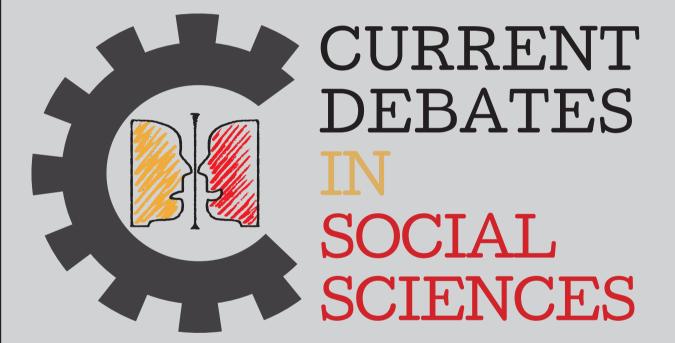


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ABSTRACTS & PROCEEDINGS



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PROCEEDINGS

Audio Aesthetic Elements Used in Television Advertisements¹

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Abstract

Aesthetic elements used by advertisers to arouse interest in consumers and draw their attention to advertisements create meanings about products in the minds of consumers through the associations they induce. These meanings, which create artificial differences between products that do not differ much, make the products unique and indispensable, and enable the creation of customer preferences. Knowing about compatible associative characteristics created by aesthetic elements increases the efficiency of advertisements by contributing to the use of compatible elements together and eliminating incompatible ones, although there is not a perfect and universal formula to make a television advertisement addressing both visual and audio senses, for which huge sums are allocated. Despite this significance, no study has been found that deals with all auditory elements, that can be used in television advertisements in an aesthetic context, together. The purpose of the study is to fill this gap in the literature by tackling all of the audio elements used in television advertisements together, with the effects they created in the aesthetic context and the associations they induce. Within the scope of the study, the existing literature on the audio elements used in television advertisements was reviewed, these elements were tackled in terms of aesthetics and presented to researchers and practitioners in a comprehensive way. The study will help to raise consumer awareness about the effects of audio aesthetics elements.

Keywords: Aesthetic of Advertisement, Advertisement, Audio Aesthetic

Introduction

A "philosophy of art" definition, which deals with values related to the concept of beauty, has been associated with the term "aesthetics" throughout the works conducted in various disciplines focused on aesthetics (Veryzer, 1993: 224-225). Because aesthetics, with its hedonic and semiotic dimensions, is commonly utilized as a differentiator in the field of communication, it is now used to refer to the formal improvement of creative and communicative activities rather than the philosophy of art. The hedonic dimensions of aesthetics capture and bind viewers' attention, fascinate them with appealing sensory elements, make their experiences attractive and enjoyable and provide them memorable experiences. The semiotic dimensions of aesthetics build meanings in people's minds with the associations produced by the sensory elements, and share the ideas and values of the sensory elements with them.

Advertising, which aims to persuade consumers to buy products and services but is not a sort of communication demanded by the buyers, makes use of aesthetics to improve the efficacy of the communication they will establish with the consumers. Stylistic differences created through sensorial elements between different advertisements, determines aestheticability of advertisement. Aesthetic arouse the interest of the consumers with striking and eye-catching sensory elements and draw them into the advertisement (Thyssen, 2012:57). Colorful and interesting messages, fascinating and luxurious places, beautiful and cheerful people and appealing objects create dream worlds and offer a reality that is different than the reality. Ads that make use of aesthetic elements provide enjoyment to the viewer, stimulate their imagination, provide different experiences, and enhance the advertisement's attractiveness. The person who

¹ This paper is derived from the doctoral thesis titled "Aesthetics in Advertisements: An Empirical Study on Automobile Advertisements in Television".

enjoys the brand's commercial can positively approach the brand and the message it conveys (Sutherland ve Slyvester, 2004:129-130).

