

---

## **Verbal and Visual Sign in Selected Cosrx Instagram Ads**

---

**Dewa Gede Agus Krisna Putra Wiryana**

Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

[dkbeat11@gmail.com](mailto:dkbeat11@gmail.com)

**Putu Desi Anggerina Hikmaharyanti**

Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

[putudesi812@unmas.ac.id](mailto:putudesi812@unmas.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

*The utilization of both verbal and visual elements plays an important role in ads. This study seeks to discern the verbal and visual cues and also delve into the significance of colors employed in Cosrx advertisements. The research is grounded in the observation method, a means to elicit comprehensive and nuanced insights. In terms of analytical methodology, the study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis yielded a dataset comprising 22 instances, subdivided into 8 verbal and 14 visual cues. Within advertisements, a prominent trend is the inclusion of product ingredient names, such as AHA/BHA, Retinol, and Snail. These names function as a form of verbal sign, effectively conveying key information about the products to readers. This tactic assists in enlightening consumers about the specific components featured in the products, thereby heightening their awareness and understanding. Ultimately, the research elucidates how these strategies effectively communicate product attributes and qualities to consumers, fostering a more informed engagement with the advertised products.*

---

**Keywords:** Verbal Sign; Visual Sign; Cosrx; Advertisement

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is used to communicate of social groups or participants in its culture to express themselves by spoken, signed, or written symbols (Robins & Crystal, 2023). In other words, language is the basic tools used by human to communicate daily. In English literature, there is one branch of linguistics that concerns in meaning of language namely semantics. Leech (1985) define semantics as having to do with language's meaning includes the study of how words, phrases, and sentences comprehension. It analysing the connection between linguistic components and the concept they stand for. Moreover, according to Griffiths (2006), semantics is the study of sentence meaning and word meaning. In semantics there is one of the well-known concepts that study about communicating with symbol namely, semiotics. According to Nordquist (2020), semiotics is the theory and study of signs and symbols, especially as elements of language or other systems of communication.

Communication can be done by both ways verbal or visual. Kaplan (2023) stated verbal communication is, literally, oral communication with words that others pronounce aloud. However, nonverbal communication is the exchange of information through gestures, expressions on the face, and body language. In simple terms, verbal communication is a type of communication in which we convey information to the other person by using spoken and written words (Pavlovic, 2023). While the use of various visual mediums, such as graphic design, text, prints, charts, illustrations, typography, infographics, body language, signs, expressions, gestures, still images, color, and animation, to communicate information and convey data is known as visual communication (Bhasin, 2023).

In the digital marketing landscape, social media platforms have evolved into potent instruments for businesses to establish connections with their target demographic. Among these platforms, Instagram has risen as a preeminent arena for brands to showcase their merchandise and engage with consumers. One such brand that has adeptly harnessed Instagram's potential for advertising is COSRX, a renowned skincare enterprise. However, beneath the veneer of straightforward visuals and captivating captions lie intricate strata of meaning woven into the denotation and connotation of their advertisements. In this article, the researchers embark on a semiotic exploration, unraveling the concealed messages embedded within select COSRX Instagram advertisements.

COSRX, a well-established Korean brand, enjoys considerable popularity across Southeast Asia. In particular, Indonesia has become a hub of COSRX enthusiasts, with an abundance of favorable reviews. These positive testimonials signify the effectiveness and appeal of COSRX products, underscored by their well-crafted formulations. This study endeavors to elucidate both the verbal and visual signs while dissecting their denotative and connotative meanings. The choice of COSRX as the data source is substantiated by the substantial acclaim the brand has garnered and the remarkable assortment of verbal and visual signs exhibited in their social media advertising campaigns.

This research draws support from various semiotic studies. The first study, "A Semiotic Analysis in Victoria's Secret Product Advertisements" by Suryantara et al. (2022), aims to decode the meanings embedded in the verbal and non-verbal signs of Victoria's Secret Product Advertisements. The research unveils 22 instances of verbal and non-verbal signs, distinguished by two types of meaning—denotation and connotation. The second study, "A Semiotic Analysis In Downy Collection Advertisement" by Pratami et al. (2022), delves into the world of verbal and non-verbal signs in Downy Product Advertisements. The outcome reveals 72 instances of verbal and visual signs, divided into 38 connotative meanings and 34 denotative meanings. Lastly, the third study, "An Analysis of Verbal and Visual Signs Found on Grave of The Fireflies Posters" by Modok et al. (2021), undertakes an analysis of verbal and visual signs within the poster of "Grave of The Fireflies," uncovering 3 verbal signs and 5 visual signs. The third research is entitled An Analysis of Verbal and Visual Sign Found on Grave of the Fireflies Posters by Modok et al. (2021). The focus of this research is to analyze the meaning of verbal and visual signs found in the poster of Grave of the Fireflies. The result of this research reveals that 3 verbal signs and 5 visual signs found in the poster. The researcher used formal and informal method in analysing the data and applied three theories namely, Saussure (1983), Barthes (1977), and Wierzbicka (1996). The similarities between Modok's studies with this study are both of the studies used Barthes and Wierzbicka's theories in

analyzing the data and presented the data by formal and informal method. The differences between Modok's studies with this study are the previous study used poster as the data source since this study used advertisement. The second difference is Modok's study used Saussure's theory while this study used Chandler's theory.

