

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a complex system of communication that allows humans to express information, ideas, and emotions through speech, writing, or signs. It is composed of letters, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that are connected to create meaning and enable effective social interaction. Every sign in a language or image carries its own meaning, and the deeper we explore these signs, the more meanings we can uncover. The study of semiotics focuses on how these signs function and how they produce meaning.

Semiotics is the study of signs in social life and the rules that govern their use. A sign consists of three main components: the sign itself, the signifier, and the signified. According to Saussure (1983:65), the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, meaning it is determined by social convention rather than a natural connection. This theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how meaning is created and interpreted through signs.

In the context of food advertising, semiotics offers a useful framework for analyzing how verbal and visual signs work together to create persuasive messages. Food advertisements use various signs visual elements such as images, colors, and layout, and verbal elements such as slogans, text, and narration to attract attention and shape consumer perceptions. Specifically, fried chicken advertisements often combine appealing visuals of crispy chicken with catchy words or slogans to

stimulate appetite and build emotional connection with the audience. Fried chicken has become one of the most popular and enjoyed foods in the world. Its simple cooking process and delicious taste make it a favorite choice for many people.

Among many restaurants that sell fried chicken, KFC is one of the most famous brands in the world. KFC is known for making fried chicken popular everywhere through its special recipe and attractive advertisements. Because of this, KFC advertisements are interesting to study using a semiotic approach to understand how they create meaning through words and images.

The impact of advertising is not only determined by the signs themselves but also by how society interprets those signs based on shared cultural meanings. Advertisers carefully select and combine these symbols to shape the brand's image, evoke emotions, and influence consumer behavior. Therefore, semiotic analysis involves not only identifying the relationship between symbols and what they represent but also exploring both their literal meanings and their cultural or emotional associations. In this study, the researcher aims to analyze the verbal and visual signs found in fried chicken advertisements, particularly those produced by KFC, and to identify the meanings behind each of those signs. This includes understanding how language, color, and imagery work together to construct messages that attract consumers. By interpreting these signs, the study seeks to reveal how fried chicken advertisements communicate deeper meanings and cultural values through both visual and verbal elements.

1.2 Problems of the Study

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

1. What verbal and visual signs are found in Kentucky fried chicken advertisements?
2. What are the meanings of the verbal and visual signs found in Kentucky fried chicken 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 find out the verbal and visual signs in fried chicken advertisements.
2. To describe the meaning of verbal and visual signs in fried chicken advertisements.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the analysis of verbal and visual signs found in Kentucky Fried Chicken advertisements. The study only aims to identify the verbal and visual signs and to analyze their meanings based on semiotic theory. Therefore, this research does not discuss other types of signs or advertising elements outside verbal and visual aspects. In addition, the study does not compare KFC advertisements with advertisements from other brands, so the findings are limited to Kentucky Fried Chicken advertisements only.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is important to provide insights into semiotics, especially in understanding how verbal and visual signs work in fried chicken advertisements. By examining these advertisements, can gain a new perspective on how advertisers work. In addition, this research is expected to understand how advertisements convey or provide information about visual and verbal signs.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on semiotics by expanding the understanding of different types of signs and their meanings. Hopefully, this study can be a valuable reference for academics interested in studying advertising semiotics. In addition, this study also deepens the understanding of linguistics.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

This study provides practical benefits in understanding verbal and visual signs. This study can also be useful for those who want to learn about related topics in advertising. In addition, it will help other researchers understand how certain colors, images, and words can trigger certain emotions or associations in advertisements. This research also helps the general public understand the messages conveyed in advertisements. Parties who can benefit from this research include advertising agencies, media analysts, educators, and students, as it provides insights that can improve the creation and interpretation of persuasive visual and verbal messages

