

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language, as the primary tool of communication, functions to express ideas, information, and emotions in everyday life. Language is not only used in spoken or written conversations but also in various forms of visual communication, such as signs, symbols and advertisements. One important area of study in language is semantics, which explores meaning, whether it be the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, or signs. Semantics focuses on how meaning is produced, understood, and interpreted in specific contexts.

Semantics, as explained by Saeed (2016), is the study of how meaning is constructed and interpreted through language, including words, phrases, and sentence structures. Meaning, however, is not simply attached to words in a fixed way; it is shaped by context, intention, and interpretation. In advertising discourse, semantic meaning operates at several levels. At the lexical level, specific word choices such as “premium,” “natural,” “exclusive,” or “handcrafted” carry evaluative and persuasive meanings that influence how consumers perceive a product. At the grammatical level, sentence structure, emphasis, and repetition can highlight certain product qualities and guide readers toward preferred interpretations.

In multimodal communication, meaning extends beyond linguistic signs to include visual elements such as color, typography, imagery, and layout (Kress &

van Leeuwen, 2006). These visual resources function according to culturally recognized conventions. For example, dark color tones often suggest elegance and luxury, while bright colors may represent freshness or energy. Typography can signal formality or modernity, and spatial arrangement creates visual hierarchy by determining which elements attract attention first. Advertising strategically combines verbal and visual signs to produce layered meanings. Verbal elements typically provide denotative clarity, such as product features or ingredients, while visual elements construct connotative meanings related to lifestyle, status, and emotional appeal. As Chandler (2007) states, interpretation is influenced by cultural codes and shared social knowledge; therefore, meaning in advertising is socially constructed and may vary across different audiences.

Semiotics, also known as semiology, is the systematic study of signs and how meaning is created, interpreted, and communicated through them. It explores the nature of signs, how they form organized systems such as language, and how people use and understand them in various contexts. Because signs are deeply embedded in all forms of communication and perception, semiotics has broad applications, influencing how individuals make sense of the world, share ideas, and convey both intentional and unintentional messages or emotions.

In contemporary society, the use of signs is not limited to everyday communication but is also widely applied in commercial contexts. Businesses and brands strategically employ visual and verbal signs to construct identity, attract consumers, and deliver persuasive messages. Through images, slogans, layouts, and product presentation, advertisements function as systems of signs designed to shape

consumer perception and build brand meaning. In this regard, the promotional content of Falala Chocolate demonstrates how semiotic elements are utilized to communicate brand values and product appeal effectively.

According to Saussure (1916: 65–78), meaning in advertising does not simply emerge from physical elements such as images or words. Instead, it is constructed through the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which are interpreted by society based on shared social and cultural conventions. In advertising practice, producers intentionally select and organize signs to create a specific brand image, stimulate emotions, and influence consumer behavior.

In contrast, Barthes expands Saussure's theory by providing a deeper level of analysis. He not only emphasizes the connection between signifier and signified but also distinguishes meaning into two levels: denotation and connotation. Through this framework, advertisements can be examined not only for their literal meaning but also for their implied cultural and emotional associations. Falala Chocolate, for instance, is presented not merely as a food product but as an item that carries emotional and symbolic significance. In popular culture, chocolate is commonly linked to pleasure, affection, gift-giving, comfort, and even consolation during difficult times. Therefore, chocolate advertisements tend to go beyond promoting taste or quality; they position the product as a representation of love, appreciation, and meaningful moments. Because chocolate is strongly associated with themes such as happiness, romance, generosity, and emotional comfort, it becomes a compelling subject for analysis in the fields of semantics, communication studies, consumer psychology, and advertising discourse. Furthermore, the availability of

promotional content on social media platforms like Instagram provides accessible and rich data for linguistic and semiotic research.

Falala Chocolate was selected as the object of this study because it is one of the emerging local chocolate brands that actively utilizes Instagram for promotion. Its social media content offers abundant visual and verbal materials suitable for semiotic examination. Falala's advertisements consistently emphasize emotional concepts such as love, joy, and togetherness, which are conveyed through specific word choices, color schemes, and visual compositions. Therefore, Falala Chocolate serves as an appropriate example to explore how language, symbols, and emotions interact to construct meaning and shape consumer perception within contemporary advertising practices.

This research aims to uncover meanings behind verbal and visual elements in advertisements, including cultural values, emotions and stereotypes that may be conveyed. The main focus of the research is to analyze how the use of semantic strategies and visual elements in chocolate advertisements are designed to attract consumers' attention and form a certain product image. In addition, the research also aims to identify the emotional and symbolic messages constructed in the advertisements to influence the target audience's perspective and perception.

