

SEMIOTIC SIGNIFICATION ON JEANS ADVERTISEMENT IN THE ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE

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ABSTRACT

The study is aimed at revealing the meaning of jeans advertisements in the Rolling Stone Magazines. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative supported by Peircean theory that focus on the relationship of the sign, the object, and the interpreter. The sign of Jeans advertisements can be a part of the sentence or the words from the headline text, then the text itself is combining with the picture to get the new sign (interpreter), the researcher analyzes and describes the meaning of the sign by Peirce's triadic theory to get the semiosis process. Result shows that there are many expressions of lifestyle, motivations, identities, and expression of consumerism on meaning of jeans advertisements. Those interpretations based on interpreter's experiences, knowledge, pointview, thoughts, cultures, and emotions. This study is important to reveal human's feeling, expression, thought, idea, and ideologies through sign's meaning investigation in communication.

Keywords: *Peirce, Semiotic, Jeans, Advertiserment*

I. INTRODUCTION

One element of the media that is almost inescapable and may affect the reader is advertising. Advertising according to the American Marketing Association is, "any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor," (Hanson, 2005). Advertising in America was the crucial thing. It has brought a big role for the development of American culture and economy through consumption. Thus the advertisements are paid message about specific organization, product, service, or idea that appear in the mass media then they have increased much earnings for American economy. As (Hanson, 2005) said,

"It has been a part of American media since the 1700s, the challenge today is to get consumers to pay attention to the messages that pay for so much of the media we receive. Advertising drives the size and diversity of the American economy by telling consumers the benefits they can expect from using a new computer, the image they will project by wearing a brand of

clothing, of driving a particular car, or the eating pleasure to be had from a new variety of breakfast cereal. In the conclusion, advertising has been a key element of the American economy and culture of consumption and acquisition for more than 100 years and has existed since before the United States was a nation".

Advertisement is divided into two kinds based on the aims; the first division is commercial advertisement, it linked to the varieties of product, such as food, drinks, clothes, or substances. The aim of commercial product is for campaigning a selling product oriented to profit or advantages. Commonly, its goal is for business or profit. The second division is social advertisement. The aim is to serve public, to remind public about the problem which happen around them, and to inform public about environment, education, politic, culture, social condition, or economic, etc.

Advertisement as part of media, it contained a picture and it has been used such for a long time, however in this globalization

era, the picture is used everywhere. Picture is symbol that must be read, just as a language is read, the picture did not merely reflect reality, as many people assumed, it can be something else than itself. (Forceville, 1996) stated,

“Advertisements are very rarely of a purely pictorial nature. Even though current advertising trends reveal a clear shift from the verbal to the pictorial, a minimum of text – if only a product’s name – is usually present”. As more products become available, advertising was used to promote them and what they stood for. People could now adopt a certain style and purchase the items necessary to portray that style to others – the clothes they wore, the food they served, the soap they washed with, and so forth. Each of these goods had an image associated with it that would rub off on its meaning to the product.”

In one side, human used advertising to convey feelings, expression, thoughts, ideas, and ideologies through a product, service, symbol, etc. In the other side, media regarded as a tool which can be functioned as the way to achieve its goals. Then the relationship among media and human’s figure as the sender, and products or services which are paid by an identified sponsor have created a problem on how we as the reader can read and interpret a message and meaning in the advertisement. Particularly, this case used product such as jeans, picture, and human has possessed to be the sender of the message in the advertisement. In addition, people have known that the products of jeans are particularly identified with American culture, (Sullivan, 200). Moreover, the Rolling Stone magazine of America consists of popular culture. It carries not only business music industries but also political and cultural issues that can be read by a large number of communities in the world such as musicians, artists, hippies, etc. Indirectly it persuades the readers to buy, use the brand of product, and to be role models for their lifestyle. Therefore jeans product advertised in the Rolling Stone magazine as the commercial advertisement not only to reach its goal but also to send a message or give meaning to the product through the verbal or picture.

Referring to the advertisement as part of the media. Thus media is one of the five main points of semiotics’ communication.

Semiotics’ communication emphasized on how the sign is produced and more intensive to make the goals of communication, (Sobur, 2006). The goal of communication is to transmit a message from the source to the receiver and to create meaning. A source sends a message through the medium to the receiver to produce some effect. This effect can be a response of the receiver, feedback, meaning, message, etc. Therefore, to create meaning is the way of the human’s life, because their life filled by sign, then they used the sign to convey the meaning and message.

