

Audience Response to PETA's Shock Advertise Poster: A Multimodal Sentiment Analysis

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the People's Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) campaign strategy through its controversial poster featuring anthropomorphic animals consuming human babies, aimed at questioning the morality of animal slaughter for human consumption. The research employed a semiotic analysis of a poster and combined with a sentiment analysis to analyze audience response using comments obtained from PETA's Facebook. The study focused on visual grammar elements such as iconography, attributes, settings, gaze and pose, and the emotional tone present in comments. The findings show PETA employed confident artistic choices ranging from the well-chosen tone and color associated with greed and pleasure, placing the unsettling scene at the center of the imagery, gaze, the pose to convey the action process to achieve the goal, and the shape of all characters in the middle of a grotesque scene to evoke the viewers' emotional response—meanwhile, the sentiment analysis results negatively towards PETA's shock advertising strategy. The study supports the knowledge of PETA's strategic approach to implementing provocative elements to promote animal welfare and question the morality of animal exploitation.

Keywords: multimodal discourse analysis, sentiment analysis, visual grammar, poster, animal welfare

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kampanye People's Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) melalui poster kontroversialnya yang menampilkan hewan antropomorfis yang mengonsumsi bayi manusia, yang bertujuan mempertanyakan moralitas penyembelihan hewan untuk konsumsi manusia. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis semiotika pada poster tersebut dan dikombinasikan dengan analisis sentimen untuk menganalisis respons audiens menggunakan komentar yang diperoleh dari Facebook PETA. Studi ini berfokus pada elemen-elemen tata bahasa visual seperti ikonografi, atribut, pengaturan, tatapan dan pose, serta nada emosional yang hadir dalam komentar. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa PETA menggunakan pilihan artistik yang percaya diri, mulai dari pemilihan warna dan nada yang diasosiasikan dengan keserakahan dan kesenangan, menempatkan adegan mengganggu di tengah citra, tatapan, pose untuk menyampaikan proses aksi untuk mencapai tujuan, dan bentuk semua karakter di tengah adegan yang berdarah-darah untuk membangkitkan respons emosional penonton—sementara itu, hasil analisis sentimen menunjukkan respons negatif terhadap strategi iklan kejut PETA. Studi ini mendukung pemahaman tentang pendekatan strategis PETA dalam menerapkan elemen provokatif untuk mempromosikan kesejahteraan hewan dan mempertanyakan moralitas eksploitasi hewan.

Kata kunci: multimodal discourse analysis, sentiment analysis, visual grammar, poster, animal welfare

INTRODUCTION

A poster is printed media often comprising a picture or illustration placed in a public area to distribute information. Posters have an advantage over other types of mass media because striking colors and illustrations can make them more appealing to the masses, are effective, and have excellent coverage. (Rege, 1963) To attract a wider audience, good posters are generally made with an attractive appearance and utilize several semiotic elements that can arouse the audience's awareness and offer a new way of spreading social influence. Better choices in visual elements, such as color schemes, illustration designs, typography, and easy-to-digest layouts, can improve the audience's reading experience and convey the message well. (Mubarat et al., 2023; Ulita et al., 2024)

In semiotics, a sign is anything that can convey meaning that is not the sign itself to the party who interprets it. The theory of semiotics focuses primarily on the process of "sign-making." It acknowledges that signs are the product of a social context in which both the "signifier" (form, such as color or perspective) and the "signified" (meaning) come together based on the intention of their creator, shaped by culture and psychological factors. (Kress, 2011) When semiotic elements are present in a particular social context, it is called social semiotics. It studies the deployment of semiotic elements such as multimodal signs such as writing, sound, and gestures in different socio-cultural contexts to create different meanings. (Kress, 2011) Social semiotics form a multimodal discourse analysis approach that focuses on how modes of communication represent ideas (conceptual), social relationships (interpersonal), and cohesion between sentences (textual). (Machin & Mayr, 2023)

In the context of posters, certain semiotic elements can attract people's attention and trigger reactions that enable the exchange of information. PETA (People Ethical Treatment of Animals) is an animal welfare organization often known for implementing very graphic visuals in its posters to campaign for awareness of animal rights violations. PETA's campaign strategy of using unusual illustrations successfully got the issues got its publicity. Previous research has analyzed the use of particular visual elements in environmental campaign posters, focusing on multimodal analysis and visual grammar



analysis, which focuses on constructing representative, interactive, and compositional meanings. (Guan, 2020) Studies using discourse analysis and visual rhetoric (Atkins-Sayre, 2010) on the controversy surrounding PETA's campaign style are also available. These studies unlock new knowledge about the cause-and-effect relationships of using shock elements, specifically in PETA campaigns.

