



**To our families,  
To our friends,  
And our beloved ones**

## Acknowledgements

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*The present dissertation deals with the social semiotic analysis of advertising posters of car dealerships: the case of German brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes, which are published between the years 2009 and 2020. Our aim is to analyse how these brands use linguistic and non-linguistic signs in their advertising posters in order to attract potential buyers. Six advertising posters have been analysed, two posters for each brand; relying on the theoretical frameworks of image analysis proposed by Martine Joly (2015) and Roland Barthes' (1977) theory of discourse function analysis. A qualitative research method has been adopted relying on the theory of Denzin and Lincoln (2005) to analyse the data gathered in order to conduct our study. The obtained results reveal that the three chosen German brands use iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs to attract the gaze and mind of the viewers towards their products.*

*Key words: Semiotics, Advertising, Iconic Sign, Plastic Sign, Linguistic Sign.*

**Ad:** Advertisement

**Ads:** Advertisements

**BMW:** Bayerische Motoren Werke (Bavarian Motor Works)

**CO<sub>2</sub>:** Carbon Dioxide

**DKW:** Dampf-Kraft-Wagen (Steam Powered Vehicle)

**Dr:** Doctor

**H:** Hypothesis

**N/A:** Not Assigned

**Q:** Question

**SUV:** Sport Utility Vehicle

**Web:** World Wide Web

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# **General Introduction**

### **Introduction**

Since Mankind has started existing on Earth, humans have relied on communication to survive and to interact with each other. Communication is the act of transferring and receiving information through the use of gestures, sounds, images, and so on (Zebrowska, 2013). Nowadays, with the help and the development of technology people have been graced with many tools to help them communicate at any time, from any place, and with high speed. A dominant way of communication that has emerged in the past century is advertising, as it has started through the use of printed images and newspapers, then it has begun to appear on the radio and television, but it has reached its peak within the twenty-first century with the presence of internet (Danesi, 2002). Advertising is a modern art that attracts people's attention and makes them wonder about its power and empire. It is an economic, sociological, and psychological strategy that can be found everywhere in our daily lives, as it is present in billboards, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the internet, and so on (ibid).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The focus of the present research is on internet advertising, as people nowadays spend more time on the internet than on any other media such as: television, radio, and print media. Internet advertising takes many forms: video, trailer, short film, movie, poster, and so on. Producers present a wide variety of offers in a distinct and concise manner to reach a larger audience, which creates an immediate exchange between the buyer and the producer (Deshwal, 2016). Furthermore, it presents offers in a different and brief manner to target customers across cultural and geographical contexts. It uses captivating and impactful images and plays on promise, promotion, consistency, and efficiency. It is limitless, affordable, and free. Internet advertising enables to present products quickly and to reach the whole world and most importantly, it is sustainable over time (Haugtvedt, Machleit, and Yalch, 2005).

During the past two decades, automobile advertising emerged as a new battleground between car producers all over the world to promote their cars in order to conquer and dominate the automobile market (Conley, McLaren, 2009). However, when people think up of a high-end, luxurious, virile, strong, and dominant car, they systematically think of German brands as they gather all these qualities (Ellwood, 2014). Hence, the present study investigates advertising posters made by three of the most renowned German brands to conduct the present research: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes.

In fact, several studies have been conducted dealing with the field of advertising at Master-Two level in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, which sought to analyse the advertising discourse of different kinds of advertisements. For example, the work conducted by TAKOURABT and LEHAMEL (2015) who have analyzed printed private language school advertisements belonging to distinct contexts, namely Algeria and England. The main conclusion drawn from this investigation is that both schools use linguistic and visual resources that are combined to reinforce meaning.

Another work has been done by HAMOUD and HAMTACHE (2017) which consisted of a social semiotic analysis of Condor Smartphones advertisements in Algeria. The results show that Condor Smartphones advertisements are built on different semiotic resources by which the visual and linguistic modes complete each other. Furthermore, Condor's Smartphones advertisements tend to imply messages, all of which are intended to highlight the reliability, service, and faithfulness of the company.

Moreover, OUDJANI and ABERMIL (2017) conducted an investigation dealing with the use of multimodality in Algerian advertisements in the Case of Mobilis and Ooredoo Telecommunications Networks. The main conclusion drawn from this research is that both Mobilis and Ooredoo use different semiotic resources to attract the viewers' attention.

All the works stated previously have all been conducted using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework named *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. It has also come to the best of our knowledge that there are no existent works that have dealt with the advertisements created by automobile industries. On this matter, the present study is going to fit in perfectly to try and remediate the points stated beforehand. This work focuses on the marketing of cars and is free from any kind of basic stereotypes that concerns women's softness, seduction, or any of men's brutality and strength.

### **The Problematic**

As Ronald Beghetto (2013) argues, students' creativity in the classroom should be emphasized at all times. This is not the case of Master-Two research dealing with image analysis, as they have all followed the same pattern in the use of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework, which has proven to be ineffective if no character or actor is present in the image to be analysed. As a solution to this problem, the present study intends to point out the need of Master-Two students in the Department of English at MMUTO for using a different theory to conduct studies dealing with image analysis. In addition to bringing an end to the students' use of the same approach in academic research.

### **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present dissertation deals with the analysis of some advertising posters of three German automobile brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes. The first aim of the current research is to investigate the semiotic and linguistic components of the advertising posters of the German cars chosen. The second aim is to determine the way the advertiser plays with linguistic and non-linguistic signs to capture and attract the buyers' attention. The third aim of the present research is to examine the way that the images and the texts are arranged to attract the client. In order to achieve these aims, the present study has used both the theory of image

analysis proposed by Martine Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015), to analyze the different linguistic and non-linguistic signs present in the advertising posters selected, in addition to Roland Barthes' theories *Image Music Text* (1977) to analyse the linguistic properties of the advertising posters chosen.

As regards the significance of the current study, the present research is worth conducting as it deals with a really important and contemporary type of communication which is advertising. More importantly, the research adds a contribution to the literature dealing with this field. It also gives an original analysis of online advertising posters of three German automobile brands; a field that has not received much attention. At the same time, the present study is conducted in a fresh and new way to analyse advertising images *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) by Martine Joly. As we believe that this theory incites a lot of interesting and contemporary ideas onto which the analysis of advertising images can be conducted, in contrast to previous works which have used the same theory *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) of Kress and Van Leeuwen.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In order to reach the aims of the current research, these questions have been raised:

- Q 1.** What are the components of the advertising posters of the German cars chosen?
- Q 2.** How does the advertiser play with linguistic and non-linguistic signs to capture and attract the buyer's attention?
- Q 3.** How does the advertiser succeed through the use of images and texts to promote the products?

In order to answer the previous questions, the following hypotheses have been advanced:

**H 1.** The selected advertising posters would consist of iconic, plastic visual signs, and linguistic ones.

**H 2.** The iconic and plastic visual signs would attract the buyer; the linguistic signs would encourage the purchase.

**H 3.** The linguistic signs would promote the product.

### **Research Methodology**

In order to answer the research questions stated before and reach the aims of the present work, the qualitative research method is adopted in the process of gathering data to be analyzed. The posters have been analyzed with the use of the theories proposed by Martine Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) and Roland Barthes' theories *Image Music Text* (1977) to analyse their linguistic and semiotic properties. This approach is applied to a corpus that contains six advertising posters of the three German brands chosen (Audi, BMW, and Mercedes), two posters for each of the three brands.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation follows the traditional simple model which consists of: a General Introduction followed by four chapters and ends up with a General Conclusion. The first chapter is called *Review of the Literature*, which provides the theoretical background of the current study along with the definition of the major concepts. The second chapter is the *Research Design*, which outlines the methods followed to collect and analyze data of the research. The third chapter is named *Presentation of the Findings*, it presents the results of present study as well as their explanation. The fourth chapter entitled *Discussion of the Findings*, analyses the results found in a profound manner and attempts to discuss the results obtained in order to answer the research questions and infirm or confirm the hypotheses set.

# **Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter is devoted to the review of the main theoretical frameworks adopted in the current study, which is a semiotic analysis of advertising posters of car dealerships. It is divided into two parts; the first part introduces the main concepts related to advertising. The second part is devoted to the semiotic approach and its main concepts, as well as the main theoretical frameworks of the present study consisting of Barthes' theories *Image Music Text* (1977) dealing with the linguistic and semiotic properties of the advertisement posters selected, in addition to the approach of image analysis proposed by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015).

### **I. Definitions of the Main Concepts**

#### **I.1. Advertising**

Murthy and Bhojanna (2007: 4) define advertising as “*a paid form of non-personal communication. Advertising promotes ideas, goods, and services of an identified sponsors. The main purpose of advertising is to create sales*”. From the previous quotation, it can be understood that advertising is a form of communication used by companies to raise the sales of a certain product and acquire a good achievement on the market. McLuhan (1964) in turn states that advertising is the: “*art of the modern world*” (quoted in Danesi, 2004: 273). In the previous quote, McLuhan considers advertising as a sophisticated type of communication that belongs to the highest form of art of modern times.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015: 23) advertising is: “*the activity and industry of advertising things to people on television, in newspapers, on the internet, etc*”. The quote designates that advertising is a way of getting the word out about a product to the world and getting the attention of the public using techniques and strategies to

persuade and influence the customers. It influences their feelings and attracts them to the product on sale.

According to Davidson (1992: 3) advertising is: “*a social language, a genre of Spectator/reader experiences, a technique of persuasion [...] almost a world in its own right*”. Davidson’s definition suggests that advertising uses captivating and impactful images and plays on promise, promotion, appearance, and seductive design. Moreover, it is a dimension that opts for simplicity, visibility, consistency, and efficiency.

Tremblay (1997) in an online article entitled *The Myth Today*, claims that from a traditional and mythical point of view, advertising acquires its effectiveness from the myth that the more people consume the happier they become. It is in itself an inventive vehicle of contemporary mythology, as it has rendered certain goods into true objects of worship as brands of clothing spread out in storefronts and people have craved about cars and other house machines. This has created myths about the services that a product can provide. Over the years several advertising myths have been encountered such as, the BMW being more than a car and the first Macintosh computer which supposedly would create a better life. Myths are nonexistent and incredible, but they took another form in advertising which in itself is a contemporary art in semiotics (ibid).

