Research Article | Araştırma Makalesi

Advertising Production with Artificial Intelligence: A Semiotic Analysis

Yapay Zekâ ile Reklam Üretimi: Göstergebilimsel Bir Analiz

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence technologies are widely used in many sectors of the business world to increase efficiency and deliver smart solutions. In advertising, Artificial Intelligence increases return on investment through functions such as optimization, automated ad creation, and personalization. While Artificial Intelligence can generate new variations from existing data, it requires human intervention to create entirely original and creative content. This technology enhances the quality of outcomes by collaborating with humans rather than replacing their jobs. This study aims to investigate the effects of Artificial Intelligence usage in the advertisements. The analyzed commercials are pioneering in this field. Metz's methodology used in the study goes beyond linguistic analysis by analyzing the films through cultural and technical codes. Based on the findings of the study, the Migros advertisement seeks to legitimize the use of artificial intelligence by incorporating artificial intelligence witnessing and/or objectivity in the visualization of corporate services. In contrast, the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement offers an alternative and positive perspective on the widely debated issues concerning the potential negative effects of image manipulation.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Advertising Production, Advertising Design, Advertising, Marketing.

Öz

Yapay zekâ teknolojileri, iş dünyasında ve birçok sektörde verimliliği artırarak akıllı çözümler sunmak için yaygın olarak kullanılır. Reklamcılıkta ise, yapay zekâ optimizasyon, otomatik reklam oluşturma ve kişiselleştirme gibi işlevlerle yatırım getirisini yükseltir. Yapay zekâ, mevcut verilerden yeni varyasyonlar üretebilir ancak tamamen özgün ve yaratıcı içerikler oluşturmak için insan müdahalesine gereksinim duyar. Bu teknoloji, insanların işlerini devralmak yerine onlarla iş birliği yaparak sonucun kalitesini artırır. Bu çalışmanın amacı reklamlarda yapay zekâ kullanımının etkilerini araştırmaktır. İncelenen reklamlar bu alanda öncü olma özelliği taşımaktadır. Çalışmada kullanılan Metz'in metodolojisi ise filmleri kültürel ve teknik kodlar aracılığıyla analiz ederek dilbilimsel analizin ötesinde incelemektedir. Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, Migros reklamında kurumsal hizmetin görselleştirilmesinde yapay zekâ tanıklığına ve/veya tarafsızlığına başvurarak yapay zekâ kullanımının meşrulaştırılması hedeflenmiştir. Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik reklamında ise, görüntü manipülasyonunun yaratabileceği olumsuz sonuçlara dair çok tartışılan konulara farklı ve pozitif bir bakış açısı sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay Zekâ, Reklam Üretimi, Reklam Tasarımı, Reklam, Pazarlama.

Introduction

Intelligence is the fundamental component of the human ability to understand, perceive, and sustain daily life in the world and the universe. This ability enables humans to comprehend their surroundings, respond logically, and survive. The mind functions as the basic material of intelligence by distinguishing right from wrong in this process and helps to solve problems through complex mental processes. Intelligence is examined in two different domains: natural and artificial. Artificial Intelligence (hereafter referred to as AI) can perform programmed tasks but lacks the natural human traits of consciousness and self-awareness. Therefore, the difference between AI and natural intelligence lies in the levels of consciousness and awareness (Köse, 2022, pp. 13–24). AI emerged as a highly advanced technology developed to provide effective and rapid solutions to various problems encountered by humans. AI surpasses human intellect by possessing the ability to analyze data, learn, and improve over time. In the marketing world, this technology has fundamentally transformed the work of marketers. Marketers now have the opportunity to deliver personalized, targeted advertisements to tens of millions of users through billions of interconnected devices worldwide. In this advanced technological environment, AI-supported advertising design processes have been introduced, making advertising activities more effective and efficient than ever before. AI not only analyzes user behaviors but also develops and implements the most effective advertising strategies based on this data. This enables marketers to deliver the most suitable content to their target audiences at the right time and in the most effective manner (Peltekoğlu, 2018, p. 269). Although the progress in AI and machine learning technology in the field of marketing is similar to the evolution of the Web, the difference lies in the much faster pace of developments today (Venkatesan & Lecinski, 2021, p. 14)

This study aims to investigate the effects of AI usage in the advertisements of Migros and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik. Both advertisements have been included in the research sample due to their pioneering, innovative, and inaugural characteristics in the field of advertisements produced using AI. Both were published in 2023 and shared on publicly accessible platforms such as YouTube. This ensures the advertisements' currency and accessibility, providing researchers with analyzable data. Furthermore, their publication on the brands' official channels demonstrates a formal stance on AI utilization, enhancing the study's reliability. The Migros Virtual Market advertisement, introduced as "Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement," highlights the innovative application of AI in advertising. This advertisement was selected as a milestone to emphasize AI's technical capabilities and the brand's innovative image. Conversely, the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement positions AI within an ethical and emotional context by centering it around a national value, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This advertisement offers a positive perspective on AI's controversial aspects, such as image manipulation, thereby exploring the technology's potential from a distinct angle. Advertisements represent different applications of AI: the Migros advertisement embodies a commercial and practical approach, while the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement reflects an emotional and cultural approach.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impacts and implications of AI in advertising through a semiotic analysis of two pioneering advertisements: the Migros Virtual Market and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik campaigns. By employing Metz's semiotic methodology, the study aims to explore how AI is utilized in advertising to enhance efficiency, personalization, and creative output, while also examining its ethical and cultural dimensions. Specifically, it seeks to understand how AI's technical capabilities

and limitations shape advertising narratives, legitimize its application, and influence audience perceptions in both commercial and socio-cultural contexts. Through this analysis, the study contributes to the growing discourse on AI's role in transforming advertising practices and provides a foundation for future research in this evolving field.

