

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five sub-chapters, background of the study, statements of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the study

Companies and organizations use advertisements to promote their products or services to potential customers. They use advertising to communicate and introduce their products to the consumers. As explained by Boovée and Arens (1992), advertising is a nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and persuasive in nature, about products (goods and services) or ideas by identified sponsors through various media. Therefore, advertising is controlled and made in accordance with the sponsors. The media where the advertisement will be distributed is also chosen by the sponsors.

Many media have been used for advertising from printed media to online media. Printed media advertising utilized traditional media such as newspapers and magazines. Meanwhile, online media advertising utilized the internet and social media to circulate the advertisements. Besides newspapers and magazines advertisement, there are also advertisements in the form of videos that can be seen on the television. However, as digital technology develops rapidly, television is not the only media that can be used to publish video advertisements. Social media,

such as YouTube, now has become one of many social media that are commonly used as a medium to publish videos. Since the internet or online media is easy to be accessed, many companies use the internet as a medium to promote their products or services.

In order to attract potential customers, advertisers need to be creative in making advertisements. They need to be able to convey or deliver the idea of the products or services in limited space or page, or duration for video advertisements. They also need to make the advertisements an appealing way, so that the customers will be interested in consuming the products. Moreover, they also need to compete with other companies or organizations that offer similar products or services. Many companies are attempting to attract their potential customers through advertisements, including mobile game companies.

Arknights mobile game is one of many companies that used online advertisements to promote their game. They have several advertisements circulating on several social media, such as Instagram and YouTube. Despite releasing several advertisements on different social media, the majority of their advertisements are in the form of videos and circulating on YouTube. However, the advertisements that have been released did not satisfy the Arknights gamer community. It receives negative feedback from the audience. Many of them said that the advertisements are rather boring and not appealing. Therefore, around 6 months after its initial global release, the game developer of Arknights requested some content creators on YouTube to make a video advertisement for Arknights.

One of the YouTube content creators chosen to make an Arknights video advertisement is a YouTube channel named CDawgVA.

Video advertisement for Arknights titled *I Spent \$800 on This Anime Game...* made by CDawgVA was published on July 4th, 2020. In this video advertisement, CDawgVA introduced all the features of the Arknights mobile game, which makes the duration of the video very long. Therefore, the game developer of Arknights cut and edited several snippets from the video advertisement to make some short video advertisements with the duration ranging from 21 seconds to 30 seconds. These short video advertisements were uploaded and started circulating on YouTube on August 14th, 2020. Compared to other Arknights video advertisements, the video advertisements that were made from CDawgVA's video have more narration and show many images of the female characters that may indicate sexual objectification. Therefore, these video advertisements are chosen to be the object of this study. Moreover, Arknights is a game that can be played by people aged 12 years old and older. The constant exposure of women's sexual objectification in the video advertisements can affect them and lead to self-objectification.

Depicting women as sexual object is quite common in advertisements. It gained a lot of discussion by many scholars (Frith, Shaw and Cheng 2005). Many advertisements emphasize women's physical appearance and sexual appeal to gain audiences. According to Frith and Mueller (2003), attractive female bodies and sexual appeal have been used in the U.S. to gain attention from the viewers and persuade them to consume the products. Even though in recent years women's

representation has changed from weak and dependent to strong and independent (Kates and Shaw-Garlock 1999), sexually objectified women can still be found in some advertisements.

Sexual objectification occurs when women or men are valued for their physical appearance. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) defined sexual objectification as a practice of valuing or viewing a person as an object and valuing them based on their physical appearance or sexual attractiveness. Sexual objectification could occur in both women and men. However, the APA (American Psychological Association) found that women are more often depicted in a sexualizing and objectified way than men (Szymanski, Moffitt and Carr 2010). For instance, women are more often portrayed in revealing clothing, which highlights the body parts of women. Women's representation in media also frequently received sexist comments, sexual remarks, and behaviors (Szymanski, Moffitt and Carr 2010). For example, women often get comments about their body parts and often experience verbal harassment, such as catcalling.

The practice of sexual objectification, where women are valued based on their physical appearance, can be found in video advertisements. It can be analyzed from the images, whether the women represented are wearing revealing clothes or they are depicted as dependent or passive, and also the utterances, whether they received sexual remarks or comments. Since video advertisements consist of verbal utterances and images to convey information, multimodality could be used to find sexual objectification in video advertisements. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) defined multimodal text as text in which the meaning is

realized through more than one semiotic code. This study will use the multimodality approach proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which is the grammar of visual design.

Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design consists of three metafunctions that are based on Halliday's SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics). The three metafunctions are ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunctions. Ideational metafunction is the relation between the participants or objects depicted in the images, and it can be narrative or conceptual. On the other hand, interpersonal metafunction is the relation between the images and the viewers. It can be realized through speech acts, gaze, distance, attitude, and color. The last, the textual metafunction is the relation of each part of the message in constructing a coherent message and can be formed through informative value, salience, and framing.

There are several related studies that analyzed women's issues and used the grammar of visual design as their approach. The first study is a study by Brady (2015) entitled *A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Female K-Pop Music Videos* that compared K-Pop girl groups' music videos. This study found that one of the two music videos was made to satisfy the male viewers and portray the girls as childish. The second study is titled *Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Media Adverts: A Multimodal Analysis* written by Tazanfal Tehseem, Maroor Sibtain, and Zara Obaid (2019). This study identifies the socio-cultural portrayal of women in advertisements and found that women are often shown as sexual objects. The last study is also written by Tazanfal Tehseem and Zara Obaid

(2017), entitled *Exploring Sexual Objectification of Women in Print-media Adverts: A Multimodal Analysis*, which analyzed the sexual objectification of women in advertisements.

The difference between the previous studies above and this study is that the previous study analyzed the sexual objectification found in printed media, while this study would like to analyze the sexual objectification of female characters in video advertisements of Arknights mobile game. The similarity between the previous study and this study is the approach used to analyze the visual elements, which is the grammar of visual design by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the background that has been explained, the research questions of this study are:

1. What multimodal elements are used in the video advertisements?
2. How do the multimodal elements used in the video advertisements construct the sexual objectification of the female characters?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the multimodal elements used in the video advertisements.
2. To explain how the multimodal elements found in the video advertisements construct the sexual objectification of the female characters.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The author's expectation of this study is to be beneficial for both theoretical and practical use. For theoretical significance, the finding of this study can be a reference for future studies in discourse analysis, especially for studies that attempt to analyze sexual objectification in advertisements using multimodal analysis. Meanwhile, for practical use, the finding of this study is expected to give contributions to companies and advertisers regarding sexual objectification in advertisements. Therefore, they can avoid using sexual objectification to promote their products and services in advertisements.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Sexual Objectification** : A practice of valuing or viewing a person as an object and valuing them based on their physical appearance or sexual attractiveness (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997).
2. **Advertisement** : Any kind of promotion that is paid by sponsors to promote products or ideas (Bovéé and Arens 1992).
3. **Multimodality** : An approach that connects all multiple modes found in a text to create meanings (Kress and Leeuwen 2006).