

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion on background of the research, research problem, research purpose, research significance, definition of key term, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Research

Communication is the process of exchanging message and meaning, that can be found in everyday conversation both directly and indirectly. In communication, especially indirectly, not every message and meaning are conveyed clearly. In some instances, people often play with words, and that is part of routine interactions that can be generated by anyone. When someone spins words or combines phrases with creativity, it is an expression of human imagination. This phenomenon can be found in everyday conversation, social media, or even in advertising. When words are crafted in a unique way, it can be compelling. It is often used to convey messages that are not only informative, but also interesting (Sultanatta & Maryam, 2019).

Not only in face to face interactions, play on words is often being a fascination in the world of media, especially in today's digital era. Creativity in stringing words together can create viral content on social media platforms, trigger intense interactions, and even create certain trends. In this case, it is not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a tool that influences people's opinions, brand image or perception of something.

In the context of advertising, play on words is often considered an art to capture attention and build consumer recall, as in texts and taglines for instance. The use of words in creative and unexpected ways creates a deep impression, allowing the message to stick more strongly in the audience's memory. When someone sees an advertisement with a tagline such as "Life is good", this word denotatively only has a common meaning, that's life is good, enough. But some or others would think in different perspective, that by buying and using the product, life will be better, because at least they have a tool that can be used to its fullest, rather than not having at all (Wizi & Rizky, 2021).

Understanding the complexities inherent in linguistics raises considerable challenges, with one of the most formidable obstacles being the interpretation of signs and implicit meanings embedded in language. The meaning that is expressed indirectly makes many mistakes in its meaning and understanding. And the meaning that is written indirectly requires a deeper process to understand (Narawaty, 2018). While some individuals may have the ability to translate such meanings directly, it is crucial to recognize that not everyone can easily reach this level of understanding. This aspect becomes all the more important as misinterpretation of signs or meanings can substantially change and affect the purpose and the intent behind the communicated message.

This research investigates the complex field of deciphering the signs and meanings embedded in the advertising, a phenomenon that extends across various social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Among these platforms, Instagram stands out as a highly engaging community, enticing users with its dynamic features and serving as an alluring medium for advertising. In researcher's point of view, reinforced by data according to Shelley (2024), the appeal or interest of this platform is further emphasized by its status as one of the leading advertising platforms in this current age as the third top platform in the world. The Instagram marketplace is particularly important, as users actively create accounts dedicated to serving as a selling medium. Sales accounts on Instagram utilize a variety of multimedia elements, including videos, images, and more, to effectively deliver advertising messages and promotions.

There is a widely-recognized sports brand on Instagram with a user name @Millsportid, which is attracting attention for its wide range of sports products. its products including running, futsal, football and sneakers shoes, also jersey and a wide variety of other sporting goods. The brand originates from Indonesia and the brand has earned a good reputation, especially among national athletes and sports enthusiasts who appreciate the quality and diversity of Mills products, Mills in 2020 until the last of 2023 was being the official brand of the Indonesian national team and the interesting one is Mills uses English as main language in their promotion advertisements.

This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to examine the implied meanings of advertising specifically in taglines, text and picture by revealing (S-S) or signifier and signified. Signified focuses on revealing signs in some of Mills advertisements, by revealing denotation, connotation and myth on it. Specifically, the researcher examined and analyzed Mills reels in the years 2022 and 2023 only, focusing on reels containing symbolism and signs, including three elements: text, tagline, and picture. Semiotics is a suitable theory to reveal signs and meanings, as explained by Barthes & Miller (1990), semiology aims to cover a wide variety of sign systems that integrate them into a coherent system of meaning. In this context, signs can include anything that conveys meaning, including words, images, sounds, gestures, and physical objects. Signs serve as valuable tools to reveal hidden or implicit meanings. According to Sebeok (1996), the purpose of semiotics is to understand the human species' ability to create and understand signs. This understanding enables the creation of representations, which are the result of investigating, classifying and revealing complex symbolism.

Roland Barthes' theory including denotation, connotation, and myth is used in this research due to the alignment between the research object and the theory. An advertisement, which undoubtedly has many signs, can be analyzed not only by Barthes' theory but also other theories such as Ferdinand De Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, etc. However, Barthes was chosen because it aligns with the researcher's goal of examining the relationship between literal meaning and non-literal meaning, dictionary meaning and second meaning, and reality and cultural meaning. Another reason is because the understanding of researcher itself that more inclined or more understand towards Roland Barthes' theory.

