

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In daily life, language is used for communication and interaction in two main forms, namely written and spoken. Written language is used to convey messages indirectly, while spoken language enables direct communication. Communication and interaction are fundamental aspects of human life, as humans are social beings who require continuous connection with others across various contexts. In this regard, language plays a crucial role as a medium for expressing ideas and facilitating interaction. According to Saussure (1916), language is a system of signs that expresses ideas, making it an essential tool for communication. Furthermore, Halliday (1978) states that language functions as a social semiotic system, emphasizing its role in social interaction and meaning-making.

In everyday interactions, signs are frequently used to convey meaning. These signs play a significant role in daily communication, and understanding how they function is essential to avoid misinterpretation. The study of signs is known as semiotics, which enables the interpretation of meanings behind various forms of communication. According to Barthes (1977), semiology aims to examine systems of signs, including images, gestures, and objects. Barthes further emphasizes that semiology is closely related to linguistics, as both are concerned with meaning-making processes.

Saussure (1916) explains that a sign consists of two components, namely the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the form of the sign, while the signified represents the concept or meaning associated with it. Signs can be categorized into verbal and non-verbal forms. Verbal signs involve communication through spoken or written language, using linguistic elements such as words, phrases, and sentences. In advertisements, verbal signs commonly appear in slogans, taglines, and written messages designed to attract attention and persuade the audience.

Non-verbal signs, on the other hand, are expressed through visual elements such as images, facial expressions, gestures, and body language. These elements allow communication to occur without the use of spoken language. In advertising, non-verbal signs such as images, colors, gestures, and layout designs play a crucial role in delivering persuasive messages and reinforcing verbal elements. According to Dyer (1993), visual elements in advertisements are essential in attracting attention and shaping audience interpretation, as they work to create meaning and influence perception. In addition, the interpretation of colors as non-verbal signs can be further analyzed using the theory of color terms proposed by Anna Wierzbicka (1996), which highlights how colors convey culturally embedded meanings.

Verbal and non-verbal signs are fundamental elements in advertisements because they work together to communicate persuasive messages and shape audience perception. Advertising is a form of public communication used to promote products, services, events, or ideas. It functions as a persuasive tool

designed to influence audiences and encourage particular actions. According to Wright et al. (1978), advertising is a communication process that serves as a powerful marketing tool, enabling the promotion of products and ideas through persuasive messages across various media. In this context, advertisements aim to shape consumer perception and behavior.

This study focuses on advertisements produced by Quaker Oats because they effectively combine verbal and non-verbal signs to promote health-related messages and a wholesome lifestyle. Quaker is an internationally recognized food brand known for its oat-based products, including oatmeal, instant porridge, and cereal bars. The brand has established a strong reputation for promoting health and nutrition through its advertising campaigns, which emphasize the natural benefits of oats, often associated with heart health, energy, and overall well-being. These advertisements combine linguistic and visual elements to represent values such as health, nutrition, and family life, while presenting the products as convenient and nutritious food choices. In addition, they convey broader lifestyle values, including health-conscious living and family care. Since its trademark registration in 1877 in the United States, Quaker has expanded globally, adapting its advertisements to different cultural contexts while maintaining consistent messages about health, simplicity, and quality.

Throughout its development, Quaker has utilized both verbal and non-verbal signs to communicate messages of trust, tradition, and care. Non-verbal elements such as gaze, color, layout, and visual composition complement verbal messages and enhance the persuasive power of advertisements. Across various

media platforms, including television and digital advertising, Quaker continues to reinforce its image as a provider of nutritious and reliable products.

By analyzing both verbal and non-verbal signs, this study aims to reveal how meaning is constructed in Quaker advertisements. The analysis applies Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation to uncover both literal and deeper meanings embedded in the advertisements. Through this approach, the study provides insight into how advertising discourse reflects and shapes cultural values in contemporary society.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, focus on the problem in this statement:

1. What are the verbal and non-verbal signs found in the advertisement of "Quaker"?
2. What are the meanings of verbal and non-verbal signs found in Quaker advertisements?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the identified problems, the objectives of this study can be formulated as follows.

