

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

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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.*

INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are certainly related to the words, images, and meanings in them. So words, images, and other visuals are important in advertisements. In linguistics, understanding the meaning of words, images, and other visual forms is a field of scientific study called semiotics. Semiotics, also known as semiology, is a vital science in human communication because human life requires signs and symbols at all times. Several words are defined here that demonstrate humans' close interaction with signs or symbols. Semiotics studies the nature of the existence of something's signs, where perceptions and views of reality are constructed by words and signs others are used in social contexts. Signs shape human perception, more than just reflecting the existing reality (Balci & Özgen, 2017). The semiotic tradition includes the main theory of how signs represent objects, ideas, situations, circumstances, feelings, and so on that are outside oneself. Therefore, basically, semiotics exists and we can find it in many aspects of life where semiotics itself analyzes signs, even communication. Semiotics, at its core, is the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation. It delves into how meaning is created and understood through various forms of communication, be it visual, auditory, or linguistic. Semiotics provides a framework for analyzing how signs function within a specific context, revealing the underlying messages and cultural codes embedded within them.

The application of semiotics in advertising has been extensively explored in academic literature. Scholars like Williamson (1978) have demonstrated how advertisements utilize signs and symbols to construct meaning. Through the strategic deployment of imagery, language, and

cultural references, advertisements can evoke specific emotions, associations, and desires, ultimately influencing consumer behavior. Semiotic analysis can help us understand how to shape our perceptions of a product and the brand to be followed. The world of advertising itself is one way for producers to communicate product or service information to potential consumers, which acts as a form of sponsorship that conveys messages through the media (Dermawan & Barkah, 2022). An advertisement will achieve its goals by creating an image, persuading consumers to buy a particular product, and doing so effectively and subtly by convincing them of the need and value of the product (Mounir, 2023). Advertising is an important part of how a company communicates with potential consumers, providing the tools and methods needed to promote its marketing goals.

This study delves into the semiotic mechanisms employed by Coca-Cola, a brand that has achieved iconic status, to understand how it constructs and disseminates meaning. Coca-Cola, as a global brand, has consistently employed sophisticated advertising strategies to maintain its market dominance. Coca-Cola has successfully built a very strong and globally recognized brand. The brand has been around since 1886, and Coca-Cola continues to innovate and run effective marketing campaigns to maintain a strong brand image. One of Coca-Cola's strengths is its ability to distribute its products globally. Coca-Cola can be found in nearly every country in the world, spanning over 200 countries and territories, even in hard-to-reach areas. Their extensive and efficient distribution network allows Coca-Cola to easily market its products to consumers across different parts of the world (Chu, 2020). Advertising plays a crucial role in the promotion of Coca-Cola products. There is an interesting aspect to Coca-Cola's advertisements, as they offer benefits to be experienced by their customers to considering effective integrated communication components. This has enabled the company to become one of the most successful multinational corporations in the world. The Coca-Cola company is striving to convince customers to consume more of its flagship brand, Coca-Cola (Vincent & Kolade, 2019).

Advertising, in its broadest sense, serves as a strategic form of communication intended to inform, persuade, and influence consumer behavior. It plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, constructing brand identity, and generating demand for products or services. Beyond mere promotion, advertising operates as a cultural artifact—reflecting and responding to social values, economic conditions, and technological developments of its time. Visual advertising, in particular, employs imagery, symbolism, color, and composition to deliver messages that resonate with target audiences both emotionally and cognitively. As such, advertisements do not exist in isolation; they interact with and contribute to broader cultural narratives. Studying advertisements, therefore, provides critical insight into how brands like Coca-Cola construct meaning, establish identity, and maintain relevance across different historical and cultural contexts.

The analysis of Coca-Cola advertisements in terms of semiotic has been considered through a number of perspectives by different researchers with their own insight into how this brand is represented through signs and symbols. Karlina (2018) took a semiotics-based approach to analyze the advertisement of Coca-Cola under the name of Avatar version and discovered the subtext behind this commercial, problems concerning societal issues that may be caused by the development of technology. This study reflected on how the advert had given messages regarding the anti-social impacts of overindulgence in the use of technology including loss of social integration, unity and solidarity, with the Coca-Cola Company concerned with the anti-social influences of progress of technology in the new millennium. Karlina employed Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, which classifies signs into icon, index, and symbol, to analyze the meanings embedded within the advertisement. The Thesis Proposal does not explicitly identify a research gap. However, it focuses on the hidden social messages in one specific Coca-Cola ad, suggesting potential gaps in broader analyses of

multiple ads or different cultural contexts. In Karlina's Thesis Proposal, she used an old animated video about Coca-Cola for identification using Peirce's theory.

In the context of this study, "classic" advertising refers to the visual and strategic approaches employed by Coca-Cola during its earlier branding eras—primarily from the early to mid-20th century. They are typified by nostalgic iconography, classic media channels including print media (advertisements, posters, television commercials) and the common usage of timeless brand features, including the Spencerian script logo, the contour bottle and other iconography such as the Coca-Cola Santa Claus. The nature of the communication in traditional modes of advertising was centred towards universal sentiments of being happy, being refreshed, being together, capturing the same sentiments in a classical idealised way.

In contrast, "modern" advertising pertains to Coca-Cola's modern branding strategies in the 21st century, specifically, online, multimedia and trend-oriented cultures. The trending campaigns are characterized by dynamic images, the involvement of multicultural interaction, and the integration of the existing social issues addressed, including sustainability, inclusivity, and individuality. These ads often employ the use of collaborations with pop culture (esports (e.g. League of Legends), music industries (e.g. K-pop), etc.), to attract younger (often more tech-savvy) audiences on a more personal and immersive level. In defining and analyzing these two eras, the research should be able to trace how the visual language of Coca-Cola has evolved as well as its capacity to continue the brand while allowing it to respond to changing media conditions and the emerging expectations of consumers.

Meanwhile, Amelia, Suyatman, and Sulaeman (2024) focused their research on understanding how Coca-Cola advertisements construct representations of social concepts, revealing that these advertisements contain social concepts that often depict interactions and relationships between people with positive social values like communication, togetherness, tolerance, and environmental concern. Similar to Karlina, they also utilized Peirce's semiotic theory to analyze the relationship between representation, objects, and interpretants in Coca-Cola advertisements. The authors do not explicitly state a research gap. However, their focus on social concepts in YouTube advertisements suggests a gap in the analysis of other media or the evolution of these concepts over time. In their Thesis Proposal, they used Coca-Cola YouTube advertisements. The research found that the social signs of the concept displayed in Coca-Cola advertisements certainly have social values that we can encounter in everyday life. They focused on the social concept of that Coca-Cola YouTube advertisement. Their Thesis Proposal using Roland Barthes theory Roland Barthes' semiotic theory examines how cultural signs and symbols convey layered meanings, often reinforcing societal norms through "myths." Building on Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, Barthes expanded semiotics to analyze visual and cultural phenomena, emphasizing the interplay between (literal meaning) connotation and denotation (cultural or ideological meaning).

Taking yet another approach, Deb, Prakash, and Lal (2024) employed semiotic analysis to investigate the effectiveness of Coca-Cola advertisements, particularly focusing on how women are portrayed and how creative execution, stylistic elements, celebrity endorsements, and substance influence consumer psychology. Their research found that celebrity endorsements in commercials reflect social behavior and culture, influence consumer brand association, and enhance advertisement effectiveness, while also highlighting the role of emotions and cultural elements in shaping consumer decisions, especially in the Indian context. These diverse studies collectively demonstrate how semiotics serves as a powerful tool for analyzing the complex meanings and social messages embedded in Coca-Cola's advertising campaigns across different cultural contexts and time periods, revealing the brand's strategic use of signs and symbols to connect with consumers on emotional and social levels. The study identifies the need for future research to explore the use of youth convictions, social behavior, relationship sharing, and sexuality in designing advertising messages. Future Scope of this Thesis Proposal

is that the author hopes that in the future, other authors can expand research on Coca Cola advertising campaigns to other sectors such as health, education, psychology, and so on, so that it can be generalized more widely.

However, despite the wealth of existing research, there remains a gap in understanding how semiotics operates within the context of modern digital advertising, particularly in the realm of collaborative marketing campaigns. This thesis seeks to fill this gap through discussing the strategies of semiotic choices carriers that were used throughout two brand-new Coca-Cola posters campaigns. The first poster is the project of Coca-Cola and the famous online game League of Legends. The second poster represents a theme of K-pop and a purple color. The two posters are selected deliberately. They are a rupture with the original way of Coca-Cola advertisement that adheres to the universal notions of fun and friendship. Such posters, in turn, are concentrated on the narrow focusing on subcultures of gaming and K-pop and visual and symbolic discourses that respond to narrow markets of gaming and K-pop. This thesis will discuss how Coca-Cola alters its semiotic tactics when it comes to stirring up the interest of the various demographics.

The choice of this research topic was the use of Coca-Cola because it has long stood out and dominated the global advertisement market. Being a brand that was able to make a successful change between standard and contemporary marketing, Coca-Cola offers the significant amount of various visual content that points at the changes in cultural fashion, technologies, and branding. It is well positioned to be the case study analyzing the evolution of advertising given its durability in ensuring brand identity, yet adjusting to new visual languages and the new set of expectations of the audience. Moreover, the series of collaborations between Coca-Cola and cultural phenomena the company was involved in over the years can also teach something about the use of visual component in order to stay current and speak to the consumers of a different generation.

