

ROLAND BARTHES SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS IN INDONESIAN CIGARETTE ADVERTISEMENTS

Khalid - 1611700026

Sastra Inggris

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya

Email: Khalidfaisal.jed@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This study discusses about the semiotic analysis in Indonesian cigarette advertisements by using Roland Barthes' theory. The semiotic phenomena of signs on denotation and connotation in the cigarette commercials, including the representation of signified and signifiers in cigarette advertisements based on denotative and connotative meanings, are described using a qualitative approach in this study. The data source of this study is the cigarette advertisement of L.A Bold, Marlboro, Esse, Dunhill, and Xplore. The study found that there are signs contained in a form of verbal and non-verbal signs. These forms are depicted from the words, pictures and utterances that appear in the advertisement. Advertisers and copywriters seek to create an image for the consumer's perspective that each cigarette advertisement has its own features in marketing their advertisements by using connotative connotations. Finally, the author came to the conclusion that both verbal and nonverbal indicators in the advertisement contain concealed or connotative meanings. In words, pictures, and utterances with verbal and non-verbal signs, each cigarette commercial is more likely to utilize denotation and connotation meaning.

Keywords: *semiotic, sign, denotation, connotation, advertisement*

ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini membahas tentang analisis semiotika dalam iklan rokok Indonesia dengan menggunakan teori Roland Barthes. Fenomena semiotik tanda pada denotasi dan konotasi dalam iklan rokok, termasuk representasi petanda dan penanda dalam iklan rokok berdasarkan makna denotatif dan konotatif, pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dideskripsikan dalam penelitian ini. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah iklan rokok L.A Bold, Marlboro, Esse, Dunhill, dan Xplore. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa terdapat tanda-tanda yang terdapat dalam bentuk tanda verbal dan nonverbal. Bentuk-bentuk tersebut tergambar dari kata-kata, gambar dan ucapan yang muncul dalam iklan. Pengiklan dan copywriter berupaya menciptakan citra bagi perspektif konsumen bahwa setiap iklan rokok memiliki ciri khas tersendiri dalam memasarkan iklannya dengan menggunakan konotasi konotatif. Akhirnya, penulis sampai pada kesimpulan bahwa indikator verbal dan nonverbal dalam iklan tersebut mengandung makna tersembunyi atau konotatif. Dalam kata, gambar, dan ucapan dengan tanda verbal dan nonverbal, setiap iklan rokok lebih cenderung menggunakan makna denotasi dan konotasi.

Kata Kunci: *semiotika, tanda, denotasi, konotasi, iklan*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most efficient means of communicating messages or intentions amongst people. Interacting with other humans or groups of humans is a basic human requirement. According to Silalahi (2020) language is a form of communication that people use to communicate with one another. Nuessel (2006) states that language is a set of symbols used to communicate among people who share a common language. Language can also be used as a medium of experience, which implies it can be used to capture an event in real time. Using language to promote products and services is also an interest in advertising (Noriega & Blair, 2008).

Nowadays, the evolution of advertising has rendered human inseparable from the exposure of advertisements in their daily lives. There are advertisements on television, newspapers, the internet, magazines, posters, and other media platforms at this time. Advertisement is one of the most well-known and often discussed marketing methods due to its enormous range. Fletcher (2008) says that advertisement is a sort of persuasion marketing that aims to persuade people to buy something. Persuasive advertising is used in marketing to develop desires, motives, and beliefs/attitudes by assisting in the formulation of a brand image that individuals in the target audience will or may desire (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). A cigarette advertising is an example of an advertisement. Advertising's goals are to influence and persuade people to utilize the things offered, which in this case are cigarettes. It uses not only language, but also intriguing signs to influence and persuade the cigarette community.

Signs in the language of cigarette commercials can be used to investigate connotative meaning in cigarette advertisements. A sign has a reference to something other than itself. The sign, however, evokes more than just its reference; it also evokes its sense-meaning, or the meanings or connotations associated with the brand (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). Semiotic looks at how meaning and representation is created in a variety of ways. Danesi (2002) states the basic purpose of media semiotics is to catalog and evaluate structures as they appear in media products with various meanings. It must also be used to demonstrate how semiotic meanings influence the reader's thoughts.