1. To find out the verbal and non-verbal signs in “Quaker” advertisements
2. To analyze the meaning of verbal and non-verbal signs in Quaker advertisements.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

To This study focuses on examining verbal and non-verbal signs in Quaker advertisements by applying the semiotic theories proposed by Saussure (1916), Barthes (1977), and Wierzbicka (1996). Saussure’s (1916) theory is used to identify and classify signs into verbal and non-verbal elements based on the concepts of signifier and signified. Verbal signs refer to linguistic elements such as words and sentences, while non-verbal signs include visual elements such as images, colors, and gestures.

Furthermore, Barthes’ (1977) semiotic framework is applied to analyze the meanings of those signs through two levels of meaning, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal and explicit meaning of the signs, while connotation refers to deeper meanings shaped by cultural and ideological contexts. In addition, Wierzbicka’s (1996) theory of color terms is used to interpret the meanings of colors as part of non-verbal signs, particularly in understanding how colors convey culturally embedded meanings in advertisements.

This study does not examine consumer behavior or measure the direct impact of advertisements on purchasing decisions. Instead, it focuses on interpreting signs within advertisements, particularly the relationship between

linguistic and visual elements in constructing meaning. The findings are limited by cultural and contextual interpretations of the selected advertisements and may not be generalized to all Quaker advertisements or other brands. Nevertheless, this study aims to provide insights into the construction of meaning in advertising discourse.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This study is significant in analyzing the role of verbal and non-verbal signs in Quaker advertisements. From a verbal perspective, this research examines the use of language, word choice, and explicit messages conveyed in the ads. Understanding these elements is essential to identifying how linguistic strategies influence consumer perception and effectively communicate product benefits.

From a nonverbal perspective, this study examines visual aspects such as color and symbolic representations used in the advertisement. Examining these elements provides insights into how non-verbal cues enhance the message and evoke emotional responses from the audience.

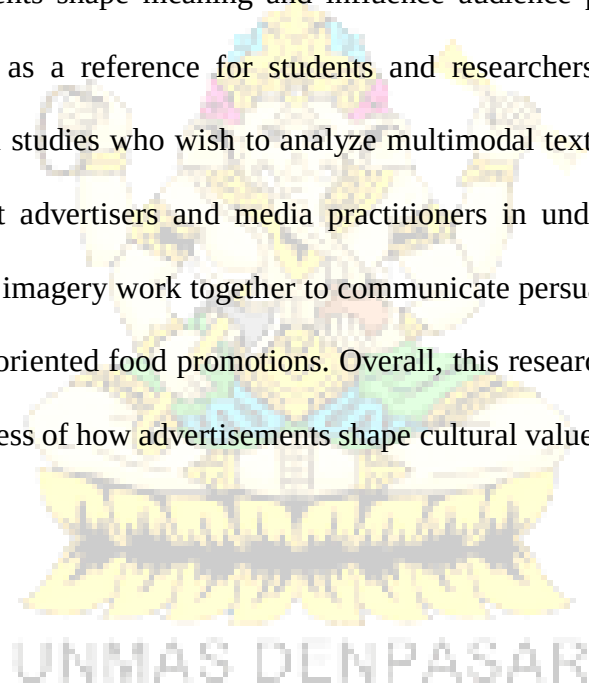
1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study holds theoretical significance by applying Barthes' (1977) semiotic theory, particularly his concepts of denotation and connotation, to analyze verbal and non-verbal elements in Quaker advertisements. By exploring how language and imagery convey meaning, this study demonstrates how semiotic

theory can be effectively applied to modern food advertisements that promote health and lifestyle values. In doing so, it broadens the scope of Barthes' (1977) semiotic framework and contributes to a deeper understanding of how verbal and visual signs interact to construct meaning in contemporary media.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study provides insights into how verbal and non-verbal signs in advertisements shape meaning and influence audience perception. The findings may serve as a reference for students and researchers in linguistics, literature, and media studies who wish to analyze multimodal texts. Furthermore, this study can assist advertisers and media practitioners in understanding how language, color, and imagery work together to communicate persuasive messages, especially in health-oriented food promotions. Overall, this research encourages a more critical awareness of how advertisements shape cultural values and consumer attitudes.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, CONCEPTS, AND THEORIES