The process of making or interpreting a message is semiotic’s role, it’s related to concept of sign. The study of sign which stands for something is called semiotic. Semiotic is concerned with sign and meaning. In this case, advertisement consisted of picture and verbal text that can stand for something else as a sign. Then this research particularly aimed at knowing the meaning on jeans advertisements as part of the media that can stand for something else as a sign and has meaning for the readers, to get the information, representation from another meaning, contained a message, advice for the reader as the user of the sign.

This research used semiotic interpretations to analyze the rich meanings. Peirce interpretation had well known by semiosis process in his triadic concept; sign, object, and interpreting. The reason that the researcher used his theory because he is more intensive to attain how the process of sign related to the object, and according to him, everything can be sign, which can be interpreted from the object, sign can be feature, symbol, movement, picture, diagram, screaming, opinion, news, flicker, thought, sound, memory, dream, social phenomenon, and everything.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1. Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotic Theory

(Peirce, 1839-1914) is the American founder of semiotic. He is a philosopher and logician. “The word ‘semiotic’ is synonymous with logic,” (Sobur, 2006). This statement referred to an argument on: “We think only in sign.” (Peirce, 1931). Therefore, his semiotic concept renowned with logic as the center of human thought. According to him, logic considered as the way of reasoning about the world through the manipulation of signs which

represent this world, (Lamarque, 1997). It means that logic can learn how people think or make a consideration. To think or make a consideration can be done through the sign. The sign itself functioned as media which put something or an object on our thinking and make a representation of its to connect or communicate with others. (Hawkes, 2003) stated that in Peirce theory,

“A sign or representament is ‘something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity’: it is ‘anything which determines something else (its interpreter) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object)’. A sign thus stands for something (its object); it stands for something into somebody (its interpreter); and finally it stands for something to somebody in some respect (this respect is called its ground). These terms, representation, object, interpreter and ground can thus be seen to refer to the means by which the sign dignifies; the relationship between them determines the precise nature of the process of semiosis.”

Grand theory of peirce recognized by ‘semiosis’. It is the triadic structured process from sign as the firstness to be an object as secondness, then to be an interpreter as the thirdness. In semiosis process, there are consisted of three basics ‘modes of being’:

1. Firstness: The object as it in itself as virtually
2. Secondness: The actually existing object as different from and opposed to the mind and to other object
3. Thirdness: The object is presented according to a law which makes it accessible to recognition. Thus semiosis is the process governed by thirdness, (Lamarque, 1997).

The structure of semiosis conceived from nine principle or relation of sign to its sign. These are classes of sign:

The relation of sign to representation can be classified as:

- a. Qualisign: It is a sign. It comes from the word “quality”, thus it consists of a quality such as quality of feeling, quality of a possibility.

The examples: The colour of red, the words rough, hard, weak, soft, etc.

- b. A sinsign: It is a sign. It comes from the word “sin means singular”. It is a sign on the basis of being an actual singular thing and an actual occurrence or fact.

The example: laughing denoted as happiness, annoying denoted as humiliation, screaming denoted as the illness, crying denoted as sadness, etc.

- c. A Legisign: It is a sign. It comes from the word “lex”. It relates to norm, law, rule, the principle, habit, regulation, ordinance, code, convention, etc.

The example: A cue as nodding the head signified as agreeing to somebody or something, shaking hands signified as saying welcome to someone, shrinking the eyebrow signified as confused, etc.

The relation of sign to object can be classified as:

- a. Icon: It is a sign. It denotes its object by virtue of quality which is resembling and imitating its object. This sign usually can be depicted by visual and verbal sign. The examples; It can be a picture, ortrait, design, figure, statue, diagram, map, photograph which resembles or imitates its object, the picture of woman and man in the toilet etc.

- b. Index: It is a sign. It denotes its object by virtue of an actual connection involving the sign and its object. It is having causal relation and reagent of its object. The examples; smell of fishy is index of fish, smoke is index of fire, sound of cat “meow” is index of cat, symptom for disease, sour taste for lemon, sneez for influenza, sweet taste for sugar, etc.

- c. Symbol: It is a sign. It denotes its object by virtue of the social convention. It’s sign which takes the form of an object and it canstands to something else. It deals with the connection of convention, law, habit of nature or a habit of convention.

