

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I used various theories from experts that are applied in this research and formed the theoretical framework of this research. The main focus of this chapter describes semiotics, sign and meaning; Barthes' semiotics theory; music video theory; and color theory. Previous related studies are also added in order to create a research outline.

2.1 Semiotics, Sign and Meaning

Semiotics is the study of signs — the way signs work and produce meaning. It is derived from the Greek root “*seme*” means sign (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 4). Primarily, semiotics attempts to examine how humans interpret certain things with the basic idea referring to the information communicated through signs as well as laws or conventions used to interpret the signs (Mudjiyanto and Nur, 2013: 73).

Pierce (in Chandler, 2007:13) asserted that signs take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. ‘Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign’. In other words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts, words or things are signs, which each individual may create different meanings. It happens because the sign only appears when we give meaning or link the sign with a certain concept and the meaning or its concept is influenced by the individual's experience and background. Therefore, the meaning formed can be different.

Furthermore, Mudjiyanto and Nur (2013: 73) explain that a sign is something that means something else to someone. Sign called as a sign when it is meaningful to someone. Everything that can be observed or made observable can be called as a sign. Signs are not limited to objects — any event, no event, structures found in something, a pattern or repetitive behavior can be called a sign. This indicates that "sign" refers to anything that has a certain meaning to someone. This could include an object, whether or not there is an event, a structure within something, a pattern, or a habit. In other words, a sign is something that can be observed by a person and has a

deeper meaning or relevance to that individual. It describes the way people can interpret or associate meaning with various aspects of their lives, including things that are visible or observable in their surroundings.

Hoed (2014: 15) states a sign is all things - whether physical or mental, in the world or in the universe, in the human mind or anywhere else - that are assigned meaning by humans. This implies everything is a sign. These signs get meaning when humans give them interpretation. Signs are not just limited to physical objects, but also include concepts and ideas.

Semiotics is a discipline that studies the various systems, rules and conventions that allow signs or symbols to have meaning. Semiotics looks at how signs are used, interpreted and decoded in human communication. This includes understanding how language, images, symbols or other signs are used to convey a particular message or meaning. (Mudjiyanto and Nur, 2013: 74).

Chandler (2007:13) declares that the two dominant contemporary models of what constitutes a sign are those of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (structuralist) and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (pragmatic). As cited by Mudjiyanto and Nur (2013: 74), Saussure called the study he developed semiology. Semiology according to Saussure is based on the assumption that as long as human actions and behaviors carry meaning or as long as they function as signs, there must be behind them a system of distinctions and conventions that make that meaning possible. Where there is a sign there is a system. Focusing on linguistic signs (such as words), Saussure defined a sign as being composed of a “signifier” (signifiant) and a “signified” (signifié) (Chandler, 2007:14). Moreover, according Peirce (in Mudjiyanto and Nur, 2013: 74), the study of sign he built semiotics. In case of Peirce, a philosopher and logic, human reasoning is always done through signs. That is, humans can only reason through signs. In his mind, logic is the same as semiotics and semiotics can be applied to all kinds of signs. As explained by Chandler (2007: 29), on the contrary to Saussure’s model of the sign in the form of a “self-contained dyad”, Peirce offered a triadic (three-part) model consisting of representment, interpretant, and object. Thus,

Saussure describes a sign as a "dyad" or pair of two opposing elements, namely the "signifier" (i.e. word "dog" in English) and the "signified" (the mental concept engendered by its word) (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 10-11). The idea of a sign consists of two separate parts, namely sound or image (signifier) and meaning or concept (signified), and both of them together form a sign. Peirce, on the other hand, proposed a three-part model or "triadic," which consists of three elements: representation, interpretant, and object. In this model, a sign consists of three interrelated components. The representation is the physical sign that represents something. The interpretant is the interpretation that a person makes when they perceive the sign. The object is the concept of what the sign represents.

Hoed (2014: 3-7) claimed that in semiotic, there is something else behind the facts, which is meaning. The sign goes hand in hand with meaning. The process of signification is called semiosis by Pierce. Pierce describes semiosis as the process of perceiving something with our senses which is then processed by our cognition. The relationship between signs can be seen not only in language, but also in paintings, or songs. In semiotics, this relationship is translated into the notion of "meaning". Humans give meaning to these signs through their understanding, interpretation, and context as seen in a thumbs-up gesture usually means "okay", but if seen at the side of the road, it means the person is looking for a free ride in a stranger's car, as well as waving hand which can mean hello, goodbye, or refusal.