This chapter presents and discusses several aspects related to the analysis of signs and images. It consists of a review of related literature, conceptual frameworks, and theoretical frameworks, which are organized into several subsections. The literature review includes two theses and three previous research articles relevant to this study. The following subsection discusses key concepts of advertising and semiotics. The final subsection outlines the theoretical framework used to analyze the data.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The first study was conducted by Purba and Tambunan (2021) entitled *Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on Wardah Advertisement Version “I Face of Indonesia”*. This study applied Barthes’ (1977) semiotic theory to analyze the meanings in the advertisement. Using a qualitative method, the study identified both verbal and visual elements and interpreted their denotative and connotative meanings. The findings show that the advertisement conveys messages related to confidence and beauty standards. However, this study does not apply any specific theory to analyze color meaning in depth.

The second study was conducted by Halim et al. (2023) entitled *Semiotic Elements of Barthes Model on Wall’s Ice Cream Advertisement*. This study focused

on identifying semiotic elements in food advertisements using Barthes' framework. The findings reveal that advertisements contain layers of meaning, including denotation, connotation, and myth, constructed through both verbal and visual signs. However, color is treated only as a general visual element without further theoretical explanation.

The third study was conducted by Setyaningsih and Palupi (2023) entitled *Beauty Representation in Scarlett Whitening Advertisement: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis*. This study used a qualitative descriptive method and applied Barthes' semiotic theory to examine how beauty is represented in advertisements. The results show that verbal and visual signs construct modern beauty standards influenced by cultural trends. Nevertheless, the study does not include a specific theory to interpret the meaning of color.

The fourth study was conducted by Astawa (2024) entitled *A Discourse Analysis Using Semiotic Theory on iPhone 13 Advertisement*. This study applied both Saussure's and Barthes' theories to analyze verbal and non-verbal signs in a technology advertisement. The findings indicate that advertisements contain hidden meanings that function to persuade consumers. However, the analysis mainly focuses on text and imagery, without a deeper discussion of color meaning.

The fifth study was conducted by Safitri and Jemian (2024) entitled *A Semiotic Analysis of Fast-Food Restaurant Advertisements*. This study examined verbal and non-verbal signs in food advertisements using Barthes' (1977) theory. The results show that both verbal elements, such as slogans, and non-verbal

elements, such as images and layout, contribute to persuasive meaning. However, the study does not apply any specific theory related to color interpretation.

The use of Wierzbicka's (1996) color-term theory in this study is essential to provide a deeper understanding of non-verbal signs, particularly color, in advertising. While many previous studies have applied Barthes' (1977) semiotic framework to analyze denotative and connotative meanings, they often treat color as a general visual element without exploring its specific cultural and emotional meanings.

Wierzbicka's (1996) theory offers a more detailed explanation of how colors carry meaning based on human experience, cultural associations, and emotional responses. In the context of food advertisements, color plays a crucial role in representing ideas such as health, freshness, naturalness, and trust. Therefore, integrating Barthes' (1977) semiotic theory with Wierzbicka's (1996) color-term analysis allows this study to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of both verbal and non-verbal signs.

By combining these two theories, this study not only identifies meanings at the level of denotation and connotation but also explains how color specifically contributes to shaping audience perception. This approach distinguishes the present research from previous studies, which mostly rely on Barthes' (1977) theory alone without a deeper analysis of color meaning.

2.2 Concepts

This study discusses two main concepts: advertisement and verbal and non-verbal signs, both of which are essential to understanding how meaning is constructed in media communication. A more detailed explanation of each concept is provided below.

2.2.1 Advertisement

Advertisements play a crucial role in shaping public perception and consumer behavior through persuasive communication. According to Leech (1966), an advertisement is a form of communication designed to inform and persuade people about a product, job, or service, and it may appear in various forms such as text, images, films, or songs. Modern advertisements function not only as marketing tools but also as semiotic texts that reflect cultural values and ideologies (Dyer, 1993). To attract the audience's attention, advertisements often integrate verbal and non-verbal signs that work together to create persuasive meaning. In this study, advertisements are viewed as semiotic systems that combine language and imagery to communicate Quaker's messages about health, nutrition, and family.

