Semiotics Analysis Of Moral Message In Cigarette Packs

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Abstract

This research investigates the semiotic elements and moral messages embedded in the images found on cigarette packs, specifically focusing on the types of sign-meanings (denotation, connotation, and myth) and their moral implications. Data were collected from 10 different cigarette packs and analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory The analysis reveals that all 10 packs contain denotation and connotation, while 8 packs also exhibit myth. Beyond these semiotic analyses, the research uncovers significant moral messages conveyed through the warning images. These pictures serve as stark reminders of the severe health consequences of smoking, prompting reflection on the ethical implications of tobacco consumption. They underscore the importance of informed decision-making and challenge the normalization of smoking within cultural contexts. In conclusion, the semiotic and moral analysis of cigarette pack images reveals a complex interplay between visual elements and societal perceptions. The findings highlight the dual role of these images in conveying direct health warnings and broader ethical considerations, ultimately advocating for a more informed and health-conscious society.

Keyword: Semiotics, Barthes, Cigarette Packs.

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A. Introduction

According to Husin (2018) Linguistics is the study of language from a scientific perspective. However, linguistics is not the only field that studies language. Language is also studied in other fields of study such anthropology, psychology, communication science, and sociology. Linguistics can be understood historically as a science that arose out of anthropologists' wish to comprehend the community that they studied on a deeper level. The anthropologists prepared themselves with a command of the community's language in order to accomplish their goals. The subfield of Applied Linguistics emphasizes the use of linguistic concepts in the classroom to help students improve their ability to communicate in their native language or a second language (Holmes in Awal, 2022). One branch of linguistic which can be found in a symbol or sign is semiotic.

Mayr (2013) explains that the name semiotics (also known as 'semiology') is derived from the Greek word semeion, which means 'sign'. It is the study of signs and symbols with an emphasis on language; a sign can be any picture or hairstyle that serves as a means of communication. In light of

this, semiotics is the study of sign meaning, which aids in people's ability to communicate more effectively and efficiently through signs they encounter. The field of semiotics focuses on understanding how people create and interpret the meaning of signs and symbols, including how people visually communicate through metaphor, analogy, allegory, metonymy, symbolism and other means of expression. Semiotics is a part of the broader study of communication, including visual arts, graphic design and basic visual literacy. Graphic designers, artists and others working in visual communication must consider how symbols, signs and colors affect the interpretation of their works.

Nowadays, the case of semiotic also happened in our daily life. For example, in the pack of cigarettes. Cigarette products are not something foreign to our society. The large number of smokers and cigarette sellers seems to prove that cigarette products have become a part of people's lives. All of this cannot be separated from the cigarette industry which is increasingly aggressively promoting its products to consumers. Every day people can see various cigarette advertisements, although many people want cigarettes and their advertisements to be abolished for reasons of public health and their impact on the people around them. Cigarette factories have even put pictures on every pack of cigarettes they produce. The pictures placed on cigarette packs are intended for smokers to see and then think. It is not uncommon for there to be several sentences that explain the meaning of the images a little.

Moral is a term used to determine the limited of good character, will, temprament, opinion or action that can be said to be right, wrong, good, bad. (Abudin Nata in Niswah, 2022). The meaning of good and bad in certain matters is relative. That is, something that is considered good by people of one nation in general, is not necessarily the same for other people or other nations. So a person's view of morals, values, and tendencies is usually influenced by his nation's way of life. When studying semiotics as a field of sign science, the researcher finds relationships between signs based on semiotics which have meaning and even moral messages. In this case, the pictures on cigarette packs.

There are five previous studies that related to this present research. First, a study conducted by Prasojowati (2019) entitled "A Semiotic Analysis Found on The Cigarette Products". In that study, the writer did a semiotic analysis towards the visual images of cigarette product. The main point of its discussion is to proof that the visual images are according to the experts stated as the semiotic signs or not. The result of the study, the writer found semiotic sign that successfully brought the messages to the person who saw it.

Second, a research conducted by Niswah (2022) with the title "Semiotics Analysis Moral Message of Film 'Hichki'". The study tells about a woman who has Tourette's syndrome and wants to become a teacher, but is difficult to accept because of a rare disease she suffers from. The purpose of the study is to provide meaning through semiotic analysis and moral messages that indirectly affect the audience's thoughts and behavior while watching the film. The result obtained from the study are that the moral messages contained in the Hichki film are persistence, independence, never give up, sincerity, cohesiveness, and honesty.