These semiotic studies collectively lay the foundation for the exploration of COSRX Instagram advertisements, delving into the nuances of their verbal and visual signs. Through this examination, the article seeks to unearth the layers of meaning that enrich COSRX's advertising narrative and provide insights into the brand's messaging strategies.

## **METHOD**

This study employed COSRX's Instagram advertisements as the primary data source for this study. The selection of COSRX was driven by the substantial volume of messages conveyed through both verbal and visual signs within their advertisements. Notably, COSRX stands as a distinguished brand known for catering to a broad consumer base, encompassing both women and men. This inclusivity adds to the significance of exploring their advertising strategies.

The data collection process adhered to several methodological steps. It commenced with the identification and curation of pertinent data, followed by the retrieval of the advertisement images from COSRX's official Instagram account, denoted as @Cosrx. Subsequently, a meticulous analysis of these images was undertaken, with the aim of identifying both verbal and visual signs. This involved diligent notation, where each identified sign was documented in written form, allowing for comprehensive examination. Moreover, the task encompassed expounding upon the denotative and connotative meanings encapsulated within these signs.

In the pursuit of understanding these verbal and visual signs, Saussure's theoretical framework (1983) serves as the analytical cornerstone. Saussure's insights are instrumental in elucidating the intricate layers of meaning that underlie these signs. Furthermore, Wierzbicka's theoretical perspective (1996) augments the analysis, specifically in regard to comprehending the meanings encapsulated by colors employed within the advertisements. By harnessing the combined insights from Saussure and Wierzbicka, this study endeavors to unravel the semiotic narratives woven into COSRX's Instagram advertisements. These narratives, communicated through both verbal and visual cues, foster a deeper comprehension of the brand's messaging strategies and the perceptual dimensions they intend to evoke among their diverse audience.

Further, this study used qualitative research in analyzing the data. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is a technique for conducting research to discover and comprehend the significance that some persons or groups of people attribute to social or human problems. Moreover, qualitative research is research that collect non-numerical data (Mcleod, 2023). In presenting the data, the researchers used both formal and informal research. According to Smith (2023), formal research involves applying scientific procedures and a methodical approach, whether informal research is defined as the collection and analysis of data using non-scientific approaches. Moreover, as the name suggests, formal research is conducted using scientific study to replicate measurable outcomes in order to determine whether the results of informal research can and should be applied to a larger group (Johnson, 2017).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The theoretical foundations underpinning this study draw from the insights of Chandler (2007) and Barthes (1968). Chandler's theoretical framework is instrumental in the collection and classification of both Verbal and Visual signs within the context of Cosrx Instagram Advertisements. Meanwhile, Barthes' theoretical perspective serves to expound upon the denotative and connotative meanings encapsulated within these signs. To further complement the analysis, the study incorporates a supplementary theory presented by Wierzbicka (1996), which aids in elucidating the significance of colors featured in the advertisements.

In the course of this research, a total of 8 verbal signs and 14 visual signs were identified and analyzed. The culmination of this analysis is presented in the forthcoming table, providing a comprehensive overview of the observed verbal and visual signs in Cosrx Instagram Advertisements:

**Table 1. Result of Verbal and Visual Sign in Cosrx Instagram Advertisement**

<b>Advertisement</b>	<b>Verbal Sign</b>	<b>Visual Sign</b>
AHA BHA Exfoliating toner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AHA/BHA Liquid toner</li> <li>2. DAY 1 : Exfoliate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The product</li> <li>2. Purple colour</li> <li>3. Cotton</li> <li>4. Women applying the product</li> </ol>
Retinol serum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The retinol 0.5</li> <li>2. Day 2 : Retinol</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The serum products</li> <li>2. Green colour</li> <li>3. Women applying the product</li> </ol>
Advanced snail 96 mucin essence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced snail 96 mucin power essence</li> <li>2. Day 3: recovery</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The essence product</li> <li>2. Yellow colour</li> <li>3. Women applying the product</li> </ol>
Advanced snail 96 all in one cream	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced snail 96 all in one cream</li> <li>2. Day 4: recovery</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The all in one cream product</li> <li>2. Yellow colour</li> <li>3. Black colour</li> <li>4. Women applying the product</li> </ol>
Total	8	14

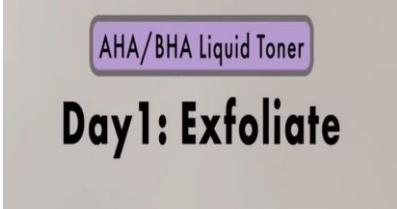
The amalgamation of these theories lays the groundwork for dissecting the multifaceted layers of meaning embedded within the advertisements. By meticulously examining both verbal and visual signs through the lens of Chandler, Barthes, and Wierzbicka, this study endeavors to unravel the semiotic nuances that construct the narrative communicated by Cosrx through its Instagram Advertisements.