### **I.2. Advertising Communication**

One cannot speak about communication without referring to the famous communication scheme of Jakobson *Linguistics and Poetics* (1960), in which he has determined that any act of communication is composed of six factors: ‘a context’ which is the topic of the conversation, ‘an addresser’ who is the sender, ‘an addressee’ who is the receiver, ‘a contact’ that refers to the channel of communication, ‘a common code’ which refers to the type of communication used, and ‘a message’ that is the information wanted to be communicated.

According to a European directive published online in 1984, advertising communication is defined as: “*the making of a representation in any form in connection with a trade, business, craft or profession in order to promote the supply of goods or services, including immovable property, rights and obligations*” (Council Directive 84/450/EEC, 10 September 1984). From this quotation, it is useful to mention that advertising communication is a marketing strategy used by companies to publicise products or services to the public. Moreover, it is an exchange between a sender who is the advertiser and a receiver who is the public or the client. It is usually a commercial communication, which can sometimes be social or political.

Advertising plays on communication, to ensure that it is concrete, that it targets customer needs, quality, and service relying on three policies: promotion, sale, and public relations. Therefore, advertising communication allows the company to convey fascinating and attractive messages in order to develop a good brand image that would influence the consumer (Danesi, 2002).

### **I.3. Internet Advertising**

According to Shah and D’Souza (2009), to ensure and guarantee an ideal advertising, companies offer themselves several supports and advice from marketing managers who plan the marketing program, study the marketing environments, and set the marketing objectives and strategies.

According to Sveltana (2014), advertising determines the way of life and has an impact on our thinking, on the attitude towards ourselves, and the world around us. Indeed, advertisements can be seen through the media such as posters, print media, radio, television, and the internet. There are also non-media resources such as sales promotions, trade shows, public relations, and direct marketing.

Internet advertising is the centre of our interest; it is considered to be the core of advertising communication. In an online article published in the *International Journal of Applied Research* (2016) by Dr. Deshwal, it has been acknowledged that online advertising has evolved into a vastly complex form of communication, with literally thousands of different ways for a business to transmit a message to the consumer. From this article, it can be understood that online advertising is a form of communication carried out on the web that presents offers in a distinct and concise manner and takes many forms. For example, it can be a video, a trailer, a short film, a movie, a poster, and so on.

According to Haugtvedt, Machleit, and Yalch (2005), internet advertising is limitless, affordable, and free. It enables to present products quickly, reaches very broad targets, and opens up to the whole world. It offers promotions and discounts and thus penetrates quickly into the websites, and above all it is a sustainable advertising that remains over time.

Today, advertisers are doing miracles with their ads in different industries mainly the automobile sector; they make sure that the image and text catch the eye of the buyer by the use of a whole range of creativity and attractive techniques to capture the client's gaze.

### **I.4. The Automobile**

According to Conley and McLaren (2009), since the 1950s' people over the world have viewed the automobile as more than just a means of transportation. Barthes (1972) famously compared the automobile to a Gothic Cathedral, as he acknowledged that a car is a purely magical object, stating that a car if not in usage is an image.

Conley and McLaren (2009: 37) stated that advertising is a great success in the automobile sector, "*According to estimates made by the industry periodical Advertising Age, autos were the most advertised category among their top 200 megabrands*". In particular, the German brands which are known to be luxurious brands. According to Ellwood (2014), German automobile manufacturers create different types of cars for customers who are in search

of premium and well-made cars. As Audi represents German technical superiority, BMW is considered as the ultimate driving machine, and Mercedes is the reference of elegance and power.

After having defined the major concepts dealt with in the present study, it is clear that the current investigation cannot be conducted without making use of the field of semiotics, as it can help in the analysis of linguistic and non-linguistic signs present in the advertising posters.

## II. The Semiotic Approach

The social semiotic approach has developed throughout time thanks to the works of several scholars. The starting point of its development came with the De Saussure, who has used the term ‘semiotics’ for the first time, and defined it as “*a science that studies the life of signs within society*” (1916: 16). From the preceding quotation, it can be mentioned that semiotics is the study of how people design and interpret all systems of meaning: social relationships, the arts, religions, dress codes, and so on, which can be studied as sign systems, in other words as languages.

### II.1. Communication Semiotics

This approach is supported by the disciples of De Saussure. Indeed, this branch studies the communication systems produced by the social institution (except for natural languages) including traffic laws, highway code, Morse code, the language of the deaf-mute, braille, maritime and air signals, railroad signs, cartography, military bells, the language of chemistry, computers, and the languages spoken (Danesi, 2013). According to Nordquist:

Semiotics is the theory and study of signs and symbols, especially as elements of language or other systems of communication. Common examples of semiotics include traffic signs, emojis, and emoticons used in electronic communication, and logos and brands used by international corporations to sell us things-‘brand loyalty,’ they call it. (Nordquist, R. 2020, *Semiotics Definition and Examples*, viewed on 30 April 2020, <<https://www.thoughtco.com/semiotics-definition-1692082>>)

It can be understood from the previous quotation that semiotics of communication is interested in the study of conventional and precise signs and symbols of the social community. Therefore, it refers to any linguistic means of communication: a sign, a number, or a symbol. This is useful to the present study as it allows to convey the meaning of the linguistic and non-linguistic signs present in the advertising posters.

### III. Visual Grammar

The theory proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen in their book entitled *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) has been used in all previous Master II dissertations in the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou dealing with the field of advertising. Visual Grammar is an approach for reading images, its aim “*is to present a socially-based theory of visual representation*” (1996: 05).

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) have claimed that visual grammar describes the way the elements represented in the images are combined together to communicate a full meaning. In the same way that the grammar of language describes how parts of speech (words) are combined into a meaningful text, which vehicle a complete meaning. Kress and Van Leeuwen have adopted Halliday’s metafunctions of the language that he has developed in his systemic functional grammar *Language as Social Semiotics: Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (1978). Indeed, they proposed three metafunctions: representational which is concerned with the representation of interaction and the relation between the elements depicted in the picture, interactive which is represented by the patterns of interaction between participants, and compositional which refers to the way elements in visuals are combined and organized to form a kind of harmony to attract the attention of the viewer. These metafunctions could be applied on the analysis of the grammar of visuals and justified this adoption of Halliday’s theory by its usefulness to analyse the representation of actions and states expressed through modes of communication such as language and visuals.

### IV. The Notion of the Sign

According to De Saussure (1916), the non-linguistic sign in the most general sense designates just like the symbol an element 'A' of diverse nature, substitute for an element 'B'. De Saussure argues that the meaning of a sign is arbitrary and variable. As reported by De Saussure (1916), any sign is a unified whole consisting of a signifier (the sound a word makes or its physical shape on the page) and a signified (the word's content). In other words, De Saussure (ibid) defines the sign as the combination of a signifier, which is the acoustic image and a signified, which would be the concept or mental representation of an object. For example, there is no relation between the signifier /dɒg/ and the actual animal (dog), which is the signified.

#### IV.1. The Sign According to Peirce

Pierce (1902) defines the sign as:

Anything which is on the one hand so determined (or specialized) by an object and on the other hand so determines the mind of an interpreter of it that the latter is hereby determined mediately, or indirectly, by that real object that determines the sign ... The determination of the Interpreter's mind I term the interpretant of the sign. (Peirce cited in Fisch, 1986: 342).

In the preceding quotation, Peirce considers the sign as the creation of an idea in the mind of each person, and this creation is linked to an object. Since each individual views the world differently, diverse interpretations to the same object are joined. However, Peirce introduces a triadic division of signs as follows: 'icon', 'index', and 'symbol' (*The Essential Peirce*, 1998).

Peirce (1998) names the sign that refers to its object as an icon, which means 'image'. We speak of an iconic sign when it resembles an object to which it refers. In other words, Peirce compares and links a certain quality to an object that possesses that same quality more than any other one. For example, linking fragility to a mirror.

Peirce (ibid) argues that the sign is called an index when it is affected by an object. This means that the index is the result of an object that occurs at the beginning, as the index

can be thought as the consequence of that object. For example, migraine is a symptom of illness, or smoke is an index of fire.

Peirce (1998) names the sign that refers to an object under a law a symbol. In a broad definition, the symbol is a unit that makes you think of another unit. In other words, the symbol is used to replace an object without really having a real relationship with the object that it represents. For example, the scale is a symbol of justice.

### **IV.2. The Sign According to Barthes**

Barthes in his work *Image Music Text* (1977) distinguishes between two functions of the linguistic message: the text can have in relation to the image either an anchorage or a relay function, while connotation or denotation is related to the meaning of the linguistic discourse.

#### **IV.2.1. Anchorage / Relay Function**

Anchorage is the function that the linguistic message exercises over the particularly polysemous message (Barthes, 1977). In other words, it has multiple related meanings, thus the text explains the image. According to Barthes:

Anchorage is a control, bearing a responsibility - in the face of the projective power of pictures - for the use of the message. With respect to the liberty of the signifieds of the image, the text thus has a repressive value and we can see that it is at this level that the morality and ideology of a society are above all invested (Barthes, 1977: 40)

From the previous quotation, it can be acknowledged that the anchorage function provides several meanings that explain the image. It has a surface meaning that makes particularly no real sense, and a hidden meaning that if combined with the image presents a clear interpretation of the latter. It presents an overstatement to capture the mind of the readers. Taking the slogan of BMW as an example 'The Ultimate Driving Machine' carries an exaggeration in order to captivate the attention of the audience.

Meanwhile, the relay designates the complementary relationship between the image and the text (Barthes, 1977); the linguistic sign completes the content of the image:

Text (most often a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level. (Barthes, 1977: 41)

The quotation includes the idea that the image and the text have an interrelated complementary relationship. The text offers additional information on the image; the latter cannot be understood without the text accompanying it, as the two create a necessary cohesion. The relay function presents a text that possesses a literal meaning to convey information about the image. For example, this function can be found in advertisements showing a woman and her children crying accompanied by a text implying to drive carefully.

### **IV.2.2. Denotation and Connotation**

In his famous study of Panzani pasta, Barthes (1977) links the concepts of the signifier and the signified to the concepts of connotation and denotation. According to Barthes (ibid), denotation describes the literal meaning of the signifier. It is used to convey information to be understood clearly without adding to it any component that would compromise the meaning that the text has. Consequently, denotation is the literal meaning of a term. On the other hand, connotation describes a secondary meaning of the signifier; it is used to give another perspective to the text. Subsequently, connotation is a set of elements that are added to the direct meaning of the linguistic message. To sum up, denotation is the surface meaning of a linguistic message, while connotation is the deep meaning of that message. For example, the linguistic message provided in the Audi R8 poster ‘born on the track, built for the road’ (Image 2, see the appendix, I).

