

An Analysis of Mass Communication in the Pandemic (In the Example of Coca Cola Ads)

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic called Covid 19, which emerged in the last period of 2019, turned into a chaos that affected the whole world physically and psychologically. The pandemic period caused people's habits and communication styles to change. It has become a way of life for people to be unable to leave their homes due to restrictions. This situation has also caused a change in the way global brands reach consumers and the content of their advertising messages. In this study, two commercials prepared by the Coca Cola brand during the period when the effects of the pandemic were felt intensely and the effects of the pandemic were relatively alleviated were analyzed by semiotic analysis method.

In this research, it is aimed to reveal how and for what purpose an international brand gives messages on a global scale in its advertisements, which intercultural codes it brings to the fore, to reveal the messages behind the visible messages and which elements in mass communication and for what purpose they are effective on people. The findings of the analysis carried out in the context of signifier-signified, denotation-connotation in the research overlap with the theoretical foundations of semiotics.

Keywords: Pandemic, Mass Communication, Advertising, Semiotic Analysis.

Pandemide Kitle İletişimine Yönelik Bir Analiz (Coca Cola Reklamları Örneğinde)

ÖZ

2019 yılının son dönemlerinde ortaya çıkan ve Covid 19 adı verilen pandemi tüm dünyayı fiziksel ve psikolojik yönden etkileyen bir kaosa dönmüştür. Pandemi dönemi tüm dünyada yaşayan insanların alışkanlıklarının ve özellikle iletişim biçimlerinin değişmesine neden olmuştur. Zorunlu kısıtlamaların neden olduğu insanların evlerinden dışarıya çıkamama durumu bir yaşam biçimi haline dönmüştür. Bu durum özellikle küresel çapta faaliyet gösteren markaların tüketicilere ulaşma biçimlerinde ve reklam içeriklerinde yer alan mesaj içeriklerinde de değişimlere yol açmıştır. Bu çalışmada Pandemi döneminin başlangıcı sayılabilecek ve etkilerinin en ağır şekilde hissedildiği dönemde ve pandemi etkilerinin nispeten hafifleyerek devam ettiği dönemde Coca Cola markasının hazırladığı reklam kampanyaları ve bu kampanyalarda yer alan iki reklam filmi gösterge bilimsel analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı uluslararası ölçekte bir markanın reklamlarında küresel ölçekte hangi mesajları nasıl ve ne amaçla vurguladığını, kültürlerarası kodları nasıl ve ne şekilde öne çıkardığını ortaya koyarak, görünen mesajlarının ardındaki mesajlara ulaşmaktır. Bu amaçla kitle iletişiminde reklam filmlerinin insanlar üzerinde hangi öğeleri kullanarak etkili olmak istedikleri açığa çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmada gösteren-gösterilen, düz anlam-yananlam bağlamında elde edilen analiz bulguları, göstergebilimin kuramsal temelleri ile örtüşmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pandemi, Kitle İletişimi, Reklam, Göstergebilimsel Analiz.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of communication, which is accepted to have started with life in the world, has also been shaped as human-to-human communication from the moment humans showed their existence on earth. With the development of communication types, mass communication has become one of the important types. The directing and persuasive effect of mass communication on human communities is possible with mass media. For this reason, it is widely used in mass media marketing and advertising. Although the pandemic is a problem that humanity encounters from time to time in the historical process, the world is going through a chaotic pandemic period that started especially in the last months of 2019 and whose effects continue until today. Despite great scientific and technological advances in today's

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modern societies, the world has entered an uncertain period in the face of the pandemic. The pandemic has especially affected communication styles and human relations deeply, and isolation and quarantine have made individuals dependent on mass media. In this research, two commercials of the Coca Cola brand describing the pandemic conditions were analyzed by semiotic analysis method. The purpose of this research is to reveal which values and messages are emphasized on a global scale, and how and how the universal aspects of intercultural codes are emphasized in Coca Cola advertisements broadcast all over the world during the pandemic period, in the context of the use of all cultural signs in the world in the social system. At the same time, among the aims of the research is to reveal how the signs used in the advertising medium are shaped in accordance with the established codes in the culture. Also in this research, it is aimed to reveal the messages behind the visible messages and which elements in mass communication and for what purpose they are effective on people. In the advertisements examined with semiotic analysis, it is aimed to measure the positions of the signs used in the culture by examining the commercials in terms of sign, signifier, shown, denotation and connotation within the scope of semiotic analysis method. In the literature part of the research, which aims to reveal how intercultural elements are reflected from the global to the local in advertisements and how guiding and effective they are in evaluating people and other living things, the concepts of communication, mass communication and advertising are briefly defined and the historical process of the pandemic period is explained.