Third, a study conducted by Zainuddin and Saragih (2020) entitled "Semiotic Meaning in Cigarette Advertisement Texts". The objectives of the study are to investigate the semiotic meanings applied in cigarette advertisement, to analyze how the meanings are applied in cigarette advertisement, to analyze how the meanings are coded verbally and non-verbally, and to reason why it is used in the ways they are. The result showed that cigarette advertisements do not express explicitly their intention to suggest people to smoke either verbally or non-verbally due to government policy, but it representing relation between the verbal and non-verbal expression by elaborationg, manipulating and exaggerating.

Fourth, a study by Kevinia (2022) with a title "Analisis Teori Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Film Miracle in Cell No.7 versi Indonesia". In this study, the writer interested in how the main character of the movie express his feelings as part of communicating. As a result, the writer understand that each human being has his or her way, and even the main character's method can be considered unique.

The last one is a study by Putri and Inayah (2022) entitled "A Semiotic Analysis of Aladdin Movie by Using Roland Barthes Theory", The types of signs found are denotation, connotation, and myth. The writer found 38 types and meanings of semiotics by Roland Barthes consisting of 21 types and meanings of denotation, 13 types and meanings of connotation and 4 types and meanings of myth.

The result of the study state that the type of semiotics of Roland Barthes can be used to explain the meaning of semiotics contained in it.

From the five previous studies above and as the fellow active smoker, the researcher found the similarity and differences with this present study. For the similarity to this present research, the previous studies above also analyzed about the semiotics in movie or cigarette. However, the writer found a research gap which is to conduct a study about semiotics analysis moral message in pack of cigarettes. The researcher will use theory from Roland Barthes in Niswah (2022) to interpret signs from the pack and find out its moral message. Therefore, the writer will conduct research with title "Semiotics Analysis of Moral Message in Packs of Cigarettes"

B. Methods

Research Instruments

This research is descriptive qualitative research, this research purpose is to find out the moral meaning from the semiotics perspective in cigarette packs. This research only research on moral value by the perspective of smokers about what they feel after looking the pictures on the cigar packs

Data Collection

Data are collected by using document analysis and interview. Data are collected from 10 cigarette packs they are, Surya, Bull, On Line, Esse, Djarum Black, LA Ice Menthol, Sampoerna Mild, LA Ice Purple Boost, Evo, and Marlboro. In this research, the writer took the data from 5 packs of cigarettes. The data here are in the form of words. Adler & Adler in Rastina (2021) states that observation is one of the basic of all deep data collection methods qualitative research, especially about the social and behavioral sciences of human. In Hasyim (2018), say that the point of observation is process of systemic observation of human activities and physical arrangements where these activities place continuously from the activity natural place to produce facts.

Morris in Juni (2021) defines observation as a note-taking activity a symptom with the help instruments and recording it with scientific or other purpose. It is further said that observation is a collection of impressions about the world around you based on all the ability to perceive the human senses.

Data Analysis

Data are analyzed by using Roland Barthes (1952) about the meaning. In Barthes' semiology, denotation is the first level of significance system, while connotation is the second level. In this case, denotation is actually more associated with closure of meaning. As a reaction against this oppressive denotational literalism, Barthes tried to get rid of and reject it. For him there are only connotations. He further said that "literal" meaning is something natural, known as significance theory. This theory is based on the theory of signs put forward by Ferdinand de Saussure, only the meaning is expanded by means of meaning which takes place in two stages. The sign (signifier and signified) in the first stage and unite so that it can form a signifier in the second stage, then in the next stage the merged signifier and signified can form a new signified which is an expansion of meaning.

Thus, Barthes' semiology is composed of levels of the language system in two language levels. Language at the first level is language as an object and language at the second level is called metalanguage. This language is a sign system that contains signifiers and signifieds. The second sign system is built by making the first level signifier and signified into a new signified which then has its own new signifier in a new sign system at a higher level. The first sign system is called denotation or terminological system, while the second level sign system is called connotation or rhetorical or myth. With a description like this:

Denotation

The denotation is a meaning that has a direct character and is a description for a sign. Denotation is the true meaning of a word and is objective in nature. For example, a movie scene that says 'good monkey`. The denotation meaning of 'monkey' is a mamal of the primate species.

