

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**VISUAL SYNTAX: A STUDY OF  
VISUAL NARRATIVE PROMOTING  
SOCIAL UNITY THROUGH  
PETRONAS THEMATIC  
TELEVISION COMMERCIALS**

**KHAIRULWAFI MAMAT**

Thesis submitted in fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**(Art And Design)**

**Faculty of Art and Design**

**October 2022**

## ABSTRACT

The study concerns social unity promoted in the thematic television commercials produced by Petronas. The main focus of this study is to examine how visual and verbal, gesture, graphic style, storytelling and narrative reception; in order to promote social unity, portrayed by Petronas thematic television commercials. The study fascinates by the peculiarities and commonalities in advertising appeals among multicultural societies. In outlining the study, a quantitative method used to collect evident based on the questionnaire given to the respondents. The questionnaire set was constructed based on the variable that set for this study. Measurement of the collected data evaluated using Likert scale. Findings gathered from the collected data supported five hypotheses, as analysis showed that there was a strong correlation between the visual and verbal approach, the gesture approach, the graphic style approach and the storytelling approach. The outcome of this study also found out that; the fifth hypotheses; narrative reception has a mediation effect on all of the procedures mention before. Besides, the strengthening of the storyline is an aspect that needs the most attention, as agreed with most respondents. Thus, the use of visual syntax to assist narrative performances is indirectly involving elements of style. Lastly, as a conclusion, this study concludes that in low-context culture, television commercials would be more likely to contain complete information to the audience.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr Ruslan Abdul Rahim, for the support, guidance, encouragement and advice he has provided me during my studies. Indeed, his enthusiasm and passion for visual communication are indispensable to my research. Huge gratitude also to my co-supervisor, Dr Norman Yusoff, for his insight gave me a different vision to set the course for my research, and his experience of film gave me a wider perspective on the world of development. Vital insight from both of them helps me a lot, helping me to finish my thesis.

Second, I'd like to thank my dad, Hj. Mamat @ Abdul Majid Taib, for never-ending love, support and not having me give up on my doctoral trip. Prayers and encouragement from him, bringing me a new and festive spirit every day of my journey. I would also like to thank my close friend, Fakir Mohamad, for his presence in my life is all, we have been through the best and saddest, ups and downs of life, and through him I know the definition of a good friend.

Last but not least to all those who have taken part in my PhD journey, who have given ears to listening to my complaints, or even to seeing the hardship I have been experiencing, from the very bottom of my heart, thank you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Motivation of Study	2
1.3 Importance of Study	3
1.4 Problem Statement	5
1.5 Research Question	12
1.6 Research Objective	12
1.7 Significance of Study	12
1.8 Scope and Limitation of study	13
1.9 Definition of Variables	14
1.9.1 Visual Narrative	14
1.9.2 Social Unity	14
1.9.3 Visual and verbal	14
1.9.4 Gesture	14
1.9.5 Graphic style	14
1.9.6 Storytelling	14
1.9.7 Narrative reception	15
1.10 Research Framework	16
1.11 Hypothesis of Study	16
1.12 Organization of The Thesis	17

<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Overview of Advertisement	18
2.3 TV Commercials	20
2.4 Media Culture	21
2.5 Malaysia Ethnic Group Attitudes Towards Advertisements	23
2.6 The Roles of Advertising	23
2.7 Social Groups in Advertising	25
2.8 Usage Levels of Older Adults in Advertising	26
2.9 Ethnic Group Representation	29
2.10 Advertising as a Cultural Institution	31
2.11 The Potrayal of Older adults in Advertising	33
2.11.1 Stereotypes	33
2.11.2 Ageism	34
2.11.3 Social Breakdown Syndrome	35
2.12 Advertising Related Theory	36
2.13 Television Advertisements and Its Effectiveness	40
2.14 The Digital Visual Effects (Visual syntax) in Create visual Narrative	42
2.15 The Expeditious of Narrative Progress	44
2.16 Visual and Verbal	47
2.17 Hand Gesture	49
2.18 Gestures in Human Communication	52
2.19 Graphic Storytelling	56
2.20 Visual Narrative: the relationship between words and pictures	59
2.21 Narrative Images in Prose Fiction	64
2.22 Interdependence Between Verbal and Visual Representation	66
2.23 Analysis of examples of visual/verbal advertising messages	68
2.23.1 Alfa Romeo Giulietta	68
2.23.2 Kia Sportage	72
2.23.3 Audi A1	74
2.24 Impact of Visual Design on Consumers' Perceptions towards Advertising	78
2.25 Advertisements' Visualization	79
2.25.1 Elements of Visual Designs found in Advertisements	81
2.25.2 Visual Design Impact on Perception	82