

## SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON TOKOPEDIA'S ADVERTISEMENT TITLED "FILOSOFI PETE"

<sup>1</sup>Natasya Amanda Azzahra, <sup>2</sup>Gesit Oktaviani

<sup>1</sup>Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia

([natasyaamandaazzahra@students.undip.ac.id](mailto:natasyaamandaazzahra@students.undip.ac.id))

**Abstract.** This study examines the concept of semiotics proposed by Roland Barthes, which is then linked to the analysis of YouTube advertising media of an Indonesian e-commerce platform, Tokopedia. Tokopedia uploaded a "Filosofi Pete" advertising video on the YouTube platform. The advertisement explores the narrator's attitude and perception of petai, from initial discomfort to eventual enjoyment. The purpose of this research is to analyze more deeply the messages conveyed in Tokopedia's advertisement titled "Filosofi Pete". The research employs a literature review, sourcing from scholarly articles, books, and other studies. Additionally, it utilizes descriptive qualitative methodology to depict and understand complex phenomena through in-depth descriptive analysis without quantitative measurement. The findings indicate that the advertisement not only delves into how an individual's perception of a product can change after trying it with an open mind but also encourages the community to actively purchase products from micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM). Furthermore, Tokopedia, as a service provider, actively supports and provides opportunities for UMKM to contribute to the country's economic development.

**Keywords:** semiotics; roland barthes; advertisement; tokopedia

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The purpose of advertising is to positively influence people's perceptions of a product, service, or concept (Ghevolor et al., 2023). It has a dual role of informing and creating change through various forms of media (A. S., 2023). Social media platforms, like YouTube, play a crucial role in molding consumer behavior and enhancing brand recognition. Video-based advertisements on YouTube are a vital element of contemporary marketing tactics.

The objective of advertising is to influence the audience's perceptions, particularly consumers' attitudes. When a brand is widely recognized, the advertisement is more likely to be retained and the message more readily comprehended, resulting in a more effective outcome (Dermawan & Safa'atul Barkah, 2022). Developing advertising messages and visuals is a multifaceted undertaking that necessitates carefully communicating information to the audience.

Tokopedia is an Indonesian online marketplace that allows individuals and companies to open and manage online stores quickly and affordably. The platform aims to provide all users with a safe and comfortable experience while contributing to the vision of "Building a Better Indonesia Through the Internet". They recognize the importance of a connected and integrated digital shopping experience in retail transformation 4.0 (Asiyah, 2023). Their user-friendly mobile applications and online platforms allow customers to shop conveniently from anywhere. Additionally, Tokopedia has advertised on the YouTube platform with a video titled *Filosofi Pete* to attract more customers.

This advertisement is a component of Tokopedia's promotional strategy, designed to accentuate local Indonesian commodities. Through the narrative of 'petai'—a quintessential Indonesian delicacy—the campaign elucidates the phenomenon whereby an individual's preconceived notions about a product transform experiencing the product with receptivity and an open mind.

In the past, the quality and regulation of Indonesian local products faced significant challenges, leading to many revocations in 2016 (Agustiwi, 2020). This brought to light issues in the regulation establishment process. However, efforts have been made to address these challenges by strengthening local supervisory institutions and promoting good governance and accountability. The financial conditions of local governments in Indonesia are influenced by various factors such as revenue base, cost of services and goods, population, and financial efficiency (Ritonga et al., 2019). Policy decisions that aim to improve the economic conditions of local governments can support the development and marketing of local products by considering these factors. With a focus on enhancing governance, education, and product diversification, the condition of Indonesian local products has gradually improved over time.

The advertisement entitled "Filosofi Pete", uploaded on the YouTube platform by Tokopedia conveys several implicit and explicit messages related to the company's viewpoint regarding UMKM products. In this regard, we will examine these messages in-depth in today's discussion. By analyzing the advertisement's various implications, this paper aims to understand Tokopedia's perspective on the subject matter comprehensively.

In addition, this research uses Roland Barthes' theory of advertising semiotics, which consists of (1) Denotative, the signification system (meaning), or the meaning of the sign as a literal definition that is real. (2) Connotative leads to socio-cultural conditions and personal associations. (3) Myth, associating connotative meanings considered valid in a community or society (Barthes, 2012).

