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Semiotic Analysis of Slang Commercialization: How Do Brands Use Subcultural Language

Master's Thesis

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Annotation

This thesis investigates how global brands use subcultural slang as a semiotic resource in advertising. Through qualitative case studies of Snickers and Gucci campaigns, it examines how slang is recontextualized, mythologized, and transformed within commercial discourse. The study shows that branding practices shift slang from a sign of subcultural identity to a tool of consumer engagement, altering its original meaning and ideological function.

Keywords: semiotics, subcultural slang, branding, recontextualization, consumer identity

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Introduction

Language plays a symbolic role in modern brand discourse, shaping identities, performing affiliations, and reproducing ideas. One interesting example of this trend is how global brands use subcultural slang, which turns linguistic signs of pushback into tools for market integration. Findings from this thesis look at the semiotic effects of this process, specifically how the commercialization of subcultural language transforms meaning, consumer identity, and cultural authority. The importance of this question lies in its ability to shed light on how brands function as cultural intermediaries, shaping and redefining subcultural statements in ways that allure and repel. The importance and innovation of this research is in taking a closer look to the products of mainstream media nowadays and applying ideas from semiotics, sociolinguistics and subculture studies to investigate language as a sign. So, this thesis mainly looks at subcultural language, but treats it as a sign, with all sociolinguistic and semiotic aspects to it.

The main *research question* this study tries to answer is: What are the semiotic implications of brands using subcultural slang in advertisements? Two more specific questions support this main question:

1. What mechanisms cause a subcultural symbol to lose its original meaning?
2. How do brands deploy subcultural slang and semiotic resources to construct identities that resonate with target consumers?

Drawing from the works of Dick Hebdige, Nikolas Coupland and Pierre Bourdieu that are discussed further, identity is the dynamic and socially constructed sense of self that individuals and groups perform and negotiate through linguistic and stylistic practices, particularly in relation to cultural norms, power structures, and group affiliations.

Together, these questions direct the analysis toward the structural, relational, and ideological aspects of sign contextualization.

To provide a foundation for this investigation, two case studies are looked at. The Snickers *Noobie Mistakes* campaign (Snickers India 2023) uses slang from gamers to make the humor more relatable. The second is the Gucci x Fnatic *GG Esports Watch* collaboration (FNATIC 2020), which combines fashion and gaming by using the phrase "GG" (good game), which is a slang of the gaming community. These two instances show contrasting subcultural engagement strategies: the first uses slang for comedic effect, while the second tries to fit in with a new cultural area. To create cultural proximity and consumer identification, both cases show how brands pick and choose which language tokens to use.

The study is based on culture semiotics, mainly focusing on Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes. Slang is framed as a signifier subject to ongoing recontextualization by Eco's ideas of unlimited semiosis and interpretive codes. An analysis of how commodified slang turns into a sign system of the second order, naturalizing particular ideological positions, is made possible by Barthes' idea of myth. Emphasizing boundary-crossing and polyglotism, Lotman's semiosphere model helps to understand the differences between subcultural and mainstream meaning systems. According to Torop's theory of cultural translation, signs change meaning when they are used in a different cultural or commercial context. Additional to this semiotic

framework are marketing ideas from Penelope Eckert, and Nikolas Coupland. The tools for analyzing how slang is abstracted, made to look good, and woven into brand stories come from these methods together.

Using close textual and contextual analysis as a guide, the study uses a qualitative case study research methodology. Using a semiotic lens, each case is broken down, looking at the cultural, verbal, and non-textual elements that help brands reach their goal. The research method is interpretive, and it uses semiotic analysis to look at how signs work in advertisement and cultural settings. Instead of judging sincerity, appropriation and authenticity, the study looks at how meaning changes over time and how language is positioned ideologically in the market. Judging subcultural sincerity, appropriation, and authenticity is inherently fraught, as these concepts rely on contested, context-dependent criteria shaped by both insider norms and external perceptions (Hebdige 1979). Media reactions, ranging from comment threads to influencer critiques, often reveal how audiences negotiate these tensions, such as backlash against brands seen as co-opting streetwear without genuine ties to the culture¹. In a larger dialogic area, consumer reception and cultural discourse, such as responses on social media, are also looked at.

What follows after the literature review is the main thesis structure: 1) foundational semiotic context; 2) subcultural and sociolinguistic explorations; 3) case studies analysis and discussions;

¹ For example, in 2018, H&M faced significant backlash for an advertisement featuring a Black child wearing a sweatshirt with the slogan "Coolest Monkey in the Jungle," which many perceived as racially insensitive. The controversy highlighted the importance of cultural awareness in marketing and led to public apologies and organizational changes within H&M.

This study adds to critical understanding of semiotic appropriation in contemporary commerce by looking at how brands take on and change subcultural language. It shows how linguistic style is connected to systems of symbolic power, giving a more complex view on how identity is turned into a commodity and how language's impact on the cultural economy is changing.

1. Literature Review

The literature review section is an overview of key academic works that frame the study of slang commercialization within gaming, subcultural identity, and marketing discourse. It establishes the scholarly foundation for understanding how slang operates as both a cultural resource and a strategic branding tool.

A crucial set of studies relevant to slang commercialization and consumer identity revolves around gamers' slang and how it becomes a part of everyday life. Poels, Ijsselsteijn, and de Kort (2015) examine how immersive gaming experiences, particularly within games such as World of Warcraft (WoW), have a deep impact on the everyday language and attitudes of players. They note that extended playtime allows the migration of game-specific vocabulary such as "n00b" and "WTF" into real-world usage, fostering a crossover between virtual and real worlds (Poels et al. 2015: 1137). This finding is particularly important in guiding the thesis to explore how subcultural language transgresses mainstream settings, which highlights points of natural crossover where slang can become attractive to brand marketers. In addition, their proof that repeated playing makes increased normalisation of slang in standard use by the public (Poels et al. 2015: 1149) fits nicely the argument that mass-market brands themselves will mythologise and naturalise sub-cultural slang to be widely appealing.

Conway's (2010) participant-observer research also supplements this approach by investigating in the world of sport videogaming, the use of slang among players to build and negotiate hierarchical status and social identity within their groups through the use of particular jargon. Conway determines slang as a means of "symbolic currency," whereby individuals can express expertise or social belonging and thus control social status (Conway 2010: 351). This theorization in turn directly applies to the thesis by emphasizing the inherent power of slang as both an identity marker and social diverter, major features that advertisers take advantage of when they take up subcultural slang and use it for branding purposes. In addition, Conway emphasizes the "highly social, intertextual and immersive experience" of gaming, which means gaming slang does more than enable gaming, it actually enhances identity formation and sociality (Conway 2010: 353). Such awareness is important for the thesis's consideration of such campaigns as Gucci x Fnatic's "GG Esports Watch," in that it reveals how commercial interest recontextualizes slang in order to access its strong cultural resonance in creating popular consumer selves. Together, these studies provide insight into how slang operates not merely as linguistic shortening but as a major site of cultural engagement, negotiation of identity, and ultimately commercial appropriation.

Marketing semiotics is a core theoretical framework to understand how brands systematically alter and reinterpret slang from different subcultures. Pinto Grunfeld and Pinheiro Gomes (2024) highlight the important role of semiotic protocols to analyze cultural trends in strategic brand communication environments. Their research on advertisement practices in the telecommunications industry during the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak demonstrates how brands consciously invoke both widespread cultural macro-trends and particular micro-trends in

advertising narratives utilizing hermeneutic and connotative analyses (Grunfeld & Gomes 2024: 583). The research methodology is relevant to the thesis because it outlines explicit tools like the semiotic square to systematically deconstruct how slang incorporated in brand narratives becomes ideologically remade and attuned to existing consumer attitudes and social changes. Moreover, Pinto Grunfeld and Pinheiro Gomes argue for the importance of diachronic semiotic analysis, asserting that brands are constantly reworking their connotative meanings in response to changing cultural contexts (2024: 584). This approach is highly compatible with the thesis's examination of the processes of re-semiotization of slang, providing a model to follow and explain the shift in meaning as subcultural slang is commodified and absorbed into mainstream culture through projects like Gucci x Fnatic and Snickers.

In parallel with this methodology, Alain Perusset (2024) uses post-structural semiotics to formulate a theoretical framework relating to consumer experiences, thus providing a holistic analytical tool to classify marketing offerings into different kinds of interactional regimes, namely domination, cooperation, emancipation, and harmonization, that are aligned with "goods," "play," "work," and "existence" (Perusset 2024: 656). Significantly, Perusset highlights the semiotic aspect lying at the heart of experiential marketing by suggesting that the interactions between customers and brands are best controlled by careful management of symbolic experiences and meanings (Perusset 2024: 667). The theoretical framework of the concept of interactional regimes in the thesis acts as a systemic tool for analyzing the experiential aspects of slang-oriented branding practices. The framework improves the understanding of how the brand names Gucci and Snickers employ slang to provoke certain consumer responses, like identification, authenticity, or amusement, and foster consumer

commitment and loyalty. Therefore, the study of marketing semiotics as conceptualized by the research methodologies and theoretical models discussed by Pinto Grunfeld, Pinheiro Gomes, and Perusset provides the necessary tools and conceptual structures to better understand and interpret the multifaceted semiotic practices surrounding the commercialization of slang in contemporary branding scenarios.