The examples: flower for expression of love, flags for

country, Morse for asking help, the individual replicas for expression, language as word for communicating among the human, number for counting, etc.

The relation of sign to interpreter can be classified as:

- a. Rheme : It is a sign. It can be termed as 'seme'. It represents its object in respect of the association between sign and its object.
The example: Someone with his grim face can be signifies that he was confronted by some problems or depressed.
- b. Dicent Sign: It is a sign. It can be termed as 'decisign or pheme'. It represents its object in respect of actual existence.
The example: the installing of the police line over the road was denoting that there were many incidents or there were many people committed the crime.
- c. Argument: It is a sign. It represents its object in respect of law or habit. It's sign that given some appraisals or arguments to something.
The example: If someone says "this house is frightening". He says such that because that place suits to be feared.

2.2. The Interpretation of Meaning Relates to Peirce Concept.

In comprehending the term of meaning in Peirce concept is to definite semiotic itself. It's said that "semiotic is the study of the production of meaning. (Lamarque, 1997). "It means the signs or representing objects have material manifestation in the representation's function. In broad sense, a picture, a word, a reaction in the brain, etc, they have a relation to material or mental, or factual, or real that can produce some meanings or reproduce another one in the context of sign's function. (Lamarque, 1997) stated, "A sign is a 'functional' unit." Furthermore, Peirce used *ground* as something that gives sign to be functional and meaningful, they are nine kinds of sign as mentioned in the previous page (please see on the page 4).

In the explanation preceded, Peirce's own focus had fallen mainly on logic. Logic is formed out of the

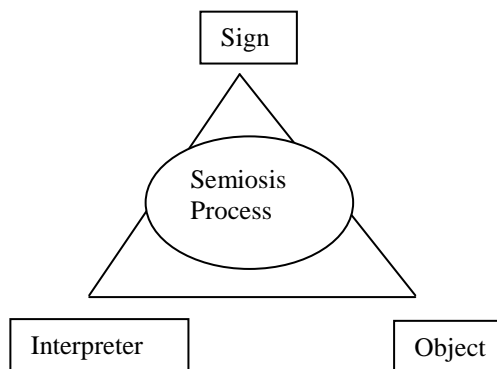
combination of reasoning and fact. "Logic can be seen as the science of general necessary law of signs", (Hawkes, 2003). In addition, "Peirce suggested that logic is a study of how human being thinks logically. Thinks logically is done by means of signs. Signs are enable us to think, make a relationship with other people and give the meaning with what show of nature. The nature of sign's ultimately dominant mode will depend finally on its context," Terence (Hawkes, 2003). As Peirce is one of the leading american pragmatist semioticians, his semiotic concept began with the observation in the phenomenon of the world. Human can use everyting what he saw in the nature and manifested it through sign, then he can interpretes it based on the social, history, knowledge, cultural context, and so on.

According to Noth as quoted by (Budiman, 2005), Peirce tries to expand all his classification based on three universal categories; Firstness or potentiality or quality (*a might be*). Secondness or actuality or effect (what happens to be at the moment). Thirdness or regulation or product in the process of its becoming necessity (what would be, could be, or should be, given a certain set of conditions), second has relationship with third. It is a mediation category, habit, idea, continuity, communication, and sign.

Based on the explanation above, here the writer gives the examples of the structure above; If we listen to the music of dangdut. At first, we felt immediatelly as kind of indonesian music, it's firstness. Our experience on space and time about dangdut music through notes, it's secondness. Then the relation of dangdut music to the notes, rythms, drum (instruments of dangdut) is thirdness. In such manner that meaning emerges for us at the particular moment.

According to Peirce, one of the forms of sign is word, while the object is something which referred by the sign. If those elements interact with someone's mind, the meaning will appear which represented by the sign. Those things can be explained with the theory of meaning triangle of Peirce, which consists of sign, object, and interpreter. In the meaning of triangle, it will be explained in turn how the meaning appears from the sign when the sign is used by the people in communication, (Fiske, 2001).The relationship of meaning of Peirce showed like this:

Inter-related Parts in the Concept of Triangle Meaning



(The relation of sign-object or (What the sign 'stand for' or represent.)
 (The meaning of sign-object's relation based on the sign assumption.)