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many studies have discussed the semiotics of e-commerce advertisements. Such as Barezki's research in 2021 talking about semiotic analysis on *Bukalapak* advertisement (Barezki & Aras, 2021), Guimaraes in 2010 talking about semiotics analysis on Brazilian E-commerce sign (Guimaraes et al., 2010).

In addition, in previous studies that discuss the semiotics of advertisements, many theories have also been used. For instance, Puspita and Putri's research in 2021, using Ferdinand de Saussure's theory discusses the semiotic analysis of *Grab* advertisement (Sandra Puspita & Perdini Putri, 2021). Also, Rudrakuma's research in 2022 discusses semiotics analysis in coca-cola by combining the theory of Saussure and Barthes (Rudrakumar & Venkatraman, 2022).

Besides that, many have used Barthes' theory in analyzing the semiotics of an advertisement such as Nafiry's research in 2022 discuss semiotics analysis in *Tokopedia Advertising Ramadhan Special* (Nafiry et al., 2022), Asih's research in 2016 talking about semiotic analysis by comparing *Bukalapak* to *Tokopedia* and *Elevenia* advertisement (Wahyu Asih, 2016), and Ramadhan's research in 2023 discuss semiotic analysis on *Tokopedia's* advertisement titled *Dekatkan Yang Jauh, Kirim Yang*

*Bermakna* (Kurnia Ramadhan & Rosita Anggraini, 2023). However, no one has studied the semiotic analysis in a *Tokopedia* advertisement entitled *Filosofi Pete*.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The approach employed in this research is a qualitative descriptive methodology, which signifies that the data is scrutinized, and the analysis findings are presented as descriptive narratives rather than numerical data (Sosrohadi & Wulandari, 2022). However, qualitative research generates descriptive data in written or spoken words and observable behaviors from individuals. It focuses on capturing a holistic view of the subject under investigation, understanding it as an integrated part of a larger whole (Moleong, 2007:3 as stated in Sosrohadi & Wulandari, 2022).

The technique of analyzing the data in this study is as follows: First, data is collected by watching the advertisement video multiple times to gain a deep understanding of its content. Next, the spoken words in the video are transcribed into written text for further analysis. Then, specific parts of the transcription relevant to the research goals are selected. These selected data may include the utterances or symbols used in the advertisement or other elements of interest. Finally, the chosen data is classified according to Barthes' theory, linking relevant aspects to the concepts described in the theory. This method allows for the gathering and analyzing of data from video advertisements, providing insights into the conveyed messages within a theoretical framework.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semiotics is a scientific discipline or analytical approach used to investigate signs (Pondaag, 2013 as cited in Sitanggang, 2020). Semiotics finds utility in communication science, specifically in the analysis of messages or media texts. It enables researchers to examine and interpret the signs and symbols employed in these forms of communication, uncovering deeper meanings and understanding how they convey messages to audiences (Zaini, 2014 as cited in Sitanggang, 2020).

According to Roland Barthes' semiology theory, denotation is the fundamental level within the signification system, followed by connotations and myths. Barthes distinguishes between two levels of significance, namely 'denotative' meaning literal as the first level he calls form, and connotative cultural contextual meaning associated with myth and entering the area of 'metalanguage', which he calls concepts (Tulasi, 2014 as cited in Sitanggang, 2020).

Denotation involves the utilization of the sign's literal and actual meaning. Connotations, conversely, encompass the sociocultural contexts and personal associations associated with the sign (Hanifah & Ningsih, 2023). Denotation refers to a sign's primary and straightforward meaning, explicitly conveyed through visual elements or symbols that carry specific reading codes. Reading codes are systems that enable humans to recognize certain entities as signs. The meaning of denotation is the meaning by the original meaning, without any shift in meaning or change in meaning (Barthes, 2011 as stated in Sosrohadi & Wulandari, 2022). Denotation is the level of signification that explains the relationship between markers and markers, or between signs and their references to reality, which results in explicit, direct, and particular meanings (Mitak, 20:97 as cited in Sitanggang, 2020).

