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Semiotic Analysis of Motivational Content on Instagram: Meaning and Representation on the @ruangnderes Account (September 2024)

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Abstrack

The purpose of this research is to understand the denotative meaning, iconic signs, and symbolic signs of posts as objects that then generate meanings and representations of the images of posts through the Instagram account @ruangnderes, as well as to understand the meanings of captions shared through the Instagram account @ruangnderes. The research method is descriptive qualitative with an interpretative approach, which is a research activity that aims to describe, illustrate, and reveal an idea or thought as it is. The researcher will analyze the Instagram account @ruangnderes, specifically 101 posts, where each post contains denotative meanings, iconic signs, and symbolic signs related to Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis and the representation of posts from September 2024. The results show that the Instagram account @ruangnderes is about the world of memorizing the Quran in the form of visual images accompanied by quotes and design modern graphics through the social media Instagram. The text presented contains messages that reflect reality in life, motivational meanings, as well as solutions to the issuesfaced that can be applied by the audience, making the audience interested in this Instagram account.

Keywords: Semiotics, Roland Barthes, Instagram, Quran Memorization, Motivation

Introduction

The rapid development of media has pushed print media to follow trends by transforming into modern mass media or what is better known as social media (medsos). Social media is a web-based platform where users can participate by sharing information with one another (Cholik, 2021). One of them is Instagram, which is a very popular image and video-based social media platform. Launched in 2010, Instagram allows users to share photos and videos publicly or privately, as well as providing the ability to apply filters, effects, and captions to their content before sharing it. One of the things that makes Instagram so popular is its focus on visuals. Users can express themselves, share everyday moments, and explore their interests through images and videos. This platform is not only a tool for sharing content but also a medium for self-expression, inspiration, and social interaction (Putra, 2020). One of them is also a medium for providing motivation or encouraging words. Amid the varied content on Instagram, the account @ruangnderes attracts attention due to its consistent use to spread motivational messages to its followers not only about the world of memorizing the Quran but also sharing quotes or teachings from the scholars. One interesting aspect of studying digital media is how platforms like Instagram can serve as a means of conveying messages through the content that is uploaded. As an audio-visual-based medium, Instagram has great potential to disseminate information that is more engaging, thus reaching a wider audience. In this context, through a semiotic approach, this research focuses on the

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denotative meaning, icon signs, and symbol signs in each post uploaded in September. By using descriptive qualitative methods, it is expected to understand the denotative meaning in the posts on the @ruangnderes account as well as to represent its signs. This study is expected to contribute to understanding how digital platforms, particularly Instagram, can play a role in conveying meaning and signs to a wide audience. Additionally, the results of this research can also serve as a reference for content creators in designing images that not only entertain but also have a positive impact on viewers.

Methods

This research uses qualitative research. This approach allows researchers to explore the social and cultural phenomena contained in the posts in a deep and comprehensive manner. In qualitative research, the researcher plays a key role in the collection and analysis of data. This means that the researcher does not only collect data passively but is also actively involved in understanding the nuances, context, and subjective interpretations inherent in each post.

In a qualitative approach, the data collection process is conducted holistically and flexibly, allowing for adjustments to the dynamics that arise during the research. Researchers can use various techniques, such as content analysis and participatory observation, to gain a richer and deeper understanding. This aligns with the goals of qualitative research, which aims to obtain deep contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

In this research, two data collection techniques are used, namely primary and secondary data collection. Primary data was obtained directly through observations of content posts on the Instagram account @ruangnderes in September, which consisted of 13 posts containing several slides of content. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from books, journals, and other relevant data sources.

Results and Discussions

1. Presentation Of Data

The process of analyzing the semiotic meaning and signs on the Instagram account @ruangnderes during September 2024, a total of 101 data posts were the focus of this research. The identified semiotic meanings and signs include denotative meanings, icon signs, and symbol signs. First, in the denotative meaning, 100 data images show meanings from formal and informal language (Javanese), reflected in the audiences' numerous responses; this denotative meaning will facilitate the audience in understanding the meaning of the posts.