The emotions and thoughts evoked by the sensory elements that compose the form of the advertisement create the meaning (the content). Advertisers employ variety of sensory elements, that compose the form, to convey a message in a coordinated, organized and purposeful manner. Sensorial stylizations that do not create meaning or emotion, but just appeal to the senses, cannot be supposed to be aesthetic. Aesthetics in advertisements should be addressed together with its hedonic and semiotic dimensions. Advertisers need to know all the aesthetic elements that they can use, together with their semiotic and hedonic effects, to benefit from aesthetics effectively. There is not a perfect and universal formula to make a television advertisement addressing both visual and audio senses, for which huge sums are allocated. Knowing the hedonic and semiotic dimensions of aesthetic elements can help advertisers to choose sensory elements that are compatible with each other and appropriate for their target audience, as well as eliminating incompatible elements. This is a critical contribution for advertisers that want to improve the efficiency of their advertising.

Despite all this significance, the issue has not received the attention it deserve in the literature. There are few studies regarding the aesthetic elements used in television advertisements (Percy ve Rositter, 1992; Rutherford, 2000; Asemah vd., 2013). The aesthetic elements examined in these studies are categorised according to various criteria, with brief descriptions provided for each. The contradictions between the elements in these studies catches the eye at first glance. Akgün and Papatya (2018) analyzed the elements in these studies and offered an up-to-date list, which included also visual and audio aesthetic elements in a comprehensive way. No study has been found in which the audio elements that can be used in television advertisements are discussed in the aesthetic context in details. The aim of the study is to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing audio elements used in television advertisements together with the hedonic and semiotic effects they have in the aesthetic context. In this direction, within the scope of the study, the existing literature on the audio elements used in television advertisements was reviewed and these elements were analyzed in terms of aesthetics and presented to researchers and practitioners in a comprehensive manner.

1. Aesthetics In Television Advertisements

Since the 1940s, television has been the mass media that provides advertisers with the most sensory communication (visual/audio) opportunities. At the turn of the century, television began to share this feature with other types of mass media, such as computers and mobile phones. General public's intense interest to it and its high accessibility rates made television one of the most extensively used advertising tools (Elden, 2009:225-226).

Television transforms reality into images and presents these images to public as signs (Baudrillard, 2008: 155-156). Every sign consists of these two elements; the signifier and the signified. Color usage, sound effects, music and other sensory details are signifiers, which are visual and audio elements of surface content. These sensory details evoke emotions and thoughts, which are named as signified. Barthes points out the existence of two different levels of meaning that can be created through signs (2009:84). The first level of meaning, denotation, is the level of objective meaning in which the sensory elements utilized as signifiers are defined. Connotation level, which is the secondary meaning level, is the level where the signifier extends to different associative meanings (Dyer, 2010:100). Fiske states that connotation is created with sensorial elements such as sound, light, camera angle etc., as a result of human interference to advertisements

(2003:116-117). Advertisers can manipulate the signifiers, which are sensory factors, to create the meaning they want. Audiences build meaning through perceiving a variety of signs, as well as denotative and connotative meanings, all at the same time. The structure of television, which enables numerous signs to operate at once, allows for other messages to be sent in the background while displaying a story with visual and adio elements in superficial content (Adorno, 2001:164-165). Moreover, it is a process that is difficult to resist, since it occurs spontaneously in the mind of the individiual, outside of the consumer's consciousness and awareness.

Sensorial stilizations that determines the aesthetics of television advertisements, activate meanings and emotions by making use of the semiotic dimensions of aesthetics. These formations adds meanings to the brand that it does not actually have, and allows for the formation of an emotional bond between consumers and the brand. Television ads provide an idealized world to the audience with creative sets, impressive graphics and attractive models, to arouse desire at them by making use of the hedonic dimensions of aesthetics.

Visual and audio aesthetic elements can be used in television advertisements that appeal to the visual and audio senses. The study focuses on audio aesthetic elements from these elements.

2. Audio Aesthetic Elements In Television Advertisements

Sounds in a video program consists of music, voiceovers and dialogues, and sound effects. These audio elements, which are also used in television advertisements, are discussed together with the semiotic and hedonic effects they create in the aesthetic context within the scope of the study.