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

This chapter will be divided into three different parts, which are a review of related literature, concepts and theories. This chapter presents a review of previous studies and theoretical concepts relevant to the topic of verbal and visual communication in advertising. In compiling the literature review, it will be based on two theses and three articles.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Several studies had been conducted related to this research. The first study was a thesis by Saputra (2023) entitled “Semiotic Analysis of Hamburger Advertisement.” This study used a qualitative approach to analyze verbal and visual signs in hamburger advertisements taken from a hamburger company’s website. The research aimed to identify and interpret the meanings of the signs. It applied semiotic theories from Saussure (1959) and Barthes (1957), as well as Wierzbicka’s (1996) theory of color terms. The data were collected through observation. The findings showed that the analysis of nine hamburger advertisements revealed a strong relationship between verbal and visual signs. Verbal signs mainly appeared as large product names and attractive headlines, while visual signs focused on models and color combinations to highlight the product and brand identity. Most signs contained both denotative and connotative meanings. The similarity between this study and the current research was the use of the same theoretical frameworks. However, the difference was found in the methodology, as the previous study used

both qualitative and quantitative methods, while the current study applied only a qualitative method.

The second research was a thesis by Hanafi (2023) entitled “Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on the Film ‘R.A. Kartini’ by Hanung Bramantyo.” This research analyzed feminism and gender inequality portrayed in the film. The study aimed to examine denotative and connotative meanings related to women’s struggle for equality. A qualitative approach using phenomenology was applied, and the analysis was guided by Barthes’ semiotic theory. The findings indicated that the film represented various forms of injustice toward women, such as marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, and violence. Kartini’s struggle was interpreted as a form of liberal feminism. The difference between the previous study and the current study lay in the data source, as the previous study used film, while the current study used advertisements. The similarity was the use of Barthes’ theory to analyze meaning.

The third related study was an article by Basit et al. (2024) entitled “The Meaning of Ancol’s New Logo: Semiotic Analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce.” This study used a qualitative descriptive method based on Peirce’s semiotic theory. The research analyzed Ancol’s new logo as part of its rebranding strategy. The data were collected through documentation, literature review, and interviews. The findings showed that the logo represented Ancol’s brand identity and future vision through color, font, and visual design. The difference between this study and the current research was the data source, as the previous study focused on logos, while the

current study analyzed advertisements. The similarity was that both studies aimed to identify and interpret the meaning of signs.

The fourth study was an article by Pratami et al. (2022) entitled “A Semiotic Analysis in Downy Collection Advertisements.” This study aimed to describe verbal and visual signs and analyze their meanings in Downy advertisements. A qualitative method was used, supported by Saussure’s and Barthes’ semiotic theories, as well as Wierzbicka’s color theory. The findings showed 72 verbal and visual signs consisting of denotative and connotative meanings. The analysis revealed that product names, colors, backgrounds, and models conveyed both literal and implied meanings. The similarity between the previous research and the current study was the use of advertisements as the data source. The difference was that the previous study used both qualitative and quantitative methods, while the current study applied only a qualitative approach.

The fifth study was conducted by Haryati and Apriadi (2023) entitled “Beauty Construction on Clean & Clear Foaming Face Wash Video Advertisement: A Semiotic Analysis.” This study used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze beauty stereotypes in a video advertisement. The researchers applied Peirce’s triadic model of semiotics and beauty stereotype theory. The findings showed that the advertisement reinforced beauty standards related to physical appearance, such as clear skin and confidence. The similarity between this study and the current research was the use of semiotic theory, while the difference lay in the data source, as the previous study analyzed video advertisements and the current study focused on image advertisements.

2.2 Concepts

This section contains the main ideas that often arise in discussions. These ideas include semiotics, verbal signs, visual signs, advertising, and fried chicken. Each of these ideas plays an important role in the broader context of the topic, and understanding these ideas helps to understand the details and deeper meaning of the subject.

2.2.1 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols. This theory states that signs and their meanings are shaped by the social context and underlying systems. Signs are divided into two categories: verbal signs and visual signs. According to Saussure (1983), semiotics is a study that combines these two types of signs: signifiers and signifieds. A signifier is the physical form of a sign (such as a word, sound, or image), while a signified is the concept or idea contained within it. These two components work together to create complete and meaningful signs.

