

Humor in Armenian Commercials

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## Abstract

This capstone analyzes Armenian comedy commercials released from 2008-2017 in hopes to find whether or not humor works best for Armenian advertising, and why humor is used so often by Armenian brands (when it comes to advertising). As no Armenian studies have been done in this area, international humor theories, advertisement theories and semiotics theories were used to study the humor use in these commercials. Lewin's 1951 "field theory," (Cline, T., Moses B. Altsech, & Kellaris, J., 2003), NFH and NFC (Thomas W. Cline, 2003), humor superiority, incongruity, and arousal-relief theories (McCreddie & Wiggins, 2008), Kelly & Solomon Experiment and semiotics theories were the methodologies used. Findings and conclusions were that advertisement text is strongly product-driven, an aggressive tone is common and funny, all humor was previously tried (nostalgic, risk-free), women and the weak are underrepresented, the persona of the "lav txa," socio-economic jokes, love for Russia and family care is common, commercials are based more on product rather than "big ideas" of brand, commercial context and humor is Armenified, cast choice is done upon ethos (credibility and likeness, famousness), no tricks and no prices are included, socio-economics is a recurring topic, collectivism and normality is in play, identification, demonstration, and mirroring of belief system advertising was a found pattern, and superiority and arousal-relief humor theories were mostly used. All these semiotic and cultural findings are collectively a representation of why and what kind of humor works best for the Armenian consumer.

## Introduction

Advertising is a science, and there are many ways to do it. Fear, emotions, credibility, promotion, sex, humor, claims, doubt, repetition are some of the few ways. The goal is for the message to stick and for people to swipe their credit cards, and so these psychological strategies have been tried over the years to discover which method sells the best. Even after numerous experiments and research, there is still a difference of opinion as to which strategy works best, and which should be avoided. Using humor has also been a subject of dispute in the world of advertising, although lately it's being promoted more than ever. Promotion is primarily because the human attention span is now just eight seconds, and because humorous content gets shared the most on social media. Consumers buy from people they like, and so humor is arguably the fastest way to build a relationship with your audience.

If one turns on Armenian television at any time of the day, they're presumably going to tune in to a commercial screening, and there's a good chance that the commercial is going to be pretty long and comedic. At the end of the 20th century, commercials grew so much of an impact on social consciousness, that they started to be called the "fifth government" «հինգերորդ իշխանություն».

Armenian commercials are inexpensive, in comparison to the rest of the world. It's cheap to film and show commercials on TV, and so most advertising companies keep showing their commercials. Around the world, the optimal number of ads displayed are 6 -10 minutes of advertising per hour, 4 to 6 ads with a duration of 30 seconds per block. In Armenia, the ads reach 20-25 minutes per hour, with 45 ads per block. Generally, social advertisements, are almost absent in Armenian TV time, even though the law states that social advertising should be at least 5 percent of the advertising airtime. Humor in Armenia is being boosted more than ever now, especially in commercials and banners in the advertising world, and in Armenian-directed movies, shows, series and even the news. Humor is also integrated into the inhabitant

speech and culture. Armenians, being a small group of people, with everyone knowing each other, love to socialize with friends and within communities. There's a tendency to want to become the most popular in the group or to show-off and brag, which often happens through the retelling of the best anecdotes and jokes.

Armenians tend to take themselves too seriously sometimes: genocide recognition, economy, and government problems, "goghakan" laws, the society's melting pot, making enough money for daily expenses, etc. Laughing and humor is probably a break from all of the negative. It is possibly at least one trait that the Armenians are proud of having, and so they use it so often. Armenians, and probably countries in the same economic status as Armenia struggle with skepticism being very skeptic of people and the government. They hardly believe or fall for anything, and so humor/comedy is the only way into their hearts

Humor also seems very "human," friendly and down-to-earth. With humor, the advertiser can speak to the middle-class and the poor, and this person does not feel tricked or manipulated but instead connects more to the advertiser. The Armenian actors playing in the commercials can even be seen on the streets; they are every-day, simple people, and Armenian people love that they can relate to them, without being pressured to buy something.

Other countries have icons of beauty, sports icons, icons of success, wealth and brains, who if starred in a commercial, will get the product's sales up like crazy, but in Armenia, our icons are the actors. A few years ago there were only a few shows on Armenian TV, mainly comedy skits, and everyone watched it. The actors are the faces most Armenians til the day associate TV with. As commercial time is cheap in Armenia, advertisers have time to tell a whole story- a whole skit with a punchline. Moreover, because ads are so cheap, there is no real competition in this field.

On the contrary Armenian ads are not as good in quality, the actor choice is almost always the same cast, the jokes are sometimes stretched and not so funny, and the humoristic quality of ads is

overused. In Armenia the advertising agency is just a source of money, many advertisers are not interested in advertising efficiency, results, and analysis. Advertising in Armenia is not practical because it is cheap, with the habit of escaping with a "cheap" order and solving the rest of the problems at the expense of the consumer. However, on the other hand, Armenian banks spend considerable resources on advertising and PR. Advertisement is generally regarded as the primary source of revenue for mass media, so commercials must have some logic and semiotics.

In marketing and advertising, semiotics play a crucial role in making a commercial successful or not. And through semiotics research, one can identify trends in popular culture of that country, understand how viewer/consumer attitudes and behavior are formed in popular culture and how advertisers can best meet the needs of consumers. And all this is done by improving communication (deployment of verbal, visual and performative elements) with their consumer (Christian Pinson, 1998). The symbolic elements include logos, rituals, cultural symbols, colors, iconic individuals, text, advertisements, websites, physical environments, hospitality and service, taglines and other “touch points.” Semiotics research on Armenian humoristic commercials may bring to the roots of the popular culture and the attitudes and behavior of Armenian towards such ads.

If a professional company with the best creative specialists came to make Armenian ads of better quality, would they succeed? Would it bring to more sales, or is the people’s demand only for humoristic ads, in the style they are today? No (not enough) previous research has been done in the sphere of Armenia and humor and Armenian humoristic advertisement after the country’s independence, and so this topic is of high relevance and importance. The goal of the capstone is to understand advertisement mentality and strategy in Armenia through semiotics and understand whether commercials can or cannot become more useful for the Armenian audience with or without the use of humor.

## Literature Review

### *Humor in Advertising*

#### **Humor “Sticking”, “Vampire Effect” and “Wear Out” in Advertising**

Humor is often used in print (magazines, newspaper, billboards), media and television to sell products. While used frequently, humor in advertising remains controversial, in the sense that whether it helps improve sales and brand identity or whether it does not have much of an effect, compared to other (traditional) forms of advertising. On the one hand, humor has been credited with calling attention to an advertisement, increasing comprehension of the ad, contributing to the positive attitude toward the ad and enhancing the positive attitude toward the advertised product. Those who support the use of humor argue that advertising does not have to be dull, but instead striking and entertaining, for it to “stick.” Others consider that the use of humor may not be suitable for certain products or services or audiences and is thought to lead to faster advertising “wear out.” Ads may offend some viewers and may result in the “vampire effect,” where the humor sucks attention away from the advertised product. Viewers may get so distracted by the joke that they forget the brand and its intended message. (Catanescu, Codruta Tom, Gail, 2001). Critics argue that humor in advertising entertains more than it sells. Sure, humor can sometimes fade over time; after watching the same commercial multiple times, it may not be funny anymore, thus causing a repelling effect. When choosing whether to use humor, it's important to think about the audience, message, medium, product and the type of humor.

Armenian ads use humor to sell just about anything, but mostly internet services, food, and electronics are the common humoristic commercial trends. The marketing personas for these companies are Armenian regular TV viewers, who also enjoy/have enjoyed the favorite comedy shows such as Kargin Haghordum, Kargin Serial, Full House, 32 Atam, Vitamin Club, 71/2, Tnpesa, Armenian comedy films, etc. Also, these personas enjoy the specific humor portrayed in these shows/films (since they are so popular) and consider what they are used to seeing on TV, as the definition of humor/what’s funny. It is

more or less easy for advertisers to hit the right spot on the humoristic elements of the ad because they have the humor base--the popular comedy shows as a template; they know what the Armenian viewers accept as funny. Moreover, most advertisements stick to the same scenarios and elements of other comedy shows and even use the same actors in similar situations. They do not copy jokes word by word, but they try to make it as similar as possible, so there's almost no risk in having the humor or jokes not work. For ads to "stick", they mostly use verbal slogans or joke punchlines, that stick in the head. However, whether or not these jokes have expiration dates is arguable and unresearched. Whether the humor takes away from the product or service ('vampire effect') is also arguable and unresearched.

### **Lewin's "Field Theory", Contingency and "Need For Humor"**

According to Lewin's 1951 "field theory," (Cline, T., Moses B. Altsech, & Kellaris, J., 2003) behavioral responses are shaped by two factors: the person (his or her needs, beliefs, etc.), the situation he or she is in (the environment), cognition and motivation, which determine what a person will do and whether he or she will do it. Understanding the audience and environment can only be understood by individual people's traits, characteristics, and interpretations. Contingency has been tested in multiple experiments to see how consumers react to the different elements of humor. Experiments and research that examine contingency used the following terms: NFH as an individual's "need for humor," NFC as a "need for cognition" and NFL a craving for humor and whimsy "need for levity." NFH, on its term, was divided into internal-humor (the need to experience humor internally (internal perspective) - humor generation) and external-humor (the need to experience humor from external sources-humor connoisseurship). Using these ideas of "needs," the experiments strived to find the underlying effects of humor on advertising outcomes. The study found that the basis of humor's widespread in advertising. NFH may be useful as a segmentation tool to find the right audiences. It was also found that NFH usually has a moderate role on the effect of humor when subjects have a low NFC. (Thomas W. Cline, 2003) This means that the need for cognition is somewhat inversely related to the need for humor.