2.1. Music

Music, whose effects on people have been constantly discussed throughout the ages, has been used in advertisements since the end of the 19th century. Music began to appear in commercials during this time period, along with the usage of clowns and showmen in product promotions, where sales were held in a carnival atmosphere and intertwined with entertainment. Music has become widely used in ads as a result of the emergence of radio and television (Batı, 2010: 780-790).

Music takes on more important roles than just being a song that conveys an advertising message or a background melody (Uğur, 2011: 3). Music enhances the appeal of advertising by utilizing the hedonic dimensions of aesthetics and causing the audience to enjoy themselves by accompanying the music. Even when the music stops playing, the individual who whispers the advertisement's phrases can keep the messages sent by the music in his head longer and more easily absorb the advertisement's message (Uğur, 2011: 3). Music awakens diverse emotions in people, tells the audience what they should feel in front of the image, and strengthens the message by allowing the commercial to emotionally connect with the consumer (Batı, 2010: 781; Kutlay, 2007: 68). Music that is compatible with the visual elements and brand image provided in advertising and conveys the same message is an aesthetic element that enhances the advertisement's attractiveness (Uğur, 2011: 4). When choosing advertising music, it's crucial that music appeals to the target audience's tastes as well as fit the company's image and advertising's message (Huron, 1989: 566). Dengel and Halbfeld (2002) identified the various styles of music that different age groups prefer in their research conducted in Germany. People aged 6 to 15 love rap, teen pop, hip hop, and charts, while those aged 16 to 25 choose hard rock, heavy metal, techno, and charts, and those aged 26 to 40 prefer rock&pop, new age, and rhythm&blues. People between the ages of 41 and 60 favor light pop, country and western, jazz, classical, and big band music, while those above 60 prefer swing and classical music (As cited in Akgün, 2007: 82). Weber and Breyer (2002) found that, in addition to age, the target audience's social status, personality traits, gender, and educational level all have a role in music preferences. They determined that people with higher education levels liked classical music, that men favored Heavy Metal and Hard Rock music more than women, that the elderly chose folk music, and that young people

preferred techno music. Weber and Breyer noticed that MercedesBenz, which targets an older audience, uses classical music in its commercials, but WV Polo, which targets a younger audience, uses rock music (As cited in Akgün, 2007: 79-82).

According to Bruner, music is not a sonic mass formed by a random combination of sounds. Music consists of controllable elements that can be put together purposefully and harmoniously. These elements, such as rhythm, loudness, harmony, mode, pitch, and tempo constitute musical structure and also each of them arouse diverse emotions in listeners (Bruner, 1990: 94-102), by utilizing semiotic dimensions of aesthetic. Advertisers can create emotions and meanings related to the message intended to be conveyed in the advertisement on the audience, with the manipulations of these elements (Batı, 2010: 797). The emotions and meanings evoked in the audience through music in the advertisement are transferred to the product or brand through classical conditioning (Gorn, 1982: 94-101). The musical elements are shown in Table.1 with the emotions and meanings they created.

Table.1. Emotions and	l Meanings Created by Different Mus	ical Elements
	Major	Minor

Mode	Major	Minor
Series of notes, arranged in a scale of	Gaiety, Happiness, Playfullness,	Sadness, Sentimental, Tender,
ascending pitch, which provides the tonal	Sprightliness	Yearning
substance of a song		
Tempo	Fast	Slow
The speed or rate at which a rh}thm	Happy, Exciting, Humorous	Dignified, Sad, Sentimental,
progresses		Serene
Harmony	Simple	Dissonant
Combination of simultaneous notes so as	Happy, Graceful, Serene,	Exciting, Freightening
to form chords	Sentimental	
Rhythm	Uneven	Smooth
The pattern of accents given to beats or	Happy, Playful	Sacred, Serious
notes in a song		
Pitch	Hight	Low
Magnitude of the sensation judged by the	Sprightly, Humorous	Sad, Vigorous, Dignified, Serious
individual (Soysal vd., 2005: 108)		

(Adapted from Bruner, 1990: 100; Wagner, 2008: 17).

