

A Discourse Analysis Using Semiotic Theory on iPhone 13 Advertisement

I Wayan Budhi Astawa

English Language Education, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha

Corresponding e-mail: *budhiastawa21@gmail.com

Received on June 6th 2023, Revised on July 11th 2024, Published on July, 31th 2024

ABSTRACT

Currently, we see a lot of advertisements, both in the form of print media and electronic media. With technological advances, advertisements can be made as attractive as possible in order to persuade consumers to own or use these goods/services. The way producers advertise their products is also very diverse, ranging from making advertisements for goods in the cinematic genre to showing advertisements in the comedy genre. The creativity of each producer is very necessary because this is also their determinant in the success of advertising to persuade consumers to buy the goods/services. Not infrequently many advertisements have discourse, especially the hidden meaning in each scene. So this article was created with the aim of analyzing one of the interesting advertisements published by the Apple company, namely the launch of the iPhone 13 smartphone. The method used is a method using a semiotic approach, where the results of the analysis will be in accordance with the theory presented by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes. This theory covers the sign described by Saussure; the meaning of denotation, and connotation, and also the myth described by Barthes.

Keywords: *Advertisement, Semiotic Analysis, Saussure's Theory, and Barthes's Theory.*

ABSTRAK

Saat ini kita melihat banyak iklan, baik dalam bentuk media cetak maupun media elektronik. Dengan kemajuan teknologi, iklan dapat dibuat semenarik mungkin untuk membujuk konsumen agar memiliki atau menggunakan barang/jasa tersebut. Cara produsen mengiklankan produk mereka juga sangat beragam, mulai dari membuat iklan barang dalam genre sinematik hingga menampilkan iklan dalam genre komedi. Kreativitas setiap produsen sangat penting karena ini juga merupakan penentu keberhasilan iklan dalam membujuk konsumen untuk membeli barang/jasa. Tidak jarang banyak iklan memiliki wacana, terutama makna tersembunyi dalam setiap adegannya. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini dibuat dengan tujuan menganalisis salah satu iklan menarik yang diterbitkan oleh perusahaan Apple, yaitu peluncuran smartphone iPhone 13. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode dengan pendekatan semiotik, di mana hasil analisis akan sesuai dengan teori yang disajikan oleh Ferdinand de Saussure dan Roland Barthes. Teori ini mencakup tanda yang dijelaskan oleh Saussure; makna denotasi, konotasi, dan juga mitos yang dijelaskan oleh Barthes.

Kata kunci: *Iklan, Analisis Semiotik, Teori Saussure, dan Teori Barthes.*

INTRODUCTION

Discourse in mass media is a language phenomenon that plays a significant role in effective and intensive communication systems, contributing to the development and preservation of human culture. Language serves multiple purposes, including providing information, ensuring the accuracy of facts, and influencing the behavior and opinions of others (Widyahening, 2015). Additionally, language is employed to describe and present goods or objects, as well as to convey the sensory experience associated with them. Furthermore, language is utilized to narrate events that have occurred to others, and it is important to note that language must be understood within its specific context and situation. As Firth (in Syamsuddin, 1992) emphasized, "language is only meaningful in its context of the situation."

Semiotic is the study of signs and their meanings in societal life. It is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign, which is a combination of a signifier (the physical form of the sign) and a signified (the concept or meaning associated with the sign) (Yakin & Totu, 2014). The two prominent scholars of semiotics are Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure's theory emphasizes language as a system of signs, while Peirce proposed the term 'semiotic' as synonymous with the concept of logic that focuses on the knowledge of the human thinking process. Semiotic theory focuses on methods of structuring and operating the symbol system, which means the ways symbol systems are structured and how those systems are operationalized. The association between semiotics and communication is clearly shown through the assertions or claims of several scholars. The historical background of semiotics dates back to more than two thousand years ago by the Greek philosophers, and the field of semiotics has continued to become a research topic and writings among scholars and academicians to date.

