




Roland Barthes' Semiotics on Political Posters For The Election of Regent and Vice Regent of Malang In 2024

Rula Nadia Rachma

Al Qolam University of Malang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author  rulanadiarachma22@alqolam.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the types of signs, symbols, words and colors from semiotics and describe the denotation, connotation, mythical and cultural meanings of each sign and symbol contained in political posters for the 2024 Malang Regency Regent and Deputy Regent elections. Observation was conducted using descriptive qualitative to observe the meaning based on Barthes'(1977) semiotic theory, this analysis includes the identification of denotation meaning (literal meaning), connotation (additional meaning), and myth (hidden meaning) of each sign and word. Coding was given to each sign to facilitate analysis and categorization. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify the main themes and political messages conveyed. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of narratives and images to clarify the meaning and political messages contained in the posters. The results of this study found 10 datum consisting of signs, symbols, colors and words, each of which is seen from the meaning of denotation, connotation and myth. It was found that the revealed meaning provides teasers or clues and invitations for the community as voters.

Keywords: Semiotics, Political posters, Barthes' semiotic theory

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INTRODUCTION

Signs and symbols were used by ancient man to leave traces of human history to the next generations and to communicate with each other. This continues to this day and even continues to grow, It started long before the invention of letters. Signs and symbols are common today they can be found in every corner of life, from public spaces, terminals, stations, public roads, in books, even on smartphones. Behind a compelling visual is a complex system of meaning that shapes our perception and response to an image. That's the world of semiotics, the science that reveals how visual, verbal and audio signs communicate and create meaning in our culture. Through semiotics, we can uncover the meanings hidden behind an image, a word, and a color.

Many terms and concepts used by contemporary semioticians were introduced by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. (Saussure, 1966) defined a sign as any motion, gesture, image, pattern, or event that conveys meaning. He defined langue as the structure or grammar of a language and parole as the choices made by the speaker to communicate that information. Semiotics is a key study into the evolution of human consciousness. According (Barthes, 1977) semiotics is the study of meaning, that is, how meaning is produced, translated and interpreted in various sign systems. Charles Sanders Peirce (As cited Istanto,

2005) said that signs work only if there is an intelligence capable of learning from experience.

These three researchers have made important contributions to the development of semiotic theory, with each having a unique and different perspective on signs and the process of meaning production.

Semiotics is the study of signs and how they create meaning in our culture. Semiotics studies the complex relationship between signifiers (visual, verbal, or audio elements) and signs to understand how meaning is produced, decoded, and interpreted. Key figures in semiotics, such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Charles Sanders Peirce, have contributed to shaping our understanding of the field. Through their combined insights, semiotics helps us understand how visual and verbal cues influence our perception and response to images, words, and even cultural phenomena, ultimately shaping our understanding of the world around us. Roland Barthes states that he is one of the followers of Saussure (Fiskes, 2018), who first designed a model systematically that this model becomes a process of negotiation, that is, interactive ideas that can be analyzed. The core of Barthes' theory is the idea of an order of meaning or relation.

(Vera, 2015) Barthes' semiotic theory is almost practically derived from Saussure-based theory. Roland Barthes said that language is a sign system that reflects a person's representation at a certain time. In Barthes' semiotic study, there are three concepts regarding the meaning of images, namely denotation, connotation, and myth.

Semiotics teaches us to think analytically and analytically about our surroundings, enabling us to uncover biases and assess messages more objectively, as noted by (Eco, 1979). Many fields, including education, journalism, marketing, and politics, benefit from this useful analytical ability according to (Berger, 2011). In addition, by applying semiotics, we can improve our skill in creating clear, effective and engaging messages, which is especially costly in areas like marketing, advertising, and public relations.

Semiotics helps people grasp how many signs mirror multiple ethnic aspects and values in a society (Barthes, 2011). We can gain comprehension into the belief systems, standards and practices of a society by observing the signs and through this analysis, we learn more about that culture. Semiotics helps us understand how meaning is formed. It shows how signs influence our views, and behavior. Semiotics is commonly investigated in various linguistic landscape such as album, social media, and poster.

