

## Social Semiotics "Masako Package": Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

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### Abstract

This research investigates the references which are realized by signs within the Masako package. The scope of this research is language in function, which is presented in both verbal and non-verbal languages. The theory used for this research is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which is supported with the theory of semiotic for non-verbal language. The research implies qualitative research, and phenomenology. The data were taken from Masako package. The verbal language such as clauses are analyzed with theory of SFL proposed by Halliday, while nonverbal language such as; colours, pictures, photos are analysed with semiotic proposed by Peirce. The research results indicate that the Massako package hires nonverbal and verbal languages. The yellow colour indicates that Masako is very suitable for cooked food. The red indicates that the spice contains chilly, which is not good for baby food. The green indicates that the spice is very good with fresh meat and vegetables. The ideologies of Masako are; (i) the company of Masako wants to share the market with some segmentation by providing several taste and different weight in the packages, (ii) the company want to dominate the market by showing "Halal" so most of Indonesian communities are not in doubt about the material. This research is significant for semiotics, discourse analysis, and language teaching. This research is expected to be very useful for communities and to stimulate other researchers to do similar research.

**Keywords:** Sign, Masako, object, interpretant, representamen

## INTRODUCTION

Language is not only viewed as verbal language, but it is also viewed as nonverbal language. Both kinds of language work together to convey certain purpose. Language can not be seen only as a communication tool but has larger functions that can influence one's emotion. Therefore, language is consider having power beyond the language itself. Language has big impact for the user because language embeds with context (Bourdieu, 2020). Non-verbal language realised with signs has certain function to attract one's interest for entities. Many sales and marketing staff offer their product and service through non-verbal and verbal language to market in the community. Signs are used to increase the value of products or service so the messages embedded in the product or service can attract communities' minds. Signs have certain references based on the context such as; when, where, to whom, how signs are employed (Pulungan. et al, 2022).

Masako is one of spice products which is marketed in Indonesia. The company uses both nonverbal and verbal languages in the package of the product. Both of those languages are used to describe the spice product, involving the function, the material, and the way to use the product. Unfortunately, not all communities understand the references of the non-verbal language employed in the package. It is caused by lack of non-verbal comprehension. Therefore, understanding text needs very deep comprehension about culture because language will have certain message based on culture. The text is interpreted beyond physical performance (Danesi, 2004; Ibrahim and Sulaiman; 2020).

Several related researches focusing to related problems of this research are used as comparison for this research. The first research was done by Suardana (2023). The research focused on social semiotic of Covid-19 health protocol from SFL. The findings of the research indicated that social behavior realised with health protocols were interpreted in a connotative point of view. The health protocols were interpreted from linguistics point of view. However, the research has different

concern, namely the research did not involve signs such as colour and verbal language. The research only focused on physical behaviours, so the analysis differs from this.

The second research was done Prasojowati, Natsir, and Ariani (2019) which analysed the pictures in the cigarette from semiotic point of view. The research indicated that the pictures presented in the cigarette package could not change the smokers' mindset, the smokers kept smoking. The research had similarity to this research especially in visual semiotics. That research did not explain the theory used for that analysis, while this research hires the theory of semiotic proposed by Pierce known triadic theory of sign. The similar research was done by Anwar, Hapsan, and Sinaga (2018). The research analysed the logo used by Indonesian National Library.

Wulandari and Siregar (2020) did research which focused on only the object, namely icon, index, and symbol. The scope was smaller than this research. However, it had the same theory with this research. The research used a short story entitled "Anak Mercusuar Karya Mashdar Zaina". The result of the research suggested that there were six indexes, four icons, and three symbols. The research was very limited because it did not analyse the representamen and the interpretant. To analyse sign with theory of Peirce, it should involve the three aspects in once so the result of the analysis will be much comprehensive.

Besides those researches using semiotic theory, journal related to SFL was used as comparison. This journal was used to assist the analysis of verbal language. Arianto. et.al (2016) analysed the inappropriate cohesive devices in students' academic text. The research strengthened the concept of cohesion in clauses. The research described how to find out inappropriate cohesion within the text. The result of the researched presented in percentage, the research did not show the references beyond the inappropriateness of cohesion. The similar research was found in the research done by Saputra. et.al (2022). The research analysed the use

of Transitivity in the text of Sri Mulyani's Speech at Singapore. The result of the research only presented in percentage of the process usage within the text. The research did not explore the meaning beyond the percentage of the process.

