

*Public Service Announcement In Indonesia and Malaysia: A Semiotic Analysis*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to analyze how public service announcements: social media and newspapers were applied in Indonesia and Malaysia. The method of this study used a qualitative research approach. Social media and newspapers were analyzed as the objects of this study. The researchers used documentation and observation in collecting data and used Barthes' theory to find out how the public service announcements were used. The result of this study shows that public service announcements are communicated in Indonesia and Malaysia have some similarities and differences. They can be seen from languages, contents, colors, models, media, designs, and places of public service announcements. This paper presents an analysis framework and rarely do any studies defy such attempts critically.

Keywords: Semiotics Analysis; Public Service Announcement; Publishing

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## Introduction

The public announcement seems purposeful and beneficial to inform the societies toward the significant information. Therefore, the public service announcements are advertisements published in local newspapers, social media, broadcast on local radio, public facilities, television, or sent as mailings to announce public comment periods for EPA decisions and major project milestones. Public service announcement is not meant to be used to provide updates on site progress or to inform or educate the public about specific site activities. A public service announcement has to present a simple, clear message in a conspicuous place (Wang and Lund 2020).

A service of the public announcement which is supported with representative pictures or captions functioned to bring a serious subject to the attention of the audience; a public-interest message that is freely shared by the media to enhance public awareness (Leksono et al. 2020). Furthermore, PSAs (public service announcements) have progressively become a part of our daily lives. These messages, aimed at correcting social behavior patterns and bringing public notice to particular societal ills, may be found almost everywhere (Malenova 2018).

Likely, Studies on public service announcements have been conducted (Jolani, et al., 2017; Puppini, 2020; Trubyk, 2010: and Weber, 2013). Jolani, et al., (2017), views the semiotics aspect as an essential aspect of preparing new structures for mass media programming, including public service announcement. the study examined the semiotics of constructive elements and factors of public service announcement on a radio channel focusing on health. Additionally, Puppini (2020) examined environmental public service announcement as an essential yet underused aspect for environment-related communication in China. The environmental public service announcement uses an array of culture-related elements as intertextual reference or visual metaphors to promote awareness of wildlife protection.

To be expected of semiotic agreement on publics, Trubyk (2010) and Weber (2013) reported the design of the campaign and found that the interpretation of both the marginalized at-risk and law-abiding subject position is working within the public service announcements. Similarly, Matulewska and Wagner (2021) describe semiotics for public signs should be relatively simple to understand and sufficiently substitute written signs.

The focus of the present study involves recent research relating to the identities and functions of languages in public service announcements. Signs used in the public area for public service announcements involve the use of images or icons that communicates meaning to the public, however, the meaning is not the sign itself. Therefore, This paper first gives a diachronic overview of Malay and Indonesia policy leading up to the present situation, then analyzes the collected data in social media and newspapers. Thereafter, the survey is presented, including examples of Public Service Announcements.

Based on the phenomenon that occurred, this research comprises a semiotic examination of texts applicable to public service announcements in Malaysia and Indonesia. Based on this reverberation, the researchers chose to apply the ideas from Barthes' semiotic theory, as a structure for the examination of the signs chosen as samples of public service announcements that are utilized in both countries.

To serve the supportive thought and notion, the researcher investigated and cited numerous references which are relevant and significant to highlight the topic selected.

## **Language Policy and Practice in Malaysia and Indonesia**

To support nationality, Malaysia's government implemented several language policies to promote the national language for several decades. The government permeated the new system of schools which was categorized into two types of schools in 1957, they were national and national-type schools. The national school was employing the Malay language as the medium of instruction as supported by the government, while the national-type schools used other vernacular languages like English as the instruction medium (David, Dealwis, and Kuang 2018). However, in the Indonesian education system, English is not taught as a second language but is taught as a foreign language. Indonesians have their official language and that is Bahasa Indonesia or the language of Indonesia. Most Indonesians speak one of more than 700 indigenous languages; That is the reason why Indonesians use English as a foreign language. Besides, English is only accepted on the surface level such as high-class society but resisted at the cultural and psychological levels. People who stay in rural areas do not speak English. They use their mother tongues for communication (Zein et al. 2020).