Next, the icon sign with the data of 13 entries is taken from each posting date. The icon sign here enhances imagination and can become an individual interest for the audience, adding a deeper understanding. Moreover, the presence of the icon sign reflects creativity and adaptability for the audience in interpreting an image in the context of social media.

Finally, symbolic signs were made on 100 image data and captions that show various motivational symbols. Symbolic signs are a form of meaning that cannot be seen directly but are captured through religion, beliefs, or certain ideologies. In the context of the account @ruangnderes, the symbols that appear are largely related to Islamic values, the struggle to memorize the Quran, the relationship with God, and the role as a parent.

All of these analysis results can eventually create a rich picture of the semiotics of language, providing deep insights into the presence and practices of language on the Instagram platform, particularly in the account @ruangnderes.

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2. Discussion



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this image depicts a woman wearing a pink hijab, dressed in a soft green jacket with a bone-white dress, who is sitting and holding a large frame without a photo. The frame is raised covering the woman's face from the top of her head to halfway down her body. The background is pastel and light blue. There is a quote text conveying the way to maintain Quran memorization in the style of KH Sadullah. Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of the sentence indicates that the topic of the post is about the methods of maintaining the memorization of the Al-Qur'an according to KH Sa'dullah.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the post icon is a direct visual representation of a woman. Although it is an illustration, it still represents a human figure. Additionally, the picture frame is a direct representation of a frame.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, women are a symbol of perseverance, seriousness, and commitment in maintaining the memorization of the Quran. The position of the woman holding the frame can be interpreted as 'embracing' or 'guarding' that memorization. The lack of images within the frame can be interpreted as a memorization that still needs to be preserved and maintained. The text symbolizes the importance of methods and guidance in preserving the memorization of the Quran, indicating that there are specific methods taught by KH Sa'dullah.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this image shows a man with short curly hair, wearing a blue shirt and even-length pants, sitting relaxed against a brown sofa while looking at his phone. The background is in soft pastel colors. There is a quote text that conveys that a memorizer of the Quran is also a human being, has feelings and a heart, The denotative meaning of this sentence is that the memorizer of the Quran also has feelings and a heart just like ordinary humans.

B. Icon Sign

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Based on the data above, the icon of the post is a man and a mobile phone representing the daily life of modern humans, especially the younger generation. The relaxed body position symbolizes comfort, relaxation, or everyday life that is not always formal or rigid. The sofa and house, icons of a homey atmosphere or personal space, signify that even religious people have personal space and time for themselves.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, the symbol found in the post, which is the text 'Quran memorizers are also humans': serves as a strong reminder that despite someone appearing religious or memorizing the Quran, they are still ordinary people who can feel tired, disappointed, or want to relax. This symbolizes empathy and humanity towards religious figures. Additionally, the pastel color signifies softness, tranquility, and a contemplative atmosphere that supports the narrative message for the audience to reflect on its content. The social media logo on the sofa: symbolizes the modernization of da'wah or the dissemination of Islamic values through digital platforms.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this image shows an elderly man wearing glasses, evident from his white eyebrows, holding a microphone, wearing a white turban used as a headscarf. He is dressed in a gray suit with a white shirt underneath and wearing a brown sarong. He is KH. Anwar Mansur, the caretaker of Pondok Lirboyo. The pastel background features text conveying (The Quran must be preserved, read. Your home must be peaceful because of the Quran. Do not let you teach the Quran here and there while your own home is empty (vacant) of the Quran)." The denotative meaning of the sentence conveys direct advice containing an invitation to preserve and read the Quran, as well as to make the home a cool and peaceful place due to the presence of the Quran. This advice also contains a reprimand for those who are active in preaching but neglect to bring those values into their own homes.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the post icon is an image of a respected religious figure, who is the founder of P.P Lirboyo. Moreover, the microphone wearing a suit and a white turban indicates that he is a knowledgeable and respected person. Meanwhile, the use of a warm gradient background (from light red to orange) gives a sense of warmth and tranquility, in line with the word 'adem'.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, the symbol found in the post is the Quran, which represents spirituality and a source of moral values. The home serves as a symbol of the smallest and primary environment that should reflect religious teachings. Teaching everywhere but having an empty home is a symbolic satire on hypocrisy or an imbalance between preaching and personal practice.

