

# Study on Symbol Characteristics of Advertisement Design

Xiaorong Yuan

Guangxi Arts Institute, Nanning, 530022, China

**Keywords:** advertisement design; semiology; application; symbol characteristic

**Abstract.** Advertisement design aims to publicize widely. We need to fuse some special elements in advertisement design. This paper analyzes advertisement design from the perspective of semiology so as to excavate symbol characteristics of advertisement design, i.e. understanding, pertinence, innovation, culture and communication and proposes we should better apply semiology in advertisement design based on these symbol characteristics to make advertisement design have more artistic charm. Thus, people can enhance the confidence in accepting product sale and finally achieve the promotion purpose of advertisement design while making them feel sense of beauty.

## 1. Foreword

Advertisement design is an art type, so it inevitably has artistic characteristics of symbols. Its fundamental objective is to stimulate consumers through symbol elements in advertisements, convey some advertising information with profound meaning to consumers, penetrate the information into consumers' mind, stimulate their art reaction and finally achieve the purpose of advertising promotion.

## 2. Overview of advertisement design and semiology

### 2.1 Advertisement design

The word “advertisement” is actually an exotic vocabulary. Its Latin implication is “attention”. Later, it was used by English and the extended meaning is to make people notice something. In Chinese, the meaning of advertisement is publicizing widely. In other words, it means to publicize or convey information to the public. We can see from these explanations that advertisement is a product information communication channel which is used by advertisers and aims to make consumers generate consumption desire. Or advertisement is a paid communication ability advertisers used to make consumers generate trust in advertisers. So, the birth and development of advertisement is actually an accompaniment of commodity development under the law of market economy. It will develop as social and technical improvement.

### 2.2 Semiology

Semiology was first put forward by a Swiss linguist Saussure. It is a subject about conformity nature and rule and has significant and huge influence on epistemology of philosophy. So far, theories and methods of semiology have been widely applied in multiple fields such as art design and architectural design. In China, cognition of semiology could trace back to the period of the Spring and Autumn when people paid attention to some symbol phenomena. For advertisement design, semiology is a brand-new element and can load and convey some information through processing and integrating advertisement design so as to make advertisements give play to fundamental design purpose of convey feeling and ideas and finally make advertisements promote sales.

## 3. Symbol characteristics of advertisement design

Symbols in advertising design contain pictures, characters and various creation methods. Due to addition of symbols, advertisement design has its characteristics different from other design. Hence, we consider symbol characteristics of advertisement design include understanding, pertinence, innovation, culture and communication.

(1) Understanding. For advertisement design, the first characteristic it should pay attention to is advertisement understanding. In other words, application of semiology in advertisement design must regard whether public visual sense is attracted as the fundamental aim to finally motivate public consumption desire and complete their purchasing behavior. Such understanding is established on the foundation of consumer cognition. It requires advertisement designers to fix a promotion range according to specific advertising promotion requirement and effectively combine pictures and characters so that the public can gain the best information dissemination effect. That is, it is required to make the public fully understand meanings of symbols in advertisements. Or else, the function of advertisements cannot be fully exerted. So, symbol understanding in advertisement design is the first attribute.

(2) Pertinence. In advertisement design process, designers must make clear the specific objects of advertisement design, or else symbol elements may not be understood and accepted by the public if advertisement design surpasses certain boundary. Thus, advertisement design loses its due functions and significance. Symbols in advertisement design must own certain definiteness and should make people in a specific range accept the information conveyed by symbols. Here, information receivers may be different in age and culture levels. Advertisement designers should conduct symbol design with pertinence to arouse emotional resonance of the public and reach the fundamental objective of advertising promotion;

(3) Innovation. Although symbol element application in advertisement design emphasize sameness, which is more beneficial to public understanding, advertisement design is an art design and needs symbol processing and integration to reflect certain new meaning, i.e. pursue certain difference while pursuing sameness. Such advertisement design has certain personalized features and can make the public gain stronger advertisement stimulation. Therefore, symbol application in advertisement design should adopt diversified design style in allusion to the same design theme, find out multiple design points to conduct advertisement innovation, stand out among numerous advertised products, successfully seize public interest and better give play to publicity features of advertisements.

(4) Culture. Symbol elements in advertisement design are based on common cultural awareness of the public in order to be cognized and understood. In other words, symbol characteristic in advertisement design must be consistent with cultural background of the public, or else advertising communication purpose cannot be reached. So, advertisement designers should fully consider cultural background of the public during application of colors, pictures and other symbols. This is because people's understanding inevitably includes many cultural factors. Peoples' cultural concept and cultural form play a decisive role for understanding of advertisement design. It thus be can be seen that symbols in advertisement design certainly own certain cultural attributes to generate advertising effects which comply with people's cultural cognition ability, enhance people's aesthetic experience and improve cultural connotation of advertisements.

(5) Communication. Advertisement is an economic phenomenon closely related to social culture. It is a product under market system and owns certain information symbolization characteristic. It needs some symbol elements in advertisement design to generate shocking effects so as to leave a deep impression on the public. Symbols in advertisement design must possess certain communication feature. It is required to make the public understand symbol meaning. Thus, symbols in advertisements are no longer simple decoration symbols, but important channels and platforms for communication between commodities and consumers. Symbols must be able to attract the public in time and spread information in advertisements so that people can better understand advertisement theme. In this way, the promotion purpose can be reached.