In everyday life, we often see advertisements, whether in the form of print media (newspaper, pamphlet, billboard, etc.) or can be in the form of electronic (television, radio, etc.). Advertisements that are displayed through print and electronically are very diverse, ranging from commercial advertisements, services, notifications, and other things that are persuasive to consumers. Advertisement becomes a very important thing in our lives because in it is to strengthen consumers to want the goods or services advertised (Widyahening, 2015). Advertising can be defined as the business of way to persuade customers to buy something like goods or services advertised (Ivanovic & Collin, 2003). From these two understandings, we can take the notion that advertising is a process or effort carried out by every company in offering its goods, both through print and electronic media so that consumers are interested and want to own or use the advertised goods/services. We can also define that advertising is a communication tool or medium that is used as a promotion of a particular good or service that can persuade consumers to have or use it.

The purpose of the advertisement is to persuade consumers to want to have the goods or services offered in the advertisement. Usually, the advertisements that are displayed use persuasive sentences by displaying the goods or services that they want to offer to consumers (Puteri, 2017). The visualizations used are also varied, either directly explaining the goods or services offered, or advertising by demonstrating the function of the goods or services offered to consumers. Advertisements are also made as attractive as possible by combining bright colors and not forgetting the persuasive element, as a form of diverting consumers to the goods

displayed in the advertisement. Producers try to be as creative as possible to create advertisements that can persuade consumers. Advertisements can be unique, innovative, and even comedic so that apart from persuasive advertisements, advertisements can also entertain consumers through the creativity of a producer in offering their goods or services. This can be said as the art of offering goods, where producers create advertisements with the right composition, situation, color, and brightness so that the displayed goods look attractive.

In this article, the advertisement that will be used as the object of study and which will be analyzed is the advertisement about smartphone products, namely the "Introducing iPhone 13" advertisement. This ad is an advertisement published by the Apple company in September 2021. This ad shows how a courier sends goods that have been ordered by consumers before. The courier used the iPhone 13 smartphone as his "daily driver". It can be seen in the advertisement that the smartphone used has features that strongly support his profession as a courier. In connection with the content of the advertisement, it is necessary to study the sign, denotation, connotation, and myth in the advertisement published by Apple, Introducing iPhone 13. This study is a study based on the theory put forward by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes in Semiotics field. Semiotics is a field of science that examines various types of signs that are conveyed through various media, either through print or electronic media (Prior, 2014). Advertising is one example that can be studied using a semiotic approach where in understanding the content of an advertisement, we examine how producers provide markers and signifiers from the advertisements delivered. In addition, with this field of semiotics, we can examine the denotations, connotations, and myths that exist from these advertisements.

The main purpose of this article is to identify and describe the markers and bookmarks used in the "Introducing iPhone 13" advertisement. In the iPhone 13 advertisement, the producer shows how the features contained in the smartphone provide convenience for its users. The producer also shows that this smartphone has the advantages that many consumers want from the smartphone. Producers package the ad creatively so that it can persuade consumers through the features possessed by the smartphone. In addition, the article entitled *A Discourse Analysis Using Semiotic Theory On iPhone 13 Advertisement* discusses the meaning of connotation, denotation, and myth in the advertisement in accordance with Roland Barthes' theory in the field of Semiotics.

METHODOLOGY

The object study in analyzing the advertisement with the title "Introducing iPhone 13" is discourse analysis which analyzes an advertisement whose main point is the visualization in the advertisement. The ad shows the features found on a smartphone used by a courier and this feature helps the user in every activity.

The advertisement that introduced the iPhone 13 was obtained by the author through the search results of advertisements on YouTube. The advertisements that the author got were sourced from Apple's YouTube account which was published in September. This ad was issued as a form of the presence of the latest smartphone from their company. The advertisement also explains how the features of the smartphone can help users in doing various things.

In analyzing the advertisement, the writer recognizes the meaning of the advertisement. First, the author analyzes the advertisement by determining the sign on the smartphone