Political posters have become one of the most powerful media campaign tools through visual communication. This media has a significant role in shaping public opinion, mobilizing emotions, and influencing voters' choices. In today's digital era, political posters are increasingly prominent in public spaces, both on social media and in physical public spaces/billboards (Fatimah, 2018). There are several strategies carried out by the candidates for Regent and Deputy Regent of Malang Regency through campaign channels including print media, electronic media, outdoor media and small format media through political advertisements by promoting their campaigns through political billboards that are present in the mass media, because they can reach the wider community effectively and efficiently.

Outdoor media, often referred to as billboards, is an alternative media that can build brands with a strong impact. As an alternative media for advertising and promoting Regent candidates, outdoor advertising media has several special quantities that other advertising media do not have. Outdoor advertising reaches all levels of society and the audience is not divided like other media. Its effectiveness is very high, especially in reaching young people and adults. Political advertising now functions more as an image so that voters will know that the ideal leader is worthy of being elected as Regent and Deputy. (Sutarini, 2019)

To fully understand the persuasive power of political posters, an in-depth understanding of semiotics, the study of signs and sign systems in culture, is required (Eco, 1979). Analyzing the semiotics of political posters allows us to uncover the hidden meanings behind seemingly simple visual elements. Through the analysis of elements such as imagery, typography, color, composition and language use, we can uncover the connotations and denotations contained within. (Barthes, 1977) Thus, we can understand how political posters subtly attempt to influence voters' perceptions and emotions, forming a positive or negative image of a particular candidate or political party.

The importance of researching the semiotics of political posters lies in its ability to

reveal the communication strategies used in politics. By understanding the semiotic codes deployed in political posters, we can identify the ideologies, values and implicit messages that the creators are trying to convey. This knowledge can help us become smarter voters, able to critically assess political messages and vote rationally based on valid information. In addition, semiotic research on political posters can help us understand how politics and visual culture influence and shape each other.

There are several studies that have been conducted using semiotic theory. The author takes several previous or previous studies that are relevant to this research to support or be used as reference material in this research. The research, among others, is a study that *"Analisis Semiotika Billboard Pasangan Calon Walikota dan Wakil Walikota Medan"* by (Lubis, 2017). The problem studied is about how the image looks and the message conveyed by the candidate pairs for Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Medan 2015. The researcher used the de saussure approach theory with its structural analysis.

The next similar research is *"Analisis Semiotika Papan Reklame Kampanye Politik Calon Legislatif DPRD Tahun 2014 Dapil 1 Kabupaten Bone"* by (Alfian, 2015). With the results of the study finding semiotic meaning of icons, indices, and symbols so diverse using Roland Barthes' semiology with the relationship between signifier (signifier) and signified (signified) in a sign in the form of a in a sign in the form of description of personality, activities, principles, as well as the goals that the to achieve when the candidate is elected which are described and explained at the denotation and connotation levels and gives its own meaning. gives its own meaning. The semiotic meaning found on which basically aims to attract public sympathy..

The third research is *"Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Pierce dalam iklan kampanye pasangan Calon Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Provinsi Bengkulu Tahun 2015"* by (Fitria, 2017). With the results of research on five campaign advertisements that have very many signs or signs in the form of audio visual figures of candidate pairs, traditional leaders, society, objects, geography, having objects that can be seen and heard with a series of images and sounds.

The next research is *"Analisis Semiotika Media Billboard Kampanye Calon Walikota dan Calon Wakil Walikota Bandar Lampung Tahun 2020 Dalam Implikasi Pembelajaran Sekolah"* by (Handoyono, 2022). With the results of data analysis show that the semiotic meaning in the form of description of the personality, activities, principles, and goals of the candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Bandar Lampung that have similarities and differences in meaning candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Bandar Lampung who have similarities and differences in meaning. significant differences in the object of research. They considered that they consider that it can help to find out the meaning of the candidate's personality, activities, principles, and goals.

