

## Semiotics Analysis of Roland Barthes' Theory on Pocari Sweat's "Sweat for Dream" Advertisement

Catur Sunu Wijayanto<sup>1</sup>, Fitria Iswari<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI

**Abstract.** Semiotics originates from the Greek word *semeion* which means "sign". According to language, a branch of science that studies the relationship of sign forms such as code, language, signals, and others. Ferdinand de Saussure introduced semiotics using the form of a sign: signified and a signifier which is atomistic. The relationship is an association between "marked" and "marked". Then, Barthes, a follower of Ferdinand de Saussure, who holds the view that a sign system that reflects the assumptions of the wider community at a certain time. According to Roland Barthes' semiology, denotation is a form of significance in the first stage, whereas connotation is the second stage. In this case denotation is more associated with closed meaning. It is like a reaction to reject the oppressive form of denotation necessity. Barthes tries to refuse, because according to him there are only connotations (Budiman, 1999: 22). Advertising is often associated with denotation and connotation through the media of promotion. Structurally, advertisements have signs, a combination of audio and visuals, have a product description and even an implied message in the ad serving. Advertising aims to promote an item or product. The advertisement that will be used as the object of study and will be analyzed is an advertisement about one of the famous body fluid replacement drink products, namely Pocari Sweat. To achieve this level of analysis, this study uses the theory of semiotics from Roland Barthes' thought. This study used a qualitative method, namely descriptive research on the semiotic analysis of Roland Berthes' thoughts in the Pocari Sweat "Sweat for Dream" ad.

**Keywords:** Semiotic, Barthes, Denotation, Connotation, Advertisement

---

**Correspondence author:** Fitria Iswari, fitriaiswari@gmail.com, Jakarta, Indonesia



This work is licensed under a CC-BY-NC

## Introduction

In the American Marketing Association (AMA), advertising is defined as any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of idea, item, or service by an identified sponsor. Frank Jefkins said the ads aim to persuade people to buy. In general, a message in advertising is delivered to convey the form of promotional activity and change people's mindset to buy an advertised product (Kasali). Advertisement can be found in mass media and print media such as television, magazines, newspapers, billboards, or on social media. Basically, advertising aims to promote an item or product. Advertising uses sentences and phrases in other words aims to invite and make consumers buy the product. A sentence and phrase used in the advertisement must be interesting, easy to remember, and easily understood by all people or the target audience. So, the content or messages in advertisements that are displayed either in the mass media or print media, cannot be separated from certain messages to the public. These messages can be taken and used as a "myth" for consumers and finally the products being promoted will create their own characteristics and keep in the minds of consumers.

In this research, the object of the study that will be analyzed is an advertisement about one of the famous ion supply drink products, namely Pocari Sweat. Pocari Sweat is one of famous healthy drink that contains a balance of ions (electrolytes) that replenishes the natural fluid balance in the human body in Japan. Pocari Sweat is manufactured under Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. Not only in Japan, but also Pocari Sweat manufactures and sells in East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Australia. . Pocari Sweat is very famous in Indonesia because of the myth that this drink can replanish body fluids after activities and sports. The myth is well known in Indonesia so that Pocari Sweat has its own characteristics among consumers who love the product.

To achieve this level of analysis, this study used the semiotic theory of Roland Berthes. Since 1960s Semiotics which is one of studies of mass media, has been an important approach in media theory. It becomes analysis development to study sign. Signs are a set used in an effort to try to reach the way in the world, in the midst of man and together with man. He also distinguished two notions from semiotics, namely denotation and connotation. The use of the basis source began from semiotic and continued to advertising and cinematic theory that developed when the scope of theories such as semiotic theory, advertising theory. All contents in mass media or advertisements are basically verbal language, meanwhile language is part of a symbolic world. Semiotics is a part of science that studies signs that related to the rule of the function, the relation, delivery, and the acceptance from those who use communication messages (Sudjiman, P. H. M., Zoest) . Semiotics are visual and verbal signs. All signs or signals can be accessed and received from all the senses that we have. When the signs establish a system of code, it means its systematically provide information or records in writing in every human activity and behavior. The sign is not only limited to objects, but also to movement and gesture. The sign can be in any form of a sign here as a shortening

