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SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF E-COMMERCE ADVERTISEMENT “GILANYA BELANJA DI BUKALAPAK”

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Abstract

This research aims at interpreting the meaning of each scene in the advertisement *Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak* (Shopping Madness in Bukalapak) by using Roland Barthes’ (1972) semiotic analysis. It seeks to understand the meaning of the signs in each scene and to reveal the message in the advertisement. The research used qualitative approach with Barthes’ Semiotics method. These scenes showed several people that strangely used tools or goods, which can lead to the audience’s false perceptions. The results indicate that (1) the denotation meaning of each scene shows some people that performed unusual movements when using some tools or goods; (2) the connotative meaning of each scene is that those people showed happiness with unusual movements when shopping with big discounts at Bukalapak; (3) based on myth elements, five myths in Bukalapak advertisement are: (a) selfie stick and selfie which showed modern culture, (b) high heels shoes that can boost women’s appearance, (c) the use of pomade among men, (d) branded women bags which become a phenomenon for women who wear it, and (e) a pestle and mortar which are Indonesian traditional kitchen tools.

INTRODUCTION

Mass media is a means to deliver various kinds of information to the public through electronic media. As Sobur (2004) states, theoretically, mass media aims to convey information to the public properly and efficiently. According to McQuail (2000), mass media can widely reach a large number of people (universality of reach). It has publicly and is able to give popularity to anyone who appears in mass media. Mass media has various forms. One of those forms is television. Television is the most influential media in human life and has become an important part of life integrated with the everyday life of individuals and the society. Television usually broadcasts entertainment,

news, and advertisements. Advertisement is a means of persuasive communication that aims to influence or persuade people to use a product, either in the form of goods or services. Every advertisement shows products to attract consumers to use the products. E-commerce advertisements, similar to other advertisements, use media language in the form of texts, images, and even sounds to convey information about a product to the society.

Advertising has been trusted as a way to boost sales of a product by a company which has a lot of funds for promotions, either offline companies, or online or e-commerce-based companies. Recently, many people have bought online products, especially those who are very busy with their activities and do not have time to shop offline or go to places where it is possible to do buying and selling activities. Each year, the number of buyers using E-commerce is increasing. Many traders or companies utilize e-commerce to gain more profit. People who buy online products think that online shopping saves time because people can buy some products just by accessing e-commerce sites. On the other hand, offline shopping will definitely spend more time and effort. However, some people choose offline shopping because when they buy online products, they cannot see the products in detail. So, it becomes a disadvantage for buyers because what they buy does not always match what they want.

E-commerce is selling and buying activities of certain products and goods through electronic network or social media by companies or producers to consumers aiming to gain profit by both parties. In Indonesia, some popular e-commerce sites are Bukalapak, Tokopedia, Lazada, Elevenia, OLX, and Traveloka. Each company has different services depending on the scope and field, for example consumer to consumer, business-to-business, or business-to-consumer. This research analyzes the most popular e-commerce advertisement based on the consumer-to-consumer market. E-commerce companies have their own advertising concepts containing messages to promote their websites and applications.

The advertisement of *Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak* (Shopping Madness in Bukalapak) on December 2016 showed Bukalapak's buyers who get discount, and they express their feeling in an unnatural way using items they bought. This advertisement shows that Bukalapak gives cheap prices with jumbo discounts and the customers can still bargain the prices. Also, Bukalapak promoted their event, *Hari Belanja Online Nasional Bukalapak!* (Bukalapak Online National Shopping Day), where Bukalapak celebrated the national online shopping day by offering massive promos to Bukalapak customers. The advertisement on December 2016 became one of the top advertisements in Indonesia and one of the advertisements seen by many people on Youtube. This research interprets the meaning of the advertisement *Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak* and why it attracts audiences.

Advertisement is part of promotional mix, and the promotional mix is part of marketing. So, advertisement is a message that offers a product to the society through some media (Kasali, 1992). According to Moriarty, Mitchell, and Wells (2011), there are several types of advertising: Brand advertising, Retail advertising, direct-response advertising, business-to-business advertising, institutional advertising, nonprofit advertising, and public service announcements.

According to Irwansyah and Moniaga (2014), the E in the term E-commerce is an abbreviation of electronic commerce, which means a business transaction conducted through electronic networks such as the internet. E-commerce is classified into three types of business.

