

CHAPTER 2

FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORIES

In this research, the writer uses semiotic theories from Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes as well-known semioticians. Based on those theories, in this paper the writer will analyze the real meaning in the Marlboro advertisement "Maybe ..." version.

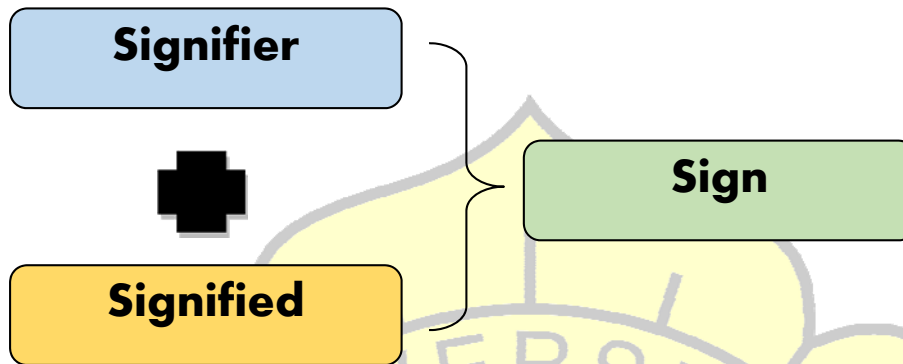
Semiotics is the theory and study of signs, symbols, and signification as communicative behavior, especially as an element of language or other systems of communication. It is the study of how meaning is created. Below are some brief definitions of semiotic terms, beginning with the smallest unit of meaning and proceeding towards the larger and more complex. Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. The semiotic tradition explores the study of signs and symbols as a significant part of communications. As it is different from linguistics, however, semiotics also studies non-linguistic sign systems. Semiotics focuses on the relationship of the signifier and the signified, also takes into account interpretation of visual cues, body language, sound, and other contextual clues. Semiotics is linked with both linguistics and psychology. Semioticians do not only study what a symbol implies, but also how it gets its meaning and how it functions to make meaning in society. Symbols allow the human brain continuously to create meaning using sensory input and decode symbols through both denotation and connotation.

In semiotics, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning, which is something other than itself, and which is able to communicate information to the one interpreting or decoding the sign. Signs can work through any of the senses, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or taste, and their meaning can be intentional such as a word uttered with a specific meaning, or unintentional such as a symptom being a sign of a particular medical condition. There are two major theories about the way in which signs acquire the ability to transfer information; both theories understand the defining property of the sign as being a relation between a number of elements.

Saussure (1857 – 1913) is known as Swiss linguist and also the founder of linguistics. Now, it is something known to refer as semiotics on 1916 in his Course in General Linguistics. There are many models in the development of semiotics. One of the leading modern semiotics is Barthes who is known as a structuralism and an analytical method that has been used by many semioticians based on the Saussure's linguistic model. In specific, this is how Barthes develops the Saussure's model of semiotics.

2.1 The Order of Signification

Saussure divides the component of sign to be the signifier and the signified.



Picture 2.1

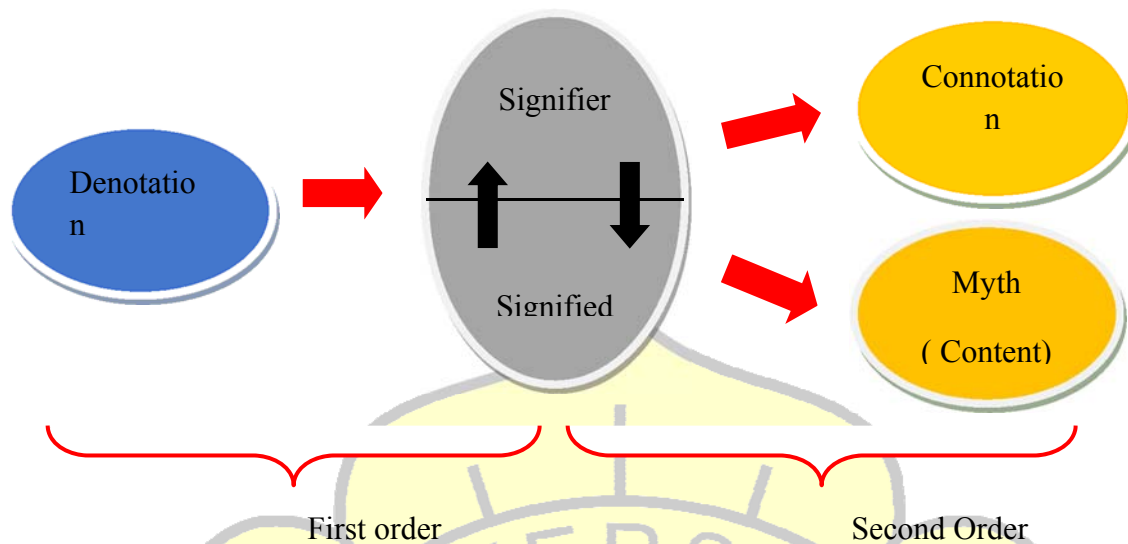
It means signifier which is added to signified will result the sign.