However, there is still a gap in conducting semiotic analysis to reveal the purpose behind using unusual visual elements that trigger public unrest. Little research has yet to analyze how the audience reacts to PETA's campaign style in creating sympathy in society. This research aimed to increase the body of knowledge about the signs contained in PETA posters and how the audience responds to these signs.

This research has significance in the use of Kress and Leeuwen's visual grammar analysis in the multimodal discourse analysis developed by Machin and Myer to reveal how PETA uses visual elements to build a narrative construction that challenges the understanding of speciesism where humans are viewed to possess a high degree of social hierarchy compared to others animal. Revealing the effectiveness of PETA visual choices, this research uses a sentiment analysis approach using the Large Language Model (LLM) to measure the audience's emotional response to the semiotic elements in a PETA poster. Hopefully, this research can add new treasures to the academic world, especially regarding multimodal semiotic analysis and the implementation of corpus sentiment analysis in linguistic research.

Several studies have examined extreme strategies in PETA's campaigns and posters from various animal welfare organizations using multiple approaches. One study focused on semiotics analysis, examining hidden meanings associated with tone, color, angle, and gaze (Guan, 2020) Some examine psychological cognition related to selecting symbolic elements intended to engage readers' sympathy (Chen, 2020) and analyze the evolution of social movements over different periods (Cherry, 2015). Although previous studies have successfully revealed the hidden agenda behind PETA's choice of style, there is a notable gap in our understanding of the effectiveness of shock value approaches from the audience's perspective. Previous research has mainly examined visual composition, discourse, cognitive aspects, and historical contexts of campaign models employing shock advertisement. Given the critical significance of audience perception in promoting animal welfare awareness, this study will employ semiotic analysis techniques and sentiment

analysis to examine audience responses to comments extracted from PETA's Facebook post.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, the number of animal cruelty and neglect remain prevalent despite increased advocacy from animal rights groups and legislative efforts. Data from World Animal Protection (WAP) unveiled various forms of animal exploitation for traditional medicine, exotic animal trade, and wild animals being kept captives for amusement. China is the biggest producer of bear bile, with the industry reaping more than 1 billion US dollars. (World Animal Protection, 2020) Approximately 10.000 to 20.000 bears from Asian species (*Helarctos malayanus* and *Ursus thibetanus*) and Eurasian species (*Ursus arctos*) are in captivity for bile extraction. (Animals Asia, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023) The demand for traditional medicine using ingredients sourced from parts of wild and exotic animals harms animal welfare, biodiversity, and the environment and puts public health at risk. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was suspected to come from exotic animals used in Chinese traditional medicine through zoonotic transmission from animals to humans. (Wang et al., 2020)

On top of that, the issue of animal welfare also includes their relationship with the ecosystem. Industrial-scale animal farms are one of the main contributors to environmental degradation and climate change. (Musa, 2019) Livestock farming is one of the significant sources of greenhouse emissions, specifically methane from fermentation in ruminants' stomachs and nitrous oxide from manure management. (Musa, 2019) The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that livestock production released around 6,2 Gt CO₂ equivalent emissions in 2015. (FAO, 2023) Another estimate put animal-based greenhouse emissions around 9,7 Gt CO₂ equivalent in 2010 alone. (Xu et al., 2021) In addition, livestock requires big land acres to grow feed crops, leading to deforestation, soil degradation, and water scarcity. The Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model (GLEAM) estimated that feed crop production released 13% CO₂ with supply chain greenhouse emissions comparable to 14,5% of global anthropogenic sources. (Gerber et al., 2013) (FAO, 2017)

In response to these ethical, environmental, and health concerns, the vegan movement has gained significant traction worldwide. The vegan movement advocates for

the elimination of animal exploitation by abstaining from the consumption and use of animal-based products, including meat, dairy, egg, leather, and fur, and against animal testing procedures for skincare and cosmetics. (Jaiswal & Shrivastava, 2024) By adopting plant-based and animal-friendly lifestyles, vegans aim to reduce dependency on animals to lessen demands for industries that harm animal welfare, mitigate environmental impact, and promote healthy lifestyles. The rise of veganism reflects a growing awareness and shifting societal values toward greater compassion for animals, environmental sustainability, and ethical consumerism. Supporters of veganism and animal welfare are present globally, encompassing individuals, public figures, and various organizations.

