IDEAS

A Semiotic Analysis
on FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar Memes

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Abstract

Memes have become a unique way of conveying messages and sharing experiences in today's social media era. The FIFA World Cup is one of the biggest sporting tournaments in the world, and its audience, which is divided into various regions and circles, has attracted researchers to make it an object. The aims of this semiotic analysis study are to determine the signifier and the signified, as well as the denotation and connotation, as well as the meaning of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 memes. The descriptive qualitative method is being used in the study. To analyze the data, the researchers applied Roland Barthes' theory. Memes are classified as signifiers and signified, which can be expressed verbally or visually. The researchers also explained the denotative and connotative interpretations of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The writers selected four memes for this analysis that talked about watching experiences, trolling the fans and players, and giving thoughts about the FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar tournament. The results show that the signifiers in the memes were very random and unique, such as the heartbeat display in the first image, scientists in the second image, actors in the third image, scientists, and cartoon characters with flags in the last image. These signs certainly have objective or literal meanings (denotation) and subjective or other meanings (connotation). Most of the connotational meaning from memes that have been analyzed focuses on sharing the experience of watching the FIFA World Cup 2022 competition and also trolling the football supporters or even the players that participated

Keywords: *discourse analysis; meme; semiotics; world cup 2022*

Introduction

In this modern era, internet users have various ways to convey messages, feelings, ideas, and thoughts. Memes are a unique way to communicate on the Internet. In general, memes are used to express feelings that are short and easy to understand. Typically, these memes involve some sort of expressive image and some block of text that contains signifiers (words, pictures, sounds) and signified (the meaning of its words, pictures, and sounds) which produce connotative (subjective) and denotative (objective) meaning. These memes have a powerful meaning and are designed to help convey an emotional state in an easy-to-understand way. Usually, the messages conveyed through memes can be in the form of satire, provocation, or trolls. Both creators and viewers of these memes usually have the same experience as that represented by the meme.

Social media platforms on the Internet enable people to contribute and leave comments on relevant content without any moderation. Although most internet users are inoffensive, some produce offensive content as a result of the privacy and freedom provided by social networks. People are becoming more expressive in their humor as a result of this freedom by creating memes. Although memes are intended to be humorous, they can become intimidating and disrespectful to certain people or communities (Suryawanshi et al., 2020).

The term "meme" was formed by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (1976) through his search for a term to describe the cultural counterpart to genetic evolution. He describes memes as replicators, which should be viewed as information units that are transmitted through symbol (Johann & Bülow, 2019). Troll memes are offensive memes that are aimed to offend individuals or groups. Trolling memes can spark social media debates and influence specific events. It can cost a company money or ruin somebody's life. As a result, it is critical to identify and limit the spread of trolling memes (Mishra & Saumya, 2021).

Football is the most popular and most watched sport in the world. Although, this competition is held every 4 years, the FIFA World Cup is the most watched competition because it involves national teams, which means this sport competition can unite many groups of people on earth. The most recent FIFA World Cup competition, according to the time this journal was written, was FIFA World 2022, which was held in Qatar. However, when this competition was held, the 2022 FIFA World Cup was always a trending topic on various social media.

Many football fans use memes as their tool to convey information or experiences as well as satire, provocation, or to make fun of the opponents of the team they support and their fans. Therefore, the researcher will examine the sign and symbol from the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 memes shared on the internet by football fans, which include the national team, players, and even fans. These memes are interesting to discuss and analyze because there are still so many people who do not understand the meaning of the meme content that they saw. Furthermore, these memes have distinct and intriguing semiotic meanings, which could serve as research material for this paper.

This research's title was preferred to answer several questions, such as analyzing the signified and signifier as well as identifying the denotative and connotative interpretations of FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar memes. Previous research was done by Fauzan et al.,(2021) entitled Semiotic Analysis of "Euro 2020" Tournament Memes on Twitter. The signifier/signified and meaning of Euro 2020 tournament memes were studied in this research. The researchers analyze the data using Roland Barthes's theory, analyzing the denotative and connotative meanings of Euro 2020 memes. Through their research, the authors discovered three memes about trolls and comedy in the Euro 2020 tournament.