1. Literature Review

AI is a broad field of computer science focused on designing and developing intelligent machines capable of performing various tasks that typically require human intelligence. This discipline aims to enable machines to mimic complex human cognitive abilities such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, language understanding, and even creative thinking. AI goes beyond simple automation processes to create systems capable of handling more sophisticated and complex tasks, making decisions at a level close to human intelligence. Consequently, AI plays a crucial role in enhancing efficiency, solving complex problems, and introducing new technological innovations across different industries and daily life (Hockley, 2021, p. 13). AI emerges as a reflection of the human thought system and overall integrity. While humans continuously strive to sustain their existence within the world and the universe, they also endeavor to create order within the abstract concepts and theories they generate. These abstract concepts are part of how humans make sense of and organize the real world, and AI can operate in harmony with these concepts (Köse, 2022, p. 65).

Looking at the historical development of the AI concept, the process began with Alan Turing's famous question, 'Can machines think?' in 1950, which became one of the cornerstones of this field (Karabulut, 2021, p. 1518). In Türkiye, this topic was brought to the forefront in 1959 with the presentation titled 'Can Machines Think and How Can They Think?' by Distinguished Professor Cahit Arf. His presentation indicated that the AI topic was starting to be taken seriously in Türkiye as well (Arf, 2021). The AI concept, which emerged during these years, has shown rapid development over the years and has become an indispensable facilitator in both personal life and business, especially since 2016. During this period, AI applications have made their impact felt across a wide range of areas, from daily life to business processes, increasing efficiency and speed and becoming a part of our lives (King, 2019, p. 4).

AI refers to the capacity of a machine to perform various tasks 'intelligently.' In other words, AI is a computer system that can rapidly and accurately process and analyze large datasets, make complex decisions, and continuously improve its performance based on learning processes. These systems can effectively perform various tasks by mimicking human-like thinking and problem-solving abilities, using the information obtained from data (Venkatesan & Lecinski, 2021, p. 63). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, AI can be defined as the theory and development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision making, and language translation. It is observed that AI is gaining human-like capabilities and becoming increasingly proficient in such tasks (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

AI is closely related to two fundamental scientific fields: computer science and data science. While computer science focuses on the design, development, and operation of computers, data science aims to process and analyze large datasets to extract meaningful information. These two fields form the foundation of AI, enabling computers to work more intelligently and efficiently (Figoli et al., 2022, p. 22). AI is defined as the ability of

a machine to perform tasks intelligently and is often characterized as powerful computer systems capable of processing large amounts of data quickly and efficiently. This concept includes various subfields such as natural language processing, computer vision, speech recognition, and machine learning. These areas work in an integrated manner with various technologies to enhance AI's ability to solve complex problems (Venkatesan & Lecinski, 2021, p. 63). Machine learning is a discipline based on the ability of computer systems and algorithms to improve themselves from experiences and observations without human intervention. This process involves working with large amounts of data to create statistical models that identify patterns and relationships within the data. Machine learning is a process where systems continuously optimize themselves over time to make more accurate predictions and perform better in specific tasks (Figoli et al., 2022, p. 23). The improved performance of algorithms is made possible by continuously refining the model based on insights gained from the data. Thus, machine learning systems become capable of more accurately predicting future events or situations based on the insights obtained from data analysis (Venkatesan & Lecinski, 2021, p. 68). Every automated system has the potential to make errors; this indicates that similar to how humans complete their learning processes by making various wrong decisions, automated systems can also learn by making mistakes. In this context, AI systems possess the ability to learn and improve themselves by learning from errors during this process (Sterne, 2017, p. 234). It is noteworthy that AI develops abilities similar to human skills, and these abilities are becoming increasingly complex. All these abilities indicate that AI continuously enhances its capacity to undertake complex and diverse tasks comparable to humans (Karabulut, 2021, p. 1534).

Among the areas where AI is most frequently used are business, finance and banking, healthcare, law, manufacturing, security, transportation, engineering, and design. In these various sectors, AI technologies are widely used to optimize various tasks and processes, increase efficiency, and produce smarter solutions (Figoli et al., 2022, p. 27). AI-supported solutions create a competitive advantage by offering organizations the opportunity to conduct their business in more innovative and effective ways. These solutions enable companies to more accurately predict future trends and opportunities by utilizing data analysis and predictive capabilities (Campbell, 2022, p. 31).

AI, like in other sectors, is actively used in marketing and provides significant advantages in campaigns organized by businesses. It has been understood that AI technologies impact two broad areas in marketing campaign management. These areas are altering companies' marketing strategies and influencing customer behaviors (Sarioglu & Develi, 2022, pp. 117–118). In marketing, AI can be defined as a predictive capability. This technology offers more secure and faster answers to questions such as who the target audience is, what message to deliver, and where to place this message. AI and machine learning perform these processes more quickly and effectively than manual methods, improving results and providing a competitive advantage (Venkatesan & Lecinski, 2021, p. 64). This technology shows great sensitivity in understanding individuals' preferences, habits, and needs, making the offers more suitable for each individual's unique requirements, allowing brands and companies to develop more effective strategies and increase customer satisfaction (King, 2019, p. 8).

Advertising, a crucial branch of marketing, is not just about ideas but about selling ideas. It involves communication ideas aimed at changing how people think or behave regarding a particular product, service, or organization (Kelley & Sheehan, 2022, p. 10).

Improving the return on investment in advertising is a critical concern for advertisers, and AI advertising has the potential to play a vital role in this regard. AI assists advertisers in various advertising functions such as advertisement optimization, automated advertisement creation, and personalization. Additionally, it employs Natural Language Processing (NLP), Image Recognition (IR), Speech Recognition (SR), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Generation (NLG), and image and speech production (Ford et al., 2023, p. 2). Furthermore, AI has been observed to develop human comparable abilities such as detecting objects in images, understanding and responding to speech, playing games, translating, creating art, generating fonts, and removing backgrounds from photos (Karabulut, 2021, p. 1534). AI can function in creative processes by deriving from existing data. This technology can create new variations based on existing information but requires human intervention to produce entirely original and creative Works (Talug & Eken, 2023, pp. 26–27). Although AI is often perceived as something that will replace human jobs, it maintains a complementary relationship where humans and machines collaborate to address each other's shortcomings and enhance the final output quality (Figoli et al., 2022, p. 28).