One notable organization advocating vegan and animal cruelty is the US-based People's Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), founded in 1980 by Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco. PETA campaigns often employ striking imagery and messages consisting of graphics depiction of animal suffering, nudity, and anthropomorphism designed to shock and capture public attention to highlight issues of animal cruelty and exploitation, endorsing a vegan lifestyle and fake animal derivative goods as a healthy and cruelty-free alternative to substitute animal-based products. PETA's provocative visual elements approach frequently sparked controversy on the internet, with critics arguing that these tactics can be offensive, alienating, and counterproductive by overshadowing the underlying message and hindering constructive dialogue.

Analyzing PETA's visual grammar strategies and how public reception towards their strategy is essential to understanding the effectiveness of such a campaign in advocacy and how it shapes public perception toward the effort to raise awareness of animal welfare while keeping ethical communication practices within the social movement.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is a framework for exploring diverse media communication modes. Multimodality is an approach that recognizes communication and representation, not only limited to mere language, and considers a range of communicative forms, such as images or body language. (Jewitt, 2009) One of the core assumptions of language in multimodality is that it is only a type of mode in a broader multimodal ensemble. While language has often been considered the primary means of communication, especially in education settings, multimodality asserts that all modes have the potential for meaning-making contributions. (Jewitt, 2009) Meanwhile, body language and image tend to be perceived as only existing to support speech or writing

without carrying its meaning. The second assumption describes modes in multimodality as tied to cultural and historical context, not static, with each role and function expressed within specific situations. (Jewitt, 2009) In addition, individuals are liable for creating meaning through their choice in configuring and selecting various modes responsible for meaning-making's significance in the third assumption. Finally, the last assumption views multimodal resources as socially constructed and governed by rules, norms, and personal choices during production. (Jewitt, 2009)

Visual grammar is essential for MDA since it concerns rules and principles that guide how visual elements like signs, composition, viewers' position, colour, and framing convey meaning within text or images. Gunther Kress developed visual grammar stemming from 1978 Halliday's social semiotics (commonly known as Systemic Functional Linguistics or Grammar), which classifies language as consisting of three metafunctions: ideational (representing reality), interpersonal (social relations), and textual (text organization). Kress adopted the framework and applied it to the field of visual communication with the assumption that all semiotic modes, including images, fulfilled those three metafunctions, albeit with different takes on the material characteristics of each mode. This approach gained popularity among language researchers in the following decades after the 2000s in exploring various resource modes in language usage, acknowledging communication as multimodal in nature. (O'Halloran & Smith, 2011)

In Kress's multimodal social semiotics approach, he reinstates that "Social semiotics is a theory about meaning-making in process of interaction as communication. ... it is a theory about meaning-making as signmaking with all the modes that are available in a culture, where sign-making is seen as the semiotic work of social agents." (Kress, 2011)

For instance, (O'Halloran & Smith, 2011) specified multimodal approaches as Halliday social semiotics derivation, grounding social critique and practices in three basic principles: the first one is a triple layer of meaning conceptualization referring to the low level (features in texts: images), middle level (lexicogrammatical), and top-level (socio-cultural contexts). The second is metafunction, which Halliday defines as ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The third is instantiation, meaning the relation of choices in systemic potentials of language in specific pattern registers, resulting in particular text choice patterns in a text type (e.g., differences in language choices between messaging friends and lecturers).

In analyzing multimodality in various communication media, (Kress, 2011) describes three essential compositions that create meaning from visual elements: information value, framing, and salience. The first composition is information value, a principle about how elements' placement, either in the middle, top, bottom, or side, carries different information values. Second, framing is associated with how visual elements are connected and separated by dividing lines, space, or contrast to show the connection between elements, thus creating meaning. Third, salience is a principle about the attractiveness of each visual component arrangement to the spectators influenced by several factors, from size, color, contrast, background, and sharpness choices.