Simandalahi et al.,(2022) examined cartoons of Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump. This research is aimed at the meaning and types of signs used in Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump cartoons. The study selected qualitative research methods to figure out the meaning and types of signs used in accordance with Charles Sanders Pierce's theory. The study's findings are as follows: The general meaning of Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump's Semiotic Analysis Cartoons is generally each other's competitive diplomacy about nuclear weapons. The fundamental principle of this study is that they learn and think about making better nuclear weapons to make each other afraid of him. This paper's general type of sign is an iconic sign. The iconic sign is used to alert viewers to similar objects. The first, second, third, and fifth images are all similar. The same sign is shown by Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump. The first illustration is similar to learning more about nuclear power. The second illustration is

identical to the television show. Third as well as fifth, they share the same mindset of competing with one another.

Another previous research have been conducted by Prasojowati et al., (2019) about analyzing the semiotics that is found in cigarette products. The author conducted a semiotic analysis on the visual images of cigarette products. The author used the qualitative method. The results of these studies, gathered by the writer, show that the messages or semiotic signs found on cigarette products were successfully conveyed by the active smoker or the viewer, where the active smoker means a person who has been actively smoking for a specific length of time.

Isnaini et al., (2019), a visual semiotic analysis of multicultural values in an Indonesian English textbook is the title of the study. This study examined the multicultural values represented in an Indonesian vocational high school English textbook through the visual images in the textbook using Roland Barthes' visual semiotic theory. According to the results of this research, there are four types of multicultural values represented in the EFL textbook: respecting other people's traditions, appreciating other people's points of view, praising other people's cultural institutions, and respecting women's equal rights. These observations provide students with opportunities to improve their intercultural communication skills by appreciating cultural diversity and accepting racial and religious differences in their surroundings.

Moreover Gandhi, (2020) analyzed the semiotics of *Ruangguru* advertising that appeared on television. This study looks at television advertisements that last less than 30 seconds in the hopes of attracting viewers. This study utilizes semiotics to analyze television advertisements for the product. To analyze the signs used in advertisements, the research approach uses an interpretive and descriptive approach. The data resource consists of four video advertisements on television media. The analysis begins with transcription and the creation of video screenshots to help sharpen the analysis. According to the findings, *Ruangguru* uses signs that indicate superior features to attract television viewers. The features include animated learning videos, practice questions, discussion, and application-based learning.

Several other studies have also been carried out by several authors, namely by examining various objects such as advertisements, poetry, films, memes, and culture using Roland Barthes's semiotic method and analyzing the connotations and denotations of these objects so as to produce exciting and different research results (Aprillyanto, 2022; Kanzunnudin, 2022; Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022; Suryawanshi et al., 2020; Tamara, 2020; Widiastuti et al., 2020).

Semiotics

According to Umberto Eco (Dianiya, 2020), Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be referred to as a sign. Saussure Chandler (Rudrakumar & Venkatraman, 2022), said that the signifier and the signified produce a sign as a byproduct. The actual utterance of the object can be defined as a signifier. It is a material aspect of an object that may exist as a visual, auditory, or graphic aspect. A signified is the mental aspect of an object, in which the image of the object is more significant than the actual object. The signified is the meaning presented by the speaker and the listener. As a result, a sign, according to Saussure, is the arbitrary nature of the bond between the signifier and the signified. The French philosopher Roland Barthes is the most specific semiotic person in the history of semiotics. He was indeed a philosopher, literary critic, structuralist, and semiologist all rolled into one. This semiotician advanced Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism in-text semiotics study. The model of denotation and connotation is fundamental to Barthes' semiotic analysis (Siregar, 2022).

Roland Barthes defines semiotics utilizing the theory of Ferdinand De Saussure. Ferdinand De Saussure's Cours de linguistique générale is being read by Roland Barthes. Ferdinand de Saussure inspired Roland Barthes' theory. Denotation is the very first level of

signification in Barthes' semiology, followed by connotation. Denotation is more implicated with closed meaning in this case. As a response to the literality of such an oppressive connotation, Barthes attempted to eliminate and reject it. Only certain connotations for him. He went on to say that the literal meaning of "literal" is something natural, recognized as the theory of signs. (Simandalahi et al., 2022).

Language according to Barthes Manik et al., (2022), is a system of signs that mirror the assumptions of a specific culture at any particular time, where the idea of the sign is made up of the signifier (marker), the signified (sign), the denotative sign (denotative sign), the connotative signifier (connotative marker), the connotative signified (connotative sign), and the connotative sign (message/myth).