1. Business to-Consumer (B2C): B2C is a business transaction that sells goods or services to individuals. For example: amazon.com which sells books to consumers through an online system.
2. Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C). C2C is when a consumer directly sells goods or services to other consumers through electronic system. For example, Amir sells his mobile phone to others through kaskus.co.id.
3. Business-to-Business (B2B). B2B is a business that sells goods/services to other businesses by using electronic systems. For example, the change of ABC that sells computer hardware to DEF, a computer assembly company.

Kalakota and Whinston (1997) define e-commerce based on several perspectives, namely communication perspective, business process perspective, service perspective, and online perspective. Zwass (Chaffey, 2004) proposed a broader definition of e-commerce. He stated that e-commerce is sharing business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions through telecommunications networks.

Several state-of-the-art studies are relevant to this study. The first is A Semiotic Study: Cultural Misrepresentation in Pakistani Advertisements by Murtza & Khubra (2017). This study analyzed the Pakistani culture's misrepresentation in local brands' advertisements. Three brands were chosen for this research: Lux (soap), Sunsilk (Shampoo) and Tarang (Milk pack). Their research aims at exploring various signs, symbols and gestures that carry heavy connotative meanings and symbolic significance for the viewers, simultaneously highlighting the related issues.

The next research is What Sports Advertising Tell to Us? Semiotic Analysis by Balci and Özgen (2017). The research described that TV commercials are important messages which can be used to convince people. The results of this study indicated that these companies used sports images effectively in TV commercials with various advertising strategies to achieve their marketing objectives. Using sports images in TV commercials contributes not only to the companies, but also to the sports images and popularity of the athletes. This relationship between sports and commercials has a crucial effect on their development. In light of this information, it can be stated that research on sports-related commercials is useful for sports managers and advertisers.

The third research is A Semiotic Analysis of Portraying Gender in Magazine Advertisements by Jha, Raj, and Gangwar (2017). The research showed that media plays a big role in people's life. There are different kinds of media, such as television, cinema, advertisements etc. portraying and making images of Men and women. They analyzed 12 advertisements taken from Magazines (Femina and cosmopolitan) within the period of January 2016 to December 2016. In this current study, the researchers identified the portrayal of Femininity and Masculinity as a form of sexual object and hegemonic nature in the magazines.

According to Okuyama (2016), semiotic is the study of sign system to determine how symbolic meaning was created and transmitted through the

use of words, concepts, pictures, and others. So, what is sign? Sign is something that means something else in a meaningful way. The sign consists of a signifier, which is expressed in a physical form, and which is signified representing the material or conceptual object. Every language, including sign language, is a sign system (Okuyama, 2016).

One of important areas that Barthes (1972) encroached in his study of signs was the reader's role. The connotation, even though it is the true nature of the mark, requires the reader's activity to function. Barthes (1972) extensively reviewed what is commonly referred to as the second-level meaning system, built on other existing systems. Literature is the most obvious example of a second-level meaning system that builds on language as the first system. Barthes called this second system as connotative, which in his mythologies he unequivocally distinguishes from the denotative or the first-level meaning system. Continuing the study of semiotics, Barthes created a map of how signs work (Cobley & Jansz, 1999):

1. Signifier (Penanda)	2. Signified (petanda)	
3. Denotative Sign (Tanda Denotatif)		
4. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER</i> (PENANDA KONOTATIF)		5. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED</i> (PETANDA KONOTATIF)
6. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGN</i> (TANDA KONOTATIF)		

Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Map of Sign
(Source: Cobley & Jansz, 1999)

Figure 1 shows that denotative sign (3) consists of the signifier (1) and the signified (2). However, at the same time, denotative signs are also connotative signifiers (4). In other words, it is a material element, only if you recognize "lion" then such connotations as self-esteem, ferocity, and courage are possible (Cobley and Jansz, 1999). Thus, in the Barthes concept, the connotative sign is not merely an additional meaning but also contains both denotative signs underlying its existence. In fact, this is Barthes's significant contribution to Saussure's semiology stopping at denotative sign (Sobur, 2017). Basically, there are differences between denotation and connotation in general, and denotative and connotative understood by Barthes (1972). In general, denotation is usually understood as a literal meaning, a meaning that is "true." The signification process that traditionally referred to denotative usually refers to the use of a language with a meaning that corresponds to what is spoken. However, in the semiology of Roland Barthes and his followers, denotative is the first level of signification system, while connotation is the second level.