From those triadic relationships among a sign or representament as a first, an object as a second, and interpreter as a third will produce some meanings which represented by the sign. As mentioned, one part of sign form is the word. In this example, the word 'bird'. This word is having relation with verbal language. That reflects sound in the language of /B/, /I/, /R/, /D/. That is saying in a row after that it can be written as bird. The word 'bird' is manifestation of sign or representament, it's something that refers to or stand for certain object that is bird. Then this word is captured other sign in human's mind. The word bird can be an object that reflects it in the real world. It shows physic of the bird which has two wings in the both side. Next, the interpreter comes after the relation of sign-object. It depicted by the interpreter or human's mind as an animal that capable in doing something such as flying. In spite of that the process of semiosis is not merely stop at here. sign will continue to interpret other meanings if the world bird posed as the picture of the bird. Then it has relation with iconic sign, it will be reinterpreted and changed meaning from the first mening to the second, and so on. Finally, this is the nature of semiosis.

Engendering and processing sign and making them meaningful are based on the cultural experience from each individual. Sign will be interpreted as long as the human's experience and pointview of the individual in giving meaning. Then finally, according to Peirce theory, the core of semiotics is semiosis, that the process of

sign becoming sign and the process of rendering signs meaningful.

III. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The objective of this research is to know the meanings among the relationship of the sign, the object, and the interpreter on jeans advertisements using Peirce theory. The method used in this research is qualitative method. Qualitatif method is one way to explain or to describe the data. In this research, the researcher describes and analyzes jeans advertisements in Rolling Stone magazines based on the relationship of sign, object, and interpreter in semiotic Peirce theory. The sign from the Jeans advertisements can be a part of the sentence or words from the headline text and combined with the picture to get the new sign (interpreter). The reseacher assumes the representations subjectively as the writer's interpretation through the sign.

IV. DISCUSSION

In these data descriptions, the writer will tabulate the collected data from Rolling Stone Magazine as described below:

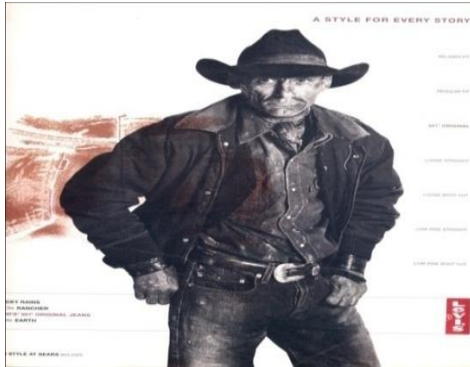
No	SIGN	OBJECT	INTERPRETER
1	“A STYLE FOR EVERY STORY”	The picture number one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The man’s consumer lifestyle in jeans. • The ideals and special wears. • Jeans had suited wears and more fashionable for any kinds of occupation.
2	“ If we want things to change for the better, we have to be the miracle”	The picture number two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The black man’s idea of indicating self-concept that he believed in hard working or effort, and wishing for getting something. • To promote the benefit of the product. • The organization shows to build awareness of the product and the life. • The brand stands for providing quality product, creating worlds and inviting people to take part in the destination.
3	{Ready to Wear}	The picture number three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a benefit of the product by demonstrating the ready to wear. • Jeans (ready clothes) are better than sewing clothes. • The lifestyle of the Rolling Stone consumers such as rock musicians. • Jeans available in many branches and had special price.
4	Nate Bockley	The picture number four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branded image by actor to build a positive image of the product Supported or opposed a piece of organization such as G.I.V.E. • To build the positive image of the product by using an actor. • The actor shared his time and talents as volunteers with non-profit community-based organization. • Give the information about Jean’s company and their organization.
5	Calvin Klein Jeans	The picture number five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This kind of jeans branded by the name’s designer Calvin Klein designed for young couple. • Jeans determined by current sex and style because sex appeal in order to increase sales and big attention to the young couple consumers. • Dark Jeans or called by sulfur dying showed as the Ideal Jeans that can be worn for a night out on the town.

