



Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications "Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models

sahar oumertem ^{1*},

¹Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University, Algeria, s.oumertem@univ-setif2.dz

Received: 15/07/2026

Accepted: 30/09/2026

Published: 30/09/2026

Doi: 10.53284/2120-013-003-016

Abstract:

This comparative study employs a semiological analysis, grounded in Roland Barthes' framework, to examine the interplay of visual, bodily, and linguistic codes within the promotional discourse of "Yamsafer" and "Trivago." The research identifies two distinct communicative paradigms:

- **Globalized Model ("Trivago"):** Transcends local cultural nuances, utilizing a simplified visual language, a solo presenter, and cognitive appeals centered on technological comparisons.
- **Localized Model ("Yamsafer"):** Aligns with Arab sociocultural contexts by invoking "local body" semiotics and familial cohesion through dramatized narratives blending emotional and rational appeals. Both platforms converge by using Modern Standard Arabic for text and Lebanese dialect for voiceovers to balance accessibility with emotional resonance. Furthermore, they strategically employ specific color palettes and close-up framing to cultivate trust, positioning leisure travel as a signifier of luxury and social distinction.

Keywords: Semiotic Analysis, Promotional Discourse, Cultural Localization, Consumer Behavior, Communicative Paradigms



1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the digital transformation that has reshaped the paradigms of marketing communication, the advertising spot has evolved into a complex semiotic space. Within this space, image, body, and linguistic codes interact to produce a persuasive discourse capable of directing the recipient's perception and influencing consumer behavior. This interaction is not limited to transmitting information; rather, it transcends it to construct a system of significations, values, and representations that grant the brand its identity and distinctiveness within a rapidly accelerating competitive market.

Contemporary digital advertising operates within a structural and cultural context that goes beyond being a mere promotional tool for utilitarian exchanges. It has transformed into a complex semiotic system tasked with producing meaning, reconstructing social values, and representing identities. This becomes increasingly evident in advertisements for tourism booking applications, which rely on the intensification of visual, linguistic, and bodily messages to stimulate the desire to travel, foster trust in the service, and establish a positive mental image among the audience. Within this horizon, advertising spots for tourism booking applications do not merely offer tangible physical services; instead, they sell the recipient "semantic promises" and imagined symbolic experiences (*Imagined Experiences*) that reshape the concepts of travel, luxury, and space.

This process is realized through a synergistic network of semiotic systems that integrate within the advertising space. The iconic and plastic codes of the image (colors, framing, lighting) interact with bodily semiotics (movements, gestures, and physical appearance as a vehicle for cultural identity). This interaction is governed by the linguistic code—in its anchoring (*ancrage*) and relaying (*relais*) functions, according to the theories of Roland Barthes—to guide the interpretive process and constrain the slippage of meaning.

However, the divergence in cultural references and communication strategies between brands raises questions regarding the nature of the semiological codes employed, their operational mechanisms, and the extent of their convergence or divergence in producing advertising meaning. Consequently, this study acquires its profound critical dimensions by subjecting these semiotic systems to a comparative analysis between two contrasting communication philosophies:

- **First: A globalized, standardized, cross-cultural model** represented by the "Trivago" application, which relies on simplified visual and bodily language, alongside pragmatic, instrumental applications that seek to transcend local specificities and homogenize global consumer behavior.



- **Second: A regional, localized model** represented by the "Yamsafer" application, which actively seeks to reformulate advertising codes to align with the cultural and social commonalities of the Arab recipient, invoking the semiology of the "local body," familial relations, and visual symbols that resonate with the collective imagination of the region.

The scholarly paradox crystallizes here in the tension between the "globalization and standardization of the tourism symbol" and its "cultural localization" (*tibi'ah wa thaqafah*). This divergence poses an epistemological problem concerning how semiotic systems function and interact to produce meaning when advertising shifts from a universal context to a specific cultural milieu.

"Based on this premise, the central problem of the study is articulated through the following primary question:"

- **"How do the semiotic interaction mechanisms of image, body, and linguistic codes diverge in constructing advertising signification between the 'Yamsafer' and 'Trivago' tourism booking models?"**

"This main question branches into the following sub-questions:"

- "How is visual signification constructed through image codes in both the 'Yamsafer' and 'Trivago' advertising spots?"
- "How is the body deployed as a semiotic system to shape promotional discourse and persuade the recipient?"
- "What are the functions of linguistic codes in guiding the interpretive reading of the advertising message?"
- "How do image, body, and linguistic codes integrate to produce persuasive meaning?"
- "What are the similarities and differences in the semiological structure of both advertisements, and what communicative, cultural, and marketing orientations do these differences reveal?"

Methodological Procedures of the Study

Study Type and Methodology

Determining the nature and methodology of a study is a fundamental step that guides the researcher, contextualizes the subject matter, and prevents methodological errors. This study, which presents a comparative semiological analysis of tourism booking application advertisements—specifically using "Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as models—falls within the

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



paradigm of qualitative research. Qualitative research is defined as a scientific inquiry predicated on the existence of social facts and phenomena constructed through the subjective lenses of the individuals and groups involved in the research (Kandilji, 2009, p. 58). Furthermore, this inquiry can be characterized as a descriptive-semiological study, specifically designed to investigate, describe, and analyze the advertising spots of both target applications.