Understandings of language in the context of marketing are essential to the comprehension of the commercialization of subcultural slang. Shixiong Liu, Yi Wu, Wu Gong (2022) contribute a valuable insight with their conceptualization of "Internet Slang Style" (ISS), specified by the features of amiability, overt expressiveness, transparency, and severity. Such a framework allows objective evaluation of perceived effects of slang on customers (Liu et al. 2022: 1), thus improving the examination of strategic linguistic uses in marketing activities like Snickers' "Noobie Mistakes" campaign and the commercial venture of Gucci and Fnatic. The scale developed by Liu et al. enables marketers to predict consumer responses towards slang and thus to coordinate linguistic choices and the goals of brand personality (Liu et al. 2022: 8). Significantly, their study shows that while different dimensions of slang are uniquely linked to brand personality, they do not directly influence overall attitude towards the brand. This finding supports the thesis argument herein that brands utilize slang to enhance relatability and authenticity and not to basically change brand perception. In summary, Liu et al.'s research provides empirical data and usable methods to investigate how slang contributes to the formation of consumer identity and brand loyalty.

2. A Semiotic Approach to the Commercialization of Subcultural Slang

The theoretical framework section is where the thesis builds its analytical lens using concepts from semiotics, subcultural theory, and sociolinguistics. It provides the tools needed to understand how slang functions as a sign, how meanings shift across cultural boundaries, and how brands use language to shape identity and power relations. The section 2.1 explains why language can be viewed as a sign from semiotic perspective, while section 2.2 provides an important background to understand subcultures and its other signs, that can be commodified.

2.1. Language as a Sign

Semiotics, as a study of signs and symbols, provides a useful theoretical framework for comprehending the intricate ways that language, especially subcultural slang, acquires meaning and importance beyond simple communication. This thesis uses semiotic theory, especially cultural semiotics, to look at how subcultural language and naming practices are connected in a complex way. It says that slang is more than just a way to communicate; it has symbolic and ideological meanings that brands use to keep customers loyal and help them match their identities.

The basic idea behind semiotics is that all languages, even slang, are made up of signifiers and signifieds that are organized in a way that is based on social norms (Eco 1977: 27). Language works like a code, storing cultural norms, values, and identities. It then carries deeper ideology meanings. In his writings, Eco says that looking at culture through the lens of semiotics helps us understand how all cultural elements, including language, are constantly communicating with each other. Therefore, semiotics shows the basic rules that govern what things mean in a culture, showing how deeply connected linguistic signs and cultural beliefs are (Eco 1977: 27–28). Cultural semiotics is a branch of semiotics that was largely started by Juri Lotman and the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school. It focuses on seeing societies as constantly changing systems of sign circulation, which Lotman calls "semiospheres" (Lotman 2000: 8). Languages coexist, interact, and frequently fight within these semiospheres, which establish boundaries and translation points. Cross-boundary semiotic exchanges have the power to change things, and these cultural interactions show how meaning-making processes are always changing. The semiosphere idea by Lotman stresses the significance of cultural memory and crossing boundaries as key ways that new meanings appear and old meanings are rearranged (Lotman 2000:9).

Peeter Torop's idea of cultural translation makes the semiotic framework even stronger, which shows how signs are reinterpreted or recoded when they move between different cultural settings. Torop says that cultural semiotics helps us see culture as a self-communicating system that creates new meanings all the time through new interpretations and mediations (Torop 2014: 170–178). When repurposed by branding strategies that remove signifiers from their original subcultural significations and give them new ideological functions aimed at mainstream

customer segments, language, especially subcultural slang, serves as an excellent example of this process. The analysis looks at how the marketing of subcultural slang shows these semiotic principles. This discussion fits into the bigger picture of this thesis. When companies use slang, they're not just borrowing words; they're also borrowing ideas, which changes how people see themselves and how cultural limits are set. Because of it this thesis looks into what this re-signification of slang means and how branding practices not only use language resources but also change the ideologies that these resources are part of. In the end, semiotics gives us important analytical tools for figuring out the symbolic parts of society and language. It makes it possible to look into how brands use cultural signs in a smart way to build meaningful connections with customers. This thesis adds to our knowledge of the semiotic processes involved in the commercialization of subcultural expressions by looking at these steps. It also sets the stage for a more in-depth study of slang commercialization and its wider cultural, social, and ethical effects.

2.1.1. Unlimited Semiosis

Eco's idea of unlimited semiosis makes it clear how signs can lose their original meanings and contexts and then resurface and take on new meanings in different settings (Eco 1976: 65). This way of thinking is especially useful for looking at slang because it frequently experiences detachment and reinterpretation when it is used by businesses. In Eco's words, slang is an example of semiotic instability because it changes depending on the situation and is culturally

embedded (Eco 1976: 66). This is especially true when it is used in new semiotic settings, like brand marketing.

To deepen our study of signs and symbols, Roland Barthes's important work *Mythologies* explains the idea of "myth" in a way that helps us understand the ideological aspects of meaning. Barthes sees myths as a second-order semiotic system, which occurs when the sign from the first-order system becomes a signifier in a new system, producing myth by attaching new cultural meanings that appear natural. This process is explained as "the sign (in the first system) becomes the signifier of a new signified" (Barthes 1972: 114) in which a culturally established sign is re-coded and naturalized so that it seems innate or universal (Barthes 1972: 113). Barthes shows that what seems normal often hides how it happened in the past. Barthes defines "denotation" as a sign's clear meaning and "connotation" as its culturally complex secondary meanings that come from cultural codes (1972: 115). Carrying Barthes' ideas into branding, Laura Oswald calls this process "re-semiotization," in which marketers change cultural meanings in a way that fits with what consumers want (Oswald 2012: 47). By applying Barthes' mythological analysis to slang, it is clear how commercial use turns subcultural language practices into standard goods, taking away from their political and aesthetic meanings to help people identify with them. Slang once rooted in resistance and identity within subcultures, becomes repackaged when filtered through the lens of mainstream marketing. This shows how slang changes from a form of subcultural resistance to a marketable identity. Through this theoretical lens, branded re-signification is shown to be highly ideological and to reflect the sociocultural dynamics of appropriation and commodification. These semiotic views of cultural embedding and interpretative openness (Eco), and myth as ideological

naturalization (Barthes), as a whole offer a strong way to look at how slang is used in business. Meaning-making is shown to be a complicated process involving language form, cultural background, interpretive codes, and the normalization of ideas. Subsequent parts of this thesis will go into greater detail about these dynamics by looking at subcultural slang as a semiotic practice that is experiencing significant signification within commercial contexts, having a huge impact on consumer-brand relationships and cultural views.

2.1.2. Cultural Signs

The theoretical frameworks created by Juri Lotman and Peeter Torop establish language as a semiotic system and a container for cultural memory, influencing how meaning moves within and between cultures. To understand how languages, especially subcultural slang, change meanings when used in different cultural settings, this section brings together their different ideas, paying special attention to Lotman's semiosphere and Torop's cultural translation. Lotman talks about culture as a semiosphere, which he defines as a "structured yet dynamic space of sign circulation" where different semiotic systems fight and interact, creating and changing meanings all the time (Lotman 1981: 53). Languages interact constantly in this space, creating a network that shapes and changes cultural messages. Lotman makes the important point that culture works by letting different sign systems, like spoken languages, non-verbal languages, rituals, and gestures, coexist and interact (Lotman 1981: 54). This idea is especially helpful for understanding slang as a system of signs that comes from certain subcultural groups and

changes when it interacts with mainstream discourses. This is called "semiotic polyglotism" by Lotman: the coexistence and interaction of various sign systems within the same cultural space (Lotman 1981: 53). It happens when slang moves across the semiotic boundary from subcultural origins to wider societal use. To fit the interpretive frameworks and value systems of mainstream culture, subcultural language must be reinterpreted.

Secondary modelling systems and Torop's (2014: 170) *cultural translation* are two more ideas that help to explain these changes in semiotics. Torop claims that cultural translation includes more than just linguistic translation; it also entails bringing cultural practices and meanings into new situations, which changes the way signs are understood. Language is shaped and recontextualized in new contexts through these processes, which involve secondary modeling systems like cultural frameworks, myths, or beliefs (Torop 2014: 174). Language, in this model, is both a main way of communicating and a secondary storehouse of cultural events and changes that affect everyone. If you apply these ideas to subcultural slang, you can see how language moves from being a primary modeling system in a subcultural setting, where slang communicates identity, group cohesion, and resistance, to secondary modeling systems as it becomes part of mainstream media and commercial branding. The original cultural meanings that are embedded in slang are changed by this process of retranslation. The original meanings of slang, which are often linked to resistance or exclusivity, may be neutralized or commodified as it enters the ruling semiosphere, taking on new ideological and commercial implications. Taking Torop's theory in consideration, it is clear that knowing how slang changes during the transition requires a knowledge of metatextuality, the interpretive framework used to decode and recode cultural texts. Meaning and worth change during this process of retranslation, which is

caused by how mainstream culture interprets things and how they are consumed. Because of this, the original subcultural meaning of slang is often watered down or replaced by meanings that fit with business needs, personal tastes, or larger social trends.

When slang is used in advertising and branding in new ways, it shows Lotman's idea of "boundary crossing," which is when different symbolic systems come together to make new cultural forms (Lotman 1981: 54). Once a way to show who you are in a group, subcultural slang is now part of a bigger commercial story that reinforces mainstream values and consumer beliefs. As a result, slang loses its original ideological power and gains new layers of meaning that are more geared toward mainstream consumption. Using both Lotman's semiosphere and Torop's cultural translation, this part shows that subcultural slang is a living sign system that changes in important ways as it moves from minor subcultures to mainstream cultural stories. The constant interaction between subcultural and mainstream semiotic codes shows how fragile and situational cultural signs are, especially when they are used and reinterpreted in business settings.