or simplification of the message conveyed, so that the message is loaded in the form of a sign. Nonverbal forms of communication are based on three studies: kinesic, procsemic and paralinguistic (Rachman). Pocari sweat ads contain kinesic, prosemic and paralinguistic studies of facial expressions, background atmosphere, time and objects and oral speeches conducted by anime objects in the ad video. Whether there is an event or not, the structures are found as something, a habit, and they can be called as objects. A small flag, a word, a hand gesture, eating habit, a mood symptom, a silence, a nervous motion, a flushed face, a certain pleasure, star location, a flower, an attitude, gray hair, keeping silence, and stuttering, Fast talk, walking, fire, settled, white, speed, sharp angles, patience, worry, madness, and fatigue, it's all considered as a sign (A. V. Zoest)

The limitation of this paper is to discuss of Pocari sweat ads that are associated with denotation marks and connotations and myths of the ad and does not discuss nonverbal forms of communication (kinesic, procsemic and paralinguistic). The main purpose of this discussion is to find out and elaborate what message or myth is conveyed in the Pocari Sweat ad in the title "Sweat for Dream". In the journal entitled Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes Theory on Pocari Sweat's Advertisement "Sweat for Dream", definitely in this discussion, the theory used a mythical semiotic theory by Roland Barthes, French Philosopher who continued the semiotic theory of Saussure.

## Methods

This research uses qualitative methods, by using descriptive approach (Kriyantono) This research is descriptive focus on the semiotical analysis of Roland Barthes in The Pocari Sweat Advertisement "Sweat For Dream". The results of the analysis are presented in the form of descriptions. The subjects in this discussion are myths and characteristics of Pocari Sweat products that change people's thought about myths for the positioning of the target audience or consumers. Myth is also a second-state system. In myth, a sign can have several markers. The myth of Roland Barthes arises because of the perception of Roland himself that behind the signs there is a mysterious meaning that can eventually give birth to a myth (Kris. Budiman)

## Result And Discussion [this is formatted as heading 1]

Semiotics originated in the Greek *semeion* which means "sign". According to the language, a branch of science that studies the relationship of sign form such as code, language, signals, etc. Ferdinand de Saussure introduced semiotics using the form of markings: signified and signifier in the form of atomistic. The relationship is an association between "to be marked" and "to mark". A sign is an idea or signified and a wholeness of a signifier. That is, the marker is a 'sound or scribble that has meaning. Thus, a marker is a material aspect of language, that is, something that can be said or heard, and something that can be written or read, If the sign is a description of mental, mind, and concept.

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the sign is a unity of two fields that cannot be separated like a piece of paper. Where there is a sign, so there is a system. A sign (in the form of an image or word) has two aspects that are responded by the human senses called signifiers, the field of markers or concepts of an aspect and other form called signified. The second aspect is contained in the first aspect. So the sign is a concept or what is presented by the first aspect (Pradopo)

Preminger said that semiotics are the science of signs. It considers that social and cultural phenomena are signs. Semiotics study the systems, rules, conventions that allow these signs to have meaning (Pradopo). While Pierce explained semiotics is a branch of science that studies the study of signs and everything that related with a sign, sign system and method that applies to the use of the signs (A.V. Zoest). Semiotics is a branch of science that pursues the sign, the function of the sign, and the production of meaning. In Zoest's point of view, everything that can be observed or observed, is called a sign. Therefore, the mark is not limited to the things. Whether existence of events or no, the structure that exists is a habit, Its can be called as a sign. From definition of Semiotics above, it can be concluded that semiotics are the sciences to know about the system of signs, the conventions that exist in communication and the meaning that is contained in it.