The futher similar research is *"Analisis Semiotika Makna Foto Dalam Baliho Kampanye Giring Untuk Presiden 2024"* by (Hidayatullah, 2021). The results of this research found a semiotic meaning in the Photo of Billboards Giring Campaign for President 2024 there are various signs, text images, symbols and colors contained in the billboards that have their own meaning and colors contained in billboards that have their own meaning. Basically wants to get support and votes to all people, especially young people or the current millennial generation, which can be seen as a result of the or the current millennial generation which can be said to be the largest voting right at the 2024 election to advance Indonesia. during the 2024 elections in order to advance a better Indonesia.

On research with the title *"Semiotic Analysis On Kimetsu No Yaiba Movie Posters"* by (Andriani & Anti, 2022). The results of this research show that there are 26 symbols consisting of both verbal and visual signs, each of which is viewed from the meaning of denotation and connotation. Further, after translating the symbols and signs using the theory of Dyer (2009) and Barthes (1983), it is found that the meanings revealed give a teaser or clue about the story which tells about the journey in carrying out missions.

This research has similarities with previous research in terms of theoretical approaches that use a semiotic approach to analyze the meaning contained in visual media, such as political posters and billboards, and focus on revealing the meaning contained in signs, symbols, words and colors that affect voter perceptions. This research with several

previous studies also has similarities in the use of qualitative methods with descriptive analysis. However, there are also significant differences in the object of research, where this study specifically examines political posters for the 2024 Malang Regent and Deputy Regent Elections, while previous studies cover a variety of contexts and regions, such as billboards for mayoral elections and legislative candidates elsewhere. In addition, this study emphasizes the context of cultural myths and local values in Malang Regency that are relevant to local voters, uses data from one specific type of poster media, and explicitly adopts Roland Barthes' theory in its analysis, in contrast to some previous studies that used Charles Sanders Peirce's theory or other semiotic approaches and analyzed various types of media in one study. Thus, while there are similarities in approach and focus of analysis, this study offers uniqueness in terms of context, object, and theories used.

Based on the aforementioned previous related studies, the researchers only concerned with the difference between previous researches and the current one is the difference in the selection of the object and the research theory used. Roland Barthes' research theory is employed this present study. In other words this study is carried out to figure out the signs that appear in the poster, namely denotation and connotation signification correlated to the myth or culture of political posters of candidates for Regent and Deputy Regent of Malang Regency in 2024.

Overall, this research will offer a unique perspective on semiotics within political communication, extending the existing body of knowledge while contributing to the understanding of visual language in contemporary political campaigns. It will also have practical implications for political strategists and communication professionals. The results of this research are expected to enrich the study of semiotics and political communication, and provide guidance for political strategists in designing more effective and attractive campaigns. With a deeper understanding of how signs function in a political context, it is hoped that voters can become more intelligent and critical, thus strengthening democracy in Malang and its surrounding areas. This research also opens up room for further research into the relationship between visuality and politics, as well as how changes in communication practices can affect voter behavior in today's digital age.

METHOD

This writing uses qualitative research methods. According to (Creswell, 2009), qualitative research is a process of inquiry aimed at understanding human or social problems by creating a comprehensive and complex picture presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from information sources, and conducted in a natural setting. This approach was chosen because this research analyzes and explores phenomena that originate from human problems, in this case human problems in understanding semiotic signs. This approach was chosen because the data in this research is presented descriptively, the type of data is in the form of words without using numerical elements, and researchers interpret the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

Data collection was carried out in several stages, the data was taken through one of the posters represented as a candidate for the 2024 Malang Regency Pilkada which was published in August 2024, the poster was downloaded from one of the websites (<https://tretan.news/pasangan-sanusi-lathifah-shohib-siap-menangkan-pilkada-kabupaten-malang-2024/>). Then, the researcher identified and highlighted the signs and symbols in the poster, after which the researcher analyzed the visual image and observed the text in the political poster.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observation was conducted to observe the meaning based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, this analysis includes the identification of denotation meaning (literal meaning), connotation (additional meaning), and myth (hidden meaning) of each sign and word. Coding was given to each sign to facilitate analysis and categorization. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify the main themes and political messages conveyed. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of narratives and images to clarify the

FINDINGS



There are several signs and words in political posters. All the signs found will be explained so that all data can be read and detected correctly. The researcher breaks down the 10 visual image and observed the text in the political poster into 10 datums, where each datum will be explained in detail by the researcher. Thus, the meaning that the poster maker wants to convey can be well understood well understood by the reader. The 10 visual image and words are divided into three concepts, namely Denotation, Connotation, Myth and culture. The following are Data found:

DATUM 1



Gambar 1.1

The image shows a woman wearing a green hijab, the woman smiling to show a positive and friendly expression. In addition, the style of hijab worn gives a modern and

stylish impression, showing that hijab can be a part of everyday fashion. Overall, this image illustrates the beauty and diversity of hijab wear, and shows how women can express themselves through their clothing choices.