1.2 Problems of the Study

This study will address two issues based on the background information provided. The problem in this study are:

1. What types of verbal and visual signs are found in the Falala Chocolate advertisements?
2. What are the meanings of the verbal and visual signs found in the Falala Chocolate advertisements?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to find out the answers to the problems that are discussed. These could be characterized as follows:

1. To identify and classify the different types of verbal and visual signs found in the Falala Chocolate advertisements.
2. To explain the meaning of verbal and visual signs found in the Falala Chocolate advertisements.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses solely on identifying and classifying verbal and visual signs, as well as analyzing the meanings contained within them using semiotic and semantic approaches. It does not cover other aspects such as how the advertisements influences consumer behavior, audience responses or interpretations, or the overall effectiveness of the advertisements. Additionally, the interpretation of the signs' meanings in this study is subjective and may vary depending on the background and perspective of the analyst. The study also does not address technical production aspects or marketing strategies used in the advertisements.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research has an important meaning in deepening the understanding of semiotics, especially related to verbal and visual signs through advertising in Falala's Chocolate. By observing and analyzing the advertisements that appear on certain pages, people can gain a new understanding of how writers use advertisements to attract consumers' attention. This research is also expected to contribute to understanding how these advertisements influence people's perceptions and interactions in the context of visual and verbal communication.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this research is to provide an understanding of how advertisements in Falala chocolate advertisements convey meaning. In addition, this research aims to analyze advertising commercials and explore how they function effectively in conveying a clear message to the public. This research also seeks to explain the application of Saussure's semiotic theory to public signs. In addition, this research is also expected to be a reference and guide for future academics who are interested in the semiotic study of public signs in their environment. This research is also expected to reveal how the application of the two theories by experts can be applied to advertisements.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this research aims to improve people's understanding of language and messages, especially in the context of advertisements. It is also

expected to provide information on the importance of analyzing advertisements and how to interpret their meaning. By using advertisements as the main data source, this research offers a deeper understanding of semiotic phenomena and can clearly identify the challenges in accurately understanding the meaning of advertisements.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, CONCEPT AND THEORIES

This chapter aims to examine relevant literature, concepts, and theories in order to establish a solid theoretical foundation and identify gaps in previous studies. The theoretical framework underpinning this research includes the study of semiotics, signs, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

In order to establish a robust theoretical framework for this study, a review of prior research concerning verbal and visual signs, semiotics, and their function within advertising is essential. This section examines three pertinent articles and two academic theses.

The first review taken from an article entitled “The Semiotic Role of Color in Alcoholic Beverage Packaging and Its Advertising Synergy” by Carson, Lysander, and Elowen (2024). It aims to provide valuable insights for brand managers and marketers on how to strategically use color to enhance branding efforts and build stronger consumer relationships in the alcoholic beverage industry. The study addressed the problem of understanding how the semiotic role of color in alcoholic beverage packaging influenced consumer perception (Henderson, Cote, Leong, & Schmitt, 2003). It sought to identify how different colors in packaging evoked psychological responses and cultural meanings that affected consumer attitudes toward a brand. The research examined the relationship between color

choices and the establishment of a strong brand identity, as well as how these choices contributed to brand recognition and recall among consumers, and marketing effectiveness. It investigated how color consistency across packaging and advertising campaigns enhanced marketing effectiveness and consumer loyalty, emphasizing the need for brands to align their visual identity with their overall marketing strategy.

The article used quantitative data and mentioned that the research focused on a limited number of brands and market segments, suggesting that the sample size might have been somewhat narrow. The analysis involved brands like Jack Daniel's, Johnnie Walker, Absolut Vodka, Coca-Cola, Heineken, and others, indicating that these brands were part of the study. It is different from this current study, it will use qualitative method and will focus on the meaning from the advertisements. The conclusion highlighted the importance of color in alcoholic beverage packaging and advertising, showing how it could enhance visual identity, brand recognition, and consumer loyalty. By maintaining color consistency, brands like Absolut Vodka, Coca-Cola, and Heineken succeeded in creating a cohesive and emotional image. The research also emphasized the importance of considering cultural context in color strategies for global brands, as well as the role of digital advertising in strengthening color synergies across different online platforms.