In accordance with language practice, semiotic in some countries sometimes supports language qualities established to give information. As academics have worked to provide a more nuanced understanding of these landscapes, this field has increasingly been referred to as Semiotic Landscape studies (Goebel, 2020). Purposefully, Advertisements for public services are the product of cultural construction involving the representation, creation, and implementation of ideas in society. The government, authorized parties, commercial or non-commercial groups, or institutions may issue public service advertisements to achieve a social or socioeconomic aim (Agustia and Subratha, 2021).

### **Language Use in Public Service Announcements**

Public service announcements (PSAs) are designed to inform and educate the general public in order to effect social change where this sign could be easily found in public.

**Social Media.** Videos, sounds, photographs, articles, and other forms of media are used to make social networking service adverts as appealing as possible (Agustia and Subratha, 2021). Social media is widely used, and it is becoming increasingly intertwined with a variety of societal domains (van Dijck and Poell, 2015). Some references are then read; Paek et al (2011); Maidin et. al (2019); Jerome et al (2021). Maidin et. al (2019) at the first examined the public perspective of public service announcement by Malaysian government through social media. Upon this study to find out whether the public are aware announcements made by the government, it was found that people are well informed and aware of social media PSAs eventhough they do not follow the government's account.

**Newspapers.** Newspapers in Public Service Announcement are considered substantial where the Newspapers serve as a source of news, education, entertainments, communal ambitions, social controls, and language trainings, among other things. The use of language in a newspaper's news article can be deduced from both shape and content of the text, written quickly and dynamically in order to attract, impress, and pique reader's interest (Muhammadiyah and Hamsiah, 2020). Newspapers have an important role in raising public awareness; Semiotics is used in newspapers to infer meaning and ideology from the use of signs and symbols (Sattar et al. 2020). Additionally, The language used for the Public Service Announcement was both Arabic and English and the topic was regarding forest and natural preservation was reported in the study under Mliless (2019).

**Barthers' Semiotic Theory.** The study of semiotic or symbol could be interpreted as the study about signs which semiosis is the study of sign processes, which are any action, behavior, or process involving signs, where a sign is defined as anything that communicates meaning to the sign's interpreter that is not the sign itself (Muhammadiyah and Hamsiah 2020). Consequently, it concerns how people understand and how they sign and symbols to make meaning (Mohamed et al. 2019). In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects (Sattar et al. 2020). Besides, Saussure stated that a linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept (signified) and a sound pattern (signifier). The model of Saussure's (1959) sign can be shown in the following:

Figure 1: Saussure's model of sign (Adopted from Chandler: 2007, p.33)



In concern with linguistic, Roland Gerard Barthes (1915-1980) continued and developed Saussure's theory about signs. Moreover, Barthes explored the essence of the sign system that goes beyond the rules and grammar for organizing the meaning of complex texts, hidden, and dependent on the culture, i.e., denotation and connotation are two main determinations of this theory. Connotation and denotation are two principal methods of describing the meaning of words. This idea is known as the "order of signification". Barthes' semiotic theory is as follows:

Table 1: Sign Map of Roland Barthes (Adopted from Ananda: 2019, p.25)

Signifier	Signified
<b>Denotative Sign</b>	
by	Connotative Signified
<b>Connotative Sign</b>	

In short, Barthes' theory explanation is concluded as follows: 1) denotation is the interaction between signifier and signified in the sign, and between sign and referent (object) in the reality; and 2) Connotation is the interaction that occurs when a sign is related to the feeling or emotion of the reader of their cultural value. Furthermore, a sign is more open in its interpretation of connotation than denotation.

## Method

The research used a qualitative approach to practically serve the objective data. Methodologically, this research employed Evaluative research where it belongs to qualitative research concerned with issues surrounding how well does it work (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As long as the method is procedurally used evaluative approach, this research aims to 1) to identify the factors of intervention and the effects of taking a subject of the study; 2) to examine the nature of the groups' requirement, and 3) to explore a range of organizational aspects of intervention and the context of intervention. A recommendation is significant to be publicly served. Darlington & Scott (2002) presented several procedures to write recommendations after evaluation research: 1) All aspects of evaluation are fair; 2) The possible phenomenon must be

reported before serving the information; 3) different sources are possibly needed; 4) A good relationship must be kept; 5) a context-based and realistic are a must for serving the recommendation; 6) setting a limitation is hoped, and 7) the recommendation is easily understood. The data of the research were from the public service announcements on social media and newspapers implemented by Malaysia and Indonesia. The techniques of collecting data were documents and observation. As Creswell (2012: p.223) stated: a valuable source of information in qualitative data can be documented. Documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study.