advertisement in accordance with Ferdinand de Saussure's theory. According to Saussure (1950) a sign is something that has an explanation or thing related to sounds, letters, images, or body movements that can act as markers. These markers can then create a good sign that is an image, sound, or gesture of the object being analyzed. Second, the author analyzes the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myths implied in the advertisement that displays the smartphone in accordance with Roland Barthes' theory. According to Barthes (1990) Denotative meaning focuses on the meaning of the sign conveyed or in other words the meaning of the visualization in the advertisement. Furthermore, connotation is more open to interpretation because the meaning of connotation is how something is described or denoted. Finally, the myth in semiotics can be interpreted as the meaning of things that appear on the sign, but are not actually true. By analyzing these two things, the author can achieve the purpose of making this article.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this article, the author examines smartphone advertisements, namely iPhone 13, which are published on the official YouTube account from Apple. This advertisement tells of the activities of a courier using an iPhone 13 smartphone when delivering goods to their customers. It appears that the smartphone can be used in any situation and situation that the courier passes when sending goods to his customers. The advertisement also demonstrates how the iPhone 13 can withstand wet conditions, is resilient, and saves power. From the advertisement, the Apple company wants to persuade consumers to have the smartphone because judging from the display, the iPhone 13 is very suitable to be used as a guide for the community to do any work related to smartphones. In the advertisement, the producer also tries to convince the public by directly demonstrating the durability of the smartphone, so that consumers will be interested in owning it. The following is an analysis of advertising based on the theory of Saussure and Barthes.

Semiotic

Semiotics is the study of signs and their functions, encompassing visual signs, sounds, words, and body language. Signs consist of a signifier (expression) and a signified (content) and play a role in conveying cultural and social ideas. Semiotics is synonymous with semiology, with semiotics being the more commonly used term today where it focuses on the representation of signs in language, images, and objects (Isfandiyary, 2017). In visual semiotics, visual signs have more direct meaning compared to language. Different perspectives exist within visual semiotics, such as Pierce's classification of signs into icon, index, and symbol, and Mieke Bal's exploration of image interpretation whilst the application of semiotics expanded to include visual images like photography, advertisements, and films, thanks to Barthes' development of semiotics beyond linguistics (Isfandiyary, 2017).

Saussure's Theory

Ferdinand de Saussure proposed the term 'semiology' to study the life of signs within society, which would be a part of social psychology and general psychology. He emphasized language as a system of sign and believed that it plays an important role in constructing reality.

Saussure's theory of signs gives more emphasis to the internal structure of cognitive thought processes in structuring signs. His principle is known as structuralism and has influenced prominent scholars in other fields, such as Levi-Strauss. Saussure's theory emphasizes language as a system of signs. He believed that a sign is something intentionally delivered with a specific meaning, subject to a conventional system. In other words, a sign is a combination of a signifier (the physical form of the sign) and a signified (the concept or meaning associated with the sign). Saussure's theory of signs is also known as semiology (Yakin & Totu, 2014).

Barther's Theory

Roland Barthes' semiotics theory encompasses any system of signs, including images, gestures, sounds, and objects, as systems of significance (Barther, 1990). Semiology, which is part of linguistics, focuses on the signifying elements of discourse. Barthes applies semiotics to analyze images in the media, recognizing the importance of studying how signs function within the meanings behind the images. He distinguishes between verbal signs, such as text on a poster, and non-verbal signs, such as images that support the verbal signs to make the poster engaging as an advertisement package.

Barthes identifies two levels of signification: denotation and connotation. Denotation represents the immediate or basic meaning of visual signs without considering societal, cultural, or ideological factors. It is the primary level of signification. Connotation, on the other hand, describes the interaction between the sign and the emotions and cultural values of its users. It involves the system comprising signifier and signified and the process that connects them. Connotation is influenced by cultural factors and myths, which are related to cultural values, beliefs, and ideological criticism.

The analysis of myth, a part of semiotics, is challenging and requires correlation with connotation, which represents the meaning at the second level of the semiotic system (Isfandiyary, 2017). Myths can be found in various mass culture products, including advertisements, photographs, and television.

Scene 1



Picture 1. Introducing iPhone 13, Apple. YouTube.

Saussure's Theory

In Saussure's theory, we examine the signs that exist on an object. This sign is divided into two, namely the signifier and the signified. Signifier is a tangible or physical form that can be recognized through the form of the work, be it images, movements, or other architecture. While the signified is the meaning or picture that is revealed through the concepts, functions, or values contained in an object, be it pictures, movements, or other architecture. In this iPhone 13 advertisement there is a sign that a courier is delivering the package to the customer's house using the iPhone 13 as a signpost.