Furthermore, in terms of denotation the datum (1) refers to as a head covering worn by women, and shows a way of dressing that is in accordance with social norms in the context of Muslim culture (Kilian, 2019). The woman smiled, showing a friendly and positive expression. In datum (1) also found connotations in the form of use of hijab can reflect religious identity and commitment to Islamic values, it also shows attachment to a community or organization and regional traditions, hijab can be seen as a symbol of religious freedom. Furthermore, the color green is often associated with fertility, life, and harmony. In the context of Islam, green is also considered to be the color loved by the Prophet Muhammad which symbolizes peace and prosperity.

In addition, the mythical analysis of color green in the context of hijab can create a narrative of hope and a better future, contributing to a positive image of the woman wearing it. The color green also refers to the culture of the unfortunate region, which is predominantly Muslim and follows the NU school of thought, where green is symbolic of NU.

DATUM 2



Gambar 1.2

The picture shows a man wearing a black songkok, his appearance shows a serious and solemn expression that reflects politeness and respect. The use of the songkok gives a formal impression to the wearer.

Besides, in terms of denotation datum (2) refers to songkok as a head covering commonly worn by Muslim men, especially in Indonesia. Plain and black in color, this songkok is often used as a mandatory attribute by officials. Then, the connotation findings of datum (2) are the wearing of songkok is often associated with Muslim identity and local culture. Some contexts show the position of men who wear songkok is considered a respected figure and has a certain status in society (Taufik, 2023).

Afterward, the myth analysis the songkok is symbolizes a traditional way of dressing or appearance that survives in the midst of modernization. As well as being the theme of a growing debate in society, between maintaining tradition and accepting change as noted by (Sarung BHS, 2024). The wearing of songkok is also associated with leaders who have a responsible attitude.

DATUM 3



Gambar 1.3

This logo features the words “Malang Makmur” with the use of modern and elegant fonts for the word “Malang” giving a professional impression, while the word “Makmur” is written using capital letters in red color giving a firm and striking element. On the left, there is an abstract graphic element that resembles a leaf, wave or water flow, so the element reflects growth, sustainability and dynamics, which is in line with the theme of prosperity as noted by (Kantor Kemenag Kab. Hulu Sungai Utara, 2024)

The word "Malang Makmur" of the datum (3) directly refers to the denotation aimed at the name of Malang Regency and the word “Makmur” which means prosperous or developing, overall this logo aims to reflect the identity of Malang Regency, emphasizing the spirit of growth and prosperity expected for the Malang Regency area. Furthermore, the connotation findings of the words “Malang Makmur” imply hopes and aspirations for prosperity in the Malang Regency area. There are several colors used, namely red, green, blue, which imply courage, growth and calmness. The shape of the leaf or wave graphic element suggests a harmonious relationship with nature, sustainability and innovation (Libra, 2019).

Thereafter, the mythical analysis of this logo can create a narrative that Malang Regency is an area that has great potential to develop and prosper, this builds an image that the community is active in striving for progress and prosperity.

DATUM 4



Gambar 1.4

The image reads “SALAF” in graduating white with the use of bold and capital letters, and a dark green silhouette behind it.

Furthermore, denotation findings from the writing “SALAF” on the picture of the datum (4) is an abbreviation of the names “H. Sanusi” and “Hj. Lathifah Shohib”. The acronym is formed from the initial letters of both names, namely “SA” from Sanusi and “LA” from Lathifah, so that it becomes the word “SALAF” to give a strong and memorable impression to the reader. Moreover, the connotation findings, the use of the name “SALAF” as the identity of the candidate pair can give a positive impression and provide nuances that prioritize religious and cultural values.