The specificity of the posters in question relates to the fact that they could serve the purpose of removing the differences between a global brand and subcultures. They reveal how Coca-Cola uses semiotic codes of gaming and K-pop to generate the feeling of exclusivity and membership to such target audiences. Through examining the visual factors, cultural allusions as well as intertextual relations of these posters, this Thesis Proposal will provide an insight into how semiotics has been changing in the world of advertising and creates meaningful relationships between the brands and the consumers. Coca-Cola, being the world-known brand, tends to be the reflection and moulder of cultural trends, observed in its advertisement. When a poster of a product (a so called making of a poster) is analyzed, one can also gain an insight into the ways how the company tries to break the old associations related to its product to come up with the new ones (innovate a brand image) or targeting a certain age group (which could be signified by the Korean print used and the abstract icons of the younger generation). This kind of cultural interpretation is important to a subtle Peircean interpretation. It overlaps a Coca-Cola that is a familiar brand among all the continents and a very famous online role-playing game, League of Legends, with the K-Pop concept. This crossroad expresses the modern society and is a valuable source of studying the combination of brands and digital entertainment. It contains a lot of visual aids such as color, a picture of an ice cube, and the can shape in the poster. They are signs that may be discussed on the basis of the semiotic theory developed by Peirce to know how they generate meaning. The target audience of the poster (gamers, young adults, trend) enables exploring how marketing can customise the message in accordance to a target group and what kinds of semiotic practices are implemented to be relevant to this particular group. The poster can be analyzed in order to understand the strategy Coca-Cola follows in its effort to identify the ways it aims at using the values and life styles of the gamers. The theory that categorizes signs into icon, index and symbol is effective in deconstructing the poster by Peirce. The recognizable images are the iconic signs, associations

such as suggesting refreshment by the image of ice are the indexical signs and the beliefs and associations about Coca-Cola as a cultural symbol are the symbolic ones. League of Legends Game and K-pop. The comparison of classic and modern posters reflects upon the opportunity of the visual language to meet new audiences and communication requirements. This transformation represents the way classic posters relied on the combination of words and pictures to convince or educate the audience, and how modern posters also may have minimalistic designs, alternative layout, or interactivity to make an impression in the digital context. Reading about the distinctions between traditional and modern posters, the reader can see what the development of the graphic design was historically and how the revolution of technology affected the graphic design and how the visual media can still reflect and spread the cultural change. Behind this knowledge does not only make the appreciation of poster art increase, but also makes us see the current dialogue that exists between technology, culture, and creative expression.

METHOD

This research attracted qualitative research design, where semiotic analysis was used as the main methodology to explore the scope of branding practiced in the well-known brand name and Coca-Cola Company with global operations. It was based with solid grounds about the original semiotic theory by Charles Sanders Peirce that was able to give a strong lens through which meaning could be deconstructed in the manner it was created in a Coca-Cola advertising. The theory offered by Peirce an elaborate vocabulary and conceptual framework to deconstruct the strata of communication within the context of advertising materials whereby he divided signs into three fundamental modalities which included icons (signs which were understood to resemble the object), indexes (signs which enjoyed a direct existential relationship with the object) and symbols (signs whose relationship with the object was justified through convention). This research method facilitated both a broad based and a rich approach to the study of how Coca-Cola had strategically presented its roots, values, and changing storyline into a wide variety of advertising sources, both historical and also present day. Through a careful examination of the relationship between visual and verbal elements (namely: imagery, color schemes, logos and typography on the one hand and slogans, narratives and textual clues on the other), this study attempted to identify the hidden meanings, cultural codes, and convincing techniques that appealed most to the specific community groups at different cultural settings in different time and space (Milligan, 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Description of Selected Coca-Cola Posters, Classic and Modern Posters

The initial poster that is to be discussed is a Coca-Cola and League of Legends cooperation campaign. It has an active graphical structure, the can of Coca-Cola is shown along with the images and symbols connected to the most popular online game. The latter poster is based on the K-pop style, with purple backgrounds and stylizations of the graphic elements creating the mythical brightness of the genre. Both posters depart from Coca-Cola's traditional advertising themes of universal happiness and togetherness, instead targeting audiences through specialized visual and symbolic cues.



Figure 1. Classic Posters

Source: <https://www.creativeview.co.uk/its-the-real-thing-coca-cola/>
(2018, November 15)

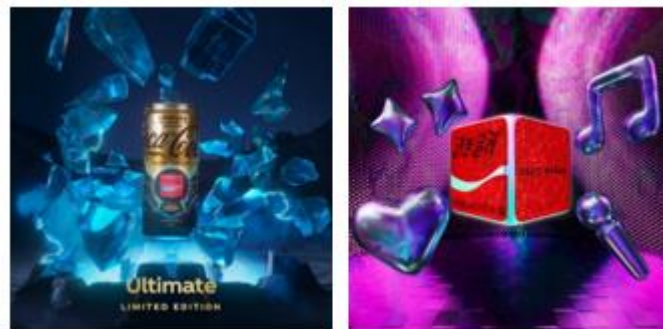


Figure 2. modern Posters

Source: <https://www.coca-cola.com/id/id/offerings/creations>
(2023, December 23)

Table 1. Description of Posters

Category	Classic Coca-Cola 1 (it's real things coke)	Classic Coca-Cola 2 (it's real things)	Modern Coca-Cola (Limited Edition)	Modern Coca-Cola (K-pop)
Icon	Coca-Cola bottle, logo	Coca-Cola bottle, logo, hand	Coca-Cola, gaming motifs	Coca-Cola, K-pop motifs (color, design)
Index	Happiness, refreshment (generalized)	Simple and strong	Coldness, energy (gaming excitement)	Excitement of K-pop, energy
Symbol	Family, togetherness, nostalgia	nostalgia	Gaming community, competition, digital world	Creativity, luxury, youthfulness, K-pop fandom

The table above compares the use of icon, index, and symbol in Coca-Cola's classic and modern advertisements, specifically analyzing a League of Legends campaign and a K-pop themed poster. Each semiotic category plays a key role in shaping the meanings that Coca-Cola communicates through its visual language.

Classic Coca-Cola 1, It's Real Things Coke

The Coca-Cola poster featuring a collection of chilled red cans nestled within a mound of ice exemplifies a masterclass in mid to late 20th century product advertising, employing a calculated blend of semiotic richness, visual impact, and brand narrative. At first glance, the most immediate feature of this advertisement is the saturation of the brand's signature red hue, which dominates the visual plane and serves as an unmistakable identifier of Coca-Cola's global

presence. The viewer is presented with an arrangement of cans covered in ice crystals and droplets of condensation imagery that not only stimulates a sensory reaction but also cements the association of Coca-Cola with refreshment, immediacy, and gratification. The ice, glistening and sharply textured, functions as both a literal and symbolic element; it provides visual evidence of the product's coldness while also signifying purity and authenticity, aligning with the tagline prominently featured above: "It's the real thing. Coke."

This slogan, placed in bold white text against a solid black background, occupies the upper portion of the composition, ensuring its visibility and rhetorical dominance. The use of the definite article "the" in "It's the real thing" carries semiotic weight, implicitly discrediting all competitors as imitators or secondary alternatives. In this context, the language reinforces Coca-Cola's brand mythology that it is not just a beverage, but the original, the authentic, and the emotionally genuine soft drink. The addition of the shortened "Coke" further underscores the brand's colloquial familiarity and cultural embeddedness it is a term so widely recognized that it serves as shorthand for the product category itself in many global contexts.

Visually, the advertisement maintains a careful equilibrium between complexity and clarity. While the arrangement of the cans appears spontaneous and abundant suggesting mass appeal and sociability the composition remains tightly controlled. Each can faces outward, ensuring that the brand name is legible from multiple angles, an approach that maximizes logo visibility while simultaneously suggesting volume, availability, and communal consumption. The choice to cluster several cans, rather than feature a single heroic product, shifts the narrative away from individual ownership toward collective experience. Coca-Cola here is positioned not only as a personal indulgence but as a shared cultural object, one that binds people across moments and spaces through its universally recognized design and taste.

From a semiotic perspective, this advertisement demonstrates the interplay of icon, index, and symbol as described by Charles Sanders Peirce. The red can of Coca-Cola serves as a clear icon, functioning as a direct visual representation of the product. Its distinctive shape, color, and typeface are so deeply embedded in consumer consciousness that the image alone communicates the brand, even in the absence of textual reinforcement. The indexical signs namely, the condensation on the cans and the glistening ice are indicators of physical properties: coldness, freshness, and refreshment. These visual cues evoke tactile sensations, allowing the viewer to almost "feel" the coolness of the can. On a more abstract level, the symbolic dimension emerges through the use of the slogan and color scheme. The red color symbolizes excitement, passion, and energy qualities frequently leveraged in Coca-Cola's branding to associate the product with vitality and enjoyment. The slogan "It's the real thing" becomes a linguistic symbol of heritage and trust, conveying Coca-Cola's self-assigned role as the authentic originator of the cola beverage category.

This poster also engages in a subtle but powerful form of cultural storytelling. By relying on minimalist visuals and strong sensory appeal rather than narrative scenarios or character-based depictions, Coca-Cola positions itself as a product that speaks through presence rather than explanation. The image does not need to depict a person drinking the soda or a group of friends celebrating with it; the product itself becomes the protagonist. The effect is to elevate Coca-Cola to the status of a cultural icon recognizable, desirable, and emotionally resonant without the need for external justification. It is not simply marketed as a drink but as a symbol of lifestyle, memory, and emotion. The simplicity of the visual design ensures universal accessibility, allowing the message to transcend language and cultural barriers.

Moreover, the juxtaposition of the black background with the vibrant red cans and white typography creates a strong contrast that enhances legibility and visual hierarchy. The dark backdrop isolates the product, almost theatrically, as if placing it on a stage. This dramatization further magnifies the centrality of the Coca-Cola can within the visual field, implying not only its importance but its timeless presence in consumer life. The overall aesthetic, while clean and

modern, still draws on the legacy design codes that have historically defined Coca-Cola advertising specifically, the iconic red-and-white color pairing, the flowing Spencerian script of the logo, and the emphasis on direct product representation.

In sum, this poster is a deliberate act of brand mythology. It communicates on multiple levels: sensorial, symbolic, emotional, and historical. It leverages color, texture, repetition, and linguistic brevity to assert Coca-Cola's ongoing relevance and superiority. Through the use of semiotic precision and minimalistic composition, the advertisement encapsulates Coca-Cola's identity not only as a consumable good but as a cultural artifact, one that continues to adapt while remaining rooted in its original promise of realness, refreshment, and shared joy.

Classic Coca-Cola 2, It's Real Things

The old coke poster with the stylized hand image that holds a contour glass bottle in a warm orange halo and a background in the profound red captures a specialized epoch in visual branding. The slogan controlled the whole process "It's the real thing", The poster makes the long proclaimed claim of Coca-Cola to authenticity and originality in the beverage industry across the globe. The message could be seen not only in text but also in the iconography, color symbolism and design nostalgia of the composition, all of which serve to establish the status of Coca-Cola as not only a reliable good but also a cultural relic.