The theoretical framework of this study is focused on semiotic studies. Barthes' semiotic theory develops Saussure's semiotics by studying the relationships among the signified and the signifier in a sign. The signifier and the signified have an equivalent rather than a similar relationship (Prasetyaningtyas, 2012). Barthes' meaning map of how signs function is typically presented as follows :
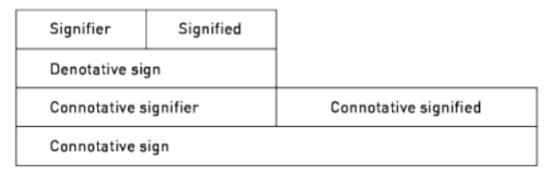
Signifier	Signified	
Denotative sign		
Connotative signifier		Connotative signified
Connotative sign		

Figure 1. Roland Barthes Meaning Map (Muthia Rahayu, 2020)

In the first stage, Barthes' semiotics works directly about the object (denotative stage), such as signifier, signified, and sign. The second stage uses the entire sign system from the first stage (connotative stage). The meaning of the message is revealed at the second stage (metalanguages), namely by the addition of a myth (Dianiya, 2020).

Denotative and Connotative

According to Leech Pratiwi et al., (2020), the denotative meaning is the true meaning of meaning, as defined by the dictionary. A denotative meaning is the recognized meaning of the word woman, which can be specified as human, female, girl, or adult. It can all be concluded based on the true meaning of women, and connotative meaning is the meaning that does not go specifically to the purpose or something, in other words, this meaning surpasses the conceptual meaning itself; connotative meaning is often defined as meaning that is not actually.

The researcher used a qualitative research method in this analysis, collecting data and analyzing an object before describing the sign in text form. In collecting data, the researcher collected the meme pictures from several internet sites, and the researcher analyzed the sign found in the meme pictures using Roland Barthes's semiotics theory, which is divided into three parts, namely, connotation, denotation, and myth. The researcher also used Roland Barthes's meaning map concept to analyze the data, which means the data has been analyzed in table form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper aims at identifying the meaning behind the FIFA World Cup 2022 meme image by using Roland Barthes's theory. In the table, five meme images were examined. In order to find the meanings and the forms of the meme pictures, the researcher described every sign in the meme pictures, which will appear in the table below :

1.
https://www.boredpanda.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/world-cup-memes-football-soccer-fifa-63a043b283952_700.jpg

Signifer : 1. A picture of zigzag line. 2. normal heartbeat. 3.A picture of straight line. 4. Deceased heartbeat. 5. A picture of an irregularly shaped line. 6. Argentina vs. France.	**Signified :** 1. A picture of zigzag line in heart rate indicator is described as a normal heartbeat. 2. Caption that described the first picture (a zigzag line heartbeat). 3. A picture of a straight line described as dysfunctional heart. 4. A caption that described a heartbeat of dead people. 5. A picture of an irregularly shaped line described as an extreme heartbeat or an adrenaline rush (this picture of a heartbeat is not real) caused by watching the Argentina against France. 6. Caption that means the participants of grand final match of FIFA world Cup 2022 .

Denotative Sign : This meme is showing the 3 types of heartbeats. The first picture is a zigzag line with the caption "normal heartbeat", which means normal heartbeat is described as a zigzag line. The second picture, a straight line with the caption "deceased heartbeat", means the heartbeat of deceased people is described as a straight line. And the last picture is an irregularly shaped line with the caption "Argentina vs. France" which means the heartbeat of people who watch the match between Argentina and France.

Connotative Signifier : Denotatively, the researcher saw the 3 different types of heartbeats that showed in the meme picture. A normal heartbeat, a deceased person's heartbeat, and an irregular and random-shaped heartbeat of people that	**Connotative Signified :** The connotative meaning is that the FIFA World Cup 2022 grand final match between Argentina and France was very intense; the game was ended with a score of 3-3, with Argentina taking the lead 2-0 first, and then France equalizing it to 2-2; but then Argentina took

watched Argentina's match against France in the FIFA World Cup 2022.	the lead again to 3-2; but dramatically, France equalized it again in the last few minutes of extra time, and it's ended up with Argentina winning it in the 4-2 penalties. This caused the people that watched that game to have an adrenaline rush, which is described in the picture as a random, irregularly shaped line in the heartbeat indicator.

