

## ANALYZING ADVERTISEMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE WAY TO TEACH SEMIOTICS: A LESSON PLAN

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**Abstract:** in this study, the writer would like to propose an alternative strategy to be used to teach semiotics. Semiotics is the study of sign of language. One alternative strategy that could be implemented is by utilizing advertisement in the study of *Roland Barthes* theory as one of semiotics material that must be taught in Semiotics subject. This abstract indicates a target language program on English for Academic Purposes at higher education level. The target audiences are academics or faculty members and linguistics teachers. This paper aims at describing how analyzing advertisement can be an alternative way to teach semiotics. The steps proposed are as follows: The data are taken from beautiful advertisement on television. Firstly, ask the students to watch the advertisement on television, then record pictures, sound, and utterances, and watch them more than twice in the class. Furthermore, the picture will be caught, and transcribed the utterance to the notes, then, ask the students to notice everything that support the data analysis (picture, movement, and situation); in addition, show them how to analyze data, and explain them how to analyze the data based on semiotics theory and *Roland Barthes* theory. Comprehensively, the result of analysis is able to explain the students the theory of *Roland Barthes* in semiotics. The women in this advertisement can be seen from the meaning of connotative and dennotative meaning. From those steps, it is expected to make the student easier to understand the theory of *Roland Barthes*. In addition, it would be beneficial for student to be familiar with the material in semiotics.

**Keywords:** *Analyzing advertisement, Roland Barthes in Semiotics, a lesson plan*

### Preliminary

Semiotics is the study of sign. "The goal of theoretical semiotics is to study the origins, nature, and properties of signs, that of cultural semiotics to examine their functions and uses within their "cultural container" (Danesi and Perron 1999: 67). It is called a multidiscipline study. We can begin to understand the semiotics by starting a question: how could the theory of de Saussure develop signs on Roland Barthes' Theory, and of what later developed in the study of culture? The theory of de Saussure was developed by Barthes, where he developed to assess cultural aspects related to the division of the *signifiant* and *signifie* sign. With this, de Saussure tried to see a sign as a of unity between the two entities comprising mental *signifiant* (signifier or marker), which is the form of ACOUSTIQUE image or image noise, and *signifie* (signified or marker), which he called its concept (de Saussure 1973: 146). De Saussure saw language as a system of signs. According to him, the sign (language) is a psychological entity duality. In other words, it means *signifiant* (marker, signifier) and *signifie* (signified). *Signifiantis* the image of the sound or sound psychological impression that arises in our minds, while *signifie* is the concept or meaning that there is an impression in our minds. Sign concept is then taken by Roland Barthes. Barthes was a French semiotician. He built a framework of analysis in his book *Elements of Semiology* (Afriani, 2003: 67).

One of the Roland Barthes's theory is concepts of denotation and connotation. The writer tries to propose one alternative strategy in teaching these concepts to the students in the class. That is teaching semiotics through analyzing advertisement. Some advertisement in the television, which can be analyzed part of advertisement that use women as a model. Television is actually an effective and efficient cultural transformation tools. However, as the complexity of the issue and interests in society, then the existence of the advertisement becomes a tool misused by certain manufacturers in order to perpetuate its products. Christomi (2006: 1) adds that the market share easily translated by an advertising agency in the form of representation, using highly structured and creative. However, the advertisement is actually open to be interpreted and have the possibility of 'leaky' and change behavior outside its market segment, when dispersed in society. "Sweet black girl might be thinking of also buying skin whitening". In other words, anything unusual, it can become a commonplace naturalized (Barthes in Christomi (Barthes 1979, 1993)). If we consistently "watch" television ad in Indonesia, then in general I can say that the Indonesian television is actually more "highlight" eyes ads than other events. That is why the ads have aired portions much more than the news for example. If we watch the eyes of the "advertisement" in Indonesian television, then we will find that advertising "drugs" is a sub-impressions,

followed by advertising "skin whitening women" and shampoos. If the number of women who are often seen as a model of advertising, it can be said also that how women have been used in a manner to be used on television. This is because the skin whitening advertising model, is already white, *Lux* soap ads using ad model, who was already a star, and model of the ads shown, physically is already "pretty" or even exceed the standards of beauty culture in Indonesia, that which is considered beautiful is white, slim, tall and has long, black hair and bushy. All these things are developed because of the myth of beauty (beauty myth), which has been believed and rooted in the world of advertising to woo consumers (women) in Indonesia with various beauty products. Although, the myth of beauty is different in each culture. In Africa, for example, the beautiful woman who gives the impression of abundance, with a large round body shape, chest and lower body, with black pigment course (<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0210/14 / dikbud/glob36.htm>). In conclusion, I see that the beauty of this ad is clearly aimed at women, and "may" is intended to be enjoyed by men, and that being a model is a woman who has standards of beauty in Indonesia. Whether or not of this assumption, will be tested in the study on *zinc* shampoo ads and *Nivea* Intensive Body Lotion ads.

Semiotics is one of subjects that is taught in University (higher education level). It is taught theoretically from the beginning of the study. A lecturer of linguistics needs a way to deliver the basic concepts on semiotics interactively and attractively. One of the theory taught in Semiotics is a theory of Roland Barthes. It is not easy to deliver the concept of the theory because it is really scientific, and the students get difficulties to catch the idea by reading the book only. For those reason, one of the way to understand Roland Barthes Theory by using advertisement analysis. The writer has already done the research related to beautiful advertisement in Indonesia. The steps of the analysis has shown to the students in her class January to June 2014. One of the way to understand Roland Barthes theory is advertisement analysis.

These advertisement (*Zinc Shampoo and Nivea*) are interesting to be investigated. Analyzing advertisement is one alternative strategy that could be implemented in Semiotics class especially when the teacher tries to teach Roland Barthes theory. This paper is very appropriate for a target language program on English Academic purposes at higher education level. In conclusion, This paper aims at describing how analyzing advertisement can be an alternative way to teach semiotics, especially Roland Barthes theory.

### **Analyzing advertisement as an alternative way to teach semiotics**

#### **Data**

The data in this study is a model of speech and the narrator ads within the advertisement: (i) *Zinc* shampoo; (ii) *Nivea Intensive Body Lotion*; Data Processing Method is (1); Researcher and the students watched the advertisement over and over again, (2); The researcher capture images and transcribe speech to the records, (3); the researcher noted the things that support the analysis of data (images, motion, situation), and invited the students to note everything on the advertisement (4); The researcher classified types of data (5); the researcher analyzed the data based on the theoretical framework. Here are two ways that will be studied through the semiotics of Barthes; the focus is verbal aspect, namely the advertising language of the narrator and advertising models, while in terms of nonverbal (picture, movement, situation) would be seen as supporting text and verbal context. After analyzing the data, the researcher show the students the result of the analysis. Advertisement is a good media in explaining Barthes theory.

#### **Mass Media: Television and advertisement.**

The study of mass media, such as television overlaid in the awareness that the text or discourse in the mass media has such influence in humans (Littlejohn, 2002:163-183). The entire activity and the symbolic meaning of a text can be carried out in the mass media. Basically the text of the mass media is not value-free reality. At the point of the basic human consciousness, the text always includes interests. Text in principle has been taken as the reality of the siding. Of course the text used to win the fight idea, a particular interest of a particular class or ideology. At some point, the media text itself already ideological (Littlejohn, 2002:217). Advertisements in television, as one of the text in the mass media, have the power to influence and tuck a particular ideology in order to perpetuate its products.

#### **Women and Advertisement**

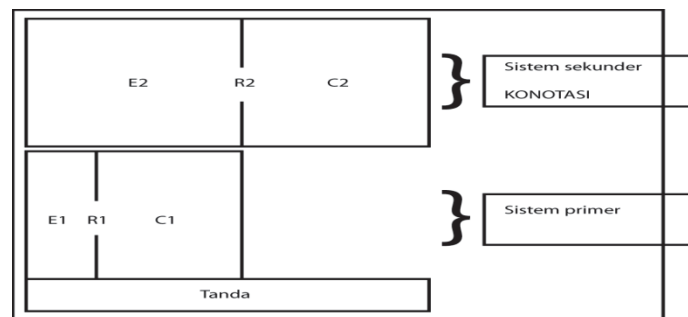
Ads that use "woman" has been around a long time, even the role and position of women in beauty advertising on television then and now remains as an object (Afriani 2002:10). It is not only in Indonesia, but also in other countries, eg, United States. Betty Friedan, an activist and author of *The Feminine Mystique*, accused the advertising industry in the United States over the exploitation of women's oppression by using negative stereotypes in their ads (Steve Craigin Tejasmara 2004:9). However, since 1970, been a lot of ads that put women as independent decision-makers, so even a panothermyth in the world of advertising, that women are placed as if it might be accepted only if they can meet the standards of slimness, beauty (skin color for example)

and specific fashion. This also happens in Indonesia, that this myth by way women construct a new one anyway; is pretty white, slim, and long black hair and bushy (Afriani 2006:11).