The selection of Mills brand as the research object to be analyzed by Roland Barthes' denotation, connotation and myth is accompanied by several reasons. Apart from the reason that Mills advertisement is a good medium because it includes all signs such as words, images, and sound, Mills also one of the local brands that use English as main language to promote their product to reach a wider market. Mills uses several texts and taglines that are somewhat confusing but have a good meaning, such as "Running like flaying, Knight pack, Master the chaos, Spartan", etc. With these reasons above, the researcher felt that Mills is appropriate and good to be analyzed as object of research. With the object that includes all signs, researcher can easily use the theory of order of signification. This is because denotation, which covers the actual meaning,

connotation the implicit or second meaning, and myth, which covers the cultural meaning will always be present in images, words, and other sign elements.

“Competing against yourself. Chasing superiority” is one of the taglines found on the Mills advertisement. “Compete” according to Online Cambridge Dictionary (2023) is to take part in a race or competition. However, connotatively according to researcher is the idea that people should compete and motivate themselves to reach their full potential. By maximizing the potential of the item, then he will successfully exceed his limits by competing against himself. “Chasing superiority” according to Online Cambridge Dictionary (2023) is to try to get something that is difficult to get or achieve. Its means that he has reached the glory, not only against himself but others. According to Sebeok (1996) on his book entitled *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics* stated that “The primary objective of semiotics is to understand both a species’ capacity to make and understand signs and, in the case of the human species, the knowledge-making activity”. According to Roland Barthes (1968), “Semiology must first of all, if not exactly take definite shape, at least try itself out, explore its possibilities and impossibilities”. This understanding allows the creation of representations, which are the result of investigating, classifying, and revealing complex symbolism. Although it will be somewhat challenging, awareness and understanding of the meaning in a sign analyzed using semiotics, is possibly and can be determined by the ability of analyzing, reading, and understanding the knowledge of the researcher himself.

There are several previous research from theses and journal article. Previous studies are research endeavors that are somewhat similar but have differences, aiming to serve as sources of reference. According to Darmalaksana (2022), in his book entitled *Panduan Penulisan Skripsi dan Tugas Akhir* that the minimum requirement for previous research in an undergraduate thesis is 2 research, while for thesis and dissertation it ranges from 2 to 5 research. Therefore, in this research, the researcher includes only 3 previous research studies. The following are some previous research works related to this topic.

The first previous research is conducted by Nadira (2018), entitled *Roland Barthes’ Denotation, Connotation, And Myth In The Change Of Four Starbucks Logos: A Study Of Semiotics*. This research analyzes the changes that occur in a logo on a popular brand, namely the Starbucks logo. The logo has changed four times since the

brand was built. From each change, it is analyzed using the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes, by analyzing visual images such as changes in colors, images, and words.

The second research is conducted by Nurryah (2023), this is a thesis entitled *Meaning Of Icons, Indexes And Symbols on Youtube Video Beauty Advertisements of Wardah Products*. This thesis aims to examine and elucidate the meanings embedded in Wardah product advertisements. Nurryah employs Charles Peirce's semiotic theory to analyze the icons, indexes, and symbols within 11 YouTube videos of Wardah.

The third research is a journal article by Fauzi & Rusmana (2022) entitled *Struggle Meaning in the Lyrics Nasyid '90 Langkah' by Santri Gontor (Semiotic Analysis)*, focusing on exploring the meanings of struggle within the lyrics of nasyid (Islamic song). The theory utilized for this analysis is Roland Barthes, which delves into denotation, connotation, and myths.

The difference between this research and previous research lies in several points, especially in the object being analyzed. In Nadira's research, she uses the same theory from Roland Barthes denotation, connotation and myth in Starbucks logo, but just focuses on the changes of the logos which have changed four time till now. And the difference is the type of object which is she analyses visual sign while this research analyses both verbal and non-verbal sign. Then, in the second research from Nurryah, she analyses icon, indexes, and symbol in Wardah advertisement product. The difference is the theory, she uses Charles Peirce's theory while this research Roland Barthes theory. And then, the last previous research from Rusmana and Fauzi, they analyze the struggle meaning in the nasyid (Islamic song) lyrics. The difference is from the object research, they focus to analyze a song, which contains the struggle meaning while this research focuses on advertisement.