### **IV.3. The Sign According to Joly**

Joly has made notable works about image analysis, the semiotic approach of the image, and its interpretation. In her work entitled *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015), Joly distinguishes between three types of messages:

Three types of messages make up this visual message: a plastic message, an iconic message and a linguistic message. The analysis of each of them, for the study of their interaction, should allow us to identify the implicit global message of the announcement. (Joly, 2015: 76)

In this quotation, Joly speaks of the arrangement of three types of messages: the iconic (e.g., the product and the background), plastic (e.g., frame, angle of view, and colours), and linguistic messages (e.g., slogan, jingle, and text), which assume different roles. The message that the image carries can be withdrawn from the analysis of the complementary combination of the three types of messages. Thus, Joly offers three signs for a semiotic analysis of an image:

### **IV.3.1. The Iconic Sign**

Joly considers the iconic sign as all the figurative signs that refer to the world around us, that is to say any shape, symbol, image, or object.

In the advertising context, signs have meanings and bring meaning to the image. The iconic messages present in the corpus of the present study should make it possible to convey a message. As Joly considers that the iconic message, which is composed of several iconic signs, is a form of interaction between the advertising image and the public: *“It is a form of dialogue between the advertisement and the client”* (2015: 65).

### **IV.3.2. The Plastic Sign**

The plastic sign is the stylistic variant of the advertising poster (Joly, 2015). In other words, the plastic signs designate the tools specific to visual representation that shape the image, such as the frame, framing, the angle of view, and composition and layout, in addition to the tools that refer to the perceptual experience: shapes, texture, colours, and lighting.

The operating rules of the plastic signs are flexible; they can change according to each image.

The analysis of the corpus would be based on the following elements:

### **IV.3.2.1. The Frame**

According to Joly (2015), any image has limits which are highlighted by a frame that takes a certain shape. This element has the purpose of determining the physical form of the border used to frame the image, as it can take the shape of a square, rectangular, triangle, oval, and so on.

### **IV.3.2.2. The Framing**

According to Joly (ibid), the framing corresponds to the size of the image; it is the visual distance between the object photographed and the lens of the camera. In other words, it is about analyzing the scale of the picture. There are two kinds of framing; vertical which gives the impression of proximity and horizontal which gives an impression of distance.

### **IV.3.2.3. The Angle of View**

The angle of view is the relationship between the lens of the camera and the object photographed (Joly, Ibid). That is to say, it corresponds to the visual axis of the image. The capture varies along the horizontal and vertical axes. The horizontal axis can take the form of a frontal view; meaning the shot captures the front of the product, the three-quarter view which enables to see the product from three angles, or the profile view that offers a side perspective. On the other hand, the vertical axis takes the form of the level angle view, which is the most used and is considered to be neutral, the bird's view which captures the object of the image from its high angle, or the low angle view which is the result of the shot being taken from under the object of the image.

### **IV.3.2.4. Composition and Layout**

According to Joly (2015), it is about the inner geography of the visual message. By way of explanation, it is the arrangement of the elements within the image. It has an effect of prioritisation of vision and therefore directs the reading of the image. The composition is

consequently resulted from the organization of plastic and iconic signs on the surface of the image. According to Joly (ibid), several types of construction can be used to orient the reading of the image:

### **IV.3.2.4.1. Focused Construction**

The colour, lighting, and shape draw the customer's gaze to the product (Joly, ibid). That is, the product is placed at the back of the picture, while the plastic and iconic signs are used to draw the sight of the viewer to that object. For example, the product advertised can be placed at the back of the poster to withdraw the focus placed on it. Then the image would use bright colours and other elements to direct the attention of the viewer towards the product;

### **IV.3.2.4.2. Axial Construction**

Places the product in the centre of the ad so that it coincides with the axis of the gaze (Joly, ibid). That is to say, that the product is usually placed at the centre of the image by itself with limited plastic and iconic signs so that the sight of the viewer drops on the product displayed directly. For example, the product on display can be placed at the centre of the ad by itself with either limited or no elements added to the picture;

### **IV.3.2.4.3. Deep Construction**

Puts the product at the front of a staging set with perspective so that the product can take centre stage (Joly, ibid). This means that the product is placed at the foreground to put it mainly on focus while using several plastic and iconic signs at the background of the picture on which the product can be displayed upon. For example, the product portrayed is placed at the front of the image while using various elements at the back, so that the image would have a certain perspective;

### **IV.3.2.4.4. Sequential Construction**

This technique involves looking around the advertisement so that the gaze drops on the product (Joly, 2015). In other words, this method consists of making the viewer browse through the image in stages, so that the sight of the viewer drops eventually on the main object. For example, the image would contain several elements used to withdraw the focus from the product so that the gaze of the viewer would follow those elements until it drops on the product advertised.

### **IV.3.2.5. The Shapes**

Joly (ibid) states that, in advertising the most banal stereotypes are often provoked to create a clear and easier manner to understand the image, especially the use of femininity and masculinity. Therefore, the forms associated with feminine softness, fragility, refinement, but also the forms associated with solidity, vigour, and brutality have been released from the corpus. Due to the academic intent of the present study, it seems that using advertising posters that contain the stereotypes stated above would compromise the integrity of the present work and defect it from the primary aims drawn at the beginning, as the present study has no purpose to showcase the social representation of women or men in any context.

### **IV.3.2.6. Colours and Lighting**

Joly (ibid) argues that the interpretation of colours and lighting depends on a cultural perception and the person's experience. These two elements have an effect on the viewer, as Joly states that colours convey certain meanings that can be either conventional or not. An example that can be given is of the red being the colour of strength and of blood, or of the black and white, which do not stand only for mourning or purity.

On the other hand, the lighting sets the mood of the image, such as the brightness that invokes a sense of enjoyment and happiness, or darkness which infers a sense of mystery and sadness.

### **IV.3.3. The Linguistic Sign**

According to Joly (2015), the linguistic sign signifies an entity for the expression of language. It includes a word, sentence, or text. Advertisements generally contain some kinds of linguistic discourses that have different roles in the understanding of the advertising image. That is, the image can be interpreted in different ways, but the linguistic message can help find the actual meaning of the image. Joly uses her theory of image analysis *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) in parallel with Barthes' theory of linguistic message analysis *Image Music Text* (1977) to analyse the function of the linguistic messages perceivable in the images.

However, the theory presented by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) has not accounted for the different linguistic messages present in the advertising posters. Thus, the theory established in *Advertising: An IMC Perspective* (2007) has been used to list the different linguistic messages found in advertising. This theory has been introduced by the Murthy and Bhojanna, who have offered two distinct types of linguistic messages within advertisements.

#### **IV.3.3.1. The Headline**

Murthy and Bhojanna (2007) define it as a limited linguistic element (text, jingle, slogan), used to draw the attention of the viewer towards the advertisement. It is a captivating phrase placed at the top of the advertising poster and written in a large size. An example of the headline in Image 4 (see the appendix, II) 'Some sights you never forget'.

#### **IV.3.3.2. The Body Copy**

Is a logical extension of the headline, it explains the product features and tries to close the sale (Murthy and Bhojanna, 2007). It is generally placed under the headline; it plays on safety, comfort, promotion, and so on. It is written in a smaller size than the headline. An example of Image 3 (see the appendix, II), where the attributes of the car are given.

To affirm the authenticity of the advertising posters selected for the sake of the present research and to avoid any form of counterfeit poster, the present study has opted to include two anti-counterfeit elements that each poster should contain at least one of them:

The first component is the brand slogan and/or logo, which are the signatures of the brand, chosen by the founder of the company or business; it is an original, short, and meaningful formula. To take the example of Audi, the brand slogan ‘Vorsprung Durch Technik’ or the logo of Audi consisting of the four metallic rings attached together.

The second element is the contact information, which is placed at the very bottom of the advertising posters. For example, it can be given in the form of a telephone number, address, website, and so on.

### **V. Comparison of Key Concepts**

The following part is a comparison between the theories of Joly (2015) that has been adopted in the present research with the theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), which has always been used in previous works related to image analysis in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.

The first two characteristics that are somewhat comparable are the iconic sign according to Joly (2015) and the representational metafunction presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The representational metafunction represents objects and their relation in the world, however it needs to have at least one actor in the picture to analyse it. On the other hand, the iconic sign is the narration of all the recognisable objects of the world present in the image, no matter if there is an actor or not.

The next two features that are similar are the plastic sign and the interactive metafunction when it comes to their subdivisions. The gaze, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s theory (2006), is comparable to the composition and layout feature proposed by Joly (2015) as they both refer to the way that the image has been constructed to direct the

reading of the image. But the gaze mainly requires the presence of actors in the images, which is not the case for the composition and layout element. Another feature is the framing proposed by Joly and the social distance suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen. They are particularly the same as they both analyse the distance between the lens of the camera and the product or actor in the image. However, Joly gives a proper terminology to the different types of framing; vertical, which stands for proximity, and horizontal which refers to distance. The angle of view offered by Joly and the point of view offered in turn by Kress and Van Leeuwen are practically the same with some terminology difference only. The plastic sign presented by Joly offers two characteristics that do not have a counterpart in the theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen, the frame which refers to the shape used to limit the image and the colours and lighting, which gives an account on the colours used in the image as well as for their interpretation, in addition to the lighting used to animate the image.

The third characteristic is the compositional metafunction suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen. This stands for the combination of the representational and interactive metafunctions to attract the attention of the viewers. Even if there is no terminology for this combination in the theory of Joly, it is acknowledged that both the iconic and plastic signs perform a complementary function to attain the same objective as the compositional metafunction.

The last element that can be compared between the two theories is the linguistic sign, which is non-existent in the theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen. According to Joly, the linguistic sign plays an important role in the advertising image, as the iconic and plastic sign capture the attention of the viewer, while the linguistic sign closes the deal and directs the customer towards the product showcased.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter has accounted for the theoretical foundations of the present study. It has first started by defining the most relevant concepts necessary to the understanding of the research, mainly the concepts of advertising and semiotics, in which it emphasizes the contribution of semiotics in the sphere of image analysis. Then it has presented the two theoretical frameworks used as tools for the analysis of the corpus, namely the theory proposed by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) to analyse the different linguistic and non-linguistic signs present in the image. In addition, the chapter has dealt with the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977) to interpret the linguistic and semiotic functions of the messages present in the advertising posters. Finally, the present chapter has accounted for a comparison between the theory of Joly (2015) and the theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) in terms of image analysis.