Armenian commercials can also be put under the “field theory” to find out whether viewers will buy the advertised products/services or not, and whether the ad works. For this, we will need to factor in the Armenian viewer (his or her needs, beliefs, etc.) and the environment he or she is in. A good ad will tell the story or portray the life/views of the average Armenian being, and a viewer or analyzer will be able to tell the traits of an Armenian and his/her environment. Armenian ads usually use as much Armenification, Armenian lifestyle and Armenian jokes as possible. Do these commercials go by international standards or are they a style on their own catered to Armenians? No studies have been done about this. According to the NFC and NFH inverse relationship, does this mean that Armenia and Armenians have less of a need for cognition/acquired knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses? Studies have not been done in this area.

#### **Attention Span, Distraction Hypothesis, Mood, Memory and Pleasant/Unpleasant Advertising**

Research examining the use of humor in a variety of contexts has provided support that humor increases attention spans (Stewart and Furse 1986). Weinberger and Gulas (1992) argue that humor is directly linked to both attention and recognition. And the more attention by the audience, the more opportunity the ad will have to express extensive information and message processing, which will be remembered more. Other research has shown that humor can have distracting effects on information processing, the audience may not attend to message arguments at all (Smith 1993). Smith suggests that consumers' attitudes toward the ad and the brand can be enhanced by humor, but only in the case of ads which are characterized by weak arguments. According to the distraction hypothesis, a persuasive message that is differing with a position strongly held by viewers will be more successful in creating an attitude change if the viewer/consumer is distracted during the message presentation (Festinger and Maccoby 1964). This theory suggests that distraction may enhance message persuasiveness by taking part in the audience's attempts to counter-argue against the discordant/weak information. In an advertising

context, effective responses generated by humor may redirect a consumer from counter-arguing against a differing message. On the flipside, reduced counterarguing may increase acceptance of a humorous message (Cline and Kellaris 1999; Duncan 1979; Sternthal and Craig 1973). Absurd humor can result in more positive cognitive responses and hence more positive attitude. Humor also is used in elevating the consumers' moods, and even a slight change in mood towards the positive usually has a dramatic (positive) impact on how the consumer will act or think. (Kahn and Isen 1993). This may be the very turning point which will get the consumer to buy the product or service being advertised.

Memory researchers have found that information is remembered better when it is organized in a specific way: when spokespersons and products are meaningfully associated (Alba, Hutchinson, & Lynch, 1991). The first trick of good advertising is to make people pay attention. For the company deciding on the advertisement, the most crucial question is: How do I get what I have to say (my message) to stick in people's heads? Humorous content elicits a mismatch response, followed by an increase in appetitive activation, resulting in increased resource allocation and memory for humorous ads. More resources are allocated to ads with an overall unpleasant tone compared to pleasant tone and the addition of sexy and humorous content compared to unpleasant compared to pleasant ads results in better memory. (Sparks, J. V., & Lang, A., 2015). Also, advertisers need their audience to hook to the commercial (hold attention) and for a lasting response to evoke within them; the ad must cause a feeling related to the brand in people's memories. Neuroscience suggests that instinctively, our attention is directed to previous experience. Loud noises and creepy images attract our attention because we are taught to fear them. To make people feel good about a brand, enlisting negative emotions to get their attention may backfire, while the opposite is true for positive emotions. (Sarter, M., Givens, B., & Bruno, J., 2000).

Do Armenian ads have weak arguments or strong arguments, and does humor help the commercial by creating more attention to their ad and message respectively, or are the messages a bit

controversial and so humor is needed to create a connection with the audience? These questions have not been studied thoroughly. A positive mood is created, undoubtedly, but does mood elevating have to do with Armenians being in a bad mood in general or is there a need for humor? A socio-economic situation may come into play here. However, researching this will all be new information. What tones are used most: unpleasant tones, pleasant tones, sexy or humorous tones is also put under examination. If Armenian ads are making use of previously used humoristic approaches, then they link to previous experiences in the viewer's mind which instinctively draw our attention. Are other nostalgic elements used in these commercials? Moreover, what feelings do the brands try to create to stick in people's memories? Answers to these questions have to be retrieved from patterns and semiotic research.

### **What Make Humor/Jokes Funny, Humor Theories and Humor Types in Commercials**

A humorous ad has to be all or nothing (absurd or nothing); absurdness sticks to the head the best. The best example of humorous ads and absurd humor is Joe Sedelmaier, the face/father of humorous ads. Known for the popular commercials such as the fast-talking man for Federal Express, "Where's the beef?" for Wendy's, and Alaska Airlines, he has revolutionized the content of commercials. He directed his commercials emphasizing exaggeration such as strange expressions; loopy walks; sped-up or slowed-down movements just like Hollywood comedies. Also, because of the big success of such advertising, many advertisers started copying his style for commercial-making. (Elliott, S., 1992). Funny is also hard though. Everyone likes a good joke, but it is hard to make a nice joke that everyone will like and agree on. Some may find a commercial or joke clever, while some may find it offensive. Jokes and humor can also be culture-specific. Before launching, advertisers tend to pay to test their TV commercials with a sample of their target audience. However, even with ad budgets running to millions of dollars, humor "mistakes" are still often done.

Humor is a complex phenomenon, which includes the abilities to produce, recognize, and appreciate humor and to use it as a coping strategy. Martin (2007) summarized humor as the ability to understand jokes and other humorous stimuli, an expression of humor and cheerfulness, the ability to make humorous comments or have humorous perceptions, the appreciation of diverse types of jokes, cartoons, and other humorous material, the active seeking of sources that elicit laughter (e.g., comedies), the memorizing of jokes and funny anecdotes in life, as well as the tendency to use humor as a coping mechanism.

The three most prominent humor theories mentioned by Scheel, T., & Gockel, T., 2017 are the superiority, incongruity, and arousal-relief theories. McCreaddie and Wiggins (2008) trace the superiority theory back to Hobbes “an aggressive form of humor which takes pleasure in others’ failings or discomfort. It characterizes self-disapproval/-defeating/-ridiculing humor, making fun of those who are less fortunate or who deviate from a given norm. People laugh more at jokes that put down people toward whom they have negative attitudes and laugh less at jokes that put down those with whom they identify: humor about outgroups is funnier than about ingroups. Incongruity is humor where the punchline is not in harmony with the set-up; when something clashes with our mental patterns and expectations; the juxtaposition or shift from seriousness to play (McCreaddie & Wiggins, 2008). One understands the humor by humor comprehension, not through humor appreciation. According to Freud, the relief theory implies “Humour released by ‘excess’ nervous energy (tension) which masks other motives and/or desires” (McCreaddie & Wiggins, 2008). Humor may, for example, serve to facilitate relief of the tension caused by one's fears. Laughter, according to relief theory, results from this release of nervous energy. Humor, according to relief theory, is used mainly to overcome socio-cultural inhibitions and reveal repressed desires.

Catanescu C. & Tom, G use Reick's practitioner-oriented classification system, defines five types of humor used in advertisements: exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness and surprise; and also

comparison and personification are added later to the list. (Catanescu, Codruta Tom, Gail, 2001)

Understatement, jokes, irony, and intent are more perceptions of humor in advertisements presented by Kelly, J., & Solomon, P. (1975). Different media usually uses different types of humor more, which suggests that the effectiveness of the type of humor may differ by the medium. (Catanescu, Codruta Tom, Gail, 2001).

Like Sedelmaier's commercial absurdity was taken from Hollywood comedies, Armenian commercials are like mini-films or skits taken from Armenia comedy shows and series. Armenian advertisers most-likely don't spend as much testing their commercial on a target audience, and so this capstone will try to evaluate if the humor/jokes work or not, using humor theories and semiotics. It will also be interesting to evaluate as to which humor theory Armenian commercials mostly fall into and what types of humor is often used: exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness, surprise, comparison, personification, understatement, jokes, irony or intent, and if such a choice fits their medium.

### **Kelly & Solomon Experiment for Humor in Advertising and their Technical Findings**

How often are humorous appeals used in television advertisements, to what extent do humorous ads differ from non-humorous ads with respect to animation, what number of actors, and what handling of products is more effective, where is humor placed in advertisements, whether humor is better visually or through audio, and whether humor is related to or directed towards the product were essential questions that were asked for a "humor in advertising" experiment. (Kelly, J., & Solomon, P. (1975)). The findings discovered that humorous advertisements were animated most of the time. The number of actors does not differ between humorous and non-humorous ads, even considering the misconception that humor requires the whole available commercial time. There also was no difference in whether or not the product was being directly held during the ad, in whether the advertisement was more effective or not. If humor is to be used as an attention-grabbing device, it follows that the humor should appear toward the beginning of a

commercial, but the study showed that the humoristic part is mostly in the second half or during both halves of commercials. Most advertisements use visual and audio humor, not only one type of humor, according to the same Kelly & Solomon experiment. It has been suggested by some humor devotees that to be successful- humor must be related to the product, while others suggest the opposite. According to the study, approximately 50% of the humorous advertisements were related to the product, while the others were not. (Kelly, J., & Solomon, P., 1975) Moreover, so, there's still more that one way to make advertisements strongly useful. The choice depends on specific media, different products being advertised and cultural preference and demand.

The same experiment will not be done for Armenian ads, but instead, the capstone will use these findings and compare them to the chosen commercials to see whether similarities occur between American and Armenian ads or whether Armenian ads are thoroughly different. Details that will be examined are: humorous commercials mostly animated or not animated, the number of actors, commercial time, humor at the end or beginning, visual or audio humor, humor related to the product or not.