## Conclusion


### Semiotic of Public Service Announcements Used in Indonesia

Some phenomena are discovered to realize the theory of semiotic in certain public announcements such as social media and newspapers.

### Social Media

Social media, generally, is claimed as computer-based technology that facilitates the public with ideas, thoughts, and information via virtual networks and communities. By design, social media is internet-based and gives people quick electronic communication of contents. Besides, the following table represented a sample of 15 announcements published on social media found by the researchers:

Table 2: Semiotic Analysis of PSA in social media of Indonesia


No	Signifier (Picture)	Types of Announcement	Verbal Sign	Non-Verbal Sign	Signified (Denotative)	Connotative Analysis
1.		Education Information	Language Features: noun phrases, noun, verbs, emotive language  Sentence structure: Imperative, Declarative	Color: Blue, light blue  Picture: Someone presenting into a group, someone handing over a paper, a folder organizer	This is to inform students from both Indonesian and foreign students currently studying in Indonesia regarding the occasion to sign up for the Bali Democracy Students Conference III	Color: the blue and light blue color resembles a bright and casual atmosphere  Picture: Someone presenting into a group resembles the conference itself, someone handing over a paper resembles the admission process, the folder organizer resembles the required documents

Based on table 2, it can be seen that numerous announcements posted on social media are put on platforms popular to Indonesian netizens. The more common the social media platform used; the more netizen might see the PSAs posted. The PSAs on social media also use verbal signs on their announcements supported with relevant pictures. The findings showed that both denotative and connotative expressions are typically employed.

## Newspapers

Newspapers usually contain promotions, products, goods, services, jobs, and/or events made by producers or initiators which are delivered through media to public. Announcements are designed and customized creatively to get people interested in buying and using the products or services. The same principle goes with PSAs an announcement to get readers' attention. The researchers analysed twenty samples of the announcement which were written in the newspapers; yet, the following table represented some of announcements on newspapers.

Table 3: The Semiotic Analysis of Indonesian newspapers

No .	Signifier (Picture)	Types of Announcement	Verbal Signs	Non-Verbal Signs	Signified (Denotative)	Connotative Analysis
1		Healthy announcement	Smoking doesn't protect against Covid-19. Smoking is deadly. More than 8 million people die each year as a result of tobacco use. People with underlying health conditions such as heart disease, which can be exacerbated by smoking, are at higher risk of severe covid-19.	<p>A. colorful picture (a man with his cigarette) symbolizes how often public people consume various cigarettes.</p> <p>B. the bolded (yellow) information is used to highlight the stressed point of information.</p> <p>C. the mark or sign circle (colored with red) signifies the vital prohibition</p>	This announcement announces that smoking routine doesn't protect someone from coronavirus dangers	<p>A. This announcement has a purpose to inform the public readers especially for those who are smoking where this custom doesn't give them a safe from Covid19.</p> <p>B. to represent the dangers, the writer gave the symbol red color supported with the circle which means this icon signifies the</p>

				D. the logo/icon written World Health Organization (WHO) represented the official company who is authorized to determine the information		danger of prohibition.
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An announcement on table three used text and picture without any variation of color on the background. Besides, PSAs in Indonesia are delivered through some media.

### Semiotic of Public Service Announcements Used in Malaysia

Several services which publicly announced to public in Malaysia can be found on social media and newspapers.

