

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, we can find brands everywhere. The brands uniquely differ from one and another because of their special traits – symbol, color, icons, and words. I have the impression that the brands can make the products or services different from others. And yet, it is sometimes found that they merely put a random name in a random proportion in a brand without being aware that a brand is actually important for a company. It is because the brand is the representation of the company.

A brand or a logo has an important role as Ryan Hicks said in his article “Your logo is what represents your company and what you do. By having an established logo, you are letting consumers know who you are and you are building brand recognition because consumers will start to recognize your logo with the products or services they are looking for” (Hicks). Moreover, William King states about brand and branding “Branding is perhaps the most important facet of any business beyond product, distribution, pricing, or location. A

company's brand is its definition in the world, the name that identifies it to itself and the marketplace.” (King). From the quotations, I conclude that brand is important in a company.

For this reason, I want to study the brand as the *language* used by the producer to communicate its concept of the product and the service they offer to consumers. Laura Oswald, an expert of Semiotics, said “A brand is a system of signs and symbols that engages the consumer in an imaginary or symbolic process that contributes tangible value to a product offering.” (Oswald) My purpose of writing this thesis is to make the reader aware of the importance of a brand. A brand can be considered as a sign because it often uses visual graphs, sounds, or words, “something that *stands for* something else.” (Chandler 2). In my thesis, the most suitable definition of a brand is “A recognizable and trustworthy signifier of origin and also a promise of functional or emotional delivery.” (Government Communication Group)

To describe the importance of a brand is, firstly, I would like to elaborate on the definition. A reassurance is hidden behind the visible brand, and audiences can easily recognize it and be guaranteed that they can trust the company. It is because they get the ‘reality’ the company promises, namely, the services offered. Brand is the signifier because it carries the company’s concept. To be functional, a brand has to be emotionally communicative or referential. From the elaboration stated, it is true that a brand is important for a company.

Brand as a medium has to be communicative to make the consumers easily identify the message the marketers want to convey through the brand. Furthermore, brand is the symbol of the reputation of an organization.

(Government Communication Group) Yet, not all companies are aware of the importance of brand as their trading language. This situation causes problems in conveying the concept. As a result, the customers are brought to interpret other things instead of getting the intended concepts of the companies the marketers want to convey.

As I am going to analyze brands as *language*, semiotics will be applied in analyzing the brands. What I want to analyze are what the linguistic signs reflected in the brands of companies, specifically, cafés or restaurants and how brands communicate their concepts of companies to their consumers. This is my reason for my choosing the topic of this thesis. My topic is analyzing humans' way of communication through brand by using semiotics. Basically, I am challenged to do this study because I am interested in understanding human communication, in this case, through brands.

My significance of the study is to show that a brand is also a language used by people to communicate something to other people. In my case, communicating the concept of restaurant to its consumers. A brand is where people place their trust in the company so that people will have more respect for the product or service if they see the connection between the brand and the product. Moreover, by writing this thesis, I want to show people to become more aware of the signs which are actually, a part of our life.

For the data, I choose local brands because I can observe the places. The cafés or restaurants which I choose as the data are some quite prestigious cafés or restaurants where middle or higher class people usually eat or dine. In my

opinion, such prestigious places are supposed to pay attention to the brands and aware of the important role of brands in representing their companies.

I will analyze the data by using the structuralism theory proposed by a Swiss Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the semiotics theory of the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. Semiotics is a study of signs. According to C. W. Morris, “Semiotics covers the triad Syntax (the relationship of signs), Semantics (the meaning of signs), and Pragmatics (the relationship between the signs and their users).” (Van Zoest 7) In short, my field of study is syntax, semantics, and pragmatics by using semiotic approach.

According to Saussure, the founder of structuralism, we know the meaning of something by relating it to other things in a sign system. Based on this theory, Saussure offered a dyadic sign: a sign has to have a signifier and a signified to make something different from something else. Meanwhile, Peirce believes that a sign establishes its meaning through recursive relationships that arise in sets of three. He proposed the triadic sign, using the relation of *representamen*, *interpretant*, and *object*. Peirce’s theory is more of human communication. Although Saussure’s and Peirce’s theories are slightly different, their theories support each other.

I find that semiotics has a vast range of application. Semiotics can be applied to any study. I have read some researches and journals of semiotics on literature, linguistics, and design. To be more specific, I will try to apply Semiotics to linguistics, namely, the sign system used by humans to communicate something to other people. Hopefully, my analysis of brands will

contribute something to my university and also for others who want to develop my thesis more deeply.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. What are the linguistic signs reflected in the brands of cafés or restaurants?
2. How do the brands communicate and represent the concepts of the cafés or restaurants by using semiotics?

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To show what the linguistic signs reflected in the brands of cafés or restaurants.
2. To show how the brands communicate and represent the concepts of the cafés or restaurants by using semiotics.

1.4. METHOD OF RESEARCH

I start the research for this thesis, firstly by library research by reading Chandler's Semiotics: the Basics to know and master the basic of Semiotics. I also read many books and scholarly journals dealing with Structuralism and Semiotics. Then, I compile some texts taken from the Internet.

Then I browse some brands in the Internet and find their concepts. All of the information and knowledge having been gathered are then used to analyze the brands. Finally, I draw some conclusions from the research I have conducted.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is presented in four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, the Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two consists of the Theoretical Framework, which is used as the approaches to analyze the data in Chapter Three. Chapter Three is the analysis of the brands. The analysis will be concluded in Chapter Four, where I give some comments and opinions of the findings. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendix.