

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON WESTIN HOTELS AND RESORTS ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGNS

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Abstract

Signs in various forms are often used in various interests in implying certain messages or meanings. In advertising a service, signs are often used to imply the quality of their services, not least in the promotion of hotel services. Therefore, the sign used needs to be in accordance with the purpose of the message to be conveyed. This study aims to identify the meaning of signs and messages in hotel campaigns by using the theory of semiotics by Barthes (1978). The descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data. This study used source from six campaigns by Westin Resorts and Hotels. This study analyzed the denotation, connotation, and myth from all the signs found in the campaigns and interpreted the messages. The meaning of the signs found can be interpreted both in the first meaning (denotation) which relates to the direct meaning, the second meaning (connotation) which relates to the context of promotion in each campaign, and the third meaning (myth) which consists of the relation of denotation and connotation meaning in each sign and produces new meaning in each sign. The message in each sign is found through the conclusion and interpretation the relationship between denotation, connotation, and myth in each campaign sign. The myth showed the purpose and impression conveyed in each sign used in each Westin Hotels and Resorts campaign so that it indirectly shows the message contained in the sign. The meaning and the message of the found signs indicate the promotion of Westin Hotels and Resorts with the context of the services offered in each campaign and persuade or influence potential customers to using their services.

INTRODUCTION

Semiotic is a study of the science of signs. In semiotics, it considers social phenomena in society and culture to be signs, and semiotics itself is the study of systems, rules, and conventions that allow these signs to have their own meaning. Etymologically, semiotics comes from the Greek word Semion which means "sign". Terminologically, semiotics is defined as the study of a wide array of objects, events and entire cultures as signs. Semiotics also defines as "The science of signs and everything related to them: the way it functions, its relationship with other words, its transmission, and its reception by those who use it" according to Van Zoest (Sobur, 2001).

The concept of semiology was introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure (Saussure, 1972). Semiotic defined as "The study of the role of signs as part of social life" (Saussure, 1966). Signs are part of the social life around us. There is a sign system and there is a social

system, both of which are still related. Social convention which regulates the social use of signs, by combining and using signs in a certain way so that they have social meaning and value (Sobur, 2016). The sign is made up of a signifier (e.g., the acoustic form of the word, the sound) and a signified (e.g., a mental concept). These two are combined in the mind resulting in understanding or meaning (e.g., perceiving the sound “cat” signals the object “cat”). The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary; any word can be used to signify anything.

In other hand, Barthes is known as one of the structuralist thinkers who practiced Saussure's linguistic and semiotics models. According to Barthes, language is a sign system that shows the assumptions of a certain society at a certain time (Sobur, 2016). Roland Barthes' semiotic theory prioritizes three pillars of thought that are at the core of his analysis, namely Denotative, Connotative and Myth meanings. The first system of meaning is called Denotative and the second system of meaning is called Connotative. The formula of the first order signification consists of expression (E) as signifier and concept (C) as signified (Saussure, 1966). The denotative meaning constructed through the relation (R) between (E) and (C) and formulated as (ERC). Connotative meaning, or second order of signification, relates to socio-cultural and individual associations (ideological, emotional, etc.), whereas denotative meaning, or first order of signification, stands for the literal meaning. In the second order of signification (connotation), signifier or expression (E2) replaces denotative meaning (ERC). (ERC2C2) or (E2R2C2) is one way to graphically illustrate the formula (Gaines, 2001). Related to connotation, Barthes then refers to what he called as myth. According to Barthes, myth has an order of cultural signification where semiotic code is interpreted as fact (Barthes, 1972). The third order of signification is a form that provides an understanding that comes from something other than denotation and connotation. To distinguish between connotation and myth, it can be stated that myth appears natural or universal in its signification, or “myth is connotation that has become dominant-hegemonic” (Heck, 1982). Referring to the formula added by Gaines (2001), the myth formula can be analyzed as (E3R3C3). Expression (E3) comes from the second order of signification (ERC2C2) in Relation (R3) to the signified Content (C3) of Myth [(ERC2C2)] (R3) (C3) (Gaines, 2001).

