

# “*Pahlawan Top Up*”;

## *An Advertisement to Enhance the National Non-cash Movement*

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**Abstract**— Advertising is so familiar in the modern era that people can see it almost everywhere. Advertising is not only about commercial promotion of products, but also comprises the idea of texts with particular intention to elevate the image of an individual, group or organization. The medium of advertisement can vary, from newspaper or magazine to media social including YouTube. The aim of this research is to discover the message of Grab’s advertisement “*Pahlawan Top Up*” which was carried by its official account on youtube. The advertisement has been watched by more than 28 million viewers in a month. The research used discourse of advertising and semiotics by Barthes to analyze the data. The result shows that in the primary meaning, the advertisement attempts to persuade the society to appreciate the drivers. Meanwhile, in the secondary meaning, it is found that there is an effort to enhance the cashless payment in the society. The platform supports the government agenda of National Cashless Movement (GNNT).

**Keywords**—*advertising; discourse; semiotics; Barthes; cashless payment*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is a cultural representation based on human mind and life-practice. Advertisement is aimed to obtain consumer’s trust toward the advertised product (Hoed, 2014:269). Products in types of materials and services are the instruments to invite consumer to accept things they advertise. Advertisement maker also could choose the media that suits the target of the product. In 50s advertisement only appeared in the form of printed media and static media in movie theater (Hoed, 2014). Nowadays, advertisement can easily found in various electronic media and also social media.

As an instrument, advertisement is shaped by several elements. According to Cook (1992), those elements consist of substances, music and image, participants, functions, paralanguage, situation, co-text, and intertext or other advertisements related. Each of the elements are connected each other to support the meaning on the message of advertisement.

Noth (1990) suggested that advertisement is included in the research area of two unrelated academic disciplines, these are economy and semiotic. In economy, advertisement is an essential factor of goods exchange process. Meanwhile in semiotic, it is an essential factor of messages exchange process. As a message exchange process, advertisement has been a part of explicit research object since the beginning of 1960s (Noth, 1990:477). Various discipline of sciences related to advertisement message are psychology, sociology, anthropology, marketing, journalism, mass communication, rhetoric, and linguistics. Among those sciences, marketing and linguistics are marked implicitly as part of semiotic. In semiotic, the advertisement researchers often focus on hidden meaning (subliminal) of the texts.

Noth (1990) depicted several elements needed to be analyzed to find real meaning on advertisement. On the first research, the analysis key toward advertisement can be found in the connotation concept and ideology based on semiotic. Furthermore, advertisement discussed based on code or sign partially on the advertisement structure maker. Thus, researchers can give critics toward advertisements which manipulated public using hidden strategies on its production.

To achieve the explicit message on advertisement, analysis is needed on the connotative meaning and ideology behind it. Barthes' semiology approach has stimulated several analysis of advertisement. Barthes (on Noth, 1990) depicted that connotation system can shape advertisement rhetoric. Such rhetoric refers to expectation level or signifier. On the level signified, connotation system appears as ideology believed by the society. These rhetoric and ideology form a sign known as expression or signifiers and content or signified.

The subject of this research is the advertisement of Grab "Pahlawan Top Up". This advertisement is interesting because of the hidden messages related to government agendas inside it. Grab is transportation network company founded in Malaysia and based in Singapore. This company has spread its wings to Southeast Asian countries and become one of the most reliable public transportation in Indonesia. "Pahlawan Top Up" is one of its most watched advertisement in Youtube, with more than 28 million views in one month. Moreover, basically this commercial advertised two products, which are Grab and OVO. As first decacorn start up business in Southeast Asia with more than US\$ 10 billion, Grab is one of influential company to Indonesia economic growth.

Grab provides online transportation service with two ways of payment; cash and OVO. OVO is an electronic payment platform used as substituting GrabPay, the Grab previous feature payment. Digital payments nowadays become the important choice for the society, even if those are not developed massively. By the growing of electronic payment application, OVO tries to attain people's interest and facilitate its consumers in the system of balance top up. According to the researcher's hypothesis, this commercial is a way by OVO to spread electronic payment massively, also to support government in realizing Gerakan Nasional Nontunai (GNNT) or National Non-cash Movement.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Analysis of Advertisement Discourse

Cook (1992) explained about advertisement and its structural components as a discourse. Discourse does not just involve the linguistic feature, but also the communication context. In commercial, Cook (1992) described context consisting of:

#### a. Substances

Advertisement substances consist of primary and secondary substances. Primary substance is a physical sign taking part on the advertisement, such as writing, sound wave, music, image, and so on. Secondary substance is a material or media to deliver the commercial, such as magazine, newspaper, radio, and social media.

