CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter divides into several sections: research background, research questions, research objectives, research significances, and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Semiotica or *"semion"* in Greek means sign. In other words, semiotics is a study or analytical method for studying signs. Signs are tools that use to find the way in this world. Semiotics wants to study how humanity makes sense of things. Meaning means that objects carry information and constitute a structured system of signs (Sobur, 2013). Some experts say semiotics is a science examining signs in human life (Fatimah, 2019). It means that everything present in human life is seen as a sign that must be given meaning. On the other way, what is in human life can be seen as a form that has a certain meaning, and this is based on social agreements. That explanation shows that the sign can be studied.

According to Barthes (1915-1980), semiotic or semiology is a sign system that reflects various assumptions of a particular society at a certain time (Fatimah, 2019). One of the assumptions often heard is the assumption about gender, namely femininity, and masculinity. Nowadays, the issue of gender has become a matter that is widely discussed in various countries, including Indonesia. However, gender is often seen as the same thing as sex, even though both are different. Sex, as known, consists of men and women. In addition, sex is something that humans get naturally or is the biological state of humans from birth.

Sex is related to the function of the human body, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Sex is considered a state that will never change. In contrast, gender is a form of assumption from social or socio-cultural construction that is dynamic and can change from time to time (Kurnia, 2004). Gender is defined as a perception that refers to the roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of individuals, both male and female, which are not innate traits from

birth and are clarified as female (feminine) or male (masculine) traits, which are the result of general socio-cultural construction (Sasmita, 2017).

Masculinity is a concept that exists because of the social construction of men. It indicates that men are not naturally born with masculine traits because culture shapes masculinity (Demartoto, 2010). Some general unwritten rules state that real men are active, aggressive, logical, ambitious, and strong. They should not cry, look scary, have an athletic body, and be brave (Demartoto, 2010). This construction also causes the birth of a boy to be burned with several things, such as norms, obligations, and expectations from family. This is passed down from generation to generation, so a man must do what has been done if they want to be a real man. This assumption about masculinity can be found in various media. Media is one of the most powerful impacts on viewing women and men as social phenomena.

Wood (1994) stated that there are three subjects in how media portrays gender perspective. First, women's female voices are not represented, which indicates that the cultural standard is that men and women are not important. Second, both women and men are portrayed by the stereotype of social view about gender, like women are in the domestic area (home, bedroom). In contrast, men do outdoor activities and relations. Third, normalize violence against women and emphasize traditional roles of the relationship between men and women (Herman, 2021).

One of the media is an advertisement, which is defined as a form of conveying a message or persuasion, where the message conveyed is in the form of information about a product, either in the form of goods or services that will offer to the public. It follows what Forceville (1994) stated advertisements are paid messages about an organization, product, service, or idea appearing in the mass media. Advertisements can be found in various mass media such as television, billboards, newspapers, brochures, and the internet. One of the media that is often used to load or display advertisements is the internet. It makes advertisements not a strange thing anymore in society.

Advertisement is a thing between a product and a customer as a referee to sell the product attractively to get more attention from a prospective customer. Advertising campaigns to produce gender identity based on their imaginings, the stereotyped of masculinity and femininity (Grau & Zotos, 2016). The representation of masculinity through advertising reflects the ideal view of masculinity that is socially constructed by society from time to time (Pimenta & Natividade, 2013). That representation of men is described as hegemonic masculinity. Here are the stereotypes and gendered expectations of men as cited in Gender Stereotypes by Naomi Ellemers (2018):

Table 1.1 Gender Stereotypes

Gender Stereotypes	Male
Stereotypical domain	Agency
Relevant behavior	Individual task performance
Anticipated priorities	Work
Perceived qualities	Competence
Neglected needs	Interpersonal connection

Table 1.1 shows that the stereotypes or representation of male in society are agency stereotypical domain, they are individualist, work is their priority, perceived qualities of men is competence, and interpersonal connection or emotional bonds is neglected needs. Kurnia (2004) stated that a representation of masculinity in advertisements today raises a new standard for men as aggressive and sensitive characters. This follows the statement previously mentioned that 'the ideal view of masculinity that is socially constructed by society from time to time'. It also means that each culture's masculine value is distinct and has become involved over time. Following Kurnia (2004), the concept of masculinity in society has shifted to feminism. It can be found of them in skincare advertisements aimed at men.