This study analyzing denotative, connotative and myth meaning in hotel advertisements campaign. Advertisement defined as a public notice or announcement, usually paid for and intended to promote products, services, or events to the public (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, n.d.). It is a form of marketing communication that aims to persuade or influence potential customers towards a specific action. In tourism, advertising is also often used in offering services and products to tourists or potential tourists. Nowadays, many tourism actors create advertisements and publish them on browsing media and also social media to increase the potential of wider tourists. Hotels as tourism actors today also advertise through social media by creating advertisements so that they can attract more tourists to use the hotel's services.

This study examines the denotative, connotative and myth meanings in tourism advertisements, especially in the context of hotel advertisement campaign. In a previous study entitled "Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in Cigarette Advertisements" by Ningsih (2023), it was found that the meaning of signs in cigarette advertisements can influence the audience to be interested in the product. This research then analyzes e-poster as advertising or promotional media, especially in the field of tourism to attract audiences through the meanings of signs contained in it. This research was conducted to contribute ideas in the form of studies to provide clear and real information about the language used in signs with the semiotic theory of Barthes (1978). This is very urgent to do because of the development of this study and theory in the present and later can be a reference for the

wider community in seeing the meaning of signs contained in the advertisement. This research analyzes advertisement campaigns of The Westin Hotels and Resorts as a data source.

METHODS

This study used the qualitative research method that produces analytical processes that do not rely on statistical analysis or any other form of quantification (Moleong, 2012). Qualitative descriptive research generates data that describe the 'who, what, and where of events or experiences' from a subjective perspective (Kim et al., 2017). Descriptive qualitative research is a type of qualitative research that explores the characteristics of a phenomenon, rather than explaining the underlying causes or mechanisms. It involves the collection and data analysis in the form of words, images, or other non-numerical forms of information).

The aim of the technique is to identifying denotative, connotative and myth in Westin Hotels and Resorts advertisement campaigns. This method is also supported by semiotic approach by Barthes (1978) in denotative, connotative and myth meaning. The source of this study data is signs taken from advertisement campaigns by Westin Hotels and Resorts form of download ads in pinterest.com. The data then analyzed by using the table of first and second order signification by Hjemslev (1963) and third order signification by Barthes (1978).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data on the study are the signs used in the campaigns. The signs are analyzed in the third-order signification system. The analysis is divided into first-order signification (denotative), second order signification (connotative), and third order signification (myth) by Barthes (1978). Myth is a meaning formed from the relationship between denotation meaning and connotation meaning. The relationship forms a meaning as well as a message that has persuasive characteristics and implicitly indicates a message to potential guests.

The result could then be described through the analysis of first until third order signification and the messages conveys as follows:



Figure 1. Westin's Advertisement Campaign: Find New Routes Without Losing Your Way

(Source: <https://id.pinterest.com/pin/1145743961442511717/>)

- (1) DATA 1: Westin offers localized running maps, so you can take your outside. It's just another way we help you stay fit when you're on the road.

Signifier	Signified
"Westin offers localized running maps, so you can take your outside. It's just another way we help you stay fit when you're on the road." (E)	Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road (C)
Westin offers a service in providing localized running maps to help the guest on the road (ERC)	Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road as one of their services

Figure 2. First Order Signification of First Sign in Figure 1

The campaign contains a paragraph that is a descriptive information about the promotion referred to in the campaign. The paragraph contains "Westin offers localized running maps, so you can take your outside. It's just another way we help you stay fit when you're on the road". In the first signification, the paragraph acts as the signifier or expression that becomes the sign used in the campaign. The concept of using the paragraph is "Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road". The relationship between the paragraph as the expression (E) and the concept (C) then is "Westin offers a service in providing localized running maps to help the guest on the road" (ERC). Based on this analysis, it is concluded that the denotation meaning of the paragraph is Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road as one of their services.