2. Method

In this study, the AI-themed advertisements of Migros and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik were analyzed using Christian Metz's semiotic analysis method. Metz's approach, grounded in film semiotics, enables the decoding of cultural and technical codes by considering the sequential and syntagmatic structures of moving images and their inherent causality chain. The analysis was conducted under five headings: moving image, phonetics (dialogue), music, graphic material, and noise. Through this process, the aesthetic, ideological, and societal dimensions of the advertisements were thoroughly evaluated, shedding light on the role of artificial intelligence in advertising within the context of Türkiye specific cultural frameworks and ethical considerations. This methodology, despite relying on a limited sample, provides an in-depth analysis, offering qualitative insights into contemporary applications of AI technology as reflected in the advertisements published in 2023. Notably, the focus of the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement on a national value, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, enhances the study's regional specificity.

Semiotics, also known as semiology, examines how an object transforms into a sign that conveys meaning beyond its basic reciprocity (Armutlu & Tan, 2024, p. 78). According to semiotics, every entity in natural and human life, when placed alongside another, forms a meaningful pattern, continuously multiplying this meaning to create different systems of signs, codes, or living organisms (Aytaş & Demir, 2024, p. 163). Eco mentions that these codes and signs are far from being absolute systems of probability (2023, p. 97). Indeed, in advertisements aimed at persuading the audience and creating an intention to purchase by emotionally affecting them, the use of many images, codes, and signs provides a suitable structure for semiotic analysis (Şenel, 2024, p. 85). In this context, the selected advertisements were analyzed using Metz's semiotic analysis method. According to Metz, who focused on film semiotics (2012, p. 105), unlike photographic images, all moving images (films, documentaries, advertisements, etc.) are 'designed' and subject to a causality chain due to their sequential and syntagmatic structure. To conduct an effective analysis within this layered structure, the selected advertisements were analyzed under five headings: moving image, phonetics (dialogue), music, graphic material, and noise. Cultural and specific (technical) codes were identified and explained within the scope of the moving image. Metz's approach surpasses linguistic analysis by examining films

through their cultural and technical codes. The adoption of Metz's semiotic analysis methodology in this study is crucial for unraveling the intricate meaning structures and cultural contexts of AI-supported advertisements, as it facilitates a systematic exploration of their multifaceted components within cultural and technical frameworks. Metz's approach transcends superficial narratives, offering qualitative depth by thoroughly examining the aesthetic, ideological, and societal dimensions of advertisements, thus enriching the understanding of AI's role in advertising. This methodology enhances the study's originality by revealing how the Migros Virtual Market and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisements legitimize AI usage, their emotional and cognitive impacts on audiences, and their engagement with Türkiye specific cultural codes. Moreover, Metz's film semiotics-based framework provides an effective tool for assessing AI's technical contributions and limitations in creative processes by analyzing the syntagmatic and causal structures of advertisements.

Although this study examines only the Migros Virtual Market and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisements, thereby presenting a limited sample, it enables an in-depth analysis by focusing on pioneering applications of AI in Turkish advertising; its adherence to Metz's semiotic methodology provides a qualitative richness by meticulously decoding the cultural and technical codes of the advertisements; the inclusion of advertisements published in 2023 offers insights into contemporary advertising practices by reflecting a current snapshot of AI technology; and the focus of the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement on a Türkiye specific national value (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) enhances the study's regional specificity by developing a unique perspective on the ethical and emotional use of AI within a local cultural context.

3. Findings

The effects of AI usage in the advertisements of Migros and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik were analyzed. The first Migros advertisement was analyzed chronologically as it was aired first, followed by the analysis of the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement. The findings were categorized accordingly.

3.1. Migros Virtual Market Advertisement

The 22-second-long Migros Virtual Market Advertisement, available on the official YouTube page of Migros Türkiye, was published on May 15, 2023, under the title 'Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Product-Price Advertisement' (Migros Sanal Market Advertising, n.d.).

A. Moving Image

The advertisement opens with a collage split into two different images. On the left side, there is a phone screen graphic displaying 'Emek Sunflower Oil 5 L - 125 TL per unit for a purchase of 2, Stock Quantity: 100,000' through the Migros Virtual Market application. Simultaneously, on the right side, there is a blurry visual resembling an illustrative image of a man, with a loading symbol '%x' approaching 100 in the center. As the loading percentage nears 100, the mosaic effect on the image decreases, and subtitles synchronized with the dialogue are overlaid at the bottom. Subtitles and voice-over (Graphic Material): 'A person who buys 5 liters of Emek Sunflower Oil from Migros Virtual Market for only 125 liras and gets it delivered to their door without the hassle of carrying it' and the fragmented subtitles and the loading image create a sense of post-

truth. As the linguistic expression completes, the graphic image on the right side also clears up. The image shows a very happy man with two bottles of oil in front of him, resembling animation content created by commanding AI, frequently shared on social media recently. Voice-over: 'Yes, the picture is a bit strange, but look, he is very happy!' The screen transitions to a plain orange background, two vehicles with 'Migros Virtual Market' written on them approach each other, the Migros logo appears, and the voice-over says, 'Migros Virtual Market, in the Migros application,' ending the advertisement.