2. Communication, Mass Communication, Advertising and Pandemic

Communication is an uninterrupted and dynamic process for understanding and being understood (Andersen, 1959). Symbols used in this process in which thoughts, feelings and information are transferred (Berelson & Steiner, 1964, p. 254) carry cultural codes and constitute the social interactions of individuals (Fiske, 1990, pp. 67-69). Mass communication; They are messages sent for profit to targeted large masses by means of mass means carrying the functions of informing, persuading and socializing (Laswell, 1948, p. 224). This type of communication is conveyed to the undifferentiated social masses that do not have a bond or solidarity between them (Giddens, 2008, p. 631). Until recently, mass communication was used in newspapers, magazines, books, telephone, radio, it was carried out by means of cinema and television (Aziz, 1982, pp. 3-5). Today, computer-mediated communication, in which internet-based technologies are used, has outstripped other mass media, as new information technologies combine radio, television, personal computers and the internet in a single device (Dolgun, 2016, p. 134). "Reclamare" meaning to call in Latin and "reclame" meaning promotion, announcement in French are accepted as the root of the word advertisement (Okay, 2009, pp. 6-7). Paid presentations for the general audience that aim to promote the service, product or ideas of a particular person or organization are expressed as advertisements (Kotler, 2020, pp. 13-15). Advertisements consist of meaningful wholes woven with imaginary and cultural codes that affect and recreate people's values, prejudices and perceptions. Ads are texts that have their own language and rhetoric (Tuncer, 2020, p. 74). Advertisements are a socio-cultural reflection of the society they address, so it is only possible to get the targeted result from the advertisement by recognizing the cultural infrastructure of the target audience. Knowing the cultural structure of the target audience increases the impressiveness of the advertisement (Yıldırım, 2019, p. 345). In addition, mastering the cultural structure allows the advertising message to be evaluated from more than one perspective, not only the verbal and the visible, but also the non-verbal (Gromova, Müğlova, & Perez, 2017, p. 82). With digital advertisements, the distance between the target audience and brands has decreased and interaction has begun (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000, pp. 50-52). In terms of the diversity of feelings and thoughts, man is quite different from other living species (Özkan, 2021, p. 80). Advertising, which turned from physiological needs to psychological needs and emotions (Berger, 2000, p. 146), also enabled the development of an emotional bond between users and brands (Batu, 2010, p. 12).

Pandemic; It is defined as the beginning of an epidemic leaving the regional borders (Aslan, 2020, p. 38) and affecting large masses (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) reported on 31 December 2019 that there were cases with pneumonia-like symptoms in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province of China (Dunyada-covid-19-salg-n-n-ilk-100-gununde-yasanlar-ilk-nerede-ortaya-cikt-nasl-yayildi, 2020) A new coronavirus was identified on January 7, 2020. On February 11, 2020, WHO named the virus that causes serious acute respiratory diseases as Coronavirus Disease-2019

(COVID-19) (Muccari, Chow, & Murphy, 2020) and declared it a pandemic, announcing that a global epidemic had begun. About three months after its emergence in China, the disease has spread worldwide (Zhou, et al., 2020, p. 270). Currently, more than 762 million people in the world have been affected by the pandemic and more than 6 million people have lost their lives (Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation report, 2020). It shows by increasing it in economic and sociological sense (Gangadharbatla, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has revived existential concerns by reminding people of their fragility (Hui S. , Azhar, Madani, & Ntoumi, 2020, pp. 264-266) and accordingly, radically changing people's lifestyles and habits. (Hasanat, et al., 2020, pp. 3-6). An important part of this periodical change is the changes in advertisements.

3. Semiotics and Its Theoretical Framework

The word semiotic comes from the Greek words “semeion” meaning sign, (Rifat, 1992, p. 17) sign and “logia” meaning theory, word (Culler, 2002). In addition to emphasizing the contrast between the signifier and the signified, the ancient Greek philosophers created a doctrine of signs by emphasizing the role of the correct choice of words in effective communication, and Plato by emphasizing the universality and objectivity of words (Rifat, 2009, p. 10).

Semiotics is based on symbolization and, examines the formation of meaning. Semiotics begins with understanding the sign (Saussure, 1998). Signs are forms, objects and phenomena that represent something outside of themselves and have qualities that can replace what they symbolize. Signs are the parts of the meaningful whole formed by the intermediaries such as languages, gestures and mimics, sign languages, sound, writing, picture, music, film, image, movement that people reveal with the aim of communicating, and are functional with the basis of association. Semiotics examines the interrelationships of these agents. In semiotics, the sign is at the center (Barthes, 2016, p. 47) They are the structures that signified and complete the signifier. Demonstrating the concept signifier the concept intended to be explained is expressed as the signified. The signifier creates the narrative and the signified creates the content (Fiske, 2017, p. 130).

All signs in an individual's life have a meaning, and every linguistic or visual message around them can be constructed as a language skill, apart from the produced symbols (Sığırıcı, 2016, p. 29). Individuals express their thoughts to the world through their signs (Bulduklu & Karaçor, 2019, p. 205). Semiotics is functional in a wide area including cultural phenomena (Erkman, 1987, pp. 9-11). Semiology, which produces meaning from messages in the communication process, makes this production by using cultural codes and using signs according to the processing systematic of the culture (Fiske, 1990, pp. 67-69). In summary, semiotics conveys the explicit or implicit meanings in images or texts that form a meaningful whole, from the known to the unknown.

Philosopher John Locke is the person who gave semiotics its name. For the first time, Locke defined semiotics as the doctrine of signs with the term 'semiotice' and expressed it as a basic science. (Deely, 1990, pp. 113-114). According to Locke, the doctrine of signs examines the content of signs used to understand concepts or explain information to others (Rifat, 1992, p. 18).

Ferdinand de Saussure took languages into the study area of linguistics, founded a branch of science on the functioning of signs other than language and named it with the concept of sémiologie. According to Saussure, language is the most important set of systems and signs that express concepts. In semiotics, features such as the features of the alphabet, intonations and sound levels are meaningful within the semantic structure of the language. With all these features, language can be compared with writing, special alphabets, sign languages, symbols and social behavior rules (Saussure, 1998, p. 46). He states to Saussure that every sign (such as image, object and sound) consists of the “signified” represented by the 'signifier', and that the sign consists of the signified and the signifier (Saussure, 1998, p. 111). The signifier is the expression, the form, and the signified is the content. The signifier is the physical being of the sign and the signified is the mental being of the sign and they cannot be separated from each other. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is associative. There is no natural or logical relationship between them (Erkman, 1987, p. 45). While Saussure applied semiotics to the linguistic field, he also extended linguistic analysis to the field of culture (Saussure, 1998, p. 46).