Based on the theory of Saussure, Barthes adds the myth element to find out the meaning in the study of semiotics. In addition, it gives more details on how the signifier and the signified appear as the result of denotation. Furthermore, denotation appears as the sign and when it is added to the connotation will result the myth.

Barthes adopts Hjelmslev is the notion which tells different orders of signification (level of meaning) in semiotic systems. They are:

1. Denotation: what the signified actually is, quite like a definition, but in brain language.
2. Connotation: points to the signified but has a deeper meaning.
3. Signifier: is in some way a substitute. Words, both oral and written are signifiers. The brain then exchanges the signifier for a working definition.
4. Signified: is what the signifier refers to.
5. Sign: is the combination from Signifier and Signified. Or the other meaning is the result between both.

Scheme of the elements that exists in the study of Semiotics by Barthes is just like in the picture below



Picture 2.2

Denotation and connotation are often described in terms of levels of representation or levels of meaning. Barthes adopts the notion of different orders of signification from Hjelmslev (Barthes 1957, Hjelmslev 1961, 114ff). Denotation and connotation are combined will result myth. As the result of connotation, myth gives the description of meaning that is represented by the signs. It is the content of connotation that gives the function in second order of signification. Furthermore, the theory about the denotation, the connotation, myth, and it is relation to the signifier and the signified are used in this term to find out what the meaning in the advertisement of Marlboro “Maybe...” version is.

2.2 Denotation

Denotation is the first order of signification that refers to the simple or linear relationship of a sign to the references at this level. There is a sign consisting of a signifier and signified (Barthes, 1957). Meaning includes both denotation and connotation. ‘Denotation’ tends to be described as the definitional, literal, obvious or common-sense meaning of a sign.

In the case of linguistic signs, the denotative meaning is what the dictionary attempts to provide and the first level of signification. It means the permanent sense of a word excluding all subjective evaluations (dictionnaire de la langue Francaise 1993). It describes the literal or obvious meaning of the sign, thus, denotation of the visual image refers to what all people see without association to their culture, ideology, or society. Barthes expressed that the denoted message bears analogical properties and it is primary to connotation in the process of signification.

In this level of signification, we deal with the sign as the basic meaning that is independent of context and subjective interpretations as in connotation. Denotation is the "literal or obvious meaning" or the "first-order signifying system". The denotative meaning of an image refers to its literal, descriptive meaning. For example: the image of sunrise denotes as the beginning of the day, and the end of night, while in connotation the sunrise can be described as a new full of hope day or the end of darkness, and many other interpretations. For Panofsky the art historian, the denotation of a representational visual image is what all viewers from any culture and at any time would recognize the image as depicting (Panofsky 1970, 51–3).

As Barthes has noted, Saussure's model of the sign focuses on denotation at the expense of connotation and it is left to subsequent theorist (notably Barthes himself) to offer an account of this important dimension of meaning (Barthes 1967, 89ff). In 'The Photographic Message' (1961) and 'The Rhetoric of the Image' (1964), Barthes argues that in photography connotation is (analytically) distinguished from denotation (Barthes 1977, 15-31, 32-51).