Every scientific inquiry requires a systematic methodology to achieve its objectives. Methodology serves as the primary conduit for the researcher to realize planned goals; it is the pathway to uncovering truth in science through a set of general, systematic rules that govern the cognitive process and direct intellectual operations toward a logical conclusion (Badawi, 2019, p. 35).

Consequently, we have adopted a methodology that facilitates the analysis of these advertising spots, aiming to uncover the manifest and latent ideas and orientations embedded within them. To achieve this, we employed semiological analysis, an approach derived from semiotics. Semiological analysis aims to decode the hidden meanings within any sign system; it examines human language, animal communication, and non-verbal signs—such as traffic lights, storefront displays, maps, diagrams, and images—as structured systems of signs (Faddour, 2005, p. 23).

This methodology delves deeply into the message contents of advertising spots. It provides specific techniques and procedures for describing and analyzing an object as a self-contained signifier, as well as in relation to other signifying elements. It aims to identify the structural units of the communicative system and dissect its components to trace their structural homologies. Ultimately, it seeks to uncover the functional formula governing the construction and semantic interaction of this system through several analytical frameworks. Prominent among these are Martine Joly's approach, Roman Jakobson's communicative functions, Jacques Durand's rhetoric of visual discourse, and Roland Barthes' semiological model.

These analytical frameworks illuminate the mechanisms of meaning production within signifying systems, revealing the internal relationships among the constitutive elements of advertising discourse. They also seek the underlying truth of message contents by exposing latent meanings that are not overtly stated. In this study, we rely on the approach of Roland Barthes, who was a pioneer in applying semiological analysis to advertising.

Study Population and Sample

Every researcher aims to draw valid conclusions about the study population from which the research problem originates. The population is defined as the entirety of the elements of the



phenomenon under study, encompassing all individuals, objects, or entities that constitute the focus of the research problem (Obaidat, 1974, p. 109).

As established in our title and research question, the study population consists of the advertising spots for two tourism booking applications: "Yamsafer" and "Trivago."

Accordingly, we opted for non-probability sampling, wherein the researcher selects the sample based on specific self-determined criteria. In this approach, the researcher deliberately intervenes in the sampling process, deciding which elements of the parent population to include or exclude (Obaidat, 1974, p. 115).

Among the various types of non-probability sampling, we utilized purposive (judgmental) sampling. This technique relies on the researcher's deliberate selection of sample units that best serve the specific objectives of the study. In this case, the researcher assesses the information requirements under certain conditions and defines the sample accordingly (Obaidat, 1974, p. 116). Consequently, the researcher must provide rigorous scientific justifications for selecting these particular units over others within the original population, thereby adhering to a systematic methodology in choosing representative units of the study population.

Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools comprise the sources and instruments used by the researcher to gather data and information—defined as the observations recorded for each unit of the study population relevant to the scientific endeavor, whether quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (evaluative). In this study, we utilized two primary tools.

The primary tool is Roland Barthes' semiological analysis model, a choice dictated by the qualitative, analytical, and semiological nature of our study, which aims to decode both the denotative and connotative meanings of the selected "Yamsafer" and "Trivago" advertisements. The secondary, supporting tool is scientific observation. The following outlines the conceptual foundations of these tools:

1. Roland Barthes' Semiological Approach

An analytical approach represents a specialized, non-traditional application of scientific theory. To address our research problem, we employ Roland Barthes' semiological analysis to uncover the latent signifiers and underlying meanings within the "Yamsafer" and "Trivago" advertisements.

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



According to Barthes, this approach constitutes a rigorous investigation into the deep structures of media messages. The researcher maintains analytical neutrality toward the message while remaining attentive to the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions that enrich the analysis. This method penetrates the deeper layers of media discourse to facilitate critical analysis, offering a qualitative, inductive reading of the latent content of the message (Chaouch, 2011, p. 571).

This approach operates on two primary levels of signification:

- **The Denotative Level:** Refers to the immediate, literal, or self-evident meaning of the image.
- **The Connotative Level:** Refers to the latent, associative, and culturally coded meaning. This is the deeper, non-obvious dimension of the message (Yakhlef, 1996, p. 25).

Barthes posits that an image carries two types of discourse: first, a literal discourse that corresponds to the depicted scene, where perception engages with a non-coded iconic message (the description of the image); second, a symbolic discourse, which is more critical as it requires cultural knowledge to decode (the interpretation of the image).

Consequently, the analysis must proceed through two fundamental stages: a descriptive denotative reading and an interpretive connotative reading, which encompasses a cultural and ideological critique (Zerari, 2017, p. 105). These two stages form the overarching methodological framework of our study, enabling us to trace the signifiers and meanings within the advertising discourses of "Yamsafer" and "Trivago."

2. Scientific Observation

Serving as an auxiliary tool in this study, scientific observation involves examining the studied phenomenon within its distinct framework and natural context to obtain data relevant to the researched dimensions. It is defined as the meticulous observation of a phenomenon, or a systematic sensory and cognitive effort exerted by the researcher to identify selected manifest and latent aspects of behaviors and events within a specific situation and time.