In Barthes' framework, connotation is identical to ideological operations, which is called myth, and serves to express and justify the dominant values in a given period. In myth, there is also a three-dimensional pattern of sign, signifier, and signified, but it functions as a second-level meaning system.

Also, in myth, a signified can have several signifiers. For example, British imperialism is characterized by various signifiers, such as Tea (which is a compulsory drink of the United Kingdom but the country has no tea tree planted in the UK), Union Jack flag with the cross spreads to eight corners, and English language that becomes an international language. It means that signified has less number than the signifier. Thus, a concept can repeatedly emerge in different forms. Mythology studies these forms because the repetition of concepts takes place in various forms (Sobur, 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This qualitative research collected opinions, responses, information, concepts, and descriptions related to the research problem. Qualitative research is a series of activities or process of filtering reasonable data or information related to a problem in a particular condition, aspect or field of the object life. According to Bodgan and Taylor (Moleong, 2004), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people or behaviors being observed. Kirk and Miller (1986) propose that qualitative is a fundamental tradition that depends on the observation of people in a particular territory and relates to both language and terminology. Research with qualitative approach is a study intended to produce descriptive research data in the form of written or oral words about people and observable behaviors to find the truth that can be accepted by people's common sense (Moleong, 2004).

The subject of this research is Bukalapak advertisement," Shopping Madness in Bukalapak" in December 2016. Then, the object of this research is the message contained in the advertisement. Data were collected by looking at related data from television and the internet (Bukalapak YouTube). Then, the data were used as materials to be further analyzed. This research also used observation technique to collect data. The observation technique was based on experiences. Observation optimizes researchers' ability in terms of motives, beliefs, attention, unconscious behavior, habits, and others. Observation allows researchers to see the world as seen by the subject of research, to live at that moment, to grasp the meaning of the phenomenon from the understanding of subjects, to capture the cultural life from the point of view and role models of the subjects at that time. Observation allows researchers to feel what is perceived and lived by the subject enabling the researchers to become a source of data. Also, observation enables the formation of shared knowledge, both from the researchers' side and subject (Moleong, 2004).

The data analysis technique used in this research is Roland Barthes' semiotics, including denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth used to understand the meaning of each scene in Bukalapak advertisement, *Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak*. Barthes (1972) called this as denotative which is the most real meaning of signs. Connotation is a term used by Roland Barthes to indicate the second level of significance. It describes the interaction that occurs when a sign meets a reader's feelings or emotions and cultural values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The concept or story idea is an aspect of advertisement. The concept or idea of a story in an advertisement is usually made according to what happened in the community. So, when the advertisement is aired, it can convince the audience that the advertisement is true according to the current culture and phenomena. Bukalapak advertisement in December 2016 edition, “Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak” (Shopping Madness in Bukalapak), showed the concept of how buyers in Bukalapak use goods they buy in an unnatural or exaggerated manner. Each scene in the advertisement (Scene 1-9) is full screened during the beginning to mid-December 2016 in several Indonesian television stations and can be viewed on Bukalapak's Youtube official account. Each scene in the advertisement was described according to each of the following picture scenes.

a. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 1

	
<p>Denotation</p>	<p>The first scene showed the pricing list, a short-haired woman, and a bearded man. The woman and the man expressed in front of the camera phone using selfie stick at the music studio. The price was written in this scene. Next, the camera changes into Long Shot, as the woman begins to move the selfie stick excessively. This movement makes the man confused and immediately run away from the woman.</p>
<p>Connotation</p>	<p>In the first scene, the two characters make excessive movements and behaviors. This scene makes the audience confused with the advertisement, but the message is focused on the expression of happiness and confusion, as if the selfie stick has a good quality that makes the buyer happy with a message communicated to audiences.</p>
<p>Myth</p>	<p>Recently, selfie stick and selfie are part of people's life. Those two are complementary. People are accustomed to using selfie stick and taking selfie photos to be uploaded to various social media. Selfie is a form of wanting to be acknowledged by others. By</p>

	showing off selfie photos, the person wants to look 'worthy' to others.
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b. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 2

