

# Semiotic Analysis of Packaging Designs in Promina Puffs Weaning Food

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## ABSTRACT

Packaging is one of the fields in visual communication design that has many special demands because it deals directly with consumers. The demands include technical, creative, communicative, and marketing demands that must be manifested into visual language. A physical form of the packaging contains communicative signs that have a visual meaning with a message that needs to be conveyed meaningfully. Moreover, it is expected for packaging design to be able to translate marketing objectives and persuade the audience. This study aimed to examine how the visual aspect of packaging design can accommodate the demands and be the right communication tool for producers to consumers. The object of this case study is the weaning food packaging of Promina Puffs, a brand that has been present for nearly 30 years in the market. This research will use filling system techniques that explain about making certain categories to classify the data obtained and semiotic analysis methods. The data were interpreted by researchers, combined with concepts or theories that support the understanding of the phenomenon under study before being processed through observation, recording, in accordance with the categories used based on analytical methods using the basic triangle theory of Peirce's semiotics. The result shows that the new Promina Puffs packaging has visual appeal and practical appeal that are classified as good with more accurate communication innovations and the use of eye-catching visual elements.

*Keywords: Design, Food packaging, Semiotics*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, better known as Indofood, is a major Indonesian company involved in the food industry with the headquarter located in Jakarta. PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk (Indofood CBP), through the division of Nutrition and Special Food (NSF), launched "Promina Puffs", a snack for babies 8 months and above who can help children to learn Self Feeding. Robert Arifin (Head of Marketing PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk) explained that Promina as a trusted brand that has been present for almost 30 years on the market is trying to supplement the daily nutrition of babies by preparing breast milk complementary foods, namely "Promina Puffs". Promina Puffs comes as a snack for babies who can train babies after 8 months to learn how to eat on their own. In maximizing image changes from the latest Promina Puffs products, Promina is working with local design studios, Loco Studio to design new packaging designs that are increasingly attractive with the aim of reaching a wider target audience. The packaging design of Promina Puffs comes as an on-the-go package in the form of pouch for 1-2 meals so it doesn't get sluggish. With the tagline "Easy to hold, Melt in the mouth", Promina Puffs has a texture that quickly melts in the baby's mouth, preventing babies from choking hazards.

This new packaging design innovation is aimed at attracting market attention with an increasingly broad target of consumers and can survive in industrial

competition in similar products. The main objective of a competitive strategy for a business unit in an industry is to find a position in the industry where the company can protect itself as well as possible [1]. According to Kotler and Keller, products are a key element in the overall market offer, products can be defined as consumer perceptions that are described by producers through their products [2][3].

The number of new products that emerged did not rule out the possibility of competition between similar products. As a strategy to face the increasingly fierce competition, packaging a product is now one of the good promotional tools, especially in the retail market [4]. Packaging is one of the fields in visual communication design that has many special demands because its function is directly dealing with consumers, including technical, creative, communicative and marketing demands that must be manifested into visual language. Packaging includes three things, namely the brand, the packaging itself, and the label [5][6].

Packaging design is one of the company's strategies to be able to compete in the business world, besides being able to create a brand image in the minds of consumers that aims to attract as many consumers as possible so packaging also stimulates customer buying behavior [4][7].

The advantage of packaging design that is considered by consumers as one of the factors in making purchasing decisions, are as follows: the size and shape of the packaging, material from the packaging, color of the packaging of a product, brand and label contained in the

packaging [8]. These elements can stimulate consumers to make purchasing decisions on a product, while the company wants consumers to be satisfied with the packaging design that has been given to their products. For a visual communication designer, this is a challenge because in addition to being required to be able to present an aesthetic packaging design, designers are also required to maximize packaging attractiveness in order to win in competition against other similar products. In line with the research conducted by Ampuero and Vila [9], there is a relationship between packaging design and consumer perceptions delivered through color variables, typography, and other graphic elements. Thus, the design on the packaging can also shape consumer perceptions of the product. This means that the design on the packaging is increasingly becoming the most important part in conveying product information from producers to consumers.