The main body of the composition is the image of the hand holding tightly the glass bottle which is recognized as the icon. The depiction of the hand in vintage illustration style brings the human element that will focus on physical touch, proximity, and touchiness. The scene of the hand implies the fact that Coca-Cola should not be seen or admired, but smelt, tasted, drunk and touched. This drinking gesture turns the beverage into something he or she owns, something that they have their hands on, so to speak, and it brings the viewer into contact with the product in a physical way. Additionally, the bottle itself which is dark green glass and the red-and-white label that instantly comes to mind bear visible signs of tradition and timelessness, strengthening the visual heritage of the respective brand. The world-famous and decades-old shape of its profile is a graphic shortcut to the identity of the brand.

This message of continuity and authenticity is supported by what accompanies it in the visual. A circular golden-yellow background containing the bottle creates the feeling of warmth of the sun or a spotlight effect that carries the product to the center of visual and symbolic impacts. Such spotlighting dramatizes the bottle almost venerating it as being of cultural importance. The circle is also representative of completeness and harmony, which would imply that Coca-Cola would be there in the center of everyday life, a reliable constant in a time of change.

The choice of colors is a very important element in creating the emotional and symbolic context of the poster. The preponderant red background is not just a brand trademark but it is semiotic cluster with overloaded signs. The color red causes passionate feelings, raises the audiences excitement and makes people feel energetic, which matches the long-standing depictions of Coca-Cola as a celebration that lifts people into a good mood. The whiteness of the slogan and logo adds contrast and clarity to it, but also the purity and simplicity which are also connotations. Collectively, these colors do not only elicit attention but affirm on consumers brand values of energy, sincerity and joy. The green strip around the edge of the poster also gives an effective yet subtle feeling of confinement and refinement that forms a visual box suggesting old school packaging or antique signage. This framing device gives the poster an air of a museum-like nature, providing support to the notion that Coca-Cola is not just a drink, it is a heritage brand built on cultural meaning over a long history of time. The slogan "It's the real thing" serves as both a linguistic symbol and a brand philosophy. Through its simplicity and declarative form, it has the power of truth. The implication that the phrase brings forward is that not only is Coca-Cola genuine, but it is the standard that other products will be evaluated against. With respect to advertising history, this slogan was offered at a time when authenticity

was a treasured concept amid the rising consumer cynicism. By using this phrase as an anchor of the visual message, the advertisement promotes Coca-Cola as a solid unchanging factor, which also survived fashionable trends and did not depend on temporary rivals.

From a semiotic standpoint, the advertisement balances all three of Peirce's sign types. The glass bottle is an icon, a direct visual representation of the product. Its design and color are so familiar that they carry immediate recognition, even without textual cues. The hand functions as an index, pointing to human interaction and suggesting that the product is meant to be held and consumed. It also indexes a sense of control, immediacy, and satisfaction. The slogan, meanwhile, is the advertisement's primary symbol a culturally coded phrase that conveys ideological meaning. It signals that Coca-Cola is not just a soft drink, but a part of lived experience, a brand that is real, reliable, and emotionally resonant.

Also important is the style that the poster represents. With its restricted color palette and graphic simplicity, the hand-drawn illustration locates the advertisement in a given artistic tradition i.e. mid-century American commercial art. Such retro format attracts the feeling of nostalgia relying on the collective memory and emotional connection to those times, which people call the golden age of advertisement. By doing so, the poster turns into not only a part of promotion, but an artifact, which reminds the era when Coca-Cola was establishing itself as a global brand. The aesthetic choices of the font, layout, illustration are all descriptive of the ability of the brand to adjust its messaging without missing the visual identity.

In conclusion, this vintage Coca-Cola poster exemplifies the brand's long-standing mastery of visual rhetoric. Through its minimalist yet symbolically rich design, the advertisement communicates themes of authenticity, sensory appeal, emotional connection, and brand continuity. The use of iconic imagery, strategic color choices, and nostalgic illustration serves to position Coca-Cola not only as a product, but as a timeless symbol of realness, tradition, and universal enjoyment. It is a design that does not merely sell a beverage it sells a feeling, a memory, and a cultural truth: that Coca-Cola is, indeed, "the real thing."

Limited Edition Coca-cola

The Coca-Cola "Ultimate Limited Edition" poster presents a stark departure from the nostalgic simplicity of the brand's earlier visual narratives, embracing instead a hyper-modern, immersive, and gamified aesthetic. At the core of the composition is a glowing, gold-accented can suspended in midair, surrounded by fractured, luminous blue crystals that appear to be levitating or exploding outward from the central object. The setting is dark and atmospheric, evoking a fantasy or digital universe. This ad clearly departs from Coca-Cola's historical appeal to tradition, instead aligning itself with youth culture, virtual experiences, and modern fandoms specifically that of League of Legends, a globally popular online game. The pictorial construct helps indicate the strategic engagement of Coca-Cola entering the virtual pop arena in a bid to rebrand the brand in communication with Gen Z audience members and online societies.

The most appealing thing to the eye of the poster is its futuristic palette. The redesigned can of AA Coca-Cola made up of sleek metallic gold and black is a radical departure of the brick red and white visual of the brand. This change denotes a conscious, semiotic shift: where previously the reckoned familiarity of the mass market held the notion, here, with its relegation to exclusivity, collectability, and luxury. The words "Ultimate Limited Edition" below the can further emphasize scarcity, elevating the drink to the level of a premium, gamified commodity rather than an everyday refreshment. In this regard, the can turns into a symbolic object, i.e., an object that serves not only as a drinking material but a status item in the digital game environment.

The visual influence in the surroundings provides much more to the story. The dynamic forms of the faceted blue pyramidal shards displaying crystalline geometry and glowing edges connote an instant of digital rupture or release of power, and calling upon the aesthetic of the computer game interface, fantasy landscape, and power-up. These elements are not incidental;

they signal a targeted aesthetic that appeals to gamers familiar with the visual tropes of popular fantasy or sci-fi games. The backlit blue aura, paired with the dark landscape and deep shadows, creates a sense of mystery and elevation. Here, the beverage is not grounded in realism or tangible consumer moments it exists in a heightened, imagined realm, suggesting that Coca-Cola is now part of immersive, gamified experiences.

From a semiotic perspective, this poster engages all three levels of Peircean sign categories. The can itself functions as an icon, directly representing the product but recontextualized through design and form. It keeps the simple cylindrical design as well as the brand name, however, the change in coloration and labeling denotes a different kind of interaction. The glow shards and digital effects work as indexes because it suggests that they are part of power, transformation, and futuristic aesthetics. These aspects allude to the fact that the product is aligned with a fantasy game world of a specific game League of Legends as well as to the fact that there is some amplification of reality. Symbolically, special prelude of ultimate and pronounced production with limitation of “Limited Edition” imply exclusivity, scarce and prestige item that runs very deep in video gaming culture, fan economies, and creating identity in the virtual world.

This advertisement also lists a decisive cultural shift in the brand communication strategy of Coke. In contrast to vintage posters, which target on collective cultural memory and emotional nostalgia of sight, smell, and touch, the objective of the design is to address a behavioral disconnected and technology-high audience. No longer does this branding use collective family experiences and daily availability, it is touching on individualized, niche identities that gamers, eSports fans, and digital collectors hold. The product is repackaged not to be a drink everyone drinks, but to be a high end drink of the initiated like gesture toward branding more of an experience, not simply consumption. It turns into souvenir, a symbol, even a subculture identification insignia.

Moreover, human presence or recognizable real world is also excluded in the composition quite purposefully. Nothing holds the can, there is no natural setting and the story of people drinking the drink. Rather, the poster presents a product-driven fantasy world as well, which once more highlights the fact that Coca-Cola belongs to a transmedia experience. It is not something to drink anymore it is something to enter into. It is indicative of the current trend in culture regarding advertising in which companies aim to become part of virtual environments instead of being tied to real-life relatability. Its aesthetics feel reminiscent of video game cinema trailers (or the briefest in-game content reveals) which heavily suggests Coca-Cola was willing to at least temporarily conflate itself with contemporary forms of online entertainment.

To wrap up, the Coca-Cola poster with the slogan in the title, “Ultimate Limited Edition”, is a vivid demonstration of the fact that even such a brand with its long history as Coca-Cola can be presented in the digital space of the younger generation through the implementation of modern visual concepts. By using the future visual effects, allegoric lack of resources, and participatory aesthetics, the commercial not only signifies its status as a cultural icon in the context of the fantasy and games industry, but also symbolizes the becoming of the Coca-Cola brand as a cultural icon in this setting. It does not convey the sense of refreshment, but empowerment, exclusivity and immersion and it managed to reformulate the relevance of the brand in the context of 21st-century visual and participatory culture..

Modern Coca-Cola (K-pop)

The “Creations – K-Pop Edition” Coca-Cola poster marks a bold venture into the realm of pop culture convergence, specifically drawing from the global influence of K-pop and the visual language of modern digital youth aesthetics. At the center of the composition is a red, glitter-textured cube bearing Coca-Cola’s iconic wave logo in Korean script alongside the phrases “Zero Sugar” and “Creations.” Floating around the cube are metallic, iridescent 3D icons a star, heart, music note, and microphone all rendered in glossy purples and blues that shimmer against

a vibrant pink and violet disco-like background. The overall composition is highly stylized, immersive, and digitally synthetic, evoking the sensibilities of metaverse culture, virtual stage design, and social media iconography.

At first glance, the poster invites interpretation not as a traditional product advertisement, but as a pop spectacle, visually aligned with the aesthetics of K-pop fandom and digital performance spaces. The neon ground and wall art is the image of the virtual concert area and this gives the impression that Coca-Cola will not be only joining youth culture, but it will be playing in it. A non-traditional cube used in the sphere of beverage marketing conveys a sense of a modular, versatile and innovative approach. In contrast to the traditional can or bottle, the cube has concept abstraction meaning that this is how Coca-Cola should be consumed as a product as well as having a piece of art to be perceived in it.

The magenta, violet, and holographic silver color palette help to achieve a substantial affective mood of the poster. Such tones are typically equated to digital aesthetics, fantasy pop media, and “futuristic femininity” a visual language which greatly appeals to K-pop fan bases and Generation Z consumers. The slick liquidity of the floating images of the icons can be compared to emojis or in-app gifts sent within livestream platforms, further desiring the distinction between brand expression and interactive media culture. Those are the semiotic interconnections between Coke-Cola, and the colorful cyber-spaces in which young identity is staged and negotiated.