2.2.2 Verbal Sign

Verbal signs refer to the linguistic elements such as words, phrases, or sentences used in advertisements to convey information or persuade the audience. According to Dyer (1993), words not only describe objects and communicate emotions but also evoke certain images and associations in the minds of readers or

viewers. In the context of semiotic analysis, verbal signs represent the signifiers that carry both denotative and connotative meanings (Barus & Siregar, 2025). These linguistic elements may include product names, slogans, taglines, or written descriptions that emphasize product quality and benefits. In this study, the verbal signs in Quaker advertisements help convey health-related messages and promote positive lifestyle values, aligning with the brand's image.

2.2.3 Non-Verbal Sign

Non-verbal signs are visual or symbolic elements used to communicate meaning without words. These may include gestures, images, colors, facial expressions, layouts, and visual designs. According to Dyer (1993), pictures often have a stronger emotional and cognitive impact than words because they are more immediate and memorable. A recent study found that colour and visual design elements significantly influence how audiences interpret advertisement messages and engage with them (Pryshchenko & Senchuk, 2022). Another recent studies Casmita et al. (2024) also emphasize that colors, imagery, and visual composition significantly influence how audiences interpret advertisement messages. In semiotic analysis, non-verbal signs correspond to visual signifiers that generate connotative meanings through cultural associations. In this study, non-verbal elements such as color, imagery, and character expressions in Quaker advertisements will be analyzed to uncover how they reinforce messages of wellness, family care, and healthy living.

2.3 Theories

This study applies three main theories to analyze the data, namely Saussure's (1916) semiotic theory, Barthes' (1977) semiotic theory, and Wierzbicka's (1996) theory of color terms. These theories were chosen because the object of this study, Quaker advertisements, contains both verbal and non-verbal signs that construct meaning through language, imagery, and color. Saussure's (1916) theory is used to identify and classify signs based on the concepts of signifier and signified. Barthes' (1977) theory is used to reveal how signs communicate layered meanings through denotation and connotation, while Wierzbicka's (1996) theory helps explain how color choices contribute to the construction of those meanings through cultural and emotional associations. Together, these theories allow the researcher to interpret how linguistic and visual elements in Quaker advertisements convey messages about health, nutrition, and family values.

2.3.1 Semiotic Theory

This study uses Barthes' (1977) semiotic theory as the primary analytical framework because it focuses on the process of signification, that is, how meaning is produced and interpreted through signs. According to Saussure (1916), a sign is formed by the interaction of two components: the signifier (the physical form, such as a word or image) and the signified (the concept or idea that the sign represents). Barthes (1977) further developed this concept by explaining that signs can produce multiple meanings through different levels, namely denotation and connotation.

Barthes categorizes meaning into two levels:

1. Denotation, which refers to the literal or explicit meaning of a sign; and
2. Connotation, which refers to the symbolic, emotional, or cultural meanings that extend beyond the literal.

Barthes' (1977) model helps reveal how advertisements function as systems of meaning, in which visual and linguistic elements combine to construct ideologies and values. In this research, Barthes' (1977) theory functions as the main analytical tool to identify and interpret the verbal and visual components in Quaker advertisements, uncovering how they communicate messages related to health, wellness, and family life.

2.3.2 Signifier and Signified

According to Hanif (2025), a sign consists of two inseparable elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of the sign, such as a written word, image, or sound, while the signified refers to the concept or idea it represents. Together, they form the basic unit of meaning in semiotics.

Barthes later expanded this model by explaining that the same signifier can produce multiple signified meanings depending on cultural context. For example, in a Quaker advertisement, the phrase "Healthy Start" may literally refer to breakfast (denotation) but also suggest wellness, energy, and family care (connotation).