# **Research Design**

## Introduction

The present chapter deals with the methodological frameworks of the study. First of all, this chapter describes the research method used to obtain data from the analysis of the selected posters. Then, it provides a description of the corpus of this study, namely the three German brands Audi, BMW, and Mercedes. After that, the current chapter will present the procedures of data collection of the advertisements. At the end, the method of data analysis based on the theory proposed by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) will be provided.

### I. The Research Method

To analyse the data of the current research, the method of Joly (2015) has been employed. It has first presented the advertising posters specific to the three brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes. Then, the current research has analyzed the three signs that Joly has offered: the iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs. To reach the aforementioned aims set at the very beginning of the study, a qualitative method is used following the theory of Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 03) who have claimed that: “*Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them*”. That is, the qualitative approach permits a deeper perspective of the phenomenon observed; it includes things such as people thinking, feelings, and all other variables that are soft like assumptions, rumors, expectations, ideas, experiences, and knowledge.

### II. Presentation of the Corpus

The corpus of the study is made up of six advertising posters, published on the internet in different commercial sites. The posters have all been made from 2009 to 2020. The three brands of cars chosen are presented in the following:

### **II.1. The Audi Brand**

Audi is a German automobile brand created by August Horch in 1901. The name Audi is a wordplay between the Latin word ‘Audi’, which means ‘Hear’ and the patronymic of the founder, which in German means ‘listen’ (Audi official site, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.audi.com/en/company/history.html>).

#### **II.1.1. The Audi Slogan**

The slogan ‘Vorsprung Durch Technik’ translated into English ‘Advance through Technology’, constitutes a signature of the company thanks to which Audi reaffirms and reinforces the values of its products. With this slogan, it promises its customers the best of progress in automobile technology. It is a way of presenting the prestige and the high-end of the brand (Audi official site, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.audi.com/en/company/history/vorsprung-durch-technik.html>).

#### **II.1.2. The Audi Logo**

The four legendary interlocking metallic rings symbolize the union and fusion of four German automobile brands: AUDI, DKW (Dampf-Kraft-Wagen, Steam Powered Vehicle), HORCH (Luxury Car Manufacturer), and WANDERER (Motorcycle and Car Company) (Audi official site, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.audi.com/en/company/history/history-of-the-logo.html>).

### **II.2. The BMW Brand**

The acronym BMW refers to ‘Bayerische Motoren Werke’, which means in English ‘Bavarian Motor Works’. The BMW headquarters is in the region of Bavaria, Germany. It was founded in 1916. At first, BMW was specialized in aviation; it was after the First World War that the company has converted into the automobile industry (David Kiley, 2004).

### **II.2.1. The BMW Slogan**

In the 1970s, BMW has introduced one of the most iconic car slogans ever ‘Die Ultimative Fahrmaschine’ which is translated to ‘The Ultimate Driving Machine’; this promises the buyers the ultimate and best car on the market. Furthermore, it has introduced another slogan in 1980 ‘Freude am Fahren’, which means in English ‘Sheer Driving Pleasure’. It refers to the joy of driving and the thrills of speed, which in itself is a form of piloting, a full-time activity once your hands are on the wheel (David Kiley, 2004).

### **II.2.2. The BMW Logo**

The symbol was founded by Franz Josef Popp in 1917. This logo has not undergone any change for 90 years; it consists of 4 blue and white checker boxes enclosed in a circle. It was supposed to be a representation of a white or silver propeller blade spinning through a clear blue sky. But by coincidence, the two colours are also a symbol of the Bavarian flag (David Kiley, 2004).

## **II.3. The Mercedes Brand**

Mercedes Benz is a German automobile brand created in 1902 by Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler. The name was born from the merger of two brands Daimler and Benz. Daimler then had given it the name of his daughter Mercedes. Mercedes Benz is recognized as a symbol of luxury, known as the star car. Its headquarters is in Stuttgart, and its Chief Executive Officer is Dieter Zetsche (Mercedes official site, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.mercedes-benz.com/en/classic/history/corporate-history/>).

### **II.3.1. The Mercedes Slogan**

In German ‘Das Beste Oder Nichts’, this means in English ‘The Best or Nothing’. This signature was assigned to the father of the brand Gottlieb Daimler, who stages everything that is classic. Mercedes offers the best for its drivers and the best is found in service, design,

high-end, and price (published in Mercedes-Benz News 2017 by Admin, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.arrowheadmb.com/blog/what-is-the-mercedes-benz-slogan/>).

### **II.3.2. The Mercedes Logo**

The Mercedes brand logo has evolved through time; in 1902 it was a simple representation of the name of the company. In 1904, they chose a gear and the linguistic sign ‘Original Benz’, which has been placed in the center of the crown. Then, in 1909 the symbol became a laurel wreath. The symbol changes and finally takes the shape of the three-point star in 2011 (Mercedes official site, viewed on 2 October 2020, <https://www.mercedes-benz.com/en/classic/history/corporate-history/>).

## **III. Procedures of Data Collection**

The present section provides an explanation of the main procedures followed in order to collect data. The data are gathered from six advertising posters, two posters for each brand. To analyse the corpus of this research, the theory of image analysis proposed by Joly (2015) has been adopted with its iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs. To collect the data of the study, only six posters from dozens of advertisements have been selected, as they would be suitable for a semiotic analysis, all of them have been taken from several websites.

## **IV. Procedures of Data Analysis**

The six advertising posters that have been selected have been analyzed thoroughly through the lenses of the theory proposed by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015), in which she mentions that an image can be analyzed using three distinct signs.

### **IV.1. The Iconic Sign**

To analyse this sign, four criteria have been chosen: the product displayed, the state of the vehicle, the background, and the logo (for more details, see the previous chapter Literature Review).

### **IV.2. The Plastic Sign**

To analyse this sign, six characteristics have been selected: the frame, the framing, the angle of view, composition and layout, colours, and lighting (for more details, see the previous chapter Literature Review).

### **IV.3. The Linguistic Sign**

Two elements have been chosen according to the theory of Murthy and Bhojanna (2007) to analyse this sign: the headline and the body copy. In addition, two other elements have been added to check the authenticity of the advertising posters selected: the brand slogan and/or logo and the contact information (for more details, see the previous chapter Literature Review).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with the research design of the present study. It has presented the research method used to investigate the topic. It has also described both the procedures of data collection, as well as the data analysis procedure, which consists of the principles proposed by Joly within the framework of *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015). These principles have been applied to analyze the selected posters of the three German brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes, under the following resources: the iconic sign, the plastic sign, and the linguistic sign.

# **Presentation of the Findings**

## Introduction

The present chapter aims at displaying the results obtained from the semiotic analysis of the six advertising posters of car dealerships, the case of German brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes. The chosen posters have been examined relying on the theoretical framework proposed by Joly of image analysis *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015). The aim was to discover the different types of semiotic and linguistic signs present in each poster. Then, the different linguistic functions of each poster have been presented relying on the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977).

### I. The Iconic Sign

This part shows the different elements composing the iconic sign of each advertising poster. The following characteristics have been selected to represent the iconic sign: the product, the state of the vehicle, the background, and the logo.

<b>Iconic Sign</b> <b>Image</b>	<b>The Product</b>	<b>State of the Vehicle</b>	<b>The Background</b>	<b>The Logo</b>
<b>Image 1</b>	Audi Q7, Q5, Q3	Static	Lake pier	Bottom left
<b>Image 2</b>	Audi R8 Sport	Static	Two racing cars on a race circuit	Bottom left
<b>Image 3</b>	BMW M3	Moving (Power sliding)	Curve of a race track	Upper right
<b>Image 4</b>	BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé	Static	Eclipse in a desert	Upper left
<b>Image 5</b>	Mercedes SLS AMG Coupé Black Series	Static	City at night	Bottom right
<b>Image 6</b>	Mercedes ML 63 AMG	Moving	Dark blurry road	Bottom right

**Table 01: The Iconic Signs of the Six Advertising Posters**

Table 01 indicates all the recognisable elements of the world present in each advertising poster. Most of the cars on the posters are all in a static state except for the cars in images 3 and 6. As for the background, two posters (Images 1 and 4, see the appendix) use a background featuring a natural landscape, whereas two others (Images 2 and 3, see the appendix) use a race track as a background. For the rest, image 5 uses a city at night, while image 6 uses a dark blurry road. As regards the logo, both images 1 and 2 have placed it at the bottom left of the poster. However, in image 3 it is placed at the upper right, while in image 4 it is placed at the upper left. As for images 5 and 6, the logo is placed at the bottom right.

### II. The Plastic Sign

This part shows the different elements of the plastic sign present in each poster. In order to do so, the following characteristics have been selected for each advertising poster: the frame, the framing, the angle of view, composition and layout, colours, and lighting.

<b>Plastic Sign Image</b>	<b>Frame</b>	<b>Framing</b>	<b>Angle of View</b>	<b>Composition and Layout</b>	<b>Colours</b>	<b>Lighting</b>
<b>Image 1</b>	Rectangular shape	Horizontal and wide	Three quarters	Deep construction	Black, blue, red, white	Natural light
<b>Image 2</b>	Diamond shape	Horizontal and medium	Frontal	Deep construction	Red and white	Spotlight
<b>Image 3</b>	Rectangular shape	Horizontal and wide	Three quarters	Deep construction	Dark blue, black, and white	Natural light
<b>Image 4</b>	Rectangular shape	Horizontal and wide	Three quarters	Deep construction	Brown and gray	Natural light
<b>Image 5</b>	Square shape	Horizontal and medium	Three quarters	Deep construction	Yellow, black and white	City Lights
<b>Image 6</b>	Rectangular shape	Vertical and medium	Level angle view	Axial construction	Silver, black and white	Spotlight

**Table 02: The Plastic Signs of the Six Advertising Posters**

Table 02 shows all the elements composing the plastic sign present in the advertising posters. Most posters (Images 1, 3, 4, and 6, see the appendix) have used a frame of a rectangular shape, while image 2 has used a diamond shape one and image 5 has used a frame of square shape. As for the framing, half of the posters (Images 1, 3, and 4, see the appendix) have used a horizontal and wide framing. In contrast, two others (Images 2 and 5, see the appendix) have used a horizontal and medium framing, while image 6 has used a vertical and medium framing. The next characteristic is the angle of view. Almost every vehicle on the posters (Images 1, 3, 4, and 5, see the appendix) have been displayed in three quarters, which is not the case for the vehicle in image 2 as it has been displayed only in a frontal view, while image 6 has used a level angle view.

