targeted verbal signifiers to provoke thought and discussion. This dual strategy maximizes both reach and engagement, turning a product announcement into an interactive Brand–consumer dialogue that spans cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Analysis of the two data from this research resulted in two conclusions. The research results show that there is a total of 20 signs were identified from the selected data, among those signs, 7 signs are verbal signs, while 13 signs are visual signs. The verbal cues used are dominantly product names, product types, and also explanations or information related to the product. The brand uses these types of verbal elements to present relevant information about the product, as both products are recently launched. The usage of these verbal signs also carries connotative meanings and myths, presenting how brands relate to their target consumers. There were various visual signs found on the four posters, and the most outstanding visual sign represented by the Barenbliss brand was the visual of the model's face. These visual signs encourage the perception or meaning by consumers with the message conveyed. The positioning of verbal and visual signs on the four posters is also balanced, following the purpose or messages that the brand wants to communicate. The results of this research showed that the visual and verbal signs are interrelated. Both verbal and visual elements used successfully bring positive perceptions to consumers, especially for consumers of Barenbliss Indonesia products. The consumer comments showing this active engagement aligned with the visual of the commercial, while the cognitive questions such as asking questions and raising awareness, correspond to the informative text. The results of this research hope to provide space for further research to examine more types of media and consumer engagement with a brand. Types of media can be researched such as dynamic posters and product promotion videos. Different data sources such as other social media or communities of a brand are also relevant.

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