

Construction of Taste in Food advertisements. What Tweenage Children are Learning from these advertisements?

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Introduction

This study is concerned with analysing the construction of taste in the food advertisements that tweenage children (children aged 10 to 12 years) are being exposed to advertising on Australian television. This study presents a semiotic analysis which uses techniques adapted from Judith Williamson to investigate the general ideological underpinning of the taste-related messages to which Australian consumers are currently exposed through television advertising. It concludes by demonstrating that food advertisements that advertisers broadcast during C classified time describe the taste of the advertised food products on the basis of their fresh quality. The study has revealed that food marketers strive to communicate the freshness of their products with reference of their appearance and colour, flavour, and texture through imageries, sound, sensory words and voice-overs.

Signs and images

At the centre of mass communication sign system, there are images. The technique of advertisers of arranging various signs to attach a particular image to a product is called the 'referent system'. Visual semiotics is widely used to analyse 'how visual representations convey meaning' (Hall 1997, p. 41) According to communication theorist Moriarty (1995), the meanings of pictures are not in the pictures themselves, but rather, they depend on our interpretation of the pictures. Visual interpretation is based on our perceptions through language, our cognition ability, which has been developed during our life experience. Like linguistic analysis, visual analysis is also based on readers' experiences and social interactions. Therefore, advertisers utilise a pre-existing referent system of meaning (Moriarty 1995; Saren 2007). For instance, advertisements portray beautiful women with 'sexy' curves; they thus equate 'curvy' women with being healthy, because society equates being 'curvy' with being healthy and beautiful. In this way, advertisements do not create meaning for the product; rather, they create consciousness and translate the meaning for the product through a sign system. Such pre-existing sign systems can be characterised in a number

of ways. They have been called ‘codes’ by Hall (2001), ‘referent systems’ by Williamson (1978) and ‘mythologies’ by Barthes (1972). All of these concepts refer to the linked set of signs that are involved in the process of constructing meaning in advertising. Each of these terms means something rather different, and each has somewhat different methodological implications (Gillian 2001; Rose 2011, p. 88).

This study relies on the semiotic approach used by Judith Williamson to make explicit the ideologies underlying Australian food product commercials to show how advertisers are constructing the tweenage market through advertising messages to children (Althusser 2006; Barthes 1972). The reason is this: advertisements become a medium for ideology by reinforcing ideas, beliefs and opinions that reflect the society within a culture. The ideology is generated by the signs contained in the advertisement and its message, and advertisers make use of signs to convey advertising messages (Bezuidenhout 1998; Chandler 2000). Sign systems help people to reinforce notions of the way that things are. Consequently, semiotic analysis always involves ideological analysis. Ideology produces meaning through the use of signs, which are contained in the advertisement and its message (Chandler 2000). Therefore, in order to gain a deep insight of the role that advertising plays in the construction of the tweenage market, it is necessary to identify how advertising organises and constructs reality, how ideology and meanings are produced within advertising discourse, and why images are the way they are (Hodge & Kress 1993, p. 212).

According to Judith Williamson, when interpreting the ideological work of an advertisement, it is important to understand how advertisers establish a correlation between signifier and signified through narrative, shots, editing and so on; that is, how viewers take meaning from the product. Questions to be asked include: What kind of meaning does the advertising message have outside of the advertisement; what is the significance of that message; and what quality does the advertisement transfer to the product? In this study, emphasis has been given to the visual rather than verbal codes, because visual codes hold a greater impact on children (Hodge 1989).

Reading advertisements

To examine the techniques that advertisers use to market products to tweens on free-to-air television in Sydney, it is important to read and analyse the visual and verbal content of the advertisement. Analysing media texts, such as advertisements constitutes an important area of visual semiotics. Therefore, this study will use semiotics as its primary research method to examine the techniques that advertisers use to market products to tweens, on free-to-air television in Sydney.

To identify different kinds of appeals, and to understand how advertising works on the basis of dominant ideologies, this study relies on semiotics to read and analyse advertising – content

analysis cannot address the broader issues in analysing visual images, as it assumes that different viewers see the same image in the same way (Rose 2011, p. 85-6). Semiotics is an appropriate tool for an examination and critical analysis of advertising (Dyer 2003; Jhally 1990; Williamson 1978). Semiotics allows for the ‘decoding [of] advertising text’; this technique lets researchers make classifications of advertising signs and sign systems in relation to their method of transmission (Berger 1989).

Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1990, p. 214) argue that one of the main strengths of semiotic analysis is that researchers can examine cultural code and thus can understand how people in different societies signal to each other, through their facial expressions, body language and dress codes that exist within their cultural system (Leiss, Kline & Jhally 1990.) Semiotics helps researchers to understand how sign systems operate in communities – to understand the concepts that are ‘obvious’, ‘natural’, universal and permanent – through the sign system. This method helps to make researchers realise that they are always dealing with signs in order to represent the world, and that sign systems are involved in the construction of meaning (Chandler 2000).