#### b. Situation

Situation on the advertisement discourse includes the relation between object and the performer on the commercial text as remarked by participants.

#### c. Participants

Participants include the sender, addresser, addressee, and receiver of the message.

#### d. Function

Function of advertisement is what is meant by the sender and addresser or what is remarked by those whom need the message and receive it.

#### e. Language and paralinguistic

Language and paralinguistic are two different elements that is related one another. Language generally refers to the message by the writing to convey through the advertisement. Paralinguistic is the meaningful behavior following the language, such as sound quality, attitude, face expression, and touch (on the story), and the choice of letter of the writing.

#### f. Co-text

Co-text is a text antedating or following the observed commercial and determined as part of the same discourse. This element is not absolutely existed, which means that not all observed advertisement have co-text to support the commercial discussion.

#### g. Intertext

Intertext is a text reputed as part of other discourse by participants, but still has associative relationship with the observed discourse and influence the interpretation. *Maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications*

### B. Barthe's Semiotics

Semiotic theory by Barthes is literally brought by Saussure's linguistic theory, proposed four theoretical concepts, they are langue-parole, *signifiant-signifie*, syntagmatic-paradigmatic, and synchronic-diachronic (Hoed, 2004:21-22). Barthes later developed *signifiant* and *signifie* theory became expression for *signifiant* and *contenu* for *signifie*. Then he developed more theory about sign into denotation and connotation theory. According to Barthes, sign by Saussure is still in general level and socially controlled, in this context known as denotation or first system of sign.

Human can use sign with two other possibilities, which is called by Barthes as second system. In this system, sign can evolve to its expression aspect, that is the evolving process of some expression (E) referred to the same *contenu* (C). The development of this expression is called paralinguistic, or synonymy in linguistics (look at Picture 1). If the same expression refers to the different *contenu* then it is called as connotation. On the other words, connotation is derived from one same signifier into more than one

meaning. Furthermore, Barthes developed this connotation theory as a base to analyze culture and construct the theory of culture (Hoed, 2004:78). This connotation theory is then used by the researcher to analyze the aspects of advertisement structures.

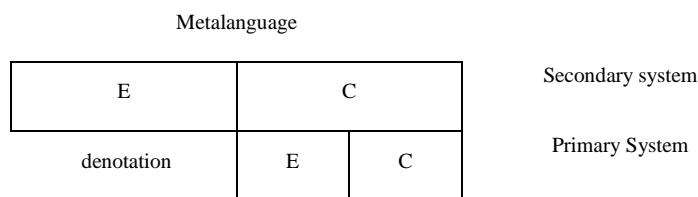


Fig. 1. *Paralinguistic and Connotation Theory (Barthes 1957)*

### C. Gerakan Nasional Nontunai (GNNT)

Gerakan Nasional Nontunai (GNNT) or national non-cash movement is a project initiated by Indonesia government, specifically by Bank of Indonesia (BI), on 14 August 2014 to motivate Indonesian society in using cashless payment system and instrument (<http://keuda.kemendagri.go.id>). The government believes that cashless payment will continue to good rewarding for government and the public. Cashless payment is considered is a way to increase macro-economy growth, lower the cost, and decrease the level of corruption. The benefits of cashless payment by the society are facilitating people to not bring money in the pocket, wide access, transparency of transaction to prevent and identify crimes, and efficiency of currency, and accurate economic planning (<http://www.bi.go.id>).

However, based on Indonesian Economics Report on 2017 by Bank of Indonesia, the acceptance attitude of the society is still in low level compared to other countries. Beside effected by the inefficiency of national retail cashless payment ecosystem, the low acceptance is also affected by the society habit on doing cash payment and limited awareness of cashless transaction benefits (<http://www.bi.go.id>). Facing these challenge, Bank of Indonesia tries to strengthen the electrification program; a program under Gerakan Nasional Nontunai, focusing on the massive sectors like *bansos* (humanitarian aid) and transportation.

