

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language serves as a fundamental tool for human communication, facilitating the expression of thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Language selection is not only done when interacting in person with someone, but also indirectly, such as through the mass media. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), media selection involves search for the most cost-effective media to deliver the desired amount of exposure to the target audience. According to Bovee (1992), advertising is a type of impersonal communication that delivers information about products, services, or ideas through different media. It is generally intended to persuade and is often financially supported by identified sponsors.

Advertising is a powerful and expressive form of communication that allows companies to present their products effectively using text, sound, and colour, helping to build a lasting brand image while also driving sales (Kotler, 2010). To reach target audiences efficiently, advertisers carefully select media channels, with language playing a crucial role in shaping public perception through various styles adapted to different platforms and audiences. The rise of social media—particularly YouTube, founded in 2005—has transformed advertising by enabling more direct, personalized, and interactive marketing strategies. Platforms like YouTube offer tools for targeting specific audiences, measuring campaign success, and leveraging influencers for authentic promotion, thus democratizing advertising for both large

and small brands. Originally an entertainment platform, YouTube now serves as a major hub for advertising content, reflecting the broader evolution of digital media and consumer engagement.

Kotler and Keller (2006) define advertising as all forms of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services carried out by certain sponsoring companies that require payment. The function of Advertising is about informing, persuading, reminding and adding value. For this reason, information about a product from an advertisement must be conveyed correctly to achieve targets related to the product being marketed. Information about product benefits in advertising is conveyed through verbal and non-verbal signs. Verbal signs should use words, phrases or sentences that make the audience feel related, supported by non-verbal signs, namely the physical form of the model used to promote the product. Verbal and non-verbal signs can be explained using semiotic theory. Semiotics is a science that studies everything that can be considered a sign (Eco, 1976). According to Saussure in Chandler (2007), a sign consists of a signifier (sound image) and a signified (concept). The signifier is the material or physical form of the sign taken, while the signified is the concept meant by the signifier.

Winarni (2010) stated that advertisements often highlight aspects of appearance, gender identity and beauty in their representations. Likewise, advertisement uses the concept of beauty to influence and shape the way viewers perceive the product or service being promoted, aiming to create a positive association that enhances their interest or desire to engage with the offering. According to Danesi (2010), representation can be defined as the use of signs

(images, sounds, etc.) to connect, describe, photograph or reproduce something that is seen, sensed, imagined or felt in a certain physical form. Generally, representations of beauty refer to women, but Stuart Hall explains that the important thing in this representation system is that groups that can produce and exchange meaning well are certain groups that have the same knowledge background. Therefore, the advertisement can create almost the same understanding (Hall, 1997). This indicates that beauty is not only about a woman, but everyone, including men, if they learn the same knowledge regarding the representation of beauty within themselves.

Beauty representations related to a country's beauty standards refer to society's ideals and expectations regarding physical appearance, especially those related to attractiveness and desirability. One example is the representation of Indonesian beauty in the article "Beauty Representation in Scarlett Whitening Advertisement: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis" by Setyaningsih and Palupi (2022), which says that someone who has white, clear and clean skin is a beautiful person. The concept of beauty to influence and shape the way viewers perceive the product or service being promoted, aiming to create a positive association that enhances their interest or desire to engage with the offering. However, beauty standards portrayed in advertising are often deeply rooted in cultural and racial ideals, which can perpetuate stereotypes and marginalize certain groups. These standards frequently reflect Eurocentric ideals of beauty, which have historically been tied to issues of race, class, and privilege. In the context of international skincare brands, it becomes essential to analyse how beauty is represented, as these

brands play a significant role in shaping global perceptions of beauty. By examining how these brands portray beauty, we can better understand how they influence societal norms and contribute to the ongoing conversation around race, inclusivity, and diversity in the beauty industry.

L'Oréal Paris is a well-known beauty brand offering skincare, haircare, and makeup products, especially popular among those aged 20 and over. It promotes beauty standards that go beyond appearance, highlighting glowing skin, healthy hair, and a fresh look. The brand emphasizes inclusivity, reflecting diversity in ethnicity, skin tone, and age, while also focusing on innovation and self-care. L'Oréal's campaigns often promote self-confidence and self-acceptance, celebrating individual uniqueness and beauty.