**Barthes's semiotic: connotation, myth and ideology**

The theory that will be used in this research is the theory of Roland Barthes' connotation. Barthes (1973: 89-94) developed two levels of meaning indication that allows generating stratified. He defines a sign as a system consisting of E, expression or related markers (R) with C, the content or markers. This system (ERC) is called the primary sign system. The primary sign system can be developed into an element of a more comprehensive system of signs. If development occurs at the level of content (C), the primary sign system (E1 R1 C1) will be the expression (E) of the two sign systems, namely E2 (E1 R1 = C1) C2 R2. In this case, the primary sign is denotative, while the second sign is connotative.

Denotation is an indication level which describes the relationship between signifier and signified, or between the sign and the reference to the reality, which generates meaning explicit, direct and definite. Denotation is the meaning of meaning to what it seems. The connotation is an indication level which describes the relationship between signifier and signified, in which operations are no explicit meaning, not directly, and certainly not open to the possibilities (Piliang, 2004: 94). If development occurs at the level of expression (E), the primary sign system (E1 R1 C1) will be content (C) of the two sign systems, namely R2 C2 E2 (E1 R1 = C1). It is also called the metalanguage. In the metalanguage, a sign will have more than one E to C is the same, the opposite of connotation where a sign has more than one C to the same E (Hoed, 2004: 53).



Connotation of the theory, Barthes then develop a tool to assess the culture. Through semiotic connotations, Barthes saw language as a part of the culture. Connotation evolved along with the cultural influences of the giver of meaning. Be a sign of a particular connotation when we look at the use of the mark in advertising. For example, a photo of "car" has reference to the car in the real world, and has connotations of freedom, strength, modernity, and status. The concept of this connotation, can then be developed into a myth. In his mythologies (1973), Barthes shows how the semiotic and explain what is meant by the myth (Mythe). Myth is not an object, concept, or idea. Myth is a way of signification 'symbolism' a form. Myth is a speech (parole), "The myth is a type of speech" (Barthes 1973: 109), and all of which can be considered discourse (a discourse) may be a myth. Thus, the myth cannot be found orally, but in the form of writing or performances (Zaimar, 1991: 22). Barthes also explains myth as a semiotic system. He stated that as a study of speech, mythology is a fragment of a vast science of signs, namely semiotics. In the operation of this myth, the sign becomes a second order marker (second order signifier). Connotations cannot be separated from the culture in which we live and grow together with the influence of culture on the meaning giver. This brings us to what Barthes referred to as a myth. If the myth to settle, then it would be ideological.

The theory explained above will be the theoretical framework in analyzing the data. After asking the student to watch the advertisement on television, then the students records pictures, sound and utterances, and watch them again in the class. The researcher invited and asked them to notice everything in order to support data analysis; they are picture, movement, and situation. In addition, we showed them how to analyze the data. The result of data analysis as follows:

**Discussion**

The data are taken from *Zinc Shampoo Advertisement*, and *Intensive Body Lotion Nivea*. The result of the data analysis is explained as below.

**Women in Zinc Shampoo advertisement.**

Zinc shampoo commercial was aired throughout 2006. The Context in this ad areas follows: (i) advertisements showed women (advertising model) with long hair, straight, black and bushy is running (rather waltz)

with confidence; (ii) The woman brushed her hair, and then got the attention of all the people who are around, especially from handsome men (in Indonesian standard) who touched her hair; (iii) The ad tells us that women wear Zinc shampoo, and (iv), when she met with him again, he smiled, amazed, stealing glances and finally "invented". The narrator tells the following ad:



"Zinc, zinc, zinc..., zinc, zinc, zinc; rambut zinc, bikin semua terpikat, zinc pyrithion dan octopiroxnya bikin ketombe takut, ginsengnya bikin rambut kuat dan lembut...; zinc, zinc, zinc, bikin semua terpikat; zinc, zinc, zinc, cumarambut zinc yang bisabegini. Ketombe di Zinc aja! Rambut OKE."