The explanation above indicates that this research has similarities and differences from those researches mentioned above. This research focuses on the exploring beyond the language use. This research analyses the verbal or non-verbal languages presented in the package of Masako based on the function. The analysis of this research hires SFL proposed by Halliday (2014) and Halliday and Hasan (1999) as the main theory and supported by the theory of sign proposed by Peirce in Short (2007).

This research is expected to be useful for communities since it references nonverbal language. Therefore, communities understand the function of Masako. In addition, this research is expected to be able to invite other linguistic researchers to do semiotic researches. This research is very useful for discourse analysis, semiotics, and sociolinguistics.

SFL is the science of language which focuses on language function. The language used in social activity as long as it is comprehended very well by the users of language is called text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Text can be in non-verbal, verbal languages or the combination of the two kinds of language form. A text is nothing to do with the length of clauses used within the text. The concept text is the language used in the community and the language users can understand. Therefore, a text can be interpreted as social phenomenon happening in social community because a text has certain function in community. A text can be realised in a word, group, clause, code, and others (Eggins, 2014).

Clause is very important in a text because clause brings particular meaning in a text. Halliday (2014) states that a clause can be seen from three aspects called metafunction: clause as ideational, clause as interpersonal, clause as message. Clause as ideational is a clause used to state one's experience happening in the

world. Clauses as ideational involve three aspects: participant, process, and circumstance. Clause as interpersonal is clause used for social interaction. The language involves modalities and clause forms. Clause as message is related to how clause is formulated in a text. It involves Theme-Rhema (Topical, interpersonal, and textual).

Again, the meaning of language is defined by the context happening in that language use. Language cannot stand by itself to create certain meaning. The meaning of language rises from the combination between language and the context. Different context creates different reference even though the same language is used in social interaction. Context known as social context is associated with context of Situation and context of culture (II & Zulfitri, 2020). Halliday and Hasan (1999) stated that context in SFL is constructed by *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*.

*Field* is associated with language which one's experience so it is called language as experience (Halliday, 2014). *Field* is related to what happens, how the activity is done, who does the activity, to whom the activity is performed, why the activity is performed. Therefore, *field* focuses on the social events happening in the world which is realised with language. *Tenor* is related to the language used for social interaction involving participants. The language used for social interaction contains the modalities and the language forms. The two aspects represent relationship among the participants involving social status embedding among the participants (Martin, 1992). *Mode* is associated with how language is used as social interaction tool. It is related to some aspects such as; Theme-Rheme of language, kinds of language, language stylistics, text genre, media, and purpose of text.

Context of culture is either of social context of SFL, it is associated with how culture frames language so the language can create certain references. Context of culture is associated with the communities' perception regarding to text. Every social phenomenon is interpreted based on culture frame. It is also associated with the stages or steps to achieve social goals because doing social activity needs some

steps based on the culture (Eggins, 2014). Context of culture is also associated with moral value of text because a text has own way to convey certain messages called moral value of text. Moral value is not obtained from the clauses used in a text; rather, the messages are obtained beyond the language (Danesi, 2004). The moral value is associated with the abstraction of text based on cultural perspective.

The ideology of text is more abstract than context of culture. The ideology of text is the purpose of text related to background, why a text is created. There are many ways to express the idea's purpose through text called genre (Martin, 1992). The text creators select certain genres to convey the idea such as; narrative, descriptive, history, exposition, procedural, and others. The ideology of text is related to communities' perspective to achieve the social goal. Therefore, it is concerned with what the communities must and must not do to achieve the social goal.

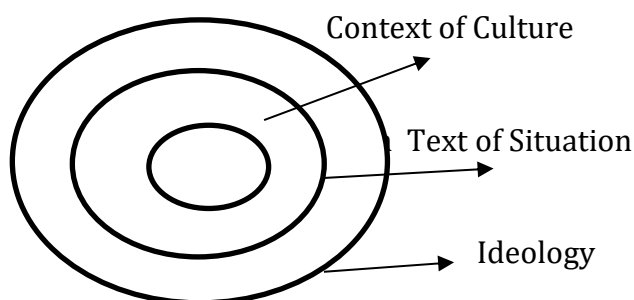


Figure 1  
Social Context

Nonverbal language such as: code, picture, colour, or symbol are also to convey social messages. Nonverbal language functions to support message transmission so the messages delivered to the communities through media can be understood easily. Theory of sign proposed by Pierce analyses nonverbal language

called triadic (Short, 2007). The sign theory describes three aspects: representamen, object, and interpretant.