Charles Sanders Peirce introduced contemporary semiotics in the early 20th century, at the same time as the linguist Saussure. Peirce named his theory of linguistic and non-linguistic signs as semiotic and enabled semiotics to cover all areas of life (Erkman, 2005, pp. 68-69). Peirce defines the signs as triads that are divided into three within themselves (Rıfat, 2005, p. 116). In the first three, the sign is evaluated according to whether it is a simple quality, a real entity or a general rule. In the second triad, the relationship between the sign and the object is evaluated according to whether the sign has a feature on its own, establishes an existential relationship with its object or establishes a relationship with its interpreter. In the third triad, it is evaluated according to the interpreter's interpretation of the sign as a possibility, reality or logic sign. A sign stands for a person for any adjective relating to something, and this creates an equivalent sign in the person's mind. Briefly; sign, interpreter, and object are Peirce's three most important categorizations (Pierce, 1978, p. 122). In theory, based on the relationship of a sign with an object, the pictorial sign (icon), is called symptom and symbol. The pictorial sign refers to the object due to the nature of the object (Pierce, 1984, p. 291). Certain lines in the mind, which cannot perceive all the details in the perception process, have associative features. The visual sign activates the formation of these lines (Erkman, 1987, p. 47). Peirce is an important theorist in semiotics because he takes the concepts as a whole and elaborates them, separating the signs, interpreters and objects according to their types.

According to Umberto Eco, semiotics consists of natural and spontaneous communication systems, a diversity that includes complex cultural systems, and examines all cultural phenomena within the communication process (Erkman, 1987, p. 31). Eco states that the sign is the basic and smallest unit of the process of creating meaning. Emphasizing that signs convey information, they can also convey inaccurate information in this transfer process, and states that there are three types of intentions during the reading of the texts. These; the reader's intention, the text's intention, and the author's intention. Eco; states that although a work is completed as a production, it is not closed to interpretation. Interpretations cannot change the originality of the work, but it offers different perspectives to the interpreter and allows the reader to make endless guesses (Küçükerođan, 2009, p. 168).

Roland Barthes is one of the founders of contemporary semiotics. The structural analysis method developed by Barthes includes facts that have meaning. Barthes connects these phenomena to semiotics through the concept of signification and examines the relations between signs and connotations (Vardar, 2001, p. 88). Barthes is the pioneer of denotation and connotation theories. Societies produce objects in the context of certain rules and measures, and all uses in this production turn into their own signs (Barthes, 2016, pp. 48-50). Signification is the process of visualizing the signifier as the signified. Barthes has settled the fictional analysis in the literature as denotation and connotation. The literal meaning expresses what the sign represents. Connotation refers to how the sign represents. The denotation is generally universal and is resolved with common meaning in the mind. Connotation, on the other hand, is resolved in different ways in the minds of each person, depending on the culture (Barthes, 2016, pp. 48-50). Literal meaning; After it emerges with the meaning in the mind of the person, it starts to lose its power and the number of meanings depending on the same signifier increases, so the connotation that the codes in the signs are deciphered emerges. Denotation is objective, connotation is subjective (Fiske, 2017, p. 84). Although denotation and connotation are sometimes shown as opposites, they are not opposites, but complementary concepts (Dzanic, 2013). In the process of meaning and interpretation, Barthes also explains the concept of myth. According to Barthes, myths are signs with broad cultural meanings and complex and well-formed communication systems that serve the ideological purposes of the dominant class (Dervişcemalođlu, 2016, p. 6).

4. Relationship Between Semiotics, Advertising and Pandemic

Semiotic analysis is an important method that is frequently used in the field of communication studies (Atabek & Atabek, 2007, p. 75). Semiotic analysis is effective in revealing the invisible part of advertisements that effectively use the existing codes in society (Günay, 2022, p. 183). The fact that the advertisement contains verbal and visual elements increases the use of semiotic analysis in the analysis of advertising campaigns (Barthes, 2009, p. 27). While advertising plays a role in transferring the cultural codes of individuals to consumer products (Odabaşı, 2017, p. 68), it also keeps the product or service under control (Bati, 2018, p. 48). While semiotics ensures that the intended meanings are understood by

the buyers (Williamson, 2001, p. 11) it also provides the re-creation of the products presented with the advertisements by the environment, cultural codes, symbols, and images created by the brand (Küçükerdoğan, 2009, p. 155). Each advertising notice is a combination of a signifier and a signified. The success of global brands locally is directly proportional to their good use of cultural signs (Barthes, 2016, p. 188) In today's societies, the consumption process has turned into the publication and reception of signs (McLuhan, 2014) the subject of consumption has become the order of the signs (Baudrillard, 2016, p. 252).

Health requires a state of complete physical as well as mental and social well-being (Larson, 1996, p. 181). The changes that emerged with the pandemic have also changed the expectations of consumers from brands (Kotler, 2020, pp. 13-15). In processes where large-scale social problems are experienced, consumers expect brands to show social responsibility and be active about the problems (Özoran, 2020). During the pandemic process, the brands to consumers; It can be stated that they approach in line with the approaches to alleviate concerns about Covid-19, communicative solutions focused on crisis management, and to unite people who are physically apart during the crisis (Shipley & Loar, 2020). National and global brands have broadcast advertising campaigns covering pandemic conditions during the Covid-19 outbreak. In this period, brands followed their lives closely, reflected their culture in campaigns and made the pandemic an important message in order to appeal to their target audiences. In this way, they tried to strengthen their position by giving the message that they do not only offer products or services, but that they know their target audience closely and think about them. For example; The Coca Cola brand has moved the letters in its logo away from each other during the pandemic period and has created a bond between the target audience and the brand with its message that staying apart is the best way to unite again (<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/coke-goes-big-covid-social-distancing-times-square/1677909>).