2.1.3. Signifier Detachment

To fully understand how signs move across social and cultural borders, it is important to know what they mean in different interpretive contexts and ideological agendas. This process is called recontextualization (Coupland 2007: 107). It talks about how signs that were deeply rooted in one social or cultural setting are removed and used in other places, causing big changes in their

meaning and use. Subcultural slang is a good example of this, changing from a means of expression with specific ideological and identity-based significations within subcultures to a product that is appealing to advertisers in brand storylines. When signs are taken from their natural settings and put in business settings, their meanings are changed on purpose to fit with business strategies. Laura Oswald calls this "re-semiotization," and she means specifically branding strategies in which companies change cultural signs on purpose to make new connections with customers (Oswald 2012: 58). This kind of commercial appropriation isn't just linguistic; it's also highly ideological – it turns cultural signs from politically and socially charged symbols into things that appeal to masses. In order to see how recontextualization changes ideas even more, it is a good idea to go back to Roland Barthes' idea of myth. Slang becomes myth when it is commercialized, with its original subversive meanings replaced by clean stories meant to appeal to a wide audience.

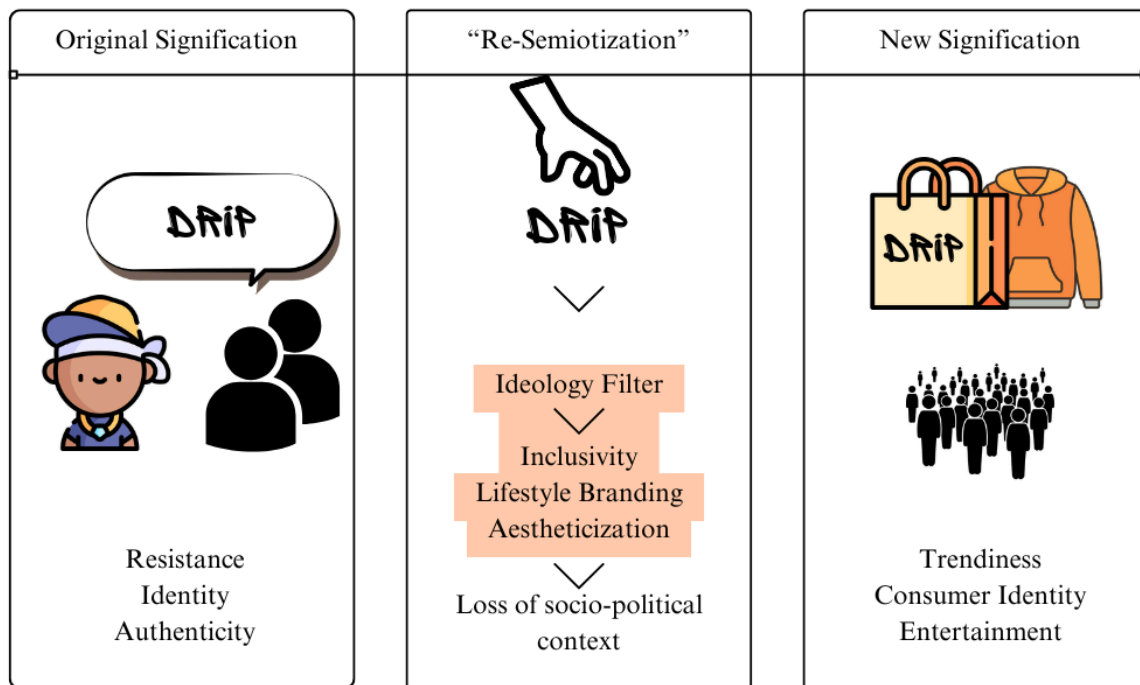


Figure 1. Re-semiotization visualized. Author's visualization.

2.1.4. Subculture and Mainstream

Boundary theory provides a crucial analytical tool for analyzing interactions between subcultural and mainstream semiotic systems within cultural semiotics. It is possible for cultural creativity and re-signification to happen at boundaries, which can be thought of as semiotic edges where different cultural codes meet and talk to each other. Hartley (2020: 148) emphasizes that the digital age amplifies these interactions by speeding up the circulation and recontextualization of cultural signs, describing the semiosphere as a dynamic environment of ongoing negotiation and translation. The mechanisms by which subcultural slang enters

mainstream branding settings are clarified by this theoretical framework which becomes an important sign in the formation of consumer identities. It's especially clear when it comes to branding strategies, where marketers purposely mix subcultural codes with mainstream consumer culture. Kettemann explains this process by saying that consumption has mostly turned into symbolic acts, where people buy ideas instead of things (Kettemann 2013: 2). Symbolic consumption is shown by the use of subcultural slang in mainstream advertising. Slang words that come from specific subcultural settings are taken and used in branding stories that are aimed at larger groups of people. In addition, Faizan says that advertising is mainly symbolic and that its goal is not only to sell things but also to connect symbolic values and ideas to those things through signs and symbols (Faizan 2019: 135).

Faizan's semiotic analysis says that ads use symbolic and iconic signs to build stories that match what people want, turning subcultural signs into messages that fit with mainstream ideals (Faizan 2019: 138). Subcultural slang translation into advertising involves more than just linguistic translation; it also involves a semiotic transformation in which the original subcultural meanings are changed to fit business and ideological goals. Kettemann also says that the act of consumption in advertising rhetoric shapes social identities by involving symbols (it is a meaningful activity for the cognitive construction of identity (2013: 1). The consumption of advertised goods symbolically transfers social values to the consumer, embedding them within particular ideological frameworks (Kettemann 2013: 4). This associative transfer is made possible by semiotic mechanisms such as the objective correlative. As a result, when brands use subcultural slang, they go through a dual process of recontextualization and symbolic recoding, changing the slang's ideological connotations to reflect mainstream cultural ideals like youth,

authenticity, or rebellion. A constant tension between authenticity and commercialism is also created by the cultural translation of subcultural slang into mainstream speech. Hartley says that interactions between digital signs make these translations more visible and happen faster, which makes cultural clashes at the boundary between subcultures and mainstream culture worse (Hartley 2020: 103). Branding takes advantage of this tension in a smart way, banking on the idea that subcultural language is real while also removing its potential to be subversive. Faizan sees this as a smart move that helps brands cross cultural lines and turn niche cultural capital into mass-market appeal (Faizan 2019: 140).

2.2. Subcultures and Identity

The subcultures and identity section follows the discussion of language as a sign and extends the theoretical focus toward the social functions of slang within cultural groups. It builds on the idea of signification by showing how subcultural language shapes identity, group boundaries, and symbolic resistance.

2.2.1. Style and Language

Style is not just a fashion choice in Dick Hebdige's important works, "Style as Intentional Communication" and "Style in Revolt: Revolting Style." Style is seen as a key semiotic tool that subcultures use to express their identity and uniqueness within a larger social framework. Hebdige says that style in subcultures is more than just the way people dress and look (Hebdige 1979: 117). It is a powerful cultural symbol that is carefully chosen to set the group apart from the rest of society and to help people feel like they belong to the same group. He says that these idioms have strong symbolic meanings and were picked on purpose to express certain ideas, question social norms, and uphold the group's traditional values and social limits. A subculture's style, everything about it, from clothes and hairstyles to tattoos and accessories, is a sign that tells you a lot about the group's social and cultural views. The members use these signs as a form of physical communication to find each other, share shared beliefs, and find their way in the social worlds they live in.

Hebdige also says that style as a form of revolt or defiance is an active process of making meaning, where subcultures use how they look to question and manage their place in society. In this signifying practice, there is no passiveness; it is actively involved in building social identity and group unity. It gives subcultures a way to make their own spaces and make public comments that often question or upset the social and cultural norms. Style is used on purpose to help the community and the rest of society talk to each other. The visual and symbolic parts of style are used as a way to explain and argue. Hebdige uses "symbolic" to describe how subcultures rework dominant signs to disrupt conventional meanings. Symbols are detached from fixed references and used in ways that provoke ambiguity and resistance, becoming tools of ideological struggle (Hebdige 1979: 117–119). Using the body as a platform to question popular ideas of what is beautiful and acceptable is a form of cultural pushback. Symbols from popular culture are often used in new ways to create new meanings or to flip what people usually think they mean. So, style isn't just pretty words on the surface; it's an important part of subcultures' symbolic weapons and a way to criticize society and culture. Subcultures express their individuality, opposition to popular norms, and unity as a group by using their own style. Not only does this use of style shape the subculture's internal dynamics, but it also shapes how it interacts with and is seen by society as a whole. This makes style an important part of their identity and a central point in the world of cultural interactions.

2.2.2. Commodification

Language is an important site of both resistance and incorporation within subcultural society, especially when viewed as a unique code in the field of subcultural studies. Subcultures use slang as a form of symbolic pushback to mainstream rules and values, and the study of subcultural style includes language practices like specific language. Within subcultures, linguistic practices not only serve as identity marks, but they are also used as weapons of semantic warfare to fight against prevailing cultural norms and represent a contrasting order of meaning. These behaviors include a type of cultural capital that subcultures use to set themselves apart from the mainstream and keep those limits strong. They do this by using a shared language landscape to show membership and keep their group together.

Hebdige says that this opposing stance is threatened by two main types of incorporation: commodification and ideological assimilation (1979: 96). When it comes to commodification, the business world often takes on the unique words and language styles of subcultures. Subcultural language loses some of its original function in a practice of resistance when it goes through this process and becomes a tradable good. Language from subcultures can be used in mainstream media and consumer culture for a wider audience, taking it out of its subcultural context and adding it to the language of popular culture. This kind of incorporation takes subcultures' language practices out of the political sphere and puts them back into a capitalist setting, where their main purpose changes from opposition to making money. The second type of incorporation is ideological assimilation, which happens when dominant cultural tales use

subcultural language in a way that stops it from being rebellious. Many times, this happens because of how subcultural slang is used in mainstream speech, which often misrepresents or downplays the original settings and meanings. In order to fit in with the current power structures and beliefs, subcultures' language practices are revised, recoded, and reintegrated back into the main cultural system through ideological assimilation (Hebdige 1979: 97). The dynamic relationship between subcultures and the mainstream is highlighted by both types of incorporation. Subcultural practices that start out as a form of defiance are constantly in danger of being taken over and subdued by the very structures they are fighting against. It is important to note that cultural signs and meanings change over time. This sign interaction also shows how subcultural groups are always fighting for identity and independence.