Based on this research, researchers found that in the semiotic section, visual signs are the signs most widely used in advertising COSRX brand products. Of the four products advertised on Instagram, there are 14 visual signs that appear in the advertisement. Therefore, researchers can conclude that the sign that appears or is used most frequently in COSRX advertising is the visual sign, and the verbal sign is the sign that is least used.

Referring to the aforementioned table, the subsequent discussion provides a descriptive account of its contents. However, for the sake of conciseness, the focus will be directed towards elucidating the meaning of two specific data points from the table. These explanations offer a

glimpse into the intricate semiotic layers present within Cosrx Instagram Advertisements. The analysis delves into how individual signs—whether verbal or visual—contribute to the overall narrative, shaping the way consumers perceive and engage with the brand's offerings.

**Table 2. Cosrx Instagram Advertisements**

No.	Captured Image	No	Captured Image
1		4	
2		5	
3			

The first verbal sign, "AHA/BHA Liquid toner," directly signifies the product's name and core ingredients. The abbreviation "AHA" represents alpha hydroxy acid, known for its skin-smoothing effects such as reducing fine lines, wrinkles, and enhancing skin texture. It also aids in cleaning pores. On the other hand, "BHA" stands for beta hydroxy acid, which delves deeper into the pores to combat excess oil and exfoliate the skin. The term "Liquid toner" pertains to the product's consistency. This particular product is designed to cleanse and care for the skin, targeting clogged pores and promoting a cleaner skin texture.

The second verbal sign, "Day 1: Exfoliate," implies that on the first day, the advertisement suggests using an exfoliating toner as part of a skincare regimen. "Exfoliate" refers to the process of shedding surface layers, and in this context, it pertains to the removal of dead skin cells. The AHA/BHA ingredients in the toner facilitate this exfoliation process, gently eliminating the top layer of the skin. This product is recommended for nighttime use on the first day and beyond. It's emphasized that applying sunscreen during the day after using the

product is crucial to prevent skin damage from sun exposure. The product's functionality lies in cleansing textured skin by exfoliating and aiding in the removal of dead skin cells, thereby promoting a healthier complexion.

The first visual sign featured in the advertisement revolves around the product named "AHA/BHA Clarifying Treatment Toner." The term "Clarifying" conveys the message that the advertised product is adept at thoroughly cleansing and eliminating impurities from the skin. The color palette of the bottle label combines purple and black hues. In the context of color symbolism, purple emerges as a fusion of blue and red. Wierzbicka (1996) highlights that red is often associated with blood and carries a rich and warm connotation. When red is blended with blue, it gives rise to the color purple. Consequently, purple encapsulates the essence of a rich, warm color stemming from the amalgamation of red and blue elements.

Conversely, black is recognized as a dark color, often evoking notions of mystery and depth. In the context of this advertisement, the combination of these hues, especially purple, seems to allude to a rich and warm quality. This color scheme is aligned with the product's intended use, which is to intensively cleanse the skin and eliminate dead skin cells. Therefore, the color choices, notably the incorporation of purple and black, serve to underscore the efficacy and purpose of the product in a visual and evocative manner.

The second visual sign prominently features a woman utilizing the toner with a cotton pad. This image serves as an instructional guide for readers or potential customers on how to apply the AHA/BHA Clarifying Toner to their faces. This element is particularly valuable for individuals who may be unfamiliar with the process of using an exfoliating toner. The visual imparts the idea that the application of an exfoliating toner is most effective when used in conjunction with a cotton pad. This practice is believed to enhance the toner's effects.

The AHA/BHA Clarifying Toner, as depicted, serves the purpose of removing the skin's surface layer, subsequently contributing to a brighter and cleaner complexion. Applying the toner with a cotton pad offers a dual benefit: it aids in gently scrubbing the skin, and it facilitates the toner's optimal efficacy. By visually portraying the correct application method, the advertisement provides valuable guidance to potential users and reinforces the notion that the product's intended benefits can be fully realized through proper use.

In the context of Data 2, the first verbal sign is "The Retinol 0.5". The term "Retinol" refers to an active ingredient that contains vitamin A. The statement "The Retinol 0.5" signifies that this particular product contains a concentration of 0.5 percent retinol.