	
<p>Denotation</p>	<p>In scene 2, a long-haired woman who is wearing a white shirt and long black pants is trying to wear red high heels shoes. She is in a dressing room surrounded by shoes rack and wardrobe. The price also appears in this scene.</p>
<p>Connotation</p>	<p>This scene shows a woman who is trying high heel shoes with an excessive manner. This scene has a connotation message that Bukalapak sells various kinds of high heels</p>
<p>Myth</p>	<p>There is a woman who is trying high heels. High heels and women are something that cannot be separated. Many women assume that wearing high heels can make their feet look elegant. So, they can boost their appearance and confidence.</p>

c. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 3


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Denotation	This scene shows price inclusion and a man with a bald head, mustache, and thick beard. This man wears a white long sleeves T-shirt and is using pomade, and he has a sharp gaze.
Connotation	The researcher found that the concept of this advertising is a hairless consumer can still use hair pomade. The advertisement gives a message that everyone can use all products marketed in Bukalapak.
Myth	Pomade has become a trend, and it has many enthusiasts, especially men. Not only young people like to use pomade, but also adults. They use it to style their hair and make their hair neater. According to some women who were interviewed by the researcher, men who use pomade look more masculine.

d. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 4

	
Denotation	This scene shows price inclusion and a woman in an open space. The woman has long brown hair, wears a brown jacket, and holds a brown bag. She twirls around and swings the bag she was holding
Connotation	This scene is focused on the bag held by the woman. The researchers found that the scene implies as if the bag is a branded bag with a relatively affordable price to attract audience to purchase in Bukalapak.
Myth	Branded bags become a unique phenomenon for women who carry them, including the level of confidence. When a woman wears a bag with a famous brand, there is a big chance that the

	woman is a well-established and independent woman in terms of economic and career sides.
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e. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 5

	
Denotation	In scene 5, the advertisement shows the price inclusion and a long-haired woman wearing glasses. Also, the woman wearing gray shirts is in a messy kitchen. In the scene, the woman swings a blender and a cup until the content was spilled
Connotation	Scene 5 shows the power and the durability of Blender in Bukalapak. In scene 5, the woman swings the blender as if she could not control herself when she is holding the blender. The woman also cannot take off the blender from her hand. This situation shows that Blender in Bukalapak is strong and durable. So, the communication message of scene 5 is to attract buyers to purchase in Bukalapak
Myth	The researchers did not find the myth in the 5th scene. Based on common knowledge, blender is an electronic tool to emulsify food. Blenders are often used to make juices or smoothies.

f. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 6

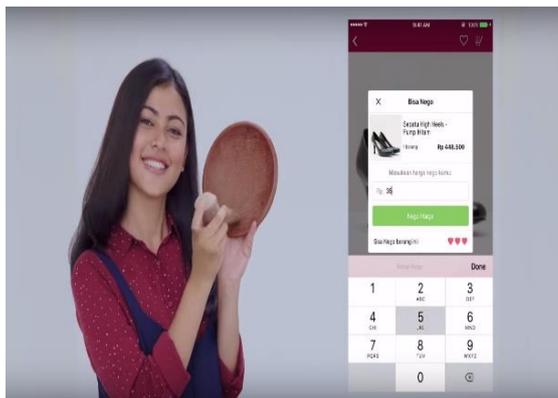
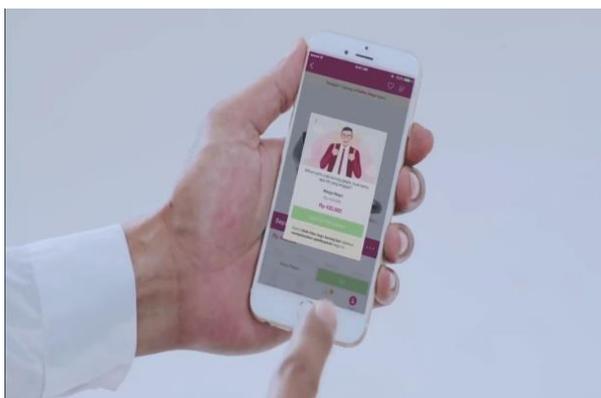
	
<p>Denotation</p>	<p>In scene 6, a long-haired woman is holding a rice cooker in the kitchen. She is acting weird and excessive by ruffling the rice at the table and making the table looks messy</p>
<p>Connotation</p>	<p>This scene is inappropriate because it uses food which is rice. However, the message in scene 6 refers to the quality of rice cooker that is sold in Bukalapak. It shows that Bukalapak sells a high-quality rice cooker to attract buyers to buy the product in Bukalapak.</p>
<p>Myth</p>	<p>Researchers did not find any myth in scene 6. As most people know, rice cooker is an electronic tool for cooking rice.</p>

g. Denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 7

	
<p>Denotation</p>	<p>Scene 7 shows the price inclusion, a man, and a boy in a courtyard. The boy is wearing a white undershirt and holding a shovel and a water hose. He is accompanied by an old man who is wearing a long-sleeved white shirt and holding a cup of glass.</p>
<p>Connotation</p>	<p>This scene shows a man and a boy engaged in outdoor activities. The boy looks like roughly shoveling the plant with his shovel. From this</p>