2.2.2 Verbal Signs

Verbal signs play a very important role in the function of language, because verbal signs are the form of text, word or sentences that have meanings. According to Saussure (1983: 67), this relationship is explained as follows: “In the language system, a sign is a psychological entity that has two sides. One side is the concept, and the other is the sound image.” This quote emphasizes that linguistic signs, especially verbal signs, consist of two inseparable components: the concept in the signified and the signifier. In this way, verbal signs form the basis of language,

enabling individuals to communicate abstract ideas and concepts through a system of symbols that is arbitrary but socially accepted. The difference between the signifier and the signified is fundamental to understanding how meaning is constructed in language.

The verbal signs used in advertising that contain meaning are very important. Powerful words can convince people. The words chosen must be impactful and memorable. Meaningful words connect with the target buyer, and their effectiveness depends on this communication. Ultimately, powerful words are essential for a successful advertising campaign.

2.2.3 Visual Signs

The concept of visual signs is not explored directly in the same way as it focuses on linguistic signs. According to Saussure (1983:77), the general theory of signs applies to both verbal and visual signs, where visual signs, like linguistic signs, also consist of signifiers (visible symbols or images) and signifieds (concepts or meanings). Visual signs in Saussure's theory function similarly to verbal signs, consisting of visual signifiers and signified concepts. Visual signs are signs that use images, movements, and shapes. Visual signs analyze how images convey meaning or messages. Verbal and visual signs are interrelated and work together to create meaning. Images play a crucial role in advertising because they allow the target audience to easily imagine and understand the product being promoted. Well chosen images significantly aid understanding and make the product more relevant and memorable to potential buyers.

2.2.4 Advertisements

According to Meidan (1996) in his book entitled “Marketing Financial Services” Advertisements is non-personal communication directed at target audiences through various media in order to present and promote products, services and ideas, the cost of which is borne by an identified sponsor or sponsors are messages. Advertisements can be made using a verbal and visual signs. Offline advertisements are often seen in printed materials such as newspapers, flyers, brochures, and billboards. Online advertising can take many forms, including digital flyers, posters, e-books, and other similar formats.

2.2.5 Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)

Pawar et al (2011) explains that chicken thigh meat that has been marinated in seasoning and coated with batter is fried using a pressure-frying method, and its physicochemical properties are then compared with those of conventional fried products, which are prepared by frying the chicken in hot oil using an open pan. This explanation is presented in the article entitled “Quality Characteristics of Battered and Fried Chicken: Comparison of Pressure Frying and Conventional Frying”. Fried chicken is usually made by covering pieces of chicken with flour and spices, then frying them in hot oil until they turn golden brown. One of the most famous brands that sells fried chicken is Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Based on the article “Analyzing the Fast-Food Marketing Strategies Impacting Consumer Buying Behavior” which was derived by Gan and Chien (2024), Kentucky Fried

Chicken (KFC) is described as a long established dominant player in the global fast-food industry, particularly recognized for its distinct fried-chicken offerings.

2.3 Theories

This chapter presents the theories that will help address the issues discussed in the previous chapter. The main theory used in this study is Saussure's theory from his book *Course in General Linguistics* (1983). This theory helps analyze the verbal and visual signs used in fried chicken advertisements. First, Saussure's theory of semiotics focuses on how signs work, with the signifier and signified, second will use Barthes (1964) for theory of meaning. Lastly, the study also uses Wierzbicka's theory of color terms (1996) to analyze how colors in the advertisements have specific meanings. Together, these theories provide a complete understanding of how the verbal and visual signs in fried chicken advertisements work to create persuasive and meaningful messages.