Semiotics, defined as the study of signs with the goal of revealing the meaning of connected symbols, can be used to evaluate an advertisement. By implementing Barthes' (1964) semiotic approach, the result conducted by Burhanuddin (2019) succeed in uncovering the meaning and

moral message behind the L.A Lights cigarette television advertisement version of “Conquer Your Challenge”. The result obtained in the study is how the meaning of the denotation and connotation in the advertisement is clearly explained by the researcher along with the moral message in it.

Every advertisement has both denotative and connotative meaning; the relationship between signs, signifier, and signified will lead us to the hidden meaning of the cigarette advertisement. Therefore, the writer feels the need to conduct a study on semiotics on L.A Bold, Marlboro, Esse, Dunhill, and Xplore cigarette advertisements.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is descriptive qualitative. Barthes’ conception of signs is used as the theoretical framework. The research question proposed in this article is: what are the denotative; and what are the connotative meanings contained in the cigarette advertisement. The data source of this study is the cigarette advertisements of L.A Bold, Marlboro, Esse, Dunhill, and Xplore cigarettes. The data is taken from the internet; you-tube. The data includes the sign of verbal and non-verbal in the form of words, pictures, and utterances that appear in the advertisement. The data are analyzed based on Barthes’ two order of signification in Fiske (2002). The method used in analyzing data is a semiotic method. According to Rose in Silalahi (2019) states that semiotics provides a comprehensive set of analytical techniques for dissecting images and determining their relationships to larger systems of meaning. Sebeok (2005) also added that semiotics is a tool for analyzing anything that makes sign, as well as a science with its own corpus of discoveries and theories. The data are then selected and classified based on the Barthes’ two order of signification in Fiske (2002): Denotation and connotation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study is to reveal the signification of the hidden meanings in cigarette advertisement: the denotative and connotative meaning. Barthes’ conception of signs is used as the theoretical framework. The data source is based on the writer’s observation through watching cigarette advertising on the internet. The data is obtained and collected carefully by witnessing an activity and noting any phenomena that develop signs. This paper only discusses the denotative and connotative meanings on verbal and non-verbal signs.

Semiotic is a field of study that studies the meaning or meaning of a sign of symbol. Since signs are human creations, they can only be interpreted in terms of the applications to which they are placed. Sign can alternatively be classified as verbal or non-verbal. A verbal sign is made up of words, whereas a nonverbal sign is made up of pictures (Dhananjaya, 2019). As a result, the term "sign" refers to a wide range of categories, from simple to complex.

Semiotics encompasses and refers to more than just the study of signs; it also encompasses signs, words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Denotation and connotation can be inferred through the signs that appear in our daily life. The literal meaning of a sign or words, or something observable, is referred to as denotation. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to items that are regarded personal depending on one's point of view.

According to Dhananjaya (2019) denotation refers to something that is self-evident, such as a common sense or literal meaning of a sign or words. If we look at a picture with denotation meaning, we can see that it refers to something that can be seen with the eyes or something that can be observed. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to how a sign or word might be perceived differently by different persons. When we look at an image in a connotative sense, we are referring to the meaning underlying the picture that is understood by individual persons or various people.

L.A Bold (Speech & Party)

Non-verbal Sign



In this picture, there is a non-verbal sign with the denotation of a man wearing a black suit and neatly giving instructions to his employees. In the picture the black color connotes formality and luxury. The cigarette product can be classified as a high-class and deluxe product because it has the demonstration of a man in a suit uniform. As we know that cigarettes are expensive in every country, for that reason, LA Bold cigarettes can be said to be high-class cigarettes at the moment. As a result, customers are attracted in the product because they enjoy and feel the taste of elegance and boldness associated with it; smoking this brand of cigarette gives the impression of maturity and masculinity.