5. The Purpose and Method of the Research

In this study, two commercial films of the Coca Cola brand during the COVID-19 pandemic were examined. The first of these commercials is "Wonderful Meal", which was released by the Coca Cola brand in June 2020, lasting 90 seconds with the participation of 13 real families from eight countries (<https://www.passionateinmarketing.com>, 2020). In this commercial, there are images and discourses that invite people to stay at home and explore life at home in the face of new normals (<https://www.coca-colacompany.com/news/around-the-table-around-the-world-coca-cola-celebrates>, 2020), In the images in the commercial where they cook and shape their own meals, it is emphasized that people can continue the excitement of life from their homes, increase their awareness about themselves and the world, and the power of staying together in this new order. In addition to the call to stay indoors during the pandemic, the ad also calls to eat together. Coca Cola in the commercial, It gives the message that humanity is separate from their loved ones due to the conditions of the period, but they are one when they share (<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/coca-cola-the-great-meal-anomaly-new-york/1688513>, 2020).

"Open Yourself to Life", the second commercial that the Coca Cola brand released during the period when the pandemic continued, started to be broadcast in August 2020. In this commercial, the brand encourages consumers to discover new values that emerge with the changes created by the pandemic in human life and in the world, while inviting awareness, appreciation of values and being open to change. Emphasizing the idea of returning to normal and being open to change, the advertisement emphasizes being able to look at life from a new perspective and discovering new opportunities. In the commercial, Coca Cola also gives the message that humanity is separate from their loved ones due to the conditions of the time, but they are united when they share (<https://www.passionateinmarketing.com>, 2020).

There are various cultural norms, attitudes and beliefs in society, and consumption-oriented advertisements aim to reach their target audience by using these codes. The most effective method for this is to call out strong codes accepted in the society. The aim of this research is to reveal which values are emphasized on a global scale in Coca Cola advertisements broadcast all over the world during the pandemic period, which universal features of intercultural codes are highlighted, and the ways and forms of the signs used in the advertising medium to the established codes in the culture. The research aims to analyze the images and discourses used in Coca Cola's advertisements with the theme of "Great Meal" and

“Open Yourself to Life” in this direction. In the analysis, the position of the signs used in the advertisements examined in the culture is tried to be measured. The reflection of intercultural elements in advertisements from global to local is another factor examined in the research. In summary, the research has tried to reveal with which codes the brand, emphasizing that we are part of a global family, tries to achieve this. While positioning itself as a brand, it is also revealing which cultural codes it uses, with which strategies and with which connotation. The commercial films examined in this research were examined in the context of semiotic analysis method, in terms of sign, signifier, signified, denotation and connotation. According to Saussure in semiotics, features such as the features of the alphabet, intonations and sound levels are meaningful within the semantic structure of the language. With all these features, language can be compared with writing, special alphabets, sign languages, symbols and social behavior rules (Saussure, 1998, p. 46). He states to Saussure that every sign (such as image, object and sound) consists of the “signified” represented by the 'signifier', and that the sign consists of the signified and the signifier (Saussure, 1998, p. 111). The signifier is the expression, the form, and the signified is the content. The signifier is the physical being of the sign and the signified is the mental being of the sign and they cannot be separated from each other. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is associative. According to Barthes, there are two levels of meaning, denotative and connotation. Denotation; it consists of the signifier or the plane of narration, while the connotation meaning refers to the plane of signifier or content. The prose refers to what the signifier represents, while the connotation refers to how the signifier represents it (Barthes, 2016, pp. 48-50). The theoretical frameworks used in the study belong to Saussure and Barthes. The reason for this is that the main pillars of Saussure and Barthes in the process of examining the study and expressing its purpose are appropriate and explanatory.

6. Research Limitations and Contributions

In the research, two commercials broadcast by the Coca Cola brand in June and August of 2020 after the announcement of the pandemic were examined. The reason why the Coca Cola brand was included in the research for only two commercial films is that other Coca Cola commercials do not directly emphasize the pandemic. It has been seen that the studies on the advertisements it carries out are limited. And also, While some studies' analysis of advertising campaigns during the pandemic process through semiotics and their focus on social messages are similar to this study; Some studies focus on studies on different fields during the pandemic process and the findings they reveal differ from the results of this study.

7. Research on the “Great Meal” and “Open Yourself to Life” Commercials

In the research section, the commercial films of the Coca Cola brand broadcast during the pandemic period will be examined with the "Great Meal" and "Open Yourself to Life" semiotic analysis method.

“Great Meal”

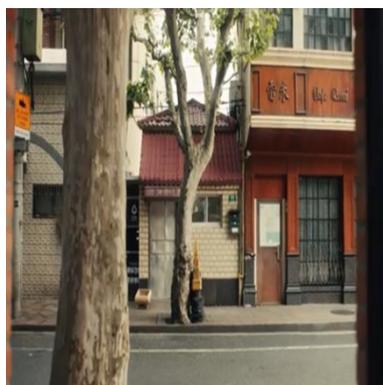


Image 1. Empty Street

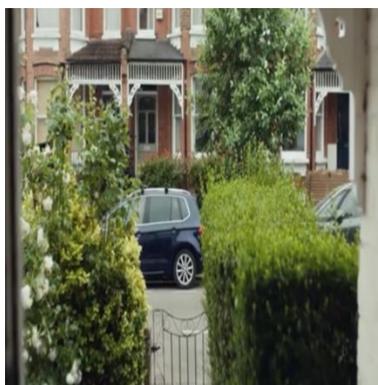


Image 2. Empty Garden and Street

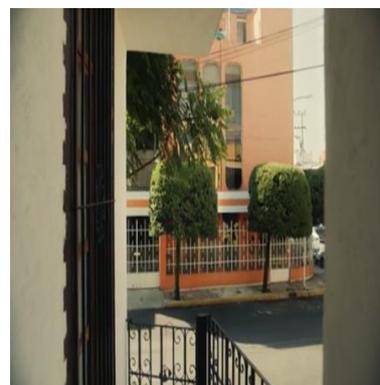


Image 3. Empty Street View from Window

All images related to great meal are by (<https://www.coca-colacompany.com/news/around-the-table-around-the-world-coca-cola-celebrates>, 2020).