The majority of the advertising posters selected have used a deep construction in their presentation (Images 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, see the appendix); the remaining poster (Image 6, see the appendix) has used an axial construction. As to the colours, each advertising poster has used a considerable mix to create various effects according to each situation. In terms of lighting, three of the posters (Images 1, 3, and 4, see the appendix) have used a natural light. On the other hand, two posters (Images 2 and 6, see the appendix) have used a spotlight, as for image 5 the lighting has been made by city lights.

### **III. The Linguistic Sign**

This part displays the different elements of the linguistic signs present in each poster. The following characteristics have been selected for each advertising poster: the headline, the body copy, the brand slogan and/or logo, and the contact information.

The following table (Table 03) describes all the elements composing the linguistic sign present in the advertising posters.

<b>Linguistic Sign</b> <b>Image</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Body Copy</b>	<b>Brand Slogan/Logo</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>Image 1</b>	#TogetherWithAudi	Additional information	Both are present	Website and phone numbers
<b>Image 2</b>	Born on the track. Built for the road.	N/A	Brand logo only	N/A
<b>Image 3</b>	Have Mercy	Additional information	Both are present	Website
<b>Image 4</b>	Some sights you never forget	Additional information	Both are present	Website
<b>Image 5</b>	Men don't grow up. They just change their toys.	Additional information	Brand logo only	N/A
<b>Image 6</b>	Buy your daughter a horse. Keep the other 556 for yourself.	Additional information	Brand logo only	Website

**Table 03: The Linguistic Signs of the Six Advertising Posters**

First of all, the headline is present in all the posters selected as it has been used to captivate the public's attention. Another element is the body copy, which is found in the majority of the posters (Images 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6, see the appendix), which plays on the promotion of the car displayed. However, in image 2 the body copy is not used. In terms of the brand slogan and logo, both are present in three posters (Images 1, 3, and 4, see the appendix). On the other hand, only the brand logo is present in the rest of the posters (Images 2, 5, and 6, see the appendix). The last element is the contact information provided by the advertisers; in three posters (Images 3, 4, and 6, see the appendix) it is given in the form of websites. However, in image 1 the contact information is given in two forms: website and phone numbers. In the remaining posters (Images 2 and 5, see the appendix) no contact information has been given.

#### IV. The Anchorage / Relay Function

In this part, the theory of Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977) has been referred to, as the present study has tried to figure out the function of the linguistic message present in each of the advertising posters.

Function Image	Anchorage Function	Relay Function
Image 1	In the headline	In the body copy
Image 2	In the headline	Not used
Image 3	In the headline	In the body copy
Image 4	In the headline	In the body copy
Image 5	In the headline	In the body copy
Image 6	In the headline	In the headline and in the body copy

**Table 04: Anchorage / Relay Functions of the Linguistic Messages in the Six Posters**

Table 04 sheds light on the functions of the linguistic message present in each advertising poster. As it can be noticed, the anchorage function which does not provide any additional information about the vehicles displayed is always found in the headline, except for image 6. Regarding the relay function, it is found in the body copy of four posters (Images 1, 3, 4, and 5, see the appendix), as it provides more information about the vehicles portrayed. However, in image 6 the relay function is found in both the body copy and in the headline, unlike image 2 in which there is no relay function.

#### V. The Denotation and Connotation Function

In this part, the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977) has also been referred to, as the present work has tried to investigate the function of the linguistic message present in the advertising posters.

Image \ Function	Denotation Function	Connotation Function
Image 1	In the body copy	In the headline
Image 2	Not found	In the headline
Image 3	In the body copy	In the headline
Image 4	In the body copy	In the headline
Image 5	In the body copy	In the headline
Image 6	In the body copy	In the headline

**Table 05: The Denotation /Connotation Functions of the Linguistic Messages in the Six Posters**

Table 5 describes the function of the linguistic discourse found in the advertising posters. Connotation is found in all of the headlines of the advertising posters, as they have a secondary meaning that is used to attract the attention of the public and seduce them. On the other hand, denotation is found in the body copy of most of the advertising posters (Images 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6, see the appendix), as they convey a literal meaning, but not in image 2.

### Conclusion

The current chapter has presented the main results of the semiotic analysis of the advertising posters of car dealerships, the case of German brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes. The analysis has relied on the theory of Joly of image analysis *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) and the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977). The findings show that all the advertising posters selected make reference to the various types of semiotic and linguistic signs presented by Joly. Moreover, the investigation has shown that the anchorage and relay functions as well as the connotation and denotation functions are used in the linguistic discourse. These results will be further analyzed and discussed in the following chapter.

## **Discussion of the Findings**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter is a discussion of the results obtained from the semiotic analysis of the advertising posters of car dealerships, the case of German brands: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes, displayed in the previous chapter. This dissertation adopts the theory of Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) and the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977), as mentioned in the review of the literature. This chapter is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the investigation of the three types of signs present in each poster: the iconic, plastic, and linguistic sign, as well as the two functions that the linguistic message transmits: relay / anchorage function and connotation / denotation. Furthermore, the research questions asked in the General Introduction will be answered, and the validity of the proposed hypotheses will be checked.

### **I. Image 1: An Analysis**

#### **I.1. The Iconic Sign**

Relying on Joly's theory (2015: 60), the iconic sign is composed of "*all the elements of the world recognisable in the image*". In this advertising poster three luxurious and classic cars are showcased in a static position; versatile in sports, technology, and quality range: Audi type Q7, Q5, and Q3 (see table 1). They are exposed in broad daylight on an oblique pavement, with a lake pier as a background (see the appendix, I). The brand logo can also be seen on the bottom left corner of the poster (see the appendix, I). Based on the findings (see table 1), it can be argued that the iconic signs present in the advertising poster are working together to give an idea of harmony and security. This explains why the advertiser has used a lake pier as a background since the lake is where people venture to relax. This is in line with the theory of Joly (ibid), as the identified elements stated above form the iconic sign of this image.

### **I.2. The Plastic Sign**

Regarding the plastic sign, the findings confirm that the advertising poster (see appendix, I) uses specific tools to shape the aesthetic side of the image, as argued by Joly (2015). The poster (see the appendix, I) is framed by a thin line that takes a rectangular shape. Meanwhile, the image is horizontal and wide to give an overall plan, which allows the cars to be represented entirely with the complete environment behind (see the appendix, I). Moreover, the portrait of this poster is visible from three quarters, an angle that allows the viewers to see the entire space and vehicles. In this poster, a deep construction can be identified (see table 2), as the cars are put at the front of the image while using a background that will later on catch the eye of the public.

To conclude, in this advertising image a marriage of colours can be admired. The colours of the environment are linked to the types of cars Q7, Q5, and Q3 on display and represent a certain quality in accordance with the cars portrayed as argued by Peirce (1998). The first colour is Black; it is found in the contact information, the brand slogan, and is the colour used for the representation of the Q7 car (see the appendix, I) to symbolize elegance and refinement. The second colour is blue, which is the colour of the sky, a colour that makes the audience dream and is the colour used for the representation of the Q5 car to symbolize safety. The third colour is red; it is the colour of the Q3 car that symbolizes glamour, sportiness, and attraction. The fourth colour is white, which appears in the logo and in the headline (see the appendix, I) to make them readable. It is a natural light that animates the image and gives it clarity.

### **I.3. The Linguistic Sign**

Joly (2015: 80) claims that “*the image has different interpretations, however the linguistic sign provides the real meaning of the image*”. This advertising poster includes the headline ‘#TogetherWithAudi’ (see table 3), which is placed on the bottom left of the poster.

It can be understood from this slogan that these three cars offer the driver and the passengers an uninterrupted feeling of security and harmony. The three cars symbolize toughness, elegance, and safety. However, it can be argued that the body copy ‘Happiness is multiplied when you are with the ones you love. And with Audi Technology, it is always uninterrupted.’ (see the appendix, I) plays with the emotions of the buyers as it gives feelings of safety, happiness, and harmony. It is a marketing technique used to attract and seduce potential buyers. It can also be noticed at the very bottom, information about the price of the cars and the bonuses granted after their purchase. The brand slogan ‘Vorsprung Durch Technik’ is found on the bottom right of the poster, in addition to the Audi logo that is present in the advertising poster. Moreover, the contact information of the dealership is also given at the end of the advertisement in the form of phone numbers and websites (see the appendix, I). This proves what Joly has argued, since the linguistic sign of this poster offers the real interpretation of the image as designed by the advertiser.

### **I.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

In this advertising image, the linguistic message acts as both a relay and anchorage function (see table 4), because the body copy provides additional information on the vehicles and gives an overview of the prices and purchase bonuses of the Audi Q cars. On the other hand, the headline plays an anchorage function since it does not provide any additional information as argued by Barthes (1977). It only catches the reader's attention.

### **I.5. Denotation and Connotation**

In accordance with Barthes's theory (ibid), denotation is found in the body copy as it tries to convey a literal meaning in the form of additional information and an explanation of the headline (see table 5), whereas connotation is found in the headline (see table 5) as it conveys a secondary meaning implying that people can feel better when they are together in an Audi.

## II. Image 2: An Analysis

### II.1. The Iconic Sign

As perceived from this advertising poster (see the appendix, I) a red Audi type R8 sport is shown in a static position, a race car built for the road. Audi R8 is the result of the collaboration of Audi and Lamborghini, which gives a luxurious sports car. Its design reflects its ferocity on the track, its power, and its speed. A background that shows us a racing car circuit with two Audi Le Mans endurance race cars on it can also be seen, as well as the logo that symbolizes the brand at the bottom left of the poster (see table 1). From this analysis, it can be claimed that this advertising poster reflects the idea put forward by Joly (2015: 58) that: *“each iconic sign is there for another one than its own”*. In other words this advertising poster uses a race track and race cars as a background to showcase the racing heritage that the road car portrayed possesses.

### II.2. The Plastic Sign

Relying on Joly (ibid), this advertising poster gathers different stylistic variants that compose the plastic sign within the image. The plastic sign includes the frame which takes the form of a diamond-shape red wall with the car being placed in the middle. This image is horizontal and medium (see table 2); this offers a closer horizon and thus puts the car in front. As for the angle of view, this poster is visible from a frontal angle and offers a front view of the car. Subsequently, in this poster a deep construction is noticed, as the car is put on the very front of the image with an added background that serves as a staging set (see the appendix, I).