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Cosmetics that used to be women are now an item that is no longer taboo for consumption by men. Through media exposure that depicts masculinity, men with well-groomed bodies and faces have influenced people's consumption of skincare products. It seems that men's awareness of their body's appearance is increasing. Now men are starting to feel no shame in caring for their bodies to get the impression.

Tuerefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing verbal (linguistics) and visual signs in men's skincare products advertisement and how men are portrayed. The chosen object is from online advertisement, as the media can easily be found in people's daily activities. This can be the one that most influence society because an attractive way of advertising in conveying messages can indirectly influence people to see a phenomenon and make it a mutual agreement. However, this study will focus on several men's skincare products, namely NIVEA Men, Pond's Men, Garnier Men, and Vaseline Men advertisements on YouTube. To make it more focus, the researcher limits the period of ads to be analyzed, i.e., from August 2011 until October 2019.

These brands are global skincare brands or brands originating from abroad specifically aimed at men. NIVEA Men is from Germany, Pond's Men and Vaseline Men are from the United States, and the last one, Garnier Men is from France. However, products from these brands can be easily found in Indonesia; consumers can buy these products everywhere, from mini markets to big malls. Compas Dashboard research in March 2022 shows that NIVEA Men, Garnier Men, Pond's Men, and Vaseline Men are among the top 10 best-selling brands in Indonesian E-commerce (Wiwaha, 2022).

Therefore, the researcher is interested in making these brands the object of this research, considering that these brands come from abroad but have succeeded in targeting the market with specifically male consumers, even though many still consider it taboo to use skincare for men in Indonesia. The advertisements issued by the four of them are also interesting because they represent the male figure with their skincare products. Roland Barthes' semiotics is a theory that fits the research

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problem raised. In his theory, Barthes uses the development of Saussure's sign theory (signified and signifier) and adds connotation, denotation, and myth to examine a sign. The connotation, denotation, and myth of the representation of masculinity in this advertisement will be analyzed through verbal signs and visual signs of the advertisement.

Additionally, several previous research in the form of article journals and thesis found with the related issues taken as the main concern in the research. The first previous research by Tazkiyatul Fikriyah A'la (2011) entitled "A Semiotic Analysis on A-Mild Advertisement using Roland Barthes' Theory". This research aimed to know the connotation meanings of A-Mild advertisements' verbal and non-verbal signs. Further, to know the myth that motivates those advertisement. The method of this research is descriptive qualitative method. The theory used in this research is Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The data was collected from some big billboards on the bank of the central road of Jakarta. The result shows that there are some signs in each version of the advertisement. Those are five signs in 'Go Green' version, seven signs in 'Two Boys Skateboarding' version, six signs in 'Five People I' version, seven signs in 'Five People II' version, six signs in 'Sign Language' version, and six signs in 'A Flava Click Mint' version.

The second previous research by Pimenta and Natividade (2013) entitled "The Semiotic Construction of Masculinity and Affect: A Multimodal Analysis of Media Texts" is aimed to determine the semiotic construction of masculine identities as dynamic social representation from selected Veja magazines. The data were in the form of magazine articles published in 2003 and the cover pages of the magazines in 2005 and 2008 editions. The theories applied in this study are social semiotic by Kress (2010) and the masculinity theory perceptions. The result showed that the masculinity incursion towards the feminine universe is only depicted to maintain the masculine hegemonic identity projects which are reflected in the analysis of Veja magazine 2003. Meanwhile, the adverts of the 2005 edition magazine showed that masculine emotions are hidden in the image of masculine power. Lastly, the 2008 edition adverts showed that masculinity in men was defined

by a certain persona of being strong, self-assured, competitive, and successful. This stands for the stereotyped sets of behaviour related only to men.

The last previous research by Sinuraya, Azhar and Sazali (2022) entitled "Analysis of Semiotics Representation of Feminism in The Molan Film 2020". This research aims to find out how the semiotic analysis of feminism representation. The object of the research is Film *Mulan 2020*, an American period war action-drama film directed by Niki Caro. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with the semiotic analysis technique of the Roland Barthes model. The results of the study indicate several scenes depicting the representation of feminism in the film *Mulan 2020* which have been studied through Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory. The representation of feminism can be seen from the signs and meanings that have been studied through Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory.