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd images in the big meal advertisement show empty streets and avenues in the context of the signifier, emphasizing the eyes looking out of their homes even if people are not in the frame. In the context signified in the images, the empty streets describe people who have lost their freedom, despite the presence of green trees, light and all the necessary environment for people to continue their lives. The sentence “the day the world stopped, was the day we found out where we are going” accompanying the images emphasizes that the pandemic has had such a strong effect on humanity that the world has stopped, and this effect causes people to question their humanity and where the world is heading. This questioning has once again reminded people that there is a way out, that hope is not lost, that life continues behind closed doors, albeit with limited freedom.



Image 4. Woman in the House



Image 5. Man in the House



Image 6. The Person in Front of the Door

Images 4, 5 and 6 show people inside the house as signs. Images 4 and 5 It shows a close-up of the people who show it in the visuals. In these images, people are looking in a certain direction, but the object or person they are looking at is not visible. 6. In the image, the person who is inside the house shows a view from a more distant plane. This person is shown opening a door in the signifier. People with close-up faces do not see any smiles on their faces. It can be stated that these facial expressions, which can be described as somewhat tense, are related to the current pandemic conditions. However, in all images, the presence of light in the environment of people can be matched with a feeling of light and hope in the universal sense in the context of the signified or connotation. 6. In the image, we can say that the door opened by the person in the context of the signified or connotation emphasizes the feeling of hope to reach more positive times after the obstacles.



Image 7. People in the Kitchen



Image 8. Person in Apron in the Kitchen

In the 7th and 8th images, the demonstrator signifier a middle-aged woman and a man getting ready to cook in a place that is understood to be the kitchen with light from the windows. In the signified, the woman is standing upright, with her face turned to the sunlight, with a postural stance that reflects her thoughtfulness or concern. People who are going through difficult times are anxious but continue to stand

up and face the challenges. The man in the 8th image also displays a thoughtful, slightly bent head, but an upright stance. The kitchen is a place where food, which means the continuity of life for human life, takes place. The images, in which people are prepared to cook the food and are on their way to the continuity of life, emphasize the continuity of life and hope, accompanied by the daylight that fills the content, despite all the difficulties and uncertainties.



Image 9. Refrigerator and Coca Cola



Image 10. Woman in the Kitchen

In images 9 and 10, there are two women who are preparing a meal accompanied by sunlight pouring into the kitchen from the window. In the 9th image signified, white objects on the counter symbolize meanings such as cleanliness, purity, peace, salvation and hope. Colors such as blue, green and red on the woman and on the walls of the kitchen emphasize the vitality and warmth of nature. The fact that the refrigerator is full of food emphasizes that people have food and that if there is food, life can continue. In the signified of the 10th image, the feeling that hope and salvation can exist with the light that fills in, is tried to be aroused in the audience, and the depth of the kitchen and the shot that emphasizes the depth and the length of life are emphasized.



Image 11. People Cooking



Image 12. Meal with Tomatoes



Image 13. Person Drinking
Coca Cola

In the 11th and 12th images, there are people with only their hands visible on the kitchen counter preparing a meal with various fruits and vegetables. In the size signified, the fruits and vegetables in the images symbolize the continuity of life, while at the same time reflecting the diversity and yield of food that our planet offers to people. People continue to keep themselves and their loved ones alive by continuing to cook. Although dark colors are dominant in the images, it is seen that fruits and vegetables have bright and vibrant colors and a reference is made to the meaning of life. The signifier in the 13th image is an African American male drinking Coca-Cola. This person is the person in the 5th image who looks at uncertainty with worry. In the context signified in this image, the person is sipping Coca-Cola with a more relaxed facial expression and is in a light-colored T-shirt in a bright room. In the narrative, where white and light colors are used as supportive, Coca-Cola is at the center of the photograph, accompanying diversity and productivity, and emphasizing that the hardest times are easier with it.



Image 14. Artichoke



Image 15. Food with Coca Cola



Image 16. Pastry

In the 14th, 15th and 16th images, although the people cooking in the context of the signifier are not visible, the dishes are visible. In addition, in all three images above, it is seen that dishes belonging to the cuisines of various countries and therefore their cultures are prepared. While different dishes symbolize different cultures and cultural diversity, we can say that Coca Cola, which is mixed into the food or on the tables, is emphasized as the common flavor and unifier of the whole world. We can say that the current side meaning in the images shown is that Coca Cola will continue to exist alongside humanity and people in the new world order.



Image 17. Fish Meal



Image 18. Meat Meal



Image 19. Dinner Table with Coca Cola

In the images 17 and 18, the hands of the people cooking and the food being prepared are seen. Meals in the signifier are meat and fish. The images include gastronomies of various cultures. In the advertisement, Coca Cola emphasizes that it is a cross-cultural consumption item with these details, while emphasizing that it is a bridge between cultures and that it has features that unite people. In the 19th image, there is a table and the preparation of the food being brought to the table. In the context signified, the brightness of the table environment and the presence of more than one person's hands in the frame convey the message that bright days can only be reached together. Coca-Cola brought to the table is the closest object to the lens in the photograph and complements the thoughts and feelings emphasized. In the context of the meaning generally shown in the visuals or in the context of the side meaning, we can say that Coca Cola is processed as an object that unifies, integrates and empowers people in difficult times.