Scientific observation is distinguished from casual observation by being systematic and goal-oriented; the researcher aims to track specific events or focus on defined dimensions. It is structured rather than accidental, requiring the researcher to follow precise procedures to record information systematically. Moreover, the researcher does not rely solely on basic sensory perception but employs tools that enhance the efficacy and precision of the observation.



Applied to our study, scientific observation encompasses all systematic observations recorded to describe, map, and analyze the complex linguistic and iconic components of the "Yamsafer" and "Trivago" tourism booking advertisements.

First: Semiological Analysis of the "Yamsafer" Application

1. Denotative Reading of the "Yamsafer" Television Commercial Broadcast on MBC1

Shot No	Shot Duration	Shot Type	Camera Angle	Camera Movement	Visual Content	Voiceover / Dialogue	Sound Effects (SFX)	Music Genre
01	1 sec	Medium Long Shot (MLS)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	A family of four is shown; the son sits on a white sofa next to the father, who is holding a smartphone. Facing them is the mother with her daughter on her lap, all smiling.	Voiceover (VO): "Want to book a hotel? Download the Yamsafer app."	//	Uptempo / Dance
02	3 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	A smartphone screen displaying the Yamsafer app, demonstrating the interface and booking process.	VO: "And not just hotels, you can book apartments too."	Bell chime	Uptempo / Dance
03	5 sec	Close-up	Eye-Level Angle	Static Shot	The father is shown at a hotel reception	VO: "Book now, best price"	//	Uptempo

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



		(CU)	(Normal)	(Fixed)	receiving a room key while showing the receptionist his smartphone with the booking details.	guaranteed."		/ Dance
04	1 sec	Medium Long Shot (MLS)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The father walks toward his family, who are joining him inside the hotel lobby.	VO: "...and pay upon arrival."	//	Uptempo / Dance
05	2 sec	Medium Long Shot (MLS)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The family is shown inside the hotel room, visibly joyful. The father is holding his smartphone while the children run around playing.	VO: "Yamsafer, the largest Arab booking site."	//	Uptempo / Dance
06	2 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The brand name "Yamsafer" appears in blue against a white	VO: "Download the app for free."	//	//



					background. Below it, the application's official website and download instructions are displayed.			
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A. Analysis of the Relationship Between the Audio and Visual Tracks

Regarding the editing and synchronization of the audio-visual tracks, a profound harmony exists between the selected musical genre (uptempo/dance music) and the service offered by the "Yamsafer" application. The music exerts a positive, complementary influence on the advertised service.

In television advertising, audio-visual synchronicity must be prioritized to ensure that the soundscape effectively drives the message. Indeed, the narrator's vocal timbre, sound effects, and musical score constitute primary semiotic elements that imbue the television commercial with vitality and verisimilitude.

Furthermore, music introduces an emotional dimension (*émotion*) to the promotional message. It possesses the capacity to induce an affective and emotional state in the spectator that aligns with the advertisement's goals. Music facilitates a direct connection with feelings and sensations; the recipient typically engages with the commercial affectively before processing it cognitively. Consequently, auditory cues can significantly enhance persuasive efficacy.

B. Analysis of the Written Code in the Commercial (The Linguistic Message)

The initial written signifier in the commercial is the brand name "**Yamsafer**" (O Traveler), rendered in blue against a white background. This explicitly designates the advertised application. It appears repeatedly on the mobile screen throughout the commercial and culminates at the end in a prominent, large font alongside instructional text indicating the application's URL and download methods.

Observing the commercial reveals that the target audience encompasses all demographics—regardless of gender—who share a passion for travel, mobility, and tourism. Consequently, a nuclear family consisting of a father, mother, and children serves as the central characters. This

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



choice indicates that the advertisement employs both affective (emotional) and cognitive (rational) appeals to persuade.

Emotional appeals often drive consumers to make spontaneous purchasing decisions without prior comparative deliberation. These motives are grounded in affect and triggered by subjective, irrational variables. Purchases are made spontaneously without analytical weighing of alternatives. These purchasing drivers include, but are not limited to, factors such as: imitation, prestige, status, appearance, design, color, upgrading to newer models, seeking aesthetic/status-driven services, exhibitionism, and uniqueness (Mansour, 1977, p. 39).

In this commercial, emotional appeal is manifested through **humor/playfulness**, evidenced by the smiles on the characters' faces and the joyful play of the children. It is also evident in **status appeals**, which elevate the prestige of the service, thereby transferring this perceived value directly to the consumer upon usage.

Conversely, the cognitive (rational) appeal is manifested through **competitive advantage**. This strategy highlights a unique, existing feature of the product that competitors lack. It intentionally compares the product with alternative offerings—either directly or indirectly—to assert superiority; hence, it is often termed "comparative appeal" (Al-Sayyid, p. 132). This is clearly articulated by the voiceover narrator: *"Best price guaranteed, Yamsafer is the largest Arab booking site."* These utterances bestow distinctiveness upon the service and contrast it with competing applications.