4.1. Data Analysis

From the description above, the data is analyzed through the perspective of Peirce’s triadic concepts which cover the sign, the object and the interpreter. In this analysis, the data are combined and related to the texts, the pictures and their interpreter

to get the interpretation and meaning in process of semiosis. Referring to the relationship of the triadic concepts, the data can be analyzed as follows:

1. The headline text: A STYLE FOR EVERY STORY



Picture No. 1

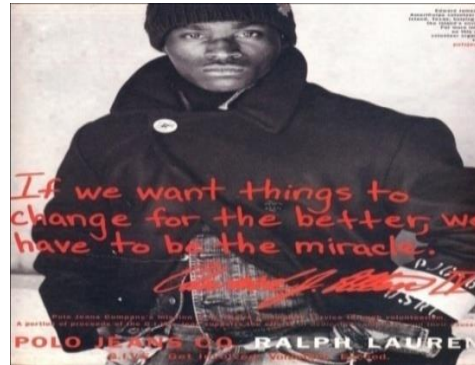
Source: Rolling Stone February 19, 2004. P.39

From the combination of sign as the text A STYLE FOR EVERY STORY, object as a picture, and the interpreter as the man's consumer lifestyle in jeans, jeans become ideals and special wears, jeans had suited wears and more fashionable for any kinds of occupation. Then The writer makes the assumption that person especially denoted to a man who exhibits an interest in using clothing as means of expression can be interpreted as demonstrating his likeness in wearing jeans. Jeans had been a suited wears and fashionable for any kinds of occupation, as Jeans come in many styles such as relaxed fit, regular fit, original, loose straight, loose boot cut, low rise straight, low rise boot cut, those kinds of jeans are fashionable to wear. Jeans become special for them because beyond jeans there was experience, story and life. This argument denotes to one of the man's occupation in the picture above as the rancher, the writer suggests that the rancher is a person who works on a ranch or a large farm. He would look fashionable and trendy by wearing jeans even life in the urban social in the West.

Jean in the picture also shows with the black jean color, it is contradictive with the text on the picture, written as Original Jean which referred to blue jean color, the writer thinks that the text and the picture both were supported to the theme of a style for every story, the theme shows the relationship of the lifestyle of the rancher in the entire time and jean that he used. Then the message is when the persons especially denoted to men who wear jeans, they have the style in their life and experience.

2. The headline text: If we want

things to change for the better, we have to be the miracle



Picture No. 2

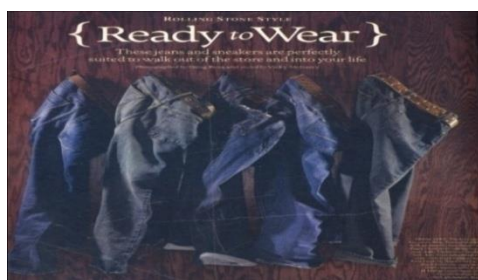
Source: Rolling Stone June 24, 2004. P. 17

From the combination of the three concepts, the sign as the text, the object as picture, and both of them can be correlated each other to the interpreter as the black man's idea of indicating self-concept that he believe in hard working or effort, and wishing for getting something, the organization shows to build awareness of the product and the life, the brand stands for providing quality product, creating worlds and inviting people to take part in the destination, to promote the benefit of the product. Then those all have made the interpretation in process of semiosis. As the writer gives argumentation that Edward Jams as the black American and he is a model of the organization of G.I.V.E and a brand of product POLO Jeans which support and oppose a piece of organization by using the image of the actor as the black person to attract the consumer and built awareness and attention to the product and life. The brand stands for providing quality product, creating worlds and inviting people to take part in their destination that encourage people to be aware of and take care of people life by giving something to the poor people. It expressed if the people wear and buy jeans, they had supported the goals or destination of the brand and the organization into their social environment, that the benefit for them and the brand of product.

In this case the text or the idea of the black American model is denoted to indexical sign that the word "if" used as "possibility" to express the condition in a cause-effect relationship, it is a loose construction of "we want things to change for the better then we have to be the

miracle". Means there is action and effect, there is an effort there will be a result. Then the interpretation in the text used as inspiration of success for every person who has spirit and willingness by working and doing a good thing for getting the better and then miracle will come. The text used to support and give a spirit to the people who want to be success.

3. The headline text: Ready to Wear



Picture No. 3

Source: Rolling Stone September 2, 2004. P.132

The triadic concept of Peirce can be shown in the text Ready to Wear as the sign, the picture as the object, and both were related each other in giving interpretation to the interpreter as promote a benefit of the product by demonstrating the ready to wear, jeans (ready-made clothe) are better that sewing clothe, the lifestyle of the Rolling Stone consumers such as rock musicians, jeans available in many branch's and had special price. Then the writer makes interpretation about this advertisement that someone who wants to wear instant or ready-made clothes just buys jeans as ready clothes. Jean shows as a simple ready wear that person does not to be struggle and difficult to sew their clothes. He just buys it at the store and he just got to use it. What he consumes is denoted to urban lifestyle. Many people can consume anything they need just in instant service or express time.

