

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Choosing the Subject

Humans communicate with each other through language. The online Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'language' as an acknowledged mode of interaction among individuals in a specific nation or region that involves lettering and uttering symbols. However, according to Ferdinand de Saussure (2013), language is a structure to convey thoughts through signs (18). Furthermore, signs are the foremost component of human language (3.1 Language and Meaning, 2016, p. 125). A sign describes as representing a thing with another thing (Chandler, 2017, p. 2). When people agree on something, for instance, instead of saying or writing 'yes,' they can just nod to express their respond. In summary, signs play an essential role in communication.

Communication involves exchanging verbal and nonverbal signs affected by numerous circumstances to create meaning (1.1 Communication: History and Forms, 2016, p. 2). Mass communication, one of five fundamental communication forms (1.1 Communication: History and Forms, 2016, p. 6), uses mass media, involving printed and electronic media, to convey messages to a large audience (p. 11). Advertisement aims to make known goods, events, opinions, or services through diverse media (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). Initially the mode of conveying an advertisement was through raising someone's voice to promote varied goods before bystanders (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia, 2023). As technology advanced, new

ad media emerged into wording and images on printed media (e.g., newspapers, posters, and magazines), electronic media (e.g., radios and televisions), and internet-based media. Despite these advancements, the primary elements of advertisements remain as before, involving verbal (wording) and visual (images) elements.

Steve Jones and Martin Serger (cited in Vad, 2021) stated that music album cover, or album art, serves as protective packaging and marketing tool (p. 11). Alex Steinweiss is illustrious as an early designer and inventor of today's music album arts (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2021, p. 5). In addition, Steinweiss' designs were akin to posters (Jones & Sorger, 1999, p. 72), succeeding as marketing tool which the entire genre approved (Frank, 2008, p. 59). Steinweiss' design used textures, colors, typography styles, and the experiences of the music's composer to implicitly convey the content of music albums (Frank, 2008, p. 56–61). In brief, album art carries verbal and visual elements, which typically contains album titles, artist names, logos, images, colors, photographs, and typography.

According to Peter Doggett (2015), in his book entitled *Electric Shock* in chapter *Flying through the Air*, album art as promotion media of music album represented not only arts, but also lifestyles, movements, and cultural values. However, the advancement of in both recording medium and technology led to the demise of the cultural and social branding in album art (Doggett, 2015). In comparison, the technology development brings a good impact on music industry as well. Now people can listen to music on streaming platforms and

see album art on their gadgets (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2021, p. 10). Despite these transformations, album art, which comprises verbal and visual elements, remains as an essential part and inseparable from music culture.

According to Gillian Dyer (2009), visual elements are as essential as verbal elements when examining the content of advertisements (p. 69). Besides, visual elements are simpler to comprehend and more alluring than verbal elements (Dyer, 2009, p. 69). Furthermore, Standing, Conezio, and Haber (1970) affirmed that humans have an enormous memory for visual elements through conducting four trials of seeing pic for a few seconds for different participants each. Their study showed that most participants scored nearly 90% correct in reverse and non-reverse order on pairs of one previously seen-one new pics (Standing, Conezio, & Haber, 1970, p. 73–74). However, the participants' average scores decreased by approximately 80% when approaching the precise pictures' orientation. Despite this reduction, the study confirmed the vast and keen human memory for visual signs (Standing, Conezio, and Haber, 1970, p. 73–74). Thus, visual signs are a crucial aspect in analyzing ad content.

Semiotics is the study of interpreting signs or symbols. Ferdinand de Saussure (2013) stated that semiotics aims to examine the function of signs in societal interaction by considering the principles, periods, and circumstances of the signs and humans (p. 18). Furthermore, Daniel Chandler (2017) stated that semiotics examines signs and their structures to create meanings and portray their actual presence (p. 2). Additionally, signs are everything that people provide meaning into and use that shared meaning, including sounds, gestures,

scents, pictures, wording, tastes, and occasions (Chandler, 2017, p. 11). In other words, semiotics is the study of interpreting and depicting signs by looking at the signs' surroundings and principles. Thus, semiotics approach can aid in comprehending the ads content, such as in album art which comprise verbal and visual elements.