The linguistic dimension is highly active in this commercial, operating through moving text on screen and the brand name. Thus, the advertisement is semiotically saturated with diverse linguistic codes. Decoding these codes allows for a deeper comprehension and interpretation of the commercial, unveiling the underlying values, psychological formulations, and narrative genres deployed in this television message.

2. Typology and Strategy of the Commercial

A. Genre of the Commercial

Among the fundamental narrative structures of television commercials, this spot falls under the **"product-as-hero"** scenario. Within this narrative archetype, the product or service is present from the outset, serving as the protagonist and the primary catalyst of the plot (Rajem, p. 81). The narrative structure centers on the service from the very first frame.

B. Primary Strategic Approach



The commercial under analysis relies on an **informative-image strategy**, which aims to consolidate and reinforce the brand image of a specific service ("Yamsafer") in the consumer's mind. This strategy fosters consumer trust in the parent company, elevating its brand awareness to a point where the consumer chooses its services without hesitation due to the psychological trust established by the advertisement (Barthes, 1969, p. 160). This is achieved by providing sufficient information regarding the nature of the service, its market presence, and download instructions.

C. Creative and Artistic Execution

Television commercials employ various execution formats, ranging from testimonials and dialogues to dramatizations, musical numbers, or hybrid formats. The "Yamsafer" commercial relies primarily on the **dramatized format**.

The narrative unfolds chronologically: it begins with the family at home; the father then books a hotel using the "Yamsafer" application; subsequently, we see the family inside the hotel, and then within a luxurious suite, visibly exhibiting joy. Crucially, men, women, and children are all cast as central characters. This inclusive representation reflects the demographic of the primary target market. Utilizing such creative executions facilitates the smooth transmission, comprehension, internalization, and ultimate translation of the message into positive consumer behavior.

D. Message Content

The "Yamsafer" commercial relies on an **instructive/directional message** focusing on introducing a new service with novel features. It provides practical information regarding how to book, complete payments, and download the application.

3. Connotative Level of the "Yamsafer" Commercial

Having examined the denotative features, we now transition to the connotative level. This level encompasses the semantic formulas and sign systems that synthesize the deeper meaning of the commercial, translating and interpreting the elements identified in the denotative field.

A. Textual Structure (The Linguistic System)

The linguistic system in this advertisement utilizes **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)** for the on-screen written text, paired with a **Lebanese dialect** for the voiceover narrator. This dual linguistic choice injects a sense of verisimilitude (realism) and defines the spatial-demographic coordinates of consumption. Since the application targets the broader Arab market, MSA is used for universal



accessibility, while the Lebanese dialect is selected for its widespread intelligibility across the Arab world.

Language is a primary marker of national and cultural identity; it represents sovereignty, heritage, and civilizational belonging. As Said Benrad argues, the primary function of language transcends mere expression and communication; it actively shapes our conception of the universe, space, and time. What we know about the world, and how we categorize its contents, are processes negotiated within language through its conceptual segmentation of space and time. Language is the ultimate tool that permits this articulation. Consequently, we are often captive to our language, rather than being its conscious masters as we tend to assume (Benrad, p. 13).

B. Iconic Representations

The visual composition relies predominantly on **close-ups and extreme close-ups**. The designer effectively synthesizes psychological framing with scenic/decorative framing.

The close-up frame isolates the essential features of the subject, rendering background details secondary; this technique is used to clearly showcase the mobile application, its activation, and usability. Conversely, wider scenic shots are utilized to showcase the spaces and depict the characters experiencing joy and playfulness within the hotel.

Furthermore, **slow-motion shots** are employed during the presentation of the product to anchor consumer focus and attention, specifically when demonstrating how the booking service operates.

Regarding representation strategies, the **male figure** is deployed as a powerful and influential signifier. The father's appearance in the television commercial reflects his traditional socioeconomic role within the family as the primary breadwinner and financial provider. As Abdelwahab Al-Rami observes, the father is often the ultimate target of marketing efforts because he bears the financial burden of the household. He represents a purchasing power that is often activated by the mother, and his endorsement of the commercial's objective is presented as a natural, self-evident truth (Al-Rami, p. 44).

The depiction of the **woman** reflects her pervasive role in contemporary advertising. Her presence is driven by specific ideological frameworks, whether cast in a traditional stereotype (such as the mother) or portrayed in a modern, assertive light. In this regard, Jean Baudrillard posits that when advertisements rely heavily on women, they systematically focus on the female body, transforming it into the ultimate consumable object—a process achieved by rediscovering the body and embracing a discourse of physical emancipation (Baudrillard, 1970, p. 13).



Similarly, A. Ancelin and E. Chapus argue that advertisers exploit the female image for two main reasons: her purchasing power and her seductive appeal. Today, women hold substantial purchasing power over daily consumer goods and cosmetics, and advertisers frequently leverage the female form for its aesthetic and visual value (Chapus & Ancelin, 2019).

The inclusion of **children** in this commercial aligns with Cécile Jaurès' observation that children are often deployed in advertisements for goods not directly intended for them (such as cars, home appliances, or cleaning products). While the underlying commercial objective remains sales-driven, the physical presence, voices, or language of children are increasingly utilized to infuse the advertised product with a wholesome, domestic, and familial dimension (Al-Ayadi, 2008, p. 28).