This study aims to determine the meaning of a visual display of packaging through the assessment of visual signs (typography, colors, illustrations used, and layouts) with the Semiotics theory approach. Semiotics was chosen because of its relevancy to the theory of communication. Charles Sanders Peirce, a researcher in semiotics indicates that humans can only think and communicate through the medium of sign. Whereas semiotics itself is a science to study signs, so it is very appropriate if the study of Promina Puff packaging uses the Semiotics approach. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model suggests a theory of meaning triangles which consists of three main elements: sign, object, and interpretant [10]. A sign is something that is physically shaped that can be captured by the five human senses and is something that refers (represents) other things beyond the sign itself. Signs according to Peirce consist of symbols (signs that appear from agreement), icons (signs that appear from physical representation) and indices (signs that appear from causal relationships). While this sign reference is called object. Objects or reference signs are social contexts that are references to signs or something referred to by signs. Interpretant or user sign is the concept of thought from people who use the sign and lower it to a certain meaning that is in someone's mind about the object referred to by a sign. The most important thing in the process of semiosis is how meaning arises from a sign when the sign is used by people when communicating [11]. A sign is something that represents or describes something else (in the mind of someone who thinks) [12]. With this research, it is hoped that it can produce an analysis of signs from the packaging of Promina Puffs that can bring the field of packaging design especially in Indonesia to develop.

**2. METHOD**

The research procedure uses action research; thus, research has several stages starting from the need assessment and formulation of the model. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method for data search and analysis. The results of collecting primary data from direct observation will be processed together with secondary data. Secondary data is data collected from a second source or secondary source from the data needed.

Secondary data used include Internet, data documentation, and literature review.

This study will use filling system techniques and use semiotic analysis methods. The filling system technique was introduced by Wimmer and Dominick [13] which explained about making certain categories to classify the data obtained. After that, the data is interpreted by the researcher, combined with the concept or theory that supports the understanding of the phenomenon under study. From data collection, data is processed through observation, recording, according to the categories used based on analytical methods using the basic triangle theory of Peirce's meaning. In this study, the researcher placed the position as a facilitator who tried to interpret the messages displayed in the visual packaging of Promina Puffs then the whole analysis would be in the form of a descriptive description.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Visual analysis is taken from the branding (label) of 2 Promina new product variants that come in a packaging design with a new identity. The two products are Promina Puffs banana flavor and Promina Puffs blueberry flavor. In general, this study only discusses the communication aspects that are formed from the branding of the packaging itself, including the application of visual elements in it. The meaning in figure 1 below was made as an overview of semantic readings to read the visual meaning of the intended product which is still far from the actual meaning.



**Figure 1.** Analysis of New Packaging of Promina Puffs

**Table 1.** Analysis of Promina Puffs packaging

Packaging Element	Banana Flavor	Blueberry Flavor
<b>Logo</b>	The position of the Indofood Nutrition logo is always at the top left of the PDP. The position of the Promina logo is in the middle and is large.	The position of the Indofood Nutrition logo is always at the top left of the PDP. The position of the Promina logo is in the middle and is large.
<b>Typography</b>	The use of text on packaging is clearly divided according to the type and priority of information Design the tag name to give a distinctive identity to	The use of text on packaging is clearly divided according to the type and priority of information Design the tag name to give a distinctive

	Promina's new product line.	identity to Promina's new product line.
<b>Color</b>	Orange as a contrast and unique sign of banana taste. Orange in the tag name as a product flavor difference.	Purple as a contrast and unique sign of blueberry taste. Orange in the tag name as a product flavor difference.
<b>Image</b>	The image used consists of: images of puff products and materials to confirm the product, visual characters and graphic elements to attract attention.	The image used consists of: images of puff products and materials to confirm the product, visual characters and graphic elements to attract attention.
<b>Structural</b>	Using plastic pouch shaped with zip lock to maintain product quality in 1-2 meals.	Using plastic pouch shaped with zip lock to maintain product quality in 1-2 meals.

### **3.1. Analysis of Visual Attraction and Practical Attraction**

Visual attraction refers to the appearance of packaging which includes graphic elements (color, shape, logo, illustration, typography and layout) [8][14]. All of these visual elements are combined to create an impression in optimally providing visual appeal. While practical attraction is the effectiveness and efficiency of a package aimed at consumers and distributors, for example for the ease of storage or extension of functional products.

#### **3.1.1. Visual Attraction**

##### 3.1.1.1. Brand/Logo

Promina's logo is displayed in the dominant middle position to strengthen the identity of the packaging and maintain its readability among the visual elements around.

##### 3.1.1.2. Color

The color used in this package serves to identify differences in taste variants from Promina Puff products. Orange color is used to display banana flavor rather than yellow because it has a higher contrast to the visual product, so it can stand out among other products in retail stores. Orange color also appears more eye-catching and gives a warm and vibrant impression. Purple color is used to display blueberry flavor rather than blue so that it gives depth and color changes to the packaging. It also has a high and harmonious contrast when combined with the orange color of the banana flavored packaging.

##### 3.1.1.3. Shape

Promina Puff's product packaging was designed in the form of pouch with the concept of on-the-go that can be taken anywhere. The packaging is 12 x 17 cm in vertical

shape and has a zip lock that can be closed again to maintain product quality in 1-2 meals.