Image 20. Food Ritual with Coca Cola



Image 21. Eating with Coca Cola



Image 22. Tables with Coca Cola

Images 20, 21 and 22 show people helping each other and preparing the table. People who are family or close friends are preparing to eat in a bright environment with a smile and joy. In the context signified, Coca Cola is on the table in all three images, emphasizing the message that without it, the tables are incomplete and unity and togetherness are incomplete. The family is complete only with Coca Cola. Increasing the number of Coca Cola in proportion to the number of people in the image number 21 emphasizes the necessity of not depriving everyone of this flavor and integrating power. In the context of connotation in all images, Coca Cola is included in people's families and personified as if it were a living entity.



Image 23. Coca Cola and Dinner with Friends



Image 24. Dinner Table in the Garden

In the image number 23, two young men, a dog, a live house plant and household items are seen eating together in a home environment. At the dinner table of two people of different ethnic origins, the Coca Cola bottle is a unifying element. In the visual describing the quarantine period in the pandemic, it is emphasized that life continues with cultural diversity, that people continue to be with the people and animals they love, while they have Coca Cola with them. The dog and house plant in the image have the connotation that Humans are strong with other creatures on the planet. Image 26 shows people sitting around a table in the garden and eating. Green grass and trees can be seen in bright weather, a baby carriage can be seen in the garden. Despite the pandemic, people continue to eat without losing their will to live in a garden in green colors that emphasize vitality in the context signified. While the bright, luminous air emphasizes hope for the future, the high fenced garden and high walls behind the garden emphasize that the limitations and separations still continue. The stroller in the garden emphasizes the continuity of the human species and life.



Image 25. Food Ritual with Coca Cola



Image 26. Differences and Coca Cola



Image 27. Activities and Coca Cola

In all three images in the commercial, people of various ages, genders and ethnicities are seen around a table. People who eat or play together in a house are seen smiling. In the context shown, there are Coca Cola bottles on the tables together in the visuals. It is emphasized that Coca Cola is the most important element that unites people and ensures continuity of life in the pandemic. The verbal expression "we got lost together, we rediscovered ourselves" in the images can be stated that even in challenging periods such as the pandemic, people transform differences and diversity into unifying elements, and that the time spent at home necessarily plays a role in increasing togetherness, interaction and communication. In the narrations in the visuals, it is emphasized that Coca Cola is always an accompanying element in the works that people perform together in their homes. People who succeed together have Coca Cola by their side in their success, and Coca Cola has a share in this success.



Image 28. Handinhand

In the last image in the advertisement, it is seen that the sign consists of a table and the hands that appear hand in hand on the table of two different people. In the signifier, it is seen that the cover-like object on the table is white in color. In addition, the "together tastes better" inscription under the Coca Cola emblem shows that white color is used as a backdrop. When evaluated in the context of denotation meaning, it can be seen that two people who know each other are holding hands in the same space, while when evaluated in the context of signified or connotation meaning, it can be seen that they have features and highlights of the pandemic period. In the signified or in the connotation sense, it emphasizes that people have entered into a certain solidarity by joining hands during the pandemic period. In addition, the sentence under the Coca Cola emblem gives a message of unity and uses the color white. When evaluated in the context of cultural signs, it is emphasized that although the use of white color is challenging and pessimistic, peace, cleanliness and enlightenment are still possible for people. The Coca-Cola emblem is seen in the center, placed in the middle of the signifier. In the context of the signified and connotation meaning, we can say that the message that the Coca Cola brand is with people in this difficult period and that it is with them in their lives is emphasized. In the image, the brand tries to convey the message that it is a part of the family with people who know each other and perhaps are family, and that the difficulties of life can only be facilitated by being together.

“Open Yourself to Life”



Image 29. The Person Inside the House



Image 30. The Person in Front of the Window

All images related to open yourself to life are by (coca-cola.com.tr/kurumsal/duyurular/ac-kendini-hayata, 2020).

In the first image in the advertisement, the African American man sitting in a dark room is facing the window and the man is looking towards the sunlight entering the room. The room also features a desk in front of the window and a plant in a flowerpot on the floor. When the image of the advertisement is examined in the context of the signified, the fact that the man leaves the dark side of the room behind and turns his face to the light coming from the window is the message that the darkness is left behind, which is also supported by cultural symbols, and that the future is brighter. It is expressed by the work desk in the sign that the person carries his social or business life to his home, and also the living plant standing on the ground sign the continuity of life. The ad states that “everyone is restrained in the pandemic. It can be said that it is a image that supports the message of “now is the time to get out of the darkness into the light, it is time to look forward”.

In the second image, which signifies the figure, the man is standing in front of a bright window, smiling. In the context of denotation or connotation, the person looks at the light with a smiling expression. Smiling is a universally positive expression and contains the message that the future is more hopeful. When the expressions in the images are examined in the context of connotation, it can be stated that what is expressed by "that" day is the atmosphere of panic, anxiety and chaos that started with the pandemic and continued afterward. “Wait a bit” is a discourse that emphasizes that people should get rid of their sense of helplessness and think more logically, and that they should maintain hope despite all that has happened.



Image 31. Smiling Man



Image 32. Smiling Woman

A dark-skinned young man standing in front of the wall in the 3rd image and his stance smiling in front of the wall he has behind him can be seen. In the 4th image, a similar image is seen, smiling in front of the wall behind it, and an illuminated corridor extending forward. The message that is displayed or in both images in terms of connotation is that everyone, regardless of their ethnic origin, is confined and stuck between walls during the pandemic period. Now, it is time to leave the walls behind and go into the

light, the message of time to look forward is given when people take the walls behind them and the corridor is illuminated with a perspective angle.