The same melodies, which are built of these musical elements, can arouse different emotions in the listeners when they are performed with different musical instruments (Kutlay, 2007: 83). While brass instruments evoke triumphant and/or grotesque, woodwind instruments evoke awkward and/or mournful feelings. Melodies on a piano are perceived as brilliant and/or tranquil, and string sounds are perceived as glad. Timbre of brass instruments conveys a feeling of cold, hard force whereas reed instruments produce a lonely, melancholy expression (Bruner, 1990: 95, 97). In perfume advertisements, piano, classical guitar, and flute can be used to emphasize the romantism of the perfume. The drum adds excitement to the advertisement (Kutlay, 2007: 83-84).

Different musical genres can also be regarded as a sign (Rodman, 1997: 29). Different musical genres (rock, hip-hop, rap etc.) that hold social structure traits, such as words or images, represent various ideas and lifestyles in society (Uğur, 2011: 4). Different musical genres elicit meanings based on the cultural codes with which they are associated in society. In their research conducted in Germany, Dengel and Halbfeld (2002) described the perceptions that different musical genres generate, as well as the product categories that are suited for use of these musics (As cited in Akgün, 2007: 75-81). The findings of the their research is shown in Table. 2. Music Genres are shown as signifiers and perceptions they genrated are shown as signified in the table.

Music Genres (Signifier)	Product Image (Signified)	Product Category	
Classical Music	Quality	Watches, Cars, Other Luxury Products	
(Baroque; Bach, Hendel)	Quality	watches, Cars, Other Luxury Floducts	
Classical Music	Crustil Elsont Mature	Wine, Champagne, Foodstuffs	
(Classic, Mozart, Beethoven)	Graceful, Elegant, Mature		
Classical Music	I and Affa atian	Perfume, Decoration	
(Romantic; Chopin, Tschaikovsky)	Love, Affection		
Pop Music (Dance)	Lively, Friendly	Food, Beverage	
Rap Music	Protest, Disparity	Leisure and Sports Materials	
Rock Music	Sense of Self, Protest	Beer, Jeans	
New Age	Natural, Original	Foodstufs	
Jazz Music	Graceful, Elegant	Cosmetic, Perfume	
Folk Music	Native	Level Speciale Ear data ffr	
(Local and Instrumental Folk Music)	inative	Local Specials, Foodstuffs	
Folk Music (Children's Songs)	Pure, Friend	Toys, Deserts	
Folk Music (Marching Music)	Power, Discipline	Cleaning Agents	

Table. 2. The Perceptions of Musical Genres, Product Image and Product Categories (Akgün, 2007: 81)

2.2. Voice-Over and Dialogues

While voice-over represents the voices of a presenter who is not seen in the advertisement or who is speaking off-screen (Belch ve Belch, 2003: 286), dialogs incorporate the conversation of two or more people in the advertisement. The voice-over and music were mostly investigated in advertising research, and the dialogues in the advertisement were not analyzed enough according to the literature review. In the literature review, it was seen that the voice-over and music were mostly investigated despite the dialogues were not analyzed enough in the advertising research. Within the scope of the study, although the dialogues are included in the aesthetic audio elements of the advertising, they will only be defined theoretically. The study will mainly focus on the use of voice-over.

The voice-over can convey information about the product and explain the visuals and movements on the screen, as well as add a verbal comment to the situation that the viewer sees in the advertisement by appearing only at the end of the advertisement and lead the promotion of the product (Pelclová, 2010:41-42). Advertisers are not compelled to use voice-over in their advertising. While using voice-over that complements the visual content of the advertisement improves its communication effectiveness, using voice-over that is incompatible with the images and does not complement the story has the opposite effect, making it difficult to understand the message the advertisement is trying to convey (Millward Brown, 2012: 2).