2.2.3. Examples

Like it was talked about before with language practices, the commodification and ideological assimilation of subcultural practices can be clearly seen in punk subcultures. *Cultural Histories and Social Practice* by Ken Gelder is a great example of how punk's anti-establishment language, which started out as a way to fight against mainstream ideals, goes through these two processes of incorporation. Punk was a movement that grew out of strong resistance to the political and social order. It used a mix of language signs that were both internal markers and public displays of defiance. Punk's language, slang, and clothing styles all had hidden symbolic

meanings. Each element was chosen to go against the dominant cultural norms and to represent a break from the time's ideological and aesthetic standards.

Punk's distinctive language and aesthetic did not remain isolated from mainstream culture. As Gelder notes, the process of commodification led the fashion industry to incorporate visual elements associated with punk, such as torn clothing, safety pins, and unconventional hairstyles. These elements, once symbols of subcultural resistance, were transformed into commercially viable trends. Similarly the media began to adopt punk language and rhetoric, although often divorced from their original context and intent. This shift reflects a semiotic transformation from denotation to connotation. Initially, punk's symbols carried specific, denotative meanings tied to anti-establishment values and subcultural identity. However, as they were absorbed into mainstream culture, these meanings expanded and became more ambiguous (2007: 92-93). What once directly signified dissent came to represent a more generalized image of individualism or nonconformity, more easily marketable to a wider audience. In addition, the ideological content of punk underwent a process of recontextualization. Anti-establishment messages were frequently softened or reframed to align with dominant cultural narratives. For instance, a punk song that originally expressed political dissent might be repurposed in a commercial context, where its aggressive tone is reinterpreted as a symbol of energy or boldness. Through this process, the subversive potential of punk is neutralized. Its symbols, once unruly and provocative, become sanitized and integrated into consumer culture, losing much of their original power to challenge societal norms. Gelder's case studies of punk music are related to Hebdige's ideas about subcultural pushback and incorporation. They show how subcultures are always negotiating their place in the larger society. The constant interaction

between commodification and ideological assimilation shows how difficult it is to keep a subcultural identity while also fitting in with mainstream culture. It also shows how complex the sign dynamics are that affect the development of subcultural styles and languages.

Another example is brought by Dick Hebdige, who shows how Rastafarianism and the way it is expressed through reggae music are a form of cultural and ideological struggle in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Reggae is a tool for the Rastafarian movement to speak out against oppressive systems. Its themes include freedom, going back to one's African roots, and fighting against the "Babylonian" systems of the West. These themes have strong historical and cultural meanings, which is why for Rastafarians, reggae is more than just music. It is a sign of resistance and identity (Hebdige 1979: 30). Reggae music, however, experienced a commodification process as it gained popularity around the world. Originally packed with specific ideological content, its cultural goods were sold all over the world, often without mentioning their political or cultural backgrounds. The original progressive message of the music is lost through this commodification, which turns it into a commodity that can be bought and sold. The way this happened shows how mainstream and economic structures can take over subcultural expressions and make them less subversive.

Another way that things have changed is through the ideological assimilation of reggae. In this process, the extreme and opposing parts of Rastafarianism are often made more acceptable or idealized so that they can appeal to a wider audience. As reggae becomes more a part of mainstream culture, its controversial voices are repackaged in ways that are easier to understand and fit with dominant cultural narratives. These findings fit with the bigger ideas of subcultural commodification and ideological reconfiguration that I already talked about.

Rastafarianism, like punk and other subcultures, shows how complicated it is for original cultural expressions of resistance to become part of mainstream culture. It also shows how the ongoing search for authenticity affects local expressions of identity and resistance, as well as how global cultural flows affect these.

The last example can be found in *Cultural Histories and Social Practice* Ken Gelder writes about subcultures. The proletarian vernacular stands out as a deep linguistic challenge to capitalist norms, representing a unique form of class defiance (2007: 83). As a sign system, this proletarian language is deeply rooted in the experiences and socioeconomic conditions of the working class. It shows solidarity among its members and resistance to the dominant socioeconomic order. This dialect isn't just a way to talk to each other; it's also a powerful way to build a shared class identity that goes against the dominant capitalist philosophy.

The use of proletarian vernacular represents more than just localized communication; it represents a form of pushback against the commodification of language itself, where mainstream linguistic forms are frequently shaped by market forces and capitalist interests. By using this dialect, the working class claims a unique identity that doesn't want to be absorbed by the forces of capitalism that try to erase class differences by standardizing culture and language.

Two things make proletarian vernacular a form of rebellion. In a way, it's a direct challenge to the ways that capitalism treats working-class ideas and feelings as less important and less important than others. On the other hand, it fights against the ideological assimilation that comes with the commodification of language, where special ways of expressing yourself are co-opted and remade for mass consumption, often without their original meaning and context. The proletarian vernacular serves as both a means of communication within the

working class and a sign of resistance to the culture and linguistic homogenization that capitalism encourages. Through stylistic and linguistic differences, punk and Rastafarian music and speech question mainstream norms. Similarly, the proletarian vernacular challenges the very linguistic structures that support capitalist ideology. These types of subcultural expression show a bigger fight over meaning and image in a society with a lot of big differences. Each subculture navigates and negotiates its place within the larger socioeconomic environment through its distinctive linguistic and stylistic codes, constantly reshaping its identity in opposition to, and occasionally in collaboration with, main cultural forces.

2.2.4. Symbolic Power

Pierre Bourdieu's idea of linguistic capital, which comes from the larger theory of symbolic power, shows how language can be used to reinforce and reflect existing power systems based on social class. The process of changing meaning is especially important in subcultural slang because it not only sets borders between in-group and out-group but also builds social capital for those who are good at it. Bourdieu says that language is never a neutral way to talk to someone; it is always an organized system of power relationships. The idea of authorized language shows how discourse's validity is socially conditioned, with some linguistic practices dominating in a symbolic sense. Bourdieu defines discourse as a socially situated act shaped by power relations, not just linguistic structure. Its meaning depends on the linguistic market, where speakers'

linguistic capital determines how their words are valued (Bourdieu 1991: 37-38). Discourse functions as a form of symbolic power, reflecting and reinforcing social hierarchies. It is shaped by both the speaker's linguistic habitus and the social conditions of communication. This is clear from the way that dominant groups impose their linguistic standards, treating subcultural language as outside of mainstream culture until it is accepted by mainstream organizations. Brands that use subcultural slang are part of a process of legitimization through institutionalization. This is when once-controversial linguistic markers are used for business purposes.

A key aspect of Bourdieu's theory is the concept of the market of linguistic exchanges, where different modes of language use possess varying degrees of symbolic capital depending on their legitimacy within specific social contexts (Bourdieu 1991: 37–39). Within subcultures, slang functions as a sign of authenticity, conferring what can be understood as a form of subcultural capital. It can be related to Bourdieu's broader notion of cultural capital. The capacity to use subcultural slang appropriately indexes membership and loyalty. It reinforces intra-group boundaries and social hierarchies. However when corporations appropriate these linguistic forms in advertising, the original oppositional or identity-bearing value is often diluted. This phenomenon can be interpreted through Barthes's (1972) notion of myth, where the signifier (the slang term) is emptied of its original signified and resignified within dominant ideology, transforming resistance into spectacle. The process also resembles what Bourdieu describes as the reproduction of linguistic domination, where the dominant class imposes its norms while appropriating and neutralizing subordinate ones. Importantly, it is not habitus that reinforces linguistic stratification per se, but rather the structured dispositions encoded within

habitus that direct speakers toward linguistic practices deemed appropriate or “natural” in their social field. For subcultural members, the use of slang aligns with these embodied dispositions, lending it an aura of authenticity. In contrast, when external actors, such as brands, attempt to adopt the same codes without participating in the field from which they emerge, their usage may appear inauthentic or commodified. This tension between authenticity and commodification signals a broader conflict between symbolic resistance and its recuperation under capitalist logic.

Slang commercialization is another example of what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence. Symbolic violence, in Bourdieu theory, refers to the subtle imposition of systems of meaning by dominant groups, which are accepted as legitimate by both the dominant and the dominated (Bourdieu 1991: 163–170). It operates through everyday practices where power is exerted without physical force, rendering social hierarchies appear natural or deserved. The dominated embed these values through habitus, reproducing inequality while misrecognizing it as fair or objective (Bourdieu 1977: 164–168). This form of violence is central to the reproduction of symbolic power and is sustained through institutions like the state, media, and schools (Bourdieu 1991: 113), which occurs when powerful organizations change subcultural language practices to suit their needs, without being forced to do so. In this situation, brands create a new language market, turning slang from a way for people to tell each other apart to a common linguistic item. Because of this, the first users may lose symbolic capital as their once-private linguistic assets become less valuable and open to others. The social and cultural risks associated with this linguistic change are also made more clear by Bourdieu's theory. When brands use subcultural slang, they sell associations of the products/brand with the signified

resistance as because of its its meaning. This fits with Bourdieu's criticism of linguistic authority, which says that some speech forms are legitimate while others are pushed to the edges. Bourdieu's idea of symbolic power offers a useful lens through which to examine the semiotic effects of slang commercialization. When looking at slang as a form of linguistic capital within subcultures, it's clear that its commodification changes the internal divisions and takes away the uniqueness that made it valuable in the first place. This process shows how language, which is used to separate people socially, can be resisted and changed in the larger market of symbolic exchange.