Image 33. Activity Together



Image 34. Video Chat on the Phone

In the sign in the 5th image, there is a house, an adult man and a boy, and the boy plays the game called table football on the adult man carpet. Light Light enters the house and faces are smiling. In the dimension of connotation, there are people who cannot spend time outside the house, so they try to live their lives and have fun inside the house. In the image, it is emphasized that the situation of the children in the limitation due to the pandemic can only be alleviated by all kinds of activities that we can do together with and with our loved ones. In the 5th image, the sign includes a video conversation of a person with a mobile phone and the person on the other end of the phone lying down and sending a kiss to the person with his/her hand. In the dimension signified, it is emphasized that people who cannot go out of the house during the pandemic period can communicate with their loved ones and people who need them, only to the extent permitted by technology. In the image, the message is given that people can convey their feelings to the person in front of them only through a medium. The sentence “we realized, we understood the value of many things” in the 5th and 6th images is the little thing that people always complain about because of the bans that came with the pandemic at the connotation level, the restriction of freedom, the inability to be with other people, and the disruption of the usual flow of life. It emphasizes that they understand the value of even things.



Image 35. Haircut



Image 36. Market Personnel



Image 37. Smiling Market Personnel

In the 7th image, a bathroom, a man and a woman are seen in the signifier. In the bathroom, the woman cuts the man's hair. Both are smiling, dressed in yellow. In the context signified, there is the message that people who cannot go out of the house cannot even meet their basic needs. The bright bathroom in the signified and the yellow colors on the people are positive elements in psychology. The sunshine in the environment and the smile on people's faces represent hope for the future. In the 8th and 9th images, a staff member is seen inside a large sales place. It is seen that the young woman, who creates

the impression that she is on duty at the beginning of her job, shown in the first image, is wearing a blue workwear that means harmony, peace and comfort. The unsmiling facial expression of the officer in the first image gave way to a smile in the second image, and started to spread a message of positivity. The yellow color on the rear shelves symbolizes light and sunlight. The attendant smiles and becomes willing to communicate with other people. "Well, if we do things differently now", "Will I say I don't like my job, for example; never" discourses, the connotation is that people can grasp the value of everything they have by developing awareness, that the problems that were complained about before become meaningless with the pandemic, and the order of importance and value is re-created.



Image 38. Little Girl



Image 39. People on the Bus



Image 40. Sea and Human

The car signifier in the 9th image is a little girl and a person inside the car. It is emphasized that not being able to go out freely in the context signified raises awareness even in children. While the child is looking at his mother from the outside of the car, the message that nothing will be the same again supports what is signified by the rhetoric "I don't want to go to school again" in the visual and emphasizes their awareness of the freedom to go out. 10. The image shows a bus interior that reflects depth. In the signifier, the people on the bus are sitting far from each other because of the pandemic. In the context of this signified, it symbolizes the physical and psychological isolation of people and their distance from each other. It symbolizes that there is always hope. The individuals in the photograph are smiling even though they are going through difficult times, and this action symbolizes their belief in the good under all circumstances. Infinity and loneliness are emphasized in the image number 11. In the signifier, the air is gray and closed. In what is signified, man is alone and left alone with nature on the planet. The adventure of humanity, which started alone and defenseless, has returned to where it started. Humanity is alone with a long time to question its loneliness and the reasons for this situation. When the images 10 and 11 are examined, the sentence "I will listen with my ears, not with my headphones" emphasizes people's distance from nature and reality with technological developments in terms of connotation.



Image 41. The Man in the Kitchen



Image 42. Flour and Eggs

In images 13 and 14, it is seen that people engage in activities that make them feel good, such as music and food, in an environment dominated by dark colors. When examined in the context of what is

signified, it is emphasized that people have all kinds of equipment and abilities to be self-sufficient even when they are alone in a dark period. The pandemic has made people despair. Liberation, on the other hand, is hidden in the yellow color of the Afro-American man, the color of the sky and the sea, reminiscent of the sun in the blue garment or the meal. In the text dimension, the sentence "I will continue with my music and my meals, I will try new things" is always to continue living again and to find new things for oneself, for the sake of humanity, for the sake of life, no matter what people come up with.



Image 43. City and Billboard



Image 44. People Dancing

In the 15th image, the perspective-emphasizing roads, flowing traffic and a large Coca Cola advertisement poster placed in the building on the opposite façade can be seen on the signifier. In the signified, motion indicating the continuity of life, drawing reflecting the emphasis of depth and eternity in the advertisement of Coca Cola, located just opposite at the top of the road, as well as dark colors, the presence of vivid colors such as lights and red are seen. While all these image signs reflect the continuity of life, Coca Cola, which is at the center of life, movement and continuity, continues to be with people during the pandemic period they are going through, is at the center of life and symbolizes vitality. 16. Signifier in the image are people dancing on the street. In the signified, there are elements that emphasize mobility and the continuation of life. People continue their habits and activities they enjoy in order to survive. The fact that the street symbolizing infinity and the wall symbolizing obstacles are left behind supports this message. The sentence "I will not be ashamed, I will share my figures everywhere because I danced" in the images, on the other hand, emphasizes that people could not do the behavior they always did in the early stages of the pandemic, but now they will continue to hold on to life more eagerly than before as they start all over again.



Image 45. The Wall



Image 46. Drinking Coca Cola Together

It is a garden that signifier in the 17th and 18th images. There are people sitting in the garden, separated by a wall and fence, eating and drinking Coca Cola. The wall and fence signified represent separation and symbolize the separation between people. The ritual of toasting the separated people against each other shows that they continue to be together, communicate and have fun despite everything. Barriers did not separate people. Although the tables cannot be set together, Coca Cola has a unifying

power. The raising of Coke bottles in the hands in the images symbolizes that the force that unites people is Coke. The value of being able to eat and drink together at the same time on both sides of the obstacle is emphasized. The weather is cloudy, the colors are dark, but the wall, fence and plates are white. The future holds hope. The sentence “I will enjoy every meal with my loved ones” in the visuals emphasizes that life gains meaning with people who are valued. The taste of every dish is possible with our loved ones and Coca Cola.