To uncover the public presumption about the meaning behind the campaign PETA pushed forward, a study using sentiment analysis is an excellent candidate to understand better the public's reception of PETA's strategy of using picturesque imagery as leverage in their campaign. Sentiment analysis is a method used to identify, extract, and measure opinions or emotions in the text to understand a person's attitude or feelings toward a subject. In the past decade, sentiment analysis has become a viral tool in various fields, including marketing, politics, and social studies, to process large amounts of data and generate insights directly from audience feedback. Sentiment analysis techniques have developed along with advances in natural language processing (NLP) technology and machine learning, which allows increases in sentiment analysis accuracy. In the dictionary-based method (lexicon-based), sentiment analysis identifies words with positive, negative, or neutral nuances in the compiled dictionary. (Nurmadewi et al., 2024) Meanwhile, machine learning-based approaches involve training models using data labeled with sentiments, such as Naive Bayes models, SVMs, and more complex models, such as transformers. Transformer is a type of neural network architecture that relies entirely on attention mechanisms to process sequential data, such as text, without recurrence or convolution. (Vaswani et al., 2017)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research integrates semiotic analysis and sentiment analysis within an online observation framework using a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the meanings behind PETA's illustration designs and to investigate audience responses to PETA's campaigns. The study focuses on the interpretation and understanding of the meanings in

the visual designs of PETA's campaigns and how these visual elements affect the audience. This analysis combines semiotic and sentiment analysis to evaluate the emotional responses and sympathy levels created by the campaign.

In conducting this research, the researcher carried out online observations of posts from PETA's Facebook account to acquire the poster and utilized web scraping software to gather a substantial amount of data from the internet. Semiotic analysis is conducted using the strategies developed by Barthes, Kress, and Van Leeuwen to analyze the data. This approach describes the meaning behind PETA's posters, which contain anthropomorphic animals and their choices of artistic freedom. Semiotic data in this research consists of illustrations, tone, color, angle, and gaze. The illustration analysis utilizes semiotic strategies developed by David Machin and Andrea Mayr. The scraping process was conducted using the Apify service, which offers JavaScript-based software that eliminates the requirement for manual coding instructions. This research adhered to ethical guidelines during the data collection process and conducted multiple trials on smaller samples to ensure the accuracy of the extracted data, aiming for completeness and the elimination of duplication or errors.

The researcher observed the PETA organization account page on Facebook to find several uploaded posters with illustrations containing shock value elements. Then, the researchers sorted a number of poster uploads by focusing on posters uploaded a year after the research began with high engagement. A poster uploaded on June 28, 2023, was chosen because it showed a scene of three animals eating pieces of human baby meat, which received mixed reactions and as many as 18,000 comments. Then, the researcher downloaded the poster and carried out web scrapping to obtain comment data of around 6000 comments.

To carry out semiotic analysis, researchers observed the posters and collected five pieces of data, mainly iconography, attribution, setting, eye gaze, and poses of the animal characters displayed on them. To measure the tone in audience responses, web scraping was conducted to extract audience comments from PETA's Facebook posts that were pertinent to the research conducted. The scraping process was conducted using the Apify service to gather structured data, resulting in a table that includes details about the account, gender, comment text, and the commentator's URL. This scrapping yielded only 6,000 comments from a total pool of 18,000 due to restrictions imposed by Meta on the amount

of data that can be scraped via the Facebook API. To enhance the quality of the raw data, this study employed the generative AI service, GPT-4 Canvas, to generate Python scripts that effectively remove Unicode emoji symbols, which can disrupt NLP processes when conducting sentiment analysis. The cleaned dataset was sorted by gender in Microsoft Excel to create a corpus that includes only gender information and comment text, aiming to maintain the privacy of the commentators. The checking step was performed manually to address dataset errors that were overlooked in the previous data cleaning stage and to comply with research ethics codes regarding the use of internet-sourced data. The dataset size was reduced by applying random sampling techniques with Python instructions in GPT-4 Canvas, resulting in a smaller dataset of 1,812 entries. This process was done to maintain ease in conducting the research and to overcome limitations of labor and computational resources.

Systematic data analysis starts with a semiotic study of the poster to interpret the semiotic signs in the illustration. Then, after the research discovered the semiotic signs in the poster, they were identified and classified into five types of social semiotic elements commonly found in posters, as explained by Machin and Mayr. The researcher built a corpus from a dataset of previously processed comments to determine how the audience responds to the semiotic signs in the poster. Sentiment analysis was carried out by utilizing NLP models commonly used in sentiment analysis research: RoBERTa-base. RoBERTa, developed by Facebook as an improvement from Google BERT-base model, is an open-source machine learning model based on transformer architecture, incorporating neural network capabilities that enable comprehensive and contextually informed language analysis. The sentiment data produced by RoBERTa is classified between males and females into three sentiment types: negative, neutral, and positive, and presented in the form of a 2-dimensional plot and a bar chart.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the goal of a poster is to capture public attention by employing various strategies, such as impactful design or the aesthetic allure of intricate artistic composition. A poster is a visual communication tool used to convey messages, often with the intention of persuasion or manipulation. (Chambers, 1983) Traditionally, a poster is associated with printed media as a work of art or a novelty

display. However, recent developments in digital media have allowed digital posters to exist as a form of digital art, too.