Verbal Sign



This picture shows a brand logo of the cigarette product where the brand has its own characteristics. It can be seen in terms of the urban nuanced background with sparkling lights. The city can be connoted as a place that is modern and not slum. Therefore, the cigarette advertisement provides an image that these cigarettes are cigarettes for the elite. In the picture there are lights that beautify the city. The denotative meaning of the word "light" is a tool used to illuminate. The meaning of connotation depends on the user in what accompanying sentence. In this case the light can be connoted as a new hope, namely the hope that consumers can smoke these products with the hope of living a glamorous life. In addition, the cigarette brand provides the slogan "The Bold New World" with white and red colors. The color white can be connoted as peace and kindness. The color red is connoted as strength, courage, and passion. It can be concluded that these cigarette products are made for consumers who want to try different characteristics. By smoking these products, consumers are expected to experience life with peace and a strong desire.

Marlboro Filter Black – The Line

Non-verbal Sign



Here is Marlboro Filter Black advertisement. A non-verbal sign of a crown may be seen in this scene. A crown is a traditional sign in the shape of a headdress worn by a king, or queen in a denotative meaning. The crown connotes a symbol of power, legitimacy, and prosperity. The advertising product is attempting to persuade the consumers that the product has distinct features. This product has their own distinct features; with the symbol of crown, this cigarette product portrays elegance and exclusivity. Coated with a black color which has a connotative meaning of magical and luxurious. Also, there's the red line curved under the crown, which represents power, courage, and desire. The desire in this cigarette advertisement is connoted like a wind which is abstract in form but can be felt and believed to exist.

Verbal Sign



In this picture, a verbal sign is seen with the name of the cigarette brand, “Marlboro”, with the tagline "Filter Black." The tagline "Filter Black" is utilized in this commercial to attract consumers who are looking for something distinct than other local cigarettes. The word "Filter Black" is in uppercase to show that the product is

widely known. This cigarette has a black filter which for now most of the other local cigarettes still use a white filter. The new design was created in order to persuade consumers to try it out. With a total of 20 cigarettes written, this product offers a wide range of options for consumers to choose from, making them feel joyful and at ease.

Esse – Love Yourself

Non-verbal Sign



The shot shows several adult men gathering and posing as a non-verbal sign of the advertisement. Equipped with a colorful background that gives a stylish impression. It can be connoted that "ESSE" cigarettes are more suitable to be marketed among young people or millennials so that the use of adult male characters in the advertisement

provides an attraction for consumers so that they can consume the product, especially for young people. In the scene, it can be seen that the adult men are posing with different background colors like yellow, blue, orange and purple. The yellow color connotes hope and inspiration. The blue color connotes wisdom, integrity and strength. The orange color connotes creativity, light and friendliness. While the purple color connotes royalty and sensitivity. From the picture it can be concluded that "ESSE" cigarettes are not arbitrary in making an idea to promote their advertisements. By smoking the “ESSE” cigarette, life will be colorful which means colorful in a relative sense.

Verbal Sign



In this picture, the verbal sign of the advertisement is a brand name “ESSE” and the slogan “Love Yourself” which is white on a black background. The color white gives the meaning of connotation as light and purity or holiness. White color has more positive connotations. On the other hand, black gives a connotation of mystery, magic and formality. The cigarette advertisement provides a different design from the others. By providing an elegant design so that these products can be competed with other cigarette products. With the slogan "Love Yourself" which makes it a plus in the ad. The connotative meaning contained in the slogan is to have self-esteem, and a positive self-image.

Dunhill – Moment Surfer

Non-verbal Sign



The next advertisement is for Dunhill cigarettes. This image depicts a non-verbal sign. The image depicts three men skating around on skateboards. Skateboarding can be connoted as a symbol of an extreme game, implying that it requires greater ability to play it. The three men in the picture appear to be brave. The skateboard itself represents a sporty man who is strong and masculine. In the picture there are three men skating a skateboard. It has a connotation meaning of courage and confidence. With the form of blue and purple graffiti as a background which is identical to the actions of men, it is a part of the art painting which is categorized as a vandalism. The blue color might connote trustworthiness and strength. The purple color connotes hope. In the picture there is also color of light blue. The light blue color signifies the sky, it carries the connotation of peace. The conclusion derived from the image is that smoking can provide a relaxed state, similar to not feeling burdened in life.