Cultural Codes:

'Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement'

AI is a branch of computer science that utilizes algorithms to achieve specific goals (Kırdar & Sönmezer, 2024, p. 52). With its rapidly evolving and expanding application areas, AI has started to attract attention in the global advertising sector as well.
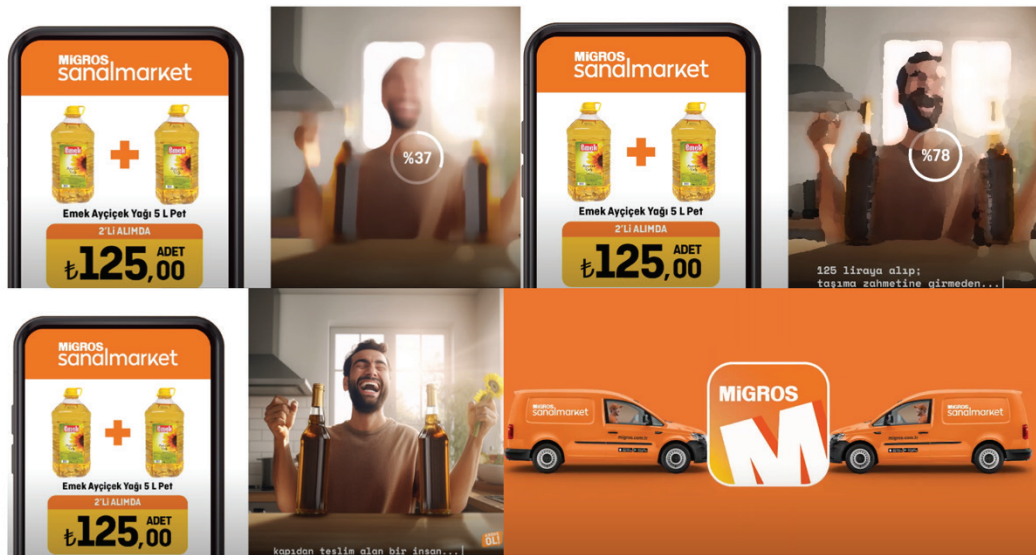

Figure 1. Migros Advertisement

The phrase 'Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement' in the advertisement's title emphasizes the notion of being the first. Being the 'first' in a field is a commonly used method to create a competitive difference. Indeed, the title 'first AI-prepared advertisement,' which also encompasses qualitative attributes such as 'innovation,' 'currency,' and 'keeping up with the times,' can be considered an indicator of the brand's intention to differentiate itself from its competitors.

Artificial Intelligence Testimony and/or Neutrality

The main text of the advertisement aims to guide the target audience based on AI testimony. The fundamental assertion emphasized in this context is that, given sufficient data and necessary definitions, even the output of AI points to the brand. This idea, reminiscent of the proposition 'Computers do not make mistakes, but ultimately, it is humans who develop and use AI technologies' (Çeber, 2024, p. 66), can be mentioned as an important issue for today's AI ethics discussions.

'Virtual' Market and 'Artificial' Intelligence Analogy

The advertisement's focus on Migros' Virtual Market application, which is accessible only through smartphone and computer systems, aligns with AI as a field of informatics. This analogical match can create an impression of the brand's experience in this area and generate a perception of technical expertise.

Specific Codes:

Composition and Camera Angle

Since the entire advertisement consists of digitally created graphic images, it can be mentioned that the eye level has a fixed 90-degree viewing angle. This angle, commonly used in graphic animation productions, can sometimes be altered by creating different three-dimensional layers with advanced illustration programs.

Lighting and Color Usage

Throughout the advertisement, highly saturated and vibrant colors are used. Indeed, the high resolution and saturation frequently encountered in AI drawings, which form the main theme of the advertisement, add an innovative touch to the composition.

Editing and Montage

The lack of natural movement and temporal flow in the advertisement film has been balanced using a highly dynamic editing structure. Sources of movement include the typewriter text animation of the text bands, the three-dimensional shape and texture movements of the graphics, and rapid figurative scene transitions.

B. Phonetics (Dialogue)

- 'A person who buys 5 liters of Emek Sunflower Oil from Migros Virtual Market for only 125 liras and gets it delivered to their door without the hassle of carrying it.'

This linguistic expression, similar to commands given to AI algorithms, is simple, understandable, and sequential. The transformation of the command to avoid the hassle of carrying into the visual of a very happy man as an output shows the brand's direct suggestive feature on how the audience should feel in return for the service. In this context, it can be mentioned that there is a mathematical operation of 'no hassle equals happiness.'

- 'Yes, the picture is a bit strange, but look, he is very happy!'

When examining the linguistic expression, it is observed that the emphasis and intonation (voice-over: 'strange') are on the word 'strange.' The Turkish Language Association (TDK Sözlük, n.d.) defines the concept of 'strange' as 'having a feature outside the usual' and 'altered; modified'. In the context of the advertisement being the first AI advertisement, it supports the notion of being outside the usual. Additionally, the continuation of the expression with 'but… very happy' creates a complementary contrast, aiming to prevent the audience from finding the advertisement odd.

C. Music

An energetic background music familiar from various advertisements and promotions has been used. The graphic movements designed in harmony with the music provide dynamism to the advertisement.

D. Graphic Material

The entire advertisement consists of illustrations and computer-based designs, qualifying as graphic material. When examining the subtitle designs, it is observed that the phrase 'Migros Virtual Market' is highlighted in the brand color orange, unlike the other linguistic expressions in white.

(Under the image tape caption) 'For your health, reduce excessive sugar, fat, and salt consumption. Stocks are limited to 100,000 units. Details in the Migros application.' provides informative communication, indicating that the brand fulfills its legal and ethical responsibilities, such as legal obligations and consumer information rights.

E. Noise

No environmental sounds were used in the advertisement film; only voice-over and background music were included.

3.2. Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik Advertisement

The 44-second-long Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik Advertisement, available on the official YouTube page of Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik, was published on November 9, 2023, under the title We Commemorate Our Great Leader with Respect, Longing, and Gratitude (Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik Advertising, n.d.)

A. Moving Image

The 10th of November-themed advertisement by Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik opens with a blackout, using an aged, grainy visual effect and noise (image noise, distortion) in the cinematic structure of the scene.