2.2.5. Marketing Mechanisms

As Oswald argues, branding operates through a semiotic system that decodes and re-encodes subcultural language into commercially resonant narratives, shifting its symbolic function from oppositional to aspirational. Brands increasingly use subcultural slang as a strategic semiotic tool to communicate cultural relevance and foster consumer engagement. Slang becomes more than linguistic novelty. It is embedded within a broader system of signs that brands manipulate to produce meaning and value. (Oswald 2012: 90–91). This process entails significant shifts in meaning and usage. Brands extract linguistic codes that originally indexed group identity, authenticity, and resistance, and reposition them within commercial frameworks. Through mechanisms of cultural anchoring (the embedding of linguistic forms in culturally resonant brand stories) and semiotic resonance (the degree to which signs align with cultural myths or

ideologies)- slang is transformed into a signifier of brand personality and lifestyle orientation (Oswald 2012: 88–89). Cultural anchoring stabilizes the signifier within new commercial myths, while semiotic resonance ensures that these myths remain meaningful to a broad audience.

Mythopoesis, or the construction of brand mythologies that embed slang into consumer identity narratives, plays a central role in this process. Oswald highlights how the crafting of credible brand myths enables slang to be internalized by consumers as authentic expressions of selfhood, not merely marketing strategies (Oswald 2012: 90, 105). By circulating these signs across media and contexts, brands re-semiotize their meaning, transforming ephemeral slang into durable brand language. This iterative process separates the signifier from its subcultural origin and repositions it within dominant discourses of style, belonging, and legitimacy. The effectiveness of these strategies, however, depends on a brand's ability to manage its perceived authenticity. Semiotic resonance can generate strong brand loyalty, but when audiences perceive inauthenticity or cultural appropriation, the strategy may backfire (Oswald 2012: 96–97). Code-switching, often used to alternate between mainstream and subcultural registers, exemplifies how brands attempt to balance mass appeal with cultural credibility. Yet the sociolinguistic dynamics of legitimacy, as theorized by Bourdieu, suggest that the same utterance can carry divergent meanings depending on the speaker's social position (1991: 55–57) Ultimately, slang commercialization reveals a tension between linguistic innovation and corporate appropriation. While brands benefit from the symbolic capital of subcultural language, the subcultures themselves often respond with innovation or resistance, generating new forms of expression to preserve group distinctiveness. Oswald refers to this as the “semiotic instability of brand meanings,” wherein brands are locked in a perpetual cycle of adaptation to maintain

relevance (Oswald 2012: 104–106). The result is a dynamic semiotic economy where slang functions not only as a linguistic artifact but as a site of contestation over cultural meaning and identity.

2.2.6. Sociolinguistic Variation

Distinct linguistic styles emerge within youth subcultures, serving as semiotic markers of identity by defining boundaries between in-group and out-group members through pronunciation, word choice, and slang. Eckert's (2001: 124) study of Jocks and Burnouts shows that linguistic variation among teen social groups is not random, but deeply rooted in social positioning. Jocks, who follow social norms, tend to use standard language forms, while Burnouts, who don't follow the rules, use pronounced phonological variations like raising vowels and leaving out consonants. In a way, these linguistic markers serve as social cues, connecting people with specific subcultural groups. Subcultural linguistic practices actively create social categories through interaction, as Stockwell emphasizes in his talk of style and variation.

Slang becomes a main way for people in the same group to show support for each other, with meanings that go beyond literal meanings. Slang is frequently used in youth cultures, which shows how important it is as a sign language. Once a word becomes part of mainstream culture, it quickly loses its uniqueness, so new words must constantly be invented. Subcultures retain their linguistic distinctiveness thanks to this process, which Eckert describes as a

component of the larger sociolinguistic phenomenon of enregisterment. As a result, the meaning of slang words is dependent on subcultural acceptance (Eckert 2001: 125). They become important in society not only by being used a lot, but also by going against established linguistic conventions.

Pronunciation is another symbolic tool that is just as important for defining subcultural identity. Vowel shifts, syllable contractions, or over-the-top prosody are all variations that show agreement with certain youth groups. Stockwell says that changes in the way people talk and write within subcultures are not random or just regional; they are encouraged by the way people connect with each other. Following certain phonetic patterns within a group strengthens subcultural identity. Departing from these rules, on the other hand, could mean that someone isn't being honest or is trying to bridge social gaps. Eckert says that phonological traits become socially charged when they are used to separate peer groups. This keeps the subculture together while keeping outsiders out. So, the way slang, pronunciation, and word choice work together creates a set of styles that communicates social meaning within a framework of resistance, conformity, and identity building.

Indexicality, a fundamental idea in sociolinguistics, explains how linguistic traits gain social meaning by being linked to specific speaker identities and situations. Eckert's study of high school subcultures shows how phonological and lexical choices reflect social positions. For example, Jocks' speech is close to the standard norm, while Burnouts' linguistic practices reject established authority through noticeable variation. The social world is actively shaped by these linguistic decisions, which are not just for show. Due to its embeddedness in subcultural speech, slang, a highly indexical linguistic form, acquires meaning. When used by mainstream culture,

the same word can mean friendship in a subcultural group but show that someone is not real when used in mainstream culture.

The idea of linguistic capital by Bourdieu helps us understand how the meaning of slang changes when it is sold. Subcultural language is frequently neutralized when it enters business settings, turning it into a marketable linguistic good. A lot of the time, brands use youth slang to make their products seem more real, but this process often separates the symbol from its original meaning. For example, words that come from marginalized groups may be used in advertising efforts, where they lose some of the power they had when they were first used to combat something. In a new semiotic framework, what used to be an index of resistance might now stand for corporate branding. This shows how indexicality is flexible. As Eckert points out (2001: 124-125), linguistic change is a result of active social positioning, in which speakers use variation to negotiate their identity in real-time encounters, rather than just generational shifts.

Which means that the indexicality of slang works within a system of social division. Until it is adopted by outsiders, it acts as an intragroup marker. Because slang can mean different things to different people, it is often used as a tool for ideological debate because meaning can be changed at any time. Brands that use subcultural slang try to keep the original meanings of the words. However, when the word is taken out of its original context, it causes a slip in meaning that makes the language theatrical instead of real. The conflict between linguistic innovation and commercialization, which is a recurring theme in the semiotic evolution of youth language, is highlighted by this paradox.

3. Methods

The methods section follows the theoretical framework and explains how the study applies its semiotic and sociolinguistic concepts to real-world branding examples. It introduces a qualitative case study approach focused on two selected campaigns. It details the criteria for selection, the analytical tools used, and the interpretive concepts used to examine how subcultural slang is adapted and transformed in commercial contexts.

To examine how brands use and change subcultural slang in their advertising campaigns, this thesis uses a qualitative case study methodology. Instead of trying to draw broad conclusions from many examples, the goal is to look into specific cases where slang from gaming subcultures has been used in brand tales in a way that is both detailed and interpretive. This method allows for a more complex reading of both textual and visual signifiers, contextualized within the ideological and cultural frameworks that support modern advertising. In particular, this thesis tries to figure out how subcultural slang is used in branding conversations, how it is reframed, and what cultural work it does when it moves from niche groups to everyday language.

Because of two main things, a qualitative case study plan was picked. First, the research questions do not try to find statistical patterns. Instead, they want to understand the meaning-making process and the transformations associated with them. This is consistent with

the epistemological perspective of cultural semiotics, which sees language and style as part of larger cultural ideals and ideological frameworks. Second, this layout enables in-depth contextualization of each campaign, taking into account brand history, media coverage, and customer positioning. Because slang is highly context-sensitive and ideologically loaded, only a method that can pick up on small differences in meaning and use could properly record its context shifts.

As a focus of this research, gamer-origin slang was chosen, because it is chosen because it reflects a large, active subculture that shapes how young consumers communicate, build identity, and form communities online. Its popularity and symbolic value make it especially useful for brands seeking to tap into digital youth culture and appear authentic in a competitive consumer market. Two advertising efforts that intentionally and prominently use gamer slang make up the empirical material. These campaigns were chosen based on three distinct criteria: (1) recency, (2) open central use of gamer-origin slang, and (3) diverse modes of contextualization. In the first case, Snickers' "Noobie Mistakes" campaign began during the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2023. It uses the gaming term "noobie" (or "noob"), which usually refers to a new player, to talk about mistakes that sports fans make in real life. The second case is the "GG Esports Watch" collaboration between Gucci and Fnatic. The term "GG" (an abbreviation for "good game") is used in both fashion and esports settings. While Snickers' campaign tries to change the slang's meaning and use it outside of gaming culture, Gucci's use of "GG" stays more focused on its own meaning, playing on the double meaning of luxury branding and gamer identity. The two cases were chosen as contrasting examples that provide comparative insight into various levels and methods of slang incorporation, not as a representative sample. Both

campaigns use gamer slang, but they do so in different ways and to different degrees. Snickers takes the slang out of its original context and reframes it as a common social mistake, while Gucci keeps the slang term in a gaming context but makes it look better through luxury branding. As a result, the cases show two different approaches to cultural translation: one is broad and fun, and the other is specific and symbolic.

Video advertisements, brand websites, and marketing articles in trade magazines were among the sources of data for the analysis that were made available to the public. Websites run by brands (like Gucci.com and Snickers.in) and trusted marketing news sites (like afaqs! and WPP.com) were used to access all the materials. Online audience responses were also taken into account as context, especially from Instagram and Twitter, where campaign hashtags and customer comments were shared. Not as primary data, but as interpretive context for figuring out whether the public was in sync with, not in sync with, or resistant to the brand's language choices.

An interpretive framework from different fields guides the analysis. It is based on the work of Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes. The study uses Eco's ideas, especially interpretive codes, unlimited semiosis, and the cultural embeddedness of signs, to look at how slang moves from one area to another, picking up and losing meanings along the way. Eco's focus on semiotic instability is especially important to slang, which doesn't have a fixed meaning and can quickly change what it means. Barthes' model of myth and second-order signification can also be used to look at how slang that was once part of subcultural resistance can become normal, harmless, or funny through brand discourse. Barthes' theory is based on the idea of naturalization, which can be used to look at how language that was once political or exclusive

can become less political and more accessible to everyone. Juri Lotman and Peeter Torop's work adds to this core by giving us ways to understand cross-boundary meaning changes. As an example of cultural space, Lotman's semiosphere is used to show how signs like slang words can move across boundaries and take on new meanings. These kinds of boundary crossings can be seen in the Gucci and Snickers campaigns, with the Gucci campaign staying within the gaming semiosphere and the Snickers campaign crossing it. Torop's idea of cultural translation gives us a way to talk about how signs take on new meanings in different ideology settings. Torop's idea of secondary modeling systems also sheds light on how branding works as a system for making meaning that changes language signs for commercial use.

