



Semiotic Analysis of Female Character in Shell Advertisement Semangat Jalan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the female character in Shell Advertisement titled "Semangat Jalan" using semiotic theory. Shell as a global company has an established image of masculine brand because of its automotive products and services, therefore most of its advertisements portray masculine figures. However, Semangat Jalan advertisement has a different approach where it shows a working female as the main character. This study uses the semiotic theory by Roland Barthes to translate visuals of female figure in the advertisement. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with observation techniques. Result found in this study is that the selection of female character in Shell Semangat Jalan advertisement is used to broaden Shell's audience who are dominated by male, shifting perspective of the impression that Shell is a brand that represent men only.

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1. Introduction

In advertising, advertisers tend to use various ways to increase product sales, ranging from creative ideas, selection of dissemination media to selection of figures in advertisements. One of the most frequently used characters in advertisements is women, both in products intended for women and not, quoted from research by Salsabila Aulia Putri, Arinda Novitasari and hasna Arsita Khoirunnisa that the representation of women in advertisements is influenced by how the media constructs the meaning of the image concept and a number of other representational elements (Putri, Novitasari, and Khoirunnisa 2021). According to Ilma Hanifa Madina and Ajeng Dyah Kumala, The way that is often done by advertisers to be able to compete in the world of advertising is to use women's bodies as a public bond to an advertisement (Madina and Kumala 2020). In her research, Yuli Susiyanah argues that women often become media consumption and the image of women in the mass media tends to be stereotyped and also discriminatory (Susiyanah 2019). Therefore, there is a perception that women must appear by highlighting their sexual attractiveness. Quoted from Aulia Kartika Asih's research, the beauty and beauty of women can be a factor that affects the audience (Asih 2019). Women are chosen to be the object of sales rather than men because women can influence the public to use the products and services offered. However, even though women are often used as an attraction in a product advertisement, negative views of women are actually increasing, as stated by Hamidah Nur Fitriani, Muhammad Raihan Herdiansyah and Najmi Sai'dah that the presence of sensual women in the mass media is increasing. reinforces negative stereotypes of women in society which are portrayed as objects for male satisfaction (Fitriani, Herdiansyah, and Sai'dah

2021). There are so many uses of female characters in various advertisements, ranging from household products such as laundry soap, detergents, cooking spices, to products that have a close image with men such as automotive.

The automotive world is very attached to images of men and masculinity, as if the only users of automotive products were men. While the female figure is more often used as a selling tool to increase sales as stated in the research of Sumi Lestari and Nadya Marenti Lumbanraja that the currently developing phenomenon is that women who work as SPGs, especially related to automotive products, tend to use their physical beauty as the company's main marketing strategy to get the attention of consumers (Lestari and Lumbanraja 2018). This appearance was created with the hope of being able to attract the interest of potential buyers, especially men, so they want to get to know the product being offered. In fact, users of automotive products are not limited to men only, now many women also drive private vehicles independently. However, the perception of women and automotive is still not accepted by the public, as stated by Lulu Pranidhar and Nani Kurniasari that women are considered not to understand automotive engines and only under the guise of wanting to be stylish (Pranidhar and Kurniasari 2020). This perception is very attached to women so that women who usually have a hobby of doing make-up will not understand the automotive world such as engines, gasoline and oil.

Along with the times, the role of women in society has also developed, although there is still a stigma that women are destined only to be housewives, as stated in the research of Anisa Eka Kusuma Dewi and Anika Dwi Kusuma Dewi that society sees women choosing to be mothers household is better than being a career woman and the stigma of career women not prioritizing a mate or family which can eliminate the motivation of women to continue to achieve what they want (Dewi and Dewi 2021). This is contrary to what was stated in the research of Rusni Hadji, H. Nurdin and Lukman Ismail that there was a change in the role of women who originally only worked in the domestic sector, now began to also penetrate the public sector (Hadji, Nurdin, and Ismail 2020). Now, women have more space for expression, including in areas that are not closely related to the female figure. One of the phenomena that occurred can be seen in the Shell Semangat Jalan advertisement which was launched in 2019. The advertisement shows that the main character is a woman. This strategy is quite different from other Shell advertisements that use a male character as the main character. In the Semangat Jalan advertisement, Shell shows a married woman who still has the passion to pursue her dream career even though she is underestimated and has to work harder than others even her husband, contrary to what was stated in the research of Fikha Nada Naililhaq and Elsara Khairun Nisa that the stereotype of women's work is usually related to jobs that are easy to do and don't require a lot of energy to do it (Naililhaq and Nisa 2019). The depiction of female characters in the Shell Spirit of the Road advertisement is a study that can benefit the general public as well as advertisers because it is able to provide new perspectives for future advertisers and provides space for other women to be able to freely express themselves without being shackled by the stigma that women are placed in the social sphere. domestic only. The depiction of women in this street spirit advertisement also provides benefits to Shell, namely expanding the target audience of women and changing the perception that Shell is a product that is intended for men only.