From a semiotic perspective, the poster engages with meaning through both explicit cultural references and implicit emotional cues. The Korean script is not merely linguistic—it is cultural branding, signaling authenticity and alignment with Hallyu (Korean Wave) aesthetics. This moves Coca-Cola beyond appropriation and into cultural collaboration, positioning the brand as a participant rather than an outsider in K-pop’s global fandom. The musical icons—the microphone, note, and star—serve as visual indexes pointing toward performance, creativity, and fan participation. They are not mere symbols awaiting consumption but are interactive, celebratory and invite emotional participation and these motifs are resonant with the activities fans practice towards their idols via the digital space.

The cube itself serves as a central icon—a physical embodiment of Coca-Cola’s new identity under the “Creations” sub-brand. Its glittery texture, sharp geometry, and unconventional format signal a departure from the familiar, suggesting that this Coca-Cola is experimental, limited, and co-created with or for fan culture. The bold phrase “ZERO SUGAR” functions as a symbolic nod to modern health-conscious youth, while also preserving Coca-Cola’s legacy of adaptability. In essence, the cube is a multi-layered icon: it is at once a product, a gift, a virtual badge, and a collectible—concepts all central to K-pop merchandise culture.

The absence of a human figure or physical setting amplifies the ad’s conceptual abstraction. Unlike vintage Coca-Cola ads that ground the product in tangible, sensory environments, this poster is almost entirely detached from physical reality, reflecting the visual logic of augmented reality (AR), music streaming interfaces, and online fandom rituals. This detachment reinforces Coca-Cola’s presence within the aestheticized digital universe, where identity, consumption, and expression are fluid and participatory.

Moreover, the inclusion of floating emojis and sparkling textures signals a deep understanding of platform-native visual communication. These symbols are the currency of TikTok, Instagram, and fan-based platforms such as Weverse or VLive. Coca-Cola’s visual alignment with this language is more than stylistic—it is a strategic integration into the affective economies of online fan practices, where emotions, reactions, and community-building are mediated through shared icons, colors, and motifs.

In conclusion, the “Creations – K-Pop Edition” Coca-Cola poster exemplifies the brand’s most radical shift toward hyper-modern, co-branded cultural marketing. It moves beyond traditional advertising into the realm of aesthetic collaboration and fandom signaling, embedding

Coca-Cola into the emotional, performative, and participatory culture of global youth. Through its use of vibrant digital imagery, cultural specificity, and symbolic abstraction, this poster reframes Coca-Cola as not just a consumable product, but a visual and emotional experience rooted in collective celebration and identity expression. It is a testament to the brand's ability to transcend generational boundaries, entering new spaces of meaning and memory through the language of music, fandom, and digital imagination.

Discussion

Semiotic Element Represented in Classic and Modern Advertisement of Coca-cola.

Being one of the most widely known brands in the world, Coca-Cola has always used visuals and symbolic features to develop and share its brand personality with its consumers. The purpose of this section is to critically explore the use of iconography, visual motifs and other design elements as applied by Coca-Cola to their branding and advertising resources in an attempt to present a certain brand values and stories. Special emphasis is placed on Coca-Cola and its affiliations with popular culture, like the video game League of Legends or musical bands like K-pop groups to discuss how such symbols operate in promoting the recognition and cultural relevance of a brand among different groups of people.

Analysis of Icons

The poster advertising the League of Legend collaboration, the Coca-Cola can by itself is used as an icon i.e. it actually represents the product with its recognizable shape and red coloring. Another use of imagery that serves in the iconic sense is the introduction of game-related motives, i.e. the silhouette of a character or the symbols found in the game. Equally as well, in the poster based on the K-pop theme, the abstract components and stylistic purple backdrop become the hallmark of the bright, active world of K-pop.

The case study of such an iconic element in the advertisements of Coca-Cola can show the complexities behind how companies use iconic elements to convey certain meanings that can connect with a particular audience. Coca-Cola also manages to incorporate symbols in both the League of Legends collaboration poster and the K-pop themed poster and which directly communicates with the cultural settings and values of their targeted consumer groups. This iconographic branding also doubles as a reinforcement in the identity of Coca-Cola as the beverage of choice in these international subcultures, induces emotion to the advertisement more than a neutral interaction with the viewers since the use of the iconography belongs to aesthetic languages that are well developed already with the audience as method of entertainment..

Coca-Cola as an Icon

In the League of Legends collaboration suitable poster, one of the main icons is the very Coca-Cola can. Its design and the shape of the can are iconic, and the most popular red and white color scheme is a visual short cut to the brand. This may immediately produce some sort of recollection since Coca cola has applied this design in its advertisements since a century ago. The foundations of such iconicity of the Coca-Cola can lie in its success in representing not a drink but also a cultural artifact identifying with enjoyment, refreshment, and social events (Shankar & Ahuja, 2021; Holt, 2004). Using this powerful brand name, Coca-Cola makes sure the product itself is so prominent in the advertisement. By doing that, it is counting on the strong emotions that consumers have towards the products, which have been part of a decades-long steady branding and marketing. In addition, incorporation of game-inspired graphics like game character outlines or game icons serve as supplementation to the iconic stature of Coca-Cola as viewed in the scope of the gaming culture. League of Legends, a global phenomenon with millions of active players, has its own iconography, including character designs, logos, and visual motifs that are highly recognizable to its audience. By incorporating these visual cues into the Coca-Cola advertisement, the brand successfully associates itself with the immersive, competitive world of gaming (Abidin, 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017). The combination of

Coca-Cola's iconic can with League of Legends' gaming icons creates a hybrid visual language that speaks to the shared cultural interests of the gaming community. It also signals Coca-Cola's understanding of the cultural nuances of this audience, indicating that the brand is not just a passive product but an active participant in the gaming world.

K-pop Icons in Coca-Cola's Branding

Similarly, in the K-pop themed poster, Coca-Cola uses the stylized purple background and abstract design elements as icons that visually reference the energetic, colorful world of K-pop. K-pop, as a cultural phenomenon, is known for its highly stylized visuals, vibrant colors, and youthful energy. The abstract design elements, with their vivid and dynamic shapes, capture the essence of K-pop's aesthetics, which are often characterized by boldness, vibrancy, and a sense of movement (Jones, 2015; Gómez et al., 2018). The stylized purple background in the poster is particularly significant, as purple is a color often associated with creativity, royalty, and passion attributes that resonate deeply with K-pop fans who engage with the genre not only as music but as a cultural identity.

The use of this iconic imagery aligns Coca-Cola with K-pop's energetic, global appeal, effectively embedding the product within the cultural context of the genre. The incorporation of K-pop-inspired icons into the design transcends simple product placement; it creates a cultural narrative where Coca-Cola is positioned as an integral part of the K-pop experience. The abstraction of design elements in the background reinforces the notion of youth and vibrancy while simultaneously aligning with the visually striking music videos and performances that K-pop artists are known for (Vaughan, 2019; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). This visual style is unmistakably connected to the digital era in which K-pop thrives, and Coca-Cola's use of it highlights the brand's ability to stay relevant in an increasingly visual and fast-paced global marketplace.

By using K-pop as a cultural reference point, Coca-Cola taps into a worldwide phenomenon that resonates strongly with Gen Z and Millennial consumers, especially in Asia. The brand's iconography in this context is not just about selling a product but about associating the Coca-Cola experience with the excitement and cultural movement of K-pop. Through the use of color, design, and abstraction, Coca-Cola is able to position itself as a product that understands and reflects the dynamic and ever-changing world of youth culture. The success of this approach lies in its ability to connect the visual language of the ad with the deeply felt cultural identity of K-pop fans, making Coca-Cola not just a beverage, but an experience tied to the culture of music, youth, and global connection (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Visual Significance of Iconography in Advertising

The use of icons in both the League of Legends and K-pop themed posters demonstrates Coca-Cola's ability to adapt to the visual language of modern culture. Each visual element—whether the iconic Coca-Cola can or the game and music-related symbols serves as a cultural signifier that communicates more than just the product. These icons create a connection between the brand and its consumers by evoking specific cultural narratives and emotional responses. In the case of League of Legends, Coca-Cola is visually represented as part of the gaming community, symbolizing energy, excitement, and victory. In the K-pop poster, Coca-Cola is intertwined with the world of music and youth culture, offering a sense of fun, vibrancy, and global unity.

This iconographic strategy enables Coca-Cola to communicate to diverse audience groups in different nations but they still share the same international brand. These icons, however, have become so powerful because of their potential to communicate a message in the shortest time possible with a shortcut in terms of cultural meaning that appeals to underlying principles and interests of the target demographics (Kapferer, 2012; Gomez et al., 2018). The utilization of the iconic imagery in the shape of the traditional red and white can or integrating certain symbols of a specific culture that were used by Coca-Cola to produce another product is critical in

completing the brand in the recent advertisements.

The visual approach to the campaign in both campaigns consists of a recognition of the cultural landmarks of the people who drink Coca-Cola. Whether it is to the digital gaming culture of League of Legends or to the youngest and liveliest world of K-pop, the brand also identifies itself with the cultural trends that constitute the social reality of the young people of the modern globalized world. These iconographic choices highlight Coca-Cola's commitment to staying relevant in a fast-changing world while ensuring that the brand's core identity remains intact. The brand's strategic use of visual culture helps it maintain its position as a global leader, resonating with diverse consumer groups by tapping into the icons and symbols that define their lives (Jones, 2015; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017).

Analysis of Indexes

Indexes in the League of Legends poster are found in the depiction of ice and condensation on the can, which indexically suggest coldness and refreshment. The presence of digital effects, such as pixelation or gaming motifs, indexically connects the product to the gaming experience, implying that Coca-Cola is the drink of choice for gamers. In the K-pop poster, the use of vibrant colors and dynamic lines serves as an index of excitement and youthful energy, qualities commonly associated with K-pop culture.

Indexes are crucial elements in semiotic analysis because they create connections between the signifier and the actual experience or condition the symbol represents. In Coca-Cola's advertising campaigns, particularly in the League of Legends collaboration poster and the K-pop themed poster, indexes are strategically employed to enhance the product's connection with the target audience, evoking specific sensations or cultural references. These visual cues such as coldness, refreshment, excitement, and energy reinforce Coca-Cola's association with specific lifestyles and experiences, solidifying its place within various subcultures and global trends.