The analysis is based on close reading – the verbal parts (slang, slogans, hashtags), visual parts (colors, motifs, fonts), and media framing parts (the social platforms used, the tone of delivery, and the call to action) of each campaign are all carefully looked at. Along with this, the brand's bigger narrative framework is looked at, including how the slang fits into the company's past campaigns, its target audience, and its style positioning. It is looked at how each sign fits into the brand story and how the slang word is used to make people laugh, feel like they belong, identify with something, or want something. A lot of attention is paid to keeping track of changes in meaning: what the slang meant in its original context and how that meaning changes (or is lost) in the branded context. The analysis also looks at how the slang was received by the public to find out what indexical effects it had. It looks at how people interacted with the slang, such as how they made memes, commented on posts, and reposted them. Even though interviews and surveys aren't part of this study, the answers they do give give us a general idea of how well the campaigns' re-signification tactics worked.

All of the materials that were looked at are open to the public. Slang from subcultures has social, historical, and moral significance. It's not the main point of this thesis to talk about cultural appropriation, but it is recognized as a possible problem in branding practices that use subcultural codes for business purposes. Because of this, the study looks at how legitimacy, inauthenticity, and symbolic power change over time as part of its interpretive research.

The research has some limitations, like the small size of the sample. Since only two ads were looked at, the results should not be used to make broad statements about all branding uses of slang. Instead, the narrow focus makes room for complexity and subtle differences between things. The researcher's semiotic and sociolinguistic training, as well as their own familiarity with gaming subcultures, are all factors that contribute to the campaign's interpretive subjectivity. To do this, the analysis is set in the context of other writings, such as Hebdige's on incorporation, Bourdieu's on symbolic power, and Oswald's on branding speech. The study is informed by the researcher's insider knowledge of gaming slang, which supports deeper interpretation while being balanced by a conscious effort to avoid bias through reliance on theoretical frameworks.

To perform a thorough analysis of two branding campaigns, the methodology combines semiotic, sociolinguistic, and cultural theoretical frameworks. To show how slang is re-coded and moved in business settings, it uses close reading and contextualization. This shows the cultural and ideological stakes of language use in the workplace.

4. Case Studies

The case studies section builds on the methodological framework by applying it to two contrasting brand campaigns that use gaming slang. It provides detailed analyses of how Snickers and Gucci incorporate subcultural language into their marketing, illustrating the different strategies and effects of slang recontextualization in commercial settings.

4.1. Snickers

Snickers' "Noobie Mistakes" campaign (Snickers India 2023), launched during the 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup in India (DDB Mudra Group), is a striking example of cultural translation and recontextualization, where a term born in gamer subculture "noob" is adapted to a broader, mainstream context.

4.1.1. Context

In the ad, cricket fans commit humorous blunders, such as pretending to be ill to attend a game and then revealing it via social media. The punchline, "Noobie mistake! Maybe you just need a

Snickers,” takes a term from gaming’s speech community and relocates it into cricket fandom, shifting its social meaning from in-game incompetence to real-world absentmindedness caused by hunger.

The campaign draws on Snickers’ long-running slogan, “You’re not you when you’re hungry,” but injects it with new cultural relevance by engaging with subcultural language. This act constitutes a clear case of incorporation: a resistant or niche term (“noobie”) that originally signified insider status within gaming is absorbed into the commercial mainstream, stripped of oppositional edge, and turned into a tool for humor and mass appeal.

This process aligns with Snickers’ strategic effort to commodify cultural expressions, adapting youth-coded language to promote a product. The campaign’s design across TV, social media, and the interactive “Noobiverse” game also highlights audience design, as Snickers tailors its register and slang to appeal to Gen Z² and young adult consumers, an audience fluent in both gaming and sports slang. The digital contest, where users spot “noobie mistakes,” exemplifies register blending, integrating casual gamer discourse with cricket-themed storytelling to maximize relatability.

Snickers has a precedent of appealing to gaming culture. It previously sponsored the ELEAGUE (IPG Media Lab 2017) esports tournament and created gaming-themed content like “Good Luck Have Fun.” By using “noobie” in this campaign, Snickers performs an act of crossing- adopting language from a digital youth subculture it is not inherently a part of, but doing so in a way that aligns it symbolically with that identity group. This also functions as a

² Associated with people born between 1997 and 2012

performative act of identity, aligning the brand with “in-the-know” youth, even while repositioning the term in a broader sports fandom narrative.

Public response to the campaign was largely positive. On platforms like X and Instagram, the use of the hashtag #NoobieMistakes triggered widespread audience participation, confirming the indexicality of the term “noobie” it pointed not just to mistakes, but to a shared identity space where young people could laugh at themselves and their fandom. The humor and linguistic familiarity functioned as a form of style-shifting: Snickers used informal, digitally native language to present itself as approachable and youth-savvy in contrast to traditional “advertising speak.”

4.1.2. Analysis

Snickers’ “Noobie Mistakes” campaign is a quintessential case of linguistic and cultural commodification, illuminating how brands transform subcultural slang into commercial tools for consumer engagement. By appropriating the term “noobie” gamer slang for a novice or inexperienced player Snickers constructs a layered semiotic narrative that serves its brand ideology, simultaneously erasing the term’s oppositional edge. Viewed through the lens of Umberto Eco’s and Roland Barthes’ semiotic frameworks, the campaign exemplifies how signs shift across cultural domains, becoming unmoored from their original contexts and re-inscribed with marketable connotations. In this way, Snickers’ use of “noobie” exemplifies re-semiotization, semiotic instability, and the transformation of slang into myth.

At the core of this transformation is Barthes' concept of myth (second-order signification). In the subcultural lexicon of gamers, noobie functions as a first-order sign: the signifier (the word "noobie") directly denotes an inexperienced player, often carrying derisive or exclusionary overtones. Within that speech community, the term functions as a regulatory mechanism, marking status and expertise. However, once co-opted by Snickers, this sign is lifted into a second-order system, a mythic layer where it no longer simply denotes inexperience but connotes something humorous, relatable, and even endearing. It becomes a symbol of human error caused not by lack of skill, but by hunger, a state Snickers claims to remedy. In this move, the original social and performative context of noobie is overwritten by a consumer narrative: the fan made a mistake, but it's okay they just needed a Snickers.

This mythification operates through naturalization. What began as slang imbued with insider meaning is recontextualized as a casual, commonsense label for any minor mishap. As Barthes observes, the ideological work of myth lies in its ability to erase history and present constructed meanings as "natural." Snickers' ad doesn't just use slang it renders its appropriation invisible, giving the impression that noobie is universally understood as funny and harmless, rather than culturally situated within gamer communities. This process of depoliticized speech is particularly salient in the marketing of slang, where terms rooted in social identity, group belonging, or even resistance are stripped of those contexts and rendered palatable to mass audiences.

Umberto Eco's concept of interpretive codes provides additional insight into how Snickers successfully reframes noobie for mainstream consumption. Slang, like any sign, relies on shared cultural codes for interpretation. In gaming culture, noobie encodes social

stratification and identity performance. Snickers, however, introduces new interpretive codes anchored in consumerist logic and humor that redirect the audience's understanding. Within Snickers' interpretive framework, noobie is no longer a sign of exclusion or lack of skill, but a temporary lapse in judgment solvable through consumption. This is a classic case of cultural translation: the sign is transferred from one cultural domain (gamer subculture) to another (mainstream advertising), its meaning adapted to fit a new ideological framework.

This re-embedding of the sign occurs within what Juri Lotman would describe as the semiosphere the cultural space where sign systems interact, clash, and evolve. In this space, noobie crosses a boundary from the gaming semiosphere into the commercial semiosphere, a movement that triggers a shift in its function. Once a marker of identity and community-specific knowledge, it becomes a humorous brand signal, a gesture toward relatability. The shift is facilitated by semiotic conflict: the original subcultural meaning and the branded meaning coexist temporarily, but the latter gradually dominates through repetition and institutional reinforcement via advertising, packaging, and digital media.

Eco's notion of semiotic instability and unlimited semiosis further explains how slang like noobie is particularly vulnerable to semantic drift. Because slang is already fluid, context-dependent, and often ironic, it lends itself to reinterpretation. As it travels from gamer discourse into advertising, it is not simply reused it is re-signified, given new connotations that align with the brand's messaging strategy. Snickers doesn't just adopt noobie; it redirects its semiosis toward the narrative of hunger and satisfaction. In doing so, it engages in a form of symbolic colonization, where the brand occupies the semiotic space once held by subcultural identity.

This movement is not ideologically neutral. As Eco and Barthes both suggest, signs are always embedded within systems of power. Snickers' use of noobie is an act of semiotic authority: it redefines what the term means for a larger public, guided by the brand's communicative goals. What was once a marker of insider status becomes a branding tool, helping Snickers craft an image of approachability, youthfulness, and humor. This also reflects Barthes' insight that brands use myth to sell not only products but lifestyles and values in this case, self-deprecating humor, community belonging, and emotional reassurance.

Furthermore, Snickers' deployment of noobie as a linguistic commodity aligns with Eco's idea of the interaction of sign systems. The campaign integrates verbal slang, visual cues (fan antics), and narrative structure (problem-resolution) to form a cohesive mythos. Each element reinforces the others, creating a branded environment in which mistakes are signs of hunger, and hunger is resolved by Snickers. Through this interaction, the slang term is no longer a standalone word it becomes part of a multimodal marketing text, shaped by and shaping consumer interpretation.