The dominant colours in this poster are red and white (see table 2). Red, which symbolises power and passion; it is the colour of the background and of the car portrayed (see the appendix, I). It is used to seduce and attract the eye of the public. Unlike the white colour, which is generated from a spotlight to animate the image and give it clarity and is also used

for the texts present in the image to make them readable (see the appendix, I). This proves the theory of Joly (2015), as all the elements stated before are used to form the stylistic variants of the plastic sign in the image.

### **II.3. The Linguistic Sign**

As argued by Joly (ibid), the linguistic sign can be presented in the form of a word, sentence, or text. In this case, the headline that takes the shape of a sentence (see the appendix, I) is found at the top right of the poster: ‘Born on the track. Built for the road.’ From this phrase, the idea of power and speed that this car offers can be depicted. In addition to the fact that this car has been restyled from a racing car to a road-legal one, thus the choice of the two words ‘born’ and ‘built’. This strategy plays on the subconscious of the public and tries to persuade them that they will be buying a road-legal race car. In this advertising poster, only the Audi logo has been provided (see table 3).

### **II.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

According to Barthes (1977: 40), “*In all these cases of anchorage, language clearly has a function of elucidation, but this elucidation is selective*”. In fact, the linguistic message in this poster plays an anchorage function (see table 4), as the headline tries to attract the public’s mind and play with their subconscious to implement an idea into their heads.

### **II.5. Denotation and Connotation**

As perceived by Barthes (ibid) connotation is used to give a different perspective to the linguistic sign. This can be confirmed in this poster (see the appendix, I), as it is used in the headline (see table 5) to convey a secondary meaning, which refers to the fact that the car has been restyled to become an everyday car with great performances.

### III. Image 3: An Analysis

#### III.1. The Iconic Sign

Relying on the theory of Joly (2015), the elements of the world composing the iconic sign in this advertising poster (see the appendix, II) are first, a moving BMW M3 car. This is a high-performance car, which has a lot of power as well as a great handling. This explains the whole image of the car power sliding on a race track. Second is the background, which shows a curve of a race track with an effect of blur, as well as the logo of the brand on the top right of the poster (see the appendix, II). From the analysis of the iconic signs present in the advertising poster, it can be argued that this latter tries to put forward the racing qualities that the car possesses, as all the elements stated above complete each other to emphasise on this matter.

#### III.2. The Plastic Sign

As Joly (ibid: 69) explained, the plastic sign is composed of various “*figurative elements that can be identified in the image*”. Which is the case in this advertisement (see the appendix, II), as this image is framed by a thin line that takes a rectangular shape (see table 2). The image is horizontal and wide (see table 2), as it offers an overall view of the car as well as of the background. Moreover, the portrait of this poster is visible from three quarters, an angle that allows us to see almost the entire vehicle and the whole set behind it. About the composition and layout, a deep construction can be identified as the car is put at the front while using a background, which serves as a staging set.

In this poster, there are three dominant colours (see table 2). The first colour is dark blue; it is used for the car and the cloudy sky on the background to give the vehicle a mean look. The lighting also takes a similar colour as a result of the cloudy sky, to emphasize the blur caused by the speed of the car. The second colour is black, which is used for the contact

information as well as for the brand slogan. The third colour is white; it is found in the headline to make it readable, as well as for the smoke caused by the tyres, as an effect of the power sliding (see the appendix, II).

### **III.3. The Linguistic Sign**

According to Murthy and Bhojanna (2007), the headline is used to draw the attention of the viewer towards the advertisement. This is the case in this poster (see the appendix, II), as the headline is placed on the bottom left of the poster: 'Have Mercy', with the letter 'M' being replaced by the symbol of the 'M series'. This slogan refers to the power, speed, and perfect handling of the car. This plays with the subconscious of the public, as it implores them to have mercy on other drivers and implies that by driving this car it will make them great drivers. On the other hand, the body copy is found at the bottom left corner of the poster; it gives an overview of the car's attributes to promote the car displayed. The brand slogan of BMW 'The Ultimate Driving Machine' is placed on the top right corner of the poster, as well as the BMW logo (see table 3). The contact information is also provided in the form of a website (see table 3).

### **III.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

As specified by Barthes (1977) the anchorage function is used to give several meanings while the relay is used to give additional information on the image. This can be clearly seen in this advertising image (see the appendix, II), as the linguistic message plays both a relay and an anchorage function. The body copy plays a relay function (see table 4), as it gives more information on the image and the car in specific. While the headline plays an anchorage function (see table 4), as it does not provide any additional information, it only catches the attention of the public.

### **III.5. Denotation and Connotation**

Barthes (1977), points out that denotation conveys a literal meaning of the signifier, whilst connotation describes the secondary meaning of the latter. The linguistic messages present in this advertising poster are no different, as denotation is found in the body copy and gives additional information on the vehicle. While connotation is found in the headline (see table 5) to convey a secondary meaning, as it does not actually implore for mercy, but it reflects the power and ability of the car.

## **IV. Image 4: An Analysis**

### **IV.1. The Iconic Sign**

The iconic sign as argued by Joly (2015) is a series of symbols which are in their proportions and their relations similar to the object or idea they represent. This advertising poster (see the appendix, II) is a perfect example of the preceding, as it shows a static BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé, which is a prestigious and elegant car with very smooth driving and a very appealing design. It also produces a low amount of emissions and is surprisingly fuel-efficient. In this poster, the background is composed of a desert and a solar eclipse. The brand logo is placed on the upper left corner of the poster (see table 1). From this analysis, it is safe to say that the iconic signs work together to integrate the car into the background to emphasise on the car's elegance and beauty, thus proving Joly's (ibid) claim.

### **IV.2. The Plastic Sign**

According to Joly (ibid) the plastic sign consists of numerous elements that shape and attribute certain characteristics to the image. This is applied in this advertising poster (see the appendix, II), seeing that the frame of the image is limited by a thin line forming a rectangular shape (see table 2). The Framing is horizontal and wide; it gives an overall view of the car and the background. Likewise, the portrait of this poster is visible from three quarters, an angle

that allows the viewer to see the rear end of the vehicle and the entire space behind it. In addition, a deep construction can be identified in this poster (see table 2) as the car is put at the front, while there is a background which serves as a staging set.

The dominant colours in this poster are brown and gray (see table 2). The brown colour is used for the car, the background which is a desert, and the lighting, as it seeks to provide a sense of darkness caused by the eclipse (see the appendix, II). It is the colour of elegance, reliability, and security. On the other hand, the gray colour is used for the sky to create the effect of a solar eclipse, as well as for the headline and contact information so that they would not overshadow the image above.

### **IV.3. The Linguistic Sign**

As argued by Murthy and Bhojanna (2007: 174-176), “*the headline is a captivating phrase that attracts the reader’s attention*”, whereas “*the body copy is a logical extension of the headline*”. This can be seen in this poster (see the appendix, II), as the headline found at the bottom left of the advertisement: ‘Some sights you never forget’ refers to the beauty of the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé and compares it with the beauty of a natural phenomenon, which is an eclipse and intends that the sight of one of the two cannot be forgotten because of their beauty. Alternatively, the body copy is placed on the bottom left of the poster; it gives an overview of the car, including some kind of explanation about the poster. As to the brand slogan in this poster, BMW have used their alternative brand slogan, which is ‘Sheer Driving Pleasure’; it is placed on the top right corner of the poster. Moreover, the BMW logo has also been provided in the advertisement. The contact information in turn, can be seen in this advertisement in the form of a website (see table 3).

### **IV.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

In accordance with Barthes (1977), the linguistic message present in this poster plays both a relay and an anchorage function. The body copy plays a relay function (see table 4), as

it provides an explanation for the choice of the background and additional information about the car. Contrarily, the headline plays an anchorage function (see table 4), as it catches the attention of the public and makes them compare between a natural phenomenon and the car portrayed.

### **IV.5. Denotation and Connotation**

In this advertising poster, denotation is used in the body copy to give more information on the car portrayed (see table 5). While connotation is found in the headline to convey a secondary meaning that emphasises the beauty of the car (see table 5). This goes in the same direction with Barthes' (ibid) ideology of the different functions of the linguistic discourse.

## **V. Image 5: An Analysis**

### **V.1. The Iconic Sign**

The advertising poster shows us a luxurious and virile sports car, the new SLS AMG coupé Black Series in a static state (see table 1). It is a luxurious sports car, which offers its driver a great amount of power and speed. The background is a city with buildings that reflects the technology that this car possesses. The car imposes itself under the bright lights of the city (see the appendix, III). The brand logo is shown on the bottom right of the poster (see table 1). From this analysis, it is safe to say that the car in this poster is placed in the middle of the poster as a beacon in the darkness of the city so that the gaze of the viewer is drawn towards the vehicle. In addition, it can be taken into account that several figurative signs are manifested in this poster, which leads to the confirmation of Joly's (2015) work.

### **V.2. The Plastic Sign**

This advertising poster is framed by a thin line of a square shape (see table 2). Additionally, the image is horizontal and medium with the vehicle being placed in the middle

of the poster; this offers a retrospective and a closer horizon putting the vehicle at the front of the image (see the appendix, III). Consequently, the car is portrayed using a three-quarter view, which allows to better see the car and the background. Furthermore, a deep construction can be identified in this poster (see table 2), as the car is put at the front with a background that serves as a staging set.

In this advertising image, a marriage of colours that refers to energy and enlightenment can be admired (see the appendix, III). The Yellow colour stands for freshness and happiness; it is the colour used for the representation of the car. The black colour is used in the background and the pavement in order to put the car on focus since it is associated with mystery and elegance. White appears in the logo, the contact information, and in the headline to make them readable. It is also created by the city lights to animate the image and give it a touch of perfection. This goes hand in hand with what Joly (2015) has claimed in regards to the nature of the plastic sign.

### **V.3. The Linguistic Sign**

The headline is found at the top right of the poster: ‘Men don’t grow up. They just change their toys’ (see the appendix, III). The indirect meaning of this slogan is that growing up entails having less leisure time and more productive time. However, its direct meaning stands for men who change most of the objects that are used to make them happy in their early days to bigger and more complex utilities such as cars, as they need some of the aspects linked to childhood to never stop exploring and to look for the next challenge. Meanwhile, the body copy of the advertisement offers information about fuel consumption, rejection of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and efficiency class. This is a small technical sheet that represents the vehicle’s attributes. The Mercedes logo is also offered in this advertising poster. This confirms the claim put forward by Joly (2015) that an advertising poster contains some kind of linguistic discourse that has a major role in the understanding of the image.