2.3 Connotation

Connotation is the second order of signification comprises signifiers, signified, and the process whites the term former to the latter (signification) and it should undertake in the first place for each system (Barthes 1967, 91). In the framework of Roland Barthes, the connotation is a sign which derives from the signifier of a denotative sign (so denotation leads to a chain of connotations). Barthes gives the priority to connotation, and he notes that is not easy to separate the signifier from the signified (Barthes 1977, 166). Wilden 1987:224 writes the term 'connotation' is used to refer to the socio-cultural and 'personal' associations (ideological, emotional etc.) of the sign. According to Wilden, connotation is the hidden meaning behind the socio-cultural and the personal associations. We have to find out the first order of signification to get the clear sign which identifies the hidden meaning.

Connotation refers to the "second- order of signifying systems" or additional cultural meanings we can find from the image or text. Before we discuss connotation from the Barthesian's perspective, we should first know the meaning of this word. Connotation is an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning' (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2000). It is the implication evoked by words or statements and images over what they actually denote. Also, connotative signs can be personal and individual or general and universal '(J.A Cuddon 1998). These are typically related to the interpreter's class, age, gender, and ethnicity and so on.

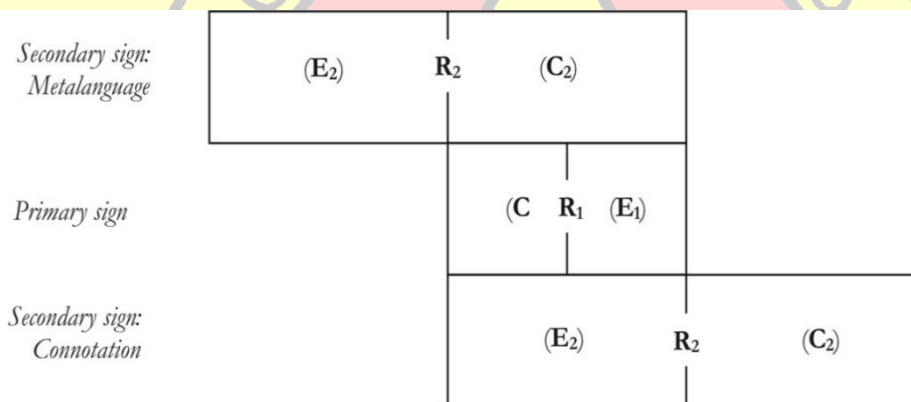
Furthermore, connotation is a term used by Barthes to explain the way signs work. It describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture (Fisk, 1992).

Connotation is thus context dependent. Signs are more 'polysemic' – more open to interpretation – in their connotations than their denotations. Denotation is sometimes regarded as a digital code and connotation as an analogue code (Wilden 1987, 224). It is, in this sense, influenced by the subjective factors that open more interpretations to the text. Wilden suggests that 'connotation being itself is a system that comprises signifiers, signifieds, and the process which unites the former to the latter (signification) (Barthes, 1968).

As Roland Barthes has noted, Saussure's model of the sign focuses on denotation at the expense of connotation and it is left to subsequent theorists (notably Barthes himself – drawing on Hjelmslev) to offer an account of this important dimension of meaning (Barthes 1967a, 89ff.). In 'The photographic message' (1961) and 'The rhetoric of the image' (1964), Barthes argues that in photography, connotation can be (analytically) distinguished from denotation. As Fiske says 'denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how it is photographed' (Fiske 1982, 91). However, in photography, denotation is foregrounded at the expense of connotation. The photographic signifier seems to be virtually identical with its signified, and the photograph appears to be a 'natural sign' produced without the intervention of a code (Hall 1973, 132). For Barthes, 'connotation relies upon the prior existence of denotation, it always works in the borrowed territory of the denoted' (Jamieson, 2007). We can say that connotation is built on denotation. In analyzing the realist literary text, Barthes came to the conclusion that connotation produces the illusion of denotation, the illusion of the medium as transparent and of the signifier and the signified as being identical (Barthes, 1974, 9). Thus, denotation is just another connotation. From such a perspective, denotation can be seen as no more of a natural meaning than is connotation but rather as a process of naturalization. Such a process leads to the powerful illusion that denotation is a purely literal and universal meaning which is not at all ideological, and indeed that those connotations which seem most obvious to individual interpreters are just as natural. According to an Althusserian reading, when we first learn denotations, we are also being positioned within ideology by learning dominant connotations at the same time (Silverman, 1983, 30).

