

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As social creatures we need to communicate with one another in our society. It goes without saying that we need language to speak with other people. Language is important in our life. It is because we use language as the communication system. By means of language, we express our thoughts, imagination, feelings and creativity. This is in accordance with the argument of Saussure, a Swiss linguist who states that language is ‘the most important of all of the systems of signs’ (Saussure 15).

In correlation between language and Semiotics, Saussure argues that ‘nothing is more appropriate than the study of languages to bring out the nature of the semiological problem’ (Saussure 16). Aside from Saussure, another linguist named Claude-Levi Strauss notes that ‘language is the semiotic system *par excellence* it cannot but signify, and exists only through signification’ (Chandler 9).

Nowadays people use technology as a way to support language as the communication system. By using technology, we can more easily express our creativity and imagination to reach our purposes.

One way of using technology is in visual signs such as radio, television, films, novels, newspapers, advertisements, pamphlets, magazines, books, photographs, and posters. People use technology, especially visual signs which contain some pictures with a special meaning to express their messages through the signs in the illustrative pictures.

What we routinely refer to as 'signs' in everyday life is such signs as road signs, pub signs and star signs (Chandler 1). The signs which are around us can be analyzed in semiotics as it includes the study of all these. Semiotics is 'the study of signs' (Chandler 1). Semiotics is not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image (Saussure 66). Therefore, the signs can also be visual signs, drawings, paintings, photographs, words, sound and body language (Chandler 1).

This thesis is concerned with one of the visual signs, namely a film poster. A film poster can convey the ideology of the film maker to the audience. In my opinion, it is important for us to discuss the hidden meaning of the pictures in the poster by making a semiotic analysis.

Analyzing film posters is interesting because when we pay attention to a film poster, we can understand the main idea of the film. People usually take a look at the film poster before deciding to watch a film. The pictures in a film poster usually depict the story of the film. There are a number of semiotic elements worth analyzing in the poster of an adventure film such as how the excitement of the adventure is clearly and interestingly illustrated in the poster.

I take the data from the posters of two adventure films which I find appropriate for my research. I use the posters of The Mummy film series entitled The Mummy and The Mummy Tomb of the Dragon Emperor. I choose those films because they have the same myth, which can be seen from the historical background and the cultural background. In addition, those films are about the battle between good and evil in Hollywood movies.

The significance of this topic is that it can enable people to understand the message of the film by analyzing its poster. The audience can imagine the story and the ideology of the adventure film before deciding to watch the film. It will also enable the film maker to communicate with the audience better and to explain as well as inform the main story of a film simply by looking at the film poster.

The research in this thesis deals with linguistics, particularly semiotics. The main semiotic theories that I use in this research are the theories by Ferdinand de Saussure, who creates the two-part model of the sign and those by Roland Barthes, who focuses on the model of signs using myth as a semiological system of sign. Besides, I also use the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen as well as Said's Orientalism to support the semiotic analysis of the two posters.

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1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this thesis the problems analyzed are formulated as follows:

1. What semiotic elements are found in the posters of the films The Mummy and The Mummy Tomb of the Dragon Emperor ?
2. What is the myth applied in the film posters?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research is conducted:

1. to find the semiotic elements in the posters of the films The Mummy and The Mummy Tomb of the Dragon Emperor.
2. to analyze the myth applied in the film posters.

1.4 Method of Research

In writing this thesis, first I choose a significant topic to analyze. Afterwards, I find the references in the library and browse the Internet to enrich my knowledge about semiotics. I choose the adventure film posters for my data. After that I analyze the film posters. In the end, I write the research report.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the presentation of the theories which are put forward by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, and which are used to analyze the data in Chapter Three. Chapter Three contains the analysis of the data. Finally, Chapter Four is Conclusion, which is followed by Bibliography and Appendix.