## III. METHOD

At first, the data is analyzed through Cook's discourse of advertising (1992) to discuss about some elements that constructed an advertisement. Those elements include substance, music and picture, participants, functions, intertext, co-text, situations, and metalanguage. As a sign system, advertisement is then analyzed by using the semiotic theory of Barthes. Danesi and Peron (1999:282) stated that it was Roland Barthes (1957) who drew attention of semioticians to the value of studying advertising. Barthes interpreted the sign denotatively and connotatively. According to Barthes, the connotation is owned by certain cultural communities (not individually). Thus, Barthes's theory is considered the most appropriate for analyzing the connotation meaning of the advertisements studied.

## IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first step of discussion is about the advertisement's substance which includes primary and secondary one. The advertisement of "*Pahlawan Top Up*" uses narrator's voice, picture, and writing as the primary substances, and YouTube channel as the secondary one. Pictures, writing, and narrator's voice are combined as a video with the situation setting of 1900s. It can be seen from the fashion style and some stuffs presented in the video such as the old book and toys which are popular in the era. That situation setting is aimed to take the viewers to get nostalgic moments. Cheung et. al (2013) stated that nostalgia can increase happiness and optimism. Thus, the advertisement tries to make the people, especially the customers, to get pleasant feeling and be optimistic after watching it.

Meanwhile, the YouTube channel is chosen to relay the advertisement since the targeted Grab's customers are those with internet network to access the application itself. According to Yuniyanto and Sirine (2018), advertisements in YouTube can increase brand recognition, that is the memory of customers toward certain brand may emerge when they see the advertisement in the media relayed it. Brand recognition could build up the brand awareness and is the first step to recognize the existence of the brand (Durianto, et al., 2001). Yuniyanto and Sirine then concluded that brand recognition gives positive effect towards the desire to buy the products. In other ways, relaying advertisement through YouTube channel could affect the customers to recognize, remember, and buy or even use the product offered.

The second aspect is situation of advertisement, that is the properties and relations of objects and people in the vicinity of the text, as perceived by the participants (Cook, 1992). Beside the situation setting of 1900s as mentioned before, this advertisement displays Jakarta as the representation of big cities. At the beginning of the advertisement, voices and writings appeared as "*di*

*tengah kejamnya kota besar*" which was supported by pictures street and construction in Jakarta which meant that big cities had many problems such as noise and congestion. The depiction of a situation like this is felt to ignite the anxiety of the audience who then looks forward to the solution offered by the advertisement in the next scene. The advertisement, indirectly, attempts to keep the attention of viewers to see the advert until the end.

Third, the participant aspect in the advertisement includes the sender, the addresser, the addressee, and the receiver. Advertising message senders are Grab companies, as well as channels that deliver advertisements are official accounts of the company. Message deliverers are advertising models and narrators who convey company messages to the addressee. The receiver of the message here is the community in general, especially those who use the internet to access YouTube. Meanwhile, more specifically, the targets of this ad were Grab and OVO customers. This shows that advertising is trying to get wider scope of customer.

Although the target of advertising is the company's customers, no words or phrases are found that refer directly to the target. On the contrary, the word 'mereka' which refers to the addresser is more frequent. As in the phrase "*mereka datang di saat-saat genting*", "*mereka datang di saat saldo OVO Anda begitu kritis mengenaskan*", "*mereka datang di saat manusia di titik nadir*", and "*mereka datang membawa terang*". The repeated use of the word 'mereka' basically directs our attention to give appreciation to the Grab drivers. Thus, they will perceive that doing top-up is easier through the drivers. With the ease of doing top-up the balance, non-cash payments will not experience significant disruption.

Fourth, from the aspect of function, this advertisement has the intention to invite Grab customers to do top-up OVO balances through the Grab driver. If juxtaposed with the connotation theory of Barthes, the connotation of this advertisement's function is to invite customers to prefer transactions through OVO or non-cash payment features rather than cash. OVO is a digital payment business unit from Lippo Digital Group which has collaborated with four strategic companies, one of which is Grab (<https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/1104074>). Thus, the Grab advertisement titled "*Pahlwan Top Up*" is a step for OVO business owners to make customers switch from cash to non-cash payments.

The next aspect is language and paralinguistic. The language element that looks most prominent and is the core of this advertisement is at the end which appears along with the following visuals.