Verbal Sign



In this scene, there is a verbal sign, namely "DUNHILL" which is the name of the cigarette product. The word "DUNHILL" is in uppercase to show that the product is widely known. The advertisement uses city buildings as the background, the city buildings can be interpreted that the cigarettes are cigarettes of today or can be said to be cigarettes of upper class. By displaying city buildings as the background of the advertisement, it can be said that this cigarette product is for those who are willing to taste a different characteristic of it which are millennial cigarettes compared to other cigarette products.

Xplore – The Real Taste of Cacao

Non-verbal Sign



The next advertisement is Xplore cigarette, in this scene a verbal sign of the letter "X" is seen on the flag. The flag's capital letter "X" represents the Xplore Cacao Company, which manufactures cigarette products. It is a representative of the firm who introduces the company's image to the customer as "X." As a result, the company does not need to include any Xplore images in its commercial, such as text or its cigarette production. The use of white color on the letter "X" or the brand of the product connotes an attention to the consumer. The white color used to show the purity and goodness of the product itself. It is aimed to catch people surround the advertisement's attention. As a result, the commercial and all of the company's goals are given to the viewer of the advertisement in an indirect manner.

Verbal Sign



In this scene, there is an image or non-verbal sign in the Xplore Cacao cigarette advertisement. The non-verbal sign in the advertisement is the image of an erupting volcano. Mountains can be denoted as a form of land surface that is located much higher than the lands in the surrounding area. And usually when the mountain is in an unstable condition it will erupt and release lava. In this picture, the advertising product is very brilliant in expressing ideas for making this ad. The eruption in the picture of the mountain connotes as a chocolate flavor or in a Latin word known as "cacao". The taste of cacao is a distinct characteristic for this product because without realizing it, this product wants to have a different characteristic, namely by providing variants of flavors in the cigarette, the taste chocolate or cacao flavor so that it can attract the attention of consumers.

CONCLUSION

The object of the study is 5 cigarette advertisements, namely: L.A Bold, Marlboro, Esse, Dunhill, and Xplore cigarettes. Based on the analysis and interpretation carried out in the advertisement, the writer concludes that both verbal and nonverbal indicators in ads contain concealed or connotative meanings. In words, pictures, and utterances with verbal and non-verbal signs, each cigarette commercial is more likely to utilize denotation and connotation meaning. By using connotative meanings, advertisers and copywriters attempt to build an image for the consumer's perspective that each cigarette product has their own characteristics in marketing their advertisements. Furthermore, the usage of signs in advertisements that produce concealed meanings serves a commercial objective of attracting consumer attention.

REFERENCES

- Barthes, R. 1964. *Elements of Semiology*. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Danesi, M. 2002. *Understanding Media Semiotics*. London: Arnold, a member of the Hodder Headline Group.
- Dhananjaya, P.A., Wandia, I.K., & Maharani, S.A.I. 2019. "Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs of

“Moana Movie Poster”. *Humanis*. Vol. 23, No. 1. Februari, hal. 43-50.

Fiske, J. 2002. *Introduction To Communication Studies*. Second Edition. London & New York: Routledge.

Fletcher, W. 2008. *Powers of Persuasion: The Inside Story of British Advertising*. Oxford: University Press.

Noriega, J., & Blair, E. 2008. “Advertising to bilinguals: Does the language of advertising influence the nature of thoughts?” *Journal of Marketing*. Vol. 72. September, hal. 69-83.

Nuessel, F. 2006. *Language: Semiotics*. Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics.

O’Shaughnessy, J. & O’Shaughnessy, N. J. 2004. *Persuasion in Advertising*. London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

Sebeok, T.A. 1991. *A sign is just a sign*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Silalahi, P.V. 2019. “The Semiotics of Batak Toba Society Marriage Tradition”. *Parafrase*. Vol. 19, No. 02. Oktober, hal. 111-118.

Silalahi, P.V. 2020. “Representations of Beauty, Love, Homesick, and Memory to Homeland Expressed in the Lyrics of Batak Toba Songs”. *Parafrase*. Vol. 20, No. 1. Mei, hal. 59-66.