Roland Barthes (1991) claimed that advertising, in its whole, is a message that composed of two messages: denotation and connotation (p. 173–175). Denotation refers to a sign's meaning that people comprehend as it seen, whereas connotation needs to connect with the personal or societal circumstances in interpreting the sign (Chandler, 2017, p. 162–163). Linguistics studies predominantly apply semiotics approach in analyzing ads' content. For example, Diryani (2013) identified the implied message in an album art, Ali and Zafarullah (2015) exposed semiotics features in the printed cosmetics ads, Dhananjaya (2019) enlightened the meaning of a movie poster, and Sidauruk, Jimmi, and Septiani (2019) revealed semiotics elements and function in the printed shampoo ads. Three of these ads' primary data studies involved tangible products with strong impressions, such as movies and beauty products. This indicates that semiotics analyses typically focus on the advertisements with tangible products.

The songs, as the promoted product of album art, cannot be visualized in human minds like the products of movie posters, beauty products ads, or food ads. However, similar to other ads that generally carry verbal and visual sign, an album art might hold another meaning beyond what it initially seems. For

example, Sastri Elok Diryani (2013) determined the album art of her chosen music album as the primary data for her semiotics analysis. Diryani (2013) discovered an implied message in the album art by applying a semiotics approach. Diryani (2013) generally identified and categorized the elements of the selected album art into verbal and visual signs, then linked the chosen album art's signs to the period and environment of the chosen album art alongside the artist. Thus, analyzing album arts by applying a semiotics approach in the linguistic study is feasible.

This study aims to disclose the unspoken meaning by conducting verbal and visual signs analysis in each selected digital art of the five Paramore music albums from the viewpoint of an interpreter while considering the circumstances and period of the designs. This study applies qualitative research methods and semiotics since discovering hidden meaning relates to social phenomena. This study's primary theory is Roland Barthes' order of signification concept. There are supporting theories, such as Gillian Dyer's visual communication concept, Anna Wierzbicka's color terms concept, Leatrice Eiseman's color meaning concept, and Theo van Leeuwen's typography grammar. This study aims to help discover and comprehend the hidden meaning in the selected digital music album art, alongside broadening the research's scope and primary data to other forms of advertisements' products and media.

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the background presented above, the problems could be formulated as follows:

1. What are the verbal and visual sign found on digital album arts of five selected music albums of Paramore band?
2. What is the implied meaning in each selected music album art of Paramore band?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation above, there are some objectives of this study that can be determined as follows:

1. To identify the verbal and visual sign on the digital album arts of five selected music albums of Paramore band.
2. To interpret the meaning in each music album art of Paramore band.

D. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on identifying and interpreting meaning of verbal and visual signs on each album art of five selected Paramore music albums: *All We Know Is Falling* (2005), *Riot!* (2007), *Brand New Eyes* (2009), *Paramore* (2013), and *After Laughter* (2017). This study examines verbal and visual signs within the five selected digital album arts by applying a semiotics approach to explore the meaning beyond the signs. The primary theory is Roland Barthes' order of signification concept, which comprises denotation, connotation, and myth for deciphering the meaning in each selected digital album art. The supporting theories are Gillian Dyer's visual communication concept, Anna

Wierzbicka's color terms to categorize colors, Leatrice Eiseman's color meaning concept, and Theo van Leeuwen's typography grammar concept.

E. Review of the Related Studies

This subchapter holds precisely five accomplished studies that link to this study. For example, similarities in the applied theories, the primary objective, the primary data, or how the previous studies' researchers examined the primary data and applied the theories. These are five related studies that have similarities and gaps that can be adapted or developed:

First, Sastri Elok Diryani (2013) accomplished research entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Love Album Cover by Angels & Airwaves Band." Diryani (2013) used Pierce's semiotics concept as the leading theory and supported it with Dyer's visual communication and Odgen and Richard's structure of the semantic triangle (p. 3). Diryani (2013) found that the selected album art comprises verbal and visual elements and discovered implicit messages about how humans must have faith in God under whatever circumstances and interact with each other (p. 4–9). Although similar in the primary data, there are differences between Diryani's (2013) and this study, namely the primary theory, the artist of music albums, and the album art media. Further, this study will explore the typography and color meaning of the album art. Despite the differences, this study will adapt how to identify elements of the selected album art through Gillian Dyer's concept as the supporting theory.