Figure 2. *Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik Advertisement*

A film strip (graphic material) frames the left and right sides of the screen, with a black-and-white photo in the center featuring Atatürk, two children beside him, smiling while looking at a book. This visualization can be reminiscent of a grandfather reading

a story to his grandchildren. The photos, synchronized with the voice-over, are mostly black and white and pale, providing information about the time and space of the image. The second photo shows Atatürk engaged in gardening. The next photo depicts Atatürk riding a bicycle on a long, empty road. Another black and white photo shows Atatürk taking a landscape photo with a vintage tripod-mounted camera. The general features of the location, the shape of the coast, and the position of the hills suggest that this coast resembles Kilyos. The following photo shows Atatürk painting on a canvas in a workshop, with the surrounding object details significantly positioned for the composition. On the left of the frame is a carved wooden chair, on the right a massive lampshade, and just behind it, an abstract oil painting that could be considered 'modernist' for its time. In the final photo segment of the advertisement, Atatürk is seen playing the saz in a modernly decorated space, close to sunrise. After this frame, the photo segments end, and we see the linguistic message 'These frames, showing Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk spending his retirement period in peace, finally taking some time for himself and engaging in his hobbies, could only be created with AI because he continued to work for his country and nation until the last moment of his life. On the 85th anniversary of his departure, we commemorate our Great Leader with respect and gratitude.' (Graphic Material), while simultaneously watching old original footage of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the center of the screen. The advertisement ends with the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik logo on a black background.

Cultural Codes:

An 'Exoneration' in the Context of AI Ethics: Atatürk as a National Value

Today, AI, which has become a producer, is seen as an important tool in communication with features such as 'machine learning, deep learning, complex data analysis, and automation.' These developments in AI technology have brought new discussion topics such as AI ethics (Ernek Alan & Bilgin, 2024, p. 115). Some prominent issues under the AI ethics heading include privacy, security, transparency, and job displacement. Looking at the overall picture, it can be seen that all these issues fundamentally focus on 'how and for what purpose AI is used' (Çeber, 2024, p. 67).

Indeed, in the analyzed advertisement, it is seen that the importance of AI as a 'tool' is emphasized, but it does not constitute the main subject. The advertisement highlights AI's ability to visualize imaginary scenarios that cannot be reached in reality and its role as a provider. In this context, the subject of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a national value and sensitivity point, as an example of AI practices, can be considered an effort to exonerate this tool in the face of current criticisms directed at AI. From another perspective, it is also possible to interpret that Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik, designing a 10th November-themed advertisement, positions its corporate image on national and social values.

Saz Instrument

Atatürk's immense importance and value attributed to music, art, and its creators is an undisputed and well-known fact. This is evident from his leadership in establishing institutions to shape the musical arts in the country and ensure the performance of high-quality music following the proclamation of the Republic (Tezcan, 2010, p. 163). An example of this can be found in the third index of Atatürk's speeches: 'Under Atatürk's directives, the Ministry of National Education appointed Cevat Dursunoglu, who was a student inspector in Berlin in 1934, to establish a conservatory for the development

of music and performing arts. As a result of the efforts, the conservatory was initially opened within the Music Teacher School in 1936. In 1940, it was put into effect with an independent regulation' (Arsan et al., 2006, p. 448). Atatürk, who enjoyed Rumelian folk songs as well as contemporary Western music, believed that 'Creatures who are not interested in music are not human; music is the joy, soul, and happiness of life'(Hüseynova, 2011, p. 39). It is known that Atatürk played the kemence, oud, and qanun throughout his life.

Spatial Details

In all fields working with moving images, especially cinema, the locations used in the plot serve as documents for architectural history. Other elements that transcend the physical space, such as events, characters, furniture, and other objects in the space, also form a reflection of the social conditions of the period (Dede & Ballice, 2024, p. 6). In all productions derived from daily life, a significant portion of time is spent in residential spaces. These spaces sometimes signify a 'home,' sometimes serve as a tool for expressing class-based economic politics, and sometimes are reflected with an emphasis on their aesthetic side, much like a main role (Şumnu, 2021, p. 20). In this context, the advertisement film features a decoration style reminiscent of a Western Baroque style beyond its time; tall window details, massive flowerpots and other botanical details, tall-legged tables, and large cushions are chosen. When evaluated with the approach that image criticism should focus on why 'that thing' is 'that way' as much as why it is not 'another way' (Barrett, 2009, p. 65), the question 'Why are there no traditional, cultural objects in the spatial details of the photos?' can provide important clues. In this context, it can be interpreted that Atatürk's secular and contemporary personality traits influenced the AI visualization.

Nostalgia Theme: Aging, Noise, and Grainy Photos

The visual arrangement of the advertisement is designed to prioritize the concept of the past. Technical visual possibilities are used to reinforce this emphasis on the past, creating an atmosphere dominated by black and white. The photo segments created with AI combine the high resolution, clarity, and image saturation of today with the black and white nature of the past, creating a sense of temporal leap. Additionally, by creating noise in the image, the resolution is degraded and pixelated, aiming to evoke a distinct sense of nostalgia. This method, also used in many past-themed video content, strengthens the dramatic atmosphere of the advertisement.

Authenticity in Atatürk's Costumes

When looking at the AI-generated photos of Atatürk in the advertisement, it is observed that the clothing choices are parallel to Atatürk's general style and the outfits we are accustomed to seeing in his real photos. In this context, it can be said that the AI producer remained faithful to the 'original' in costume selection. One of the main reasons for this is that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as an important figure in Turkish history, represents a point of social sensitivity, and modifications, adaptations, and analogies in his characteristics are ethically limited.