Throughout the spot, the family is depicted smiling. Within communication semiotics, a smile directly influences the attitudes and responses of others. Focusing on a character's smile is a deliberate strategy to evoke warmth, joy, and satisfaction in the recipient. A smiling person implicitly communicates: *"I am non-threatening; I am here to share my joy and optimism."* In an advertising context, this translates to: *"I am highly satisfied with this service, and I want to share how much happiness it has brought me."* Thus, the concept of happiness is semiotically anchored to the advertised service.

The target audience of this commercial is the **middle-to-upper-class family unit**. The cultural and value paradigm embodied here mirrors Western consumerist values, focusing on economic and leisure consumption. This is signified by the family's satisfaction after booking through "Yamsafer."

Additionally, indicators of class distinction are embedded in the application itself; it is positioned for affluent, high-income demographics who travel frequently and demand seamless, highly gratifying transactional methods. Finally, familial values are underscored by the "family gathering" indicator, manifested through collective play and leisure within the booked hotel space.

C. Psychology of Colors and Their Cultural-Social Significations

Colors play an indispensable role in advertising design, serving as critical aesthetic signifiers that capture spectator attention.

In the "Yamsafer" commercial, the color palette reflects established design principles: utilizing highly engaging, warm, and high-contrast colors (such as red, orange, and yellow) alongside glossy finishes. However, these choices are functional, treating attention-grabbing not as an end in itself, but as the initial phase of communication.

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



- **White:** Dominates the backgrounds, furniture, and characters' attire. White is a primary, cool, and high-value color that visually expands space (unlike dark hues) and provides visual comfort. It is frequently used to accentuate adjacent colors and harmonize the visual field. Psychologically, white is universally associated with transparency, purity, elegance, serenity, and truth (Jumaa, p. 13).
- **Blue:** Featured prominently in the "Yamsafer" brand lettering. Semiotically, blue connotes tranquility, intellect, integrity, fidelity, honesty, and idealism.
- **Chiaroscuro (Light and Shadow):** The deliberate modulation of light and shadow is employed to define spatial orientation, sculpt form, reflect characters' emotions, establish depth, and evoke specific psychological moods or temporal settings (Awaj, 2011, p. 18).

Second: Semiological Analysis of the "Trivago" Application

1. Denotative Reading of the "Trivago" Television Commercial Broadcast on MBC1

Shot No	Shot Duration	Shot Type	Camera Angle	Camera Movement	Visual Content	Voiceover / Dialogue	Sound Effects (SFX)	Music Genre
01	//	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	A web browser search bar is shown on screen typing: "Hotels in New York."	Voiceover (VO): "Think that famous websites..."	//	Energetic / Loud
02	3 sec	Medium Shot (American Shot)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	A man is talking; the "trivago" brand name is visible on screen with an image of buildings behind him on a	VO: "...for travel show you all the hotels? Think again and don't miss out on anything."	//	Energetic / Loud



					personal computer interface.			
03	3 sec	Medium Shot (MS)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The man explains how the app works; next to him is a map of the United States with the text: "Hotels in New York: Booking Site A" and "Booking Site B."	VO: "Websites show you different hotels."	//	Energetic / Loud
04	3 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The man stands beside a website interface showing hotel listings on one side, and a mobile phone displaying hotel listings on the other.	VO: "Some websites only show you these, and some apps only show you those."	//	Energetic / Loud

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



05	4 sec	Medium Shot (MS)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Tracking Shot (Pan/Tilt)	The man stands in front of a visual of the trivago website displaying hotel options, then walks through those visual listings.	VO: "But because Trivago compares hundreds of websites, Trivago gives you a better idea of the available hotels."	//	Energetic / Loud
06	3 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	The man stands with the website name "trivago" in front of him, along with the slogan: "The right hotel, the best price."	VO: "This is also how Trivago helps you find the right hotel at the best price."	//	Energetic / Loud
07	1 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	On-screen text reads: "Hotel?"	VO: "Hotel?"	//	Energetic / Loud
08	1 sec	Close-up (CU)	Eye-Level Angle (Normal)	Static Shot (Fixed)	On-screen text reads: "trivago"	VO: "Trivago."	//	Energetic / Loud



A. Analysis of the Relationship Between the Audio and Visual Tracks

Regarding the editing and synchronization of the audio-visual tracks, a clear harmony and consistency exist between the selected musical genre (highly energetic/tempo-driven music) and the service offered by the "Trivago" platform. The music exerts a positive, complementary influence on the advertised service.

In television advertising, audio-visual synchronicity must be prioritized to ensure that the soundscape effectively drives the message. Indeed, the narrator's vocal timbre, sound effects, and musical score constitute primary semiotic elements that imbue the television commercial with vitality and verisimilitude.

Furthermore, music introduces an emotional dimension (*émotion*) to the promotional message. It possesses the capacity to induce an affective and emotional state in the spectator that aligns with the advertisement's goals. Music facilitates a direct connection with feelings and sensations; the recipient typically engages with the commercial affectively before processing it cognitively. Consequently, auditory cues can significantly enhance persuasive efficacy.