Image 47. Hug



Image 48. Eye to Eye



Image 49. The Bride

In the 19st and 20nd images, in the context of the signifier, it is seen that people hug each other and the sun lights accompanied by smiles. It is emphasized that people can overcome these difficult days by holding on to each other and together. In the 21st image, a bride drinking Coca-Cola is happily seen among people having fun at a traditional marriage ceremony. Cola is always with you on every happy day. Despite the pandemic, Cola accompanies the most beautiful, enjoyable and traditional days. In the sentence “I will always be with you and I will shout yes yes yes” used together with the images, it is emphasized that we are always with our loved ones, as well as in a difficult time such as the pandemic. The object that emphasizes and evokes that it will be with you here is again Coca Cola.



Image 50. People in Front of Greens



Image 51. People Walking in Greens



Image 52. Nature and Coca Cola

Image 22 signifier a smiling young African American person and a green nature behind him. In the context signified, the continuity of life behind the person is depicted with green nature. The person has a yellow color that evokes sunlight and the person is smiling. In the other image, an African American man is walking to the bright future among the trees, under a sky dominated by light. The visual and the rhetoric “Yes, see, we are succeeding together” symbolizes that the future is bright and that people will achieve the enlightenment together, and that one side of this success belongs to Coca Cola. In the 24th image, the Coca Cola logo is seen in the middle of a sky photograph surrounded by trees adorned with sunlight in the context signifier. In the context signified, Coca Cola rose into the darkness like the sun in this troubled period and instilled hope in people. The photo highlights the emphasis on life, hope and continuity in the

open air and a green sky theme. Coca Cola is still with people and continues to be a hope and light to people, while opening itself to life with enthusiasm, "And now I will always remind myself of this sentence, open yourself to life with a brand new excitement".

8. Findings Conclusion, and Recommendations

In this research, the commercial films of the Coca Cola brand broadcast internationally with the slogans "Great Food" during the pandemic quarantines and "Open Yourself to Life" during the period when the effects of the pandemic began to decrease were examined. With the semiotic analysis used as a research method, the universal and local cultural elements in the verbal or written messages in the images and images in the two advertising films released by the Coca Cola brand during the pandemic period were analyzed. In the context of the signifier and written-verbal elements used in the commercial films, it can be seen that despite the heavy and restrictive conditions of the pandemic, despite the heavy and restrictive conditions of the pandemic, people should not lose hope, reconnect to life, should be together despite physical and spatial differences, and emphasized that the difficult period they are in can only be overcome with solidarity.

In commercial films, it is possible to say that the Coca Cola brand undertakes the function of conveying emotions and while doing this, it also becomes the object of function. While Coca-Cola tries to carry emotions such as family, togetherness, solidarity, friendship, love and longing to the extent that they become objects in commercial films, it gives the message that all these feelings would be incomplete and unpleasant without it in terms of signified and connotation. In the commercials, it is seen that there are message focuses on people staying at home with their families, discovering what they can do at home with their own skills and equipment, and not losing their commitment to life and hope. While Coca-Cola emphasizes that it acts with a sense of social responsibility in these visual and verbal messages in its advertisements, it is also possible to express that the brand acts strategically to stay in people's minds while people are experiencing physical and psychological separations and their priorities have changed. The image and verbal presence of the Coca Cola drink in all the activities that people perform together or alone in the advertisements includes the connotation that are given to people to emphasize that it is only possible to overcome all these emotions, physiological and psychological problems with Coca Cola. It is seen that the emotions, values and awareness emphasized in these commercial films are realized through universal and local cultural elements. Especially on a universal basis, it was concluded that many elements are used both in the context of signifier and denotation and in the context of signified and connotation.

It is possible to state that the connotation given under all the universality accents in Coca Cola advertisements is that the Coca Cola drink is a world brand and a product that serves its customers with an understanding that embraces all people from all ethnicities and religions living in the world. Considering that advertising products try to explain other meanings besides the real meaning by making them associate, it is possible to express that there is another subtext under each meaning layer. In this research, two advertisements of Coca Cola with the themes of "Great Food" and "Hungry Yourself to Life" were analyzed semiotically and the findings were interpreted. The results obtained support the theory of semiotic analysis and the principles represented by the theorists of the theory, Saussure and Barthes. In the literature researches carried out on the subject, it was seen that there was no study that examined the advertisements of the Coca Cola brand that focused directly on the features of the pandemic period and gave messages related to this period. It has been seen that some studies in the literature have examined the advertising films in the pandemic process through the semiotic analysis method, while some studies have been carried out only on the social responsibility messages given. In this context, although there is no exact similarity with this study, it has been determined that some similar studies have been done, but there are differences between the results obtained. In the light of all these results, it is possible to state that this research will contribute to the literature of communication, psychology and marketing sciences. In addition, especially in a period when the effects of the pandemic period are felt intensely, it is possible to state that the increase in studies on the effects of the pandemic period and how these effects are processed by international and national brands and what messages they contain will contribute to the literature of various branches of science and may direct the studies to be carried out later.

Arařtırmacıların Katkı Oran Beyanı / Contribution of Authors

Yazarların alıřmadaki katkı oranları Ebru İTİL %100 řeklinde dir.
The authors' contribution rates in the study are Ebru İTİL %100 form.

ıkar atıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

alıřmada herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile ıkar atıřması bulunmamaktadır.
There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person in the study.

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In this study, the rules specified within the scope of the Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive were followed.

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