Yesilçam Codes: The Road Passed by Bicycle and Autumn - Kilyos Detail and Seagulls

In the advertisement, the photo of Atatürk taking a landscape photo with an old-fashioned camera from a coast reminiscent of Kilyos evokes an atmosphere reminiscent of the

Yesilçam era. The seagull details in the photo recall the black and white panorama film segments of the 60s and 70s, while Atatürk's hat, different from those in other photos, is significant as it resembles those used by old Yesilçam cinema directors. Yesilçam films are considered by cinema critics to be more 'aural' than 'visual.' 'Yesilçam cinema is a narrative cinema' (Gülçur, 2020, p. 5). The intensive use of dialogues in these films, rather than visual story flow, stems from the oral culture tradition of the Turkish people.

Specific Codes:

Composition and Camera Angle

When examining the photos, it is observed that the subject is generally positioned in the center of the composition, splitting the background into two, with object details in the foreground and background, giving the photos a three-dimensional 'new generation reality.' One of the most notable examples is the photo of Atatürk painting. In this photo, there is a 'foreground-background' created behind the canvas but in front of the external eye, and a 'right-background' on the right side of the main subject 'Atatürk,' perceived by the viewer as two separate backgrounds. In this context, it can be interpreted that these photos created using AI attempt to capture reality through technical means. The advertisement generally uses an eye-level camera angle, which refers to shooting from the eye level of an average-height person, approximately 1.65 m (Ankara Üniversitesi Açık Ders Malzemeleri, Kamera Açıları, 2024).

Lighting and Color Usage

In the photo segments in the advertisement, it is observed that there is an artificial strong brightness coming from the left side of the video-graphic composition. This side lighting creates a dramatic effect on the image. In the side lighting technique, the light comes from one direction of the subject, leaving the other side in shadow. This light, which adds volume and depth to the image, is often used alone or with a low energy fill light (chiaroscuro) to create a dramatic atmosphere in the scene (Özen, 2021, p. 89). In the main frame of the photo, the subject's face and costumes, and the surfaces and details of prominent objects are illuminated from specific directions, adding dimension and depth to the image. From this, it can be interpreted that this reality reproduction produced by AI operates within a deep multi-layered structure. It can also be mentioned that the entire advertisement film is designed in black and white, creating an aged texture.

Editing and Montage

Transitions between AI-generated photos in the advertisement are made with vertical movements up and down and shutter sounds. Grill and fading effects are applied to the video graphic to strengthen the nostalgic theme.

B. Phonetics (Dialogue)

(Voice-over) 'These frames, showing Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk spending his retirement period in peace, finally taking some time for himself and engaging in his hobbies, could only be created with AI' This linguistic expression at the end of the first part of the advertisement, consisting of AI-produced photos, explains the ontological purpose of the viewed part, demonstrating an innovative attitude by including one of today's current topics, AI and its usage limits, in the context of the advertisement film.

(Voice-over) 'Because he continued to work for his country and nation until the last

moment of his life. On the 85th anniversary of his departure, we commemorate our Great Leader with respect and gratitude.' Simultaneously, video footage compiled from Atatürk's official ceremonies and meetings is shown, creating a contrast with the previous photos and supporting the main narrative structure.

C. Musical Sound

From the opening of the advertisement film, it is noticeable that an intense rhythmic instrumental background music, with a prominent violin sound, is used under the voice-over. This enhances the dramatic nature of the subject, and the fluidity of the rhythm aims to counteract the relative 'static' disadvantage of photographic images, focusing the viewer's attention on the subject. Metz explains the static and one-dimensional nature of photographs compared to moving images: 'Film has a kind of articulation not found in photography. When a house is to be shown in the cinema, first a staircase, then one of the outer walls, followed by a close-up of a window, and finally a shot of the house itself is presented, whereas a photograph can only provide a holistic view of the structure.' (2012, p. 97).

D. Graphic Material

Considering that the advertisement film consists of a series of photos created by AI, it can be interpreted that the entire film is technically in a graphic form. However, as in animations and illustrative works, graphic materials that can be considered outside the main context of reality reproduction are included at the end of the advertisement film. The texts running parallel to the voice-over are placed on a black background. The arrangement of linguistic messages, paragraph breaks, and breathing spaces are seen to progress in harmony with the dramatic atmosphere of the advertisement. In this context, the first phase of the advertisement film presents an alternative life scenario of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created by AI, followed by real historical video footage of Atatürk, strengthening the narrative through comparison and clarifying the boundaries between reality and imagination in the viewer's perception.

E. Noise

Given that the entire advertisement film consists of photos, the transition sound between photos has a decisive effect on the dramatic structure. In the advertisement, the shutter sound of analog cameras is used for transitions between images, in line with the general atmosphere of the visuals, supporting the overall theme.

Conclusion

Maximizing return on investment is a paramount objective for advertisers, and AI plays a pivotal role in achieving this goal through its advanced capabilities in big data analytics, ad optimization, automated content creation, and personalization. By analyzing user behaviors and dynamically refining campaigns, AI enhances efficiency, reduces costs, and enables the development of highly effective marketing strategies that deliver substantial returns. Although the literature includes studies conducted in this field, given the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence technology, examining examples from the most recent studies would be a more appropriate approach.

A study examining the attitudes, perceptions, and usage patterns of advertising professionals toward AI reveals that AI offers significant advantages in areas such as data analytics, personalized campaigns, and automation. However, concerns persist

regarding job losses, ethical issues, and the potential transfer of creativity to machines. Analyses conducted in a local context indicate that AI adoption is influenced by both global trends and regional dynamics. Individual AI usage surpasses corporate adoption, with approximately two-thirds of industry professionals utilizing AI, compared to about half of businesses. Corporate AI policies positively influence employees' adoption of the technology. No significant correlation was found between AI usage and gender or age. Professionals using AI exhibit a more positive attitude toward the technology, while those not using it tend to be more cautious, likely due to knowledge gaps or uncertainties. No evidence suggests that non-users harbor greater concerns than users. While AI's benefits in post-production and campaign creation are prominent, challenges such as knowledge deficiencies and uncertainties hinder its adoption. These findings underscore the need for targeted training and policies to address barriers and facilitate AI's integration into advertising, highlighting its transformative potential alongside persistent challenges (Gölgeli, 2025).