Connotation, on the other hand, represents the secondary layer of meaning open to multiple interpretations. It arises when the signifier is associated with various aspects, allowing different connotations to emerge. Ideology is harmonizing or unifying the diverse connotations expressed by clearly describing them. This process gives rise to myths or the development of connotations that have long-established significance within society (Yuliyanti et al., 2023). This discussion presents data from a research study on the Tokopedia advertisement *Filosofi Pete*.

Advertising experts apply Barthes' theory of myth to examine how advertisers employ mythical levels to evoke emotions in consumers and connect their products with particular values or lifestyles. Roland Barthes' notion of myth highlights the significance of signs and symbols in shaping cultural meanings and how myths are utilized to validate or defend certain social norms and values (Barthes, 2012).

The data presentation is as follows:

### Denotation

*"Ada 2 macam orang di dunia. Mereka yang suka pete, dan mereka yang tidak suka pete".*  
(Tokopedia, 2021)

"There are 2 kinds of people in the world. Those who like pete, and those who don't".

The advertisement begins with a narration stating that there are two types of people in this world: those who enjoy pete and those who do not. The word "pete" is used in its denotation, representing the literal or descriptive meaning of a specific object or ingredient. In this context, "pete" refers to a type of food or ingredient that is liked by some people and disliked by others. It does not carry any additional symbolic or metaphorical meaning beyond its literal definition. The sentence simply states that there are two types of people in this world: those who like "pete" and those who do not.

### Connotation

#### 1. Pete-designed ring



**Figure 1** A Pete-designed Ring Worn by the Sister-in-law (Tokopedia, 2021)

The advertisement cleverly uses symbolism to capture viewers' attention. It focuses on a ring the sister-in-law wears, intricately designed with a pete motif. This simple detail carries symbolic meaning, representing her obsession and expertise with pete. The presence of the ring subtly communicates the sister-in-law's passion and skill in working with pete. Its intricate design reflects her knowledge and elevates it to an art form.

The ring also foreshadows its impact on the main character's perception. As the story unfolds, the main character's initial dislike for Pete changes due to the sister-in-law's cooking skills. The main character's perspective undergoes a remarkable transformation through her culinary prowess. Their initial dislike gives way to a fondness and appreciation for Pete, showcasing the power of skillfully prepared food. Using the ring as a symbol effectively conveys the advertisement's storyline. It highlights the sister-in-law's expertise, passion, and the profound impact on the main character's journey from dislike to love.

## 2. Nudging shoulder gesture

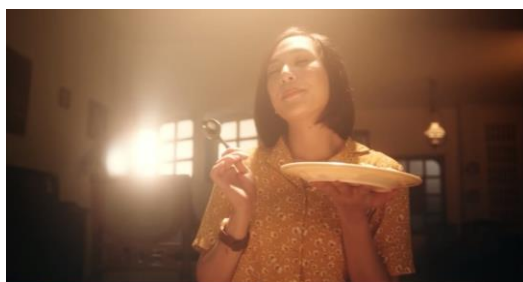


**Figure 2** Scene of the Big Brother Nudges Narrator's Shoulder (Tokopedia, 2021)

Within this advertisement, another layer of connotation unfolds in a heartwarming scene. As the older brother gently nudges the narrator's shoulder, it becomes a subtle yet powerful gesture with multiple underlying meanings. This gesture serves as non-verbal communication between the siblings. It silently invites the narrator to step out of their comfort zone and try the Pete dish prepared by the sister-in-law. The older brother's intention is clear – he wants to bridge the gap between the narrator's dislike of Pete and his wife's effort in making the meal. The gesture showcases the older brother's desire for family harmony and his consideration for his wife's culinary skills. By encouraging the narrator to join in, he aims to avoid any offense towards his wife's passion and hard work. It highlights the delicate balance of love, thoughtfulness, and diplomacy within the family.

Through this subtle interaction, the advertisement explores family dynamics and the power of unspoken messages conveyed through gestures. It beautifully illustrates the older brother's care, thoughtfulness, and desire to create a harmonious environment where everyone can appreciate the culinary masterpiece and foster unity. This scene showcases the impact of non-verbal cues and the significance of familial bonds. It demonstrates that even a simple nudge can hold deeper meaning, reflecting the older brother's genuine care and his efforts to create a harmonious space where everyone can enjoy shared experiences and flavors.