#### **4. Specific application of semiology in advertisement design**

The symbol itself is a tool and carrier of information transfer. It represents design objects in detail through physical shape, color, material and space symbols. In advertisement design, specific application of semiology is related to multiple subjects such as psychology and marketing. It needs advertisement designers to make semiology stimulate emotional need of the public in

advertisements. But, we should discuss semiology application in advertisement design from rational and scientific perspective so as to make symbols in advertisement design really give play to their due information communication functions.

(1) Semiology theory should be applied according to people's cultural needs. In advertisement design process, designers should break through too commercialized design idea according to connotation of advertisement design and culture characteristics of symbols, carefully analyze and study aesthetic psychological demand of the public and carry out advertisement design based on cultural taste and aesthetic taste of the public. In particular, it is required to attach importance to penetrative application of traditional culture. So-called modern cultural concept cannot be blindly applied. The essence of traditional culture cannot be neglected. For example, advertisement designers can apply traditional graphs and colors of traditional Chinese paintings of in advertisement design so as to make advertisement works own more cultural connotation. Thus, the public can leave deeper and better impression. Symbol application in such advertisement design is a model combining traditional culture, make advertisement design more novel and easier to identity, improve appreciation value and level of advertisement design and make advertisement works own more art charm and cultural implication. It is a model combining culture, aesthetic nature and innovation.

(2) Application of modern science and technology in advertisement design makes symbol application organically combine new media. As various modern technological achievements emerge, many electronic devices continuously break through original development foundation. This makes advertisement design own many design possibilities and makes design effects more vivid. Such era background not just makes advertisement designers have more choices and meanwhile proposes higher requirements and standards for their advertisement design. This is because symbol visual requirement in advertisement design becomes higher and higher. Advertisement designers must design more exquisite and beautiful advertisement symbols to really meet aesthetic psychology of public consumption. Thus, advertisement designers should fully seize pulse of era development and take advantage of modern science and technology to make symbol characteristics better fuse in advertisement design. For instance, designers can combine advertisement and new media, make advertising concept and commodity information match more perfectly and make the public gain very good aesthetic experience.

(3) Advertisement designers should start from advertisement communication features and well apply semiology. The basic task of advertisement design is to communicate specific advertisement theme to the public. So, advertisement designers should apply advertisement design of semiology on this basis. Specifically speaking, advertisement designers should fuse some symbols with specific visual effects in advertisement works according to advertising theme, and make the public accurately accept these advertising images, understand advertising thought and idea, seize public Psychological appeal, enhance reliability and recognition degree of the public for advertisement contents, which is beneficial to better driving publicity and sales of advertised products. This actually requires advertisement designers fully utilizing information dissemination function of symbols in advertisement design. Symbol design should be able to meet people's psychological need and emotional appeal, motivate their buying inclination and finally complete purchase behaviors. So we say symbol design application of any advertisement design should operate in specific communication mode so that the public can comprehend specific implication of symbols in advertisement. Besides, customers and non-customers can be differentiated. Besides, potential non-customers can be transformed to customers.

(4) Advertisement designers should start from innovation-type mode and well apply semiology. Advertisement design itself is a design category in need of continuous innovation and development. If it cannot achieve certain self-breakthrough, it will be caught in troubles and seriously hinder improvement of market influence and sales performance of advertised products. Therefore, advertisement designers should start from advertisement creation mode and embody certain innovation features of advertisement design through applying semiology, i.e. application of creation mode. If symbol communication pattern in advertisement design aims to construct the relationship

between information senders and receivers, symbol creation pattern in advertisement design aims to establish benign interactions between symbol reserve of advertisements and advertisements. In other words, advertisement designers serve symbols of some graphs or characters as symbol reserve and form favorable interactions with every corresponding advertisement object so that these symbols can give play to the purpose of attracting people's attention and better exert effects of pragmatics. In advertisement design, designers can divide symbols according to different symbol purposes. Generally, symbols can be classified into information symbol, evaluation symbol, symbol of triggering response as well as systematized and organized symbol etc. These different types of symbols can make instructions for people so that the public can decide whether to buy according to information expressed by these symbols. If designers can successfully apply semiology, consumers' buying desire and behavior can be well motivated.

## 5. Conclusions

Advertisement designers are a special group. They have art aura and should own certain sense of period and subjectivity. They must handle the relationship between subjective behaviors in advertisement design and objective principles. It is required to express real feelings in the heart more vividly through real objective existence. This needs advertisement designers to apply semiology well, and combine life ideal and art ideal in advertisement design. Advertisement designers should embody understanding, pertinence, innovation, culture and communication of symbols in advertisement design so that Chinese traditional culture can better blend. Modern media should be fully utilized for advertising to make advertisements give play to communication function and creation function and fully express value of advertisement design.

## Acknowledgments

This paper is a part of the topic "study on planning, creativity and cultural communication strategies of Guangxi design art industry". No.: [2010]10 201010LX319; presided by: Yuan Xiaorong; This paper is also a part of the topic "effects of visual communication on consumer psychology"; presided by: Yuan Xiaorong; No.: YY [2010]254

## References

- [1] Fan Weiquan, On development of print advertisement design [J]. News World, 2010(10)
- [2] He Shuaisen, Visual language performance of Chinese culture symbols in art design [J]. Journal of Nanchang Junior College, 2010(03)
- [3] Li Yaoliang, Application of symbol types in print advertisement [J]. Journal of Xi'an University of Arts and Science (Natural Science Edition), 2012(05)
- [4] Max Bense, Elizabeth Walter, Application of generalized semiology in design [M]. China Social Sciences Publishing House, 1992:1,186,190
- [5] Xiong Xingfu, Yang Huizhu, Exploration of product design based on semiology [J]. Packaging Engineering, 2004, 25(1):77