Based on the related previous research, similarities and differences are found. The similarities between the first previous research and this research are the theory and the object used. That is the used of Roland Barthes' theory and advertisement as the object. While the difference found in these two studies is the analysis of masculinity in advertisements. Then similarities are also found between the second previous research and this research, that is analysis of masculinity in advertising. But in its approach, the second previous research used social semiotic as the theory, so this becomes the difference between the two. In the third study also found differences and similarities with this research. Similarity found between the third previous research and this research is the used of Roland Barthes theory. While the difference between the two lies in the focus of study and the object. The third previous research talk about feminism in film while this research talks about masculinity in advertisement. Furthermore, those previous research and this research has similarity in denotative, connotative analysis but there is a thing that makes this research different with others that is about how skincare advertisement portray the myth of masculinity.

1.2 Statement of Problems

In the research background above, it is found that there is an element of masculinity in advertisements. Therefore, this study focuses the problem of denotation, connotation, and myth related to masculinity in advertisement, especially in men's skincare products advertisement. Based on the background and the focus of the study, the questions are formulated for getting more specific purposes. The research questions are:

1. What denotative and connotative meaning are found in the linguistics signs in NIVEA Men, Pond's Men, Garnier Men, and Vaseline Men's advertisement?
2. How are the visual elements of NIVEA Men, Pond's Men, Garnier Men, and Vaseline Men's advertisement portrayed the myth of masculinity?

1.3 Research Objectives

Related to the formulated research problems above, some research objectives are presented in the following:

1. To identify the denotative and connotative signs of linguistic signs are show up in NIVEA Men, Pond's Men, Garnier Men, and Vaseline Men's skincare advertisement.
2. To analyze the myth of masculinity through visual elements in NIVEA Men, Pond's Men, Garnier Men, and Vaseline Men's skincare advertisement.

1.4 Research Significance

The researcher expects that the result of this study will be useful and bring some benefits for the use of language theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, the results of this study will contribute to the development of a semiotics study and will enrich the theory of Roland Barthes analysis about masculinity in advertisement.
2. Practically, language learners can use this study to increase their knowledge and skill in analyzing signs through Roland Barthes' semiotics. This study will help in linguistic college for providing information and knowledge about connotative, denotative and myth based on Barthes' theory. Thus, the

study can be used as a source of advanced learning. Moreover, the results of this study are expected to provide useful information for the future related to Semiotics research, according to Barthes.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

    This section makes this research more obvious and avoids misunderstanding some key terms used in this research. The researcher presents a brief explanation of key terms regarding the topic. The details are described as follows:

a. Semiotics

    The term semiotics refers to a study of signs or sign processes. Semiotics is an analysis of signs by interpreting them to find their meaning. Everything can be said as a sign, so semiotics appeared to find the meaning. Consciously or not, semiotics has been widely used by the community. The sign is commonly used by the public to convey a certain meaning and message.

b. Connotation

    The term connotation used in this research is define as the level of signification that explains the relationship between the signifier and the signified in which the meaning operates, which is not explicit, indirect, and uncertain (meaning it is open to various possibilities).

c. Denotation

    The research used the term denotation to show the level of signification that explains the relationship between the signifier and the signified or between the sign and its reference to reality, which results in an explicit, direct, and definite meaning.

d. Myth

    The term myth in this research means story. It usually used to refer to stories that are untrue, fabricated stories that have no historical truth. Even so, such stories are still needed so that humans can understand their environment and themselves.

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e. Masculinity

The use of the term masculinity refers to the set of attributes that are considered appropriate for men. The attributes that are stereotypically defined by society are used as men's ideal images and aesthetics (Pimenta & Natividade, 2013). Thus, masculinity represents the appropriation of men, which shows masculinity from the advertisement's visual (images) and verbal (linguistic; narration).

f. Advertisement

The term advertisement is one of the marketing strategies used to persuade people through the message delivered to the audience to buy or consume some products. Advertisement is a medium way to convey messages to the public. Therefore, an advertisement can also be a communication medium between producers and consumers. One of the functions of advertising is to affect society. This shows that advertising provides information and instills social and cultural perceptions.

g. Skincare

The term skincare used in this research refers to the product's advertisement as the object that shows masculinity.