Representamen is an entity directed by the object or the realisation of object. Representamen can be categorized into three, they are:

- *Qualisign* is a quality of sign, it cannot actually act as sign until it is embodied, but the embodiment has nothing to do with its characteristic as sign.
- *Sinsign* is an actual existence thing or event as a sign which is known because of the qualities. It involves qualisign or several qualisigns. However, the qualisigns are of peculiar kind and form a sign through being actually embodied.
- *Legisign* is a sign used to represent the object is known by many people and the correlation is already legalized with the role and the regulation.

Object is entity, code, sound, word or others which is used to represent the reference. Object can be divided into three subsections, namely;

- Icon is used to state the relation between the object and the representamen. The object has similarity to the representamen. The similarity can be seen in the character, colour, function, form, and many others. Photo is one of icon which refers to the right person.
- Index is associated with the corelation between the representamen and the object. It is related to cause and effect.
- Symbol is used to represent an entity in which the entity does not relate to the object. However, the reference has been conventional so the users understand about the reference based on the context.

Interpretant is the reference of the representamen and object. Interpretant can be unlimited interpretation. Interpretant can be seen from any point of view defined from background of knowledge, purpose, ideology, economy, politics, social

and culture, and others. Peirce defines that interpretant can be classified into three subsections, namely;

- Rheme is associated with reference of the object and the representamen which the reference is not well-known. It can be caused by unconventional reference. The reference may be seen as a connotative, subjective, or arbitrary point of view.
- Deci sign is associated with the reference which is understood by communities. The concept of Deci sign is that many community members understand the reference, but the reference does not have absolute correlation.
- Argument is the reference has logical reason between the representamen and the object. All community members understand the reference of the sign hired in community.

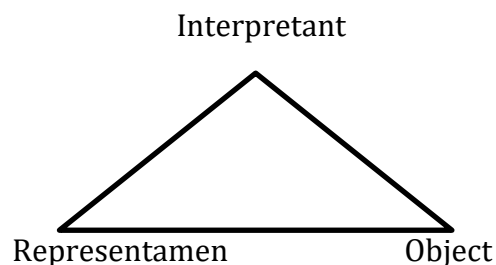


Figure 2.

Peirce's Sign

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research hired qualitative research and phenomenological research (Yusuf, 2015). The researcher saw that the phenomenon was the real thing happening in the community, and it had to be solved descriptively. The researcher observed directly to find out the signs which were used as the data of the research. The data were taken from Masako Package for both verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal language was taken from written text embedded in the package. Whereas nonverbal language was taken colour, pictures, and other signs used to



convey the message from the package of Masako. Therefore, this research used library research because the data was available in Masako's package.



Figure 3.

### Taste of Masako

The data were collected based on verbs and nominal groups for verbal language. They were viewed as significant data which could be analysed to determine the function of text. Colour, pictures, symbol, and other signs were viewed as nonverbal language. Those data were analyzed based on the theory selected for the research. The verbal language was analysed with context of Situation from SFL proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1999) and Halliday (2014). Nonverbal language was analysed using the theory of sign proposed by Peirce in Short (2007). Those theories were language functional theories hence the theories were combined to find out the reference of the signs.

The verbal language was analysed with the theory of metafunctions, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 2014). Each clause was analysed in the same time. The metafunctions analysis brought the analysis of context of Situation. Context of Situation was used to define the context of culture for the research. To find out the ideology of the text, the researcher used the data from the social context. Whereas, the nonverbal language analysis used Peirce's theory of sign called triadic propose, namely; Representamen, Object, and Interpretant.

The discussion of the research was presented in a descriptive manner. The verbs and the nominal groups were analysed based on kinds of process. The

modalities were analysed based on functions. The Theme-rheme was analysed based on clause of message (Halliday, 2014). The non-verbal language were described into the taxonomy (Peirce in Short, 2007), namely representamen (qualisign, sinsign, and legisin), object (icon, index, and symbol), and interpretant (Rheme, deci sign, and argument).