In the television screen running texts, it is stated that "ZINC shampoo sachet fixed price of Rp. 250, -". The 30-second ad. In a short amount of time, this ad is able to tell and show what Barthes called the Expression and content on the primary system, firstly, the narrator uttered and repeated that advertisement "Zinc, Zinc, Zinc". Product name is repeatedly spoken to introduce the product on consumer, by the ad narrator; so that when people hear the name of *Zinc*, they will surely remember the type of shampoo. Analysis on the television above that the text begins with understanding speech with a rising intonation, which tells that the *zinc* hair shampoo will make everyone captivated. Second, speech further illustrates that *Zinc* has astringent antidote to dandruff and substances called pyrithion amplifier and hair softener, called octopirox. Narrator ad illustrates that only zinc hair can make people hooked, and images also illustrate that the man lured the women's hair, so that the woman who is using the product *Zinc*, after that, they meet again and eventually women become enamored with him, thanks to the use of *Zinc* products. In the secondary system, researcher interprets that *Zinc* shampoo, that is a shampoo that makes men attracted, and yet another woman who eventually lured in men. That is, it seemed that the female models *Zinc* shampoo ads placed only as a display. Women become complementary flavored delights to the audience, because the display is a woman who looks "perfect", it means that women with white skin, long hair (black), pretty and slim. Women in these ads also appear minor, since it is functioned as the attention of men.

In presenting the facts to the public (audience), television is influenced by the ideology that constructs women unfairly. For example, the use of softening language "zinc air, making all hooked", because the hair is not in *zinc*, means not ok, and not interest men. That is, that the message conveyed by the ad shampoo *zinc* stereotype strengthens the position of women in particular; that means the beautiful woman with long hair, black, strong, gentle, without dandruff is that men ogled. In this case, it appears that *zinc* shampoo commercial on television is a business reality, because it serves as a source of income, return of capital and profits for private television. Vice versa, for advertisers Shampoo *zinc*, is serving at the time the audience demands a lot (there is a popular event). Rating here means there is a role, which became a television ideology. Ads shampoo like *zinc* shampoo ad, which showed ideology "pembawahan (under standard)" women, will certainly continue. It can only be revised or eliminated by the attitude of television viewers themselves, because the ads will continue to run while the advertiser is able to and does impressions matter remain popular spectator/television viewers. Therefore, a critical attitude plays an important role in the audience watching the ad and choosing shampoo/products offered on the advertisement. Let us turn to the *Nivea* advertisement analysis, will we find the same ideology?

#### **Women in Intensive Body Lotion Nivea advertisement.**

Intensive Body Lotion *Nivea* advertisement shows the context of the following events: (i) *Nivea* ad begins by showing the logo *Nivea* body products; (ii) second, emerging advertising models women stroked his own body from the



neck, down to his shoulder, then showed his back open; (iii) further, the softness of her skin is the same as parable with Avocado oil is falling on milk; (iv) the male touching the female's back open, back from top to bottom; (v) the advertisement shows the product Nivea Intensive Body Lotion, 200ml size; (v) the typical advertising slogan Nivea: *I love my body*.



After transcribing, the advertisement model uttered "*kurawat kulit kudengan Nivea Body Intensive Lotion, yang mengandung Avocado oil, bagaikan mandis usetiaphari*", furthermore, advertisement narator uttered "*Nivea Body Intensive Lotion, I love my body*"

Barthes defines a sign as a system consisting of E, expression or related markers (R) with C, the content or markers. This system (ERC) is called the primary sign system. In the analysis of the above text, the expression "*kurawat kulit ku with Nivea Intensive Body Lotion, which contains Avocado oil, like a milk bath every day*", it can be seen as a directive speech understanding, meaning that although the speech is a declaration, but the function is more on the "suggestion" or "urge" television viewers to buy *Nivea Intensive Body Lotion*, because what can make the skin soft as a milk bath is *Nivea Body* products. The next speech, "*Nivea Intensive Body Lotion, I love my body*" is an illustration of the narrator advertisement, which depicts completeness of the information, that everyone (especially women), who wants to "love" and care for the body, can use *Nivea Intensive Body Lotion*.