In Semiology, Barthes takes up the distinction, developed by the linguist Hjelmslev, between denotation and connotation. A denotative statement is a first-order statement, a statement

which concerns the literal (first-order) as mentioned from explanations in the previous paragraph that the meaning of the words that makes up that statement. We have the words used, or what Barthes calls a plane of expression (E), we have what the words literally mean, or the plane of content (C), and we then draw a relation between the two (R) to find the statement's meaning. We need to move to the relation (R) between (E) and (C), and thus to a second order meaning (connotation) to make any sense of the statement. There is clearly another meaning implied in this statement and this meaning exists at the level of connotation. To move from the plane of denotation to connotation involves the same processes we have already seen in the reading of myth: we move from a first-order meaning (denotation) to a second-order meaning (connotation). As Barthes adds the first system is then the plane of denotation and the second system (wider than the first) the plane of connotation. We shall therefore say that a connoted system is a system whose plane of expression is itself constituted by a signifying system' (ESe, 149). (Graham, 2003).



Picture 2.3

According to Barthes, there is a dual message within any singular sign: the aesthetic aspect, apparent, and the hidden ideological meaning, that reinforces the historical significance of that sign in relation to the dominant sociopolitical and economic structure (Moriarty, 1991). Denotation takes place on the primary level of signification and consists in what we think of as the literal, fixed, dictionary meaning of a word, ideally one that can be universally agreed upon. Connotation occurs on the secondary level of signification and consists of the changing associative meanings of a word. In his later writings, Barthes explicits that the distinction between these two levels of signification is only a useful theoretical one (S/Z Barthes, 1974). 3-11; Barthes (Barthes 1977). 62-67).

In actual practice, the limiting of meaning to a single denotative one would be very difficult because signs always bear traces of their meanings from previous contexts (Kay, 1995). Denotation for images implies what all viewers would recognize the objects, which the images intend to convey, while connotation refers to the sociocultural and personal associations of the sign (Chandler, 2002; Sturken and Cartwright, 2003). Connolly and Iain (2002), explain that denotative meaning of a sign corresponds to the external reality, while the connotation deals with associations. Connotation builds upon already existing system of significance or denotation (Chandler). Denotation refers to the commonsense, obvious meaning of the sign. In 'Myth Today' Barthes reminds us that the sign is, in fact, involved in a three-part relationship. A sign is, after all, the relation between a signifier and a signified, a sound or mark and a concept (Graham, 2003). In Barthes' words, every system of signification contains a plane of expression (signifier E) and a plane of content (signified C), and relations between these two planes are the signification (R).

In his book S/Z Barthes develops his further idea of the relationship between denotation and connotation: closed system of signification that is of denotation. At this level, there is a sign consisting of a signifier and a signified. Denotation is associated with closure and singularity (it is the enemy of free play, opposing even the limited plurality made possible by connotation), while connotation represents the principle of opening up the text to all kinds of cultural meanings, even to the point of questioning the coherence and the identity of the text. This leads to the issue of closed and open systems; two types of semiotic systems. Connotation is a second order of signification which as uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified. In this framework, connotation is a sign which derives from the signifier of a denotative sign (so denotation leads to a chain of connotations).

A signified on one level can become a signifier on another level. This is the mechanism by which signs may seem to signify one thing but are loaded with multiple meanings. Indeed, this framing of the Saussurean's model of the sign is analogous to the 'infinite semiosis' of the Peircean sign in which the interpretant can become the representamen of another sign.

However, it can also tend to suggest that denotation is an underlying and primary meaning – a notion which many other commentators have challenged. As we have noted, Barthes himself later gives priority to connotation, noting that it is no longer easy to separate the signifier from the signified, the ideological from the literal (Barthes 1977a, 166). Classical Hollywood cinema is an example of a closed system. It wants to be "read" in a certain way, guiding the viewer and resisting

alternative readings. Experimental films are often open systems. There is no "correct" way of interpreting their meaning; on the contrary, they are open to all kinds of readings. Barthes identifies connotation with the operation of ideology(which he also calls "myth").