Diagrammatically, Saussure's model can be represented as follows:

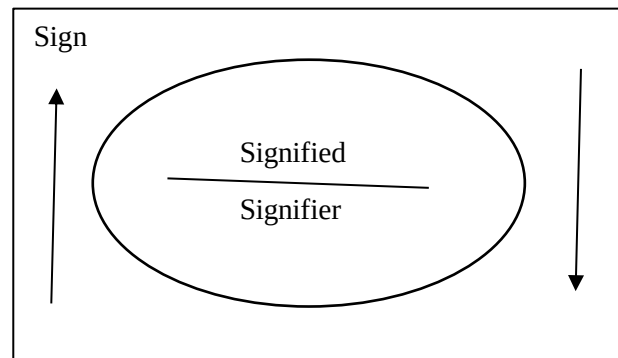


Figure 2.1 Dyadic Diagram

This model will be used in this study to identify the linguistic and visual signs found in Quaker advertisements and to interpret how each sign's literal and cultural meanings interact to communicate persuasive messages about health and lifestyle.

2.3.4 Denotation and Connotation

According to Barthes (1977), meaning is produced through two levels of signification: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the first level of meaning, which is the literal, explicit, or dictionary meaning of a sign. It describes what is directly seen, heard, or read without involving cultural or emotional interpretation. At this level, signs communicate factual and objective information.

Connotation refers to the second level of meaning, in which signs carry additional cultural, emotional, and ideological associations. Unlike denotation, connotative meaning is influenced by social values, beliefs, and experiences shared within a particular culture. Therefore, the same sign may generate different

connotative meanings depending on the cultural background and context in which it is interpreted.”

Barthes (1977) argues that advertisements often operate on both levels of meaning. At the denotative level, advertisements present products and factual information through words and images. At the connotative level, these verbal and non-verbal signs evoke ideas, emotions, and values that persuade audiences and shape their perceptions of the advertised product. In this study, Barthes's concepts of denotation and connotation are applied to interpret how verbal and non-verbal signs in Quaker advertisements communicate messages related to health, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles.

2.3.5 Theory of Color Terms

To complement Barthes's theory of denotation and connotation, this study applies Anna Wierzbicka's (1996) Theory of Color Terms to explain how colors function as meaningful signs in communication. According to Wierzbicka (1996), colors should not be understood merely as visual phenomena or physical properties of objects. Instead, color terms are semantic concepts that are shaped by human cognition, perception, and shared cultural experiences. The meanings of color terms are not universal psychological symbols but conceptual representations developed through people's interaction with the natural environment and their everyday experiences. Therefore, the interpretation of colors depends not only on their visual appearance but also on the conceptual knowledge associated with them.

Wierzbicka (1996) argues that the meanings of color terms cannot be adequately explained only by referring to hue, brightness, or saturation. Instead, each basic color term is associated with a conceptual prototype that reflects common human experiences. These conceptual prototypes enable people to understand and interpret colors through familiar objects or natural phenomena. In other words, color terms acquire meaning because they evoke shared experiences that are widely recognized within a speech community.

Based on this perspective, Wierzbicka explains that the concept of black is associated with darkness and situations in which people are unable to see anything, whereas white is related to daylight and conditions in which people are able to see clearly. Likewise, green is conceptually associated with vegetation and things growing from the ground, reflecting people's experiences with plants and nature. Meanwhile, blue is closely related to the sky and, in some languages, natural bodies of water, which serve as conceptual reference points for understanding the color. These meanings demonstrate that color terms are closely connected to human experience and cultural conceptualization rather than functioning solely as descriptions of visual appearance.

Furthermore, Wierzbicka (1996) emphasizes that although many languages possess comparable basic color terms, their meanings and ranges of reference are not always identical across cultures. Different languages may categorize colors differently because each language reflects its own conceptualization of the surrounding world. Consequently, the meaning of a color term should be interpreted

within its linguistic and cultural context rather than being regarded as a fixed or universal symbol.

In this study, Wierzbicka's Theory of Color Terms is employed as a supporting framework to analyze the meanings conveyed by colors in Quaker advertisements. The theory complements Barthes's concept of denotation and connotation by providing a semantic explanation of how colors function as non-verbal signs and contribute to the construction of meaning in advertising. Through this framework, the analysis focuses on how colors communicate particular concepts and reinforce the persuasive messages presented in the advertisements.