The research findings were presented descriptively in the subdiscussion section of this research. This research presented some findings related to the ideology of the text. The ideology is very important to educate the communities regarding to Masako.

## **DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS**

### **DISCUSSION**

Masako's package uses two kinds of language: nonverbal and verbal. The two languages work together to convey certain messages. This section analyses those languages.

#### *a. Nonverbal language*

The text uses some kinds of colour as nonverbal language such as: yellow, red, green, and white. In addition, symbol of Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) realised with "Halal" and some drawings are used in the package. The two nonverbal languages convey certain references.

The yellow colour nominates the package. The yellow is used as object, the representamen is maturity which is interpreted in larger sense. Fruits such as pineapple, banana, mango, papaya, and others will mature when they are yellow. The mature fruit has delicious taste. The interpretant is that the yellow is associated with the maturity of fruit and its delicious taste. The maturity is analogized as food which has been cooked very well. Therefore, the yellow is viewed as well cooked food. The spice is very good for well cooked food. The well-cooked food with Masako spice will be much more delicious because it increases the taste. In other words,

spice is not recommended for uncooked food. Therefore, the yellow in object is called index because everybody knows that yellow is associated with the maturity of fruit. The representamen of yellow is sinsgn since everyone can see the sign. The yellow in the interpretant is categorized as deci sign. It is easy to find the correlation between the yellow and the reference (Short, 2007).

The red colour in the written of “Masako” is a sign. The object is red colour, the representamen is red used in the written of “Masako”. The red is associated with spicy so the flavouring contains chilli. The interpretant of the red is that this flavouring is hot. We do not have to add much chilli if we use the flavouring. The red in object is categorized as the index. When person consumes spicy food, the face will be red. The red in representamen is categorized as sinsign since the colour can be seen easily and associated easily with chilli. The red in interpretant is deci sign. The reference is categorized as connotative meaning which is easy to comprehend the relation between the object, representamen, and the interpretant (Sobur, 2023).

The colour of green in the written of *Daging Pilihan* ‘selected meat’ is a sign. The green is the object, and the representamen of the green is associated with fresh and young leaves. In the interpretant, the green is associated with fresh meat. Therefore, the reference of the green is viewed that the flavouring is suitable for fresh meat and young vegetable. The green in the representamen is categorized as qualisign because the green shows the quality of meat or vegetable. The green in the object is categorized as icon because the green is similar with the young leaves. The green in the interpretant is categorized as deci sign. The green has connotative meaning, even though the green can be associated with multi dimensions, many people correlate easily between the colour and the object (Danesi, 2007).

The colour of white used as the background of “Masako” is also sign. The white is the object. The representamen of the white indicates purity or chastity. The interpretant is that the material of Masako is taken from legal seasonings which the related institutions authorize. Therefore, we do not worry about the spice,

everybody can consume Masako because it is hygienical and legal food spice. The white colour in the object is categorized as symbol since the colour is associated with purity or legality. The white colour in the representamen is categorized as insign because everyone can easily correlate the object and the reference. The interpretant's white color is categorized as a desi sign (Suardana, 2024).

The picture of white cock is used as the object of sign. The representamen is that the flavouring contains fresh chicken broth. The interpretant of the picture indicates that the flavouring contains fresh chicken broth hence the taste of Masako is very delicious. It is very suitable for any well-cooked food such as; vegetable, meat, condiment, and others. The chicken in the object is categorized as icon because the sign used in the package represents the relation between the sign and the content of Masako. In other words, the picture of chicken represents the Masako. The picture in the representamen is qualisign because everybody knows that the relation between the object and the representamen. The picture in the interpretant is argument because we can take the argumentation about the reason why the taste of well-cooked food is delicious if the food is filled with Masako.

The MUI (*Indonesian Ulema Council*) sign is also used in the package. The sign is used the object. The sign is in the representamen,, which indicates that the flavouring has been authorized by The interpretant indicates that the food is safe all Indonesian communities especially Muslim. The flavoring material is hygienical and legal, so the spice is recommended for all Indonesian communities. Muslim communities are expected not to be worried about the spicy since the spicy does not contain materials which are not prohibited by the religion. The sign refers that the Muslim organization ensures that Masako deserves to be consumed. The sign in object is symbol because the symbol has very tight role regulation. The contents of Masako were observed before being marketed in communities. Therefore, the sign in representamen is legisign. The sign in interpretant is

argument because MUI can make argument the reasons it gives recommendation for Muslim communities.