Data collection

I have recorded children’s commercials used in the current study from five television networks (Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, Gem TV and Go), from November to December 2013, during C-classified programs (4pm–8:30pm, Monday–Friday) for children less than 14 years of age (ACMA 2013a). A total of 112.5 hours of children’s television programming was recorded. The reason for collecting data from only these free TV channels was because they are the most popularly watched channels, which target diverse audience groups around the nation. In particular, the Seven, Nine and Ten channels dominate the free-to-air television advertising market (SA 2009). Therefore, these channels were used as primary data sources for gathering the advertising sample; programs were viewed heavily by the 2- to 14-year-old age category (SA 2013). Data were collected during Monday to Friday because tweens are more likely to watch children’s programming on weekday afternoons (ACMA 2015). Data collection took place during week normal weekdays from 18 November to 20 December 2013, to avoid dates when advertising data might get influenced by holidays or special events (Brindal, Corsini & Hendrie 2011). After looking at thousands of advertisements, the decision of which to include in the preliminary sorting was based on their use of the word ‘food’. All duplicate advertisements were eliminated. In total, excluding duplicates, music album advertisements and network promotional messages, the final sample size was 427 unduplicated commercial executions.

Descriptions of the advertisements

1.1 Advertisement: Kellogg’s Crunchy Nut

The 30-second Kellogg’s Crunchy Nut advertisement opens with a medium–long shot, featuring two terrified male chefs who are on the run from a terrifying and hungry dinosaur in an industrial kitchen. Finding no one, the dinosaur is about to leave the kitchen. The first chef whispers to

another ‘*What have you done, don’t make a sound.*’ Then other chef nods his head but, as he is eating Kellogg’s Crunchy Nut, a ‘*crunch*’ noise of the tasty cereal reveals their hiding place. Hearing the crunchy noise the dinosaur returns and the first man looks at the second man with surprise. Then the second man, looking at his friend, says, ‘*Sorry, they are nutty.*’ The advertisement closes by a feature of the packet of Kellogg’s Crunchy Nut, accompanied by a male voiceover that says the campaign slogan ‘*The trouble is they taste too good.*’ In the final shot, the caption on the screen is supplemented by a female image and voice. The text reads: ‘*The trouble is they taste too good.*’





Figure 1. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut

1.2 Advertisement: Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch

The 15-second advertisement opens with a close-up shot of a Hungry Jack's takeaway bag in a car. Then it continues featuring a group of friends in a car at the beach. When reverse parallel parking, the driver of the vehicle hears a loud 'crunch' noise and stops.



Figure 2. Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch

Then he discovers that the loud ‘*crunch*’ noise is not something he has run over but actually emanating from the female passenger – she is biting into a Hungry Jack’s Chicken Crunch burger.

Seeing this, all characters start laughing at this humorous situation. The next few shots feature Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch burger and its ingredients such as chicken breast, crispy coating and lettuce. These shots are accompanied by high-tempo background music and a male voiceover, saying '*Hungry Jack's new Chicken Crunch. It's surprisingly crunchy; with a juicy chicken breast in a crispy coating. For just \$4.24, they're just made for summer. Burgers are better at Hungry Jack's.*' The advertisement closes showing a billboard with the logo and slogan '*The Burgers Are Better at Hungry Jack's.*'

1.3 Advertisement: McCafé sandwiches

The 15-second advertisement opens with a male voiceover, saying, '*Are you obsessed?*' The following close-up shots feature, sequentially, a young man splashing water on his face in the morning and ironing his McCafé staff uniform. He is spraying mouth freshener, breathing in fresh air from a fan and snapping a raw carrot in half. In the next shot, the man is at a McCafé restaurant in his uniform, saying, '*Well, so do we*' and the male voiceover continues: '*Enjoy McCafé's delicious turkey sandwiches, made fresh daily, served with sparkling water for just \$7.95*'. The advertisement then shows the McCafé delicious turkey sandwiches and a bottle of Mount Franklin light sparkling water, with text showing '*New at McCafé: \$7.95 with sparkling water*' and the man serving a customer at the McCafé. The advertisement closes with a shot of tomatoes being dropped with water splashing on them, the McCafé logo and the campaign slogan campaign: '*McCafé. That's fresh*'. These shots are accompanied by low-tempo background music.



Figure 3. McCafé sandwiches

1.4 Advertisement: Nescafé Azera

The 15-second Nescafé Azera coffee advertisement opens with a close-up shot of a gold fish inside a coffee plunger with the text ‘Coffee plunger or goldfish bowl?’



Figure 4. Nescafé Azera

The following close-up shots show an Azera coffee container, a male hand taking the Nescafé Azera coffee container from the kitchen shelf, a spoonful of Nescafé Azera coffee, hot water pouring into a coffee cup, a water droplet falling into the cup of coffee that splashes and the face of the man drinking Azera coffee. These shots are accompanied by low-tempo background music and a female voiceover, saying, ‘*New Nescafé Azera combines premium instant coffee with finely ground, roasted coffee beans to create a full-bodied taste and rich, intense aroma. Coffee has evolved.*’ The advertisement closes with the Azera coffee and container, with the text ‘*It all starts with a Nescafé*’.