2. Method

Researches that focus on female characters in advertisements are getting a lot of attention such as a research by Ira Wirasari, Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute Technology titled *The Politics of Women's Skin Color in Advertising* back in 2017. The research examines signs and meanings of women's skin colour in cosmetic ads, which then form the ideology of women's beauty standards based on skin colour. The research uses interdisciplinary method that combines semiotic methods, content analysis and qualitative methods into two different cosmetics ads as case studies, both of the ads show two women with different skin colour and

portrayal. The conclusion of these two descriptions is that women are used as objects with demands for beauty standards in society. The portrayal of women in ads are increasingly diverse and are not judged only by their physical appearance. Just as Wirasari explained, women are used not only in cosmetic ads, but also in many ads for various products even the ones that are not made for women (Wirasari 2017). With this role shift, this study aims to examine the strategy behind the female character in Shell advertisement Semangat Jalan using qualitative methods with studies from books and journals that are related to the object of this research. The semiotic method is used to examine signs in advertisement and ideas that the advertiser try to convey.

2.1. Qualitative

This research aims to find results from the research object with detailed study formed with words and a comprehensive holistic overview that will later be analysed to find the results. The purpose of using descriptive research according to Nazir in Andi Prastowo is to be able to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description, picture, or painting about the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena being studied (Prastowo 2011). Qualitative research was chosen to obtain in-depth data on the depiction of female characters in Shell Semangat Jalan advertisements. The description can be described well through qualitative, because qualitative research emphasizes data that focuses on words and meanings.

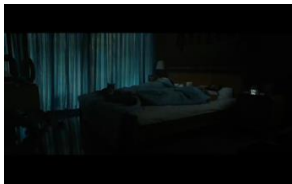


2.2. Semiotic

Semiotic analysis is used to analyze the signs in Shell Semangat Jalan advertisement to find the meaning contained in advertisements, especially visuals or images. The analysis focuses on the scenes that shows a female character named Jasmine. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis will be carried out on two levels, which are connotation and denotation to find the concept idea of Shell's advertisement video Semangat Jalan. Furthermore, the myth analysis will be carried out to draw a deeper meaning of the message that Shell wants to convey.




3. Results and Discussion

To perform semiotic analysis of connotative and denotative, several scenes that display Jasmine's daily activities are selected just as described with the following Table 1.

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis of Shell's Advertisement Semangat Jalan

<i>Scene</i>	<i>Connotative</i>	<i>Denotative</i>
00.00 	First scene opens by showing ambience of early morning. There is a husband and wife who are still asleep. The wife wakes up to turn off the alarm showing time at 05.00.	This scene shows Jasmine who wakes up earlier than her husband to get ready for work.
00.02 	Jasmine is seen approaching her car that's parked in the yard.	Jasmine remains to be an independent woman who can do things on her own such as driving to work by herself.
00.05 VO: ..again 	Jasmine looks stuck in the middle of traffic jam in the morning rush while looking tired.	As someone who lives in a big city, Jasmine struggles with traffic jams in the early morning to keep up with her work.