Chicken meat with vegetable picture is presented in large picture in the package. The object is chicken meat and vegetables, which are used to stimulate the buyer candidates to buy Masako. The representamen indicates that Masako deserves to be used for such food. The interpretant indicates that Masako is the only one making the food delicious and hygienic. The reference of the sign is that Masako is the best choice for any well-cooked food. The sign in the object is icon since the object is the representation of the delicious taste. The sign in representamen is qualisign since the sign represents the quality of food which can be seen from the soft chicken meat. The sign in interpretant is argument. We can take the correlation cause and effect of Masako and well-cooked food (Hoed, 2011).

The sign of love is printed in green colour. The sign of heart is used as the object, the sign in representamen indicates that all of us love or like Masako. The sign in the interpretant indicates that we love the flavouring because it makes the food delicious and hygienical taste. Therefore, we do not want to ignore Masako. The sign in the object is symbol because the sign and the reference does not have any similarity in form, size, colour, function, and other. However, the sign is understood by many people. The sign in the representamen is sinsign because the sign can be seen and understood by many people, not legalized. The sign in interpretant is deci sign because many people understand the reference of the sign (Short, 2007).

#### b. *Verbal Language*

A number of verbal languages are used in the package. The verbal languages have certain deep messages. This section explores the verbal languages.

Verbal group *Masako dengan daging pilihan* 'Masako with selected meat'. The word *Masako* is written in red and preposition phrase *dengan daging pilihan* 'with selected meat' (Halliday, 2014) is written in green. The colour used in the nominal

group was described above. The verbal language above can be interpreted as metafunction: (i) Textually, the Theme of the nominal group is *Masako*. The producer emphasizes the *Masako* that *Masako* is very suitable with selected meat, they work together to create very delicious taste. (ii) Ideationally, the nominal group has a deep message which can be interpreted that we must remember that wherever there is fresh meat, *Masako* must be with it. The message is embedded in our mind. Therefore, it is related to mental process related to cognition (Halliday, 2014). (iii) Interpersonally, the nominal group is interpreted as proposition as fact (Halliday, 2014) since the nominal group is supported with picture as nonverbal language.

The clause *lebih dekat dengan Masok* 'prefer to *Masako*' is a clause which experiences ellipses in the Subject. The clause can be *Kita lebih dekat dengan Masako* 'We prefer to *Masako*'. The nominal group functioning as Subject gets ellipses (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The clause can be analysed from a metafunction perspective; (i) Textually, the clause emphasizes the Subject even though the clause gets ellipses in the Subject, but the clause is viewed as communicative and the clause can be understood know as parole (Kaelan, 2017). (ii) Ideationally, the clause indicates preference to use the flavouring when cooking at any time. The verb *lebih dekat dengan* 'prefer to' is related to mental verb related to affection (Halliday, 2014). (iii) Interpersonally, the clause indicates proposal which is related to willing (Halliday, 2014). In addition, the clause has persuasive meaning, namely to persuade communities to use *Masako*.

The clause *Kamu hebat Hari Ini* 'You are great today' is clause which states praise. Ideationally, the clause uses relational process which states that the readers are excellent. Interpersonally, the clause brings positive effect for the readers. The readers feel praised as the best persons. The clause makes the readers feel happy. In other word, the clause is related to mental related to affection (Hallifay, 2014). The theme of the clause happens in *Kamu* 'you' which indicates that the readers.

The readers become the target of the product. The aim of the them is to make the readers feel satisfied with Masako by praising the readers and the readers will not escape from Masako.

Nominal group “Ajinomoto” is written in red colour. The nominal group indicates that Ajinomoto's company has another product very popular in communities, namely Masako. The use of the nominal group Ajinomoto is trusted to positively impact the market because the merk is famous in communities.

*c. Context of Situation*

The context of Situation of the text can be seen from field, tenor, and mode. The context of Situation of the text can be described as below.