B. Analysis of the Written Code in the Commercial (The Linguistic Message)

The initial written signifier in this commercial is the phrase "**Hotels in New York**", rendered in blue against a white background. This phrase denotes the global scope of the application, demonstrating that users can access information on international hotels. This spatial extensiveness bestows a distinct and comprehensive character upon the service compared to alternative platforms.

Observing the commercial reveals that the target audience encompasses all demographics—regardless of gender—who share a passion for travel, mobility, and tourism. In terms of character representation, the commercial relies solely on a single narrator (presenter) as the central figure.

Consequently, we can argue that the advertisement relies primarily on a **cognitive (rational) appeal** to persuade. This is manifested through the **competitive advantage** appeal, which highlights a unique feature of the product that competitors lack. This strategy intentionally compares the product with alternative offerings—either directly or indirectly—to assert superiority; hence, it is often termed "comparative appeal" .

This comparative mechanism is explicitly demonstrated when the screen displays search results for "Hotels in New York" on "Booking Site A" versus "Booking Site B," illustrating how Trivago compares these prices.

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



This is further reinforced by the narrator's spoken lines: *"Some websites only show you these, and some apps only show you those. But because Trivago compares hundreds of websites, Trivago gives you a better idea about hotels."* These utterances bestow distinctiveness upon the service and contrast it with competing applications.

Additionally, the written logo **Trivago** is presented as a multi-colored brand signifier, accompanied by the phrase **"The right hotel, the best price"**, which functions as the advertising promise (slogan). The commercial culminates in the final signifier: **"Hotel? Trivago"**, which serves as the core brand mnemonic.

The linguistic dimension is highly active in this commercial, operating through moving text on screen and the brand name. Thus, the advertisement is semiotically saturated with diverse linguistic codes. Decoding these codes allows for a deeper comprehension and interpretation of the commercial, unveiling the underlying values, psychological formulations, and narrative genres deployed in this television message.

2. Typology and Strategy of the Commercial

A. Genre of the Commercial

Among the fundamental narrative structures of television commercials, this spot falls under the **"product-as-hero"** scenario. Within this narrative archetype, the product or service is present from the outset, serving as the protagonist and the primary catalyst of the plot (Rajem, 2013, p. 81). The narrative structure centers on the service from the very first frame.

B. Primary Strategic Approach

The commercial under analysis relies on an **informative-image strategy**, which aims to consolidate and reinforce the brand image of a specific service ("Trivago") in the consumer's mind. This strategy fosters consumer trust in the parent company, elevating its brand awareness to a point where the consumer chooses its services without hesitation due to the psychological trust established by the advertisement (Barthes, 1969, p. 160). This is achieved by providing sufficient information regarding the nature of the service, its market presence, download instructions, and usage mechanics.

C. Creative and Artistic Execution

Television commercials employ various execution formats, ranging from testimonials and dialogues to dramatizations, musical numbers, or hybrid formats. The "Trivago" commercial



relies primarily on the **solo presenter performance format** (individual execution), where a single presenter introduces the service, detailing its characteristics and advantages that distinguish it from competitors.

Crucially, **attribute-driven appeal** (feature-focused appeal) is deployed as a central persuasive tool to target demographics interested in tourism, travel, and mobility. Utilizing such creative executions facilitates the smooth transmission, comprehension, internalization, and ultimate translation of the message into positive consumer behavior.

D. Message Content

The "Trivago" commercial relies on an **instructive/directional message** focusing on introducing a search and booking service with novel features. It provides practical information regarding how to book, compare prices, and download the application.

3. Connotative Level of the "Trivago" Commercial

Having examined the denotative features, we now transition to the connotative level. This level encompasses the semantic formulas and sign systems that synthesize the deeper meaning of the commercial, translating and interpreting the elements identified in the denotative field.

A. Textual Structure (The Linguistic System)

The linguistic system in this advertisement utilizes **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)** for the on-screen written text, paired with a **Lebanese dialect** for the voiceover narrator. This dual linguistic choice injects a sense of verisimilitude (realism) and defines the spatial-demographic coordinates of consumption. Since the application targets the broader Arab market, MSA is used for universal accessibility, while the Lebanese dialect is selected for its widespread intelligibility across the Arab world.

Language is a primary marker of national and cultural identity; it represents sovereignty, heritage, and civilizational belonging. As Said Benrad argues, the primary function of language transcends mere expression and communication; it actively shapes our conception of the universe, space, and time. What we know about the world, and how we categorize its contents, are processes negotiated within language through its conceptual segmentation of space and time. Language is the ultimate tool that permits this articulation. Consequently, we are often captive to our language, rather than being its conscious masters as we tend to assume (Benkrad, 2004, p. 13).

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



Additionally, the presence of a foreign language—manifested in the brand name "**Trivago**"—introduces a connotation of sophistication, modernity, and global prestige, while ensuring high brand recall.

B. Iconic Representations

The visual composition relies predominantly on **close-ups and extreme close-ups**. The designer effectively synthesizes psychological framing with scenic/decorative framing.