### **V.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

The message in this advertising image plays both a relay and anchorage function. The body copy has a relay function (see table 4), because it brings additional information on the car's attributes. Meanwhile, the headline plays an anchorage function (see table 4), as it provides no additional information to catch the readers' attention. This leads to the conclusion that Barthes' theory (1977) is used in this linguistic discourse.

### **V.5. Denotation and Connotation**

In this advertising message, denotation is used in the body copy (see table 5) which is used to introduce additional information on the car portrayed, whereas the connotation is used in the headline (see table 5) to convey a secondary meaning to the public, which is that men should own this car for leisure and have fun while driving it. Thus, proving the theory advanced by Barthes (ibid) in relation to the function of the linguistic discourse.

## **VI. Image 6: An Analysis**

### **VI.1. The Iconic Sign**

This is an advertising poster of a moving Mercedes ML 63 AMG (see table 1), which is a powerful and strong SUV that can suit an urban lifestyle and gives a pure pleasure of driving. It is imposing its gray glow and its splendour on the road and releases elegance. The background is a dark and blurry road (see the appendix, IV), which gives the impression that the car is moving at a high speed. The brand logo can be seen on the bottom right of the poster (see table 1). From this analysis, it can be understood that this advertising poster intends to emphasise on the power and speed of the car, which explains the use of the blurry road and the dark background. It can be noticed from this advertising poster that the different iconic signs are put together to draw a specific meaning, as advanced by Joly (2015).

### **VI.2. The Plastic Sign**

As argued by Joly (ibid), this advertising poster has used all the plastic signs efficiently to create the appropriate meaning that suit the image. This image is framed by a thin line, which takes the shape of a rectangle (see table 2). Another point is the framing, which is vertical and medium; this gives a close look on the vehicle (see the appendix, IV). In this poster, a level angle view is used, which offers a rear-view of the car. Moreover, an axial construction is used (see table 2), as the vehicle is placed in the middle of the image so that it coincides with the axis of the gaze.

The dominant colours in this poster are silver, black, and white (see table 2). Silver, which symbolizes sophistication and elegance is the colour used for the car. Moreover, black is the colour of the background, it is the symbol of authority and elegance. White is the colour used for the texts to make them readable and visible, as well as for the lighting of the vehicle generated from a spotlight. This proves the argument of Joly concerning the flexibility of the operating rules of the plastic sign, as this advertising poster imposes different plastic signs from the rest of the advertisements (see table 2).

### **VI.3. The Linguistic Sign**

According to Murthy and Bhojanna (2007: 178) the headline is a captivating phrase that attracts the viewer, while the *“body copy explain the product features”*. This can be perceived in this poster, as the headline placed on the top right of the poster (see the appendix, IV): ‘Buy your daughter a horse. Keep the other 556 for yourself.’ is used as an alternative and a more funny way to describe the power and number of horsepower that this car possesses. This slogan triggers the public’s humour as well as their commendation. Contrarily, the body copy is found at the bottom of the poster, as it gives an overview of the car’s attributes which in this case is the fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Mercedes

logo has been provided in the poster. In addition to the contact information in the form of a website placed under the headline.

### **VI.4. Anchorage / Relay Function**

The linguistic message present in the poster serves both a relay and an anchorage function. The body copy plays a relay function to give additional information on the car (see table 4). In contrast, the headline plays both a relay function and an anchorage one at the same time (see table 4), as it catches the attention of the reader and gives additional information on the car's horsepower. Thus proving the theory advanced by Barthes (1977) in relation to the function of the linguistic discourse.

### **VI.5. Denotation and Connotation**

In this advertising poster, denotation is used in the body copy to transmit a literal meaning through the addition of information about the car on display (see table 5). On the other hand, connotation is used in the headline to convey a secondary meaning (see table 5), which is the car's significant power. This goes similarly with the theory of Barthes (ibid) relating to the analysis of the different functions of the linguistic message.

After the analysis of the six advertising posters selected according to the theory provided by Joly (2015) of image analysis and the theory provided by Barthes (1977) dealing with the different functions present in the linguistic discourse, the following part is devoted to answer the research questions raised in the General Introduction.

First, it can be seen that all the advertising posters contain iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs. In addition to the use of anchorage and relay functions, as well as the connotation and denotation functions in the various linguistic messages present in the advertising posters.

Each car poster selected contains different iconic signs. Audi, BMW, and Mercedes all use different and appropriate backgrounds; to better identify the identity that they want their

cars to possess. Moreover, the three German brands use a suitable state for the vehicles portrayed to both accompany the identity of the car and to complete the background.

From the analysis of the advertising posters, it can be understood that the iconic signs are used to convey a message to the public by placing the product at the front of backgrounds to reflect speed, power, beauty, excellence, and so on, to form an interaction between the advertising poster and the audience, as Joly (2015) has explained. Each poster tries to convey one or numerous of the qualities stated before, an example of image 3 (see the appendix, II), which conveys qualities of speed and power. The cars are displayed with different states, in relation to the meaning that every poster wants to achieve. In addition to the use of different backgrounds to give clarity and meaning to the cars portrayed, an example of image 4 (see table 1), which uses a comparison between a natural phenomenon and the beauty of the car. This is used to promote and increase the sales of the cars showcased, as it is the sole objective of advertising identified by Professor Murthy and Doctor Bhojanna (2007).

The advertisements selected also contain several plastic signs. It can be seen that both Audi and Mercedes use different frames, framings, and angles of view to present the cars portrayed appropriately. On the other hand, BMW has used a rectangular frame, a horizontal and wide framing, in addition to a three quarter view in both the posters selected to provide a better look at their cars (images 3 and 4, see table 2). When it comes to the composition and layout of the posters, both Audi and BMW have used a deep construction to build up a staging effect that would better reflect the qualities possessed by their cars (images 1 and 3, see table 2). However, Mercedes uses different constructions according to the context wanted to be presented (images 5 and 6, see table 2). About the lighting of the advertisements, BMW uses natural lights to create a feeling that the car is integrated with the scene (images 3 and 4, see table 2), while both Audi and Mercedes use different types of lighting according to the meaning carried out by the image.

After the analysis of the advertising posters, it can be acknowledged that the plastic signs seen in the advertising posters selected try to attract the attention of the public by the use of numerous stylistic variants, as argued by Joly (2015) through the use of frames that suit every situation on display. Then, with the use of framing techniques that allow the public to have a better look at the vehicles displayed, as well as for the environment that accompanies the vehicles in the advertising posters. This allows the advertising posters to have a better perspective, as well as giving meaning to their content (image 2, see table 2). Concerning the angle of view, this is used to give each car in the advertising posters a certain perspective, on top of offering a different meaning. Moreover, the composition and layout of the advertising posters allow most of the vehicles to take centre stage in the images, with the use of a background that serves as a staging set (image 1, see table 2). However, it can be noticed that in every poster the car is the one that draws the eye of the public. Finally, the colours and lighting play a major role in the advertising posters selected, as they are used to capture the attention of the public and seduce them by carefully choosing the colours and lighting appropriate to each vehicle and setting (image 3, see the appendix, II). The advertising posters selected try to create an idea and link it to a car in order to convey a specific meaning to attract a specific audience, since it has been provided by Peirce (1998) that each individual views the world differently and thus chooses a car according to their need.

As regards the linguistic message present in the advertising images, Audi uses in terms of headlines phrases that play on rising certain feelings and emotions such as security and safety as done in Image 1 (see table 3) or to explain the nature of a car in order to promote it like in Image 2 (see table 3). On the other hand, BMW prefers to use linguistic signs that would promote the myth of BMW being the ultimate car company manufacturer as viewed by Tremblay (1997); this explains the idea of superiority in all the headlines used in the posters (images 3 and 4, see table 3). For its part, Mercedes prefers using humour in its headlines to

present its cars; this would offer a unique approach to promote its vehicles as humour is mostly well received (images 5 and 6, see table 3).

Through the analysis of the advertising posters, it can be seen that the linguistic signs present in the advertising posters play with the mind of the public, seeing that in every poster there is a message that is used to trigger a certain emotion in the mind of potential buyers, an example of image 1 (see table 3) which promotes the emotions of safety and harmony. It can be noticed that the headline is an essential element in every advertising poster, as Murthy and Bhojanna (2007) have argued since it is the one that plays with the subconscious of the public (image 5, see table 3). The body copy is used to play with the emotions of potential clients to make them feel more secure on the cars displayed (image 4, see the appendix, II), since its main objective is to promote the cars, as stated by Murthy and Bhojanna (2007). According to Nordquist (2020): “[...] *logos and brands used by international corporations to sell us things*” [Online], this is visible in the current research, as the brand slogan and logo are pretty common in the advertisements and are used as signatures of the brands, while the contact information are presented in the form of phone numbers and/or websites.

The use of anchorage and relay functions in the linguistic discourse of the advertising posters chosen can be perceived to convey multiple related meanings to explain the image, as mentioned by Barthes (1977). The anchorage function is always found in the headline and plays a major role in attracting and seducing the public (image 2, see table 4), while the relay function is mainly used in the body copy to give additional information on the vehicles and promote them (image 3, see table 4).

The use of connotation and denotation can also be seen in the linguistic messages present in the advertising posters to convey either a literal or secondary meaning as explained by Barthes (1977). Denotation is used to transmit information on the vehicles; its purpose is to declare the main attributes of the cars portrayed as well as their promotion (image 4, see table

5). On the other hand, connotation is used to convey a secondary meaning in the headline to captivate the attention of the public and attract them to the cars displayed in the advertising posters (image 2, see table 5).

Second, on the account of Joly (2015), all of the three German brands use the iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs and functions all at once in a complimentary manner, as they display a car in front of a background that completes the car showcased while using a certain mixture of colours, lighting, frame, and angle of view to give the car an identity. In addition to the use of linguistic discourses to explain the image, seduce the public, and give more information on the attributes and qualities that the car displayed offers, in addition to contact information to get in touch with the advertiser. All the signs are used complementarily, as each one completes the other and at the removal of one sign the advertising poster loses meaning and the power to successfully attract potential buyers.

Third, with the use of all the linguistic and non-linguistic signs properly the advertising posters can easily make every car enthusiast want to own the car portrayed, as the image puts the car in a seducing position with the use of the suitable colours and lighting to give some kind of attitude to the car. Moreover, the advertisement uses a background that completes the car. On the other hand, the text found in the advertising posters persuades the potential buyers to purchase the car portrayed, as it first uses a headline to completely seduce the buyer and give a real identity to the car on display and then the body copy picks up the pieces and gives reasons on why buying the car portrayed is a good idea. As argued by Davidson (1992), the image is used to catch the eye and the attention of the public and make them gaze at it, while the text finishes the job by captivating their minds and makes them actually believe that buying that car is a reasonable decision.