Roland Barthes was a follower of Ferdinand de Saussure who held the view that a signs system reflects the assumptions of the wider community at certain time(Muslikhun). Roland Barthes called word of semiotics as semiology that is a fundamental thing that must study how humanity, interpret things, give interpretation that cannot be united by communicating. It means that objects not only carry or interpret information, what objects can be communicated, but also stalk a system of the structure of a sign. In his study, Roland Barthes added that one of the important areas of the sign is the role of the reader. Although connotation is the original nature of the sign, it also requires liveliness of the reader in order to be functional. Roland Barthes hardly studied what he often called built on a different system that already existed into a second-stage system of meaning. The second system of Roland Barthes is said to be "connotative", which is in his book *Mythologies*, he loudly distinguishes from the denotative or the first stage.

1. *Signifier*
2. *Signified*
3. *Denotative sign*
4. *Connotative Signifier*
5. *Connotative Signified*
6. *Connotative Sign)*

From Roland Barthes's explanation, it is known that there is a denotative sign that consist of markers and signs. However, at the same time, the denotative sign is also a connotative marker. So Roland Barthes said the connotative sign not only has additional meaning, but also contains elements of both parts of the denotation sign that symbolize its existence.

In the beginning, Roland Barthes understood that there were some differences between the general explanation of connotations and denotation. Semiology belongs to Roland Barthes and his followers, the connotation is the second step, and then denotation is the first step system. In this case denotation is more associated with the closure of meaning. In reaction to against this literal denotation, Barthes tried to resist and remove it. For Barthes there is only connotation. He continued his explanation that the literal meaning is a natural character (Kris. Budiman). In the framework created by Roland Barthes, the connotation is similar to the operation of ideology, which he refers to as "myth" and aims to reveal and provide truth to the dominant values that prevail in a given period. In myth there is also a three-dimensional pattern of markers, signing, and signs. However, myth is one of the second stages of meaning systems, which means a unique and mythical system is established into a pre-existing chain of meaning. In the myth there is also a sign that have some markers.

According to the explanation above "myths" exist in a communication in the form of writing to communication media in the form of visual or audio visual such as television advertising, print media, mass media, photos, and other publication media (Kris Budiman). This is reinforced by Roland Barthes' statement that ""Myth is not defined by the object, the message, but the way in which utters the message. Everything can be a myth if it is said, speech and a type of social usage" (R Barthes). Based on this quotation, it can be interpreted that everything can be categorized as a myth, especially if it is something that can be communicated, especially orally, which is associated with social uses. If we related to the Roland Barthes' statement about the myths, He explain and describes the structure of the myth into a section or pattern diagram below (R Barthes)

Table 1 The Structure of Myth of Barthes

Tingkat 1	Bahasa	{	1. Petanda	2. Penanda	
			3. Tanda		
	Mitos	{	I. PENANDA		II. PETANDA
Tingkat 2			III. TANDA		

Source: Author

From the table above, it can be concluded that the myth is actually associated with a system of signs, markers, and signs (sign, signified, and signifier). In this case, Roland Barthes classified the above into denotations, connotations, and myths as described previously. There are three sequences, the first (denotative) marking as the first representation, The second (conotative) order reflects the 'expressive' values

attached to a sign. In the third (mythological) order of marking signs reflects the concept of major cultural variables that support a particular worldview, such as masculinity, femininity, freedom, individualism, objectivism, and so on" (Robinson)



**Fig. 1** The Scenes of Pocari Sweat Advertisement

Courtesy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2JU7eP4I8k>

From the description above, it can be concluded that beside the Myths in semiotics, there are also denotations and connotation are contained in advertisements, mass media, or other audio-visual (R. Barthes). Pocari Sweat animated ad is an anime video ad, pocari sweat is an isotonic drink that is widely used by people in the world to add body ions when exhausted after sports. In marketing the brand, pocari sweat uses marketing through video media advertising, where the content in this ad tells some of the activities and hobbies in each character to achieve dreams and ends with a pocari sweat drinking scene. This research will explain and elaborate some of the myths that exist in the Pocari Sweat soft drink ad entitled "Sweat for Dream". This ad aired on television and on the official Pocari Sweat Youtube channel and has been watched by 1.2 million people. The visuals displayed are animated.(Kusumanto)