## *Semiotics*

### **Semiotics and Advertising Styles**

Through semiotics the academic and commercial worlds, come together in the ongoing need to work with “meaning,” need for data interpretation, understanding of things in context, searching for new possibilities of meaning for brands. Marketers and advertisers, when producing commercials, are selling signs and meanings of their brands, not only physical things (demiurgy). Also, what connotation does is enable the addresser to consider abstract concepts more easily and to introduce subtlety into the discourse.

Three general principles underlie semiotic analysis: the first is that all meaning bears behaviors and forms of expression have ancient roots, no matter how modern they may appear to be, and so firstly a

semiotician has to unravel the history of signs. The second principle is that sign systems influence people's notions of what is "normal" in human behavior; the semiotician is to expose the sign-based processes behind perceptions of normalcy. The third principle is that the particular system of signs in which one has been reared influences worldview, how the language or culture portrays the topic.

To practice semiotics, you have to bridge the central two banks: the semiotic bank, theory of semiotics and rules of its usages, observation, detachment and self reflection, acculturation (cultural immersion), sense of language and signage, analyze and synthesize stimuli and the marketing bank, theory of branding and rules of work with a brand, understanding marketing specifics in analyzed text (brand positioning, brand DNA, brand promise, key insight), ability to classify and label stimuli and understanding of implications. Semiotics in marketing anchors brands in the context of the market, culture, and society tells what consumers can, new trends and consumer cues for the brand, strategic and inspirational, validation tool. (M. Danesi, 2008)

Methodologies of advertising used are: identification-am I like the people in the commercial? Do I do the things they do? Would I like to be like them? Association- association, places something in the piece that I might want to be like. Demonstration- the message here is that there is a need and the product fulfills it. Mirroring of belief systems; the belief system may be one they want to sell to the consumer, but that they feel it already exists, even if unspoken, in the audience for whom this was designed. Modeling of canonical state- a sense of the canonical state of the counter, establishing an emotional connection- sells themselves on many different levels, this being probably the most sentimental and devious. (Chandler, D., 2002)

## Research Questions and Methodology

The capstone project is a scholarly research project, which analyses humor in Armenian commercials, and whether they're effective or not on a humoristic and commercial level, compared to international standards of humor and commercial strategy, and taking into account Armenian reality and culture. This is not a marketing analysis, which analyzes numbers of viewers, consumer recall, purchases and other statistics, but rather goes deeper into the connotation of the commercials and tries to answer questions like: **What do code/signs in Armenian advertisements say about Armenian culture and beliefs, values, mindset and behavior? What meanings do some Armenian brands portray in their commercials? Do Armenian TV commercials use humor as an attempt to forget or cover up the difficult situation prevalent in Armenia, or if humor just works better for the Armenian audience?**

More than 50% of Armenian advertisements are humoristic ads, with mostly the same faces from Armenian humoristic shows/skits. These actors include: Garik Papoyan, Hovo Azoyan, Hayko & Mko, Sos Janibekyan, Aram MP3 and more. Is there a significance or strategy behind why the same actors are always casted, and why humor is used so often? Is humor used against skepticism, as a mood lighten upper, as a way to sound "friendly" and "human", as a middle class-magnet, as a supply to the audience's demand, as a social need, as a creative beam, as a exhibition of our lovely actors, as manipulation, as a psychological or marketing strategy, or is it done because it's the easiest and cheapest choice, because there isn't much competition and creative thinking?

The theories I looked at are the ones that have to do with the direct linkage of humor and ads: Lewin's 1951 "field theory," (Cline, T., Moses B. Altsech, & Kellaris, J., 2003), NFH and NFC (Thomas W. Cline, 2003), humor superiority, incongruity, and arousal-relief theories (McCreaddie & Wiggins, 2008), Kelly & Solomon Experiment and semiotics.

Four TV commercials have been chosen to analyze. The choice was done according to different release years: 2008-2012, 2011, 2015 and 2017, the popularity of commercials, different actor cast, and differing companies: Beeline (2), Ashtarak Kat and Kerama Marazzi. For each commercial, the link is included, a description of events (denotation), and connotation for the main sections, such as: Appearance + Body Language, Language, humor and Character Popularity for all commercials, plus children, status, gender, attitude and family fights, tone and Russia for specific advertisements, and then sum that up into bullet points of findings. These findings, plus semiotics (Signifier, Signified, Signification, History of Signifier and whether Signifier/Signified is Normalized or not in Armenia) are put in a list. Moreover, all this was then compared and contrasted for patterns between the four commercials.

For the theories, I separated the following sections to analyze and assess the commercials correctly: Methodology, Advertisement Of Product, Punchline/Slogan, Humor Stickiness/Expiration, Vampire Effect, Field Theory, NFC, Weak r Strong Argument, Good or Bad Tones/Mood, Socio-economics, Feeling Associated With Brand, What Kind Of Humor Used, What Humor Theory Used, Number Of Actors, Commercial Time, Humor At End Or Beginning, Visual Or Audio Humor, Humor Related To Product, What Methodologies Of Advertising Used.

## Research Findings and Analysis

**#1 Commercial:** Panrik | Ashtarak Kat 2008-2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWk8QJtplMw>

### Description/Denotation

A commercial for “Ashtarak Kat”’s dairy product “Panrik,” featuring comedy skit actors Hayko and Mko from “Kargin Haxordum.” The commercial starts with a father (actor Mko) coming up to the counter with his kid in his arms and balloons in their hands. The kid and dad are both smiling, and happy and the dad starts speaking to the clerk in a kid’s voice. He greets the clerk and tells him that they need a few fresh products. The clerk plays along with the kid-voice thing, by mimicking the dad and by adding even more facial expressions and gestures. The dad tells the clerk to give them fresh bread, the clerk says “mmhm” and brings the bread. Then, the dad says to give them fresh milk; the clerk says “mmhm” and brings the milk. Moreover, then, the dad says to give them their favorite product, fresh panrik, the clerk says “mmhm” but mistakes the product for cheese. Then the commercial takes a twist, and the dad switches to his regular, brutish, manly voice and persona and says “Ara, friend jan maybe you do not understand me well enough, I am telling you to get me “panrik” but you are giving me cheese?” Then the screen cuts to images of “panriks,” and the logo of Ashtark Kat comes along with a voiceover that says, “Enjoy Ashtarak Kat’s fresh, sweet “panriks.” Then it cuts back to the same store counter with the clerk hiding behind the counter and asking a little girl “Aziz jan can you make sure from your dad (another dad) if he wants cheese or “panrik”?” And we see that this dad is a big man in sunglasses, looking mad and scary.

### Connotation

***Appearance + Body Language:***

The kids were both wearing colorful t-shirts (red and pink), and the cashier was also wearing a bright yellow t-shirt, while the two dads (who were more in power) were wearing button down shirts. The first dad was wearing a floral blouse, thus slightly covering over his inner “lav txa” personality. The second man was wearing a plain button-down and sunglasses inside the store, reaffirming his presence, importance and “lav txa-ness.” The first man was average-built and with a mustache, the clerk was fully shaved and average-built, but the second dad was rather heavy, shaved and balding- the clear representation of an oligarch, middle-aged respected (lav txa) man. The people that were smiling: first dad and clerk were seen as making fools of themselves, especially with their baby-voices, then when the smiles were over, and the first dad got mad, the clerk got scared, and the two were brought back to real life. The second dad, on the other hand, looked very serious, with a resting mad face, showing off his importance and status through his seriousness.

***Appearance + Body Language bottom line:***

- Button-down shirts and a classic wardrobe are what “lav txas” wear
- Clothes define status
- Stereotypes are big in Armenian commercials
- Smiling makes you a fool and less respected, while seriousness means high-status
- People working in customer service are low in status, it is not a respectful job
- Weight/height also speaks of status
- Too many colors is not manly

<b><i>Signifier</i></b>	Colored t-shirt vs. Classic button-down
<b><i>Signified</i></b> (refers to)	status, seriousness, respect, “lav txa”, acceptance, disapproval, child vs grown man, manliness
<b><i>Signification</i></b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas,	For Armenians (especially men) wearing colorful clothes is considered nonstandard, and differing from the rest, thus losing respect and status points. Someone wearing bright colors is either a tourist, nonstandardized

feelings within different people)	Armenian, a fool or a low-standard worker who is forced to wear such clothes. On the other hand, dark clothes and the classical style is encouraged. The first dad has a pattern on his shirt which is uncommon.
<b>History</b>	Wearing more black, gray or brown clothes equals immersion into the clothes culture of Armenian friends and colleagues, through which they fit in. Wearing button-downs, and suits on a daily basis come from the Soviet times because there were only standard, non-creative clothes back then, and classic style means the person is more important than someone wearing more casual clothes.
<b>Normalized</b>	Colored clothes-no Classic button-down- yes

<b>Signifier</b>	Smiling
<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	status, non-seriousness, no respect, non-“lav txa”, disapproval, lunatic
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	For Armenians (especially men) smiling may seem to be a symptom or a preference to being mad. Others do not have much to smile about. However, seeing someone smile means they are not from their “clan” and are not accepted. “Lav txas” don’t smile at all. Smiling is only for family and friends and people you trust. Or, smiling between a man and woman means they want something else from each other. Or you can smile in front of children. Locals mostly ignore everybody, stare at their clothes, but not in the eyes.
<b>History</b>	Armenia's private sector is catching up with international customer service, most civil servants in state institutions, offices and agencies are notoriously rude and impatient. This behavior is normal in Armenia, yet a footprint of Soviet influence when everyone subconsciously made sure not to stand out, to fit in, to stay within the confines of socially accepted norms needed for survival. Also, Armenia has seen a lot of struggle and people struggle economically, so they do not wish to smile.
<b>Normalized</b>	Smiling- no, Smiling around children- yes

**Children:**

The dad and clerk are putting on this show for the kid; they are going off-guard, for their most valued: their kids. If the dad is qyartu, “lav txa,” in essence he should not become less qyartu in front of his kids, but because children are so valued in Armenian society, he still is ready to do anything for their kids, like go shopping with them, etc. Even the clerk was directing his speech to the kid, giving him attention. However, both the kids are silent, they do not say a word, which takes them out of the focal

point. This silence is maybe to show that grown-ups have the word in Armenian society. Also, this shows that the commercial is directed to grown-ups, selling “panriks” to adults, but by including children as characters, the commercial does not forget to include them. It is not clear as to whom the “panrik” is being bought for, because the rest of the products are not specifically for children and it is never specified that the dad is buying the panrik for their kids.