Another study, titled "Examining AI-Generated Advertisements from an Aesthetic Perspective and Analyzing a Sample AI-Produced Commercial," analyzes the Reacher eyewear brand's advertisement, "Reacher in the Eyes, Türkiye in the Hearts," using discourse analysis from an aesthetic perspective. It highlights the benefits of AI in advertising, including media monitoring, campaign effectiveness measurement, content creation, consumer analysis, and production, while addressing potential shortcomings in conveying human emotions through the use of aesthetic elements. The commercial successfully portrays emotions valued by the Turkish audience, such as patriotism, national unity, and solidarity, through aesthetic components like natural lighting, wide shots, close-ups, and harmonious sound-music integration. The synergy between human and machine efforts has produced a compelling depiction of national enthusiasm and excitement, resulting in an artistic work. As AI's strategic importance in advertising grows, this film demonstrates how a foreign brand can be perceived as a national one by embracing cultural values, leveraging aesthetic elements to forge an emotional connection with its target audience (Yıldırım, 2025).

Numerous studies in this field highlight the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in advertising, particularly in areas such as data analytics, personalization, and aesthetic content creation, while emphasizing the need to address challenges such as ethical concerns, knowledge gaps, and the delegation of creativity to machines through targeted training and ethical policies.

This study examines the Migros Sanal Market and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisements using Metz's semiotic analysis method, evaluating the role of artificial intelligence as a technical and narrative tool in advertising within the context of Türkiye specific cultural frameworks and ethical considerations, thereby offering an original contribution by integrating aesthetic, cultural, and ethical perspectives. The study investigates the application of AI in the advertisements of Migros Sanal Market and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik, utilizing Metz's semiotic analysis to evaluate AI's role as a technical and narrative tool in advertising, its influence on audiences, and its ethical implications. The findings demonstrate that AI extends beyond automation and efficiency, serving strategic purposes such as shaping consumer perceptions, crafting innovative brand identities, connecting with cultural values, and creating emotionally resonant narratives. Both advertisements employ AI in distinct ways to strengthen brand competitiveness and enhance consumer experiences.

The Migros Sanal Market advertisement, marketed as "Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement," establishes AI as a pioneering marketing tool, reinforcing the brand's image as a technological leader. Featuring vibrant, high-saturation colors, dynamic graphic designs, and fluid editing techniques, the visual composition presents AI as a "virtual guide" that simplifies daily life. The core message, "effortlessness equals happiness," emphasizes an improved consumer experience to build brand trust. The phrase "Yes, the image may seem unusual, but look how happy it is!" adopts a sympathetic tone toward AI's unconventional nature while highlighting its positive impact. However, portraying AI as impartial and suggesting its outputs are inherently accurate raises ethical concerns, as this could manipulate consumer perceptions.

Conversely, the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement, themed around November 10, uses AI to depict an imagined retirement scenario for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, emphasizing national values and societal sensitivities. Employing black and white aesthetics, grainy effects, side lighting, and Yeşilçam cinematic codes, the nostalgic and dramatic narrative fosters strong emotional connections with viewers. The claim that the ad "could only be created with AI" reframes AI's controversial capabilities, such as image manipulation, in a positive and ethically responsible light. By reimagining a national figure, the advertisement underscores AI's potential as a cultural and emotional storytelling tool. Spatial elements, including Western Baroque style decor and details reflecting Atatürk's modernist identity, highlight AI's ability to produce authentic narratives that bridge national history with contemporary values. Nonetheless, using AI to portray national figures necessitates careful attention to societal sensitivities and ethical boundaries.

Both advertisements illustrate AI's capabilities in big data analytics, ad optimization, automated content creation, and personalization, which yield significant time and cost efficiencies. However, human oversight remains crucial for producing fully original and creative content. AI's ability to generate dynamic, visually appealing, and impactful narratives at reduced costs is driving the advertising industry toward graphic- and animation-intensive content, as evidenced by the fluid narrative of the Migros ad and the dramatic storytelling of the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik ad.

AI's role in advertising enhances brands' capacity to influence consumer perceptions and secure competitive advantages, but ethical and reliability issues demand careful consideration. The Migros ad's depiction of AI as an impartial guide promotes trustworthiness, while the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik ad's ethical application of AI demonstrates respect for societal sensitivities. However, manipulative uses of AI risk eroding consumer confidence, underscoring the need for advertisers to position AI as a tool that prioritizes human needs and avoids deceptive practices.

This study makes significant contributions to the academic literature by analyzing the aesthetic, cultural, and ethical dimensions of AI in advertising, providing a robust framework for understanding AI's role as a marketing tool. It positions AI as both a technological innovation and a strategic asset that shapes consumer perceptions and strengthens brand identity. By integrating technical and cultural perspectives, the study enriches the literature on AI's creative applications in advertising. From an industry perspective, it offers practical guidance on integrating AI into innovative advertising strategies, with the Migros and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik case studies illustrating AI's effectiveness in promoting innovation, preserving cultural values, and fostering emotional connections in brand communication. These insights advance both academic research

and industry practices, sparking discussions on the ethical, aesthetic, and functional boundaries of AI in advertising.