This study aims to analyse how beauty is portrayed in L'Oréal Paris advertisements, specifically focusing on facial skin and hair health promoted through their skincare and haircare products. To achieve this goal, this research utilizes Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, which involves examining denotative and connotative meanings. The denotation aspect reveals the straightforward and clear meaning by explaining the relationship between signifier and signified in the advertisement. In contrast, connotation deals with more implicit meanings, layers of secondary meaning. The writer chose Barthes' semiotic analysis model for this research because it allows for a more nuanced interpretation of the ad's meaning through the dual lenses of denotation and connotation. The L'Oréal Paris brand was chosen as data in writing this study because this brand has unlimited beauty standards and products that support a person's self-confidence. One of the examples

is stated in the article entitled “Revealing the Women’s Characteristics Presented in L’Oréal Paris Shampoo Advertisements: A Semiotic Study” written by Nathaniela Anita Kiroyan et al. (2023), which concludes that the use of shampoo products makes hair healthier and the role models in it represent elegance, friendliness, self-confidence and self-esteem, freedom of expression and creativity, and women's empowerment. L'Oréal Paris is a leading name in the global beauty industry, recognized for its innovation and product quality. It offers a wide range of skincare, haircare, and cosmetic products designed to cater to diverse beauty needs. Through strong marketing strategies and collaborations with celebrities worldwide, the brand promotes not only physical beauty but also self-confidence. Backed by advanced technology and thorough research, L'Oréal's products are known for their effectiveness. This thesis explores how global brands like L'Oréal shape beauty standards across different cultures, influencing perceptions of what is considered beautiful. The analysis aims to reveal whether these representations support diversity or reinforce limited ideals based on specific physical traits, ultimately assessing their impact on societal norms and consumer expectations.

1.2 Problems of Study

Based on the background above, the problems can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the meanings of verbal and non-verbal signs in L’Oréal Paris skincare and haircare advertisements?
2. How beauty representations are found in the L’Oréal Paris skincare and haircare advertisement?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

From the research problem, the aims of this study are as follow:

1. To identify the meanings of verbal and non-verbal signs in the L'Oréal Paris skincare and haircare advertisements.
2. To describe how the beauty is represented through verbal and non-verbal signs in L'Oréal Paris skincare and haircare advertisements.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The writer limits the scope of semiotic analysis to the context of the L'Oréal Paris advertisement, specifically sharpening the study of signs to identify verbal and visual elements in the advertisement. This analysis is based on Saussure's (1983) sign theory, which provides a basic framework for understanding the relationship between signifier and signified in advertising. In addition, this research also uses Barthes' (1968) theory of meaning, which allows a deeper exploration of how these signs convey meaning in the context of L'Oréal Paris advertising. Through Saussure's structural approach with Barthes' interpretive model, the writer aims to reveal the complex layers of meaning embedded in the verbal and visual components of the advertisement, offering a comprehensive understanding of how L'Oréal Paris constructs and communicates the concept of beauty and facial skin health through their marketing strategy.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Based on the research discussed above, the significance of the study can be clearly delineated and will be divided into two distinct but equally important parts,

which areas follows:

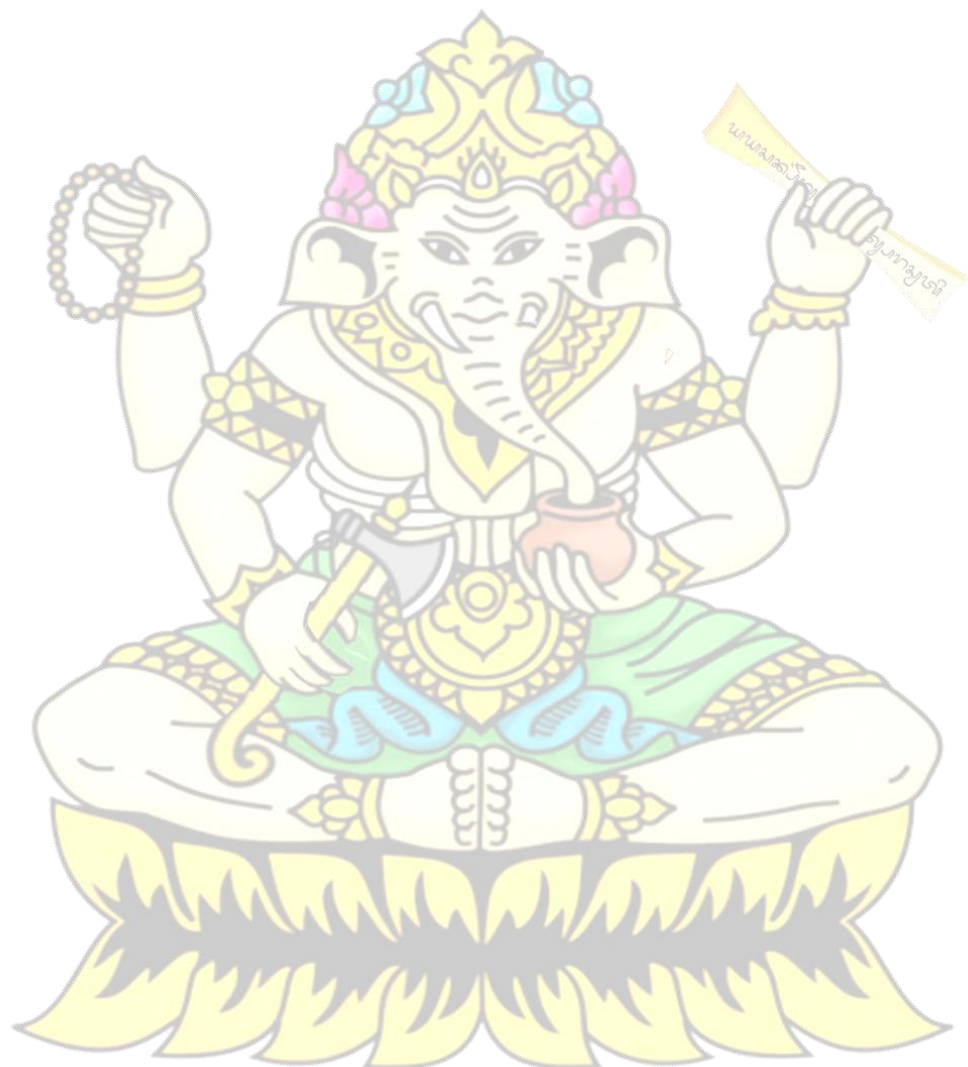
1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is useful for readers who are interested in exploring the field of semiotics, especially for those who want to expand theoretical understanding for the analysis of verbal and non-verbal signs in advertising. By exploring the semiotic mechanisms underlying advertising, readers can gain comprehensive insight into how meaning is constructed and communicated through textual and visual elements. This research not only explains the principles of semiotic analysis but also provides a detailed examination of how these principles can be applied to advertising in the real world. This research helps anyone who wants to increase their knowledge of semiotic theory and its relevance the interpretation of advertising content.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

It is hoped that the results of this research can increase readers understanding of the signs used in advertising, thereby enabling them to interpret and utilize the advertised product or service correctly and effectively. Additionally, this research served as a reference for future researcher who is interested in semiotic analysis, offering insight and methodology that can be applied to further studies in this field. This research aimed to clarify the messages contained in an advertising video by analyzing verbal and non-verbal signs to understand the usefulness of the promoted product. Through this research, readers and future researchers will be equipped with the tools necessary to critically engage with and decode semiotic elements in

advertising, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation and more informed use of marketed products and services.



UNMAS DENPASAR

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, CONCEPT, AND THEORIES

2.1 Review of Related Literature

In writing this research, the writer used several theses and academic journals to build a strong literature review, utilizing previous research related to semiotic analysis in advertising. These sources provide an overview for the author to understand how semiotic theory, especially those using Roland Barthes' theory to advertising analysis in various contexts. By reviewing previous research that uses a semiotic framework to decipher the meaning embedded in advertising images and messages, the author can identify the main themes, methodology and findings underlying this research. This thorough literature review not only highlights the relevance and applicability of semiotic analysis in advertising studies but also helps situate this research within broader academic discourse, ensuring that it builds on and contributes to existing knowledge in the field. Through careful engagement with previous research, the author aims to provide a thorough and theory-based analysis of how beauty is represented in L'Oréal Paris advertising, with a particular focus on facial skin health promoted through marketed skin care products.