***Children bottom line:***

- Kids are valued, and parents must do everything for them
- Street-credit and status is often paused in front of kids
- Dads/ the men usually go shopping, have money
- Dads usually spend time with children/buy things for them
- Grown-ups/men have the word, but children are kings
- Children don’t talk much, aren’t given too much big roles
- The panrik is for children and adults
- In the end, dads will scream in front of children/will let go of their guard in times of need
- Men are more present in Armenian commercials

<b><i>Signifier</i></b>	Father shopping with kids
<b><i>Signified</i></b> (refers to)	care, kid-importance, impress the kid, entertain kid, buy presents for their kid, guard down, pamper
<b><i>Signification</i></b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	For Armenians a man shops if the his wife asks him to. Also, men usually are the ones to spoil kids. Shopping with his kid makes him a good, fun father, who will try to paper the kid and buy them stuff or entertain them, and treat them like a king.
<b><i>History</i></b>	Women are considered to be the carriers of culture, customs, and tradition and are seen as responsible for children upbringing. The home/household is a woman's domain. It was/is their duty and responsibility to maintain the household. Shopping was/is mostly done by women, but on the other side, men usually breadwinners, with a higher salary, so sometimes they would do the shopping. The married couple, with their offspring, legislate the domestic unit. Offspring are very important for the family.

***Status:***

Through different methods such as camera angles and movements, status is also underlined. The camera is concentrated on the faces of the people, but it zooms in more and more in their faces towards the end when the situation gets tense. Then we see that in the second scene, the dad and clerk are angled in a diagonal, up and down, and the clerk is even hiding behind the counter further emphasizing the difference<sup>4</sup> of status. Also, this shows that workers (especially store workers) are not taken seriously and are considered to have a low-levelled job.

***Status bottom line:***

- Status always plays an important role, especially in Armenian ads
- Face and eye contact is important
- Those of higher status feel the need to show their power

***Language:***

The clerk almost doesn't even speak, just makes noises and nods, further emphasizing that he is lower. The kids do not speak at all. The dad in the first scene starts talking in a baby's voice, slowly and in a high voice, to entertain his kid. He starts by greeting him, refers to him as "dzdyza," the Russian version for man. Moreover, he uses the ending -it after each product, which has a minimizing effect. Then when the dad gets mad, he refers to the clerk as ara and friend jan. And says you do not understand, There's also a play on words here, "panrik" and panir-ik (cheeses).

***Language bottom line:***

- Lack of speech means lack of voice, respect
- There is no shame for your children
- Wordplay/ Language-play is funny
- Calling someone your friend jan is lowering them

- Speaking in a higher voice is more manly, convincing

<b>Signifier</b>	Voice tone (child’s voice vs. manly voice)
<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	status, seriousness, respect, jokeful-ness, playing games, equality, fright, “lav txa,” pressure
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	For Armenians, a manly, angry tone of voice and strong (or striking) language portrays manliness, power, status, and that you are a “lav txa” that no one wants to mess with. A real Armenian guy will stand up for himself and fight in most cases if someone does something wrong or they do not understand each other.
<b>Normalized</b>	yes

**Gender:**

The clerk is surprisingly male (doesn’t often happen) and all the characters in the commercial are predominantly (%) male, except for the little girl. This is strange because Armenia’s population is not predominantly male it is 50/50, and also one would think that they would need to include female characters to sell to mothers and females too. This might mean that Armenians are a male-directed country, where the male’s appearance and performance are enough for women to follow.

**Gender bottom line:**

- Males are predominant in Armenian ads
- Males often initiate fights and fight with each other
- Armenia is a male-centric nation
- Only males in ads are as effective as having males and females, only females would not be as effective
- Males are good at doing humor

***Humor:***

This commercial is considered to be a humoristic commercial for Armenians, but is it funny?

There is a dad getting mad at a clerk’s mistake, and then the clerk is now afraid of all dads asking for “panriks.”

***Humor bottom line:***

- Arguing and fighting is funny
- Wordplay/Language-play is funny
- Fright, lowering someone is funny
- Commercials with punchline

***Character Popularity:***

The characters playing are the favorite skit actors of “Kargin Serial,” later renamed “Kargin Haxordum” Hayko and Mko. Hayko is the taller one, playing the customer, and Mko is the shorter one playing the clerk, which speaks of status. All of Armenia knew these actors and watched their skits, and this commercial was like a mini-skit.

***Character Popularity bottom line:***

- Hayko and Mko, as comedy actors, will make any commercial funny, just by having them in one scene together
- Television shows have been transferred to commercials, to make commercial popular as well
- Armenian commercials are like mini-sits with a plot and punchline in the end

<b><i>Methodology</i></b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b><i>Yes/No</i></b>
<b><i>Advertisement of product</i></b>	Enjoy Ashtarak Kat’s fresh, sweet “panriks”	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Punchline/Slogan</i></b>	I’m telling you panrik and you’re giving me cheese?	<b><i>Y</i></b>

<b><i>Humor stickiness/expiration</i></b>	Yes sticky, because of popularity	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>No Vampire effect</i></b>	The punchline is so strong and product-related, that no vampire effect	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Field Theory</i></b> (Armenification?)	A Lot of Armenification, especially language, tone and the action of getting mad. The part where he hides behind the counter is exaggerated though. The ad is for those with an Armenian mentality and culture-experience living in Armenia.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Weak NFC</i></b> (understanding through thought, experience, and the senses)	You do not learn anything or feel anything worth using your brain for, from this commercial. People might rarely encounter a situation like this in real life. Most of the audience is also aware of what “panriks” are, and know that the word differs from cheese.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Weak (N) or strong (Y) argument?</i></b>	The argument here is a fact, that “panriks” are not cheese-iks. So we will consider it to be a strong argument.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Good (Y) or bad (N) tones/mood?</i></b>	The commercial starts with a very good, childish mood and tone but then switches to an aggressive one. Then the product information is said in a happy tone and ends in a scared tone.	<b><i>Both</i></b>
<b><i>Socioeconomics mentioned?</i></b>	Nothing about prices is mentioned, only shown that socially clerks are in a low position and often get blame and complaints about making mistakes or just for trying to do their job.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Feeling associated with brand</i></b>	Both children and adults want and enjoy “panriks” and will get mad if they do not get it. Happy but also pressuring	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>What humor used</i></b> (exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness, surprise, comparison, personification, understatement, joke, irony, intent)	Put-down, surprise	<b><i>-</i></b>
<b><i>Humor theory</i></b> (superiority, incongruity, or arousal-relief)	All three theories: superiority, incongruity, and arousal-relief theories are used. Superiority, because we are laughing at someone ridiculing the other, at the clerks fail in recognizing the panrik, and later the clerk is mezmorized to the ground. Incongruity, because the commercial was in a whole different mood, then boom it takes a turn. Arousal-relief theory, because the commercial cause some kind of nervousness for the clerk, but we are calmed down by the last segment.	<b><i>All</i></b>
<b><i>Number of actors?</i></b>	3 adults + 2 children, 2 main characters	<b><i>5</i></b>

<b>Commercial time?</b>	42 seconds	<b>42</b>
<b>Humor at end(Y) or beginning(N)?</b>	End	<b>Y</b>
<b>Visual(Y) or audio(N) humor?</b>	Visual and Audio	<b>Both</b>
<b>Humor related to product?</b>	Yes, they specifically talk about “panriks”, but not the functionality/taste/price of it.	<b>Y</b>
<b>Methodologies of advertising</b> (identification, association, demonstration, mirroring of belief systems, modeling of canonical state, establishing emotional connection)	Mirroring of belief systems- the fact that “panriks” are created for both kid and adult is possibly a “belief system” others know, and this commercial just emphasizes that fact, the rest of the commercial types do not quite fit in.	<b>Mirroring belief system</b>

**#2 Commercial: KERAMA MARAZZI ARMENIA | 2015**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgchFoTUNP0>

**Description/Denotation**

The commercial starts with the husband on the couch flipping through TV commercials. The first screen we see is with big letters, “No to higher prices” and the voiceover from the TV says “Electricity prices have gone up,” “Prices went up by 80 drams over one night”. And then the wife comes into the living room and announces that “The tiles in the bathroom have cracked again.” The husband answers annoyed, “It is your parents-bought tiles, from the father-in-law, mother-in-law collection. Instead, we had, to go to Kerama Marazzi to buy Italian tiles..” The wife then says “The Italian ones are expensive,” and they get into a dispute where ones say “It is expensive” and the other “it’s not expensive” three times each. Then we see the two going up the stairs towards Kerama Marazzi and in the next scene, they are already inside the store and the wife is happily hugging a tile. She says, “Well yeah, it’s not expensive”

and the husband says “And most importantly, it’s Italian”, then the wife denies her husband’s statement and says, “No, most importantly it’s not expensive.” and the dispute starts again with one saying “Most importantly it’s Italian” and the other saying “Most importantly it’s not expensive.” Then the voiceover announces, “Kerama Marazzi, Italian tiles available to everyone.”