1.5 Advertisement: McDonald’s new Brekkie Wraps

The 15-second advertisement opens with close-up shots of someone cracking an egg on the rim of a bowl, beating it with a whisk, then pouring the beaten egg into a hot pan.



Figure 5. McDonald's new Brekkie Wraps

The next few shots feature McWraps and its' ingredients, such as warm and freshly scrambled eggs, a juicy plum tomato with water droplets on it and sizzling rasher-bacon in a hot pan. These shots are accompanied by medium-tempo background music and a male voiceover, saying '*With real ingredients like fresh scrambled egg, juicy plum tomato and sizzling rasher-bacon, McDonald's Brekkie Wraps are a great way to start the day*' and high-tempo background music. The advertisement closes with billboard featuring the McDonald's logo, the slogan "*I'm lovin' it*" and its Facebook address, specifying that it is '*Available before 10.30am for a limited time at participating restaurants*'.

1.6 Advertisement: McDonald's new Real Choices McWraps & Salads Range

The 30-second advertisement opens with a close-up shot of a young man holding a McDonald's new Real Choices wrap. The next close-up shot features a young woman putting a spoonful of McDonald's Real Choices Salad into her mouth. The next few shots show McDonald's new Real Choices Salads and their ingredients such as juicy handpicked tomatoes, crunchy noodles and crisp cabbage. The following shots feature a male hand tearing off the wrapping from a McDonald's McWrap, then he bites into it at a McDonald's restaurant. The advertisement then depicts the young woman eating a McDonald's new Real Choices Salad at a McDonald's restaurant. These shots are accompanied by high-tempo background music and a male voiceover, saying, *'Introducing, McDonald's new better-than-ever bright crackly salads. They are delicious real choices salads. There is the Chicken and Aioli McWrap, with crispy all-grilled 100% Australian chicken with chicken; Spicy Mayo McWraps, with juicy handpicked tomatoes; and the new Crunchy Noodle Chicken Salads with crisp cabbage. With an introductory price of \$5.95 and \$6.95, McDonald's® real choices: they're "you better believe it" good!'* Captions on the screen supplement the images and voiceover throughout, reading: *crispy, grilled, spicy mayo, handpicked tomatoes, crunchy and crisp.* The advertisement closes with a billboard with the McDonald's logo and its Facebook address, with text specifying, *'Available from 10.30am for a limited time at participating restaurants.'*





Figure 6. McDonald's new Real Choices McWraps & Salads Range

1.7 Advertisement: The Coffee Club

The 15-second advertisement opens with a close-up shot of a knife cutting through the middle of a red capsicum followed by the capsicum halves bouncing.



Figure 7. The Coffee Club

It continues by showing freshly cut mushroom pieces rolling from the wooden chopping board and various dishes. There is a special focus on eggs benedict, which The Coffee Club offers, then on

the white, male and female customers who are enjoying their food at a Coffee Club restaurant. These shots are accompanied by low-tempo background music and a female voiceover, saying *‘Beautiful fresh ingredients are used every day to bring you delicious all-day favourites like eggs Benedict, made your way with our fresh new menu. There is more for you to love at The Coffee Club’*. The advertisement closes with a billboard of The Coffee Club logo, its website address and slogan *‘More For You To Love’*.

1.8 Advertisement: V8 Fusion juice

The 15-second advertisement opens with a full-length shot of a young woman who is about to drink some V8 Fusion juice. As she starts drinking, the advertisement features many vegetables and fruit flying towards her head. These then smash into her head, splashing the woman with vegetable and fruit juices. These close-up shots are accompanied by high-tempo background music and a female voiceover. The advertisement closes with a shot of bottles of V8 Fusion juice and text, with a female voiceover in the background saying, *‘Nutritious veggies and delicious fruit. V8 Fusion.’*



Figure 8. V8 Fusion juice

1.9 Advertisement: Oporto's Street Eats Burger Range

The 30-second advertisement opens with a close-up shot of a billboard of the campaign slogan 'New Street Eats Burger Range', and the logo of Oporto then the advertisement features three Street cooks – Kam Boonkong, Arturo Del Sarto and Jarrah Jones – at their respective street food stalls.



Figure 9. Oporto's Street Eats Burger Range

The next shots introduce three different burgers, namely the 'Thai Curry', 'Roman Aioli' and 'Outback Feisty BBQ' burgers; made by these three cooks at their respective street food stalls. These shots are accompanied by high-tempo background music and a male voiceover, saying, 'Introducing the new "Street Eats Burger Range" from Oporto ... three street cooks, with a few

tasty tricks up their sleeves, have inspired three new burgers – Kam Boonkong and the Thai Curry Burger with a zesty spice-kick of lemongrass and ginger, Arturo Del Sarto and the Roman Aioli Burger with a cheeky dash of herbs and garlic, and Jarrah Jones and the Outback Feisty BBQ Burger with sizzling bacon and a smack of BBQ sauce with a hit of chilli.’ The advertisement ends with the jingle ‘Just Gotta Go! Oporto!’ The advertisement closes with a billboard of the Oporto logo, which includes, the text ‘Fresh not frozen. Grilled not fried’.