The voice-over opens into the emotions and meanings, with the cues it offers to the listener as a signifier. These cues, which are most often not noticed by the viewer on a cognitive level, are absorbed on a subconscious level and create meanings in the mind by the associations they induce (Pennock-Speck and Del Saz Rubio, 2009: 124). The prosodic (loudness, tempo and pitch) and phonatory (breathiness, whisper, creakiness, or harshness) settings of voice in advertisements create meaning by inducing diverse associations (Herrero, 2009: 20). People form associations as a result of establishing relationships between the sounds they hear frequently in their daily lives and the contexts in which they hear them. While the sound of breathing that occurs during bodily intimacy and sexual arousal evokes sexual meanings, the whispering sound evokes confidentiality, creaky voice evokes boredom, harsh voice evokes anger (Gobl ve Chasaide, 2000: 178; Herrero, 2009: 66-67). Advertisers use voices that will harmonize with the

broadcasted images and the image of the product they are promoting as voice-over, and they consciously manipulate the voiceover to boost the message's efficacy and add emotion and meaning (Pennock-Speck ve Del Saz Rubio, 2009: 124; Pennock-Speck, 2006: 975). Pennock-Speck emphasizes that breath sound is associated with overt sexual connotations, or at least intimacy. He claims that breath sound is widely used in beauty products, sex-related products, or personal hygiene products where bodily or intimacy connotations abound, for this reason (2006: 978).

Loudness, tempo and pitch are prosodoic factors. Signal loudness is defined as intensity. Pitch variation which reflects the voice's melodic contour is defined as "intonation" (Chebat vd. 1996: 245). And tempo, is defined as the pace of delivery of speech, measured generally in syllables per minute or in words per minute. Intensity, intonation and tempo convey information to viewers. Rising pitch leads to an increase in expressions of feeling and attitudes by energizing those who hear it (Herrero, 2009: 22, 71-72). Individuals who speak loudly are thought to be better at articulating their arguments and have a higher level of verbal efficiency. Powerful speakers are seen as more credible and trustworthy than powerless ones, according to several authors. A marked intonation accompanied with a high vocal pitch contributes to an impression of competence. high intonation reflect self-confidence, competence, and trustworthiness (Chebat vd. 1996: 245). Falling pitch relaxes and soothes listeners, makes them to turn inside and focus on their thoughts and feelings. The expression of feelings and attitudes is confined by falling pitch (Herrero, 2009: 72). People characterized as having weak voices are perceived as less informative and concealing information. Marked intonation, strong melodic motions, and falling intonation at the end of the sentences are cues for floating and uncertain content (Chebat vd., 1996: 246).

The gender of the voice-over also contributes to the formation of emotion and meaning by creating certain associations. According to the different studies, almost all of the voices in television advertising that recommend consumers what to buy are male voices. The voice-over utilized in typical women's items is the lone exception to this general pattern (Pennock-Speck ve Del Saz Rubio, 2009: 114). Pennock-Speck believes that the deepness of the male voice is the reason why male voices are used more in TV advertising than female voices. He also believes that deep voices are more persuasive (2006: 979). A deep voice, according to Collins, gives the impression of people with higher volume. Collins states that a deep voice evokes of people with larger volume. She points to deepening of the voice as he transition from childhood to adolescent. People are more convinced by the deepening sound because it represents the end of childhood and the beginning of maturity (2000: 173). In this sense, the male voice is more convincing than the female voice, although the feminine voice is associated with happiness and optimism evoked by childishness. There's a prejudice regarding women that their voices are cheery. Voice-over associations are also influenced by societal images of men as more assertive and resilient than women, as well as images of women smiling more than men (Pennock-Speck ve Del Saz Rubio, 2009: 115-123).

2.3. Sound Effects:

The sound effects added to the advertisements during the editing process enhance the narrative of the advertisement scenario as well as the realism and credibility of the advertisement. Artificially reproduced sounds, other than music or speech, are used to create an impact in an impressive presentation. They are produced in order to imitate the sound of an event or to create a sound that will stimulate the ambiance. Each sound effect, as a signifier, evokes different meanings and emotions. Viers highlights five different kinds of sound effects;