Second, Ni Wayan Juniartini (2014) conducted a semantic analysis that focused on finding the types and meanings of the figurative language in the

chosen song lyrics from Paramore's *Brand New Eyes* (2009) album (p. 2). According to Juniartini (2014), figurative language for the selected music album was a means of impressively expressing the songwriter's emotions and creating a particular theme (p. 5). Further, differences in human understandings and conceptions make diverse interpretations of figurative language's meaning (Juniartini, 2014, p. 5). Despite selecting the same artist, the Paramore band, this study selects other potential parts of music albums as the primary data, specifically album art. In addition, this study applies a semiotics analysis of Roland Barthes' order of signification concept to discover the meaning of verbal and visual signs as the primary data.

Third, Shamim Ali and Zafarullah (2015) accomplished a semiotics analysis of five printed cosmetic advertisements, concentrating on the brand name, slogans, pictures, public figures, logos, and monograms (p. 690). Ali and Zafarullah (2015) applied Roland Barthes' coded and non-coded iconic message theory to disclose the denotative, connotative, and symbolic meanings (p. 690–691). Ali and Zafarullah (2015) discovered that advertisements interconnect with social constructs and contain memorable wording and representational elements (Ali & Zafarullah, 2015, p. 702). The research of Ali and Zafarullah (2015) provided insight into how to analyze ad elements through semiotics despite adopting a different Roland Barthes theory. Furthermore, this study applies Roland Barthes' denotation, connotation, and myth concepts to the digital album art elements of the album title, artist name, colors, images, logos, and typography styles.

Fourth, Putu Andhika Dhananjaya (2019) conducted a semiotics analysis on three *Moana* movie posters to discover the function and intention of verbal and nonverbal elements in the selected movie posters (p. 45). Dhananjaya (2019) applied Ferdinand de Saussure's signifier-signified concept in conjunction with Gillian Dyer's visual communication theory, Anna Wierzbicka's color terms concept, and Leatrice Eiseman's color meaning theory (p. 45). Dhananjaya (2019) discovered that verbal and nonverbal elements in the selected movie posters conveyed the movie's title, main characters, actors' and actresses' voices, main setting, release date, original soundtrack, and production company. Despite dissimilarities in the primary theory and data, this study will adapt how Dhananjaya (2019) examined verbal and visual signs and applied the theories of classifying ad elements and color terms and meanings.

Last, Juniato Sidauruk, Jimmi, and Esi Septiani (2019) applied Roland Barthes' denotation, connotation, and myth theory to disclose the purpose of semiotics elements in printed ads of Pantene shampoo's Zooney Deschanel edition (p. 129). Sidauruk, Jimmi, and Septiani's (2019) study showed that verbal signs in the ads conveyed their intention as it is, while, besides attracting viewers' attention, nonverbal signs had another meaning than they seemed (p. 132–136). Further, the profound meanings of nonverbal signs of the selected ads edition can create myths that impact the advancement of thoughts and cultures in society (Sidauruk, Jimmi, & Septiani, 2019, p. 139). The study of Sidauruk, Jimmi, and Septiani (2019) provided insight into Barthes' order of signification concept and how to apply it in examining

ad elements. Despite having similarities in the primary theory and data, their study did not explore typography style meaning, this study will discuss.

These five studies relate to and support this study, which aims to disclose the meaning of verbal and visual signs in digital album art as one of the ad media through semiotic analysis in linguistic studies. This study will adapt theories of color's terms and meaning, how to classify verbal and visual signs in ads, and how to interpret and present the data analysis from the early studies. Furthermore, this study aims to discover the denotative and connotative meanings and possibly myths of the five selected digital album arts by examining the album title, artist name, colors, images, logo, and typography style. This study hopes that using music album art as the primary data can broaden the scope and type of ad media, fill the gap in finding typography style meaning, and help people comprehend the meanings of album art elements.