## 3. The Use of Bright Lighting



**Figure 3** Scene of the Narrator Finally Started to Fall in Love with Pete (Tokopedia, 2021)

The use of denotation is portrayed in the scene where the narrator finally tries her sister-in-law's pet dish. Firstly, the scene is illuminated with bright lighting, creating a vibrant and inviting atmosphere. This lighting draws attention to the central focus of the scene but also enhances the visual appeal of the entire setting. Additionally, the narrator's facial expression is crafted to convey a sense of genuine delight and satisfaction. The joy on the narrator's face reflects the transformative experience of tasting the dish made from pete. It captures the moment of culinary revelation when preconceived notions and aversions give way to a newfound appreciation and enjoyment.

Including a spoon and plate containing the pete dish in the narrator's hands reinforces the denotative message. These tangible objects symbolize direct engagement with the culinary creation, emphasizing the narrator's physical connection to the food. It serves as a tangible representation of the journey from disdain to embrace, as the narrator holds the plate and the newfound love for pete. The bright lighting, the narrator's joyful expression, and the holding of the dish all convey a clear message. They show how the narrator's perception of pete has transformed, leading to a newfound appreciation. The advertisement emphasizes that unexpected experiences can change one's perspective and create a deeper appreciation for previously disliked or avoided things.

#### 4. Pete

Another connotation in the advertisement is the metaphorical use of Pete to represent domestically-made products. The ad portrays pete as a stinky and bitter bean initially perceived as unappetizing, much like how domestic products are often seen as inferior and uninteresting. This comparison parallels the initial perception of pete and the common perception of domestically-made goods. The ad aims to challenge and change the negative perception of domestic products through this metaphor, just as the main character's perception of pete is transformed throughout the narrative. This can be seen in the line:

*“Aku jadi sadar... seumur hidupku aku pikir aku nggak suka pete, hanya karena satu gigitan hari itu... jauh di masa lalu. Ternyata banyak hal yang kita gak suka, hanya karena kita nggak pernah lagi mau coba. Produk buatan Indonesia, sayangnya seringkali seperti pete. Ini buatan Indonesia? Emang bagus? Bagus banget. Ah, masa sih? Padahal, hari ini, keadaannya sangat jauh berbeda. Kini banyak sekali produk buatan Indonesia yang memang benar-benar bagus”.* (Tokopedia, 2021)

“I realized... all my life I thought I didn't like pete, just because of that one bite that day... way back when. It turns out that there are many things we don't like, just because we never want to try them again. Products made in Indonesia, unfortunately are often like pete. This is made

in Indonesia? Is it good? It's really good. Ah, really? Whereas, today, things are very different. Now there are so many products made in Indonesia that are really good”

### Myth

"Dulu terakhir kali aku makan pete, itu waktu aku masih kecil, dikasih oleh tante-tanteku yang iseng. Aku masih bocah kan, ya nurut-nurut aja." (Tokopedia, 2021)

"The last time I ate pete was when I was little, it was given to me by my aunts for fun. I was still a kid, so I just obeyed."

The advertisement portrays a myth in the scene where the narrator's aunties ask the narrator to try pete, as mentioned in the previous line. From that line, we can observe a myth, a belief, or a statement widely accepted in society but lacking concrete evidence. This is a common occurrence in society, particularly regarding the expectation for children to fulfill the wishes of their parents or elders, disregarding their preferences.

This societal belief is considered true without actual proof. By conforming to these expectations, a child may develop a dislike or negative association with the experience or object. In this case, the narrator's compliance with the aunties' request leads to a growing aversion towards pete. The advertisement highlights the presence of such myths and how they can influence individual perceptions and preferences. It encourages viewers to reflect on the impact of these beliefs and consider reassessing their likes and dislikes.

### CONCLUSION

In this research, the advertisement incorporates three semiotic elements: denotative, connotative, and myth, as described by Roland Barthes. The Tokopedia advertisement, *Filosofi Pete*, utilizes these elements to convey a specific message. Tokopedia aims to communicate that UMKM products in Indonesia are of equal quality to foreign products, have experienced substantial growth, and should not be subject to the negative perception that Indonesian-made products are inferior. This advertisement also demonstrates Tokopedia's support for the advancement of UMKM.

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