Then, the analysis of myth and culture by using the term “SALAF”, candidate pairs want to provide a narrative to the public that they are a representation of the traditions and values of Islamic teachings embraced by the community, so that they can gain broad support. That candidates who prioritize traditional and religious values can build good relations with the community, this can increase the attractiveness of the community in the election as noted in (Kompasiana.com, 2024).

DATUM 5



Gambar 1.5

The image displays the words “Lanjutkan!” with the use of bold letters and emphasis on the striking red color that can attract attention and add a sense of urgency.

The denotation of the words “Lanjutkan!” from the datum (5) refers to an order and invitation and emphasizes the intention to encourage the continuation of something. Additionally, the connotation findings of the word “Lanjutkan!” refer to an invitation to continue a policy, campaign or performance in a political context that has previously been started as noted in (Liputan6.com, 2024). A word that signifies passion and courage to achieve goals associated with aggressive political movements.

At the time, myth analysis found that in a political context it can create a narrative that by uniting and continuing the struggle, the community can achieve the desired change.

DATUM 6



Gambar 1.6

The image features a horizontal line consisting of five colored segments: red, orange, green, blue and yellow, this colored line is placed on a pure white background. Each color is the same size, giving it a balanced look.

The denotation of the color line in the datum (6) is a visual representation of various colors arranged in sequence. After that, the Connotation findings of the colors can be associated with diversity, each color has an emotional connotation. Red is often associated with passion, green with hope, blue with peace, and yellow with happiness. The combination of these colors can give a positive and energetic feel (Libra, 2019).

Also, the analysis of myth and culture in the context of this color line creates a narrative for social and political movements that emphasize human rights and equality. In the cultural view, the use of color can be associated as a symbol of diversity that reflects social norms and emphasizes the importance of tolerance and acceptance of differences as noted by (Kumparan.com, 2021).

DATUM 7



Gambar 1.7

The image features striking and informative text that reads "CALON BUPATI DAN WAKIL BUPATI MALANG 2024-2029". The word "CALON" is displayed in white capital letters with a red highlight, the words "BUPATI DAN WAKIL BUPATI MALANG" are written in black capital letters and there are red and white colors like the Indonesian flag placed on the letter "P" in the word "BUPATI".

Besides, the denotation of this captioned Image of the datum (7) displays clear information about the candidates, namely “CALON BUPATI DAN WAKIL BUPATI MALANG 2024-2029.” The writing is a direct statement about who to vote for in the upcoming election. Furthermore the connotation findings relate to the power and aspirations of the word “CALON” which is highlighted using the color red, which is interpreted as a symbol of courage

and enthusiasm to compete in the election (Nugroho, 2015). This shows the hope and aspiration to lead.

Subsequently, Myth and cultural analysis in this image can build a narrative that the elected leader has an important role in regional development, the myth states that a good leader will bring progress and prosperity to the people. And the general election is a battleground between various ideologies and visions for the future, where the people have the right and power to choose their leaders (Islami, 2023). In the context of political culture, this image reflects democratic values that serve as a medium and tool to mobilize people to exercise their voting rights in choosing leaders.

DATUM 8



Gambar 1.8

The image features two people, a man on the left and a woman on the right with different facial expressions between them.

The denotation of the image of the datum (8) refers to features two individuals, a man and a woman. The facial expressions of the two appear different, the man smiling slightly showing a serious but friendly expression. While the woman shows an expression of happiness and warmth by smiling broadly. Furthermore, the man's serious but friendly expression refers to the connotation as a symbol of confidence and assertiveness. This can show that the man is a reliable figure. Meanwhile, the woman's wide-smiling and cheerful expression creates a positive impression that can be considered as a symbol of hope and optimism, and indicates that she is a friendly and approachable person as noted by (Administrator UGM, 2012).

Additionally, the mythical analysis of the image refers to the different facial expressions of men and women is a combination that creates a narrative that effective leadership involves a balance between firmness and warmth. To exercise balanced leadership, the ideal leader must possess both traits. According (Hayana, 2023) in many cultures this image also reflects gender representation in leadership i.e. social change where women are increasingly recognized in leadership positions. This shows that society is beginning to accept and value the role of women in politics and decision-making.