The first previous study is thesis was written by Astari (2021) entitled "A Semiotic Analysis of Verbal and Visual Sign Ulta Beauty Advertisement". The writer used theory of sign in semiotic by Saussure and theory of meaning by Barthes to analysed the meaning of the verbal and visual signs. This study used qualitative-descriptive method to identify and analyse the meaning of the sign in advertisement

and the data were collected by note-taking as an instrument. The result of this thesis there are nine signifiers and signified found in the Ulta Beauty advertisement. The data source was taken from Ulta Beauty's short film "Breast Cancer Survivor's First Haircut" which show documents of the first haircut treatment for post-breast cancer patient. This study used formal and informal method, while formal method used to present the result of the analysis of verbal and visual sign used in picture. Informal method used to present the result of the analysis meaning by descriptions.

The second previous study is a journal article entitled "Beauty Representation in Scarlett Whitening Advertisement: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis" was written by Setyaningsih and Palupi (2022) which explores the use of mass media in promoting skincare and body care products through advertisements. The writers employ Winarni's (2010) theory on advertising, which emphasizes appearance, gender identity, and beauty. The study examines the beauty standards depicted in the Indonesian "Scarlett" brand advertisements, highlighting that glowing, white skin is considered a symbol of beauty. This is supported by the 2020 Zap Beauty Index Survey, where 82.5% of 6,640 female respondents in Indonesia equated beauty with white, glowing skin. Using qualitative methods and guided by the theories of Roland Barthes and Ferdinand De Saussure, the article analyzes the verbal and visual signs in the advertisements. The findings reveal that the model in the advertisements reflects Asian beauty standards, characterized by bright skin, beautiful faces, and healthy hair. Additionally, the study notes that the representation of male beauty is aligned with the concept of soft masculinity.

The third previous study is a thesis by Handayani (2020) entitled “A Semiotic Analysis in Estee Lauder Advertisement”, which utilized Lyons' (2014) semiotic theory to identify and interpret the meanings of signs in advertisements. This study employs Saussure's (1959) theory, which differentiates between the signifier (sound pattern) and the signified (concept), to explain both verbal and non-verbal signs. Additionally, Dyer's (1982) advertisement theory supports the analysis, positing that advertisements, as forms of mass communication, use verbal language and essential concepts to attract readers. Using a qualitative method, the study analyzes Estee Lauder poster advertisements, distinguishing between formal language (verbal signs) and informal language (non-verbal signs). The findings reveal twenty-one verbal signs (signifiers) and twenty-two non-verbal signs (signified) across six Estee Lauder posters. Furthermore, the analysis of non-verbal signs incorporates Birren's (1950) color theory to interpret the significance of colors in the advertisements.

The fourth previous study is an article written by Wijayanto and Iswari (2021) entitled “Semiotics Analysis of Roland Barthes Theory on Pocari Sweat's Sweat for Dream" Advertisement”. This research explains the use of semiotics in the Pocari Sweat advertisement. The theory used is semiotics theory from Barthes (2012) which contains denotation and connotation in signs and semiotics theory by Sudjiman, P.H.M., Zoest which states that semiotics is part of science consisting of verbal and visual signs where each sign has its own structure and system in conveying its meaning. This research uses qualitative methods by applying descriptive methods in explaining the meaning of verbal and visual signs in Pocari

Sweat advertisements. This advertisement is displayed using teenage anime cartoon characters as role models. The results of this research found the meaning of denotation and connotation in the Pocari Sweat advertisement. The denotational meaning is that teenagers are always enthusiastic about doing something with their own goals, while the connotative meaning is that teenagers sweat very quickly and need replacement fluids for the body's immune system.

The last previous study related in this study is a journal was written by Azhar (2023) entitled “Diversities Shown in L'Oréal Paris Europe and Asia Advertisement”. This research used semiotic theory from Roland Barthes regarding verbal sign (utterance) and non-verbal sign (picture) and analyze the meaning used denotative and connotative meaning. In this research also explain myth in advertisement regarding Barthes (1972) in book *Mythologies* to convey characteristic that is not determined by the material but by the message convey. This research explains the meaning of beauty by identifying the verbal and non-verbal sign in L'Oreal Paris advertisements, which are intended to show the differences about women and beauty standard between Asia and Europe. This research uses comparative research method to analyses phenomena and find the similarity and differences points with aims to make comparisons across differences country and culture and elaborated. In this research found some differences between Asian and Europe beauty representation in L'Oreal Paris advertisement seen by the norms, gender, social life and culture. The result of this research enriches the analysis by comparing beauty standards in Asian and European contexts, thereby offering insight into the cultural dimensions of advertising and how they reflect and shape

societal ideals. Through this comprehensive approach, this research not only confirms the relevance of semiotic theory in advertising analysis but also expands the understanding of how different semiotic frameworks can be applied to reveal the complex layers of meaning embedded in advertising.