##### 3.1.1.4. Illustration

The illustration on the Promina Puff's packaging uses visual photos and illustrations of characters and patterns using digital painting techniques. Photo illustrations are used to display visual products and materials to give a real and accurate impression to the actual product.

The illustration of the bear character on the packaging is used as a new identity for Promina's baby food product replacing the previous baby photo, which, according to researchers, is not effective in competing because it looks ordinary when compared to other similar products. The illustration of the bear character is intended to give a more funny and cheerful impression to the target market at a lower age such as young parents.

The use of mascot characters in a package can also provide its own unique product to appear different among competing products in a row of retail store shelves.

In addition to visual product photos and mascot characters, Promina Puff's packaging design also uses graphic elements in the form of small stars that act as sweeteners and enhance the reading flow on the packaging. It also adds to the design's fun and cheerful impression.

##### 3.1.1.5. Typography

The typography used in this packaging is a simpler type of sans serif that has a good readability among many visual elements in packaging design. In addition, Promina Puff's new packaging design utilizes further typography in making sub-logos under the Promina logo from typographic modifications to make it stand out more. This sub-logo is also used as a secondary identity of the packaging that serves to differentiate the range of Promina products in different types of food.

##### 3.1.1.6. Layout

Viewed in terms of PDP (Primary Display Panel), Promina Puff's packaging has complete information with placement in the bottom position of the packaging to focus the information area on one part. On showing different information, this packaging design uses different colors, font sizes, and formats to display regular reading flow priorities. The top of the packaging is designed more simply with the main elements in the form of the Promina logo, the Indofood logo, along with the label of the baby's age criteria of the product.

The middle part of the packaging is focused on showing the visual of the main product along with other supporting visuals such as raw materials and graphic elements.

### 3.1.2. Practical Attraction

#### 3.1.2.1. Safety

The packaging is good enough to protect the content of the product. The packaging is made of waterproof plastic with additional zip lock so that the product contents are not easily damaged from the influence of water and air.

#### 3.1.2.2. Economy

The packaging used plastic materials in addition to zip lock can add to production costs, but it can also reduce the size and field more than using more packaging to act as a sealer so that it doesn't add much to the production cost.

#### 3.1.2.3. Distribution

The packaging that is designed in the form of a pouch requires secondary packaging during the distribution process to reduce the level of damage. The pouch shaped design makes it easy to present the product on the shelf or product display because it can stand upright with the center of gravity under the packaging.

#### 3.1.2.4. Communication

Promina Puff's packaging has a clear and effective communication flow by dividing the PDP design area into three parts: The upper part contains logos and labels, the middle section focuses on describing the product, raw materials and highlights of product nutrition, and the bottom part contains written information arranged in a format that accommodate different types of information.

#### 3.1.2.5. Ergonomic

A pouch with a size of 12 x 17 cm can make it easier for consumers to carry or store in a bag. The small size of the packaging is also designed to train the habits of babies aged 8 months and above in holding on to the packaging to learn how to handle the packaging and to eat by themselves.

#### 3.1.2.6. Identity

Product identity can be easily identified by the placement of the dominant Promina logo and the use of color to display the different variant of the product. In addition, the main identity of this packaging design in the form of cute bear character's visuals and stories can instill a new impression of Promina's products. The division of the layout of the visual elements on the packaging itself becomes a system in the design that can add to the uniqueness of this product.

#### 3.1.2.7. Promotion

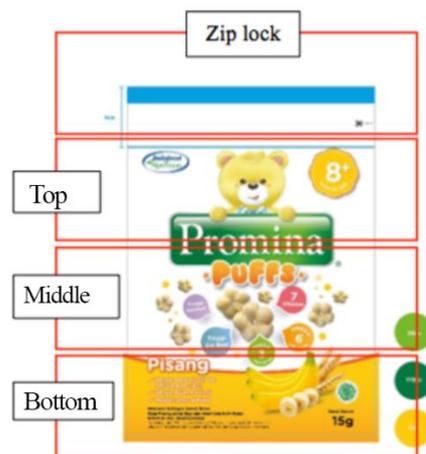
In terms of promotions, PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk (Indofood CBP) has produced Promina Puffs widely in Indonesia at an affordable price (Rp. 5,000) and held launch events to attract the attention of consumers widely, raising the consumer awareness about Promina products.

#### 3.1.2.8. Environmental

Unfortunately, in terms of the environmental effect, plastic packaging is still in the category of packaging that is not environmentally friendly and is difficult to recycle.