In analyzing PETA's poster, this study uses semiotic analysis strategies provided by (Machin & Mayr, 2012, 2023), which put emphasis on analyzing word connotation, overlexicalization, adjectives, word choice and recontextualization, lexical choices and genres of communication, and structural opposition to analyze text. Meanwhile, the book uses several semiotic signs to examine images, including iconography (connotation and denotation), attributes (objects), settings, and salience. Analyzing discourse participant attitude uses various semiotic resources, including gaze, pose, talking methods, loudness and softness, breathiness, pitch, roughness and smoothness, tension, and nasality.

PETA is well known for its anti-mainstream campaign to raise awareness of animal welfare and promote animal-friendly and vegan lifestyles. To voice their beliefs, they often resorted to public stunts, from engaging in mass demonstrations and journalistic investigation to staging protests in museums or fashion shows allegedly for displaying art or clothing exhibitions made of animal products and going as far as blocking traffic.

Visual Grammar Analysis

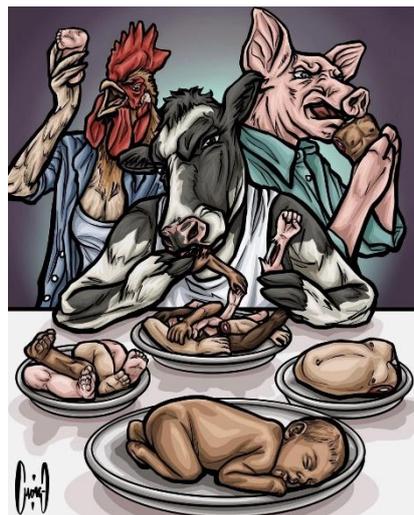


Figure 1. Antropomorphic animals feasting human babies

Iconography (Connotation and Denotation)

The illustration above contains anthropomorphic animal characters, showing a cow, pig, and rooster with human-like features and having fine dining of human babies served on plates. The iconography of this illustration is provocative and explicit to create a shock for viewers to understand the grotesque reality of animal meat consumption. Regarding

denotation, the illustration portrays three anthropomorphized common livestock for meat production: rooster, cow, and pig, sitting at a dinner table eating human infants. The denotation is disturbing in its directness in which animals typically are objects or victims of human consumption, portrayed as the aggressors engaging in the consumption of human meat. PETA preferred this type of artistic choice to create an unsettling dynamic for viewers to rethink their lifestyle and dietary choices to a vegan-based diet.

On a connotative level, the illustration carries a deeper, more symbolic meaning. The animals presented as humanoid figures not merely stand for their species but represent the whole animal farm and meat industry. The choice of using anthropomorphic animals is deliberate since cows, pigs, and chickens are the most commonly consumed animals in the world. From drawing an analogy between the consumption of human infants and the consumption of animals, the illustration asks the viewer to question the morality of killing and eating living beings for food. Meanwhile, the presence of human infant imagery is a symbol of innocence and vulnerability with the purpose of amplifying the emotional impact of killing innocent animals.

The anthropomorphism of animals in this illustration blurs the line between humans and animals as a different species, as PETA is against the concept of speciesism, a set of beliefs that view humans as having higher authority over animals' well-being resulting in its exploitation. The motive behind this is to suggest the ethical consideration we extend to humans should applied to animals.

Attributes (Objects)

The attributes within this illustration have a purpose to support PETA's anti-meat agenda. In this illustration, PETA's associated artist deliberately portrayed human infants served as food on plates, symbolizing vulnerability and innocence. This is because babies are always associated with weakness and dependency on adults to supervise them for protection. In this illustration, PETA tried to draw a parallelism between the perceived moral of eating humans and the often-overlooked violence inherent in consuming animals.

PETA emphasizes the role reversal between humans and animals through the artistic choices of making the animal characters appear human. Cows, pigs, and roosters are depicted as livestock animals, not in their natural environment but as figures that have adopted human characteristics and are taking on the role of oppressor, suggesting that the violence humans perpetrate toward animals is no less horrific simply because it is typical

within human society. In the illustration, the clothes worn by the animals are a significant attribute. The rooster wears a casual shirt, the cow has a simple bib, and the pig is dressed in a sweater, implying a sense of normalcy in the animal's actions, suggesting that consuming living beings with nervous systems means they could feel pain is socially acceptable.

