

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Video games, “electronic games in which players control images on a video screen” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), have gained popularity since it was invented in 1952 by a British professor A.S. Douglas (History, 2017, para. 3). As time goes by, the technology becomes more sophisticated and as a result, more and more consoles are created and the games themselves have become more various. There are some devices to play video games such as “computer, consoles (*Nintendo, Sega, PlayStation, Xbox, Dreamcast, and mobile devices*)” (History, 2017, para. 17-28). Nowadays, the ones that are very popular are online video games. This is due to their having high-definition graphics capabilities, lots of genres, being able to be played in anywhere and played with strangers online (History, 2017, para. 29).

Besides the above mentioned factors, the covers of the video games are also one of the determining appeals for consumer to decide whether or not they would buy a game. The cover reveals some snippets of the game; thus people could see what the video game is about.

From the covers of video game, players could find a lot of codes in a game or reveal the details that may help them get a bonus in the game. Besides, game covers usually bring up a certain concept that may relate to the game itself.

One of the games that are known to have creative cover is *Borderlands 3*. It was released in “September 2019, and was published and distributed by 2K” (Borderlands, n.d.). It is an action role-playing shooter and action role-playing video games. *Borderlands* is the “first game which successfully combines the genre between RPG and FPS” (Hybrid, n.d., para. 3). *Borderlands 3* game is the third in the series and just like its predecessors; this game’s cover also features one of the characters in the game. In this cover, there is a man with a halo behind his head; he is wearing a kind of robe. He is also portrayed to be surrounded by flowers and weaponry behind his back. In addition, *Borderlands 3* game cover has a certain concept that is different from the other two covers of *Borderlands 1* and *2*. They show more violence in their covers. However, there are no such things in *Borderlands 3*. Thus, it makes the cover more unique and interesting to analyze.

As game covers do not only contain pictures but also texts, I believe that it can be analyzed by using a branch of Linguistics field that is called Semiotics. By using it we can reveal the main concept of this game cover as “the study of signs and symbols and how they are used” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Semiotics is a study of using languages in analyzing the meaning of signs or symbols that can be found in our social life. One of the theories in Semiotics is created by Saussure, the father of Semiotics. He proposed a dyadic model, defined as a form of sign which consists of signifier (the form/image) and signified (the concept/the meaning); for example

if there is a word “flower” as a signifier, the main concept must be a thing that has stem with petals, but each person has their own main concept; it could be a rose, a jasmine, or other types of flowers. The usual purpose of doing a dyadic analysis is to determine the main concept or the meaning through signifiers that appear in a certain sign using Semiotics.

I believe that *Borderlands 3* game cover also has a certain concept that is the core or the most important thing in the game. Thus, the purpose of the study is to find the signifiers in the game cover in order that the meaning and/or the big concept behind it may be revealed. In this study, the cover is divided into eight signifiers which are the characters, the logo “PS 4”, the text “*Borderlands 3*”, the rating logo, the producer and developer logos, the roses, the weaponry and the background; they are then interpreted.

The findings of this study are important for linguistic students considering that signs are everywhere in our lives and that everything has meanings. Thus, it may help build awareness in people that even something as trivial as the cover of a video game also brings us a certain concept that makes it unique and distinctive from other game covers. This study is also hoped to add to the existing literature of Semiotic study.

(Total Words 738)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research seeks the answer of the two following questions:

1. What are the signifiers in *Borderlands 3* cover?
2. What does each signifier signify?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. to find out the signifiers in *Borderlands 3*
2. to find out the signified of the signifiers

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One contains Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purposes of the Study and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two provides a literature review about the theory used in this thesis consisting of three sub-sections, which are Semiotics, Saussure's Dyadic Model, and the review of the article of Wira Mahardika Putra's visual illustration analysis on *Dreadout* game poster through Semiotics (2018). Chapter Three explains the methods that I used for doing this research. Chapter Four discusses the analysis of signifiers which are found in the *Borderlands 3* cover and the explanation of each signifier. Chapter Five contains the conclusion of this study. Finally, this thesis ends with a list of References and Appendices.