2. Discussion

2.1 Taste as an advertising appeal

Nelson (1970) has classified market goods into two distinct categories, namely, search goods and experience goods. Search goods are defined as products whose quality the consumers can determine before making their purchase decision (e.g., clothing, furniture and jewellery). Experience goods include products whose quality the consumer cannot verify until after buying and experiencing the product (e.g., foods, books and detergents). The main focus of this study is experience goods; that is, food.

To sell their product, companies use two types of message appeals, emotional and rational (or informational). An appeal refers to the basic idea that advertisers want to communicate to the audience so as to stimulate a person to buy a product or service (Kotler et al. 2013). Emotional advertisements have been defined as ones that use ‘psychological appeals such as fear and love to touch our feelings’ (Wells et al. 1989, p. 330). Emotional appeals are messages that attempt to arouse consumers’ negative or positive emotions, which will stimulate their purchase intentions (e.g. a Hallmark greeting card advertisement that dramatises a person’s precious life moments). According to Kotler, emotional appeals include fear, guilt and joy (Kotler 1997). In contrast, rational appeals in advertising involve detailed information on the benefits – such as quality, economy, value or performance of a product – that consumers may enjoy (Kotler 1997). This stimulates consumers to make rationally oriented purchase decisions on the basis of detailed information – factual and relevant brand data – that the advertisement provides in a clear and logical manner (Kotler 1997; Puto & Wells 1984, p. 638)

Food advertisements use rational appeals by emphasising on characteristics of a food product such as taste or flavour (e.g. chocolatey, fruity, sweet) or texture (e.g. crunchy, crisp). Taste has been defined as the perception of sweet, sour, bitter, salty and the other basic tastes, which are identified by gustatory receptors found primarily in the oral cavity (Watson, Kirkcaldie & Paxinos 2010). By contrast, ‘flavour’ refers to a mingled but unitary experience, which includes the combined sensations of taste and smell. Freshness, spiciness, sweetness and other flavour attributes may have the largest impact on consumers’ acceptability and desire to consume a food again (Barrett, Beaulieu & Shewfelt 2010). The following sections will investigate the construction of freshness

in the above food advertisements by decoding the underlying messages conveyed through gustatory, visual and auditory cues that each advertisement included in this category contains.

2.2 Freshness is about sound

Freshness is a critical variable affecting overall food quality (Cardello & Schutz 2003; Steenkamp & Van Trijp 1996). Freshness is an important attribute in consumer food quality perception (Curtis & Cowee 2009; Steenkamp & Van Trijp 1996), regardless of age, gender or dieting status (Oakes & Slotterback 2002). Freshness is important to marketers because consumers perceive fresher foods to be more appealing (Cardello & Schutz 2003; Steenkamp & Van Trijp 1996). It is important to note that 'freshness' can be understood and represented in different ways. Advertisers and food manufacturers use a number of gustatory, visual and auditory cues in order to create the perception of flavour for consumers, because people consume foods on the basis of their flavour, smell and texture (Fortin, Goodwin & Thomsen 2009; Péneau et al. 2007).

In the Kellogg's Crunchy Nut and Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch advertisements (see Figures 1 and 2), freshness is constructed with reference to the crunchiness and crispiness of the advertised products. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut is fresh because it is crunchy and nutty. The visual device of animation, coupled by the storyline, dialogue, voiceover and the product's name, Kellogg's Crunchy Nut, work together to construct the product as crunchy. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut used metaphors to promote their product. In the Kellogg's Crunchy Nut advertisement, metaphor is used to humorously promote and associate eating Kellogg's Crunchy Nut with 'silliness'. The word 'nutty' has two meanings in this context. One, it signifies the taste of Kellogg's Crunchy Nut as nutty as in tasting of nuts; two, the first man refers to the second man's eating of noisy food is described as nutty because, while the dinosaur is hunting for them, by creating noises, he is actually providing the dinosaur with information about their current location.

Like the Kellogg's Crunchy Nut advertisement (see Figure 1), Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch (see Figure 2) has a humorous narrative-based structure. Intriguingly, both Kellogg's Crunchy Nut and Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch advertisements construct crunchiness through noise and visuals. In the Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch advertisement, the driver stops the car when he hears a loud '*crunch*' noise (see Figure 2). The crackling sound, which emanates from the female passenger's first bite of a Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch burger (see Figure 2) signifies the crunchiness of the product.

The above advertisements emphasise the sound generated by eating their food because sound is one of the senses that impacts on the experience of food and drink (Stevenson 2009, p. 58). What people hear when they bite into a food, such as the crunch of a crisp, plays an important role in the

multisensory perception of flavour, not to mention in their enjoyment of the overall multisensory experience of eating or drinking (Spence 2015). While crispness is a flavour characteristic, sound is an important factor affecting the consumers' perception of crispness (Vickers & Borne 1976; Vickers 1983).