Also, the plate on the dining table filled with dismembered human babies represents how meat is a desirable commodity in human society. Reducing human infants to a lump of meat and ignoring their sentience and consciousness is PETA's semiotic strategy in showing the nature of human greed and forcing the viewer to confront the reality of what it means to treat living beings only as an object.

Settings (Salience)

In terms of salience, it is a compositional feature containing symbolic meaning, such as potent cultural symbol, size, color, tone, focus, foregrounding, and overlapping, that attracts people's interest. (Machin & Mayr, 2023) In other words, salience looks at how several features in an image stand out to guide the viewer's gaze toward hidden meaning beneath the semiotic sign. One feature in this illustration is the size of the animals compared to the human babies in front of them. The figure's significant proportions emphasize the power dynamic between dominant predators (animals) and weak prey (humans). The way the subject placement is in the center of the picture gives the importance of the scene to the viewers. In contrast, the subject placement between animals and humans is distinguished, with the first in the foreground appearing much bigger than the latter to ensure viewers' attention is drawn immediately to them.

This PETA illustration uses quite minimalistic settings to ensure the focus remains locked on the unsettling scene of meat consumption. The plain background with a neutral gradient transitions from darker shades of purplish color around the animal character to lighter shades behind the animal character, creating a subtle depth without distracting from the central imagery. It strips away any potential distraction with the intent to focus on the gruesome banquet of human flesh at the center of the illustration.

The grey color surrounding the anthropomorphized animals might convey a feeling of sadness in contrast to the faint blue halo light behind them. Research from 2020 found that some population cultures associated grey with sadness and blue with relief. (Jonauskaitė et al., 2020) Thus, it aligns with the act carried out by the animal characters,

consuming human infants with the animals colored in light color. Meanwhile, the atmosphere around it is darker, representing the concealed truth of human carnivory.

The setting of a dinner table symbolizes civility and routine since a banquet is typically associated with togetherness, warmth, and nourishment instead of the gruesome scene shown in the illustration. The white tablecloth commonly associated with purity contrasts the bloody scene of human flesh set on the table. Such imagery might represent a sense of moral corruption for being indiscriminate to life-sentient beings.

Gaze/Contact

Analyzing participant representation in semiotic analysis involves considering other aspects related to the speaker. As specified by Machin & Mayr (2012, 2023), participant representation includes gaze, poses, articulating style, loud or soft speech, breathiness, pitch, roughness or smoothness, tension, and nasality. This particular illustration contains gaze and pose, which retain hidden meaning to illustrate the cruelty experienced by animals in the farm industry and even extend to wildlife poaching. Contact is the relationship or interaction between the inside (the poster) and the outside (the viewer). In the illustration above, all the animal characters focus on the baby's meat. This absence of eye contact between the represented participant character and the viewer is a sign of an offer act similar to the situation in the museum when museum visitors observe the display to grasp information from the subject or object. Guan, 2020; Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) With the animal's eyes or face not looking directly at the viewers, the illustration forces the viewer to observe and learn the meaning behind the act of anthropomorphized animals eating infant meats.

Pose

Poses are body language that can convey nonverbal meaning because, according to (Barthes, 1972) and (Kress, 2011), poses contain established connotations that indicate the depicted character's personal behaviour, values, or ideas. Kress specifies this type of narrative representation as an action process, which means a narrative process involving actors and targets, with the actors often visualized through vector elements (direction of facing represented with arrows). In the context of illustration, vectors might exist in the form of certain elements, such as the direction of the torso, body parts, tools, or lines. This PETA's illustration utilizes the concept of action process, specifically transactional action,

A corpus containing a combination of datasets from lists of comments scraped from the poster post on PETA's Facebook account, then sorted according to the commenters' sexes after undergoing a cleaning process (pre-processing) to eliminate any unwanted noises that could impact the sentiment analysis process, including non-English words, emoticons, and Unicode unreadable by the system. AntConc is used to create the word cloud. Orange Data Mining performed the second pre-processing step before measuring the raw frequency of keywords and concordance analysis using the mBERT (multilingual BERT) embedding feature available in the Orange Data Mining software.

Word Frequencies Based on Sex Choices

Frequency analysis of words used in male and female shows similarity in lexical choices, precisely words related to the main issue brought up by PETA on their poster illustration: "eat," "animal," "meat," followed by "human," and "plant." It implies that both male and female audiences have similar concerns in responding to the issue behind PETA's poster's gruesome illustration.