DATUM 9



Gambar 1.9

This image features two people, a man on the left and a woman on the right. Both are wearing clean and neat white shirts, creating a formal and professional impression.

Also, the denotation of the datum (9) refers to the use of white shirts that look clean and well-groomed, creating a formal impression. After that, connotation findings relate to the color white which is often associated with simplicity and clarity, this symbolizes integrity and transparency in the context of leadership.

Next, myth analysis in this context is clean leadership. Where the use of shirts builds

the myth that a leader must be clean, both physically and morally. In a cultural context, the color white symbolizes the value of cleanliness, purity, and openness (Nugroho, 2015). In political campaigns white shirts are often used to create a positive image, this can also create expectations among the public that leaders must be transparent and honest in all actions taken.

DATUM 10



Gambar 1.10

This image gives a fresh and energetic impression due to the use of a bright blue background, the clean and simple background allows the text displayed to be the main focus.

Afterward, the denotation findings of the datum (10) refers to the use of a bright blue color as the background. The blue color provides a good contrast with the text displayed, so that the written information can be read easily. In addition, the connotation findings refer to the color blue which is often associated with trust and stability, blue also symbolizes calmness and tranquility which can give a positive impression of the elected leader (Nugroho, 2015). With the hope that it can present a harmonious atmosphere in government.

After that, the mythical analysis of the blue background gives the Impression of ideal leadership, that a good leader must have traits associated with this color, such as honesty, openness, and stability. The myth that emerges is that the people of Malang want a leader who is not only competent but also brings a clear vision for the future.

DISCUSSION

This research uses the semiotic theory approach developed by Roland Barthes. In this study, it discusses the semiotic analysis of political posters for the 2024 Malang Regent and Vice Regent Elections, where the results of the analysis show that each visual and verbal element in the posters can contribute to the formation of complex and diverse meanings. The semiotic approach provides a powerful framework for understanding how signs function in a political context, as well as how they can influence voters' perceptions and behavior. The discussion includes the implications of the analysis results, the contribution of the research to the science of semiotics and political communication, and recommendations for further research.

This research reveals a general trend that semiotic analysis of political posters for the 2024 Malang Regent and Deputy Regent Elections shows a complexity of meanings that influence voter perceptions, with symbols, colors, and words depicting cultural identity and community aspirations. The findings are in line with previous research, such as the analysis by Alfian (2015) and Fitria (2017), which also highlighted the use of visual elements in political advertisements to attract sympathy, but differed in the focus on the local context of Malang Regency reflecting social and cultural dynamics. This study accepts the hypothesis that visual elements have diverse meanings and contribute to shaping political narratives, making them effective in understanding political communication. The implications of this study are significant, providing insights for political communication practitioners to design more effective campaigns, as well as encouraging voters to be more critical in assessing political messages, with the hope of strengthening democracy in the Malang Regency area and increasing informed voter participation. Thus, this study not only enriches semiotic studies in political communication, but also opens space for further exploration of the relationship between visibility and politics and its impact on voter behavior in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that semiotic analysis is a powerful tool for understanding and interpreting messages in political posters. Through Roland Barthes' approach, this research has uncovered the layers of meaning hidden behind the visual and verbal elements in political campaigns. These posters not only function as a communication tool, but also as a medium to build people's identities, aspirations and hopes. Furthermore, this research shows that the semiotic analysis of political posters for the 2024 Malang Regent and Vice Regent elections reveals complex meanings through denotation, connotation, myth, and culture of each element. Each element, such as images, colors, and text, has a clear literal meaning (Denotation) and creates additional meanings (Connotation) that reflect the values, hopes, and aspirations of the community, such as courage and desire for prosperity. The analysis of the myths found depicts narratives about the identity and expectations of the community, including the importance of tradition and the role of women in leadership. In addition, from the analysis of the cultural findings the elements serve as a communication tool and representation of norms and beliefs in the community's culture, which creates an emotional bond between the candidate and the voters. Overall, the results of this study show how political posters function as a powerful medium in building people's collective identity and aspirations, as well as their influence on voter behavior.

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