Pocari Sweat's advertisement titled "Sweat For Dream", It is visualized with animation, released on October 2, 2020, this ad is 1.00 minutes long uploaded on the official Youtube channel and has been watched by 1.2 million pairs of eyes. The opening of this ad is visuals of product and the recent musical instruments. The next scene is a teenage boy who will create a song. In the beginning of the scene, there are lyrics "while pursuing a dream, maybe you feel lonely.", at the 4.0 second. Then replaced with a visual of a teenage girl who wants to play the drums, at the 9.0 second, then were continued with lyrics "... But don't give up, you're not alone." In the 12.00 second, the scene changes with the teenager who is playing a soccer ball by saying, "... Move forward step by step..." after that to the next scene of girl was playing basketball by saying, "... Enjoy the journey, full of smiles and memories...", at the 16.0 second. Then a teenager who was skateboarding said, "... Even though we are different, we have the same spirit" in the 20.0 second. Then continued by the teenager who was playing the drum again, and said, "... Don't give up on your dreams...", spliced back by a teenager who wants to create a song in the 26.0 second by saying, "... Because there will be friends with you, believe me, tomorrow will be brighter. At 33.00 second, the scene showed the teenagers pursued their dreams, while they sang last lyric "SWEAT FOR DREAM". They perform with passion and never give up on their dreams by companying Japanese music. Then at the

43.00 second, they drunk the Pocari sweat while they were pursuing their dreams. Their sweat fell down and they decide to drink Pocari Sweat more in order to make them more powerful. Then in the 55.00 second, they said together "GO SWEAT, GO ION! POCARI SWEAT!", while showed the final performance

First, The scene denotatively tells teenagers are usually eager to achieve dreams, especially school children (Lestari). They have already explored their hobbies and abilities. They train their talents to make it perfect. Then, the Pocari Sweat ad scene above can also give a conotative impression (image), for example the scene is shown to the public by being associated with message and image. It is concluded that with the spirit they have, they quickly sweat and need replacement fluids because they lost the body fluid when they pursued their dream through their talent, so their bodies are fresher. It's not just for teenagers who are pursuing a dream. But it is associated with people who are actively moving to do something that makes them lose their body fluids, it makes them become weak.

The next explanation from Pocari Sweat ad scene is about the "myth" aspect. The message conveyed that pocari sweat soft drink has become a myth of isotonic water brand that is widely known in the public . A popular myth in the community is that if someone who loses body fluids due to active movement and then they drink Pocari Sweat. The product claims to replace lost body fluids and make the body become refreshed. When the target audience has heard and remembered the image or characteristics of Pocari Sweat, consumers will buy and drink Pocari Sweat when they are tired and hope that their lost body fluids will return again, because they believe it so much.

The most of the myths that was developed in the Pocari Sweat ads are that pocari sweat soft drinks are isotonic body fluids that are good consumed while actively moving all day and body fluids are reduced a lot. Pocari Sweat ads successfully convince consumers that Pocari Sweat is selected brand used to replace their lost body fluids. In fact, people prefer Pocari Sweat products to other brands of isotonic soft drink products, due to myths that have been built in consumers' mindset when they see and hear Pocari Sweat ads.

## Conclusion

Semiotics originated in the Greek semeion which means "sign". According to language, a branch of science that studies the relationship of sign shapes such as code, language, signals, etc. Ferdinand de Saussure introduced semiotics using the form of markings: signified and signifier in the form of atomistic. The relationship is an association between "marked" and "marked". A sign is an idea or sign (signified) and a wholeness of a signifier. Roland Barthes was a follower of Ferdinand de Saussure who held that language was a system of signs that reflected the assumptions of the wider community at any given time First, Roland Barthes understood that there were some differences between general explanations of connotations and denotations.