According to the results obtained from the analysis of the corpus, it can be perceived that the communication scheme proposed by Jakobson (1960) is used in every poster. The

addresser refers to the advertiser, who is the creator of the posters, while the addressee represents the audience as the advertisements are directed to them. The cars portrayed are considered to be the context and are promoted through the use of advertising posters, which are the contact of the communication process. The code found in the advertisements is the combination of visual and written elements, with the message that includes all the texts present in the posters as a part of the advertising campaign.

Through the analysis of the advertising posters selected, all the proposed hypotheses in the general introduction can be confirmed. First, the present study has proved that the advertising posters selected contain different iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs. All of these constructs have infused meaning into the image and consequently have played a major role in stimulating the purchase. The same strategies are used in the different posters, namely: the three-quarter angle view, the framing, and a choice of classic and graceful colours, as well as the use of short sentences, fixed and powerful expressions to convince and attract the customer (the example of image 4, see table 2 and 3).

Second, the present work has established the idea that the iconic and plastic signs are used and merged in a way to draw the public's attention to the product with the use of diverse eye-catching colours and staging sets. Every element is carefully chosen and used to give the product some kind of attitude and qualities such as superiority, power, safety, and elegance to trigger certain emotions in the core of potential buyers to charm them and consider the purchase of the car displayed. Furthermore, the linguistic discourse encourages and causes the purchase of the vehicles portrayed by luring them in with facts and ideals about the cars on display.

Third, the three German brands chosen use captivating and seductive messages and adopt attractive terms in the headline and the body copy to draw a wide audience to the product presented, with the use of the proper words to accompany the idea behind every car.

The texts present in the advertising posters play on transmitting feelings of security and comfort about the products and play with the subconscious of the audience by giving reasons and motives to amplify the superiority of the car so that the potential buyers would release the remaining doubts that they may have to purchase the car portrayed (Image 3, see table 3). The advertiser then adds contact information in the form of phone numbers and websites to lead the desiring clients towards the product.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, this chapter has further analyzed the advertising posters using the theory presented by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) and the theory proposed by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977) and has proved that the advertising posters all use iconic, plastic, and linguistic signs that work together to attract the buyers and seduce them to buy the cars found in those posters. Then, the results found throughout the analysis of the advertisements have been discussed. At the end, the current chapter has answered the research questions that have been asked and confirmed the hypotheses suggested in the general introduction.

# **General Conclusion**

The present work has attempted to analyze the different linguistic and non-linguistic signs found in the advertising posters of the German brands chosen: Audi, BMW, and Mercedes, using the theory proposed by Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015). In addition, the study has stressed the different linguistic functions of the discourse present in those posters applying the theory presented by Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977).

Three aims have been targeted through the present research. The first aim has been reached, as the semiotic and linguistic components of the advertising posters of the selected German cars have been investigated. The second aim has also been attained, it sought to determine the way the advertiser plays with the iconic, plastic, and linguistic sign to capture and seduce the customer. The third aim of the research has been achieved as well, as the present research has demonstrated the way the text and image successfully attract the customer.

To reach the aims stated above, a qualitative method has been adopted for data collection and its analysis in order to answer the advanced research questions and check the accuracy of the suggested hypotheses. The corpus of the study consists of six advertising posters, two for each brand.

The social semiotic analysis is very important in the analysis of images. In fact, it provided us with tools that enabled us to understand and explain the way the advertiser plays with the iconic and plastic signs to capture the attention of the public with the use of backgrounds and attractive colours and lighting. In addition to the linguistic signs present in the posters, in the form of the headline and the body copy used in a way to catch the mind of the public and persuade them into buying the cars on display to reach a positive result on the market. In order to carry out the analysis of the corpus, the present study has presented in the first

theoretical part, the key concepts necessary for the realization of the second part, namely the analysis of the corpus.

The qualitative methodology adopted in this dissertation has answered all the research questions advanced. Moreover, the hypotheses formulated have all been confirmed. First, the advertising posters selected consist of linguistic, iconic, and plastic visual signs that work together to promote the cars on display and stimulate the potential buyers to consider purchasing them. Second, the iconic and plastic signs do attract the attention of the public and captivates their sight, while the linguistic discourse encourages and causes the purchase of the vehicles portrayed. Third, the linguistic discourse guides the potential buyers to the product, as it offers attractive phrases to promote the cars on display and then offers contact information to get in contact with the advertiser to get directions on the way to purchase the product.

The study indicates that the highlighted visual and textual components are arranged in such a form to create a sense of superiority and great comfort that is perceivable to the viewers. Through the construction of an elegant, comforting, and superior atmosphere, it is palpable that the German brands tend to broadcast their brand toward viewers who pay attention to the product's quality and enjoyment in life through the use of such means. In a market featured by toughness and fierce competition, the German brands have detached themselves from other corporations by paying attention to crucial details meticulously and made themselves unique both in brand image and spirit. Thus, echoing their legacy as renowned poster specialists, with visual and textual components presenting a harmoniously mixed touch of modernity and national heritage, hence stood out in the automobile industry.

As any other study, the present work has faced numerous difficulties while conducting the research. Namely the global pandemic (Covid-19) that the world is going through which has

made it hard to gather books and obtain help from supervisors in the first months. When it comes to academics, the limitations faced were the lack of interest on the automobile industry in the field of advertising, as well as the fact that no previous work has adopted the theories of Joly (2015) and Barthes (1977) to analyse advertising images in the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.

The present work has hopefully contributed to the study of semiotics and would be of interest to researchers, producers of advertising posters, as well as consumers in general. The present study has focused on a sample of six images and limited its analysis on the advertising posters of car dealerships. Future researchers can conduct their research on the analysis of advertising images using the theories of Joly *Introduction to Image Analysis* (2015) and Barthes *Image Music Text* (1977) that this work has brought to our department. However, future studies may focus their analysis on other resources and larger samples of advertising images that have received less or no attention to them, such as: tourism advertising posters, airline companies' advertisements, and home appliance products. Another possible study would be a comparison between the theories of image analysis proposed by both Joly (2015) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006).

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# **Appendix**

Image 1: Audi Q3, Q5, and Q7



**#TogetherWithAudi**

Happiness is multiplied when you are together with the ones you love.  
And with Audi Technology, it is always uninterrupted.

<b>Audi Q7</b>	<b>Audi Q5**</b>	<b>Audi Q3**</b>
EMI	EMI	EMI
₹ 49,999	₹ 36,999	₹ 21,999
3 Years Zero Maintenance*	3 Years Zero Maintenance*	Ex-Showroom Price is equal to On-Road Price
1 <sup>st</sup> Year Insurance Complimentary	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Insurance Complimentary	Exchange bonus*
Exchange bonus* ₹ 2 lakh	Exchange bonus* ₹ 2 lakh	₹ 1 lakh

\*\*Buyback-57%. Buyback assurance after 36 months.



To get in touch with your nearest Audi dealership, place your smartphone camera here.

**Audi Dealers: Audi Delhi South: 09540292929, 011 46007300 Audi New Delhi West: 07607070808**

\*Terms & conditions apply. All offers from dealers. Trade In value of existing car considered in EMI calculations. Exchange Bonus available on select trade in cars only. \*Ex showroom = On Road available on Q3 Premium plus only. Offers on select model variants only and on limited stocks. EMI based on 84 month Bullet scheme. Buyback scheme and bullet scheme are mutually exclusive. \*Zero maintenance excludes Tyre, Battery and Bulbs. Attractive offers on other models also. \*\*Buyback scheme not available on Q7. Taxes & statutory levies shall be charged as applicable. Accessories and features shown may not be a part of the standard equipment or may not be offered in India. Picture shown is for representation purpose only. Finance at sole discretion of Volkswagen Finance Pvt. Ltd. which may use the services of sales/marketing agents for sourcing loans. For further details please visit our authorized dealership. Always wear seat belts. Obey traffic rules.

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Audi Vorsprung durch Technik **Audi Choice**

Image 2: Audi R8

**Born on the track.  
Built for the road.**

The all-new Audi R8.



**Audi Sport**

Image 3: BMW M3



The new BMW M3's performance heritage has been refined to make it the most iconic vehicle in its class. With 406 ft-lb of torque and 425 horsepower, it stands as a ruthless breed of its own. Using finely tuned adjustments and innovative technology, we've amplified the driving experience, creating a sharper, more intuitive way to drive a legendary sports car.

SPECIAL LEASE AND FINANCE OFFERS WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH BMW FINANCIAL SERVICES.

[seca@bmw.com](http://seca@bmw.com)

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Image 4: BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé



## SOME SIGHTS YOU NEVER FORGET.

Like the dramatic effect of a solar eclipse, one glimpse of the all-new BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé will create an everlasting impression. It is a vision of BMW at its purest, elegantly showing beauty and power as one. This captivating all-new BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé is the first 4-door Coupé in BMW's history, illustrating the breathtaking combination of sports car meeting luxury saloon. For a closer look at this powerful stellar attraction, contact your local BMW dealer for a test drive or visit [www.bmw.com](http://www.bmw.com)

THE ALL-NEW BMW 6 SERIES GRAN COUPÉ.

**BMW EfficientDynamics**  
Less emissions. More driving pleasure.

**Image 5: SLS AMG Coupé Black Series**



Men don't grow up.  
They just change their toys.

Redefining the limits. The new SLS AMG Coupé Black Series.

**AMG**  
DRIVING PERFORMANCE

 Mercedes-Benz

Fuel consumption urban/extra-urban/combined: 19.7/10.2/13.7 l/100 km; combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 321 g/km; Efficiency class: G.  
Figures do not relate to any individual vehicle, do not form part of any offer and are intended solely to aid comparison between different types of vehicle. The vehicle shown features optional equipment.

Image 6: ML 63 AMG

Buy your daughter a horse.  
Keep the other 556 for yourself.

The new ML 63 AMG with a V8 biturbo engine and permanent four-wheel drive.

[www.mercedes-amg.com](http://www.mercedes-amg.com)



Mercedes-Benz

Fuel consumption urban/extra-urban/combined: 15.7/9.6/11.8 l/100 km;  
CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined: 276 g/km.

Figures do not relate to any individual vehicle, do not form part of any offer and are intended solely to aid comparison between different types of vehicle.