The second review taken from an article entitled "A Semiotics Analysis in Victoria Secret Product Advertisements" by Suryantara, Santika & Pratiwi (2022). It focused on semiotic analysis and examined the meanings conveyed by verbal and non-verbal signs in Victoria's Secret product advertisements. Using a descriptive

qualitative method, the study applied two main theories and one supporting theory: Saussure's (1983) theory for analyzing signifiers and signified, Barthes' (1986) theory of denotation and connotation, and Wierzbicka's (1996) theory of color terms. The data for this study were collected from advertisements related to Victoria's Secret products, including perfumes, body care products, and lingerie, sourced from the official Victoria's Secret website. The first step involved searching for printed advertisements related to these products, selecting the relevant ones, and downloading them from the website for analysis. The data were classified into two categories: Verbal Signs, which included any text or language such as product descriptions, slogans, and brand messaging, and Non-Verbal Signs, which encompassed visual elements like images, colors, body language, and overall design. The study concluded that Victoria's Secret advertisements primarily relied on connotative meanings to communicate their messages. The analysis identified 22 signs in three advertisements, consisting of 13 verbal signs (e.g., product names, ingredients, and benefits) and 9 non-verbal signs (e.g., model expressions, images, and colors). The non-verbal signs, particularly the model's facial expression and pose, along with the color scheme of the advertisement, played a key role in conveying the product's function and benefits. The advertisements predominantly featured women models, aligning with the brand's focus on female consumers, and the pink color was a notable characteristic, reinforcing the brand's identity as a product for women. It is same for the this study, using qualitative method and for the theories from the expert of semiotic, but for this study use two theories.

The third review taken from an article entitled *The Art of Symbolism: “Decoding Balinese Silence Day Greeting Cards Through Semiotics”* by Pratiwi, Sulatra, and Juniarta (2023). It employed a semiotic analysis to decode the symbols and meanings embedded in Balinese Silence Day greeting cards. Using a qualitative research method, the study explored the cultural values and beliefs communicated through the visual and verbal signs of these greeting cards. Drawing on Saussure's (1983) theory, the study aimed to examine the signifiers and signifieds present in the cards, which contribute to the broader cultural identity of Bali. By applying the theories of Barthes (1977) and Saussure (1983), the researchers uncovered the underlying cultural narratives, ideologies, and values represented in the cards. The study demonstrated that the visual language of these cards played a key role in constructing and reinforcing Balinese cultural identity, especially in relation to the cultural practices surrounding Silence Day. The researchers focused on understanding the meanings and cultural narratives conveyed by the greeting cards. They identified recurring themes and patterns within the data, which included five greeting cards that were scanned and saved as digital images for further analysis. The analysis was conducted in three stages: Visual Signs Analysis, Verbal Signs Analysis, and Synthesis and Overall Interpretation. It is different for the this study, it focuses on the analysis of the advertisement and same method using qualitative method. The findings from the analysis were used to draw conclusions about the cultural meanings conveyed by the greeting cards. The study also made recommendations for further research, likely focusing on other cultural contexts or expanding the sample size to

understand broader trends in Balinese Silence Day greeting cards or other forms of communication.

The forth review taken from a thesis entitled “A Semiotic Analysis of The Batman Film Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotic Theory” by Sosa (2023). It examines the meanings behind the signs in the batman through the lens of Peirce’s semiotic theory, focusing on icons, indices, and symbols. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study analyzes 24 scenes from the film and identifies a total of 30 signs, 2 icons, 9 indices, and 19 symbols, demonstrating how semiotic analysis can enhance our understanding of films. The aims of this research is to explore the signs represented in The Batman and elucidate their meanings. While previous studies have utilized Peirce’s theory to classify signs in various forms of media, Sosa’s work also integrates Barthes’ and Saussure’s semiotic theories. Barthes' theory is used to explain how signs communicate deeper, often culturally constructed, messages, while Saussure’s focus on the relationship between the signifier (the form of the sign) and the signified (the concept it represents) further informs the analysis. The similarity between Sosa’s research and the proposed study lies in their shared objective of identifying and interpreting signs to uncover deeper layers of meaning in different forms of media, including film, music, and print advertising.