The close-up frame isolates the essential features of the subject, rendering background details secondary; this technique is used to clearly showcase the mobile application, its activation, and usability. Conversely, wider scenic shots are utilized to showcase geographic maps and frame the presenter.

Furthermore, **slow-motion shots** are employed during the presentation of the product to anchor consumer focus and attention, specifically when demonstrating how the booking service operates.

Regarding representation strategies, the **attribute appeal** is deployed as an effective persuasive mechanism. The casting of a **male presenter** reflects traditional socio-economic dynamics. Historically, the male figure's prominence in television advertising corresponds to his economic role within the family as the primary breadwinner and financial decision-maker. As Abdelwahab Al-Rami observes, the father/husband remains a key target of marketing efforts because he typically bears the financial burden of the household. He represents a purchasing power that is often activated by the mother, making his endorsement of the commercial's goal appear as a natural, self-evident truth (Al-Rami, 2008, p. 44).

The target audience of this commercial is the **middle-to-upper-class family unit**. The cultural and value paradigm embodied here mirrors Western consumerist values, focusing on economic and leisure consumption.

This is signified by indicators of class distinction embedded in the application itself; it is positioned for affluent, high-income demographics who travel frequently and demand seamless, highly gratifying transactional methods. Finally, scientific and cognitive values are underscored through the instructional presentation of technology, demonstrating to consumers how to operate and benefit from digital tools.

C. Psychology of Colors and Their Cultural-Social Significations



Colors play an indispensable role in advertising design, serving as critical aesthetic signifiers that capture spectator attention.

In the "Trivago" commercial, the color palette reflects established design principles: utilizing highly engaging, warm, and high-contrast colors (such as red, orange, and yellow) alongside glossy finishes. However, these choices are functional, treating attention-grabbing not as an end in itself, but as the initial phase of communication.

- **White:** Dominates the backgrounds, text elements, and the presenter's attire. White is a primary, cool, and high-value color that visually expands space (unlike dark hues) and provides visual comfort. It is frequently used to accentuate adjacent colors and harmonize the visual field. Psychologically, white is universally associated with transparency, purity, elegance, serenity, and truth.
- **Blue:** Featured prominently in the first segment of the "Trivago" brand name. Semiotically, blue connotes tranquility, intellect, integrity, fidelity, honesty, and idealism.
- **Orange:** Blended into the middle segment of the brand name, orange carries a powerful suggestive energy. It connotes novelty, pride, prestige, brilliance, sophistication, and modernity.
- **Red:** Featured in the final letters of the "Trivago" brand name. Red carries a highly symbolic charge of desire, passion, pride, assertiveness, and psychological intensity (Haas, 1958, p. 89).
- **Chiaroscuro (Light and Shadow):** The deliberate modulation of light and shadow is employed to define spatial orientation, sculpt form, reflect characters' emotions, establish depth, and evoke specific psychological moods or temporal settings.

Conclusion and Epistemological Horizons

Based on the deconstructive readings and semiological comparisons conducted at both the denotative and connotative levels of the television commercials for the tourism booking applications "Yamsafer" and "Trivago," this comparative study yields a series of structural and conceptual conclusions regarding how contemporary digital advertising operates as a complex semiotic space. While both platforms fundamentally promote a similar utilitarian digital service, their persuasive strategies, cultural positioning, and rhetorical mechanisms packaging those services diverge significantly.

- The semiotic analysis exposes two contrasting communicative philosophies in the tension between globalization and cultural localization. "Trivago" represents a globalized, standardized, and cross-cultural advertising model that transcends local specificities. It relies on a highly simplified visual and bodily language alongside pragmatic, instrumental applications designed to homogenize global consumer behavior. Conversely, "Yamsafer"

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



represents a regional, localized model that actively reformulates its advertising codes to align with the cultural and social commonalities of the Arab recipient. This is achieved by invoking the semiology of the "local body," familial dynamics, and visual symbols rooted in the collective imagination of the region.

- This divergence in communicative philosophy naturally extends to the persuasive appeals and narrative formats employed by each brand. "**Yamsafer**" utilizes a chronological, dramatized execution centering on a family narrative, seamlessly blending emotional appeals—such as humor, playfulness, and familial warmth expressed through characters' smiles—with rational appeals like "best price guaranteed" and "pay upon arrival". On the other hand, "**Trivago**" relies almost exclusively on a rational, cognitive appeal executed through a solo presenter performance format. It leverages direct comparative mechanisms, illustrating searches across competing platforms, to establish its functional superiority and unique attribute-driven advantages.
- Furthermore, both commercials deploy the human body as a coded sign system that reinforces traditional socioeconomic dynamics. In both advertisements, the "father" or "male presenter" is constructed as a powerful signifier of financial purchasing power, economic agency, and household decision-making. However, "**Yamsafer**" further incorporates the female figure in her traditional, nurturing maternal role alongside children to infuse the digital service with a wholesome, domestic, and familial dimension. Conversely, "**Trivago**" deploys a single male presenter to connote intellectual authority, technological competence, and objective guidance.
- The linguistic and visual systems of both commercials also demonstrate a highly calculated design. Linguistically, both brands employ Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) for on-screen written text to guarantee broad geographic accessibility across the Arab world, paired with a Lebanese dialect for the vocal delivery, selected for its high intelligibility and soft emotional resonance. Visually, both utilize close-ups and extreme close-ups to isolate the mobile interfaces, relying on white to dominate backgrounds and attire to connote transparency, and blue to denote trust. Yet, "**Trivago**" introduces a multi-colored branding by incorporating orange, suggestive of modernity, and red, connoting passion and cognitive intensity, while using chiaroscuro to establish depth and psychological atmosphere.
- Ultimately, both advertising spaces construct a system of representations that targets a middle-to-upper-class family demographic. By portraying seamless digital transactions and luxurious leisure experiences, both advertisements mirror Western-influenced consumerist values centered on frequent travel, economic prestige, and high-status lifestyle choices. Through this lens, the acts of booking and traveling are semiotically elevated from mere utilitarian services into signs of social distinction and class privilege.