The similarity of previous review research with this research is that all use advertising as a data source, which is analysed using semiotic theory. The semiotic theory in writing this research is related to the previous first, second, fourth and fifth literature studies, which used Barthes's semiotic theory to analyse the meaning of denotation and connotation in an advertisement. Meanwhile, the third previous research used the semiotic theory put forward by Saussure. The method used in analysing this research is the same as the first to fourth previous studies, namely descriptive-qualitative, namely describing verbal and non-verbal signs in an advertisement. Meanwhile, the latest previous research used comparative methods to describe differences in Asian and European beauty standards. This research not only builds on the foundation of previous research but also aims to explore more deeply how semiotic theory can be applied to contemporary advertising, providing a comprehensive analysis of how different cultural contexts influence the interpretation of advertising messages. Integrating the methods and theories of Barthes and Saussure, this research offers a multifaceted approach to semiotic analysis, highlighting the ways in which advertising communicates complex meanings through textual and visual elements. A focus on descriptive-qualitative analysis allows for a detailed examination of the signs and symbols used in

advertising, uncovering the underlying messages that shape consumer perceptions and behaviour.

This research and the last previous research used advertisements from the same brand, namely L'oreal Paris. The difference is the data source and method. The last previous study used a comparative method to compare the differences in beauty standards in Asia and Europe which were analysed by looking at the models used in each advertisement. Meanwhile, in writing this study, the data source used is skincare and haircare advertisements from Loreal Paris by analysing verbally and visually and describing them based on the uses and results of the skincare and haircare.

2.2 Concepts

In this research, these concepts include comprehensive ideas regarding the definition of study, with a special focus on the analysis of semiotic meaning in advertising. This research explores various dimensions of how advertising communicates messages through signs, exploring verbal and visual components. By examining these aspects, this research aims to provide a different understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in advertising. Several key definitions emerged from this analysis, including the notions of verbal signs, which refer to the textual and spoken elements in an advertisement, and visual signs, which relate to images and visual cues that contribute to the overall message. In addition, the advertising concept itself is also scrutinized by considering how these verbal and visual signs work together to influence and persuade the audience. It aims to

provide deeper insight into the semiotic mechanisms at play in advertising to understand how meaning is interpreted in this ubiquitous form of communication. So, the concepts are advertisements, beauty representation and semiotic.

2.2.1 Advertisement

Advertising is a communication process designed to persuade and motivate individuals to take actions that benefit the advertiser (Durianto, 2003). Effective advertising is distinguished by its ability to deliver an ideal message that captivates the audience's attention, stirs their curiosity, fosters a desire for the advertised product or service, and ultimately prompts them to take concrete action (Kotler & Keller, 2009). According to Dyer (1982), advertising is a systematic, paid, and non-personal communication method. It is open and identifiable, blending advertising and sales components to promote ideas, goods, or services through various media channels. Essentially, advertising should "draw attention to something" or "notify and inform someone of something," aiming to create a connection between the consumer and the product or service offered. This comprehensive approach ensures that the advertising not only informs but also engages and motivates the target audience to act in a way that is advantageous for the advertiser.

2.2.2 Beauty Representation

Beauty is described as an appealing quality that brings enjoyment to those who perceive or consider it, or an individual possessing this appealing quality (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Beauty encompasses traits that are alluring and delightful, evoking happiness in those who come across or reflect on them, or in

individuals who possess these delightful attributes. Representation is the process or result of depicting, representing, or stating something in a certain way so that it can be understood or interpreted by other people. This can be a representation in visual, verbal, symbolic, or other forms. Representation is often used to convey complex ideas, concepts or meanings using images or symbols that are easier to understand. For example, representations in visual arts can be paintings, sculptures, or other works of art that depict certain objects or concepts. In this case, representation is carried out in analyzing an advertisement through symbols, verbal and non-verbal.