F. Method of Research

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are three research methods, namely mixed, quantitative, and qualitative research methods (p. 41). Research method refers as steps in processing researches' data through particular procedures, namely collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 53). Based on its purpose, this study employs the qualitative research method.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the qualitative research method aims to comprehend how humans interpret personal or social phenomena (p. 41). The qualitative research method involves the researcher collecting,

analyzing, and interpreting data and presenting the results in descriptive reports while considering the participants' experiences and the researchers' involvement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 257–258). Further, Creswell and Creswell (2018) affirmed that the qualitative research method tends to have texts and images as data (p. 254) and involves more than one form of data (p. 257). To summarize, the qualitative research method provides a descriptive report that discloses diverse perceptions or interpretations of social phenomena based on contextual factors, the participants' perspectives, and the researchers' insights.

This study aims to understand the interpretation of verbal and visual signs on each album art of five selected Paramore music albums while looking into the circumstances concerning the band and the album art. Illustrative as the study of signs in social life, this study applies a semiotics approach to Roland Barthes' order of signification concept to analyze the selected album arts. Thus, the qualitative research method suits this study.

1. Data and Source of Data

According to the online Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, data in research studies is a group of facts about an individual or object for problem-solving or drawing conclusions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasized that proper data selection in research is essential (p. 262). Proper data selection involves the right limitations, methods, and sources. The source of data refers to the location of the data acquisition. In brief, data in research

stands for facts and figures that the researcher gathers within the proper scope, methods, and sources to resolve the research problems.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research data depend on text and image materials (p. 254) and tend to have more than one data form (p. 257). The primary data for this study are five digital album arts that simultaneously involve texts and images from audiovisual sources. Further, the analysis and interpretation processes require other information related to this study's primary data and problems from document sources. Below is a brief explanation of the main and supporting data, along with the sources of the data:

a. Main Data

This study examines the verbal and visual signs of album art, namely the artist's name, the album's title, color, image, logo, and typography, on the newest authentic digital edition of five Paramore music albums: *All We Know Is Falling* (2005), *Riot!* (2007), *Brand New Eyes* (2009), *Paramore* (2013), and *After Laughter* (2017). These five album arts originate from *Genius*, a digital forum acknowledged by the music industry to discuss song lyrics, origin stories, albums, and album art. Besides providing high-quality, authentic digital album art, the *Genius* incorporates textual and video-based interviews with related artists. Each album art is then double-checked on *Spotify*, a popular music streaming service, to ensure it matches the most recent release on the *Genius*.

b. Supporting Data

The processes of analysis and interpretation cannot solely rely on the primary data and the theories to reach this study's aims. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), data in qualitative research typically includes more than one form of material (p. 257). Furthermore, additional information might help validate the analysis procedure. The applied extra information is available online through reliable and official interviews, books, journals, articles, and websites. Thus, supporting information relevant to this study's primary data and topic is necessary.

2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

According to John W. Creswell (2013), research procedures for collecting and analyzing data, all the way to composing the results, are interconnected and frequently occur concurrently (p. 182). In other words, the three primary procedures are inseparable and tend to proceed concurrently in research. For example, the researcher in this study downloads the five selected digital album arts while identifying their common verbal and visual elements. Thus, there is the possibility of having similar steps in the qualitative research processes.

The data collection methods and techniques in qualitative research aim to determine the limitations and sources of the data and note the essential information in an unorganized or semi-organized format (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 262). Creswell and Creswell (2018) divided the methods and techniques for collecting data in qualitative research into data collection

(p. 262) and data recording procedures (p. 266). The data collection procedures involve determining limitations and acquiring the data needed to solve research problems from the proper sources. On the contrary, the data recording procedures involve noting essential and appropriate data information in memos, lines, or a simple table.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) distinguished four primary types of qualitative data collection procedures: observation, interviews, documents, and audio-visual and digital materials (p. 262–263). This study employs document material and audio-visual and digital materials by comprehensively studying the data to obtain proper information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 265). The forms and sources distinguish between documents and audio-visual and digital material types (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 263). The qualitative documents are accessible from overdue archives such as magazines, inscribed statements and interviews, journal articles, archived articles, personal journals, messages, and emails. On the contrary, qualitative audio-visual and digital materials come in a broader range of forms and sources, including the internet, social networking services, video and audio files, artworks, and images.