2.2 Semiotics by de Saussure and Barthes

Cobley and Janz (1999: 10) mention that Saussure's area of concern is the linguistic sign. In this he is following the tradition of theorizing about "conventional" signs. This refers to the fact that Saussure continued and developed the idea of the sign that already existed in the linguistic tradition. He emphasized that linguistic signs do not have a natural relationship with their meanings; instead, the meanings of signs are determined by conventions.

Saussure uses the term semiology instead of semiotics, which refers to the study of signs (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 13). Accordingly, Cobley and Janz (1999: 10) explained further that Saussure defined the ... sign as a two-sided

entity, a dyad. One side of the sign was what he called the signifier. A signifier is the thoroughly material aspect of a sign... Inseparable from the signifier ... indeed, engendered by the signifier – is what Saussure calls the signified (mental concept). It reflects an important understanding of the concept of sign that perceive the sign as a two-sided entity or dyad, which consists of two important components, namely the signifier and signified. Signifier refers to the physical aspect of a sign, such as a sound, word, or visual image. In a linguistic context, a signifier can be the sound of a spoken word or a specific written sign. In a non-linguistic context, the signifier can be an image, gesture, or any symbol used to represent a concept or idea, whereas the signified is the mental concept associated with the signifier. In other words, the signified is the perceived meaning of a sign (as in Figure 2.1). Saussure believed that the signified cannot be separated from the signifier because they interact with each other. The signified appears or is produced by the signifier, and both together form what we understand as a sign. This concept helps explain how language and other signs work, as well as how meaning is formed through the interaction between material aspect and mind.

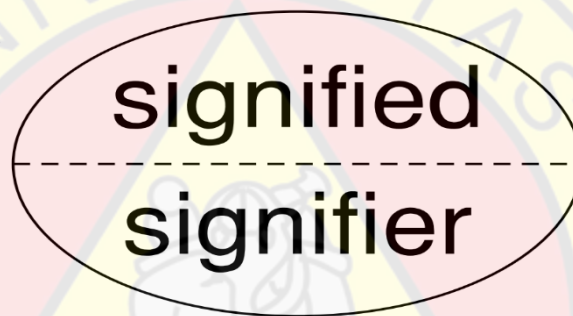


Figure 2. 1 Saussure's signified (mental concept)
(Cobley and Janz, 1999)

If we take the word “dog” in English, made up of the signifiers sound d-o-g (/d/, /o/ and /g/), what is engendered is not the “real” dog but a mental concept of “dogness”. For instance, canine, quadruped, barks, has sharp teeth, waggy tail, buries bones, howls, growls (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 11).

Later, the dyadic concept is reaffirmed by Chandler in his book entitled *Semiotics: The Basic*, who uses the word “sign vehicle” which refers to the signifier and “its meaning” which refer to the signified (Chandler, 2007: 14). In this case, Chandler wanted to emphasize and give a clear idea that a sign does not consist of mental concepts only, but there is an element of physical dimension that can be observed and brings meaning to each individual.

As asserted by Cobley and Janz in the *Introducing Semiotics*, the inseparability between the signified (mental concept) and the signifier (material aspect) is depicted in the following diagram:



**Figure 2. 2 Saussure’s model of the sign
(Cobley and Janz, 1999)**

Cobley and Janz explained that Saussure emphasized the importance of "sign" in the communication process. a sign consists of two components, namely signifier and signified. The signifier is the physical form used to represent a particular concept, while the signified is the concept represented by the signifier. Saussure believed that the process of communication through language involves the transfer of the contents of the mind, it shows his belief that language serves as a medium to transfer and convey thoughts, concepts, and meanings from one individual to another. In this case, language acts as an intermediary that enables the exchange and understanding of ideas between the people involved in the communication process (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 12).

This later further simplified by Chandler, signifier as the form that the sign takes and the signified as the concept to which it refers. The signifier is

the physical form used to represent a particular concept, while the signified is the concept represented by the signifier. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is referred to as “signification”. As in the word “open” (when it is invested with meaning by someone who encounters it on the shop doorway) indicates: the signifier (the word “open”); and the signified (the shop is open for business), however, the word “open” is not the same as if on the top of a packing carton (Chandler, 2007: 14-16).

In addition, Chandler (2007: 18-19) asserted that Saussure conception of meaning was purely structural and relational ... signs refer primarily to each other ... ‘everything depends on relations.’ No sign makes sense on its own but only in relation to other signs. Both signifier and signified are purely relational entities. It implies the meaning of a sign cannot be perceived separately, but only in relation to other signs in the system. Meaning does not exist in the sign itself, but in the context of its relationship with other signs. Saussure emphasized that everything depends on the relationship between signs in the system, and that signifier and signified are entirely relational entities.