The signifier of the first scene is seen from the picture above, in that scene there is a smartphone placed on top of a courier's vehicle which is used as a signpost to send packages to the customer's house. The picture reflects how a courier must send the package despite the rain during his journey.

Next is the signified, which is the meaning of the scene. We can find out the meaning of the scene that a courier delivers a package that has been previously ordered by the customer, where the courier uses an iPhone 13 smartphone to determine directions in conditions that are still raining.

In the video scene, the verbal sign "WATER 183 RESISTANCE" appears in the thirty-first seconds, highlighting the water-resistant feature of the iPhone 13. This means that users can confidently use the iPhone 13 even in rainy conditions or near water (excluding saltwater). The sign is written in orange color to stand out from the background, and water droplets are visible on the writing and the phone in the background. This signifies that the phone remains functional despite being wet.

The term "resistance" refers to the power of not being affected by something, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. In the context of "water resistance," it implies the ability of someone or something to maintain its condition even when in contact with water. In the advertisement, the text and the phone are visibly wet due to the rain, but the phone continues to function properly. The presence of water droplets on the text and the screen of the phone emphasizes that the phone can interact with water and still perform effectively. However, it should be noted that this indicates the phone's ability to withstand contact with a small amount of water, not being submerged underwater.

The orange color of the text contrasts with the dark background and is associated with energy, according to Chapman. This scene, it effectively conveys the energetic spirit of the delivery person and the phone as they brave the rain to deliver packages.

To summarize, the verbal sign and the use of orange color in the scene highlight the water-resistant feature of the iPhone 13, showcasing its ability to function properly even when exposed to water. The visual elements and the choice of color effectively communicate the intended message to the audience. We can also take the meaning that the courier must deliver the package on time, and even though it was raining, the courier was able to handle it because the smartphone he was using was water-resistant.

Barthes's Theory

In Barthes' theory, we examine the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth that exist in a form, image, motion, or other architectural elements. Denotative meaning focuses on the meaning of the sign conveyed or in other words the meaning of the visualization in the advertisement. In the smartphone advertisement snippet above, we can take the implied denotative meaning, which is clearly visible in the scene showing a courier delivering a package using directions with an iPhone 13 smartphone as a medium to determine the address of the recipient of the package. In the footage, it is also clear that the courier was in the rain, seen from his smartphone which was wet with rainwater.

Furthermore, in Barthes' theory, there is a connotative meaning that has a more open to interpretation nature because the meaning of connotation is how something is described or denoted. In the smartphone ad snippet above, we can take the connotation meaning that the courier confidently delivers the item even though it is blocked by rain, because the smartphone he uses as directions has a water-resistant feature, so the courier can send the package on time.

The third element of Barthes' theory is the meaning of the myth contained in the smartphone advertisement. The meaning of myth can be interpreted as the meaning of things that appear on the sign, but are not actually true. In the snippet from the smartphone ad above, we can take the mythical meaning of a courier who sends goods to customers. Why is this a myth? Because it's not necessarily the courier who only aims to send the item to the customer, it's possible that the courier will go to the Barker's filling station first before heading to the customer's house.

Scene 2



Picture 2 Introducing iPhone 13, Apple. YouTube.

Saussure's Theory

In Saussure's theory, we examine the signs that exist on an object. This sign is divided into two, namely the signifier and the signified. Signifier is a tangible or

physical form that can be recognized through the form of the work, be it images, movements, or other architecture. While the signified is the meaning or picture that is revealed through the concepts, functions, or values contained in an object, be it pictures, movements, or other architecture. In the iPhone 13 ad snippet above there is a sign that the iPhone 13 has fallen into the mud. The signifier in the footage is that the Courier slipped because it was blocked by the car in front of the courier, causing the smartphone to fall into a puddle of mud.

Next is the signified, which is the meaning contained in the scene footage. From the ad snippet above, we can see that the smartphone brought by the courier has a fairly strong durability because the smartphone has a solid cover in the form of a ceramic shield, so that the smartphone is safe from danger and the courier can continue his journey to the customer.