Semiologically belonging to Roland Barthes and his followers, the connotation is the second stage, then denotation is the first stage system. In this case denotation is more associated with the closure of meaning. From the above discussion can be concluded that denotatively adolescent children are usually eager to achieve dreams, especially school children. They usually have explored their hobbies and abilities and honed their talents to develop more. Connotationally with the passion they have, they quickly sweat and need replacement fluids to keep their bodies fresh and replace their lost body fluids as they pursue dreams and ideals through their talents. While the myth is if a person drinks pocari sweat because of loss of body fluids due to active movement it will restore lost body fluids and make the body refreshed. Pocari Sweat's ad titled "Sweat For Dream", this ad is visualized with animation, released on October 2, 2020, this ad is 1.00 minutes long uploaded on the official Youtube channel and has been watched by 1.2 million pairs of eyes. Pocari Sweat is a soft drink and isotonic body fluids that are good consumed while actively moving all day and body fluids are reduced a lot. Pocari Sweat ads successfully convince consumers that Pocari Sweat is indeed a brand of choice used to replace their lost body fluids. In fact, people prefer Pocari Sweat products compared to other brands of isotonic soft drink products, due to myths that have been implanted in consumers' brains when they see and hear Pocari Sweat ads.

## References

- Barthes, R. *Elemen-Elemen Semiotika*. Terjemahan, IRCiSoD., 2012.
- Barthes, R. *Mythologies*. McGraw and Hill., 1972.
- Budiman, Kris. *Kosa Semiotikal*. Penerbit Buku Baik, 1999.
- Budiman, Kris. *Semiotika Visual*. LKIS, 2003.
- Kasali, Rhenald. *Manajemen Periklanan Konsep Dan Aplikasinya Di Indonesia*. PT. Pustaka Utama Grafiti., 1992.
- Kriyantono, R. (2014) *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi*. Jakarta: Kencana Preneda Media Group. *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi*. Kencana Preneda Media Group., 2014.
- Kusumanto, D. (2020) kaorinusantara. or. id. newsline/ 155866/digarap-mieko-hosoi-dan-ryosuke-nakamura-iklan-pocari-sweat-bintang-sma-2020-kembali-diproduksi-studio-mappa. *Digarap-Mieko-Hosoi -Dan-Ryosuke-Nakamura-Iklan-Pocari-Sweat-Bintang-Sma-2020-Kembali-Diproduksi-Studio-Mappa*. 2020, kaorinusantara.or.id/ newsline/ 155866/digarap-mieko-hosoi -dan-ryosuke-nakamura-iklan-pocari-sweat-bintang-sma-2020-kembali-diproduksi-studio-mappa.
- Lestari, Tri Utami. *Analisis Semiotika Film Air Mata Surga*. 2019, pp. 26–27,



<http://scholar.google.co.id>.

- Muslikhun, Tohari. *Analisis Semiotika Nilai Islam Yang Terkandung Dalam Film Air Mata Surga (Studi Analisis Semiotika F.D. Saussure)*. 2018.
- Pradopo, R. P. (2001). *Metode Penelitian Sastra*. Hanindita Graha Widia, 2001.
- Rachman, T. "Implementasi Kinesik, Prosemik, Paralinguistik Dan Self Disclosure Dalam Komunikasi Antarpribadi." *Semiotika*, vol. 2, no. 15, 2021, p. 184.
- Robinson, A. (2011). An a to z of theory Roland Barthes's mythologies: A. critical theory of myths. Dikutip dari: <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-barthe.2/> pada tanggal 13 Desember 2020 pukul 20. 3. wib. "An a to z of Theory Roland Barthes's Mythologies: A Critical Theory of Myths." *Ceasefiremagazine*.
- Sudjiman, P. H. M., Zoest, A. V. *Serba Serbi Semiotika*. Jakarta. PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1996.
- Zoest, A.V. *Semiotika, Pemakaiannya, Isinya Dan Apa Yang Dikerjakan Dengannya*. Unpad, 1978.
- . *Semiotika, Tentang Tanda, Cara Kerjanya*. Terjemahan, Yayasan Sumber Agung., 1993.