In Saussure analysis of the sign, he distinguished between signification and value. Signification indicates the process of marking a concept or object depending on the relationship between the parts, while value indicates how the sign is interpreted in the overall context. A sign depends not only on the relationship between the internal parts of the sign itself, but also on the relationship between the sign and other signs as a whole. Although Saussure emphasized the importance of the linear combinatoric relationship between signs in the process of signification, in addition to the linear combinatoric relationship between signs, there are other factors that play an important role in the process of signification, such as the social, cultural, and broader context (conventional). The conventional relationship between the signifier and the signified shows that the understanding of the meaning of a work is not entirely dependent on the intrinsic elements of the work itself, but also depends on social agreements formed in a society that uses language and certain symbols. (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 14,17; Chandler, 2007: 19-20, 28).

Chandler mentioned that Saussure's relational conception of meaning was specifically differential. The meaning of a sign does not depend on a definite, there is no necessary, intrinsic, direct or inevitable relationship between the signifier and the signified, there is no natural or essential attachment between a word or sign and the meaning it wants to convey. Hence, the meaning is formed through difference or comparison with other signs. an understanding of the meaning of a sign must be understood in the context of differences and relationships with other signs, and not because of the intrinsic relationship between the signifier and the signified. (Chandler, 2007: 21-22).

Furthermore, Saussure states an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified. There is no natural relationship between the word or sign used and the object or concept it represents. Signs produce meaning based on their difference from other signs created through a relational structure (Cobley and Janz, 1999: 13-14; Chandler, 2007: 24).

In 1968, Barthes expanded and developed the concepts introduced by Saussure, bringing semiotics to a more applicable and multidisciplinary direction. In Barthes' ideas, de Saussure's concepts such as sign, signifier, and signified remain an important basis for semiotic analysis. However, Barthes expanded the scope of semiotics to include different types of sign systems, including images, objects, gestures, musical sounds, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment (Barthes, 1986: 9).

Barthes introduced the important concept of connotation, where signs have not only denotative (literal) meanings, but also connotative (additional or hidden) meanings (Barthes, 1986: 89). The first order of signification is denotation reference, while connotation is referred to as the second order of signification (Barthes, 1986: 89; Asriningsari and Umay, 2010: 35).

In a system of signification, a sign has two main components: Expression (E) which is the physical form of the sign, and Content (C) which is the meaning it represents. The process of signification occurs through the relationship (R) between Expression and Content. In other words, the sign

gets meaning through the connection between its physical expression and the meaning it represents. In the E-R-C notation, the expression (E) coincides with relation (R) that produces the content (C), showing how the sign gives meaning (Barthes, 1986: 89).

2.3 Music Video

Music videos were a great thing to study in the 1980s as they were like laboratories where the relationship between music, images and text could be tested. The music comes first — the song is created before the video is made — and the director usually designs the images with the song as a guide. This refers to exploring new ideas or concepts on how music and images can work together to create different experiences or even to express certain concepts. It also shows that the visual and musical elements are interrelated as the song is created first before the video. (Vernallis, 2004: ix-xii)

Music videos tend to explore visual concepts or emotions in an abstract manner, without pursuing a clear narrative or character development. As cited in Vernallis (2004: 1), Bordwell and Thompson assumed that it is important to compile the narrative elements in a movie, both chronologically and causally. We are expected to be able to follow the storyline clearly based on the sequence of time that occurs, the causes and effects of the events that occur, as well as the duration, frequency, and location where the events take place. Thus, we can understand and experience the movie narrative better because all these elements are arranged systematically and coherently. On the contrary in the context of music videos, the main focus is on the music, and the images or visuals presented are expected to enhance the experience of listening to the music itself. In this endeavor, the purpose of the images lies not in character development or complex narrative, but rather in creating an atmosphere or mood that matches the message or feeling that the music is trying to convey. Thus, images in music videos function more as complements that reinforce the message of the music, rather than as an independent main narrative as in movies.

Music videos have two main elements: visual and musical elements. The combination of visual elements (actors, settings, props, costumes, movement) with musical elements (melodies, musical arrangements, lyrics) complement each other to enhance the experience of listening to the music itself. Therefore, based on the content of the book written by Vernallis, it defines a video music as an audiovisual art form that combines musical elements with visual elements. Video music is the result of a combination of music (melodies, lyrics, and musical arrangements) with visual elements (images, movements, settings, and so on) that aim to create a complete and comprehensive artistic experience (Vernallis, 2004: 54-99).