The last review taken from a thesis entitled “Semantic Analysis of The Use of English Abbreviation in Instagram Captions” by Muarif (2024). It employed a descriptive qualitative method. The research data consisted of captions containing English abbreviations from Vony Felicia's Instagram account, with data collection

conducted through documentation. The credibility of the research was tested using investigator triangulation as examiners in the analytical process. The data source for this research was the captions from Vony Felicia's account from 2019 to 2023, using the theory of Indonesian linguist Kridalaksana. The study found that there were 26 English abbreviations in the captions of Vony Felicia's Instagram. The semantic analysis of these abbreviations, based on their meanings and types, revealed a total of 26 meanings, consisting of 12 connotative meanings, 10 conceptual meanings, and 4 affective meanings. Additionally, there were 18 types of abbreviations, including 11 clippings and 5 initializations. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that the most frequently occurring meaning was connotative, and the most commonly used type of abbreviation was contraction. It will be same research for the next study, this research found on Felicia's Instagram account, while this study is find on Falala chocolate's Instagram account as well.

2.2 Concepts

This section provides an explanation of some technical terms commonly encountered in research related to the topic. In particular, this section focuses on three important concepts that frequently come up in discussions: the concept of semiotic, the concept of advertising, the concept of Visual sign, the concept of Verbal sign, the concept of Falala Chocolate. Each of these terms plays an important role in the broader context of the subject matter, and understanding them is crucial to understanding the nuances of the topic.

2.2.1 Semiotics Analysis

Semiotic analysis is an approach used to explore how meaning is constructed and conveyed through signs and symbols across different types of media and communication. When applied to public signage, it helps us understand how messages are designed for quick recognition and how they depend on widely recognized codes to guide behavior and maintain safety and order in shared environments.

2.2.2 Verbal and Visual Signs

In communication, both verbal and visual signs function together to convey meaning and facilitate understanding. A verbal sign is generated through language whether spoken or written. The meaning of a verbal sign arises from the relationship between the form of the word (whether in sound or written representation) and the concept or object it signifies. For instance, when the word “chocolate” appears in an advertisement, its meaning is directly associated with the concept of the product, which is understood based on shared linguistic conventions. These verbal cues are essential for conveying explicit, straightforward information about the product, such as its features, benefits, or brand identity.

Simultaneously, visual signs which include images, logos, symbols, or other graphical elements convey meaning through their visual representation, independent of language. Visual signs communicate messages swiftly, often tapping into emotions, cultural symbols, or subconscious associations. For example, in a chocolate advertisement, the image of a chocolate bar with a smooth, glossy

appearance can instantly evoke ideas of indulgence, luxury, or satisfaction. The strength of visual signs lies in their ability to communicate immediately, generating an emotional or psychological response from the viewer.

Together, verbal and visual signs complement one another, working synergistically to produce a more comprehensive and nuanced meaning. While verbal signs provide clear, direct information, visual signs deepen the message by evoking emotional or ideological connotations. For example, the text in a chocolate ad may describe the product as “decadent” or “rich”, while the visual representation of the smooth texture and alluring packaging of the chocolate reinforces these qualities, creating a compelling overall impression. Through the integration of both verbal and visual signs, the advertisement communicates not only the literal meaning of the product but also its emotional and cultural significance, resonating with the audience on a deeper level.

2.2.3 Advertisement

Advertising is a form of communication that can be in the form of text, images, audio, or video that aims to promote a product. Advertising is used as a means to introduce a product, brand or service to an audience with the aim of attracting attention, building engagement and driving sales. Ads come in a variety of formats-from text to interactive videos-and have evolved into an essential element of the marketing world, including on digital platforms and apps.

2.3 Theories

This chapter presents various theories that will be used to help address the issues faced in this research, which are related to the problems discussed in the previous chapter. The main theory used in this study refers to the ideas proposed by Saussure's (1916). This theory is applied to analyze different types of signs, both verbal and visual, found in public signs. Additionally, this study also utilizes the theory proposed by Barthes's (1977), which provides a framework for understanding and interpreting the meanings contained in both visual and verbal signs found in public signs.

2.3.1 Semiotic Theory

In Saussure's semiotic theory, a sign is the fundamental element that creates meaning in any system of communication. A sign consists of two main parts: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of the sign, such as sound, written words, images, or other perceivable forms. The signified, on the other hand, is the concept or mental idea represented by the signifier. Saussure emphasizes that signs are arbitrary, meaning that meaning arises from the relationship between the signifier and the signified. This concept applies not only to spoken language but also to visual signs, showing how meaning is constructed through different sign systems.