	<p>scene, it seems that Bukalapak wants to show the quality of the shovel that is strong and durable. In addition, the man’s character represents the buyer who will do transaction at Bukalapak. The man was seen holding a cup with a confused expression looking at the boy who is roughly shoveling the soil with the shovel. It illustrates the confusion of buyers in choosing a shovel because Bukalapak sells high-quality shovels.</p>
<p>Myth</p>	<p>The researchers did not find any myth in scene 7 because as understood by most people, a shovel is a tool for digging soil, planting various kinds of plants, or moving plants from one place to another place.</p>

h. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 8

	
<p>Denotation</p>	<p>Scene 8 shows the display of Bukalapak application and long-haired woman who is wearing a red shirt and holding a pestle and mortar. Then, the advertisement changes into a close-up shot of smartphone displaying Bukalapak application.</p>
<p>Connotation</p>	<p>The 8th scene shows a woman who is holding a pestle and mortar, and a screen display of Bukalapak application. In this scene, the woman is pounding the mortar as if the woman is using a smartphone. This indicates that Bukalapak informs how to use the promo of the national online shopping day in Bukalapak application to buyers who will do transactions in Bukalapak.</p>
<p>Myth</p>	<p>A pestle and mortar is a tool for pounding food. The researchers found a myth about a pestle and</p>

	mortar. If people want to make a delicious seasoning, they must use a pestle and mortar instead of a blender. This myth was found by researchers from older people’s experiences and by reading articles about famous chefs on the Internet.
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i. The meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in scene 9

	
Denotation	Scene 9 shows Bukalapak CEO, Achmad Zaky, inviting buyers to do transaction in Bukalapak. He is ecstatic and rammed himself into a wall, and he has perforated the wall
Connotation	Scene 9 shows Bukalapak CEO who gives information to buyers. With a happy expression, he ran sideways and crashed his body into the wall. The CEO wants to attract buyers to buy in Bukalapak and shows that the price in Bukalapak is affordable by showing a headline “HARGA SAKIT JIWA” (Crazy Price).
Myth	The researcher did not find any myth in scene 9. It is because the scene only shows Bukalapak CEO inviting buyers to do transactions in Bukalapak.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research results of the advertisement “Gilanya Belanja di Bukalapak” (Shopping Madness in Bukalapak), the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The advertisement tells the event held by PT Bukalapak. The event is called “Bukalapak’s National Online Shopping Day” in which Bukalapak was offering massive price cuts. The message from this advertisement is the

invitation from Bukalapak for the audience or public to participate in the event which was held from 12 to 14 December 2016.

2. The denotative meaning of each scene is Bukalapak showing several people doing unusual movements using a tool or goods shown in the advertisement.
3. With regard to the connotative meaning, each scene shows a sense of happiness when people are shopping at Bukalapak with big discounts. The happiness is shown by people doing unusual movements. From the advertisement, the researchers found that goods/products in Bukalapak have good quality and various choices.
4. Based on the myth aspect, this research found several myths in Bukalapak advertisement. (1) The first scene shows a selfie stick and selfie already attached to the society. Selfie stick and selfie are complementary. The society has been accustomed to using a selfie stick and taking selfie photos to be uploaded in various social media. Selfie is a form of wanting to be acknowledged by others. A person showing off selfie photos wants to be acknowledged by others. (2) The second scene is high heels. High heels and woman cannot be separated. Many women assume that wearing high heels can make their feet look elegant. So, the high heels can boost their appearance and confidence. (3) The fourth scene is pomade. Pomade has many enthusiasts, especially man. It is used not only by young people, but also adults. They wear pomade to style their hair and to make their appearance look neater and more masculine. (4) The fifth scene is a branded bag. Branded bags become a unique phenomenon for women who carry them. The women's level of confidence will increase when they carry a bag with a popular brand. It can be assumed that women who carry a branded bag is well-established and independent in terms of economy and career. (5) The eighth scene is a pestle and mortar. A pestle and mortar are kitchen tools used for pounding or crushing food. The researchers found the myth that regarding the use of a pestle and mortar to make delicious seasoning instead of a blender.

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