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A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this image shows a woman wearing a hijab sitting in a contemplative or sad position, while behind her there is a creature resembling a devil (with pink skin, horns, wings, and a cloak) who appears to be whispering something with a deceitful expression. In addition, the sentence above that reads 'Devils that tempt humans' introduces the visual explanation series and presents the main topic of the post, which is the temptation of the devil.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the posting icon is a direct visual representation of a woman. The image of the devil is a direct visual representation of the devil.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, the symbol present in the post, which is the image of a Woman, represents a human being who is being tested and tempted. The position of the woman sitting in contemplation indicates vulnerability and inner struggles. The image of the devil: A symbol of temptation and the whispers of the devil that always lurk around humans. The devil's smile represents the sly and evil nature of that temptation. The combination of the images of the woman and the devil: A symbol of the inner struggle of humans between good and evil. The text serves as a symbol indicating that this post will discuss human weaknesses and the temptations of the devil based on the Qur'an.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this image depicts a man wearing a cap holding a microphone, as if he is reciting his memorized verses. The background is pastel and blue. The text above conveys 'Strange but true, but this really exists. What type are you?' A very unusual occurrence, yet it truly exists. Here, the audience is invited to introspect with the types that will be presented in the following post.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the icon of the post is a man, which serves as an icon because it visually represents a human. Its shape resembles the object it represents. The microphone is an icon that represents a tool for amplifying sound.

C. Symbol Signs

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Based on the data above, the symbols found in the post text: 'Strange... convey an introspective message or invite the audience to reflect on something that may seem strange but is actually happening. This creates a sense of mystery and curiosity. The question: 'You are the type... this is symbolic aimed at involving the audience and encouraging them to participate or identify themselves with a category. The cap: in the illustration of a man becomes a symbol of cultural or Islamic religious identity.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this post depicts a man wearing a cap and a traditional shirt, who is Abah KH. Abdul Bashir Hamzah. The quoted text contains a moral message about the importance of being diligent and persistent in doing something, which will yield goodness and appreciation. The text literally states that if someone is diligent, they will be loved and honored by many.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the image icon is a direct visual representation of Abah KH. Abdul Bashir Hamzah, even in the form of an illustration. There is a visual similarity between the illustration and his original photo.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, the symbol of a wise and respected religious figure. The use of illustrations can also be interpreted as an effort to convey a message that is more impactful and memorable. The quoted text is a symbol of noble values such as perseverance, hard work, and appreciation for goodness. The pastel background and illustration style have a religious and calming atmosphere.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this post depicts a man dressed in Muslim attire (a koko shirt and a peci) with a calm expression, as if he is praying or reciting dzikr. There is a text that conveys, 'The best self-healing is to be present in a semaan and sholawat gathering.' This sentence states that the best way for self-healing is by attending a dzikr and shalawat gathering.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the icon of a man is a direct visual representation of someone who is praying or reciting dhikr. Although it's an illustration, the image directly represents that action.

C. Symbol Signs

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Based on the data above, the image of the man: A symbol of tranquility, peace, and spirituality. His body position and facial expression support this meaning. The text symbolizes the importance of spirituality and worship as a path to self-healing, both physical and mental. The pastel background creates a calm and peaceful atmosphere, supporting the main message of the post.



A. Denotative Meaning

Based on the data above, the denotative meaning of this post depicts a woman wearing a hijab holding a book titled Al-Qur'an. There is text that conveys "No matter how busy and full our activities are, reading (nderes) must remain a priority. No matter how hectic and troublesome, reading must still have a place and time. Mother Nyai Hj Amirotus Sholihah." This text emphasizes the importance of taking time to read (nderes) and review the Quran regardless of busyness.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the data above, the icon image is a direct visual representation of a woman who is studying or reading the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam.