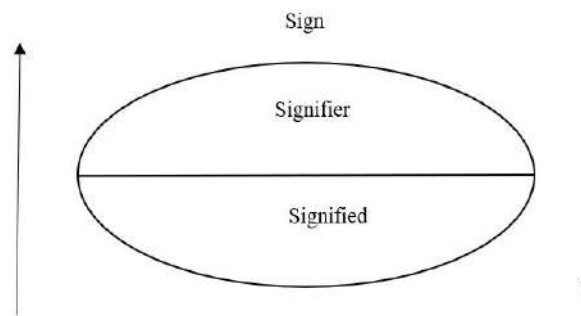


Figure 2. 1 Saussure's model of the sign

(Source: *The Basic Semiotics by Chandler's book, 2017: 67*)

These three components must exist together as a whole. If one of these components is missing, the sign cannot be discussed or even imagined in the human mind. Therefore, the signified is the concept that will eventually be represented by the signifier. The relationship between the signified and the signifier must be interconnected in order to generate meaning from the sign.

1. In Saussure's framework, the "signifier" in verbal communication refers to the sound or written form of a word, while the "signified" is the mental concept associated with that word.
2. Saussure's model can also be applied to visual signs, where the "signifier" could be an image, icon, or visual symbol, and the "signified" is the concept or idea conveyed by that image.
3. Saussure often used binary opposition to explain how meaning is formed. This binary opposition represents the difference between two opposing concepts, which define each other. In public signs, we can see the application of this binary opposition in various ways, both verbally and visually.

Saussure's principles in analyzing public signs that are verbal and visual in semiotics focus on understanding how these signs create meaning through the relationship between the signifier and the signified. He emphasizes that the meaning of these signs is arbitrary and relational, meaning there is no inherent relationship between the form of the sign and its meaning; instead, meaning emerges from the differences and relationships between signs within a system of language or other sign systems. By understanding signs as an arbitrary, relational system based on social conventions, we can comprehend how meaning is constructed and interpreted in various contexts of public communication. Both verbal and visual signs function to build and convey broader meanings tied to social conventions and relationships.

2.3.2 Theory of Meaning

Barthes' (1977: 109-159) theory in analyzing public signs focuses on the understanding that signs not only have direct meanings but also deeper, more complex meanings. Barthes developed a semiotic theory that identifies two main levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. He sees signs not just as tools for communication but also as means to spread and reinforce social and cultural values. By understanding these two levels of meaning, we can critically assess how signs shape our views of the world.

2.3.2.1 Denotation

Denotation, according to Barthes (1977: 32–51), refers to the first level of meaning in semiotics, which represents the literal, explicit, and descriptive meaning

of a sign. At this level, meaning is understood as what is directly presented and observable, without the involvement of personal interpretation, emotional response, or cultural and ideological values. Denotative meaning focuses on identifying the basic elements of a sign as they appear in reality.

Barthes explains that denotation functions as a form of primary signification and is often described as a “message without a code,” particularly in visual texts such as photographs. For example, the image of a woman wearing a black headscarf can be understood denotatively as simply showing a woman dressed in a black headscarf. This is because the sign seems to reproduce reality naturally and objectively. As a result, denotative meaning is generally shared and easily recognized by viewers, regardless of their social or cultural background.

Furthermore, Barthes highlights that denotation is essential in the meaning-making process, as it involves the identification of basic elements such as objects, written text, and background settings. Therefore, denotation functions as the fundamental stage in semiotic analysis, allowing researchers to distinguish between what is directly visible and what is shaped by cultural interpretation.

2.3.2.2 Connotation

Connotation, as explained by Barthes (1977: 32–51), refers to the second level of signification in semiotics, where meaning is shaped by subjective interpretation and influenced by cultural, social, and emotional factors. Unlike denotation, which focuses on literal meaning, connotation involves additional meanings that arise from how a sign is associated with particular values, feelings,

and beliefs within a society. At this level, meaning is no longer neutral but becomes culturally constructed. For example, the literal meaning of a woman wearing black headscarf is modesty, religious devotion, seriousness, or moral values, depending on the cultural context.

Barthes states that connotation operates through the interaction between a sign and the cultural knowledge of the viewer. Visual elements, such as gestures, colors, settings, and composition, can trigger certain associations that go beyond what is physically represented. These associations may relate to ideas of happiness, pleasure, intimacy, success, or other socially shared concepts. As a result, connotative meaning may differ depending on the viewer's background, experiences, and cultural context.

Furthermore, Barthes emphasizes that connotation plays a significant role in conveying ideology and social values. Through repeated use, certain connotations become naturalized and accepted as common sense. In semiotic analysis, identifying connotation allows researchers to understand how signs function not only to represent objects, but also to communicate emotions, attitudes, and cultural meanings. Therefore, connotation serves as a crucial analytical stage in revealing the deeper meanings embedded within signs beyond their literal representation.

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