

Method

Television advertisements aired from January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2008 in the major networks in the United States and the Philippines were analyzed. Major networks in the United States are: 1) CBS, 2) ABC, 3) NBC, and 4) Fox, whereas in the Philippines, there are: 1) ABS-CBN, and 2) GMA. Such a long time period was given to broaden the pool of advertisements where the sample was selected from. One hundred (100) advertisements were selected based on the following criteria:

- Country of Origin, as defined by the place where the ad originated: 1) the United States, or 2) the Philippines
- Time Period (January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2008) when the advertisement was aired
- Presence of Humorous Content, as expressed in the television ads through its audio (sound effects, commercial jingle), verbal (dialogue) and visual (images, facial expressions, texts, taglines) and plot or storyline.

Although product type (e.g. potato chips, instant noodles, cereal, soda, phone service, insurance), whether it is a high- or low-involvement product, is a criterion in using humor, it was not deliberately considered as such when creating the sample.

To complete the main sample of 100 advertisements, fifty (50) American and fifty (50) Filipino advertisements were chosen. The research followed a purposive sampling plan to select the advertisements. The aforementioned criteria (country of origin, time period, presence of humorous content) determined what advertisements could be included in the sample.

As mentioned earlier, product type (e.g. medicine, telecom, beer, etc.) and categorization (e.g. high- or low-involvement products) were not considered to purposively choose the advertisements. This also identified important common patterns that cut across variations, as determined by the social and cultural contexts in the United States and the Philippines. The prevalence of certain humor techniques were revealed through content analysis.

Results also described the presence of American and Filipino humor as studied in the past researches from the literature review. Therefore, the assumptions in this thesis were:

- 1) The humor contents of American and Filipino advertisements primarily contain obvious, physical humor.
- 2) American advertisements contain more humorous content of stereotypes than Filipino advertisements, and
- 3) Gender differences are pronounced in both sets of advertisements

Humor techniques, which appeared trivial on a cross-cultural perspective (e.g. anthropomorphism, infantilism) but showed an interesting number of patterns within and/or between the sets were also noted and explored. Results were discussed in two parts: 1) audio elements, which include linguistic and non-linguistic components such as dialogue and voice-over and music and sound effects, and 2) visual elements, which include images, facial expressions and written texts. The Chi-square statistical test was done to show the significant differences between American and Filipino advertisements in terms of each humor category.

To delve deeper into the meaning of these humor techniques in the advertisements in reference to the existing context of both countries, textual analysis was used. The text was mainly juxtaposed to their cultural backgrounds, but not limited to such because the analysis gave room for more observations that appeared from the data. Therefore, political and economic conditions of both countries were also considered in the analysis and discussed in passing.

Access to the advertisements was done through the Internet. Websites such as Youtube.com and Veryfunnyads.com host a database of advertisements made available for viewing. However, some video clips are not official advertisements of the brands but are mere spoofs, private videos and school projects. Such clips were not included in the sample for data analysis. Also, spot advertisements, promo plugs, infomercials, political advertisements and the like were excluded. Upon the completion of data gathering, the

statistics were generated using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Coding Scheme

Basic information about the advertisement included, 1) commercial identification number, assigned by the researcher, 2) title of the ad, 3) brand, 4) product type, 5) country of origin and 6) year.

The presence of humor content in the advertisements were determined by humor techniques that were adapted from Berger's (1973, 1993) typology of humor, as noted by Bujizen and Valkenburg (2004) in their exploratory research of the typology of humor in the audiovisual media. The scholars clustered Berger's humor techniques into seven higher order humor categories using principle components analysis: 1) slapstick, 2) clownish humor, 3) surprise, 4) misunderstanding, 5) irony, 6) satire, and 7) parody. However, due to the general nature of the clusters, Berger's humor techniques that have corresponding definitions and descriptions were adapted (*Refer to Table 1 for the list of humor techniques and their corresponding definitions*).

On this note, this thesis used the 41 clustered humor techniques in the audiovisual media specified by Bujizen and Valkenburg, without neglecting Berger's four major humor categories such as language, logic, identity and action that would be useful for data analysis. (*See Table 3*).