It shows the development of the technology. The advertisement also described the ready to wear or ready-made clothe is better than sewing at the tailor. This argumentation is supported by the picture that there many jeans ware hanging on, they look like clothes ready to wear and jeans available in many branch's and had special price. The picture also maintains the text of the Rolling Stone Style, it means that this ready to wear or jean usually worn by the

consumer, such as rock musicians. This opinion referred to the Rolling Stone is a kind of the group music of rock and roll.

4. The headline text: Nate Bockley



Picture No. 4

Source: Rolling Stone July 8-22, 2004. P. 146

The combination of the text, the picture, and the interpreter in the triadic concept of Peirce as showed in the column, can be interpreted as branded image by actor to build a positive image of the product Supported or opposed a piece of organization such as G.I.V.E, to build the positive image of the product by using an actor, the actor shared his time and talents as volunteers with non-profit community-based organization, give the information about Jean's company and their organization. Then the writer interpretation is a young man as a model gives a positive image for the consumer, as he was a public figure that always be seen by many people. Then when jean worn by him the people will follow to wear it, clothe or jean is a good style, fashionable and has the brand image of the actor. If the person wears jean he will look like a handsome man, kind man, and rich as Nate Bockley.

5. The headline text: Calvin Klein Jeans



Picture No. 5

Source: Rolling Stone September 16, 2004. P.13

From the relationship of the semiotic triangle, the sign as the text Calvin Klein Jeans, the object as the picture, and

both were correlated each other to the interpreter as this kind of jeans branded by designer's name Calvin Klein, Jeans determined by current sex-appeal, dark jeans or called by sulfur dying showed as the ideal Jeans that can be worn for a night out. So the writer gives her interpretation that the picture of young couple worn the Calvin Klein Jeans want to express their sex-appeal in wearing Calvin Klein Jeans, Jeans determined by current sex and style because sex appeal in order to increase sales and big attention to the young couple consumers, it means that jeans can be worn by both gender, in this case young man and woman. Then the brand product of Calvin Klein as designer used his name to make people known and more popular, brand image gives the information about Jean's company. Dark Jeans or called by sulfur dying showed as the ideal Jeans that can be worn for a night out on the town, therefore the picture showed young couple at the beach in the dark night, night identical with the black color it was synonymous for the black jean, the black jeans is made to be durable.

Finally, based on the analysis of sign on Jeans advertisements in the Rolling Stone Magazine. It can be said that to find an appropriate interpretation needs more investigation on sign. That is used to see a thoughtful interpretation on sign itself.

V. CONCLUSION

As the writer analyzed the data related to Peirce theory, that the interpretation of each data related on the sign as the texts, the object as the pictures, and the interpreter as the correlation of the sign to the object, next interpretes the relation and combination of three concept in the process of semiosis to create meaning or message, finally showed that there are many expressions of lifestyle, motivations, identities, and expression of consumerism on meaning of jeans advertisements. In this case, the writer interpretation through the sign is not same with the others interpretation. It shows the process of signification and interpretation does not merely have one meaning but it has a lot of meanings. The differences of interpretation happened in process of semiosis when the experiences, knowledge, pointview, thoughts, cultures, and emotions of each human in giving meaning through sign are different with each other. Besides

that, since the time is running, the process of the signification of each person through the same sign will be changing and continuing, as the people have different experience, background, needs, attitudes, knowledge, and values, etc, in interpreting the message. In short, everyone has been socialized differently. The analysis of sign in giving meaning never ended, and couldn't get final meaning. Then it was a kind of continuous process. Everyone has a different interpretation on sign.

Therefore the researcher concludes and suggests to other researchers to look at these points:

1. The researchers should use semiotic interpretations to analyze the rich meanings of products according to their experience, knowledge, thought, emotion, pointview, culture, etc, besides the theory of semiotic Peirce.
2. When the researchers analyze the data, they might produce a variety of meanings depended on the fact, experience, etc, which support the analysis.
3. The researchers might use another branches such as Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, etc, related to his understanding about the theory.

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