### Social Media

The researchers found several announcements established on social media in Malaysia. Social media serves communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing, and collaboration-focused websites and applications. Here are some findings related to social media posts; the sample is a representation:

Table 4: The Semiotic Analysis of PSA in Malaysian Social Media

No .	Signifier (Picture)	Types of Announcement	Verbal Signs	Non-Verbal Signs	Signified (Denotative)	Connotative Analysis
1		Ministry of Health Information	<p>Language Features: noun phrases, noun, verbs, emotive language</p> <p>Sentence structure: Declarative,</p>	<p>Color: Black and white; The objects are sky blue and pink on some parts of the object and the declarative sentence.</p>	Malaysian citizens should take mental health issues seriously, and ask for help if needed.	<p>The color selection resembles an enlightening salutation message.</p> <p>The man looking down and resembles someone</p>


			Imperative	Picture: A person closing his eyes while looking down and some crayon scratch on his head.		having mental health issues
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The researchers analysed 15 samples of announcements sent to some public accounts of social media where this application commonly produced a significant declaration to be consumed by readers. The placement of PSA on social media of Malaysia is interesting, clear, and good for people. The language used English with some Malaysian spellings.

### Newspapers

Newspapers are appropriate or suitable to declare written expression to readers. This functioned to gain the readers' attention toward the information highlighted. The following information represented announcements found on newspapers:

Table 5: The Semiotic Analysis of PSA In Malaysian Newspapers

No .	Signifier (Picture)	Types of Announcement	Verbal Signs	Non-Verbal Signs	Signified (Denotative)	Connotative Analysis
1		<b>Weekly announcement</b>	I, Tan Sri Dato' Kam Woon Wah (NRIC No.291129-10-XXXX) do hereby irrevocably, unconditionally, and irreversibly declare and state that I had DISOWNED AND DISINHERITED my son, Dato' Sri Andrew Kam Tai Yeow (NRIC No. 620202-10-	Capital Letter Of The Title 'Announcement'	Announcement about someone who reveals something	a. This announcement is about someone named Tan Sri Dato' Kam Woon Wah who confess that he had disowned and disinherited his son and grandson. b. Emphasizing the title so it can be more eye-catching.



			XXXX) and his daughter Hannah Kam Zhen Yi (NRIC No. 911130-14-XXXX)			
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It is shown that PSAs in Malaysian newspapers are put on newspapers page visibly where the readers could see it clear. Twenty announcements were analysed in this research.

### **Similarities and Differences between Semiotics of PSAs in Malaysia and Indonesia**

After announcements have been displayed on numerous tables, researchers distinguish public announcements from both countries in certain spots.

#### **Social Media**

The similarities of PSAs on social media in Malaysia and Indonesia; the announcements are very clear, concise, and brief messages. Both PSA posts on Indonesian and Malaysian social media emphasize how to deliver such a piece of detailed information in the simplest way possible. While for the differences of PSAs on social media in both countries are on images and colors. PSA posted on Indonesian social media has a background image with various cheerful colors while PSA on Malaysian social media sometimes posts creepy atmosphere to raise public awareness regarding their safety. An example of this kind of PSA is those PSA posted by the Malaysian Police Force.

In addition to the theory used, this report is in line with how the analysis runs such denotative and connotative that extremely functioned to determine the context of messages. The announcements published through social media generally inform an entertainment that is designed impressively. A periodical publication offering textual information about current events that are typically typed in black ink on a white or grey backdrop.

#### **Newspapers**

it is seen that PSAs in Indonesian newspaper have various colour, using charts, figures, and image to ensure readers' understanding and perhaps catching reader's attention. Indonesia newspaper announcements use simple language. While, PSAs in Malaysia newspaper are usually using text only without any variation of colour on their background and do not use some images. Moreover, both countries also use very minimal non-verbal signs. The language style in both countries' PSA is quite the same. Photos are present to provide the context of news. Large fonts are used for the headline and white background made it easy to read, Public service announcements made by announcers in any country or a particular area should make public or people get the information. Public service announcements posted on social media and newspapers in Malaysia and Indonesia are already appropriate for societies to receive either announcement or message.

It could be suggested that this research could, furthermore, be the object of formal sources to acknowledge the study of semiotic for teachers and students. For further researchers, the

findings in this study are not fully perfect and need further investigation. Even though, this study can be a reference for other researchers who wish to use semiotic analysis by using Barthes' theory. It would be better if other researchers replicate this study by comparing other languages, texts, and cultures of other countries.

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