Table 3. List of 41 Humor Techniques according to Berger's Major Categories

| Language | Logic | Identity | Action |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bombast | Absurdity | Anthropomorphism* | Chase |
| Exaggeration | Coincidence | Eccentricity | Clownish Behavior* |
| Infantilism | Conceptual Surprise* | Embarrassment | Clumsiness* |
| Irony | Disappointment | Grotesque | <i>Irreverent Behavior (action)</i> |
| <i>Irreverent Behavior (language)</i> | Ignorance | Imitation | Peculiar Face* |
| Misunderstanding | Outwitting* | Impersonation | Slapstick |
| Peculiar Music* | Repetition | Malicious Pleasure* | Speed |
| Peculiar Sound* | Rigidity | Parody | Visual Surprise* |
| Peculiar Voice* | Satire | Scale | |
| Pun | | Stereotype | |
| Repartee | | Transformation | |

| |
|--|
| Ridicule Sarcasm Sexual Allusion |
|--|

The author classified the 12 new and renamed techniques by Bujizen and Valkenburg using Berger's major categories. However, "irreverent behavior" was both placed under "language" and "action" because such kind of behavior could be manifested both verbally and nonverbally.

An advertisement could contain more than one humor technique. Therefore, the coding structure followed a multiple-response format. It was also divided into two: 1) **audio**, which covers non-linguistic elements such as sound effects and commercial jingles and linguistic elements such as dialogue and voice-over, and, and 2) **visual**, which includes images, facial expressions and written texts. The identified humor techniques were further discussed by describing the elements and the situations in which they were used. This way, the storyline of the advertisement was laid out and the important scenes or elements that support the presence of one humor technique were clearly specified. The descriptions were also used in doing textual analysis.

Textual analysis was divided by country to highlight the culturally noteworthy humor techniques in the advertisements. Aside from simply describing the humor techniques in the ads, the analysis provided comparisons between the use of humor techniques from both countries, as shown in their respective advertisements.

Pretest

A pretest of five (5) advertisements from each country as a separate sample was done to calculate inter-coder reliability. Sixty-three (63) American ads and seventy (70) Filipino ads were collected to create a pool from where five (5) American ads and five (5) Filipino ads were randomly chosen. After the pretest, the main sample for the research was chosen from the remaining advertisements in the said pool.

Three (3) coders, including the author, participated in the pretest. One coder was assigned

to watch American ads, while the other one was assigned to code the Filipino ads.

Table 4. Pretest Sample of American Advertisements

| Brand | Title of the Advertisement |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Trojan Condoms (contraceptive) | “Evolve” |
| Amp’d Mobile (mobile service) | “Busted” |
| Ikea (home furnishings) | “Start the Car” |
| FedEx Kinko’s (office needs) | “Office Meeting” |
| Doritos (nachos) | “Cashier” |

The pretests for the two separate sets of advertisements were done with the author.

Therefore, two sessions of pretest took place.

Table 5. Pretest Sample of Filipino Advertisements

| Brand | Title of the Advertisement |
|------------------------------|---|
| Coca-Cola (beverage) | “P7 Promo” |
| Coffee Mate (cream) | “French Vanilla” |
| Skyflakes (crackers) | “Ano” (“What”) |
| Eskinol Master (facial care) | “Sikreto ng mga Gwapo” (“ <i>The Handsome Guy’s Secret</i> ”) |
| Sky Cable (cable TV) | “One Night Stand” |

In preparation to the pretest, the instrument and the code book were sent to the coders prior to the scheduled date of pretest. Clarifications of the definitions and instructions were made before the coders proceeded with the pretest. The author and the coder watched and coded the advertisements together. Discussion of discrepancies and misunderstandings was done to reach a consensus after all five (5) advertisements were viewed and coded.

Intercoder agreement coefficients, where Cohen’s $K = 1.00$, were generated through SPSS. For American advertisements, the reliability was moderately satisfactory ($K = .60$); whereas for Filipino advertisements, the reliability was substantially satisfactory ($K = .75$).

The pretest was a critical part of this research. Due to the author’s adaptation of the humor techniques from past researches, the terms and the definitions were realized to be very theoretical, not to mention that humor is highly subjective. Thus, recognizing them in the ads was a problem. To solve this, the author provided possible examples and did minor modifications in the descriptions to spot the humor techniques easily (*Refer to*

Appendix B: Revised Code Book).

Finally, after the pretest, the author found the importance of the main marketing message in each advertisement in connection to the humor technique present in the ad. Therefore, another revision of the coding structure included the description of the marketing message, or the “Big Idea”. This solved the dilemma of coding all the observable humor techniques in the ad, even if they did not make an important creative contribution to build its humor content and to deliver the marketing message.