Table 1. Twenty words most used by male and female

Male		Female	
Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
Eat	323	Eat	214
Animal	247	Animal	123
Meat	127	Meat	74
Human	110	Human	50
Plant	92	Chicken	46
Eating	86	Cow	41
Chicken	72	Peta	41
Food	72	Pig	36
Peta	66	Food	35
People	55	Eating	35
Vegan	49	People	34
Lion	49	Plant	30
Cow	48	Plate	29
Love	45	Vegan	27
Life	43	God	25
Delicious	39	Baby	25
Chain	34	Love	25
Pig	33	Delicious	23
Feel	32	Feel	23
Baby	32	Uncomfortable	19

As shown in the analysis of the keywords below, males have higher scores than females regarding the likelihood of the keyword appearing in the corpus with the word cannibalism and meat in the first and second placement between males and females. It

shows that males and females have similar attitudes when discussing the issue of eating animal meat as an act of cannibalism.

Table 2. List of keywords with higher chances to appear by male and female (The mBERT score value shows the probability of the same word appearing in the corpus)

Male		Female	
Keywords	mBERT scores	Keywords	mBERT scores
Cannibalism	0.910	Meat	0.831
Meat	0.898	Cannibalism	0.813
Oxygen	0.851	Halal	0.789
Facebook	0.811	Facebook	0.745
Peta	0.755	Chickens	0.734
Water	0.731	Veganism	0.680
Petition	0.725	Peta	0.653
Vitamins	0.711	Creativity	0.580
Pork	0.655	Foolishness	0.577
Vegetarianism	0.628	Vegan	0.572
Evolution	0.621	Babies	0.565
Bullying	0.621	Animals	0.556
Animation	0.601	Feet	0.538
Babies	0.592	Veggies	0.534
Bacteria	0.588	Everyones	0.527
Cholesterol	0.586	Eating	0.509
Cattle	0.585	Moments	0.344
Chickens	0.583		
Vegan	0.580		
Rooster	0.574		

Sentiment Analysis

After being cleaned from potential noises, the next step of analyzing the preprocessed corpus datasets by uploading to Google Colab to be analyzed using a free and open-source large language model, Twitter-RoBERTa-base-sentiment-latest, fine-tuned with 124 million tweets from early 2018 to the end of 2021 by cardiffnlp in Hugging Face. The Python code to call the language model in Google Colab used a pre-built Python code library with further iteration done with generative artificial intelligence services by Google Gemini AI 1.5 Pro and OpenAI GPT-4o Canvas in Google Colab. The purpose of using Google Colab instead of running the model on the local computer is to overcome the local computing power limitation and to achieve the benefit of easy use in running the code directly in the browser.

Below is the result of the twitter-RoBERTa-base-sentiment-latest model analysis on the 1813 comments, including male and female, showing that most of the sentiments are primarily negative and neutral.

Table 3. Sentiments frequency output from RoBERTa Twitter fine-tuned model

	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE
MALE	377	465	329
FEMALE	220	235	187
TOTAL	597	700	516

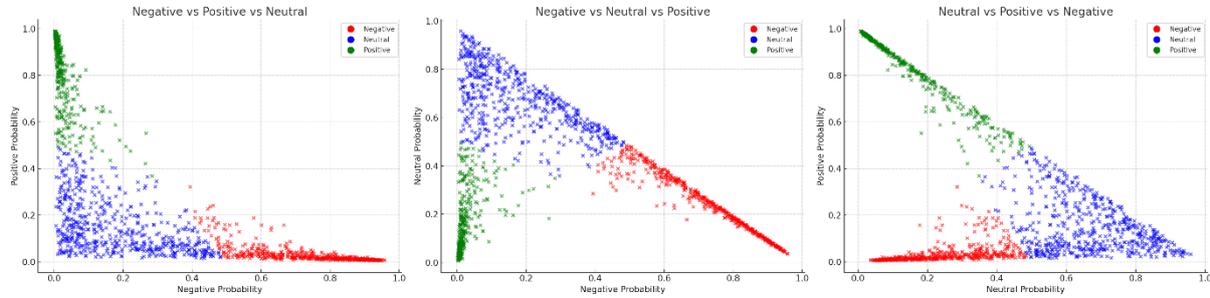


Figure 3. 2-dimension scatter plot of the sentiment analysis result using twitter-RoBERTa-base LLM (red indicates negative sentiments, blue indicates neutral sentiments, green indicates positive sentiments).