The process of representation is based on a framework involving two separate yet interrelated ideas: mental representation and language (Hall, 1997). Mental representations denote the conceptual systems existing within our minds, which we convey universally through language. This linguistic medium enables others to indirectly understand and interpret the meanings conveyed by our representations. Semiotics offers a theoretical framework that explains the mechanisms behind signs and their meanings, while representation applies this framework by utilizing those signs to effectively communicate ideas and concepts to an audience.

2.2.3 Semiotic

Henny (2014) defines semiotics as a method of analysis or scientific approach that investigates signs, which can take the form of symbols or devices, and how these signs are used in human relationships. By examining how signs function within communication, semiotics helps us understand the deeper meanings

and cultural significance behind the symbols we encounter in everyday life. Semiotics is the basis of communication studies including mass media, basically it is the process of searching for meaning in the material or content of the text. In other words, our goal in studying media is to understand the meaning contained in it—finding out the origin of the meaning, its form, its purpose, how it is conveyed, and how we, as readers, interpret the meaning (Sobur, 2004).

2.3 Theory

The theoretical framework used in this research uses semiotic theory as proposed by Saussure and explained further by Chandler (2007), which functions to identify verbal and non-verbal signs contained in L'Oréal Paris advertisements. In addition, the theory of meaning proposed by Barthes, as detailed in his book entitled "Elements of Semiology," is expected to analyse and interpret the meaning conveyed by verbal and non-verbal signs in the advertising context.

2.3.1 Theory of Semiotic

This research is supported by Barthes' Semiotics Theory (1957), which analyses signs in various forms, including speech, body language, symbols, and artistic expressions such as paintings and music, and he divides the process of sign meaning into the signifier, which is the physical form captured by the five senses, and the signified, which is the meaning that is interpreted, emphasizing how the interpretation of signs varies among cultures and societies, while Saussure, as discussed in Chandler (2002), argued that a word is not just a representation or signifier of something, but must also be connected in the mind with what it signifies,

called the signified, to form a complete sign, illustrating that a sign consists of two components: the signifier, which is the form taken by the sign (such as a word), and the signified, which is the concept it represents, and the combination of these two components is necessary for a sign to have meaning, as illustrated by Saussure in a diagram called the “dyadic diagram,” which can be seen as follows:



**Figure 1. 1 Saussure’s model of the sign
(Source: Chandler, 2007: 14)**

Example:

- Signifier : the word “open”
- Signified : the word “open” represented that store is open for selling product.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified, known as significant, is visually represented by the horizontal arrows on both sides of the diagram, illustrating their interdependence and mutual influence. It can be concluded from the diagram that the representation of the signified and the signifier is inherently interconnected, meaning that they cannot be separated from each other and cannot exist independently. For instance, the signboard displaying the word “open” on a store doorway can be classified into several categories, such as its linguistic meaning, which conveys to potential customers that the store is currently available for business, and its visual representation, which might include the design, colour,

and style of the sign that contribute to its overall impact and interpretation. This example highlights how the signifier (the word “open”) and the signified (the concept of the store being accessible) work together to create a cohesive and understandable message.

For Saussure, the signifier here is understood as a sound pattern, and the signified is considered an important concept for identifying the meaning of the sign. Neither the signifier nor the signified are tangible entities. Rather, it requires a framework to convey and interpret the intended meaning. This interaction between signifier and signified is fundamental in Saussure's theory which emphasizes that meaning emerges along with function in a wider language system.

2.3.2 Theory of Meaning

In advertising, it is really important to make sure people understand about what is message convey in the advertisement. The writer applied Barthes' theory of meaning from the book entitled Elements of Semiology (1968), which identifies denotative and connotative levels of meaning. Based on the explanation above, Barthes' theory of meaning is divided into two parts:

1. Denotative

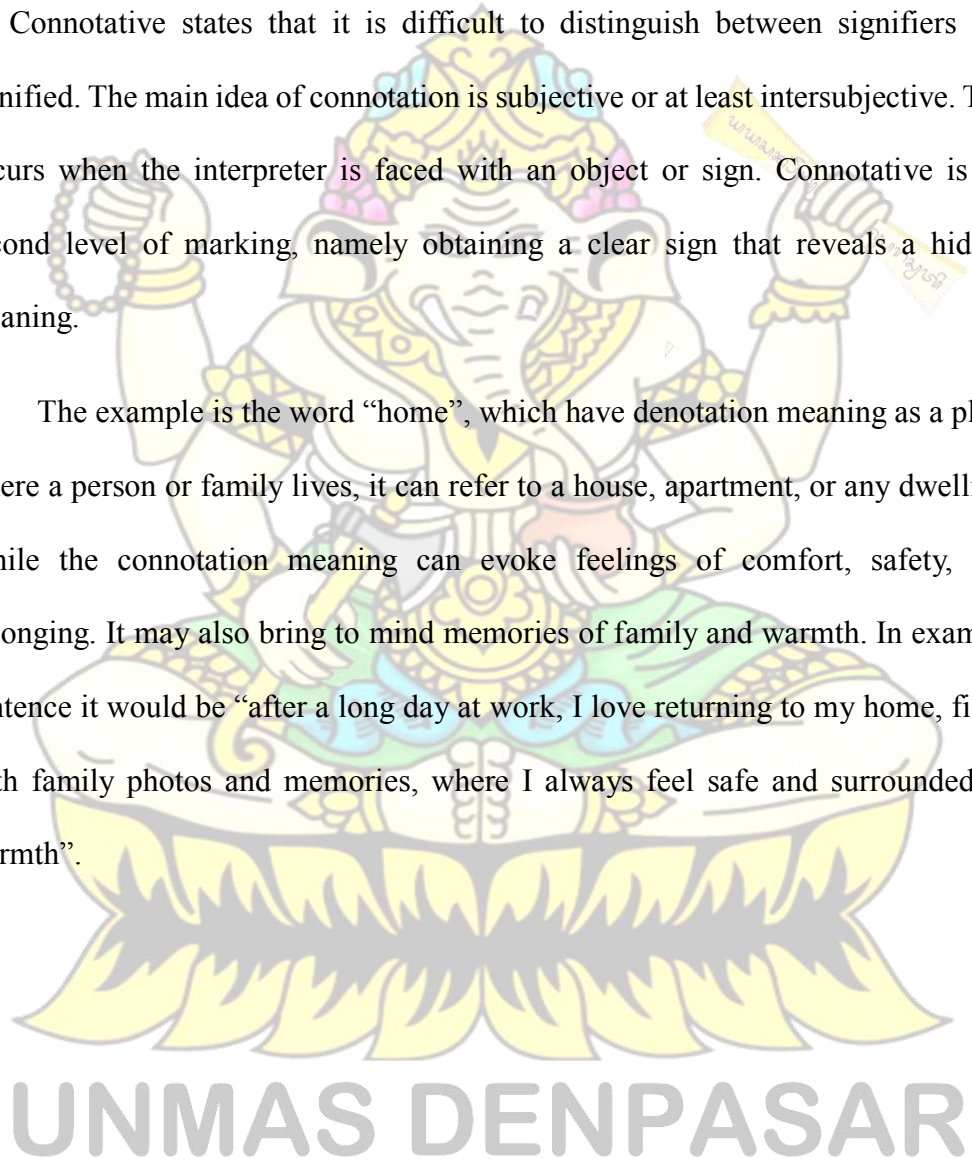
Denotative refers to the direct and explicit relationship of a sign with its signifier and signified which refers directly or actually. Denotation is a step to explain the meaning of what we see or associate with reality, thus producing an explicit, textual,

direct, and definite meaning. Denotative explains the meaning of words that are not accompanied by additional information in the form of feelings.

2. Connotative

Connotative states that it is difficult to distinguish between signifiers and signified. The main idea of connotation is subjective or at least intersubjective. This occurs when the interpreter is faced with an object or sign. Connotative is the second level of marking, namely obtaining a clear sign that reveals a hidden meaning.

The example is the word “home”, which have denotation meaning as a place where a person or family lives, it can refer to a house, apartment, or any dwelling. While the connotation meaning can evoke feelings of comfort, safety, and belonging. It may also bring to mind memories of family and warmth. In example sentence it would be “after a long day at work, I love returning to my home, filled with family photos and memories, where I always feel safe and surrounded by warmth”.



UNMAS DENPASAR