The second verbal sign in Data 2 is "Day 2: Retinol". This suggests that the company recommends or proposes to customers the utilization of a retinol serum on the second day of their skincare routine. The inclusion of retinol, which is rich in vitamin A, is known to assist in diminishing the appearance of wrinkles, enhancing skin tone, and stimulating collagen production. Much like the product featured in Data 1, this retinol serum is intended for nighttime application, followed by the application of sunscreen the following day to safeguard the skin from potential sun damage.

The first visual sign is the serum products namely "The Retinol 0.5" that colored brown. Wierzbicka (1996: 327) stated that the level of simple introspection. The other component of brown are harder to identify. The product named "The Retinol 0.5" is because one of the active ingredients contain retinol which help to reduce wrinkles on face. This product can be used for

the customer that aged above 19. Therefore, the color of this product is not bright and colorful because it is not meant for people under age.

The second visual sign portrays a woman applying the retinol serum. Through this visual, the advertisement effectively demonstrates the correct method of applying the serum. Unlike the AHA/BHA toner mentioned in Data 1, the retinol serum is meant to be applied with clean bare hands. This distinction arises from the fact that retinol is an active ingredient with a potency surpassing that of AHA/BHA. Using a cotton pad with this serum could potentially lead to skin harshness and irritation.

The advertisement underscores the importance of gently applying the retinol serum with clean hands, avoiding excessive rubbing. By offering this visual guidance, the advertisement ensures that customers understand the proper and safe application technique, contributing to their overall positive experience with the product.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research aims to comprehensively define and analyze the various types of verbal and visual signs present within The Cosrx advertisements on Instagram. Additionally, this study seeks to expound upon the meanings embedded within both the verbal and visual signs showcased in these advertisements. The analysis revealed a total of 22 data instances, categorized into 8 instances of verbal signs and 14 instances of visual signs. Alongside deciphering the meanings inherent in these signs, the researcher also delved into the interpretation of colors employed within the advertisements.

The visual signs in these advertisements are characterized by the strategic use of colors, both within the advertisement itself and the showcased products. The verbal signs, on the other hand, exhibit the producer's adeptness in using persuasive language to pique the curiosity and interest of potential customers or readers toward the products. Moreover, these advertisements feature models demonstrating the application of the advertised products, serving as informative guides on their usage. The significance of The Cosrx advertisements lies in their ability to offer solutions for a multitude of contemporary skin problems. In addressing these concerns, the advertisements become a valuable resource for individuals grappling with various skin-related challenges.

## **REFERENCES**

Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology*. Hill and Wang.

Bhasin, H. (2023, June 9). *Visual Communication: Definition, Importance and Types* . Marketing91.

Chandler, D. (2007). *Semiotics: The Basics* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Cosrx. (2022). Skincycling . In <https://instagram.com/cosrx?igshid=MzRlODBiNWFIZA==>.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Qualitative Research Methods - Objectives, Characteristics and Strategies. Sage Publications.

Griffiths, P. (2006). An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics. Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Heckmann, C. (2020, April 14). Connotation vs Denotation - Examples & Differences Explained. StudioBinder.

Johnson, R. (2017, September 7). Take A Closer Look At Research Types And Reporting. Two Rivers Marketing.

Kaplan, Z. (2023, March 3). What Are Verbal Communication Skills? Forage.

Leech, G. N. (1985). Semantics: The Study of Meaning (Pelican). Penguin (Non-Classics).

MasterClass. (2021, September 10). What Is Connotation? Learn About Connotation in Writing With Examples. MasterClass.

McLeod, S. P. (2023, July 31). Qualitative Vs Quantitative Research Methods & Data Analysis. SimplyPsychology.

Modok, M. A. N., Santika, I. D. A. D. M., & Pratiwi, D. P. E. (2021). An Analysis of Verbal and Visual Sign Found on Grave of The Fireflies Posters. *Elysian Journal*, 1(3), 66–74.

Nordquist, R. (2020, April 8). Semiotics Definition and Examples. ThoughtCo.

Pavlovic, J. (2023, January). Verbal communication explained - definition and examples. Pumble.

Pratami, D. A. N. D., Santika, I. D. A. D. M., & Utami, N. M. V. (2022). A semiotic analysis in downy collection advertisement. *Elysian Journal*, 2(2), 20–29.

Robins, R. H., & Crystal, D. (2023, July 21). Language. Britannica.

Smith, E. (2023, July 22). Formal Research vs Informal Research: Different and Comparison . Askanydifference.

Suryantara, I. G. D., Santika, I. D. A. D. M., & Pratiwi, D. P. E. (2022). A Semiotic Analysis in Victoria Secret Product Advertisements. *Elysian Journal*, 2(4), 81–89.

Wierzbicka, A. (1996). Semantics, Primes and Universals. Oxford University Press.