Indexes of Coldness and Refreshment in the League of Legends Poster

The use of ice on the Coca-Cola can is literally one of the strongest indexes in the League of Legends collaboration poster. These attributes are an index of coldness and this is a strong indicator of refreshment. The presence on the poster can give the idea that beverage must be cool, fresh and will be able to relieve, which is one of the most important things about appeal of Coca-Cola as a drink. Coldness is not only a physical feature of the drink but indicates satisfaction, pleasure, rejuvenation, and is endorsed by the nature of a game, as in between the episodes of intensive play, a player needs some fresh air and relaxation (Vaughan, 2019; Gomez et al., 2018). In addition, the ice on the can relates Coca-Cola with physicality and physical enjoy that makes the product more profitable due to the possibility of providing instant gratification. This coldness as indicated in the indexing is not merely a pointer of temperature but gives an emotional direction. The sensuality added by condensation and ice to Coca-Cola represents the cold and crisp nature of the beverage hence boosting the sensitive effect on the product. The ice and the condensation also contribute to the idea of Coca-Cola as the product that is associated with rest, interpersonal communication, and fun, all of which come as an essential part of the gaming culture (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). In the context of the League of Legends collaboration, the indexical reference to coldness not only signals the refreshing quality of the beverage but also places Coca-Cola within the gaming experience. Gamers, who spend extended hours in front of screens, often look for products that are linked to comfort and relaxation. The condensation on the Coca-Cola can, therefore, becomes a subtle yet powerful sign that Coca-Cola is the ideal drink for gamers looking for a refreshment that complements their digital engagement, whether during competitive matches or casual play (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Digital Effects as an Index of Gaming Experience

Another key index in the League of Legends poster is the use of digital effects, such as pixelation and gaming motifs. These digital effects are not merely aesthetic choices; they serve

as an index of the gaming experience itself, connecting the product to the virtual world in which the target audience operates. The pixelation and gaming symbols indexically suggest that Coca-Cola is part of the broader digital and competitive gaming culture, appealing to gamers who are familiar with the aesthetics of digital interfaces, video games, and esports (Abidin, 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017). By incorporating these digital elements, Coca-Cola enhances its branding in a way that aligns with the visual language of gaming. The gaming motif indexes not just the gaming community but also the immersive, high-energy world that defines much of the modern entertainment landscape. Coca-Cola becomes more than just a drink; it is presented as an essential companion to the gaming experience, adding to the sense of immersion and enjoyment that gamers seek. This indexical relationship between Coca-Cola and gaming creates a strong cultural link, reinforcing the idea that Coca-Cola is the drink of choice for gamers who value excitement, competition, and engagement with the digital world (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Indexes of Excitement and Youthful Energy in the K-pop Poster

In the K-pop themed poster, the use of vibrant colors and dynamic lines serves as an index of excitement and youthful energy, qualities that are commonly associated with K-pop culture. K-pop is known for its high-energy performances, vibrant visuals, and youthful appeal, and these qualities are effectively indexed through the bright colors and dynamic shapes that characterize the poster (Vaughan, 2019; Gómez et al., 2018). The use of bold, energetic colors often in neon shades creates an atmosphere of excitement and celebration, which directly connects the product to the vibrancy of K-pop. The dynamic lines in the poster also index movement and energy, evoking the lively choreography and fast-paced nature of K-pop music videos. These visual elements suggest that Coca-Cola is not just a beverage but a symbol of youthfulness, passion, and excitement. The K-pop fanbase, which is largely composed of young, enthusiastic individuals, can easily identify with the energetic visuals and the emotional intensity they evoke. The indexical use of movement and color thus reinforces Coca-Cola's positioning as a drink that complements the high-energy world of K-pop, where fans and artists alike are immersed in fast-paced, visually stimulating experiences (Jones, 2015; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). In this case, Coca-Cola's visual branding extends beyond the drink itself to symbolize a lifestyle one filled with enthusiasm, excitement, and a sense of belonging to a vibrant cultural movement. The vibrant colors and dynamic lines index a world where K-pop fans are not passive consumers but active participants in a global cultural phenomenon. Coca-Cola positions itself as an integral part of this experience, offering a refreshing beverage that enhances the moments of joy, energy, and togetherness that are characteristic of K-pop fandom (Gómez et al., 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017).

Indexicality and the Connection to Cultural Contexts

The indexical signs used in both the League of Legends and K-pop posters work to establish Coca-Cola's deep connection to modern cultural contexts. The poster of League of Legends also brands the product as something that can provide a time of relief and refreshment as the coldness and condensation on the can attest to this. Meanwhile, the youthfulness and exuberance of the K-pop poster index features the dramatic colors and movements of the line, explicitly associating Coca-Cola with the world of titillating vibrancy and loaded lines of K-pop (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). However, there is more than the text of a product with Coca-Cola being more of a cultural indicator which in the two instances serves to aid in the formation of experience upon its audience. The indexical connection between the product and the cultural experience is central in the manner modern advertisement functions in the formation as well as solidification of brand image. Through the indexical signs, Coca-Cola can position itself as part of the cultural context of the target audiences; thus, making it relevant in the competitive global market. These visual stimuli have the effect of strengthening the emotional connection between the brand and the consumers, strengthening the notion that coca-cola is more than a

drink but part and parcel of their cultural experiences in which they hold dearly. The strategic use of indexicality in Coca-Cola's advertisements shows the power of visual culture in modern branding, allowing the brand to maintain its appeal across diverse consumer groups and cultural contexts (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Analysis of Symbols

Symbols in both posters rely on culturally established conventions. The Coca-Cola logo, as a globally recognized symbol, conveys meanings of tradition, enjoyment, and social connection. In the League of Legends poster, the use of gaming symbols and icons communicates a sense of belonging to the gaming community. The use of the purple color in the K-pop poster is symbolic in the sense that the color purple is commonly attributed to creativity, luxury, and K-pop fandom culture and specifically to the popularity of the color among some fan groups.

One of the strongest advertising tools are symbols which help to create associations with complicated meanings and emotions. The practice of implementing culturally established symbols in the League of Legends and K-pop themed Coca-Cola posters enables the brand to convey the levels of fundamental values like tradition, enjoyment, community, and identity. The symbols can position Coca-Cola in association with certain subcultures and kinds of consumer behaviour, thus making it successful in posing itself as a culturally relevant international brand. These symbolic items go beyond the process of promoting the drink as a poster actually becomes a cultural signifier, which appeals to particular audience and evokes emotional attachment to a certain brand.

Coca-Cola Logo as a Symbol of Tradition and Social Connection

The Coca-Cola brand logo is possibly one of the most recognizable symbols on the earth. Its distinctive cursive script and red-and-white color scheme have become synonymous with the brand's identity. In both the League of Legends and K-pop-themed posters, the Coca-Cola logo functions as a symbol of tradition, enjoyment, and social connection. Coca-Cola has long been associated with moments of celebration, refreshment, and togetherness. This symbol's enduring presence in the posters reflects Coca-Cola's continued commitment to these core values, which have been central to the brand's image for over a century (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

The eminence of the logo on the posters is an indication of the product as well as the cultural meaning that Coca-Cola has acquired globally. It also gives an impression of uniformity and trustworthiness, who thought of the lengthy history of the company and its success to deliver pleasure in various cultures and situations. The example of a gaming community or a worldwide sensation like K-pop can be different, but one fact does not change the Coca-Cola logo is a symbol, which helps to unite people on the basis of experience and social communication. It also welcomes consumers with diverse backgrounds to accept the idea that Coca-Cola is not merely a product, but a representation of connection with others and an improvement of delightful moments wherever it be in the real world or either digital or musical communities (Kapferer, 2012; Gomez et al., 2018).

Gaming Symbols and Icons in the League of Legends Poster

In the League of Legends poster, the use of gaming symbols and icons is critical in establishing a connection between Coca-Cola and the gaming community. These symbols include elements like pixelated graphics, icons associated with gameplay, and abstract representations of game environments. These symbols are culturally significant to gamers, as they are deeply ingrained in the aesthetics of video games and digital spaces. By incorporating these symbols into the poster, Coca-Cola visually communicates that it is a brand that understands the gaming culture and positions itself as an integral part of it.

The use of these gaming-related symbols functions as a visual shorthand for the gaming experience, instantly signaling to gamers that Coca-Cola is part of their world. The pixelation effect, for example, evokes the visual language of video games, while the abstract game-related icons serve as metaphors for the competitive, strategic, and immersive nature of gaming. This

alignment with gaming culture reinforces Coca-Cola's brand association with energy, excitement, and the social aspects of gaming, such as community and camaraderie (Abidin, 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017). In doing so, Coca-Cola leverages these symbols to communicate a sense of belonging to gamers, making the brand feel like a natural fit within their social and entertainment environment.

Purple Color as a Symbol in the K-pop Poster

In the K-pop-themed poster, the use of purple color is a powerful symbolic choice. Purple is often associated with creativity, luxury, and passion qualities that resonate deeply with the K-pop fandom culture. The color purple is already an unofficial color of the K-pop fanbase representing not only the brightness of the music but peculiarities of being a part of a global fan community. This color, which is used and popular among K-pop artists and users, is symbolically used to cause feelings of belongingness, enthusiasm, and creativity (Gomez et al., 2018; Shankar and Ahuja, 2021).

The purple color in the poster symbolically creates a bridge between Coca-Cola and cultural value of K-pop, which is identified as being marked with highest symbolism in their performances, economical music production as well as outstanding displays. The use of the color purple in the K-pop music videos and other promotional content that represent and express these attributes is a common occurrence. With the addition of purple to the Coca-Cola commercial, the Coca-Cola company gets to identify with not only the creative and luxurious features of K-pop but can also capitalize on the emotional attachment that the fans have towards K-pop. This color use assists Coca-Cola to define itself as a close member of the realm of K-pop, in which the symbolism of color has become an imperative component of the fan fiction and fan self (Vaughan, 2019; Gomez et al., 2018). Coca-Cola, therefore, affirms its inclusion in the lives of a young, global population taking pride in creativity, luxury and having a sense of belonging as a result of being affiliated to K-pop.