The taste of certain foodstuffs is surely all about sonic stimulation – the crispy crunch. Food-related auditory cues can impact on how certain foodstuffs are evaluated (Dacremont 1995; Dacremont, Colas & Sauvageot 1991). Auditory cues generated during the first bite is an important factor when it comes to determining the perceived texture of a food (Demattè et al. 2014; Zampini & Spence 2004). People normally use auditory cues from the first bite when trying to judge the crispness of a food (Fillion & Kilcast 2002; Sherman & Deghaidy 1978). Therefore, Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch advertisement (see Figure 2) constructs the product's crispiness through the sound generated from the first bite. In semiotic terms, the signified (flavour and texture) attached to the signifier (the crunching sounds that the characters are making when eating) and thus transfers meaning to the product (freshness). Crunchiness is a much-appreciated textural attribute perceived by many consumers as an indication of the freshness and quality of a food product. Sounds emanated from biting of a crunchy food can positively influence people's perceptions of moistness, texture, and other aspects of food, and may influence taste perception (Tunick et al. 2013).

In addition to noise, the Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch advertisement constructs the product as fresh with the reference of the crunchiness; juiciness and crispiness of the ingredients, such as chicken breast and its coating (see Figure 2). Shaking off crispy golden crust from the fried golden-brown and crispy chicken refers to the chicken fry being crispy signifying it has come recently from the hot fat and not had time to get soggy; shaking off water droplets from a washed lettuce (see Figure 2) signifies its freshness. This is also achieved through the name of the product, Hungry Jack's Chicken Crunch, and through more specific aspects, including the crispiness of the product. Although the voiceover mentions juicy chicken breast, no picture of juicy chicken breast (see Figure 2) can be found in this advertisement.

Unlike the above, the McCafé advertisement (see Figure 3) does not construct the product as fresh with the reference to the sound generated from food; instead, it uses the sound of water splashing, iron steaming, mouth spraying, voice singing and carrot snapping (see Figure 3). This advertisement aims to promote McCafé as a source of fresh value-added foods. It attempts to assign a 'fresh' connotation to McCafé with reference to the activities that one does in the morning. Washing his face with splashes of water, pressing his McCafé uniform, spraying mouth fresher and breathing in the fresh air of the fan all refer to the fact that this McCafé employee is about to start his day with freshness in his appearance, uniform and breath (see Figure 3). Overall, the advertisement conveys the message that starting your day with McCafé breakfast is the ideal way

to start a new day full of freshness and energy. According to the famous Australian restaurateur and food writer, Bill Granger, breakfast ‘has a lot to do with our early-morning lifestyle and climate’ (Scott 2017). In Western societies, breakfast is usually made up of highly perishable foodstuffs – eggs, potatoes, tomatoes, bread and fried dishes – that are supposed to be consumed fresh. Coffee also tastes its best when it is fresh. Hence, McCafé has associated their breakfast menu with morning freshness. Hence, the advertisement employs number of signifiers of morning freshness (see Figure 3) to appeal strongly to the taste attribute of the products – it is about freshness.

The advertisement (see Figure 3) is also promoting the brand on the basis of the price and immediacy that it offers. While the images highlight the freshness attributes of the products, the voiceover provides price-related information. The voiceover states, ‘*Enjoy McCafé’s delicious turkey sandwiches, made fresh daily, served with sparkling water for just \$7.95*’ implies that breakfast at McCafé saves time and that McCafé is the budget-friendly way to have a freshly cooked breakfast daily. The images of different types of McCafé sandwiches (see Figure 3) provide information about the different options offered by McCafé. Images of falling tomatoes with water splashing on them (see Figure 3) suggest that the sandwiches are made using fresh tomatoes and, thus, the advertisement connotes the freshness of the product. In addition to sound, freshness can also be constructed through motion.

In the above advertisements, the advertisers have constructed the products as fresh with reference to sound. Analysis of the advertisements included in this study suggests that, in addition to sound, advertisers communicate the freshness of the advertised products using motion. Therefore, the following sections will investigate the construction of freshness through motion in television food advertisements.

2.3 Freshness is about movement

Movement has innate appeal; the human brain recognises movement as an indicator of freshness and quality (Gvili et al. 2015). Consumers perceive a food to be fresh by observing its movement; they rate a food as being fresher when they observe the food in motion versus static (Gvili et al. 2015). Therefore, marketers display food or drink in motion to effectively communicate freshness, because motion may serve as a cue for freshness (Gvili et al. 2015). Consumers perceive also drinks to be more appealing by observing them in motion. In a recent study by Gvili et al. (2015), when participants were shown pictures of two brands of orange juice and asked to evaluate them, they rated the moving juice as more appealing than the still juice.

This use of movement is observed in the Nescafe Azera coffee advertisement (see Figure 4) features a number of movements of the ingredients needed to prepare the coffee where ingredients that are needed to prepare the coffee are shown in motion. Shots including the pouring hot water into a coffee cup, a water droplet falling into the cup of coffee then splashing up connote the freshness of the product. The Nescafé Azera coffee advertisement (see Figure 4) makes a narrow appeal to convenience, which is secondary to the product's taste. Both the voiceover and images convey the convenience and taste attributes of the product, mentioning that it is instant, and that, being made with finely ground, roasted coffee beans, it has a rich, intense aroma.