2.4 Myth

According to Barthes, "ideology or "myth" consists of the deployment of signifiers for the purpose of expressing and justifying the dominant values of a given society class or historical period (the signs express not just "themselves", but also all kind of value systems that surround them). As myths, signs tend to appear "natural" and self-evident (although they are basically always artificial, coded), hiding the operations of ideology.



Picture 2.4

Myth, hijacks meaning and turns it into a second-order meaning or what Barthes calls signification. Signification here refers to the second-order sign; it is the meaning which has been produced through the transformation of already existent meaning, already existent (first-order) signs. Myth is a metalanguage: a second-order language which acts on a first-order language, a language which generates meaning out of already existent meaning (Graham, 2003).

According to Barthes myth has four characteristics, namely:

1. **Distorted** : the relationship between form and concept is distorted and deformative. Concept distorts the meaning of the form so that the first level of the system is no longer a meaning which refers to the actual facts.
2. **Intentional** : myth is nothing for granted. Myth deliberately created, constructed by the culture of the people with a purpose.

3. Statement of fact : myth naturalizes message so we accept it as a truth that is undisputed, something that is naturally stated in ordinary reasoning.
4. Motivational : according to Barthes, the myth contains a form of motivation. Myths is created by doing the selection of various possible concepts to be used. (Barthes, 1957).

2.5 The Meaning of the Color

Color is a nonverbal communication. It is not a static energy and its meaning can change from one day to the next with any individual, it all depends on what energy it is expressing at that point in time.

Color is something to describe different things to various people, ideas, cultures, and circumstances. In many studies, color has many influences for our life and its meaning can change from one color to other colors, one people to other people, and one place to other places, or from one day to the next day. For example, some people may choose to wear the red dress, shirt, t-shirt or everything that consists of red color to take an action or whenever they feel very excited to do something. In other hand, it also has meaning that they feel angry either in conscious or unconscious level. In other words, color is used to represent all things that happen in our life.

Red is assertive, daring, determined, energetic, powerful, enthusiastic, impulsive, exciting, and aggressive. Red represents physical energy, lust, passion, and desire. It symbolizes action, confidence, and courage. The color red is linked to the most primitive physical, emotional, and financial needs of survival and self-preservation.

The red color is an intense color that is packed with emotion ranging from passionate, intense love to anger and violence — representing both cupid and the devil. It is a hot, strong, stimulating color that represents excitement and energy. Studies show that the color red can create physical effects such as elevated blood pressure, enhanced libido, increased respiratory rates, enhanced metabolism, increased enthusiasm, higher levels of energy, and increased confidence.

The red color is a highly visible color that is able to focus attention quickly and get people to make quick decisions, which is one of the reasons fire trucks and fire engines are usually painted red. Flashing red lights mean danger or emergency, while stop signs and stop lights use the color red to alert drivers about the dangers of the intersection.

Red represents power and courage. The red color is the basis of the traditional red power tie or red suit in business, and the red carpet for celebrities and VIPs. Red's association with

courage and bravery makes it a color that is used often in national flags ,on shields, and in achievement patches. <http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-red/>

Yellow, the color of sunshine, hope, and happiness, has conflicting associations. On one hand yellow stands for freshness, happiness, positivity, clarity, energy, optimism, enlightenment, remembrance, intellect, honor, loyalty, and joy, but on the other, it represents cowardice and deceit. A dull or dingy yellow may represent caution, sickness, and jealousy.

Studies show that **the meaning of the color yellow** can be warmth, cheerfulness, increased mental activity, increased muscle energy. The yellow color helps activate the memory, encourage communication, enhance vision, build confidence, and stimulate the nervous system.

Bright yellow is an attention getting color, and when used in combination with black, is creates one of the easiest color combinations to read and see from long distances. This is why school buses, taxi cabs, and traffic signs are painted yellow and black.