### 3.2. Analysis of Sign and Meaning in Promina Puffs Packaging

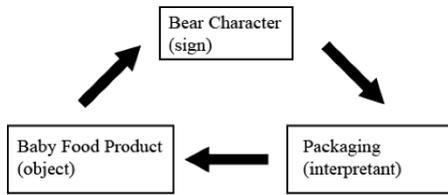
Promina Puff's packaging design consists of a collection of signs that can be translated into two parts, which is visual (image) and verbal (words) of the overall design of the PDP. Before analyzing this package, an analysis of the elements in the packaging PDP design will be carried out.



**Figure 2.** PDP of Promina Puffs

Viewed in terms of PDP (Primary Display Panel) in figure 2, this Promina Puff's packaging has complete information which is divided into three major parts, namely: 1. The top, consisting of the Indofood Nutrition logo, the Promina logo, the label "Puffs", the label 8 months up, and the visual of the bear mascot. All of these elements are the identities of the products according to their respective categories; 2. The middle/center part consists of images of puffs and nutrition labels. The center section focuses on product appearance clearly with the addition of graphic elements and nutritional labels to confirm the product image; 3. The bottom position, consists of various different information ranging from taste, product traits, BPOM numbers, company addresses, materials, net weight and halal labels. The placement of all information at the bottom aims to provide a clear and non-moving reading flow. Therefore, each type of information has a different font size and shape so that it can be distinguished visually by consumers.

In this study, Peirce's theory became a tool to analyze packaging from Promina Puffs focused on a new visual identity in the form of a bear character. The trichotomic or triadic sign model developed by Peirce is outlined simply through three main elements as shown in figure 3 below.



**Figure 3.** Trichotomic Peirce in Promina Puffs Packaging

The priority sign discussed in the Promina Puff’s packaging is the bear character as a new identity to replace baby photos used in the previous baby food products. The object is one of the food products under PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk (Indofood CBP). The interpretant is the overall visualization of Promina Puff’s packaging design.

The first step is to identify the signs themselves based on their objects. Peirce divides the sign for icons, indices and symbols. By referring to the three types of signs, several types of signs can be identified as the unit of analysis in the Promina Puff’s PDP design. After that, the researcher interpreted the meaning contained in the signs.

**Table 2.** Identification of sign and meaning of Promina Puff’s packaging

Type of Sign	Sign	Explanation	Interpreted
Icon	Character of baby bear with a funny face and pose.	Signs relate to objects because of similarity.	Visualization of the bear character.
Index	Character face with tongue licking lips.	The existence of closeness between signs and objects or the existence of a causal relationship.	The face licks the lips describing the drooling to eat.
	Pose bear characters taking food.		
Symbol	Text brand "Promina"	This relationship is conventional in the sense that there is a certain agreement between the users of the sign.	Text brand "Promina" as an identity, text tag name "Puffs" as a differentiator.
	Text tag name "Puffs"		

From the results of the analysis shown in table 2, the new Promina Puffs package has visual attraction and practical attraction that are classified as good with more accurate communication and the use of attractive visual elements.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In general, this research aims to analyze and describe the meaning of the signs contained in the Promina Puff’s packaging. These signs are analyzed and interpreted using the Charles Sanders Peirce semiotic method.

In addition, researchers also analyzed Promina Puff’s packaging regarding the visual attraction and functional attraction of this complementary food product packaging (MPASI). Based on the results of the research described in the discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. The use of visual characters/mascots in packaging design can help strengthen the impression of a product, and can be a unique identity of the company or the product itself.
2. The addition of the name tag design "Puffs" can quickly attract consumers' attention to the existence of new and unique things from Promina products. In addition, the name tag also functions as a distinguishing identity from other Promina products.
3. The design of the Promina Puffs packaging uses three types of visual elements that are designed harmoniously according to their respective roles, namely: photos for product representation, characters as identities and attention drawers, and graphic elements as visual reinforcement and complement.
4. The use of typography types and their development on name tags is very effective in conveying information and directing the flow of reading in the design of PDP packaging.
5. Color selection as a differentiator of banana and blueberry flavors has a good contrast between the two products and with other products.

From the results of the researchers' analysis, the new Promina Puffs packaging has a visual attraction and practical attraction that is classified as good with more accurate communication innovations and the use of eye-catching visual elements.

Compared to the previous Promina product packaging, from the visual side of the packaging, Promina Puffs managed to develop the PDP design to become more attractive by processing fun and cheerful illustration elements and contrasting with other similar products.

Meanwhile, from the functional side, the Promina Puff packaging is designed with sizes and portions that fit the needs of babies 8 months and older and applies additional zip lock functions that provide added value in maintaining product quality.

The launch of this new product also provides a new image of the Promina brand to consumers from design and product innovations that can provide more opportunities for companies and consumers to innovate new products in the future.

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