- a) Hard Effects: This effect has an absolute sound that is associated with the picture on the screen; thus, performance is not necessarily an issue. They are the most typical type of sound effects. Car horns, gunfire, and punches are examples of effects found in this category.
- b) Foley Sound Effects: Performance is the key to creating convincing effects in Foley effects, named after the sound Pioneer Jack Foley. Foley, can also be defined as the process of performing sounds compatible with the Picture on the screen. There are far more complex sounds of Foley artist can create, even though the most common Foley sound effects are footsteps. Foley artists enhances brawl scenes by using clothing movements and impacts and they can use cutlery movements to give reality to dinner sequences.
- c) Background Effects: These effects, which are not directly associated to any event on the screen and fill the empty void on the screen, giving a sense of the surrounding environment and location, are also known as ambient or atmospheric sound. Room tone, traffic, and wind are examples of these types of sounds.
- d) Electronic Sound Effects: Electronic sound effects, which were popular as sources for science fiction effects in the 1960s and 1970s, are now mostly used as source material for sound design effects or as production elements. Electric static, zips, and whooshes heard during radio station IDs, as well as sound beds, wipes and title elements used in television shows and ads, are examples of production elements. This effect, which was originally created with synthesizers and keyboards, can also be created with organic sound effects processed by digital audio workstations today.
- e) Sound Design Effects: These are the effects that are impossible to record naturally. Sound design effects, which are produced by sound designers through digital audio workstations, can range from a simple pin drop with a faint metallic ring to a fight between armies of mythological creatures (Viers, 2008: 1-6).

Sound effects improve the viewing and listening experience, make commercials more appealing, and allow advertisements to construct their own realities that contain imaginary worlds.

Conclusion

The study discusses the audio aesthetic elements used in television advertisements. Despite the fact that there are various studies in the literature on the audio elements utilized in television advertisements, no study has been found that addresses these elements in an aesthetic perspective with details. The study contributes to the literature by compiling and synthesizing audio elements used in television advertisements, which exist in the literature, in an aesthetic context together with the hedonic and semiotic effects they create.

There is not a perfect and universal formula to make a television advertisement addressing both visual and audio senses, for which huge sums are allocated. Knowing the hedonic and semiotic dimensions of aesthetic elements can help advertisers to choose sensory elements that are compatible with each other and appropriate for their target audience, as well as eliminating incompatible elements. This is a critical contribution for advertisers that want to improve the efficiency of their advertising. The study provides information for all advertisements that employ audio elements, although the audio aesthetic elements were discussed in the context of television advertisements in the study. Researchers and practitioners in these domains will benefit greatly from the knowledge offered in the study. The study will help to raise consumer awareness about the effects of audio aesthetics elements.

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The International Congress on Current Debates in Social Sciences has started to be organised by Farhang Morady at University of Westminster (United Kingdom) with the collaboration of Kocaeli University (Turkey) and Silesian University in Opava (Czech Republic) in 2010. First International Congress of Current Debates in Social Sciences (CUDES) held in London, United Kingdom as a joint event. After the conference, Globalisation, Religion & Development book published by IJOP-EC. Second CUDES held in Karvina Czech Republic in 2011, third one held in Kocaeli at Kocaeli University, under the theme of Research Methods in Social Sciences as a work-shop format. Fourth and fifth CUDES organised in Kocaeli at Kocaeli University for discussing current debates in social sciences. University of Belgrade (Serbia) joined the congress organisation, in the sixth congress and Harran University (Turkey), VUZF University (Bulgaria) and University of Belgrade (Serbia). Near East University joined the congress organisation in 9th and Kırklareli University in the 2020 CUDES Congress.

CUDES 2021 is organized by Kırklareli University (Turkey), Altınbaş University (Turkey), University of Belgrade (Serbia), Batman University (Turkey), VUZF University (Bulgaria) and Sakarya University (Turkey) and supported by IJOPEC Publication and University of Westminster (United Kingdom) and will be held on 1-3 September 2021 at Kırklareli, Turkey.

The main aim of the International Congress on Current Debates in Social Sciences (CUDES) creates a platform for social scientists to discuss current debates in social sciences and to encourage interdisciplinary studies between social scientists. CUDES mainly focuses on providing alternative debates platforms for young researchers.





12. INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CURRENT DEBATES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

CUDES 2021 ABSTRACTS & PROCEEDINGS