## **Connotation**

### ***Appearance + Body Language:***

The husband is sitting on the couch, looking mad or disappointed and is wearing jeans and a white t-shirt with the text reading “New Island Ocean Star,” which has no real definition. The wife is wearing all pink, thus showing off her girliness and glamour personality, but her pink clothes is kitchen-attire, including an apron, gloves and a bow- tying her hair up,--more like a 50s housewife look, with full makeup. They also live in a nice-furnished apartment, which shows that they are well-off and tasteful, which works well for Kerama Marazzi’s image. When the two go out to the store they fully change their clothes and language, the husband is now groomed, he is wearing a white button-down and white blazer, while the wife is dressed in a green dress with her hair down. This shows the “class” of the store; they are going to.

### ***Appearance + Body Language bottom line:***

- Women should be overly womanly, while men overly masculine
- The woman should be working, while the man can rest/watch TV
- The man usually is more into news, politics, woman is unaware
- The woman should always be worried about the house and cleaning constantly
- The man does not have to care about appearance at home; the woman has to
- Kerama Marazzi is for people with good taste, good standards
- The family is well-off
- They do not have children

- You have to dress up to go to hardware store Kerama Marazzi

<b>Signifier</b>	Woman in an apron, Man on a couch
<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	gender roles, work-division, status, stereotypes, housewife, worker, political-informedness, man can relax
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	For Armenians, housework has to be done by the woman, and even if the workload is heavy, the man does not need to help, he can relax. Also, that is why the man may be more educated and informed about other things since he has more time. You would never see switched roles in this scenario.
<b>History</b>	Armenian culture has historically emphasized a division of fields among the sexes. The home/household is a woman's domain. The grandmother/mother-in-law was/is the manager of the household. In the domestic sphere, women had no choice when it came to the chores. It was their responsibility to maintain the household. Both sexes could work, but women worked in lower paid jobs. As a result, the average salary of women constitutes two-thirds of men's salaries. The main work areas of women are in the sectors of education and health. Because of housing shortages in Soviet Armenia, the new couple resided with the groom's family. However, the preference has been and continues to be for new couple forming a new household. Also for a long time, after independence, Armenian did not have enough jobs, so men usually work, and woman are supposed to do housework.
<b>Normalized</b>	Yes

***Attitude and family fights:***

The two change their speaking-style at the store, speaking more calmly and professional.

However, this breaks soon when they start screaming in the store, again. The relationship between the two is very aggressive; it seems that they can never agree on a topic, and well specifically this topic. They cannot agree in the house or public, and it seems that both are not ashamed of this, as they always start to shout louder and louder. Another American or European family like this would turn to divorce if they fought so much, but the commercial probably portrays this family as an average Armenian family. The husband was already mad at the news on TV, and the wife almost made things worse by proclaiming more bad news. She also said that this happened again, and so problems like this often happen in their household, which creates a big fuss. What's interesting is that they are fighting about money, but the wife

cares more about saving money from their family budget, more than the husband cares. This speaks of the fact that the woman is more savvy, even though most likely her husband will be paying for the tiles. Does this mean that the woman will be paying if she cares so much or does this mean she controls the family spending? Most probably the husband just wants to spend a bit more but buy quality tiles, to not have problems in the future.

***Attitude and family fights bottom line:***

- Family drama may try to be covered in public, but not really, Armenian families are not shy to fight
- Husband and wife cannot agree on any topic; they fight often
- Armenian couples do not solve problems with divorce, but rather with a fight, disputes and finding solutions
- Armenian women are illogical, do things at the wrong time
- Neither (wife nor husband) wants to back down from the argument
- They fight, but still solve the problem
- The final decision was made by the male (husband)
- Armenian family life is stressful, problem-full, no smiles and dramaless moment
- Most arguments are about money
- Household problems are discussed by the husband, husband buys everything
- Woman (wife) cares about saving money, yet does not spend money
- Both control over family budget
- Husband cares about long-term problem solving, less about money
- Kerama Marazzi tiles are great in fulfilling both husband's and wife's needs

<b><i>Signifier</i></b>	Wife and husband fighting
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<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	Relationship problems, communication, status indecisiveness, money, divorce, no kids, who wears the pants, who problem concerns
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	For Armenians, the husband wears the pants in the relationship no matter what, but here the woman is fighting on the same level as the man. Women viewers may see this as a mark of independence, and that home appliance choice should be made through them. A man may think of the woman as annoyingly loud and unhumble but might relate to the same situation at home. Men care about stopping fights, and so buying quality products, women care about short-term decisions and saving money.
<b>History</b>	TV series, especially, portray violence and discrimination against women. Women are shown being humiliated, beaten and crying, weak and weak-willed and men as tyrants. In reality, men in Armenia are not afraid of domestic violence, and the man is the head of the family and has a say in everything, especially final decisions. Divorce is uncommon in Armenia. Also, women have become more independent lately by starting to work, and not being dependant on their man.
<b>Normalized</b>	Yes/No Yes, because couples do often fight, No because they do not usually fight so immensely, and man should have won, and women don't care so much about the price if they are no paying.

**Language:**

The language is colloquial, and the main phrases they use is “The Italian ones are expensive,” “It is not expensive”, “It’s expensive,” “Most importantly it is Italian,” “No, most importantly it is not expensive.” This points out that Italian products have high quality. Moreover, this also means that quality and price are elements that rarely coincide, and so they create a topic of dispute, as to which to pick and which element is more important.

**Language bottom line:**

- Quality is important for men, not to have to spend as often
- Price is important for housewife to save money
- Kerama Marazzi does the impossible, combines quality and a good price, it is the best option for both sides of the argument, both wife and husband
- Good quality products often are expensive; cheaper products are bad quality
- Husband cares about long-term, wife about short-term solutions

- Italian products are automatically good in quality= expensive, Armenian-made products don't stand a chance in quality
- Fights are often about money

***Humor:***

This commercial is supposedly funny and memorable, but there's only a dispute. Another interesting detail is the portrayal of the parents of the wife and how her husband dislikes and blames them as the root of their problems.

***Humor bottom line:***

- Fighting is amusing and funny
- Jokes about inlaws is funny
- Wife's parents are to blame for family problems
- Husband does not get along with inlaws
- Commercial with punchline

***Character Popularity:***

Armenian comedy actor from "Kargin Serial" Hayko and an Armenian series actress are the participants of this commercial, which are known for their characters in their shows and the family situations they play in.

***Character Popularity bottom line:***

- Armenians want to see popular faces/actors in commercials
- Actors continue playing their character or a similar version of their character that everyone is familiar with in commercials
- Commercial is funny because of the comedy actor

<i>Methodology</i>	Explanation	<i>Yes/No</i>
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<b><i>Advertisement of product</i></b>	Kerma Marazzi, Italian tiles, available to everyone.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Punchline/Slogan</i></b>	It's not expensive! It's Italian!	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Humor stickiness/expiration</i></b>	Yes sticky, because of popularity	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>No Vampire effect</i></b>	The punchline is so strong and product-related, that no vampire effect	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Field Theory (Armenification?)</i></b>	A Lot of Armenification, especially language, tone and family fights. The ad is for those with an Armenian mentality and culture-experience living in Armenia.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Weak NFC (understanding through thought, experience, and the senses)</i></b>	The beginning of the commercial shows news on the TV about the situation that was happening at the time, price escalation. This brings experience and senses to the table, making a tie with the viewers. But the rest is weak NFC.	<b><i>50/50</i></b>
<b><i>Weak (N) or strong (Y) argument?</i></b>	The argument here is proving/showing that this product is both cost-effective and with high quality. Average argument	<b><i>50/50</i></b>
<b><i>Good (Y) or bad (N) tones/mood?</i></b>	The tone starts annoyed and escalates to very mad. Then when the problem is solved the mood is good, then again escalates to loud and annoying.	<b><i>N</i></b>
<b><i>Socioeconomics mentioned?</i></b>	Yes from the very beginning it is shown on TV, that Armenians are fighting against price escalation. Also this family is concerned about paying a price for tiles.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Feeling associated with brand</i></b>	For regular (fighting, thrifty) but also tasteful families	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>What humor used (exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness, surprise, comparison, personification, understatement, joke, irony, intent)</i></b>	Exaggeration, screaming so loudly everywhere, Personification, can relate to family problems	<b><i>-</i></b>
<b><i>Humor theory (superiority, incongruity, or arousal-relief)</i></b>	Use mostly superiority, because we are laughing at the exaggerated screams of the couple and at the jokes made about the in-laws	<b><i>Superiority</i></b>
<b><i>Number of actors?</i></b>	2 main characters	<b><i>2</i></b>

<b>Commercial time?</b>	40 seconds	<b>40</b>
<b>Humor at end(Y) or beginning(N)?</b>	End	<b>Y</b>
<b>Visual(Y) or audio(N) humor?</b>	Audio	<b>Audio</b>
<b>Humor related to product?</b>	Yes, they even hold the product, but don't use the name of the product so much.	<b>Y</b>
<b>Methodologies of advertising</b> (identification, association, demonstration, mirroring of belief systems, modeling of canonical state, establishing emotional connection)	Identification- We identify with the family that is always fighting over something, Demonstration- the message here is that there is a need- to fix bathroom tiles, and the product fulfills it.	<b>Identif ication ,Demo nstrati on</b>

### #3 Commercial: Beeline Hi-Line | Beeline 2011

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEC6sTM-OYE>

#### Description

Two guys are sitting in front of each other disputing with “anecdotes” about whos internet is worse. The first one says “My internet is so bad that I have to download a movie now, so that at least my grandchildren will be able to watch it”, the other says, “My internet is so bad that google answers my question with another question”, “My internet is so slow, that when I get to open a photo, the girl has already aged”, “My internet is so bad that to get seperated (from the internet), I have to pay alimony for a year”. Moreover, then comes in the Bee-line presenter and says “My internet is so good because it is Hi-line, reliable, unlimited, fast internet in your house.” Now the other two are looking at him, and he continues to say “Use it for free for the first month, without any strings attached. Try it, try the difference. Are you convinced? It has been tried; I know what I’m saying.”