C. Symbol Signs

Based on the data above, the image of the woman symbolizes perseverance, seriousness, and commitment in studying religion. The position of the woman holding the book reflects a perspective on her Quran. The text symbolizes the importance of balancing worldly activities and religious activities. 'Nderes' itself refers to religious activities such as reading the Quran and reciting dhikr.



A. Denotative Meaning

This image shows an illustration of a young man dressed in Muslim attire (white koko shirt, white peci, with a shawl over his shoulder) who is smiling. Above the image, there is text that reads: 'The actions of parents for their child's success.' This slide is the opening image (1 of 12) of the carousel.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the image above, there are icon signs such as:

- Illustration of a Muslim youth: representing children or teenagers who become hafiz or successful individuals both spiritually and academically.
- Shawl on the shoulder: can be associated with religious figures or pesantren students, reinforcing the association with religious values.

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• The image of a figure dressed in white and wearing a sarong can be interpreted as a symbol of purity, piety, and Islamic tradition.

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• The simple and clean background directs full attention to the content of the text message, not the visuals.

C. Symbol Signs

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Muslim attire shows symbols of piety, religious education, and religious identity. The smiling youth can represent success, peace of mind, and the fruits of proper upbringing. The sentence on the slide signifies that a child's success does not stand alone, but is a reflection of the efforts and prayers of the parents.



A. Denotative Meaning

An image showing a woman wearing a hijab pouring coffee from a kettle into a cup. Her facial expression is calm, with a warm background color (beige/soft orange), reinforcing a sense of peace and reflection. Meanwhile, the sentence states that memorizing the Quran is a process that has two sides: bitter (challenges, difficulties) and sweet (enjoyment, results, tranquility), just like a cup of coffee.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the image above, there is an icon of a woman brewing coffee that reflects a slow process, unhurried, and full of contemplation, similar to the process of memorizing the Qur'an, along with a simple yet warm illustration style that supports a contemplative atmosphere. Meanwhile, the activity of making coffee itself can reflect that:

- The process can be slow and thoughtful
- Patience in enjoying the results
- The relationship between the elements of perseverance, time, and effort that is intertwined.

C. Symbol Signs

This sentence uses the metaphor of a cup of coffee to depict the challenging (bitter) journey of memorizing the Qur'an, which also yields happiness and satisfaction (sweet). "Warmth" can be interpreted as the feeling of comfort and peace after going through that process.



A. Denotative Meaning

A man wearing a cap and a blue robe is sitting cross-legged while reading the Quran. At the top, there is text saying 'Types of Quran Memorizers' as the title of the image. Meanwhile, the large book in front of him is a representation of the Quran.

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B. Icon Sign

Based on the image above, it can be seen that there are:

- A man who is reciting the Quran, which can represent Quran memorizers or students
- An open mushaf symbolizes the activity of nderes or repeating Quran memorization
- A set of Muslim clothing such as a cap and a kurta can indicate the religious identity associated with the activity of reciting
- The cross-legged sitting position can also reflect the typical learning atmosphere of reciting in a pesantren or at home
- The focused and somewhat serious expression on the face can reinforce that he is trying to recall verses or perhaps he is repeating or attempting to memorize long verses. Therefore, these signs can also be interpreted as the situation in which someone is struggling to memorize or understand something, especially when encountering parts that are considered difficult or, in its context, may be long verses.

C. Symbol Signs

The young man reading the Quran represents a devoted and diligent memorizer of the Quran. His position and facial expression indicate focus and spiritual depth. This illustration also serves as an index, directing the reader to the main topic of the post. The colors used tend to be calm and soothing. "Types of Quran Memorizers" indicates the main topic of the post, which is the classification or grouping of types of Quran memorizers.



A. Denotative Meaning

Literally, this sentence means that someone who is known to be the strongest (physically, mentally, or spiritually) ultimately cannot bear it anymore and falls down. In the picture, a human figure appears to be resting their head on their arm on the table, as if experiencing exhaustion, despair, or silently crying.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the image above, there is an icon of a person with their head bowed over a table, depicting fatigue, despair, and even deep sorrow. The table and the book under the head can be interpreted as a textbook, the Quran, or resembling a diary that illustrates that this person is 'falling' in the process of learning or the struggle of life.