<b>Field</b>	<b>Tenor</b>	<b>Mode</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Masako producers introduce or sell Masako to communities, especially in Indonesia. The producer understands about the community need especially in daily cooking.</li> <li>- The verbs used in the text are relational process such as; <i>kamu lebih dekat dengan Masako</i> ‘you prefer to Masako’, <i>Kamu hebat</i> ‘you are great’.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The participants are the producers of Masako and its communities.</li> <li>- The producers of Masako uses modalities especially proposal (Halliday, 2014), namely the producers of Masako invites communities to use Masako in daily cooking.</li> <li>- The clauses used in the text in declarative form include <i>kamu lebih dekat dengan Masako</i> ‘You prefer to with Masako’, <i>kamu hebat</i> ‘you are great’. Those clauses aim to give praise for communities. That is marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The languages used to market are non-verbal and verbal languages.</li> <li>- The verbal language used in the package is for communicative purposes, known as parole because it focuses on how communities understand the language.</li> <li>- Non-verbal means such as pictures are used to ease the communities in Indonesia. By seeing the pictures, they understand without reading verbal language.</li> <li>- The symbol “Halal” is used consciously in the package. It is</li> </ul>

	strategy used to invite communities to use Masako.	used to ensure that Masako is safe for Muslim.
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*d. Context of culture*

This product is viewed as good flavouring because the product fastens the symbol of MUI realized with “Halal”. The product is marketed in Indonesia in which is mostly occupied by Muslim. Therefore, the existence of the product is accepted in Indonesia. In addition, the producer knows that not all Indonesian communities can read verbal language. Therefore, non-verbal language can help them understand the function of Masako. Non-verbal language is presented as cover of the package. The producer also gives additional new menu presented with procedural (Wiratno, 2018) since the producer elaborates the procedure how to make given food. The given menu is viewed as bonus for the buyers.

*d. Ideology of The Text*

Ideology of the text is related to what should we do or what we should not do related to Masako in communities. Therefore, Masako has own ideologies, namely: (i) Masako company would like to dominate the market segmentation because it can provide some different taste such as; chicken, beef, and Masrom. The company provides different weight in package with different prices such as; 40 gr, 100 gr gr, 130 gr, and 250 gr. The variety of the weight is intended for communities who have variety of need.

In addition, the logo “MUI” is attached in the Masako package, indicating that Muslim grants the materials used by Masako. Indonesian communities do not feel worried about the materials. Masako is good for health and has been approved by MUI. (Indonesian Muslim).

**FINDINGS**

Nonverbal communication has very important messages for communities. The nonverbal language gives us some references. The food which is intended for



baby is not recommended to fill with Masako because the product contains chilli. However, it is very good for adult food because chilli increase the taste. Masako is not recommended for uncooked food like *sambal mentah* 'Balines uncooked spice'. Masako can be used not only for chicken but also for other kinds of food such as fish, beef, lamb, and others. The picture presented in the package is icon (Short, 2007). The picture is one of food which can be used with Masako. Masako contains chicken broth, which increases the taste of food even though the food does not contain meat. In other word, Masako can be used for any well-cooked food.

Verbal and non-verbal languages presented in the Masako packages are used to share the market in some various segmentations. Masako producers is very smart to adopt with social and cultural aspects existing in Indonesia for example, providing Masako package in different taste and weight which are realised with non-verbal language. In other word, vegetarians and non-vegetarians may use Masako for the well-cooked food. Verbal language used in the text gives high prestige to communities who use Masako.

## **CONCLUSION**

Masako is one of spice products which is marketed in Indonesia communities. the package of Masako presents verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal language used in the package emphasizes communicative aspect in order communities understand language easily. Non-verbal language is used dominantly in order the buyer candidates are interested in buying the product. The pictures used in the package are trusted to catch communities' mind so they decide to use Masako.

However, the non-verbal language used in the package is not comprehended wholly like the colours. The yellow colour is associated with Masako is spice suitable for well-cooked food. The red colour means that the spice is not recommended for baby food because the spice contains chilli. The green indicates

that the spice will be suitable for fresh meat and vegetables. The spice is very good for any well-cooked food because it contains chicken broth. It makes the food more delicious. The symbol of MUI in the package indicates that the food is safe for all Indonesia communities. Verbal language used in the package uses mental verbs. The use of the verb aims to attract the buyers' mind.

This research educates communities so the research is expected to give education for Indonesian communities about the references of sign. The colours are not for aesthetics, but they have certain references. Therefore, this research is expected to stimulate other researches to explore the references of the nonverbal and verbal languages in any text by doing linguistics research. This research has usefulness for applied linguistics, semiotics, discourse analysis. Therefore, this research can be used as references for research and lecture.

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