The primary sign system can be developed into an element of a more comprehensive system of signs. If development occurs at the level of content (C), the primary sign system (E1 R1 C1) will be the expression (E) of the two sign systems, namely E2 (E1 R1 = C1) C2 R2. In this case, the primary sign is denotative, while the second sign is connotative. If we analyze the connotation of Barthes's theory, then we will see the "upper-class women of modern life", which is characterized by "Avocado Oil", "I love my body", which gives an indication that women can treat the skin for the sake of looking smoothly women who have excess money, or making activities as part of skin care routine life. Connotation of "*Nivea Intensive Body Lotion*" is a moisturizer that can make "us" have smooth skin, such as milk bath. However, it does not seem as simple connotation, because expression of the exploitation of women's bodies in advertising is more noticeably through pictures (scenes of men stroking backs advertising model). Exploitation of women's bodies in every gender stereotype tends to imply the meaning of low quality, which ultimately brings more meaning women not as an object, not a creature. In advertisement *Nivea Intensive Body Lotion*, body and skin explored as an object (object sign), rather than as a subject. Advertisers make the body as a marker (signifier), which is associated with the meaning or the signified (the signified) specified, in accordance with the objectives of economic policy. That is, the body of a young female advertising model, seamlessly and beautifully with *Nivea* moisturizing products. Body with leather version maintained *Nivea* body lotion be used as a tool Intensive ideal beauty of the body, also is constructed and standardized in order to make it easier for manufacturers to customize the advertising image of the product with passion buying public.

*Nivea* advertisement clearly reminds us that women must be beautiful, slim and smooth-skinned (very stereotypical). This representation leads women to be like the models on television advertising. *Nivea* advertisement model representation on television, reminds me of the beauty myth of Naomi Wolf which expressed, that "beauty" is a currency system like the gold standard in the economics become. As with other economic areas, it is determined by the political system, and in Indonesia, the value of beauty is the best belief system to maintain the dominance of patriarchy. Here, the definition of patriarchy is capitalism television and advertising, which makes women feel uncomfortable with themselves through various images of women that are imaged as in a *Nivea* advertisement. That is, the *Nivea* advertisement store ideology to control women by

making them self-conscious, as well as making women feel guilty, if you do not have a well maintained skin like milk bath; or it can be said that women's bodies eventually fall into what is said Foucault (1995) in Budiman (2000), as a power machinery, which explores, dismantle and remodel. The impact is clearly detrimental to women's beauty myth. However, we cannot easily eliminate the ideology of capitalism that is now a proven many, at least we should be critical of the ideology.

Comprehensively, portraits of women in beauty advertising on Indonesian television can be seen through the connotative meaning in shampoo ads *Zinc*, *Zinc* shampoo is a shampoo that makes men hooked. That is, it seemed that the female models *Zinc* shampoo ads placed only as a display. Women become complementary flavored delights the audience, because the display is a woman who looks "perfect", it means women with white skin, long hair (black), pretty and slim. Women in these advertisements also appear minor, since functioned as the attention of men. In *Nivea* Intensive Body Lotion ads, wear/use *Nivea* products means using a moisturizer that can make "us" have smooth skin, like a milk bath. However, the connotation cannot be that simple, because the expression of exploitation of women's bodies in advertising is more pronounced through the images, when there are scenes of men stroking backs advertising model. Exploitation of women's bodies in every gender stereotype tends to imply meaning low quality, which ultimately brings more meaning women not as an object, not a creature.

The message conveyed by the advertisement shampoo *Zinc* strengthen the position of women in particular stereotype; that means beautiful woman with long hair, black, strong, gentle, without dandruff is that men ogled. It is apparent that *zinc* shampoo commercial on television is a business reality, because it serves as a source of income, return of capital and profits for private television. *Zinc* shampoo advertisement, also showed ideology "pembawahan/" women. Body with leather version maintained *Nivea* body lotion be used as a tool Intensive ideal beauty of the body, also is constructed and standardized in order to make it easier for manufacturers to customize the advertising image of the product with passion buying public. *Nivea* advertisement clearly reminds us that women must be beautiful, slim and smooth-skinned (very stereotypical).

### Conclusion and suggestions

Semiotics study is a study that emphasizes on theoretical based which need creativity in delivering the concept. One of the alternative way is by analyzing advertisement. Images of women in television, which is seen through the *Zinc* shampoo ads, and *Nivea* Intensive Body Lotion ads illustrates that women are still seen as objects (objects) who are not a creature, and still be a victim of political economy. Therefore, it is time for us (not just women), to develop a critical paradigm that there is a new awareness in seeing the advertisement. Television, it clearly serves as a producer ideology, which participate cram norms beauty of the body, either through shape / hair color, skin (good /not good, and healthy or unhealthy). Long black hair and heavy, smooth skin and slim body as a whole, would "aspire" by women who standardized by advertising, so is the body that ultimately can be used for the benefit of capitalism and commerciality. In conclusion, it is clear that analyzing advertisement can be an Alternative Way to Teach Semiotics. How some advertisement can be analyzed through Barthes Semiotics. It is an alternative way in teaching Semiotics interactively.

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