2.4 Color

Color plays a role in creating an emotional atmosphere and influencing audience interpretation. Holzschlag (cited in Alfin, 2022: 13), an expert in the field of color, highlights how the use of color in the context of visual communication can directly affect the perception and emotions of the audience. Holzschlag specifies the ability of each color in terms of responding to the audience psychologically (Alfin, 2022: 13), as follows:

Table 2. 1 Creating Colour Scheme

Color	Psychological responses that can be generated
Red	Strength, energy, warmth, lust, love, aggressiveness, danger
Blue	Trust, conservative, security, technology, cleanliness, order
Green	Natural, health, good sight, jealousy, renewal
Yellow	Optimism, hope, philosophy, dishonesty/cheating, cowardice, betrayal.
Purple	Spiritual, mystery, majesty, shapeshifting, fierce, arrogant
Brown	Earth, trustworthy, comfortable, enduring.
Grey	Intellect, Futuristic, fashionable, moody, destructive.
White	Purity/holy, clean, thorough, innocent (without sin), sterile, death.
Black	Power, sexuality, luxury, death, mystery, distraction

Followed by Vernallis in *Experiencing music videos: aesthetics and cultural context* provides examples of color effects, where color connotations can directly give an influence in creating meaning, such as the red color in Henry Rollins' "Liar" song directly connotes anger, the blue and green colors in U2's "With or Without You" song conveyed sadness, and the yellow color in Weezer's "Buddy Holly" song shows innocence (Vernallis, 2004: 122).

2.5 Previous Related Study

In supporting this research, there are several previous studies that have similarities and differences with this research. Hereby, I proves the existence of research that uses same theory and approach with different object literature.

The first previous related study is a doctoral dissertation written by Ardyanti (2023) with the title "Semiotic Analysis in the PUMA Video Advertisement 'She Moves Us'". The aim of this study is finding out the message carried by both verbal and visual signs in PUMA Video

Advertisement "She Moves Us". Qualitative method was used in this dissertation. The data source was taken from the Official PUMA YouTube channel. The theory of semiotics which was proposed by Saussure (2011) and Barthes (1967) was used in this dissertation. The results showed that there are three findings, or the results of this study, can be drawn from the data analysis: First, every advertisement has verbal signs with connotation and denotation meaning. Second, even advertisements without verbal signs can convey important messages to the reader since the visual signs that appear display a variety of images with different meanings in line with the context of the advertisement.

The second previous related study is a journal written by Rahmadani and Islam (2023) with the title "*Makna Tanda dalam Video Musik Stray Kids (Analisis Semiotika video musik "CASE 143" dalam Album Maxident)*" reviewed this study. The aims of this study were focused to analyze and interpret the meaning contained in music video "CASE 143" and also to find out the visual relationship of signs in the music video. Descriptive qualitative with design review stages namely descriptive, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation was used in this study. The data source was taken from Official JYP Entertainment YouTube channel. The theory of semiotics which was proposed by Pierce (1934) was used in this journal. The results obtained from this study found many visual signs in music videos related to the stages of the psychological process of falling in love.

The third previous related study is a doctoral dissertation written by Qurratuain (2018) with the title "*Semiotic Analysis on Twenty One Pilots' Music Video 'Heavydirtysoul'*" reviewed this study. The objective of this research is (1) to find the signs found in the frames of the music video and their meanings; (2) to understand the connotative and denotative meaning of each frame of the music video; and (3) to understand the possible meaning of each scene related to mental disorder. Qualitative approach which concentrates on examining a phenomenon in detailed description and content analysis applied in to analyse the frames of the scenes of "Heavydirtysoul" music video was used in this study. The theory of semiotics which was

proposed by Pierce (1934) was used in this journal. The results found that the music video tells the audience about the struggle of a mental disorder sufferer—in this case depression and sleeping disorder—as well as that of the sufferer’s loved one’s. It also tells the audience that fighting mental disorder is a life-long battle.

The difference between my research and these three studies is in the object of research used, which is music video. Although Ramadhani, et.al’s and Qurratuain research also uses music video, we use different types of music video. My research focuses on the analysis of semiotics in “Perfect Blues” music video by Hannah Bahng, while Ramadhani et.al took data from “Case 143” music video by Stray kids and Qurratuain took data from “Heavydirtysoul” music video by Twenty One Pilot. In addition, my research focuses on finding meaning of verbal signs (lyrics) and visual signs (property, location, costume, gesture) by using Barthes’ model semiotics.