The advertisement opens with a gold fish inside a coffee plunger with the text '*Coffee plunger or fish bowl?*' (see Figure 4), which signifies that consumers need to use their plunger for something else. The main theme of the advertisement is evolution; it is about discovering the possibilities evolving from taking an everyday household item such as coffee plunger and using it for new purpose. In this ad Nescafé Azera represents the evolution of instant coffee with a flavour that's comparable to the real product but with more convenience. The scenes showing the process of making Azera coffee – taking out a spoon of coffee from the container, lighting the gas stove, steam coming from the kettle, pouring boiling water on the coffee, water droplet splashing, pouring milk into the coffee (see Figure 4) – signifies that it is instant coffee; there is no waiting for the coffee to brew, or use the plunger. By sharing information on how to prepare the product, the advertisement is highlighting the product's simplicity and is thus encouraging people to feel knowledgeable about what to do with their purchase.

While a seemingly simple advertisement, the pictures reveal insight into the values of the targeted consumer. The advertisement is promoted as a gender-specific product. From looking at the actor, it seems that this product is targeted at middle-aged men. The advertisement has manufactured masculinity with the male character's aspect – the appearance of stubble is regarded as masculine in western society (Dixson & Brooks 2013). The male character's expression is sombre. The lighting is dark and relatively low in contrast – often used for creating a dark and shadowy atmosphere or setting – darker tones signify masculine traits (Fernandez 2014).

Freshness is an important factor when it comes to determining the perceived taste of a food. In the following advertisements, advertisers use motion not only to communicate the freshness of the products but also to attach a secondary value to them. By displaying ingredients in motion, the Nescafé Azera coffee advertisement (see Figure 4) also communicates the convenience aspect of the product. The Coffee Club (see Figure 7) and McDonald's Brekkie Wraps (see Figure 5) advertisements used the freshness theme in order to promote their respective breakfast menus. For V8 Fusion (see Figure 8), motion also connotes the product's nutrition value.

The McDonald's Brekkie Wraps and Real Choices McWraps & Salads Range advertisements (see Figures 5 and 6) used a number of movements of the products' ingredients to signify their freshness. The McDonald's Brekkie Wraps advertisement (see Figure 5) used shots of cracking an egg, beating it with a whisk and pouring the egg into the pan in order to construct this product as fresh. Images of a ripe red tomato, moist with droplets of water, and bacon rashers on a pan signifies that, at McDonald's restaurants, the wraps are made with freshly picked tomatoes and freshly pan-fried bacon rashers. The mention of hand-picked tomatoes in the voiceover signifies that they were hand-selected carefully from the farm with the particular purpose of making McDonald's new Brekkie Wraps.

Moreover, through the use of sensory-rich words such as '*juicy*' and '*sizzling*' in the voiceover, the advertisement constructs the products as fresh. The slogan '*Making early easy*' conveys the message that you can start your day with ease by buying McDonald's new Brekkie Wraps. Like the Nescafé Azera advertisement (see Figure 4), this advertisement (see Figure 5) also makes a narrow appeal to convenience. It is convenient because consumers do not have to make breakfast, they can buy it.

The McDonald's Real Choices McWraps & Salads Range advertisement (see Figure 6) is similar to the McDonald's Brekkie Wraps advertisement (see Figures 5) in that both ads use same theme: freshness. The visuals emphasise the freshness of the products and the voiceover emphasises flavour – highlighting the taste aspects of the product. A lot of food ingredients are shown in movement – the tomatoes are rolling down and fried noodles are bouncing up (see Figure 6), which signifies that they are not soggy and old, they are crunchy and fresh. The explosion of the crunchy noodle refers to the explosion of flavour offered by McDonald's Real Choices McWraps & Salads Range. Throughout the advertisement, it features McWraps and their ingredients, such as juicy handpicked tomatoes, crunchy noodles and crisp cabbage (see Figure 6). Chicken pieces shining on the grill, tearing up the grilled golden-brown and crispy chicken, pouring sauce over the lettuce, cucumber and tomato, then placing the chicken over (see Figure 6) all work together to construct the product as fresh. To intrigue viewers, the advertisement conveys sparkling red cabbage by adding starlight (see Figure 6) – a usual effect to construct the product as fresh.

To persuade a target audience, it is important to generate culturally acknowledged associations between the target consumers and the advertised product. Advertisers localise their products by relating a product with the taste preferences of local people in order to attract the attention of the target local consumers (Parsa 2004). While in McDonald's new Real Choices Salad advertisement (see Figure 6), any relationship between Australian chicken and its taste is not explicitly stated, the reference to '*100% Australian chicken*' in the voiceover emphasizes that the product is local.