1.2 Research Problem

In some Millsportid advertisement on Instagram, the researcher found several aspects that can be studied and analyzed, such as revealing a signs and implicit meanings, and focuses on revealing sign in advertising taglines, text and picture then the researcher will conduct a semiotics analysis of signifier and signified, signified are including denotation, connotation and myth on it. From the background of this research, the researcher formulates by designing the research question, as follows:

- a. What are the denotation and connotation signs that appear in sport advertisement on Millsportid Instagram?
- b. How the meaning of myths are contained in sport advertisement on Millsportid Instagram?

1.3 Research Purpose

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

- a. To classify the denotation and connotation signs that appear in sport advertisement on Millsportid Instagram.
- b. To explain the meaning of myths in sport advertisement on Millsportid Instagram.

1.4 Research Significance

There are two components of research significances, those are theoretical and practical.

- a. **Theoretically**, this research can add knowledge and theoretical perspectives in linguistics studies, especially in the field of semiotics related to visual and textual symbolism and sign. It can be add new insights about the the complexity of language understanding in society. The analysis of sign in visual and textual model, specifically in advertisements can make significant contribution to others, such as sharing knowledge in the form of research.
- b. **Practically**, for other researchers, the result of this study can be used as reference for further research related to sign and symbol analysis. There will be an expansion in the current understanding of semiotics in advertising. This research offers a clear depiction of semiotics found in advertisement, providing a valuable insight into which strategies are more suitable and advantageous. Specifically, this research will be beneficial for those who are deciding what strategy to analyze an advertisement. Moreover, this analysis will serve as a benchmark for researchers, students, and who are involved and it can be tools as an additional study tool to inspire innovation in utilizing a semiotic approach.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Some of the terms that are very important to describe related to the research, including semiotics, signifier, signified, denotation, connotation, myth, and advertisement.

- a. **Semiotics:** Semiotics aims to cover a wide variety of sign systems that integrate them into a coherent system of meaning. In this context, signs can include anything that conveys meaning, including words, images, sounds, gestures, and physical objects. Signs serve as valuable tools to reveal hidden or implicit meanings (Barthes & Miller, 1990).
- b. **Signifier:** Signifier refers to the physical form or representation of a sign. Signifier basically refers to the concrete or perceivable form that describes or represents a sign (Roland Barthes, 1968).
- c. **Signified:** Signified is the concept, idea, meaning, or interpretation associated with the signifier, playing a central role in unraveling the depth of the message conveyed (Roland Barthes, 1968).
- d. **Denotation:** Denotation is or the actual, initial, intentional, or the dictionary meaning taken by a form (Sebeok, 1996). In this context, denotation becomes the starting point that captures the essential meaning or intention contained in the sign of something. this denotative usually refers to the use of language with a meaning that is accordance with the meaning of what is said. According to Barthes in Lustyantje (2012), denotation is the first stage of the signification system. It explained that the denotation level produces explicit, direct and definite meaning. Denotation is the true, socially agreed meaning, which refers to reality.
- e. **Connotation:** Connotation is the meaning that involves the extension of a form to a new realm of meaning that is recognized as carrying the features of the form implicitly. In simple words, connotation involves something that implies a secondary meaning, which is also referred to as implied meaning (Sebeok, 1996).
- f. **Myth:** Myths according to Barthes in Nadira (2018), refers to popular beliefs and cultures. The term myth refers to a concept that is widely accepted in a place. A community conceptualize or understand certain topics as part of their social experience, so it is a belief that is not just accepted by one person.

- g. **Advertisements:** Advertising is a type of marketing communication strategy presented in either an auditory or visual format, utilizing overtly sponsored, impersonal messages to endorse or market a product, service, or concept. Frequently, those endorsing advertisements are companies aiming to publicize their goods or services.

1.6 Organization of the Paper

To present this thesis systematically and make it easier for readers to understand its contents. The researcher presents it into five chapters with the following arrangement:

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains background of research, research problem, research purpose, research significance, definition of key terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II : THEORETICAL REVIEW

This chapter contains review on semiotics, relation between semiotics and linguistics, relation between semiotics and advertisement, semiotics theory of Ferdinand De Saussure, semiotics theory of Roland Barthes, the definition of advertisement, mills, and Instagram.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter contains research design, sample of data, sources of data, data collection technique, and data analysis technique.

CHAPTER IV : DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the explanation of research, it is talking about signifier and signified, which signified include denotation, connotation, and myth of Roland Barthes found in sport brand advertisement Millsportid in Instagram.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the conclusion of the research that has been analyzed and suggestions.