<i>Scene</i>	<i>Connotative</i>	<i>Denotative</i>
00.07 	Jasmine is in the office and about to call a woman who walks pass her but the woman seems to ignore Jasmine by waving her hand.	As a female employee, Jasmine is often underestimated even though she has shown her hard work.
00.07 	Story continues by showing the ambience of early morning. Jasmine and her husband are still asleep as the clock shows 05.00.	This scene shows what Jasmine has to go through every day to get up earlier than her husband.
00.10 <i>VO: So many times spent on the road</i> 	Jasmine drives her car in the streets and there is a reflection of Shell's logo on the front mirror.	Jasmine drives pass Shell as product placement to give meaning that Shell always accompanies Jasmine on her journey.
00.13 <i>VO: But..</i> 	Scene moves to an office ambience at night. Jasmine is still working by herself and there is a cleaning service who walks pass behind her.	This scene shows Jasmine's dedication and hard work that she has to work late.
00.18 <i>VO: ..this is not about where you're going to</i> 	Several people sitting in a room and talking to each other while Jasmine is standing by the door.	Jasmine arrives at the meeting room and looks nervous to enter the room that is already filled with her co-workers.
00.19 <i>VO: You're not going to another meeting..</i> 	Jasmine sits next to a man and engages in the conversation.	Jasmine attends the meeting with such a confidence that she could lead the conversation.
00.22 <i>VO: ..but you're going for those you love</i> 	The scene moves to a kitchen where a male is cooking while Jasmine stares at him from the distance.	Even after going through a tough day, Jasmine still makes tome to visit her father.

Scene	Connotative	Denotative
		
00.25 	Jasmine comes closer and hugs her father.	Jasmine runs into her father's hug and expresses her longing.
00.27 VO: <i>Shell is there for you. Semangat Jalan.</i> 	Jasmine and her father continues the conversation while Shell's logo appears on the screen.	Jasmine seems so excited to share everything to her father who puts on a huge happy and proud look to see his daughter's success yet still makes time for her parent.

After finding the meaning of connotation and denotation in Shell's advertisement *Semangat Jalan*, the myth that is found is that the female character named Jasmine is not portrayed as in most of ads. Jasmine who is married still has the desire to work and pursue her dream career. As woman, Jasmine has to work harder to achieve her dream by waking up earlier than her husband and go to work early despite facing various challenges. This is supported by the *voice over* *"..Going to work again and again. So many times spent on the"*. Her struggles pay off when Jasmine manages to overcome her fear to face an important meeting. At the end of the video, Jasmine doesn't forget to visit her father who greets her with a huge smile and looking pride to see his daughter's success. The scene of Jasmine meeting her father shows that Jasmine has a bigger purpose behind her struggle which is supported by the *voice over* saying *"..but it's not about where you're going to, it's about who you're going for"*. Her bigger purpose is to make her father's dream come true which is supported by the *voice over* *"..you're not going to another meeting, but you're going for those you love"*. The Shell logo that appears in the middle of the video when Jasmine drives past Shell gas station has a meaning that Shell always accompanies Jasmine on every Journey. At the end of the video, Shell's logo reappears along with the *voice over* *"..Shell is there for you. Semangat Jalan"* emphasizes the message that Shell is always ready to accompany Jasmine's journey not only to the office, but also the journey to fulfil her father's dream.

The 30 second video ad portrays a woman with quite unique perspective than most of the ads and opposes the patriarchal system that puts women as an inferior and tends to play part in domestic areas only. Jasmine is portrayed as a woman who has a complete control over her life and dreams. However, there are several scenes that reflect reality showing women have to work harder to achieve their dream because of social expectations. Even though this overall video ad defies the patriarchal system, there are still some elements that show that the patriarchal system is deeply embedded in our daily lives.

4. Conclusion

This study includes three discussions from connotative, denotative and myth. The result of the discussion is that on connotative level, Jasmine is a married woman who also work as an employee and still visits her father. On denotative level, Jasmine struggles every day to achieve

her dream by getting up early, working from morning to late night to have a good career. The myth found in this video ad is that Shell portrays Jasmine as a tough woman who still has the ambition to work hard even after she's married. Behind her struggles she has to go through, Jasmine has a bigger purpose to make her father happy and fulfil his dream of opening a restaurant. Jasmine as a women, wife and daughter has to work harder to achieve her goals. After the discussion of three levels of semiotic analysis, the conclusion is that Shell wants to convey the message of always being there to accompany everyone on every journey and support everyone's dream. The female figure is chosen to oppose the patriarchal system and stigma of women only belong in domestic area. Just like men, women can also achieve their dreams even though they are married. There is hidden message in this video that reflects on reality that women have to work harder to achieve their goals

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