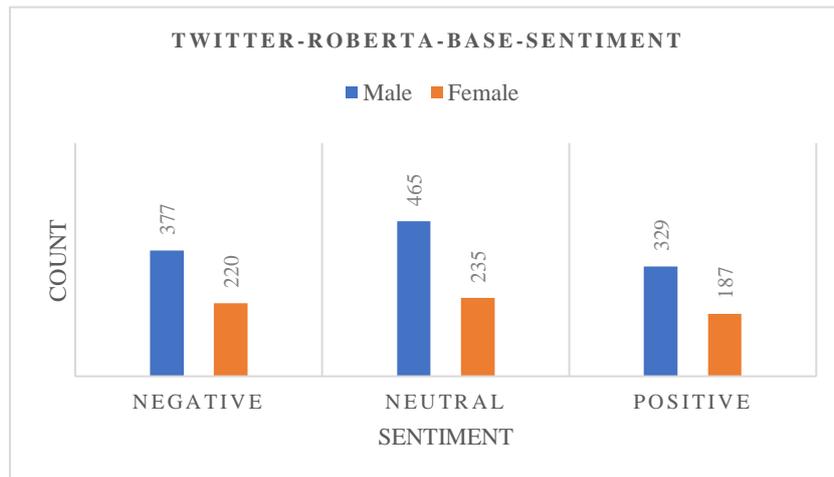


Figure 4. Bar chart of the sentiment analysis result between male and female

The sentiment analysis reveals a surprising number of negative responses compared to the positive ones against PETA's use of gruesome imagery in their shock advertising campaigns. Instead of making people sympathize with the surfaced issue of animal welfare, the audience became not amused and uncomfortable with PETA's way of pushing the agenda into people's faces.

The bar chart above shows that out of the 1,812 comments collected, 377 were hostile comments from men and 220 from women, along with 465 neutral remarks from men and 235 from women. This differs from the number of positive sentiments detected by the LLM model, which was only 329 comments from men and 187 from women. PETA's campaign style might be attributed to the high number of negative sentiments. PETA often employs dramatic and sensational elements, causing many people to become desensitized to the main issue being highlighted. However, even though negative comments outnumber positive ones, it should be noted that the number of positive comments is not far behind the number of negative comments. Furthermore, some neutral comments may lean towards a negative or positive tendency. The finding supported the knowledge that PETA's strategy choices to use shock advertising have successfully created social noise fostering the discussion about the issue in public space, but with a certain caveat. (Matusitz & Forrester, 2013)

A lack of data in the research could also cause this drastic difference since this research intentionally limits the semiotic analysis material by focusing on only one PETA poster and taking thousands of comments, which aims to simplify and streamline this research process. However, future research should focus more on semiotic analysis using Umberto Eco's post-structuralist semiotic theory as an alternative to Ronald Barthes' semiotic theory, which is part of the structuralist school of thought. In addition to that, further research should further utilize the benefit of using another large language model in conducting sentiment analysis on the campaign style of PETA and similar organizations using LLM with improved training parameters and trained with more extensive data, especially by carrying out more specific fine-tuning of comments on PETA and related issues.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the motive behind PETA's campaign strategy in this particular poster, which consists of anthropomorphic imagery of animals consuming human babies to create a shock effect for people to question the morality behind slaughtering animals for human food consumption.

One approach to using multimodal analysis to reveal a hidden ideology is to apply semiotic analysis of visual grammar to deconstruct the discursive strategy behind a

campaign poster. Through the implementation of semiotic analysis of iconography, attributes, settings, gaze, and pose to find cues of visual grammar present in this gruesome depiction of cannibalism this study, it is clear that PETA challenges the notion of human speciesism which values human in the advantage position over animals life which their fate rest on human decision making. The sentiment analysis further underscores the polarizing nature of such campaigns, with a significant portion of audience responses leaning negative or neutral rather than fully supportive.

The results of this research support previous research where PETA uses provocative visual elements as an effective strategy to make the issues advertised become discussed in the public chamber compared to using a campaign strategy that uses ordinary visual elements. However, the use of visual elements that are too dramatic can trigger a response that is contrary to the main aim of the campaign to increase public awareness of animal rights violations. Future research could focus on conducting post-structuralist semiotic analysis using Umberto Uno's semiotic theory. Discourse Historical Approach analysis could examine the evolution of PETA's campaign style from its founding to the present. Apart from that, there needs to be a lot of exploration of how the audience responds to PETA's campaign style to know the success of using the shock advertising campaign strategy in increasing public awareness of environmental issues and animal rights.

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