2.3.1 Semiotics Theory

Language can be understood as a system of symbols used to convey thoughts and feelings. According to Saussure (1983) language is essentially a depository, a thing received from without. These signs are made up of two key components: the signifier and the signified. When talked about signs, there are two main things to keep in mind: the signified and the signifier. The signified is basically the idea or concept. For example, if think about a "tree," the signified is the mental image of what a tree is maybe it's tall, green, and has leaves. The signifier is the

form that the sign takes to represent that idea. So, the word "tree" itself, or even a drawing of a tree, would be the signifier.

The signified and signifier are always connected and can't be separated. Together, they create a complete sign. It's not just about matching a word to a real world object. Instead, it's about how a word as the signifier connects to the understanding or idea of something the signified. So, the word "tree" isn't just linked to a specific tree outside; it's linked to the whole idea of what a tree is in general. This connection is what gives the sign its meaning.

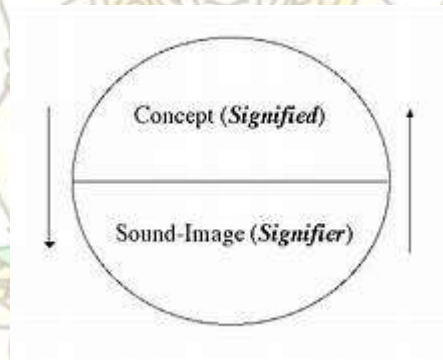


Figure 2.1 Semiotic
(Source : Saussure, 1983:66)

The diagram above shows how the signifier and signified are related. The arrows in the diagram represent the connection between the signifier and the signified. This diagram can be used to explain how signs work. Consider the example of a "No Smoking" sign to illustrate the concepts of signifier and signified. In this case, the signifier is the visual representation of a cigarette with a line drawn through it. This image serves as the concrete, perceptible component of the sign. The signified, conversely, is the concept conveyed by the signifier: the prohibition

of smoking within the designated area. Thus, the image of the crossed out cigarette functions as the signifier, acting as a symbolic device to communicate a specific message. The signifier refers to visual and verbal signs such as a word, image, color, or symbol, while the signified represents the concept or idea that the visual and verbal sign conveys. The interaction between the signifier and the signified allows the audience to interpret and understand the intended meaning of the sign.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified is crucial because without the signifier, it shouldn't have the physical symbol to represent the message. Similarly, without the signified, the signifier would have no meaning. Together, they form a linguistic sign where the visual cue is the signifier directly leads us to understand the intended message is the signified, ensuring that the communication is clear and effective. This connection highlights how signs work by pairing physical elements with abstract concepts, which is a key idea in semiotics as introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure.

2.3.2 Theory of Meaning

Barthes (1977:91) in his works explored how meaning is created. While Saussure focused on sentence structure and its impact on meaning, Barthes gave less attention to how context can change the meaning of a sentence for different people. Barthes expanded on this by emphasizing how a text interacts with a person's individual and cultural background. Barthes looked at how the rules within a text relate to the rules that readers expect and have encountered. This is a key

distinction between Barthes and Saussure, even though Barthes continued to use Saussure's terms "signifier" and "signified."

2.3.2.1 Denotation

According to Barthes (1977:94), denotation refers to the literal and primary meaning of a sign. It represents the most direct and objective meaning that can be recognized without involving interpretation, emotion, or cultural influence. Denotation focuses on what is physically and visually present, describing the sign based on its observable elements. It reflects the explicit meaning that is immediately understood by viewers.

For example, an image of a rose denotatively represents a type of flower with petals, stem, and leaves. At the denotative level, the image is simply identified as a flower without attaching any additional emotional or cultural meaning. This level of meaning only describes what is seen in a factual and objective manner. Denotation serves as the first level of meaning in semiotic analysis, providing the foundation for further interpretation at deeper levels, such as connotation and myth (Barthes, 1977).

2.3.2.2 Connotation

Connotation is the additional meanings that we associate with a sign based on our personal, cultural, or emotional experiences. According to Barthes (1977:91) the signifiers of connotation. Which we shall call connotators, are made up of signs (signifiers and signifieds united) of the denoted system. These meanings are not directly stated but are influenced by factors such as history, culture, emotions, or

even social attitudes. Connotation is about the ideas, feelings, or associations that come to mind when you see something. Connotation can also be interpreted as a double meaning that arises from a person's culture and personality based on customs, traditions, or even beliefs.