## Connotation

### *Appearance + Body Language:*

The two men are dressed in dark colors and are arguing about whose internet is worse, these are the “lav txas,” the majority of the Armenian population, and these are the complaining population. The man who comes in to talk about Beeline is dressed and groomed differently, is the more modern man, with better thoughts and better ideas. He has a colorful sweater on; his hair is more shaggy with bangs. This is the representation of the more developed and progressive people, who have solutions for everything, because of their tech-savviness. The first two are sitting crossed legged, then standing up, looking at each other straight in the eyes, and sometimes looking down at the other person. They are basically “biting each other” with their looks. The two don’t use violence when disputing; no hand movements are used. It is a peaceful dispute; they are just staring into one another real hard. The other man moves and sounds very put-together, like a teacher, he puts his hands in a orb shape and crosses his hands, showing intelligence and confidence. In the end, he helps the two guys stop fighting, and they finally smile and nod agreeing, giving up to the new man and accepting the new ways.

### *Appearance + Body Language bottom line:*

- “Lav txas” are present in commercials
- “Lav txas” wear black and complain a lot and have a min. hair haircut
- The more progressive person wears colorful clothing and does not complain
- The more progressive person is better than the “lav txa” because has better internet, less problems and because his selection wins in the end
- The progressive guy solved the situation, saved the day and put end to the dispute
- “Lav txas” fight peacefully, but try to pressure each other with words and looks (powerful weapons)
- Progressive people are more intelligent: speech, movements, more experienced, confident

- Beeline is catering to the more progressives or the ones that want to be better

<b>Signifier</b>	Complaining vs. happy man
<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	Socio-economic situation, spark to change, step forward, different is good
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	People complain virtually about anything because their living conditions are bad. However, if a new, better solution which is well-priced is offered, this may stop the complaining stream. Complaining can transform into jokes.
<b>History</b>	For a country supposedly suffering from a battered economy that has resulted in high rates of unemployment and poverty, with lack of opportunity for the educated is some of the causes for Armenians to have such a complaining attitude. But new, more forward-thinking people are coming around, with new systems and ideas brought from abroad.
<b>Normalized</b>	yes

**Language:**

The language is very colloquial between the first two guys. However, the third guy automatically changes his language formality, showing more credibility and importance in his character and speech. He also mentions that you can try the product, but before you try it he says...oh you tried it? Did you like it? It is tried, I know what I am saying. Also, he describes the internet with an easy-to-remember slogan “Hi-line, reliable, unlimited, fast internet in your house.”

**Language bottom line:**

- Regular people speak colloquial Armenian, people in power/modern people speak formal Armenian
- More formal language means more credible person and speech
- Asking questions, but giving answers, is a good technique for including people, but really not
- Rhyming, easy slogans work great
- For families, because he uses “in your house”
- Personalization
- Credibility and trust when Aram Mp3 says “It’s tried, I know what I’m saying.”

***Humor:***

The complaints/jokes they make are: “My internet is so bad that I have to download a movie now, so that at least my grandchildren will be able to watch it”, “My internet is so bad that google answers my question with another question”, “My internet is so slow, that when I get to open a photo, the girl has already aged”, “My internet is so bad that to get seperated (from the internet), I have to pay alimony for a year”. Theses all speak of ordinary internet people have, and also show the importance of grandchildren, getting answers when asked, how common internet dating is and how divorces alimony is a funny topic. This follows the format of the popular mama jokes and the Armenian version which goes: I have something so bad, that this, that. Having such jokes shows that Armenians enjoy complaining, to the point that they are competing as to who has it worse. However, these complaints are dimmed down with humor.

***Humor bottom line:***

- Joke-telling is a common practice
- Complaining is common, complaining through jokes is common
- Joke-telling and other similar practices can become into competition
- Competition and winning an argument is really important
- Complaining at things is humor, humor is complaining at things
- This same practice of complaining humor joke-telling has been used in 32 Atam/Vitamin Club, from where these actors are from
- Grandchildren and looking after them is vital
- Online dating (or using social media for meetups) is common
- Alimony is a known concept that many stay away from
- This joke system inspired by mama-jokes
- Humor is mainly created through words

**Character Popularity:**

The characters playing in the ad are Garik, Vache and Aram MP3, the most popular members from 32 Atam/Vitamin Club. They were the first and only (for a while) group to do standup comedy and were very popular amongst Armenians. One of the popular sections of their standup was to list complaints and make two of the characters fight as to has it worse, the same thing as what they did in the commercial. These three are the most popular from the bunch, and Aram MP3 is the most popular one because he is a singer/actor and popular in those spheres too, so him being the lead of the commercial was a good choice, because he is the winner here, and many choose him over others.

**Character Popularity bottom line:**

- Popular actors/ stand up comedy artists play in comedy commercials
- A funny person is funny everywhere
- Funny is popular in commercials
- If something is popular on TV (for example these skits), they repeat the same thing for commercials to make them popular
- Popular people are used in commercials
- The most popular person is supposed to say the most important text, to make it more relatable and sound more reliable

<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Advertisement of product</b>	My internet is so good, because it's Hi-line, reliable, unlimited, fast internet in your house.	<b>Y</b>
<b>Punchline/Slogan</b>	My internet is so good.	<b>50/50</b>
<b>Humor stickiness/expiration</b>	No so sticky because plain old jokes expire soon, once you hear it a couple of times.	<b>Y</b>
<b>No Vampire effect</b>	They use the word "internet" so much, that it cannot get away from the product.	<b>Y</b>
<b>Field Theory</b>	A Lot of Armenificied jokes The ad is for those with an Armenian	<b>Y</b>

(Armenification?)	mentality and culture-experience living in Armenia.	
<b>Weak NFC</b> (understanding through thought, experience, and the senses)	The jokes have to be thought about and understood through thought.	<b>N</b>
<b>Weak (N) or strong (Y) argument?</b>	HiLine is the best, fastest internet you can get	<b>Weak</b>
<b>Good (Y) or bad (N) tones/mood?</b>	The mood is annoyed then happy.	<b>Both</b>
<b>Socioeconomics mentioned?</b>	They are fighting about bad internet, which is the result of money. Also, they are sharing what social problems they are having as well.	<b>Y</b>
<b>Feeling associated with brand</b>	Modern, innovative, trustworthy, breaking old ways	<b>Y</b>
<b>What humor used</b> (exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness, surprise, comparison, personification, understatement, joke, irony, intent)	Joke- as in they were telling jokes straight on	<b>-</b>
<b>Humor theory</b> (superiority, incongruity, or arousal-relief)	Arousal relief- because the guys are talking about bad things happening, but it's so bad that we accept it as a joke	<b>Arousal-Relief</b>
<b>Number of actors?</b>	3 main characters	<b>3</b>
<b>Commercial time?</b>	41 seconds	<b>41</b>
<b>Humor at end(Y) or beginning(N)?</b>	Beginning	<b>Y</b>
<b>Visual(Y) or audio(N) humor?</b>	Audio	<b>Audio</b>
<b>Humor related to product?</b>	Yes, they speak about internet, but not directly Hi-line.	<b>Y</b>

<p><b><i>Methodologies of advertising</i></b> (identification, association, demonstration, mirroring of belief systems, modeling of canonical state, establishing emotional connection)</p>	<p>Identification-we identify with their problems, demonstration-gives a solution to a problem</p>	<p><b><i>Identification, Demonstration</i></b></p>
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**#4 Commercial:** Smart+Russia | Beeline 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1n5Gufk4Kc>

**Description**

Already a sequel, Beeline had introduced characters that each represent a feature on Beeline. There's the white-European looking BeeTV girl, the fat internet guy and the brown-haired average looking SMS girl. The fat internet guy points to the screen and says, "Have you seen this?" The three all look at the screen to see that their friend- the minute guy is in a relationship and they're all shocked and say "Wow" in English. Then the minute guy comes in with a Russian girl in a Russian headpiece. The three look at them, internet guy is not amused, BeeTv girl looks with approval and SMS girl looks up to BeeTv. The Russian girl says Hello in Russian, and the Minute guy quickly explains that she is also a minute, but a Russian minute. Then the internet guy is fast to introduce himself saying "It is nice to meet you, and that he is Internet Aragovich (The son of Arag (Fast)) and the Russian girl says she is Minuta Bezlimitovna (Minute Daughter of Bezlimit (Unlimited)) and she nicely bows down holding her skirt. The next scene is the screen with the commercial, with a voiceover stating "Join the Smart tariff packages and receive 10 000 minutes to also use for Russia's Beeline calling. Beeline- simple, comfortable, for you." Then the commercial cuts back to the previous scene where the Russian minute girl is disappointed and says to the Armenian minute, "Oh so you are not Ashot." And the Armenian minute is quick to

answer, how am I not Ashot, and he points to his shirt and says that his shirt which actually reads “Minute” spells Ashot. Then the girl calms down and hugs him and says “Ashot Qit Mrutd Ashot”, which are sweet untranslatable words in Armenian.