The yellow color is a spontaneous and unstable color. It is often associated with food and is highly used in children's products and marketing advertisements aimed at children. Perceived as a childish color for men, yellow is not a color that should be used when marketing products want to prestigious or a wealthy men. <http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-yellow/>

Blue represents both the sky and the sea, and is associated with open spaces, freedom, intuition, imagination, expansiveness, inspiration, and sensitivity. Blue also represents meanings of depth, trust, loyalty, sincerity, wisdom, confidence, stability, faith, heaven, and intelligence.

The blue color has positive effects on the mind and the body. As the color of the spirit, it invokes rest and can cause the body to produce chemicals that are calming and exude feelings of tranquility. Blue helps to slow human metabolism, is cooling in nature, and helps with balance and self-expression. Blue is also an appetite suppressant.

However not all blues are serene and sedate. Electric or brilliant blues become dynamic and dramatic, an engaging color that expresses exhilaration. Also, some shades of blue or the use of too much blue may come across as cold or uncaring, and can dampen spirits.

Blue can be strong and steadfast or light and friendly. Blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity in heraldry. The blue color in many cultures is significant in religious beliefs, brings peace, or is believed to keep the bad spirits away. In Iran, blue is the color of mourning while in

the West the something blue bridal tradition represents love.
<http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-blue/>

Gray is a cool, neutral, and balanced color. The gray color is an emotionless, moody color that is typically associated with meanings of dull, dirty, and dingy, as well as formal, conservative, and sophisticated.

The gray color is a timeless and practical color that is often associated with loss or depression. Dark, charcoal gray communicates some of the strength and mystery of black. It is a sophistication of color that lacks the negativity of the color black. Light grays can carry some of the attributes of the color white.

The gray color affects the mind and body by causing unsettling feelings. Light grays are feminine in nature, while dark grays are masculine in nature.
<http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-grey/>

Black is associated with power, fear, mystery, strength, authority, elegance, formality, death, evil, and aggression, authority, rebellion, and sophistication. Black is required for all other colors to have depth and variation of hue.

The black color is the absence of color. Black is a mysterious color that is typically associated with the unknown or the negative. The black color represents strength, seriousness, power, and authority. Black is a formal, elegant, and prestigious color. Authoritative and powerful, the color black can evoke strong emotions and too much black can be overwhelming.

In heraldry, **black** is the symbol of grief. The black color can be serious, professional, and conventional, but black can also represent the mysterious, sexy, and sophisticated. Black is a visually slimming color for clothing and like other dark colors, in interior design, black can make a room appear to shrink in size.

The black color affects the mind and body by helping to create an inconspicuous feeling, boosting confidence in appearance, increasing the sense of potential and possibility, or producing feelings of emptiness, gloom, or sadness. <http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-black/>

White, an inherently positive color, is associated with purity, virginity, innocence, light, goodness, heaven, safety, brilliance, illumination, understanding, cleanliness, faith, beginnings, sterility, spirituality, possibility, humility, sincerity, protection, softness, and perfection.

The white color can represent a successful beginning. In heraldry, white depicts faith and purity. As the opposite of black, movies, books, print media, and television typically depict the good guy in white and the bad guy in black.

The color of snow, **white** is often used to represent coolness and simplicity. White's association with cleanliness and sterility is often seen in hospitals, medical centers, and laboratories to communicate safety. The white color is also associated with low-fat foods and dairy products.

To the human eye, **white** is a bright and brilliant color that can cause headaches. In cases of extremely bright light, the white color can even be blinding.

Throughout the western countries white is the traditional color worn by brides, to signify purity, innocence, and virginity. In eastern countries, the color white is the color of mourning and funerals. In certain cultures, white is the color of royalty or of religious figures, as angels are typically depicted as wearing white or having a white glow. A white picket fence surrounds a safe and happy home.

The white color affects the mind and body by aiding in mental clarity, promoting feelings of fresh beginnings and renewal, assisting in cleansing, clearing obstacles and clutter, and encouraging the purification of thoughts and actions.

White gemstones are believed to help create new beginnings, remove prejudice and pre-conceived notions, to see the innocence in others, and to clear emotional clutter and silence the inner critic. <http://www.bourncreative.com/meaning-of-the-color-white/>