For example, an image of a rose connotatively represents love, romance, or affection. Although the denotative meaning is simply a flower, the connotative meaning reflects emotional and cultural associations commonly connected with roses. This interpretation depends on cultural understanding rather than the physical characteristics of the object itself. Connotation allows signs to communicate deeper symbolic meanings, making them powerful tools in media, advertising, and visual communication (Barthes, 1977).

2.3.3 Color terms

According to Wierzbicka (1996:287), in her book "Semantic Primitives and the Natural Semantic Metalanguage", basic color terms are essential words used to categorize and express colors across various languages. These terms, often considered universal across cultures, reflect both human perceptions of the natural world and the symbolic meanings attributed to colors. Wierzbicka's theory suggests that color terms not only describe physical attributes but are also deeply embedded in cultural and emotional contexts. Here's a breakdown of some of the basic color terms, as described in her work:

1. Black and White

According to Wierzbicka (1996:301), he explains that the colors black and white. If we simply say that as “white” means anything called white, and “black” means anything called black. These two words not only have meanings they feel like opposites, and they are also connected to ideas like light and dark. For example, in English, we can say things like light blue or dark blue, and that makes sense. But we can't say light white or dark black. Saying dark white or light black sounds weird, like a contradiction. Black is often associated with the absence of color and is seen as the opposite of light. It symbolizes darkness, mystery, and formality. Wierzbicka discusses black as a color linked to seriousness and power.

2. Green

Wierzbicka (1996:306) in her book said “when asked to give some examples of green, usually mention grass, leaves, or fresh vegetation (most commonly, grass). This does not mean that their range of greens is restricted to the colour of grass, or even more generally, to the colours of vegetation; but it seems clear that they do associate the concept encapsulated in the word green with vegetation (“things growing out of the ground”). Green is primarily associated with nature (e.g., trees, grass), and Wierzbicka explains that it symbolizes growth and freshness. It’s a color often used to represent life, fertility, and health. In many cultures, green is connected with renewal and prosperity.

3. Blue

“Blue, niebieski in Polish, goluboj and sinij in Russian, aoi in Japanese, and fāa in Thai” Wierzbicka (1996:309). Even though words like blue, aoi, or niebieski all relate to the idea of the sky, they don’t mean exactly the same thing. Each word covers a different range of blue shades. For example, niebieski only describes light to medium-dark blues, but not very dark blues, which English still calls blue. Wierzbicka suggests that the color blue is a tangible representation of the sky either as a light blue sky or a clear sky.

4. Red

According to Wierzbicka (1996: 315) by Manning (1989) that red is rich, warm colour. The words "rich" and "warm" are used here metaphorically, but I think that these metaphors provide useful clues to the meaning of red. Of the four "basic colour categories" encoded in English as red, yellow, green, and blue, two, red and yellow, are thought of commonly as "warm colours". Yellow is thought of as "warm" because it is associated with the sun, whereas red is thought of as "warm" because it is associated with fire.

Red is universally understood as a vibrant and strong color, often associated with emotions like love, anger, or danger. Wierzbicka notes that red has a particular significance because it is often the first color to be distinguished in the human color experience. It is linked to warmth and intensity. In her view, the term "red" is widely used in various cultures to symbolize passion, life, and sometimes warning or prohibition.

5. Brown

Based on Wierzbicka (1996:327) "Like pink, orange, grey, and purple, "brown", too, is often regarded as a "composite colour" a kind of visual mixture of yellow and black, or yellow and black with an admixture of red-that is, in effect, a mixture of orange and black (Wierzbicka:1990). Brown is a color of the earth, often linked to stability, reliability, and comfort. It is less intense than red or yellow but still carries deep cultural meaning. Brown evokes feelings of warmth and is often associated with humility and groundedness.