Symbols as Tools for Cultural Relevance and Emotional Connection

These posters perfectly play with symbols thus enabling Coca-Cola to portray itself as a company that is not only in touch with the modern tendencies, but also a party of it. The Coca-Cola logo, game-related signs, and purple color are visual symbols, which refer to well-established cultural standards and connote to particular audiences. Those symbols are not merely adornments some people badly need; but they are an effective way to allow people to establish emotional connections, and make the culture a part of them. With the help of symbols that are closely associated with the spheres of gaming and K-pop culture, Coca-Cola gains a reputation of an international brand that does not simply sell a drink but plays a certain role in the life and image of young users.

In both posters, Coca-Cola does not merely showcase its product; it presents a narrative of inclusivity, cultural engagement, and shared identity. The use of symbols like the Coca-Cola logo and the gaming and K-pop motifs creates a visual language that communicates Coca-Cola's role within these subcultures. Whether through the symbol of the Coca-Cola logo as a representation of tradition and social connection, the gaming symbols that index the immersive experience of gaming, or the purple color that evokes the passion and creativity of K-pop, Coca-Cola effectively leverages these symbols to deepen its connection to modern youth culture. This is a clear demonstration of how symbols, when strategically employed, can transform a brand from a mere product into a cultural icon (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Coca-Cola use visual elements in today's advertisement themes

Coca-Cola, as one of the world's leading beverage brands, has long been an influential force in the advertising world. Its advertisements serve as a microcosm of evolving marketing strategies, incorporating semiotic elements, visual rhetoric, and branding techniques designed to maintain consumer loyalty while appealing to new generations. In this study, classic and modern Coca-Cola advertisements will be explored and in this Thesis Proposal, the semiotic dimension

of such advertisements will be examined. In a close analysis, we will be able to find out how Coca-Cola is shaping its brand name over the years and changes in its approach to the cultural and technological developments.

The chosen adverts fall in a range of both traditional and modern advertisements, and hence creates a contrast between the conventional approach to advertising and the dynamic modern way applied by Coca-Cola in the modern and digital world. The pictures under consideration are both of the old-fashioned style of the early advertising of Coca-Cola and the more modern, digital one of the recent advertising. The present Thesis Proposal will provide the possibilities to understand how the visual symbols and semiotic strategies have been developed in the branding of Coca-Cola through the examination of these aspects.

Visual Semiotics in Classic Coca-Cola Advertisements (Images 1 and 2).

The traditional semiotic strategies that can be observed in Coca-Cola traditional advertisements focus on simplicity, nostalgia and brand authenticity as depicted to us in the first two images. This classic image is the central semiotic symbol in the first image that is a hand holding a glass bottle containing Coca-Cola. The hand functions as a signifier of human connection as it shows that the drink is not the one to be scary or unfamiliar, but, on the contrary, is something well-known and close being a significant part of the everyday routine of consumers. It is implied that Coca-Cola is a cultural phenomenon and not a product because of the physical encounters with the bottle (Barthes, 1977).

The slogan "It's the real thing" reinforces the semiotic message of authenticity. The phrase invokes trust and reliability, associating the brand with genuine enjoyment. Coca-Cola's use of the phrase in its campaigns not only emphasizes the quality of the beverage but also situates it within a nostalgic context, evoking memories of simpler times and reinforcing the sense that Coca-Cola is a timeless brand (Fiske, 1990). This tagline positions Coca-Cola as the ultimate, unchanging option in a world full of alternatives, appealing to consumers' desire for comfort and consistency.

The use of a red-and-white color scheme further strengthens the semiotic code of this advertisement. Red, traditionally associated with energy, passion, and excitement, enhances the emotional appeal of the ad, encouraging consumers to associate Coca-Cola with moments of joy and refreshment. White, as a complementary color, communicates purity and simplicity, balancing the intensity of the red and creating an aesthetic harmony that is visually appealing and easy to recognize.

The second image further exemplifies Coca-Cola's use of semiotics in the classic era. Featuring a line of Coca-Cola bottles and the phrase "Drink Coca-Cola," this ad focuses on the beverage's visual identity. The symmetry and repetition of the bottles reinforce the idea of mass consumption and availability. The consistent imagery and typography also signify a sense of stability and tradition, positioning Coca-Cola as a dependable brand that has withstood the test of time.

Branding Through Iconography and Symbolism

The major image of these old ads is the bottle of Coca Cola. The glass bottle, which has a unique shape, has earned to be an image of the brand. Even the bottle design as an object is legendary signifying an element of craft and quality justifying the positioning accorded to the brand as not only a premium product, but also affordable. It is not a simple container but a mighty symbol of the history of the brand itself and its role in the American culture, in particular the mid twentieth century when these advertisements were most frequently observed.

Presenting the Coca-Cola logo in a cursive type also supports the existing semiotic codes of classicism and excellence, and the fact that the work is well done implies that the product in question is neither only popular but culturally worthy as well. Through the illustration with this stylized script, Coca-Cola focuses on the cultural bulk of the product shifting it to the status not only of a soft drink but a cultural phenomenon.

Semiotic Analysis of Modern Coca-Cola Advertisements

Shifting Aesthetics in Modern Coca-Cola Advertisements (Images 3 and 4)

Transitions between classic to the modern era, Coca-Cola advertisements have changed in accordance with the new cultural conditioning and technologies. The third and the fourth pictorials are the latter versions of Coca-Cola advertisements, and they illustrate the way that the brand has changed its semiotic marketing appeals to include younger and more technologically-advanced consumers. Such advertisements adapt the advanced digital aesthetics and the use of the interactive--youth-oriented topics that are not comparable with the traditional one.

The third image, promoting Coca-Cola Zero Sugar, incorporates a futuristic design that includes bright neon colors and digital elements, such as glowing symbols and dynamic forms. The use of purple, pink, and blue hues, along with geometric shapes, suggests a shift toward technological progress. These visual elements speak to a younger, more trend-conscious demographic, emphasizing the brand's commitment to innovation and its alignment with modern tastes (Jones, 2015).

The inclusion of music-related symbols such as notes and abstract shapes signals Coca-Cola's desire to connect with the growing cultural significance of music and entertainment in the digital age. This ad is designed to attract younger consumers who view music and digital content as integral aspects of their identity. By incorporating such symbols, Coca-Cola taps into the cultural, reinforcing its relevance in a media-saturated world (Holt, 2004).

Symbolism and Engagement with Digital Culture

The fourth image continues this trend of incorporating digital aesthetics, with the can of Coca-Cola Zero Sugar placed amidst a backdrop of vibrant lights and abstract visuals. The ad makes a direct connection to the world of esports and gaming by aligning itself with the League of Legends franchise, a popular video game. This strategic collaboration highlights Coca-Cola's engagement with digital culture and its efforts to appeal to a demographic that is heavily involved in online communities and digital experiences (Abidin, 2018).

In such a modern environment, Coca-Cola has distanced itself as a producer of an individual product. It is now a style which is linked with gaming, entertainment and internet connectivity. In the advertisement the dominating element is the high-tech images that are meant to indicate that Coca-Cola is on the edge of the cultural development as there is a drink that is not only being sipped, it is being experienced through high-tech labels (Keller, 2003).

Comparing Classic and Modern Advertising: Semiotic Shifts

1. Evolution of Semiotic Codes

The semiotic shift from classic to modern Coca-Cola advertisements reflects broader cultural changes, particularly in terms of consumer expectations and technological advancements. While the classic ads rely heavily on nostalgic iconography and a sense of timelessness, the modern ads embrace modern aesthetics that reflect current trends and innovations. The shift from the familiar red-and-white color scheme to more dynamic, digital visuals signals a departure from the traditional and an embrace of the future.

This change in semiotic codes implies that Coca-Cola has realized that it should adapt to the desires of juvenile generations as long as their company keeps their main identity. By turning to digital culture as one of the major tasks is possible to remain an important brand in an age where technological innovation approaches, entertainment, and consumption are becoming so aligned.

2. Branding and Identity Construction

The Coca-Cola brand used in the both historical and the modern advertisements has been concentrated on establishing an emotional bond with the consumers. In the traditional commercials, the emotional selling point was associated with nostalgia and the concept of what it is we have experienced together. The modern advertisements, in their turn, approach the identity of the consumers differently, in an interactive, more technology-oriented manner,

focusing on the individuality of the advertisement, on innovation, and cultural relevancy.

This shows that Coca-Cola is such a strong global brand because it is able to change semiotic strategies, but not core brand identity. The brand has so far been meeting the challenge of understanding the dynamics of cultural change extolling them through visual rhetoric and semiotics to connect the different narratives to people of different generations (Kapferer, 2012).

The semiotic examination of both the classic and modern advertisements of the Coca-Cola company show that it has successfully employed the visual aspects in advert creation in order to form and establish its brand. Whether it is in the glorified image of the years gone by, through the old advertisements, or the hustle and bustle of the digital age through the new advertisements, Coca-Cola has always reshaped its visual rhetoric to address the needs of the market. Through these semiotic elements we can gather how brands such as Coca-Cola use visual culture as a method of establishing an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand to ensure long duration currency and success in the competitive market in terms of advertisement.

Comparative Discussion: Classic vs. Modern Coca-Cola Advertising

Compared to traditional Coca-Cola advertisements, which often emphasize universal themes such as happiness and togetherness, these modern posters employ more targeted semiotic strategies. The use of specialized icons, indexes, and symbols allows Coca-Cola to connect with niche audiences on a deeper cultural level, demonstrating the brand's adaptability and ongoing relevance in a rapidly changing media landscape.

Coca-Cola has been quite accomplished at advertising its brand, employing quite well the coloring of semiotics in order to build and retain a worldwide image. Nevertheless, the means it is using in its advertisement has changed immensely with time. The tradition Coca-Cola commercials concentrated on some universal topics, including endearing, association, and freshness, to establish an emotional connection with a large number of people. These old-time advertisements played off eternal ideals that do not belong to any culture, and they tap into the notion of Coca-Cola as the drink of family, culture, and festivity. By contrast, modern Coca-Cola adverts, such as the ones on League of Legends and K-pop, have more specific semiotic techniques. Such strategies involve the application of culturally specific icons, indexes, and symbols which appeal to niche consumers on a higher level, where the brand gets to connect with younger and more multicultural consumers in a better, more culturally relatable way. With such specially selected semiotic devices, Coca-Cola shows its versatility and responsiveness to the ever-changing media environment and proves that it will not only continue its established popularity but also manage to become close to the needs of new consumers (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Classic Coca-Cola Advertising: Universal Themes and Broad Appeal

Traditional Coca-Cola advertisements focused on universal themes that appealed to a wide audience. The classic holiday commercials, for example, often depicted families coming together to share a Coca-Cola, emphasizing joy, togetherness, and a sense of belonging. The iconic "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke" ad from the 1970s is a prime example of this approach. The advertisement, which featured people from different cultures and backgrounds singing about unity and peace, capitalized on the universal desire for connection and the shared enjoyment of a simple pleasure: drinking Coca-Cola. The semiotics of this campaign centered on simplicity, using straightforward visual cues such as smiling faces, festive settings, and the universally recognizable Coca-Cola bottle. These symbols transcended national and cultural boundaries, making the brand relatable to consumers from diverse walks of life (Vaughan, 2019; Holt, 2004).