Finally, the brand's approach reveals the functioning of secondary modeling systems. Branding is itself a system that models language, behavior, and values for consumption. It takes primary signifiers like slang and repurposes them within its own ideological structure. In Snickers' case, noobie is embedded within a narrative where consumer choice (buying a Snickers) is the solution to cognitive failure. The subcultural tension once carried by the term is neutralized, recast as a moment of human relatability, thus making the term useful for brand storytelling while emptying it of its original ideological load.

In conclusion, Snickers' "Noobie Mistakes" campaign illustrates how brands harness the semiotic drift of slang to construct compelling consumer narratives. By drawing on subcultural language, they gain indexical access to authenticity, youth culture, and insider status. But through mythification, recontextualization, and commercial translation, they also alter the meaning of that language shifting it from a tool of identity-making to a vehicle of consumption. In doing so, they expose the ideological mechanics of branding as a semiotic act: one that doesn't merely reflect culture but actively reshapes it.

4.2. Gucci x Fnatic

As it combined Gucci's traditional luxury fashion audience with Fnatic's young esports community, the 2020 Gucci x Fnatic Dive Watch campaign (FNATIC 2020) stands as a notable example of boundary crossing.

4.2.1. Context

Using gaming slang "GG", an example of indexicality, to connect Gucci's legendary branding with gaming culture, the advertisement mostly highlighted Fnatic's esports athletes in luxury-styled video clips. Although it was creative, the advertisement begged important issues

about the fit of these quite different cultural worlds and questioned whether real cultural translation was actually accomplished or just mimicked.

Gucci's strategic involvement in the commodification of culture, seeking to turn young, technologically driven subcultural expressions into marketable goods targeted at younger demographics, driven their unusual partnership. Gucci had earlier experimented in gamification through its mobile "Gucci Arcade" games under Alessandro Michele (Fnatic 2020), but joining the esports subculture marked a more ambitious effort at style as bricolage, assembling cultural symbols in a new commercial context. But it was clear that Gucci's basic identity, rooted in exclusivity, high fashion, and traditional luxury, was very different from the essentially casual, technologically-native, and often rebellious gamer subculture (Mcdowell 2021). Gucci's campaign thus shows Hebdige's idea of incorporation, in which mainstream culture appropriates a subculture's resistant style, so perhaps neutralizing its original oppositional meanings. Gucci's attempt to adopt gamer vocabulary ("GG") could indeed be seen as somewhat forced, running the danger of shallow representation of real gaming community dialogue.

From a socio-cultural standpoint, Fnatic's motives for aligning with Gucci also seem mixed. Historically connected with grassroots, subcultural authenticity and symbolic cultural resistance, Fnatic had developed its identity on digital communities opposing traditional sports or celebrity culture (Cohen 2020). Aligning itself with a clearly opulent brand like Gucci ran the danger of alienating their speech community and core audience, whose shared values, digital accessibility, and authenticity predetermine rather than exclusivity and luxury. By using Gucci's symbols, Fnatic possibly crossed, adopting linguistic and aesthetic elements connected with social groups significantly different from their own, raising questions about whether this

strategic change was a real act of identity or just a fleeting style-shifting done for commercial benefit.

Public and media reactions highlighted these conflicts. Mainstream fashion magazines hailed the cooperation for its originality and noted Gucci's inventiveness and openness to new cultural venues (The Face 2020). But responses of the esports community exposed more complexity and mistrust. Many players pointed out the clear discrepancy in behavior between Gucci's luxury-oriented audience and Fnatic's gamer following, so casting doubt on the authenticity of the alliance. Gamers on forums and social media cleverly criticised the high price (£1,150), emphasising that such a purchase price sharply ran counter to the daily consumer habits and expectations within gaming society, which stresses practical affordability over symbolic luxury (Fitch 2020) . Placing gaming heroes in luxury clothing can seem forced, thus perhaps diluting the authenticity of the subculture by positioning players as high-fashion champions, a role usually incompatible with the original values of the society.

4.2.2. Analysis

The limited quantity (only 100 pieces) and high price tag meant that measured commercial success was meager at best, even if the watches sold out fast. This limited-edition model might have been more of a PR novelty than a really successful audience mix (Codered 2020). Therefore, the success of the campaign in actually merging these different cultural spheres is still dubious, thus it is possible that Gucci's established collectors drove the fast sell-out more

than Fnatic's main fans. Regarding long-term involvement from esports aficionados or steady audience increase, the actual cultural influence seems to be negligible. Although first striking, the fast sell-out could be better understood as a fleeting curiosity moment rather than proof of real cultural translation or recontextualization of Gucci inside esports communities. The Gucci x Fnatic Dive Watch campaign shows generally the inherent difficulties luxury companies encounter in trying ambitious cultural boundary crossing. Gucci's deliberate use of subcultural language and symbolism notwithstanding highlights the complexity of real semiotic interaction by means of their shallow alignment of these quite different worlds. Instead of a thorough socio-cultural fusion, the cooperation might best represent a tension-filled cultural compromise. It emphasizes the limits of commercial attempts at synthesizing subcultural authenticity with mainstream luxury branding, implying that meaningful subcultural involvement demands deeper resonance in shared values and real understanding of the linguistic and cultural capital at stake. It requires more than selective incorporation of slang and symbolism.

Semiotic theory helps one to see more subtle aspects of the Gucci x Fnatic Dive Watch campaign's cultural and symbolic connotations. Using the theory of unlimited semiosis, the campaign's use of the gamer slang "GG" brought about its initial signifier coherence. Gucci re-used the symbol by removing "GG" from its gamer-centric setting, so embedding it into luxury consumerist language. This symbolic manipulation can be understood through Barthes's concept of myth, whereby original meanings re-signify into commercially appealing but ideologically diluted forms. While "GG" deftly connected Gucci's initials to gamer slang, it also performed a semiotic displacement that ran the danger of erasing the term's real resonance inside gaming culture. Eco's concept of semiotic drift also helps to highlight the inherent

instability Gucci's adoption brings. Originally reflecting mutual respect and egalitarian spirit in gaming events, "GG," became subject to commercial recontextualization and changed its basic meanings toward luxury exclusivity. Gucci's re-signification thus undermined the inherent cultural specificity of the term, so weakening its original ideological and emotional value as a sign-of shared gaming identity.

Lotman's idea of the semiosphere also offers understanding of the fundamental cultural conflicts of the campaign. Whereas Fnatic's gaming culture stresses access, digital authenticity, and communal identity, Gucci's luxury-oriented sign system naturally thrives on exclusivity, hierarchical difference, and symbolic capital. There was a basic semiotic conflict shown by the semiotic interaction between these separate spheres creating friction instead of real integration. Gucci's symbolic systems and interpretive codes suggested a surface-level integration rather than meaningful semiotic resonance since they did not fit Fnatic's cultural signals. Fnatic's involvement in this alliance also involved risks related to cultural authenticity. Matching Gucci's luxury symbolism, Fnatic performed a notable act of semiotic boundary crossing, so compromising its natural place in the gamer semiosphere. One could read this alignment as a flimsy attempt at cultural embedding, running the danger of diluting the cultural authenticity and credibility Fnatic had painstakingly built in gaming communities. The campaign underlined the dangers of trying to harmonize different cultural values using semiotic means only as Fnatic's established signs and interpretive frameworks came across Gucci's radically different symbolic order. Thus, I believe that quick sell-out of the limited-edition watches offers only conflicting proof of the actual cultural integration of the campaign. Rather, it more logically represents a brief flash of curiosity motivated by Gucci's existing customer base. Thus, any

assertion of long-lasting cultural resonance within esports communities seems flimsy, highlighting the limits of commercial endeavors at major cultural bridging. So, the Gucci x Fnatic Dive Watch campaign shows critical symbolic limitations when companies try ambitious cultural translations. The analysis reveals deeper layers of tension and possible instability, even while the deliberate manipulation of signs like "GG" offers an attractive surface story. Emphasizing the complexity and risks involved when brands commodify and reposition culturally ingrained signs without enough attention to underlying ideological alignment, the attempt at interaction between luxury fashion and gaming culture becomes a warning story.

5. Discussion

The discussion section brings the findings of case studies into a broader interpretive context. It compares the two campaigns, analyzes how slang functions semiotically in each case, and explores the cultural consequences of branding subcultural language (loss of meaning, shifts in consumer identity, and symbolic power dynamics). The section also reflects on the strengths and limitations of the thesis and outlines possible directions for future research on slang, identity, and marketing.

5.1. Cases

Through the opposing cases of Snickers' "Noobie Mistakes" campaign and the Gucci x Fnatic "GG Esports Watch" partnership, the thesis's analysis reveals insightful processes inherent in the commercialization of subcultural slang by the global brands. Every case shows a different strategic use of slang that reflects variations in brand positioning, target audience, and desired results. Snickers uses gamer slang humoristically and broadly, recontextualizing "noobie" from a term indicating gaming inexperience into a relevant metaphor for everyday minor mistakes, so changing its subcultural index from insider gaming knowledge to mainstream humor. On the

other hand, Gucci deliberately increases the symbolic power of "GG" (good game) by means of luxury branding, so preserving the subcultural authenticity of that game within its esports watch collaboration. Here, the slang keeps its original gaming connotations but also gains a secondary, commodified meaning as a sign of luxury and exclusivity. These variations reflect how subcultural slang is used depending on the identity and marketing objectives of every brand. Targeting a wide, young audience, Snickers, a mass-market snack brand, uses slang in a funny, inclusive way to increase relatability and social media interaction. By contrast, Gucci presents itself as a top fashion house appealing to a style-conscious niche; it uses slang more selectively to preserve authenticity and add symbolic exclusiveness to its esports cooperation. Gucci maintains its subcultural value and reinterpreted it within a luxury setting while Snickers dilutes the original meaning of the slang for mass appeal. This difference shows how, depending on audience expectations and desired cultural impact, slang can be deliberately changed to support different brand narratives.