According to the online Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the term recording refers to processes of documenting and organizing facts and figures for formal intentions. In other words, the data recording procedures of research refer to sorting and writing down crucial and primary information from the gathered data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) divided

data recording procedures into observation and interview protocols (p. 266). This study employs the observation protocol, which involves perceiving the gathered data by writing the data's essential facts into some lines. The presentation of the data collection methods is as follows:

- a. Visiting the *Genius* website;
- b. Going to 'Paramore' page by typing "Paramore" on search bar;
- c. Clicking "Show all albums by Paramore" menu
<https://genius.com/artists/Paramore/albums> retrieved at January, 3rd 2023;
- d. Ensuring each album art image of the selected music albums based on that is displayed in *Spotify*;
- e. Downloading the confirmed album arts from the *Genius* website;
- f. Identifying the elements in each album art;
- g. Finding and reading information from reliable sources through the internet, such as in journal articles, books, official websites, inscribed interviews in magazines, online articles, or even social networking services about album art, selected album arts, semiotics, color terms, typography, and other related information of this study's purpose.

3. Method of Analyzing Data

The procedures of analyzing data in the qualitative research comprises sorting, categorizing, and reconstructing data information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 267). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) the qualitative research data tend to involve texts and images (p. 254), making

the data analysis methods stands for creating meaning of textual and visual data (p. 267). The processes of data analysis in qualitative research involves five primary steps (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 268–270) as follow:

a. Organizing and preparing data

The first step of data analysis is arranging the collected data in an easily readable and understandable format, such as in a table. This study, which focuses on semiotics analysis, makes five selected album arts of Paramore band the primary data. Following that, this study displays the primary data in a table. The table of the collected data consists of the album's title and year of released, image of the album art, and semiotics signs. The creation of semiotics signs' classifications are verbal and visual signs. In addition, the categories of each classification evolve as the analysis's steps continue. On the other hand, the supporting data arrangement is in computerized folders based on the related information about this study's purpose, primary data, and applied theories, such as, semiotics, journal articles, color terms and meaning, typography, communication, album arts, and Paramore.

b. Reading and comprehending data

This second step is creating a broad comprehension of the data by thoroughly reading the related information about the research's purpose and data. Aside from winnowing the proper and trustworthy information from the gleaned data, this step aids in determining the suitable classifications and categories from the primary data for the study's

purpose and problems. In brief, there are boundaries in making elements of the album art the primary data for this study.

c. Creating data code names

The third step is generating code names or classification labels from the primary data. Furthermore, the classification labels originate from the primary data elements that suits with the study's purpose and problems. Following a thorough examination of the data and related studies, an album art, which act as this study's primary data, has two primary elements, namely verbal and visual elements. In addition, this study focuses on semiotics analysis, which considers verbal (text) and visual (image) elements as forms of semiotics signs. Hence, the classification labels of the digital album arts are verbal and visual signs for this study's data.

d. Generating a description and themes

This fourth step is creating categories based on the identified classifications and explaining the categories. This study divides verbal and visual signs into six categories. The artist's name and album title are the categories for verbal signs. On the other hand, the categories for visual signs are color, image, logo, and typography. Following that, two detach tables of verbal and visual signs will present for each album art, followed with the general description of each classification beneath each table.

e. Representing the description and themes

The fifth step is communicating the discoveries of the previous steps in a discussion by applying the selected theories to the data, confirming, and concluding the results. In other words, this step comprises interpretation, verification, and outlining of the results. The interpretation step discusses the identified categories' connections and examines the meaning of each album art by applying Roland Barthes' order of signification concept and the supporting theories. The interpretation step concurrently verifies the discoveries of the analysis by rechecking the winnowed and confirmed data. Lastly, this study concludes whether each selected album art has an explicit meaning (denotation), an implicit meaning (connotation), or a profound meaning (myth) after validating the results.

G. Presentation

This study comprises four chapters. Chapter One carries the study's topic, problems, purpose, scope of discussed issues, related studies, and methods in conducting this study. Chapter two conveys the theoretical approach and framework, elaborating on the applied primary and supporting theories and the selected primary data for this study. Chapter three contains the analysis of the study, which examines the verbal and visual signs in the five picked digital album art of Paramore band to discover each album art contained meaning. The last chapter entails the conclusion of this study and suggestions for the following related studies.