This focus on universal themes allowed Coca-Cola to build a broad based brand identity that was not tethered to any particular social group or cultural trend. The message was clear and simple: Coca-Cola was for everyone, a drink that could be enjoyed by people of all ages and

from all backgrounds. In such a way, the old Coca-Cola advertising tried to make the consumers feel that they should be part of the process by building an inclusive quotient around a common human experience, which included family get-togethers, celebrations, and positive emotions. This positioning assisted Coca-Cola to connect emotionally with the consumers throughout the world in the sense that it facilitated its product to be thought of as an agent of happiness and unity (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021)

Modern Coca-Cola Advertising: Targeted Semiotics for Audiences

Modern Coca-Cola advertisements operated differently though as they are more aimed and subtle. Instead of emphasizing generic topics and universal ideas, new campaigns that use League of Legends and K-pop adopt an individual approach and integrate details of a particular subculture and various cultural symbols in order to reach certain audience. Such advertisements are produced with very specific semiotic tools, like game-like graphics, technological themes, the use of color to match the liveliness and vitality of K-pop itself, and reference to the cultural norms and aesthetics of the audience the video is aimed at directly. The effectiveness of these symbols is that they immediately become familiar to their audiences, who can be gamers drowning in the virtual environment of the League of Legends or the fans of K-pop, united by the means of a universal language music and performance (Gomez et al., 2018; Rocamora and Cardoso, 2017).

To illustrate, the pixelation effect, icons that have anything to do with video games, and other digital elements help Coca-Cola suggest the atmosphere of living the game in the League of Legends campaign. These semiotic factors act as an indexical association between the product and the world of games and the brand seems to be an intrinsic part of the world of games. On the same note, the K-pop poster uses a rich palette and powerful lines as a representation of dynamic and high-paced reality of the K-pop world, associating Coca-Cola with the youthful energy of the global K-pop fan community. Such visual associations cease to be a single product sale, they aim to include Coca-Cola into the culture of such communities, to make the brand part of the gamers and K-pop fans lifestyle and identity (Shankar & Ahuja, 2021; Jones, 2015).

Symbolism and Iconography: A Shift from General to Specific

The shift from broad, universally appealing themes to more niche, culturally specific ones reflects the way in which advertising has evolved in response to changes in the media landscape and consumer behavior. Classic advertisements relied heavily on simple, universally recognizable symbols such as the Coca-Cola logo, a family enjoying a drink, or a festive setting to convey the brand's message of happiness and unity. These symbols were effective because they tapped into widely shared emotions and values that could be understood by almost anyone, regardless of their background or interests.

In contrast, modern advertisements incorporate more complex symbols and iconography that appeal to specific subcultures. The League of Legends poster, for instance, uses symbols from the gaming world, including pixelated effects, abstract icons, and references to gameplay elements. These gaming-specific symbols index the experience of digital competition, excitement, and the sense of belonging that gamers associate with the League of Legends community. Similarly, the K-pop poster uses bright colors and design elements that echo the visual aesthetic of K-pop music videos, which are known for their high-energy, colorful performances. These symbols not only reflect the interests of the target audience but also create an emotional connection by aligning Coca-Cola with the cultural touchstones that define the lives of K-pop fans (Abidin, 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017).

The Brand's Adaptability and Ongoing Relevance

Through the adoption of the specified semiotic approaches, Coca-Cola proves to be flexible in light of the dynamic media environment. The brand makes efforts to reach the niche audiences with the help of the culturally specific symbols and stories, which demonstrates attentiveness of the brand to the changing nature of consumer behavior. The modern consumers,

especially younger ones, are less inclined to relate to a general, generic idea of community and collective when nobody is narrowly defined groups and interests become the source of identification. The modern Coca-Cola advertising recognizes the change and the current advertisements apply semiotic techniques to appeal to these consumers more intimately. Such a specific strategy also helps Coca-Cola to stay relevant in the age when media is becoming more and more fragmented, and consumers are better off pursuing brands which represent their personal identity and cultural affiliation (Vaughan, 2019; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

In conclusion, the fact that the advertising strategy of Coca-Cola required alteration to change the focus on universal thematic to the more specific semiotics signifies the general trends in the development of the advertisement industry and the culture of the consumers. With the usage of special icons, indexes, and symbols on the modern campaigns, Coca-Cola not only retains the relevance of its brand but also changes with the new inclinations of modern customers. This change proves that Coca-Cola continues to embrace strategies of being a culturally responsive brand, with the ability to reach out and appeal to various audiences with similar cultural experiences and values. Coca-Cola is taking advantage of these subcultural trend movements so that it can have a bite of the cake since it is still a favorite brand globally, as well as sucking to the unique interests and identities of younger and more digitalized consumers.

Cultural and Social Meanings Embedded in the Posters

These two posters show a strategic repertoire of Coca-Cola in employing semiotics to capture the modern culture. Venturing into the world of gaming and K-pop, Coca-Cola can claim the position of the company that is sensitive to the interests and identities of younger generations of the consumers. The posters are not selling a drink, but they are creating a story of inclusiveness and relevance to culture, encouraging the representatives of those subcultures to perceive Coca-Cola as belonging to their culture and encompassing a part of their lifestyle.

The League of Legends and K-pop-themed Coca-Cola posters exemplify how the brand uses semiotics to engage with and reflect modern cultural trends. Coca-Cola's advertisements transcend the typical function of promoting a product by strategically incorporating elements from the dynamic subcultures of gaming and K-pop, thus shaping its identity as a brand that is deeply in tune with the values and preferences of younger generations. By doing so, Coca-Cola positions itself not merely as a beverage, but as a cultural symbol that resonates with the lifestyles of consumers immersed in these fast-growing cultural movements. The integration of gaming imagery in the League of Legends poster, such as the pixelated effects and motifs of battle and competition, reinforces Coca-Cola's alignment with the world of esports and digital entertainment. This connection is not incidental, it is a calculated effort to speak directly to a community that spends considerable time engaging with competitive gaming and digital worlds. Through these visual cues, Coca-Cola positions itself as the drink of choice for gamers, providing an enhanced experience of refreshment that complements their virtual adventures (Abidin, 2018; Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017). In a similar fashion, the K-pop poster's vibrant use of color and energy-filled design aligns the brand with the youthful, energetic world of K-pop music. K-pop's global influence, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z, allows Coca-Cola to tap into a global cultural phenomenon, with the bright, animated visuals capturing the spirit of K-pop's frenetic performance style. This alignment positions Coca-Cola not only as a product but as an essential part of the global K-pop culture, reinforcing its status as a beverage that enhances the experiences of young, music-obsessed fans who identify with the genre's exciting and inclusive nature (Vaughan, 2019; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). The brand's incorporation of these cultural elements serves a dual purpose first, it creates a deeper emotional connection with its audience by appealing to their cultural affiliations, and second, it positions Coca-Cola as an integral part of these subcultures, blending seamlessly into the digital and musical environments where these young consumers live and thrive.

By embracing these subcultures, Coca-Cola transcends the traditional role of a product and

becomes a cultural participant, reflecting the changing nature of consumer behavior in the modern era. The gaming community and K-pop fanbase are both incredibly diverse but united by shared interests and values. Coca-Cola's advertisements tap into these unifying themes, offering an inclusive space where consumers feel acknowledged and represented. This branding strategy is quite effective in targeting the young digitally native consumers who tend to shop authentically and embrace brands that make the statement about their social identity and cultural trend that would describe their existence. In both the posters, Coca-Cola is doing a great marketing idea of inculcating itself in cultural and social fabric related to these vibrant sub cultures. In such a way, it enhances its relationship with a global youth market that is more focused on brands that reflect their identities, values, and aspirations (Kapferer, 2012; Gomez et al., 2018). The application of game and K-pop images encourages these consumers to think that Coca-Cola is a soft drink but something more that it is a shared experience, a sense of community, and representation of culture, which provides them with a stronger connection between the brand and its viewing audience.

Coca-Cola has proficiency in being relevant worldwide through its capacity to combine both the modern cultural perception with its traditional brand values. As the world of advertising continues to evolve, brands must adapt to changing consumer landscapes by embracing new forms of cultural expression. Coca-Cola's advertisements demonstrate how semiotics can be employed to create narratives that speak to the values and interests of younger generations. Through the use of gaming and K-pop-inspired visuals, Coca-Cola not only adapts to modern culture but also shapes it, ensuring its place within the broader cultural conversation. This cultural relevance is not fleeting; it reflects Coca-Cola's deep understanding of the shifting cultural tides and its ability to stay connected with the diverse and evolving needs of global consumers (Holt, 2004; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). The posters become more than advertisements they are a reflection of the way Coca-Cola continues to redefine itself as a cultural icon that resonates with young, engaged, and diverse audiences worldwide.

Coca-Cola's cultural and social meaning in these posters, therefore, extends beyond just marketing a product. It constructs a complex cultural narrative that emphasizes inclusivity, relevance, and emotional connection. The brand's efforts to connect with younger consumers through their passions and cultural movements demonstrates its awareness of the growing importance of social media and digital influence in shaping brand identities. As teenagers increasingly combine their interest in subcultures, perceptions and identity, a product like Coca-Cola is well placed to make good use of sub-cultural associations to encourage brand habit. This way, by existing as part of the global trends of gaming and K-pop, Coca-Cola manages not only to address the immediate tastes of its audience but also to manifest its long-term intentions to remain relevant in the market that constantly changes (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). These commercials sell more than a beverage, they are a way of belonging and being involved in a culture and because of this, consumers are further connected to Coca-Cola in a more profound way by making them feel closer to the company and giving them the perspective of the product as a human.