Connotation

The connotation is a second stage semiotic called Roland Barthes. The word connotation comes from the Latin 'connotare' which means 'to be meaning' and refers to a separate or different cultural sign from words in other forms of communication. The connotation is a word that has another meaning behind it or a meaning related to a word and it is figurative. (Septiana, 2019). In conclusion, the meaning of connotation is the idea or feeling that accompanies a word. Every scene in the movie has a message or code that will produce a hidden meaning in it to convey a message to the observer (Bintariana, 2019). For example, the scene movie said 'I like a shooting star'. The phrase of shooting star.

Myth

Barthes states in his theory that myth is a development of the hidden connotations of objects in the signification process. The connotation marking system becomes ideology in society which is called myth. Myth is not a concept, idea, idea or object but myth is a way to express the message resulting from someone's speech (Sobur, 2017). For example, a shady and dense banyan tree gives rise to the connotation is `sacred` because it is considered the dwelling place of sentient beings find.

C. Result

Table 1. Table Example

Pack	F		
	D	**C**	**M**
Sampoerna Amild	✓	✓	✓
Djarum Black	✓	✓	✓
LA Ice Blue	✓	✓	✓
LA Ice White	✓	✓	✓
Bull	✓	✓	✓
Diplomat Evo	✓	✓	✓
Surya Gudang Garam	✓	✓	✓
Esse	✓	✓	✓
Marlboro Black	✓	✓	x
ON Line	✓	✓	x
Total	10	10	8

Figure 1. Sample Of Cigarette Packs

D. Discussion

This research aimed to find sign-meaning of pictures in the packs of cigarettes using Roland Barthes theory in Niswah (2022). The research finding showed that there were 4 data about denotation and connotation and 3 myth's data. The type of sign-meaning pictures were divided into denotation which found in all 10 packs of cigarette (Sampoerna Amild, Djarum Black, Marlboro, Evo, LA Ice blue, Surya, ON Line, LA Ice white, Esse, Bull), Connotation also found in all 10 packs of cigarette (Sampoerna Amild, Djarum Black, Marlboro, Evo, LA Ice blue, Surya, ON Line, LA Ice white, Esse, Bull), and the writer only found 8 myth in 10 packs of cigarette; Sampoerna Amild, Djarum Black, Evo, LA Ice blue, Surya, LA Ice white, Esse, Bull. Another finding was the meaning or interpretation of each type of sign-meaning which has been described in this chapter.

Signs are composed of two analytically distinctive elements that have an interdependent relationship, which are referred to as the signifier and the signified. The signifier denotes the perceptual component/physical representation of the sign and the signified connotes an associative/conceptual meaning. Another way to describe this is the signifier is 'what we see' and the signified is 'how we see it'. Denotation is the first order of signification that conveys a signs literal meaning. Denotation is what recognises, describes and identifies a sign. That's why in all 10 packs of cigarettes, the writer can found all the data described below the warning pictures.

Moreover, Grant (2016) described connotation is the second order of signification that relates a socio-cultural association/conceptual meaning. Connotation is a result of previously conceived ideas, personal associations and emotional responses related to a sign. Because of that, the writer distributed a google form to 4 active smokers and asked for their opinion about the picture on the cigarette packs. The average gives an opinion like "Cigarette packaging that feels premium, iconic and minimalist, cigarette packaging that shows masculinity, as well as opinions that explain that the warning pictures on cigarette packaging made him feel disgusting and cringe".

Furthermore, myth is combination of the denotative and connotative meaning of a sign that extends to a greater mythological or ideological idea. Myth is when "the sign reflects major culturally-variable concepts underpinning a particular worldview – such as masculinity, femininity, freedom, individualism, objectivism, Englishness and so on" according to Chandler in Grant (2016). The traits of this myth are what those cigarettes is suggesting us will embody if we buy the product as stated above, most smokers feel that cigarette packs make them look more manly and masculine.

Last, moral message that can be found from research on 10 packs of cigarettes is that the picture is placed on each pack of cigarettes to warn smokers that cigarettes cause many deadly diseases and take away a person's happiness. However, many smokers are already addicted to smoking so they don't pay much attention to this image. They look more at cigarette pack models that look attractive than at the warning pictures.

E. Conclusion

Regarding to the research findings, it can be concluded that all cigarette packs that have warning pictures have denotation and connotation, and for myth, only two pictures with bandaged bodies do not have myth. Another finding is that the moral message that smokers immediately understand is about smoking can cause various deadly diseases as stated in the warning picture on each cigarette pack and it is hoped that they will not consume cigarettes.

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