C. Symbol Signs

The figure bowing over the book, with a lowered head and a body that appears weary, symbolically represents a person who is exhausted, possibly due to burden or pressure. The bent body position can be interpreted as a metaphor for collapse or downfall. The embrace in the image can be interpreted as a symbol of support, comfort, or seeking solace amid sadness. The colors used tend to be dark and gloomy, enhancing the impression of fatigue and despair. The text 'The Strongest Also Falls Eventually' is symbolic of the main theme of the post. 'The Strongest' is a symbolic sign representing someone who appears strong, but ultimately also experiences exhaustion and collapse. 'Falls' is a metaphorical sign describing that downfall or collapse.

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A. Denotative Meaning

This sentence states that not all Qur'an memorizers are ready or brave to have their memorization listened to in front of others. In the picture, a bespectacled man wearing a cap and a brown shirt is holding a microphone while sitting facing a small table.

B. Icon Sign

Based on the image above, there is an icon symbolizing a hafidz or a santri, representing the readiness or formal moment when they are tested on their memorization or, in other words, being listened to, and reflecting the atmosphere of exams or lectures that are usually held in Islamic boarding schools or Islamic forums. Another meaning may also depict seriousness in memorization and being responsible for their memorization, which contrasts with the playful or joking lifestyle discussed in the caption.

C. Symbol Signs

According to the data, a man wearing a peci and glasses symbolizes a wise and authoritative figure. His attire indicates a religious or Islamic context. Meanwhile, the microphone symbolizes communication, message delivery, or speeches. The quoted text "Wani Guyom Kudu Wani Disimak" represents the symbol of responsibility, consequences, and the importance of considering the impact of words or actions. To dare to joke also means to be ready to accept the consequences or responses to that joke. Furthermore, a serious facial expression symbolizes the seriousness of the message being conveyed, emphasizing the importance of responsibility for one's words or actions.

CONCLUSION

The data obtained from the analysis presented by the author in the previous chapter concludes that there are citations related to semiotics in the posts from September 2024 on the Instagram account @ruangnderes. The types of semiotics used include denotative meanings, icon signs, and symbol signs. There are a total of 101 posts related to semiotics. The semiotics found on the Instagram account @ruangnderes can provide further insights into individual perspectives on the broader meanings regarding the world of memorizing the Quran, practices including messages and teachings from both memorization teachers and those who are not Quran memorizers. Through this research, it can explore how the account owner uses language to convey messages, interact with followers, and reflect the culture and values relevant in the Quran memorization community. By gaining a deeper understanding of semiotics in that account, the research can uncover more specific meanings and signs related to the diversity of the tahfidz world within the Instagram environment.

According to the 101 posts related to denotative meaning, there are a total of 100 posts. Furthermore, the posts regarding icon signs amount to 13 posts, and the symbol signs in the posts total 100 data posts. The denotative meaning in the posts depicts the actual activities in each stanza of the quotes, making it easier for individuals to understand the meaning of the posts, with a soft color background being a hallmark of Instagram as a platform that tends to be calm and peaceful. The images presented often attract attention in the context of social media that resonates with modern audiences. Meanwhile, the icon signs in the posts predominantly use visual icons of youth and women wearing hijabs, as well as expert Quran teachers. Additionally, the symbol signs in the posts add relevant understanding

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that occurs in the world of memorizing the Quran. In addition, there are expressions of doubt or jokes, even sarcasm with various messages and solutions, which indicate a process of introspection. The high number of interactions shows that the post has been positively received by many people who may be experiencing similar difficulties.

Instagram @ruangnderes is dedicated to the world of memorizing the Quran. Its posts emphasize the importance of consistency and discipline in carrying out worship, especially in preserving the Quran. The images and texts complement each other to convey a strong and meaningful message. The high level of interaction indicates that the messages are relevant and resonate with many people. Furthermore, the posts can be interpreted as advice, reflections, and reminders of the importance of consistency in preserving the Quran.

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