Barthes's Theory

In Barthes' theory, we examine the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth that exist in a form, image, motion, or other architectural elements. Denotative meaning focuses on the meaning of the sign conveyed or in other words the meaning of the visualization in the advertisement. In the smartphone ad snippet above, we can take the implied denotative meaning, which is clearly visible in the scene showing a courier who is having difficulty balancing his motorbike. Then because the courier failed to balance his motorbike, the smartphone he was using fell into a puddle of mud. In the picture, it is clear how the smartphone fell and was covered with a lot of mud. Not only smartphones, but the courier was also splashed with mud due to his imbalance in keeping the motorbike safe.

Furthermore, in Barthes' theory, there is a connotative meaning that has a more open to interpretation nature because the meaning of connotation is how something is described or denoted. In the smartphone ad snippet above, we can take the connotation meaning that the cellphone falls into a puddle of mud but can still be used properly by the courier. This is because the iPhone's feature is that the cover is made of a ceramic shield, making the smartphone resistant to the conditions experienced by the courier. So the smartphone is still feasible to use. Not only that, couriers can still continue their journey to deliver goods to customers properly.

The third element of Barthes' theory is the meaning of the myth contained in the smartphone advertisement. The meaning of myth can be interpreted as the meaning of things that appear on the sign, but are not actually true. In the snippet from the smartphone ad above, we can take the mythical meaning that the iPhone is still intact even though it has been dropped from a height and hit by a puddle of mud. Why is this a myth? Because the dropped iPhone is not necessarily damaged, there is a possibility that the smartphone is cracked due to the height of the smartphone falling.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of advertisements in the "Introducing iPhone 13", we can examine these advertisements using a Semiotic approach in accordance with the theory

described by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes. The theory presented by Saussure is the theory of signs in which signs can be divided into two. The two parts are the signifier which is a concept, image, movement, or other architectural concept; and the signified which is the meaning contained in the analyzed concept or architecture. In this article, the author analyzes the sign, denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings contained in an advertisement launched by the Apple company, namely an advertisement about the launch of the new iPhone 13 which was launched in September 2021.

The results obtained are that in scene one there is a signifier courier who is sending goods in a rainy situation. Signified from the scene is the courier who sends the goods in a rainy situation, but with the iPhone 13, the courier can still continue the journey because it is assisted by the water-resistant feature. The denotation of the scene is a courier who sends a package in a rainy situation, which can be connoted that the iPhone 13 can overcome this because it is equipped with water-resistant. Then in the second scene, there is a signifier showing the iPhone 13 falling into a puddle of mud. As signified from the footage the iPhone 13 can survive even if it has been dropped in a puddle of mud. The denotation of this second scene is the iPhone 13 falling into a puddle of mud, this can be connoted that the iPhone has high durability so it can withstand impacts.

REFERENCES

- Apple, 2021, 15 September. Introducing iPhone 13, Apple. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m43rh-p10P0&t=1s>.
- A.R., Syamsuddin. (1992). *Studi Wacana: Teori-Analisis-Pengajaran*. Bandung: *Mimbar Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni FPBS IKIP*.
- Anshori, Dadang. (2008). *Barthes, Roland, S/Z Translator; Richard Miler, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990*.
- Evy Tri Widyahening, S.S., M.Hum, D. C. (2015). The Role of Language In the Department. The 35th Anniversary Slamet Riyadi University, 1, 70–74.
- Isfandiyary, F. H. (2017). The Aspects Of Semiotics Using Barthes's Theory on A Series Of Unfortunate Events Movie Poster A Final Project In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements For The Bachelor Degree Majoring In American Cultural Studies. 1–24.
- Ivanovic A. & Collin P H, *Dictionary of Marketing, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, third edition, Italy, 2003, p. 6*
- Prior, Paul. (2014). Semiotics. In Constant Leung and Brian Street (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to English Studies (pp. 160-173)*. London, UK: Routledge
- Puteri, B. D. Y. (2017). Analisis Semiotic pada Iklan-Iklan Aqua di Media Televisi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa Sastra dan Pembelajarannya*. Vol. 4 (1) 160-176. Retrieved from <http://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/paramasastra>.
- Widyahening, T. (2015). The role of language in advertisement. Universitas Slamet Riyadi. Retrieved from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/169682-EN-the-role-of-language-in-advertisement.pdf>.
- Yakin, H. S. M., & Totu, A. (2014). The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 155(October), 4–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.247>.