Signifier	Signified
"Westin offers localized running maps, so you can take your outside. It's just another way we help you stay fit when you're on the road." (E)	Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road (C)
Westin offers a service in providing localized running maps to help the guest on the road (ERC) (E2)	Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road as one of their services (R2)
Map providing as a realization of Westin's 'Move Well' service	

Figure 3. Second Order Signification of First Sign in Figure 1

The construction of connotation meaning is created through the second relation (E2R2C2). The (ERC) take role as new expression (E2) as signifier and denotation meaning as (R2) becomes signified (Gaines, 2001). The (ERC) becomes (E2) as signifier and relating the denotation meaning act as (R2) signified. The description in the campaign provides detailed information about what the hook stated in the campaign means. The description shows the provision of maps of the surrounding area shown through the phrase "localized running maps" and explains that this is one of the services they provide to guests to meet the comfort and needs of guests shown in the second sentence, namely "It's just

another way we help you stay fit when you're on the road". The two sentences in the description show a picture of Westin Hotels and Resorts' concern for the guests who are the audience of their services, so that they feel satisfied with the services provided. This is a realization of Westin's pillar of service, 'Move Well', that considered on the wellbeing in term of health and sports for their guest. The Move Well pillar of Westin Hotels & Resorts, specifically through the RunWESTIN® program, is designed to support guest well-being by providing amenities that facilitate running routines during travel. RunWESTIN® not only offers curated maps of local running routes, but also a "Running Concierge" service that provides additional guidance and motivation for guests. The program creates a personalized experience and integrates the local environment, allowing guests to stay physically active while enjoying the beauty and culture surrounding the hotel. It can be concluded that the connotation meaning of the description in the campaign is that map providing as a realization of Westin's 'Move Well' service.

Signifier	Signified
Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road as one of their services (E3)	Map providing as a realization of Westin's 'Move Well' service (C3)
Westin Hotels and Resorts is the perfect choice for guests who care about their health and wellness, making it symbolic of the hotel's concern for guests' well-being during their stay	

Figure 4. Third Order Signification of First Sign in Figure 1

According to Barthes (1972), Myth formed through the combination between the denotation meaning and the connotation meaning. The denotation meaning act as (E3) and the connotation meaning act as (C3). the denotation meaning, " Westin offers localized running maps to help the guest on the road as one of their services " functions as a signifier (E3). The connotation as signified (C3) hints that Westin Hotels and Resorts provides maximum service to its guests, especially in maintaining their health while on vacation, by providing facilities for running sports. The advertisement seeks to convey the Westin Hotels and Resorts provides a comfortable stay and supports its guests' healthy and active lifestyle even when they are traveling. The description depicts the hotel's commitment in helping guests stay fit and healthy by providing access to locally customized running routes. The myth meaning that created through the signifier and signified is the Westin Hotels and Resorts is the perfect choice for guests who care about their health and wellness, making it symbolic of the hotel's concern for guests' well-being during their stay. The myth conveys a message that Westin is the perfect stay to choose for a stay to keeping the guests' health and wellness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, all advertising campaigns by Westin Hotels and Resorts emphasize the image of Westin Hotels and Resorts' quality service, luxury, and overall guest welfare. The mythical meanings formed through the denotation and connotation meanings of the signs in each campaign show Westin's concern for the specific

needs of its guests. The first campaign, titled "Find new routes without losing your way", promotes the service of providing a map area around the hotel for guests who want to run. Overall, the connotations and myths created an impression that Westin Hotels and Resorts is the perfect choice for guests who care about their health and wellness, making it symbolic of the hotel's concern for guests' well-being during their stay. The meaning of the signs found can be interpreted both in the first meaning (denotation) which relates to the direct meaning, the second meaning (connotation) which relates to the context of promotion in each campaign, and the third meaning (myth) which consists of the relation of denotation and connotation meaning in each sign and produces new meaning in each sign. The message in each sign is found through the conclusion and interpretation the relationship between denotation, connotation, and myth in each campaign sign. The myth showed the purpose and impression conveyed in each sign used in each Westin Hotels and Resorts campaign so that it indirectly shows the message contained in the sign.

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