Visual Elements in Modern Advertisements

Coca-Cola's use of visual elements in modern advertisements is an excellent example of how a brand strategically incorporates visual language to connect with modern audiences. As seen in the more recent Coca-Cola advertisements (Images 3 and 4), the brand employs a wide range of visual techniques and symbols that not only reflect but also amplify its marketing goals, which include targeting younger, tech-savvy consumers while staying relevant in a highly competitive market.

Color Schemes and Digital Aesthetics

In the third image promoting Coca-Cola Zero Sugar, the brand makes extensive use of neon hues such as purple, blue, and pink, which are closely associated with digital culture,

futuristic trends, and entertainment. The use of these colors is a deliberate attempt to appeal to a younger, tech-oriented demographic that identifies with vibrant, high-energy aesthetics. Colors such as these are not only eye-catching but also suggest a sense of boldness and individuality, aligning well with the target audience's preferences (Murray, 2019).

The addition of digital effects, and symbols (hearts and musical notes) adds more modernity to the overall ad. Such digital aesthetics signify the blending of Coca-Cola with the modern technology and culture experiences, i.e., it is a sign that Coca-Cola is not simply a product but rather an important institution in the area of digital and pop-culture trends. The fact that such modern graphics and symbols are used is more so akin to a modern trend where digital interfaces are becoming present in all aspects of life, online games apps, and streaming services, as well as social media (Rocamora & Cardoso, 2017). Hence, the visual decision in the case of Coca-Cola can be explained by the current digitalization of the worldwide advertisement modeling.

Interactive and Personalized Branding

Incorporating interactive elements like the use of gaming culture in the fourth image strengthens Coca-Cola's ability to connect with modern audiences. The collaboration with League of Legends, a widely popular online game, is a visual and symbolic strategy to deepen Coca-Cola's ties with the gaming community. The ad uses gaming-related symbols such as neon blue lighting and jagged shapes resembling shards of ice to evoke the high-energy world of esports and gaming. The application of these aspects directly addresses the viewers who are accustomed to online games and e-sports that have become a pivotal point in the youth culture (Abidin, 2018; Holt, 2004).

Also, the visual context of the ad suggests exclusivity and urgency around the product as the Coca-Cola Zero SugarCan is treated within a dramatic presentation with the keywords of "Ultimate" and "Limited edition". Such design decisions do not only make the product more attractive but also resonate with current social trends like FOMO (Fear of Missing out) and the need to have exclusive, customisable and unique things to experience (Keller, 2003).

The visual image such as the smooth can design and the futuristic background is taken into account which reflects current tendencies in the area of visual communication, where brands do not only sell a product but market the experience, a lifestyle, or even the identity. It is one of the most significant changes toward the simpler products-focused ads depicted in the traditional Coca-Cola campaigns.

Symbolism and the Creation of Visual Narratives

The centerpiece of these new ads are the symbolism applied by Coca-Cola to convey fundamental themes of modernity, enjoyment and connectivity. The symbols used by the visible images such as the microphone, the use of musical notes and shapes of pure abstraction can be used to draw upon the cultural values of the personal expression, creativity, and community. This reflects a wider cultural trend where consumers, especially younger demographics, gravitate toward brands that allow for personalization and participation in digital culture (Schroeder & Zwick, 2018).

Moreover, Coca-Cola's visual elements represent the brand's engagement with broader social narratives. The ad featuring the League of Legends branding reflects the intersection of consumerism and gaming culture, a powerful subculture that not only defines the entertainment preferences of many young people but also informs the way they define community, competition, and social interaction (Jones, 2015). Through these visual cues, Coca-Cola aligns itself with the desires and values of modern consumers, making the brand appear dynamic, current, and socially aware.

To Examine the Cultural and Social Meanings Embedded in Coca-Cola's

Branding Language

The branding language used in Coca-Cola advertisements is rich with cultural and social

meanings that reflect modern narratives surrounding identity, technology, and consumerism. By utilizing visual semiotics in both classic and modern campaigns, Coca-Cola shapes its cultural relevance in a world that increasingly prioritizes experiences and digital engagement over traditional consumption.

Social Narratives of Individualism and modernity

The Coca-Cola advertisements in the modern era, particularly the third and fourth images, place significant emphasis on themes of individualism, freedom of choice, and innovation. The visual elements used—bold, vibrant colors, digital symbols, and futuristic aesthetics are reflective of a broader social narrative that champions personal expression and the desire to stand out. In a world where self-expression and individuality are highly valued, Coca-Cola's use of digital culture, music, and gaming references works to create a sense of alignment with these cultural values (Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Specifically, the “Zero “ Coca-Cola advertisement is multimodally geared towards consumers concerned about their health, as the visual message helps to imply not only the innovation but also its version of the brand adapted to the requirements of contemporary lifestyle. The healthier alternative nature of the ad, as opposed to the unhealthier sugary sodas nature is a trend in society of healthier lifestyles and increased awareness to what people eat (Vaughan, 2019).

Cultural Connection Through Digital Culture

The imagery employed in the adverts of Coca-Cola draws on an important cultural theme of the 21st century, which is the adoption of the digital technology and social media in daily routines. Indeed, the application of digital elements to the imagery, including neon bright symbols and digital symbols, is not only a visual aesthetic, but also an association to the spread of the internet and the digital communication. With advancements in technology touching most areas of interpersonal interaction, Coca-Cola promotions have accommodated this change by becoming visually inspired with all its content being digitally minded (Gómez et al., 2018).

Moreover, the use of culturally oriented imagery, including that of a game and the appearance of musical notes, addresses a cohort that has a higher probability of engaging in the brand interaction in the virtual world, especially through the mediums like YouTube, Instagram, and live-streamed games. Such cultural awareness may be demonstrated by coca-cola that chooses these symbols to make this brand a part of the social culture of the society that is highly connected and oriented on entertainment values (Kapferer, 2012).

Social Influence and Community Engagement

A key component of Coca-Cola's branding language is its ability to foster a sense of community. Through its modern advertisements, Coca-Cola uses visual elements that promote engagement and participation. The “Ultimate Limited Edition” cans and the collaboration with League of Legends are not merely product advertisements but an invitation to consumers to partake in something larger than just purchasing a soda. Coca-Cola is positioning itself as part of a broader cultural movement that encompasses not only products but also social events, digital communities, and cultural touchstones (Abidin, 2018).

This is a social theory of solidarity and identity on a broader social level wherein a person wants to be a part of a community or group of people which often leads to a person identifying with them. The branding efforts by Coca Cola reach this nostalgia by making people wanting to be part of a communicative community structure, and through its advertising, Coca Cola empowers this sense of belonging in consumers whose demand to belong to brands and company with their values, interests, and lifestyle choices is on the rise (Shankar & Ahuja, 2021). The modern advertising campaigns of Coca-Cola have demonstrated the productivity of this brand to follow the changes in the cultural and social environment. Through inventive use of the visual and the adoption of digital culture, Coca-Cola has managed to grab the attention of the modern-day visual codes, playing up on the themes of individuality, health-consciousness, and

community interaction. These advertisements not only speak of a change in the approach of marketing but also are an indication of the larger societal trends where technology, entertainment and social integration are central.

Cultural and social connotations inside the language of Coca-Cola branding are the direct reaction to the shifting discourses of the modern society. Employing such semiotic signifiers as references to music and games, as well as digital aesthetics, the brand shows how well it understands the values and desires of their target audience. Coca-Cola remains as a company highly operational in a digitally oriented, socially conscious modern world by keeping itself abreast of cultural trends, though not neglecting its DNA of what has made the company what it is today the world icon of global harmony and pleasure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the semiotic analysis conducted on two modern Coca-Cola advertisements, one in collaboration with League of Legends and the other with K-pop, it can be concluded that Coca-Cola effectively utilizes icons, indexes, and symbols to construct layered meanings that resonate with specific subcultures. The use of icons such as the Coca-Cola logo, gaming symbols in the League of Legends ad, and K-pop motifs in the K-pop ad, demonstrates Coca-Cola's ability to adapt its visual language to speak directly to the values and identities of its younger, digitally-engaged consumer base. By employing Charles Sanders Peirce's categories of semiotics, Coca-Cola constructs a narrative of inclusivity and cultural relevance, positioning itself not just as a product, but as an integral part of the lifestyle and community of its audience. This strategy has allowed Coca-Cola to maintain its relevance in a fragmented and rapidly evolving media landscape by aligning itself with modern cultural movements (Shankar & Ahuja, 2021; Gómez et al., 2018). Coca-Cola has also exhibited adaptability of going through media dynamics and changing behavior of consumers by making their advertisements more specific. Such modern advertisements do not merely advertise products, but they relate to digital experiences and settings, which are inherent in the young generation or modern culture. Coca-Cola has inserted itself through culturally competent symbols of viral online games and K-pop, which further demonstrates itself as something more than simple drink. It is woven in the social and cultural life of the society. Through this relationship with their greater meaning, Coca-Cola can now appeal to the dreams and beliefs of young people to further entrench in the minds of the young consumers that the brand is more than just a product but also a wider cultural and social phenomenon. With this strategy, Coca-Cola will be able to preserve its trademark image of being iconic yet be in line with the fast-evolving media and consumer environment (Kapferer, 2012; Shankar & Ahuja, 2021).

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, several directions for future research are recommended:

1. **Comparative Analysis with Other Brands:** Future research could expand this semiotic analysis by comparing Coca-Cola's advertising strategies with those of other competing brands in the soft drink industry, such as Pepsi. This comparison would provide deeper insights into how different brands respond to the changing preferences of younger consumers and incorporate elements of pop culture in their advertisements. It would also shed light on the effectiveness of these semiotic strategies across brands with similar market goals.
2. **Further Analysis of Visual Changes in Digital Advertising:** With the increasing dominance of digital platforms, further research could explore how Coca-Cola adapts its visual and symbolic elements in digital advertisements, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These platforms are home to younger, digitally native audiences, and Coca-Cola's strategy on these platforms might differ from traditional media advertisements. Future studies could investigate how Coca-Cola integrates interactive

elements, such as influencer marketing and user-generated campaigns, to increase engagement and deepen its connection with its digital audience.

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