## **Connotation**

### ***Appearance + Body Language:***

The different appearances of the characters have to do with the Beeline features, which are written on their t-shirts, but their shirts are not all the same in style and color. The BeeTv girl has blonde hair, and a European appearance does not look Armenian, yet is represented as an Armenian girl. The other girl looks more Armenian, yet not so much, and her shirt is the most basic one, and she also has a very basic physical appearance. The girls are both wearing jeans, and both have attractive appearances with their hair let down, but when the Russian girl comes in, she has different- she is dressed to impress. Counter to the others, she’s wearing a dress (not t-shirt and jeans), she’s in white (not black), she’s showing off her legs, she has a headpiece on, her clothes and letters on her dress are ornamented, she taller (the other two woman are next to a taller man, but she with a shorter man) and she has a Russian braid. Most of the added details are Russian-culture specific, but in addition to that, she’s given a more womanly look that stands out from the rest. The minute guy is in all black, making a strong contrast with the white Russian girl, which also highlight how an average Armenian guy looks like and what he represents. He is also wearing a polo, not a t-shirt, so that means that he is the “lav txa” out of the bunch, who has the way with girls and has some tricks up his pockets. The two girls smile to see the Russian girl (so they are not jealous), but there’s a second where they are both confused. The most puzzled ones were the guys, however. The internet guy is surprised and displeased to sees that his colleague in a relationship, but when he see the Russian girl, he is more puzzled and displeased or jealous, and so he crosses his hands, and his facial expression looks unamused. However, then, when he learns they all have some connection with one another, he is fast to introduce himself with a seducing and “trying to please” voice,

and he speaks in Russian trying to get her approval. She bows down after the introduction while holding her dress which is an especially girly move. The other troubled one is the Minute guy, who is trying to explain the situation and get the approval of his friends about the new girl while showing to them how valuable she is. When the Minute guy introduces the girl he emphasizes that she is from Russia with an emphasizing movement of closing his wrist. He also is continually looking to her side, while she, on the other hand, is looking straight forward, standing tall.

***Appearance + Body Language bottom line:***

- Not many Armenian-looking women are cast in Armenian commercials
- Each Beeline feature represents a physical trait of their characters
- Beeline is not afraid to generalize/stereotype with physical appearances
- Beeline uses stereotypes for obvious messages: for example, if they are showing a Russian girl, then a lot of Russian cultural elements are to be used to emphasize
- Women are supposed to be attractive (at least in ads), while the appearance/height/weight of men does not matter
- Russian women differ from Armenian women; they have more womanly and seductive qualities
- A Russian woman is more wanted (men's gaze) in comparison to Armenian women (here the Russian woman is the only one in a relationship out of the three)
- Fewer clothes means more attractive
- The Russian woman and man are strongly contrasted in clothes (come from different worlds) yet something else connects them
- If Russian cultural elements on Russian woman, then Armenian man represents Armenian men's cultural elements
- Armenian cool men (cool because he got the girl) are also "lav txerq"
- Most Armenian men are "lav txerq" and wear black

- And Armenian doesn't change his "skin" after coming back from abroad, or Russia
- Armenian men lose themselves around Russian women
- A Russian woman is a trophy item, that may cause jealousy among others
- Russian women (or foreign women) may seem as easy to get or very open-minded, since the other man thought he had a chance with his friend's girlfriend
- Getting into a relationship with a foreigner may cause questions, which needs answers
- It is a trend for Armenian men to bring or date Russian women, disregarding Armenian women back at home, who might have been just as good
- Armenians need their friend's approval and the opposite, the friend requires an explanation
- Armenian men make the first move (introduce himself), while the Armenian women did not even say a word
- Armenian women are in the foreground of commercial
- Armenian women do not talk as much; women don't talk as much
- Russia is a strong, impressing country for Armenians
- Russian women are given more attention than Armenian woman (constantly looking at her)
- Russian women are womanly and not shy

<b>Signifier</b>	Russian Woman vs. Armenian Man
<b>Signified</b> (refers to)	Socio-economic situation, spark to change, step forward, different is good, Russia idolization
<b>Signification</b> (evokes particular thoughts, ideas, feelings within different people)	People complain virtually about anything because their life conditions are bad. But if a new, better solution which is well-priced is offered, this may stop the complaining stream.
<b>History</b>	For a country supposedly suffering from a battered economy that has resulted in high rates of unemployment and poverty, with lack of opportunity for the educated is some of the causes for Armenians to have such a complaining attitude. But new, more forward-thinking people are coming around, with new systems and ideas brought from abroad.
<b>Normalized</b>	yes

***Language and tone:***

The language used is formal Armenian, but they also use an English word, “wow.” The Russian girl speaks Russian. However, then the other guy starts speaking Russian too to introduce himself, and the minute guy also has a conversation with her in Russian, but with no translations. Also, wordplay/ language-play is big, they mix and make new words from turning the Armenian word “Arag” and the Russian word “Bezlimitno” with Russian last names, but both usages of the wordplay/ language-play are understandable. Another word joke is referencing the name Ashot, which is referenced with Yelena Yesenena present, making the reference funny and understandable. The voiceover speaks in a loud/almost shouting voice and is fast, but the rest of the commercial is mid-speed, with slow music for the most part. Then, in the end, the Russian girl says “Ashot Qit Mrutd Ashot.”

***Language and tone bottom line:***

- Professional commercials show people speaking formally
- Russian is so widespread, that translating is not necessary
- Mixing words is funny, mixing words with Russian is clever and funny
- Armenians all know Russian
- Armenians adapt to the Russian, rather than the opposite
- To impress a Russian girl, speak with her in her language
- The guy cares more about Russian girl’s presence, than the girls
- Wordplay/language-play and references are funny and relatable
- Commercials are not necessarily fast and are more like a skit
- Russians speaking Armenian is funny

### ***Russia:***

The country Russia and the Russian girl are portrayed as powerful, important and beautiful. All the Armenian friends are rather surprised to see their friend with a Russian girl. While introducing the Beeline new service, the voice over overemphasizes Russia and a map of Russia is shown on the screen, showing how important and big it is. Russia is also the place where a lot of Armenian men go to work, and in the meantime, they often start relations with Russia women. Russian women are fantasized by Armenian men, but because of their slightly lower status (financial, appearance, being a minority, etc.), they try to overcompensate with other things or rather, they try to trick Russian girls. We see the same situation here; the Armenian guy has surprisingly brought back home a Russian girl, creating a bit of controversy, which he quickly interrupts by explaining that the Russian girl is also one of them (she is also Beeline). Moreover, then the minute guy tricks her into thinking he is the dream guy she was looking for: Ashot.

### ***Russia bottom line:***

- Russia is looked upon by Armenians
- Russia is a powerful country and an Armenian friend
- It's normal for Armenians to go work in Russia and to find/ bring a Russian bride from there
- It would not be normal to have an Armenian woman bring a Russian man, that would not be decent, but the opposite is more than ok, it is praised
- Armenian men are nimble, while Russian women can be easily tricked; or all women are easily tricked and are naïve

### ***Humor:***

The humor here is that the guy lies to the girl, saying he is Ashot when he is not. The other funny parts are the inner jokes, for example, Yelena Yesenena (the Russian girl) looking for Ashot is a joke only

Armenians will understand. Moreover, the made-up Russian names: Internet Aragovich and Minuta Bezlimitovna are also quite quirky.

***Humor bottom line:***

- Lying/tricking is funny/memorable/work for ads
- Language jokes are funny/memorable/work for ads
- Cultural, inner jokes are funny/memorable/work for ads

***Character Popularity:***

The characters playing in the commercial are well-known in real-life, the Russian girl is Yelena Yesenena, a Russian singer who's known to Armenians because she has a song series about an Armenian man named Ashot, that she supposedly falls in love with. And with her songs, she gives all Russian-loving Armenian men a confirmation that Russian girls have a thing for Armenian men. The other actors are also somewhat known- the fat guy is from an Armenian ongoing humoristic-skit series and a popular funny music clip, the blonde-haired girl is popular on social media, etc.