Fig. 2. Example of paralinguistic element source: <https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/1104074>

The utterance "Top Up OVO paling top ya di abang Grab" along with the writing in the frame is the main message that the advertisement wants to convey. The driver's expression was clenched and some pointed. Fist shows enthusiasm and preparedness, which this advertisement tries to, once again, invite customers to top-up through them. Meanwhile, the pointing expression gave the impression that this ad was really aimed at the audience, not others. In addition, by pointing out, people who watch advertisements feel challenged to do what the senders of advertisement wish.

On the other hand, there is the word 'abang' which refers to the drivers in general. In fact, denotatively and according to the Indonesian Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), the word 'abang' is a greeting word for older or unknown men. However, in the frame there is a female driver who is not included in the category of abang's greeting. This shows the generalization of the greeting "abang Grab" for all drivers, both men and women. If this is examined more deeply in relation to gender issues, then other interpretations are possible. However, the author limits analysis to discourse and semiotics only.

The last aspect of advertisement analyzed is intertext, which is another text from another discourse that has an associative relationship with the discourse that is being observed and influences the interpretation. The authors found several other texts that supported the initial hypothesis, namely that there was an effort to accelerate the GNNT program carried out by OVO through Grab advertisements. First, there is news that after working with Grab, OVO customers have increased to 10 million customers. This shows the influence of OVO on the increase in non-cash transactions.

## Gandeng Grab, Ovo Kini Punya 10 Juta Pengguna Aktif

JNP, CNN Indonesia | Kamis, 05/07/2018 19:22 WIB

Jakarta, CNN Indonesia -- President Director Ovo Adrian Suherman menyebut saat ini layanan uang digital miliknya telah mengantongi lima sampai sepuluh juta pengguna aktif.

Pertumbuhan pengguna ini disebut Adrian juga terbantu berkat kerja sama Ovo dengan Grab. Ditambah saat ini pengguna Ovo sudah bisa melakukan isi ulang saldo melalui pengemudi Grab.

"Pengguna Ovo dapat melakukan *top-up* OVO wallet melalui pengemudi Grab di seluruh penjuru Indonesia," kata Adrian saat disela konferensi media di kawasan Gandaria, Jakarta Selatan, Kamis (5/7).

Fig. 3. Example of Advertisement of OVO customers have increased to 10 million customers source: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20180705164934-185-311816/gandeng-grab-ovo-kini-punya-10-juta-pengguna-aktif>

Secondly, there is a promo advertised by Grab on its official page, where by refilling OVO through the driver, the user will get a bonus with certain criteria. This shows more effort made by these companies so that people are interested in using this non-cash payment feature. By using the promo, the community is more attracted to use it and feels more comfortable in using the electronic payment feature.

Jumat, Februari 22nd, 2019

## Top up saldo OVO di Abang Grab, bonus s/d 50%!

Banyak alasan kenapa top up OVO di Abang Grab emang top up paling TOPI!

Pertama, Abang Grab ada di mana-mana, top up nya juga gampang. Selain itu kalau kamu top up saldo OVO di Abang Grab minimal Rp20.000, kamu bisa dapat bonus saldo OVO hingga 50%!

- Untuk kamu yang sudah aktivasi OVO, top up Rp20rb dapat bonus maks Rp5rb
- Untuk kamu yang baru aktivasi OVO, top up Rp20rb dapat bonus maks Rp10rb

Fig. 4. Example of a promo advertised by Grab on its official page source: <https://www.grab.com/id/blog/top-up-ovo-lewat-abang-grab-bonus-50-persen/>

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that the description of the advertisement about the driver of Grab as 'hero' or someone who deserves to be appreciated and appreciated is the primary meaning of the advertising sign. Meanwhile, the secondary explanation of the content of the advertisement is that the Grab advert entitled "*Pahlawan Top Up*" is an effort of two companies, namely Grab and OVO, to attract the public to the non-cash payment platform. This is in line with the government's agenda to increase electronic payments through the National Non-cash Movement, which is considered to provide benefits for both the government and society in general. If further studied longitudinally, it is possible for the development of the meaning of connotation to be a myth, to ideology in society as the theory proposed by Barthes. Thus, the authors submit suggestions for the continuation of this research to the next stage by analyzing changes in society in terms of the transition from cash to non-cash transactions.

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