The Coffee Club advertisement (see Figure 7) is similar to the McDonald's Brekkie Wraps and Real Choices Salads campaigns (see Figures 5 and 6), as all of these advertisements draw upon the taste connotation of a fresh breakfast. The connotative value of breakfast wraps and salads as fresh is evidenced in The Coffee Club advertisement (see Figure 7), in which the products – crisp capsicums, mushrooms and Egg Benedict – are made to seem fresh. Again, as in the previous advertisements, the food ingredients have been captured in motion in order to make the product more appealing to consumers. Images of a knife cutting the middle of a capsicum and the halves bouncing (see Figure 7) signify that it is fresh. Capsicum shining with water droplets illustrates its supposed freshness. The image of freshly cut mushrooms halves rolling down the wooden chopping board signifies that the mushrooms are perfect – they do not have any sign of discoloration, texture loss or dehydration – which, it can be argued, implies that the flavour and nutrition element remain intact. These shots signify the freshness of the food at The Coffee Club.

The V8 Fusion advertisement (see Figure 8) applies a similar strategy to construct its product as fresh. The advertisement showcases freshness and *nutritiousness* throughout, constructing the freshness of the product by showcasing splashes of fruit and vegetable juice. Through shots featuring vegetables and fruits flying near the young woman's head (see Figure 8); the advertisement is conveying information about the fresh ingredients contained in V8 drinks. The outdoor setting clearly indicates that the brand is offering nutritious and delicious drinks, which are perfect for staying cool all summer. The age of the model appearing in the advertisement (see Figure 8) provides information about the brand's target consumers. Apart from the Nescafé Azera advertisement (Figure 4), the above advertisements (see Figures 1–8) are aimed at young people. Marketers want to reach young consumers because this group has started earning money and forming families. Younger generations are health conscious; they prefer to have fresh and organic food (Morrison 2013). Therefore, the above advertisements promote their advertisements as fresh. While the above advertisements feature food or drink in motion to communicate the freshness of the advertised products, the next advertisements construct freshness with reference to the products' flavour attributes with the use of sensory rich expressions.

2.4 Freshness is about flavour

Consumers' judgments of freshness depend on various food properties such as flavour, colour, aroma and texture (Fortin, Goodwin & Thomsen 2009). The Oporto's Street Eats Burger Range advertisement (Figure 9) introduces three different flavours of Oporto burgers. The advertisement uses scenes of different street food stalls, which connote different kinds of flavours. In this sense, the New Street Eats Burger Range ad intends to offer something for everyone and hence everyone feels that it appealed to both themselves and others, albeit in different ways.

Advertisers use sensory-rich words, such as ‘tasty, delicious, delicate, fragrant, hot, fiery, mouth-watering, flavoursome, spicy, red-hot, tangy, juicy, subtle’ to represent products as fresh, nutritious, satisfying, perfect, adaptable, useful, glorious, etc. (Nestle 2013, p. 46) as well as to increase food sales (Larsen 2014). This advertisement makes use of expressions such as ‘*zesty spice*’ ‘*sizzling bacon*’, ‘*fresh not frozen*’ and ‘*grilled not fried*’ (see Figure 9 for all signifiers of the flavour, i.e. the taste of Oporto burgers). The association of this product with freshness and flavour transfers meaning from one to the other, such that the flavour of the advertised product becomes associated with the freshness of the product. In semiotic terms, the signified (flavours and freshness) attach to the signifier (cooks that are engaged in cooking different burgers) and thus transfer meaning to the product. Through providing consumers with information about the burgers’ ingredients, the advertisement connotes the burgers’ taste. A number of expressions, such as ‘*cheeky dash of herbs and garlic*’ ‘*a smack of BBQ sauce*’, ‘*hit of chilli*’ (see Figure 9), signify that these three different cooks add a small amount of sauces, spices and ingredients such as lemongrass, ginger, herbs and garlic for the purpose of flavouring.

Intriguingly, colour plays an important role in this advertisement. Colour, flavour, texture and nutritional value are the primary quality attributes that attract people to any food product (Spence, Smith & Auvray 2014, Stokes, Matthen & Biggs 2014, pp. 247–74). Consumers often perceive the flavour of foods by their colour (Downham & Collins 2000). Food colour affects consumers’ ability to identify flavour information sources correctly, including labelling and taste (Garber Jr, Hyatt & Starr Jr 2000). Therefore, colour and appearance may be the initial and most critical quality attributes. Specific colours are associated with particular tastes. In this advertisement, the Thai Curry Burger is associated with green (see Figure 9) because, in Thailand, kaffir lime leaves, for example are considered as the prime source of flavour and colour of Thai foods (Ekman & Friesen 2003, pp. 87–8). The Outback Feisty BBQ burger is hot, therefore, it is red (see Figure 9).

Colour is vital to advertising – advertisers use colour not only to induce consumers emotionally but also to add any particular connotative value to the product. Colour also enables ‘emotional branding’; companies can use colours connected with certain emotions in order to target the psychogenic heterogeneity of the market (Moser 2013). Colour creates and sustains corporate identity by differentiating brands from their competition (Garber Jr, Hyatt & Starr Jr 2000; Madden, Hewett & Roth 2000). In this advertisement, the Roman Aioli Burger is associated with purple (see Figure 9) because, in Rome, the purple colour is associated with power. In ancient Rome, purple was associated with the ruling classes – the Roman Emperors are known for the distinctive purple colour of toga they wore (Kraut & Johnston 1979).