***Character Popularity bottom line:***

- People from skits and the comedic world can only do comedy
- Cultural, inner jokes are funny/memorable/work for ads
- International/Russian stars are honored in Armenia and are given a good spot
- Familiar faces and personalities are a popular trend

<b><i>Methodology</i></b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b><i>Yes/No</i></b>
<b><i>Advertisement of product</i></b>	Join the Smart tariff packages and receive 10 000 minute to also use for Russia's Beeline calling. Beeline- simple, comfortable, for you.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Punchline/Slogan</i></b>	She's also a minute, just to Russia.- Slogan, Punchline-about Ashot	<b><i>50/50</i></b>

<b><i>Humor stickiness/expiration</i></b>	Average stickiness	<b><i>50/50</i></b>
<b><i>No Vampire effect</i></b>	No Vampire effect, because humor is directly connected to the Russian minute.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Field Theory (Armenification?)</i></b>	The inner-joke is bringing in the Russian singer who sings about Ashot, about whom most Armenian have heard about. The ad is for those with an Armenian mentality and culture-experience living in Armenia.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Weak NFC (understanding through thought, experience, and the senses)</i></b>	The Ashot reference has to be understood.	<b><i>N</i></b>
<b><i>Weak (N) or strong (Y) argument?</i></b>	Connect to Beeline's Smart package.	<b><i>Weak</i></b>
<b><i>Good (Y) or bad (N) tones/mood?</i></b>	Happy and surprised mood.	<b><i>Y</i></b>
<b><i>Socioeconomics mentioned?</i></b>	Only social element is an Armenian guy bringing a Russian wife from Russia..	<b><i>50/50</i></b>
<b><i>Feeling associated with brand</i></b>	Includes many elements, many family members	<b><i>N</i></b>
<b><i>What humor used (exaggeration, pun, put-down, silliness, surprise, comparison, personification, understatement, joke, irony, intent)</i></b>	Intent Pun- As in they took a well known concept and reused it in a humoristic way, so the audience make a connection. (referencing)	<b><i>-</i></b>
<b><i>Humor theory (superiority, incongruity, or arousal-relief)</i></b>	Arousal relief- because the characters are all stressed and confused about the new encounter, but the humor at the end calms us down.	<b><i>Arousal-Relief</i></b>
<b><i>Number of actors?</i></b>	3 main characters, 2 other	<b><i>5</i></b>
<b><i>Commercial time?</i></b>	47 seconds	<b><i>47</i></b>
<b><i>Humor at end(Y) or beginning(N)?</i></b>	End	<b><i>N</i></b>

<i>Visual(Y) or audio(N) humor?</i>	Visual and Audio	<i>Both</i>
<i>Humor related to product?</i>	Yes, the Russian minute is an actual character, but the Smart package, is not mentioned as much.	<i>Y</i>
<i>Methodologies of advertising</i> (identification, association, demonstration, mirroring of belief systems, modeling of canonical state, establishing emotional connection)	Storytelling/Introducing- Introducing new character/new service through a story	<i>Storytelling</i>

### **Findings**

Some of the significant codes I found were:

- **colorful clothes vs classic button-down**, signifying status, seriousness, respect, “lav txa”, acceptance, disapproval, child vs grown man, manliness;
- **father shopping with kids**, signifying care, kid-importance, impress kid, entertain kid, buying present for kid, guard down, pampering;
- **voice tone (child’s voice vs manly voice)**, signifying status, seriousness, respect, jokeful-ness, playing games, equality, fright, “lav txa”, pressure;
- **woman in apron, man on couch**, signifying gender roles, work-division, status, stereotypes, housewife, worker, political-informedness, man can relax;
- **wife and husband fighting**, signifying relationship problems, communication, status indecisiveness, money, divorce, no kids, who wears the pants, who problem concerns;
- **complaining vs. happy man**, signifying, socio-economic situation, spark to change, step forward, different is good;

- **Russian woman vs. Armenian man**, signifying Russia idolization, Russia as a woman, Russia as a place to work.

All commercials had a separate punchline and advertisement text, and all humor was made around the product they were introducing, with a catchy text. All text was strongly product-driven, to not miss the real point. However, the commercial punchlines were all said in an aggressive tone, mostly screaming. This signifies that angry humor works best for Armenians., and a lot of attention is given to the loud and angry, and that humor is strongly aligned with screaming.

All these commercials were popular because of their humor, and that said, because the humor worked, they were "sticky," and most of the humor or jokes worked because they were "tried" previously in comedy shows and series, so them working on the audience was almost guaranteed. No risks were taken, humor-wise. Because punchlines were very product-related, there was no "vampire effect," but there also wasn't too many "big" messages, but rather direct product-concentration, to get straight to the point quickly, and not miss the message. A story is created around the message, which sticks in the audience's head, but the product could've been connected a little bit more to a concept, which consumers could tie the brand with, and later advertise this identity, rather than a product.

Regarding the field theory, these ads are so Armenificied, that they would not work for another audience even if translated. The characters are purely chosen out of popularity and attractiveness; the people casted are the loved and looked-upon actors/actresses of Armenia, who are also the faces humor, the faces that the audience is used to see on TV. When Armenians see these people, they automatically associate them with their favorite series or shows. Moreover, there's an idea that if the actor plays in this commercial, then this commercial/brand/product must also be good. If another culture had to take these advertisements, they would have to change the character choice, add more women (in some cases) and fully change the tone and culture-use.

The amount of women is usually on the low side, as Armenia is masculine society, where society is more competitive, that is why heroism, assertiveness, and fight (dispute) is usually normalized, where you do not see much of cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. The commercials, following the field theory, use hyper-cultural and mentality stereotypes. The portrayal of the persona of the "lav txa," socio-economic jokes, love for Russia and family care is common. Language is usually colloquial, depending on the brand, but most commonly tries to relate to the audience by speaking simple Armenian.

Need for cognition (NFC) is usually low because these commercials play more on nostalgia or "used"/similar scenarios are already seen on TV or common in regular life. You do not have to think when watching these commercials, because everything is direct and the audience is usually "used to" what they are seeing. Moreover, if the NFC is weak, then that means the NFH (need for humor) is usually high, and relevant in Armenian commercials, and that is why it is used so much. The arguments are usually straightforward, and so it is usually not a strong or weak argument, but a fact or a persuasion method. Not a lot of tricks or commercial atmosphere is created, done not to make the audience skeptic. The commercials usually have an aggressive tone, or usually switch between happy and mad tones/moods. This mostly reflects the mood of the people in Armenia (what they are used to), and it is maybe done in the goal of creating less skepticism and a false image that everything is "good" (socially and economically) in Armenia.

Armenian commercials usually don't include prices in their ads. Usually, if the price is not visible, you give the idea of hidden costs or unfriendliness towards your customers, but if you show them that you are open, you will avoid false hopes. However, in Armenia's case, the cause is concentration away from economics. Because Armenians are very cost-savvy and cost-sensitive, including a price will cause people to start talking and concentrating only on the price (collectivism pressure on whether the product is too

cheap or expensive has a bigger effect rather than watching the ad yourself). Armenians will start comparing the price, debating on its value-factor and so on, creating a brand-forgetting effect. Socio-economics is also very big in these commercials: how the rich get more respect, the poor (in customer service) are treated badly, how money causes family fights, how the country is concerned with price escalation, how cheap services cause dissatisfaction and fights within friends and how Russia gets involved in socio-economics.

The brand image (feelings associated with it) is different for the four, but if looking for a pattern, they mostly try to create feelings of normality, bond, fitting in, and groupage. This is especially regular for Armenia, which is a more collectivism-leaning country, where the preference is for a tight-knit framework of society in which individuals expect their relatives they're in-group to look after them in exchange for loyalty, also here the in-group is pressured to not commit actions outside of the group's norms or beliefs.

The humor used is different for these four commercials, but the combining factor is a connection with the character and some kind of surprise humor (humor building up to punchline). From the humor theories, superiority and arousal-relief are used most. The situations in the commercial are slightly pressuring, but the humor provides relief, or we are usually laughing at someone being ridiculed. This kind of humor psychologically works, without seeming to pressure and forced. And just how we are relieved in the commercial, that is how media are trying to relieve Armenian pain and skepticism with the pill of humor. From the methodologies of advertising, the most common types are identification, demonstration, and mirroring of belief system. Identification and mirroring of belief systems are used to make the viewer see himself/herself in the scenario or at least take the scenario as a real possibility, so the viewer is more sure that the brand is authentic rather than scammish. Moreover, well-demonstration is straightforward, that we already confirmed that Armenian advertisers love.

The number of actors is usually 2-5, commercial time is 40-47, the humor is usually at the end, visual and audio humor are both used, which is more or less standard, discluding the commercial time which is way too long in Armenia. During this time they can film a whole skit and tell a whole story, through which the viewer is tricked into thinking he/ she is still watching their favorite prime time, rather than viewing an advert.

In conclusion, codes and signs in Armenian advertisements say that the Armenians are a very culture-following people: with the separation of man and women, Russian-love, “lav txa” rules, Armenian language word-humor and mentality traits, such as higher and lower class, social-economic problems and more. By using so much Armenification, Armenian advisers want to connect more with everyday problems, and target the audience better through what they are used to (both in real life and in popular Armenian series and TV shows) Brands in commercial, strongly concentrate on themselves, repeating their name more often rather than creating a storyline for “big ideas”. Armenian humor in general, and specifically in commercials, is used as a social-economic coverup, and most of the jokes incircle social-economic situations, but humor is also used because it works better (TV in Armenia was always humoristic, because creating humor is cheap, more trick-free and genuine (great for the skeptic Armenian audience) and can incorporate favorite Armenian humoristic actors (which are a risk-free successful option).

## Conclusion

The commercials chosen do not represent all humoristic commercials of Armenia and represent different time periods. Therefore patterns and results may or may not be so relevant and accurate. Semiotics is also a vast field of study, and so many details were not covered in the scope of a capstone project. My own experience as an Armenian, a Yerevan-inhabitant, an Armenian who's lived abroad, and my educational and cultural background has influenced by decoding of the signs in these commercials. Some of the historical and analysis parts may be generalizing and stereotyping Armenians or groups of Armenians. Some sources used in this research are very old and may not be relevant to today's analysis techniques and correct assessment of advertisements. Humor is an arbitrary subject, and so analyzing humor may or may not be objective. Also not many studies have been done in this direction from other researchers, especially Armenian studies, so conclusions may not be fully true and researched.

This research aims to open up doors for future research projects. Studying the semiotics of media of a nation puts to light cultural trends, language, non-verbal cues, behavioral norms, social etiquette, and rituals. In the case of studying commercials, we can also understand various sensory and emotional stimuli of a brand and their target audience. By studying the semiotics of commercials, we can better predict and control how consumers would respond to a brand given their current socio-cultural contexts.

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