AI is reshaping the advertising industry by significantly enhancing return on investment through its advanced capabilities in big data analytics, campaign optimization, automated content creation, and personalization. Research by Gölgeli (2025) and Yıldırım (2025) underscores AI's ability to streamline processes, reduce operational costs, and create culturally resonant, emotionally compelling campaigns that strengthen brand competitiveness. Case studies of Migros Sanal Market's "Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement" and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik's November 10-themed advertisement illustrate AI's dual role as a technical and narrative tool. The Migros advertisement employs vibrant colors, dynamic visuals, and fluid editing to position AI as a "virtual guide" that simplifies daily life, reinforcing the brand's image as a technological innovator with the message "effortlessness equals happiness." In contrast, the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement uses nostalgic black and white aesthetics, grainy effects, and Yeşilçam cinematic codes to reimagine Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's retirement, fostering deep emotional connections through national values and societal sensitivities. However, ethical concerns emerge, particularly regarding AI's portrayal as an impartial tool or its use in depicting revered national figures, which risks manipulating consumer perceptions if not managed responsibly. While AI drives efficiency and innovation, human oversight remains essential to ensure creativity, authenticity, and ethical integrity. The integration of AI in advertising not only enhances data driven decision making and cost efficiencies but also enables the creation of visually striking, animation-intensive content, as seen in the dynamic narratives of the Migros ad and the dramatic storytelling of the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik campaign. To fully realize AI's transformative potential, the industry must prioritize ethical guidelines, empirical studies on consumer perceptions, and cross cultural analyses to address long-term societal impacts. By fostering consumer-centric approaches and maintaining human oversight, AI can empower brands to deliver innovative, culturally relevant, and emotionally resonant campaigns while upholding societal responsibilities, paving the way for a more accountable and dynamic advertising landscape.

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Advertising Production with Artificial Intelligence: A Semiotic Analysis

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Extended Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are increasingly integral to various business sectors, enhancing efficiency and delivering intelligent solutions. In advertising, AI boosts return on investment through optimization, automated ad creation, and personalization. While capable of generating variations from existing data, AI requires human intervention to produce fully original and creative content, serving as a collaborative tool that improves output quality rather than replacing human roles. This study examines AI's impact on advertising through a semiotic analysis of two pioneering Turkish advertisements: Migros Virtual Market's "Türkiye's First AI-Prepared Advertisement" and Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik's November 10-themed campaign commemorating Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Published in 2023 on official YouTube channels, these advertisements exemplify innovative AI applications one emphasizing commercial practicality, the other emotional and cultural resonance demonstrating AI's potential to redefine advertising narratives, legitimize its use, and address ethical considerations.

The investigation is informed by a literature review exploring AI's historical and conceptual foundations. Originating from inquiries into machine cognition in the mid-20th century, AI encompasses subfields such as machine learning, natural language processing, and image recognition. AI is defined as the replication of human-like tasks, including visual perception, decision making, and language translation. In marketing, AI transforms operations by analyzing vast datasets to predict consumer behaviors, enabling precise advertisements across globally interconnected devices. It reshapes campaign management by refining strategies and influencing consumer interactions, providing predictive insights for targeting and messaging. Within advertising, a critical marketing domain, AI supports personalization and content generation but raises ethical debates concerning privacy, transparency, and employment impacts. The literature underscores AI's role as a complement to human creativity, fostering innovations that provide competitive advantages through data analytics and predictive modeling.

Methodologically, the study employs Christian Metz's film semiotics framework, which decodes cultural and technical codes beyond linguistic analysis by examining the syntagmatic and causal structures of audiovisual media. The analysis is structured under five categories: moving image (including composition, lighting, and editing), phonetics (dialogue), music, graphic material, and noise. This qualitative approach suits the advertisements' complex structures, enabling a deep exploration of AI's aesthetic, ideological, and societal dimensions within Türkiye's cultural context. The focused sample of two advertisements allows for in-depth insights into AI's novel applications, with the Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement's emphasis on Atatürk adding regional specificity. Data sourced from public platforms ensure accessibility and timeliness.

Findings highlight AI's distinct roles in each advertisement. In the 22-second Migros advertisement, AI legitimizes corporate services through visualization. The moving image features a split screen collage: a product listing on the left and an AI-generated

consumer image on the right, transitioning from mosaic blur to clarity. Cultural codes emphasize "firstness" to convey innovation, AI "testimony" to suggest neutrality, and analogies between virtual markets and informatics expertise. Technical elements include vibrant, saturated colors, dynamic montage, and fixed eye level angles, creating a post-truth aesthetic. Dialogue promotes simplicity ("no hassle equals happiness"), supported by energetic music and branded graphics; noise is absent, prioritizing voice-over.

Conversely, the 44-second Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement reframes AI positively amid concerns about image manipulation, imagining Atatürk's serene retirement. Moving images present grainy, black and white AI generated photos of Atatürk engaging in leisure activities gardening, cycling, painting, and playing the saz framed nostalgically. Cultural codes exonerate AI through national symbolism, incorporating Yeşilçam cinematic motifs (e.g., seagulls, autumnal paths) and modernist decor reflecting secularism. Technical codes feature dramatic side lighting, eye level angles, and shutter sound transitions, blending modern resolution with vintage textures. Dialogue justifies AI's necessity ("could only be created with AI") against Atatürk's lifelong dedication, transitioning to authentic footage for contrast. Violin led music amplifies drama, with graphics and shutter noise reinforcing nostalgia.

Ultimately, AI extends beyond efficiency in advertising, serving strategic purposes such as shaping consumer perceptions, fostering innovative brand identities, connecting with cultural values, and crafting emotionally resonant narratives. The Migros advertisement positions AI as a technological leader, using vibrant visuals to equate ease with joy, though implying AI's impartiality risks ethical concerns of perception manipulation. The Anadolu Hayat Emeklilik advertisement employs nostalgic drama to ethically leverage AI for national homage, bridging history and modernity while respecting societal sensitivities. Both demonstrate AI's capabilities in analytics, automation, and personalization, yielding cost efficiencies and dynamic content, yet human oversight remains essential for originality and ethical integrity. This analysis contributes a Metz informed framework to the academic discourse on AI's aesthetic, cultural, and ethical roles in advertising. For industry, it offers practical guidance on AI integration for competitive, consumer centric strategies, as evidenced by these advertisements' promotion of technological and emotional connections. By emphasizing human AI synergy, advertising can deliver innovative, authentic campaigns that uphold societal values, prompting further exploration of consumer perceptions, ethical boundaries, and cross cultural dynamics to foster a responsible advertising ecosystem.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Advertising Production, Advertising Design, Advertising, Marketing.