3. Conclusion

Taken together, these results suggest that food marketers strive to communicate the freshness of their products with reference to their appearance and colour, flavour and texture through imagery, sound, sensory words and voiceovers.

The fresh-themed advertisements are socialising tweens to regard these food products as fresh, regardless of whether or not it actually is. In food advertisements, advertisers commonly use the word 'fresh' in ways that have nothing to do with the textbook definition of the word. From these advertisements, tweens are learning to consider any food as fresh, if the food is crispy and crunchy (see Figures 1 and 2). Even fast food can be considered as fresh if its ingredients are bouncy, especially if the food contains moist and bouncy vegetables (see Figures 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8) and if it is not frozen (see Figure 9). Thus fast-food advertisers falsely claim that their food products are 'fresh' – they support their claims with the use of a number of sensory words, such as *crunchy* followed by *crispy, juicy, sizzling, fresh and delicious, roasted, bright, crackly, delicious, grilled, spicy, zesty* and *cheeky* to represent their products as nutritious, satisfying, perfect, adaptable, useful, glorious, and so on. This is consistent with the results of an analysis by Nestle (2013) of food advertisements. The McCafé advertisement (see Figure 3) is promoting their breakfast menu; therefore, the advertisement associates morning freshness to the freshness of the breakfast at McCafé. From the McCafé advertisement, tweens are learning that we should make eating breakfast at McCafé part of our early-morning lifestyle because, at McCafé, we can have freshly cooked breakfast daily.

Food preferences are strongly influenced by family and ethnic background, level of education, income, age and gender (Nestle 2013, p. 22). However, from looking at the advertisements in this study, it seems that they are feeding consumers false images of Australia. At least 6.7 million of Australia's total population of more than 24.1 million were not born in this country (ASB 2016a, 2016b). In spite of this multicultural mix, these advertisements do not reflect the racial diversity of Australia. A possible explanation for this trend can be the fact that white-dominated Australian ad agencies (Burrowes 2016) have limited knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural communities and this is leading them to design ads that do not reflect the Australia's cultural diversity.

Moreover, these agencies' general unfamiliarity with non-white communities makes them present non-whites as stereotypes. From this, tweens are learning that the advertised products are available for consumption by white consumers. In television commercials there has been consistent and more frequent appearance of white characters than non-Whites, while non-Whites continue to be

relatively invisible in these advertisements (Coltrane & Messineo 2000; Lichter et al. 1994; Wiegel, Loomis & Soja 1980; Wilson II & Gutiérrez 1995). Similarly, the result of this analysis also shows that white characters are over-represented compared with the broader population. Most of the advertisements (n=11, 78.5%) feature white characters only. This finding is consistent with the most recent major Australian study of in free-to-air (FTA) TV advertising (see Ebiquity Australia 2014) which found that the overwhelming majority of TV advertising featured Caucasians, with only a small percentage including other ethnicities; 76% of actors of actors in commercials were white, while only 24% came from other culturally diverse backgrounds.

None of these advertisements, portrays any tween consumers or any child consuming the advertised product. All the advertisements are targeted at young adults, because it is this demographic that has that money and is fresh-food focused (Morrison 2013). Advertisers are broadcasting commercials for adult products during C-classified time because advertisers consider tweens to be not just as existing clients but also as future clients. Therefore, advertisers consider tweens to be the target of campaigns aimed at attaining brand loyalties from an early age (Moore 2004).

This study revealed that advertisers use a number of gustatory, visual and auditory cues in their advertisements to promote their foods on the basis of the products' taste attributes, because flavour, smell and texture play a key role in the creation of sensory effects on people's food choice and intake (Fortin, Goodwin & Thomsen 2009; Péneau et al. 2007). The advertisements in this study (see Figures 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8) constructed the advertised foods as fresh by using references to the products' bounciness, crunchiness and flavour. Advertisers used sensory-rich words such as *tasty, delicious, delicate, fragrant, hot, fiery, mouth-watering, flavoursome, spicy, red-hot, tangy, juicy, subtle*, etc. to support their claims about the freshness, flavour, smell and texture of the products. Fast food restaurants prepare meals daily on site mostly with preserved and pre-cooked ingredients. Almost all, if not all, non-vegetarian food such as chicken or beef burgers served in fast food restaurants are made from frozen chicken or beef patties or from pre-baked chicken breasts with fake grill marks added onto the surface of chicken breasts as they emerge from the oven (Reuters 2017; Spotts 2016). Through these advertisements, children are being told that additive- and preservative-dense fast-food (Ashakiran & Deepthi 2012) should be considered as fresh because they contain freshly cut vegetables (see Figures 5 and 9) or because they are not frozen (see Figure 9). Additionally, children's exposure to coffee advertisements (see Figure 4) during C-classified time remains questionable. Caffeine consumption leads to a number of negative impacts on children's health – for example, it can result in tachycardia, arrhythmia, hypertension, hyperactivity and anxiety (Branum, Rossen & Schoendorf 2014; Seifert et al. 2011) – therefore, coffee has no place in children's diet.