- In conclusion, this comparative study demonstrates that advertisements for digital booking applications do not merely facilitate transactions; rather, they serve as active cultural spaces where meaning is continuously produced and negotiated. While "**Yamsafer**" successfully anchors its digital service within the warmth of regional, familial, and local cultural codes, "**Trivago**" demonstrates the persuasive power of a highly functional, rational, and standardized global discourse. Both models highlight the indispensable utility of semiological analysis as a critical tool for uncovering the latent ideological and cultural structures embedded within contemporary mass media.

References

- **Al-Ayadi, Nasr al-Din.** (2008). *Advertising and the Child: Stakes and Challenges*. Series of Radio Research and Studies, Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), (64), Tunis.
- **Al-Rami, Abd al-Wahhab.** (2008). *Analysis of Promotional Discourse in Advertising Directed at Children via Moroccan Television*. Series of Radio Research and Studies, Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), (64), Tunis.
- **Aouadj, Samia.** (2010–2011). *The Image of Women in Television Advertising in the Arab World: A Comparative Analytical Study*. [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation]. Department of Media and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Political Science and Media, University of Algiers.
- **Badawi, Abd al-Rahman.** (2019). *Methods of Scientific Research* (3rd ed.). Dar Al-Kutub, Yemen.
- **Barthes, Roland.** (1969). Rhétorique de l'image [Rhetoric of the Image]. *Revue Communication*, (4).
- **Baudrillard, Jean.** (1970). *La Société de Consommation: Ses mythes et ses structures* [The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures]. Gallimard, Paris.
- **Ben Karrad, Said.** (2004). Communication Strategies: From Verbal to Gestural. *Alamat Journal*, (21).
- **Chaouch, Chaabane.** (2011, April 18–20). *A Reading in the Semiology of the Cinematic Image* [Conference Paper]. International Symposium on Semiotics and Literary Text, University of Biskra, Algeria.
- **Chapus, Émilie, & Ancelin, Amandine.** (2019, February 20). *L'image de la Femme dans la Publicité* [The Image of Women in Advertising]. <http://www.dea.dtcom.u-paris2.fr/cours/cours-2006/hazam/pub2006-image-femme.pdf>
- **Fadour, Abdullah Al-Thani.** (2005). *The Semiotics of the Image: A Semiotic Adventure in the World's Most Famous Visual Messages*. Dar Al-Gharb for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria.
- **Haas, C. R.** (1958). *La publicité: théorie, technique et pratique* [Advertising: Theory, Technique, and Practice] (2nd ed.). Dunod, Paris.
- **Ihsan, Muhammad Al-Hassan.** (1996). *Scientific Foundations for Social Research Methods*. Dar Al-Talia'a for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon.
- **Kandelji, Amer.** (2009). *Quantitative and Qualitative Scientific Research*. Dar Al-Yazouri Scientific for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan.

Image, Body, and Linguistic Codes—A Comparative Semiotic Analysis of Advertising Spots for Tourism Booking Applications ("Yamsafer" and "Trivago" as Models)



-
- **Kandelji, Amer.** (2020). *Methodology of Scientific Research*. Al-Yazouri for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan.
 - **Mansour, Fahmi.** (1977). *Scientific Studies of the Market*. Dar Al-Cairo for Printing, Cairo.
 - **Obeidat, Thouqan, et al.** (1974). *Scientific Research: Concepts, Tools, and Methods*. Dar Al-Fikr.
 - **Radjem, Jannat.** (2012–2013). *Persuasive Strategies and Values in Algerian Television Advertising: Content Analysis of a Sample of Advertisements Broadcast by Algerian Television, and a Field Study on a Sample of the Audience in Setif*. [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Algiers 3.
 - **Yakhlef, Faiza.** (1996). *The Role of the Image in the Semantic Function of the Media Message: A Semiological Analytical Study of a Sample of Advertisements*. [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Institute of Media and Communication, University of Algiers 3.
 - **Zarari, Awatef.** (2017). The Image and its Manifestations in the Structure of Cinematic Discourse: A Semiological Analysis of the Tunisian Film "Silences of the Palaces" by Moufida Tlatli. *Al-Fotuhat Journal*, (04), Abbas Laghrour University, Khenchela, Algeria.