Taking these differences into account, both case studies have certain important parallels. They show how linguistic tokens are carefully appropriated, removed from their original subcultural contexts, and repurposed within a more general consumerist framework as part of a deliberate cultural translation strategy. This act of translating fundamentally changes the original subcultural meanings, usually neutralizing subversive potentials, and reorienting slang inside mainstream consumption patterns. Eco's idea of unlimited semiosis is especially helpful here since it helps to explain how signs always change in meaning depending on their reinterpretation in fresh situations. Subcultural slang experiences semiotic instability as brands re-signify these terms for commercial purposes, as demonstrated by the process of slang

recontextualization and commodification highlighted in the case studies. Barthes's theory of myth similarly provides an analytical prism through which one may see how commercial use helps subcultural signals to become naturalized, so hiding their historical roots and ideological contents. In this sense, slang terms become myths with sanitized and depoliticized narratives that fit corporate narratives and consumer ideologies perfectly.

5.2. Semiotics of slang

Though its main focus has been the commercialization of language, analysis reveals that language forms only a fraction of the larger symbolic universe inhabited by brands and subcultures when considering generally the thesis as a whole. Language hardly exists apart from other semiotic systems including visual images, fashion, or technological interfaces. Separating language from these linked sign systems does indeed prove difficult since they all influence consumer attitudes, identities, and cultural values. Thus, the thesis offers a broader commentary on the symbolic and cultural dynamics at work as well as helps to clarify how brands commercialize slang. From the semiotic perspective, slang becomes not only a linguistic novelty but also a part of a complex interaction of cultural symbols used deliberately by companies to embed particular ideological and attitudinal stances into consumer consciousness. From this broad perspective, semiotics provides a strong analytical framework that helps to enable complex interpretations of how commercials express clear and implicit elements of consumer identity and brand ethos.

Particularly enhancing the analytical viewpoint are Eco's model reader and the pragmatic aspects of texts. The model reader concept emphasizes how commercials create implied recipients able of decoding brand messages depending on intended interpretive frames. Pragmatic analysis emphasizes semiotic tools: irony, humor, or prestige, that influence audience reception and interpretation, so clarifying the processes by which brands acquire particular attitudes or reactions from consumers. Such insights are essential for analyzing how companies use linguistic and visual signifiers not only to grab consumers' attention but also to create enduring attitudinal affinities with them. Moreover, the thesis has emphasized the need of including more general cultural frameworks into analysis of linguistic commercialization. The semiotic phenomenon of linguistic signs serving as both identity markers and commodities, negotiating the conflict between authenticity and commodification, is best illustrated by the commercialization of slang. Modern cultural capitalism is distinguished by this kind of conflict, which exposes more ideological conflicts and subcultural negotiating with mainstream institutions. In the end, the thesis has shed light on the complex ways in which companies interact with semiotic systems and underlined language as one important component inside a larger cultural and symbolic environment. Semiotic analysis lets academics and professionals both closely review not only what is explicitly expressed in commercials but also what is subtly suggested, values, identities, and ideological affiliations molded by symbolic resonance. Therefore, the commercialization of slang marks not only a linguistic change but also a significant cultural intervention that shapes social meanings and consumer identities on a more general level.

5.3. Future Projections

Future study in this field has great space for development and improvement. Deeper study of ads by more closely examining local cultural variances seems especially exciting. Ads often have different meanings depending on the cultural setting; hence, including this viewpoint will help us to better grasp how subcultural slang functions semiotically in different markets. More accuracy in spotting the semiotic mechanisms brands employ to modify language and symbolic forms to fit particular consumer groups would be made possible by such culturally complex studies. The careful and exhaustive choosing of case studies or commercials is another area for future development. Although the present thesis effectively shows opposing cases, later studies would gain from examining campaigns more similar or homogeneous in nature. Such selection criteria could enable more simple comparative studies, so providing possibly better understanding of the specific semiotic strategies used by companies.

Future studies should also especially focus on the multimodal features of advertising campaigns. Text, image, sound, and interactive media interact complexly in advertisements to convey their semiotic meaning; each element adds specifically to the total semiotic meaning. Deeper consideration of multimodality would help one to grasp how companies use several semiotic resources in concert to transmit their intended messages and generate customer involvement. Furthermore crucial is realizing how difficult it is to evaluate public opinion of commercials and their success. The present thesis recognizes this challenge; indeed, evaluating

such results calls for sophisticated sociological elements and usually requires approaches outside semiotic analysis alone. Future studies might thus profit from multidisciplinary approaches combining semiotics with quantitative methods from sociology, psychology, or marketing to more precisely assess consumer responses and advertising efficacy.

A fundamental component of branding strategies, consumer loyalty, is very difficult to measure. Reliable measurement usually calls for either detailed market analysis or direct data from the brands themselves, neither of which is readily available through simply academic or independent research. Dealing with this would call for cooperation between academia and business to compile enough empirical information. Still, at this point I think the present thesis clarifies our knowledge by offering a targeted semiotic study of language as a symbolic sign in advertising environments. Drawing on Eco and Barthes ideas as a framework, this research highlights the complex ways in which language operates within the more general semiotic strategies used by multinational companies, so laying basic groundwork for next, more extensive studies.

One significant change in the research process in view of these methodological and theoretical aspects was the rewriting of one of the *supporting research questions*. Originally meant to investigate the dynamics of the consumer–brand relationship, the revised emphasis turned to look at the tools and strategies brands employ to appeal to consumer identities. This shift resulted from the understanding that looking at consumer loyalty presents difficulties outside the purview of this semiotic research. Loyalty as a concept is intrinsically complicated, affected by psychological, behavioral, and cultural variables, and difficult to measure without direct access to proprietary consumer data. The thesis *title* was thus also changed to reflect a

more focused attention on the semiotic and linguistic strategies themselves rather than their long-term behavioral consequences by eliminating the phrase "consumer loyalty." Centered on how brands create meanings, symbols, and identities by their interaction with subcultural language, this refined focus enables a more exact and theoretically coherent analysis. Beyond traditional marketing measurements and toward a more complex knowledge of cultural signification, it also creates new avenues for future research to examine brand discourse as a means of identity formation.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis investigated the semiotic mechanisms behind the commercialization of subcultural slang by brands, using the Gucci x Fnatic "GG Esports Watch" partnership and the Snickers "Noobie Mistakes" campaign as models. Though each used different techniques, Snickers humoristically generalized gaming slang for mainstream appeal, whereas Gucci maintained the perceived authenticity and exclusiveness connected with gaming culture, these case studies showed how brands strategically use subcultural language to foster consumer loyalty. Despite these variations, both cases exposed shared techniques for slang commodification, recontextualization, and cultural translation.

Using Eco and Barthes' theoretical models helps to better grasp how meanings change through unlimited semiosis and myth-making, so stressing the ideological changes accompanying slang's inclusion into mainstream advertising. The study focused on language as a major, but inseparable component of more general symbolic systems including images, identities, and cultural values. This thesis thus highlighted the complexity of slang commercialization and the ways in which semiotics helps to interpret branding strategies and their sociopolitical consequences. Finally, by means of Eco's model reader and textual pragmatics, this study has helped to clarify how companies use linguistic and symbolic instruments to affect consumer attitudes and identities.

This study has shown that the semiotic implications of using subcultural slang in advertising involve the transformation of meaning, identity, and symbolic power through processes of recontextualization and myth-making. Subcultural symbols lose their original meanings primarily through cultural translation, where signs are detached from their ideological roots and reframed to align with brand narratives and consumerist values. Brands deploy slang strategically to signal authenticity, foster consumer identification, and construct brand identities that resonate with target audiences by selectively preserving or neutralizing subcultural meanings.

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Kokkuvõte

Slängi kommertsialiseerimise semiootiline analüüs: kuidas kaubamärgid kasutavad subkultuurset keelt

Töö uurib, kuidas globaalsed kaubamärgid kasutavad subkultuurset slängi reklaamides, keskendudes selle keeleliste tähenduste muutumisele turunduskontekstis. Eesmärk on mõista, milliseid semiootilisi mehhanisme kasutatakse slängi ümberkodeerimisel ning kuidas see mõjutab tarbija identiteedi kujunemist ja lojaalsust kaubamärgile. Teoreetiline raamistik tugineb kultuurisemiootikale (Eco, Barthes, Lotman, Torop) ning subkultuuri ja keele sotsioloogia käsitlustele (Hebdige, Bourdieu, Coupland). Töö rakendab kvalitatiivset juhtumiuuringu meetodit, analüüsides kahte kampaaniat: Snickers India “Noobie Mistakes” ja Gucci x Fnatic “GG Esports Watch”.

Analüüs näitab, et Snickers muudab mängurislängi tähenduse üldiseks huumorielemendiks, eemaldades selle algse subkultuurse tausta. Gucci seevastu säilitab termini “GG” subkultuurse tähenduse, kuid lisab sellele luksuse ja eksklusiivsuse mõõtme. Mõlemad kampaaniad näitavad, kuidas brändid kasutavad slängi kultuurilise läheduse loomiseks, et tugevdada tarbijate samastumist ja brändi autentsust. Töö järeldab, et subkultuurne släng kaotab kommertsialiseerimisel oma algse tähendusvälja ning omandab uusi ideoloogilisi funktsioone, mis toetavad turunduslikku tähenduse loomist. Tulemused aitavad paremini mõista keele rolli tänapäevases reklaamikultuuris ning pakuvad aluse edasiseks uurimiseks keele, identiteedi ja turunduse kontekstis.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'J' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.