Connotative Sign : The message conveyed in this meme picture is that watching an intense sport match like the grand final of the 2022 FIFA World Cup between Argentina and France can cause a medical issue such as an adrenaline rush or an intense heartbeat, no matter which side you support from both teams, and by that, the form of this meme picture is about sharing the same experiences.

2.

French scientists trying to figure out how to clone and make 10 copies of Mbappé before the next World Cup.

https://img-9gag-fun.9cache.com/photo/a8q3AOZ_700bwp.webp

Signifer : 1. Scientists in the laboratory. 2. Caption "French scientists trying to figure out how to clone and make 10 copies of Mbappe before the next World Cup".	**Signified :** 1. A picture of scientists doing their work in the laboratory. 2. Caption means the French scientists are trying to make another Kylian Mbappe (French football player), which will amount to 10 for the next FIFA World Cup, so there will be a starting eleven of all Kylian Mbappe in the France national team.

Denotative Sign : This meme is about French scientists doing their work in the laboratory, with the caption above: "French scientists trying to figure out how to clone and make 10 copies of Mbappe before the next World Cup".

Connotative Signifier : This meme picture implies that the French scientists are on their way to figuring out how to make and clone another Kylian Mbappe for the next competition of the FIFA World	**Connotative Signified :** Connotatively, the meme creator is trying to say that France needs to make the 10 clones of Kylian Mbappe, arguably the only French player who performed very well in that final game of the FIFA World Cup 2022, because he's

Cup, as described in the picture of scientists working in the laboratory.	the only scorer in that final game. This means, this meme is indicating that the France national team needs to make 10 more of Kylian Mbappe so they can have a starting eleven of Kylian Mbappe (11 good players), which is impossible to do for the scientists.

Connotative Sign : The message in this meme picture is that all the French football players who played in the final of the FIFA World Cup 2022 did not perform well or contribute enough besides Kylian Mbappe, and that caused them to lose the trophy. The meme creator gives the message by trolling Kylian Mbappe's teammates that played in that final game and also the France national team supporters by saying that they need to make another Kylian Mbappe so they can have a good team to win the next tournament.

3.

https://img-9gag-fun.9cache.com/photo/aKEjLK1_460swp.webp

Signifer : 1. Henry Cavill posing on the red carpet. 2. Caption "World wanting Messi vs Ronaldo Final". 3. Jason Momoa sneaks up on Henry Cavill. 4. Caption " Morocco".	**Signified :** 1. Henry Cavill is an actor who can be seen in photos posing on the red carpet. 2. The caption means that most football fans in the world want a match between Ronaldo with Portugal against Messi with Argentina in the grand final of the FIFA world cup 2022. 3. Jason Momoa is an actor who can be seen in the picture trying to surprise Henry Cavill by sneaks up on him from behind. 4. Morocco is a country that also participates in the FIFA world cup 2022.

Denotative Sign : This meme picture is showing an actor named Henry Cavill posing for the camera on the red carpet with the caption "World Wanting Messi Vs. Ronaldo Final" on him, while there is an actor named Jason Momoa who can be seen trying to surprise Henry Cavill by sneaking up on him from behind with the caption "Morocco" written on Jason Momoa.	
Connotative Signifier : The researcher saw in this picture that Henry Cavill was standing on the red carpet and posing for the photographers, while Jason Momoa, who was also attending the red carpet, tried to troll Henry Cavill by sneaking up on him from behind.	**Connotative Signified :** The connotative meaning of this meme picture is that many of the football fans wanted the matchup between Portugal with Ronaldo against Argentina with Messi in the final of the FIFA World Cup 2022 because they wanted to witness the two players who have been very dominant throughout their careers before they retired. But that final matchup that many football fans around the world wanted to see did not happen because Portugal was beaten by Morocco in the quarter-final by 1-0 before they could meet Argentina in the final. So the moment when football fans wanted the matchup between Portugal and Argentina in the final but got surprised by Morocco national team, who knocked Portugal out of the competition early, is described in the meme picture as Jason Momoa, who is trying to surprise Henry Cavill from behind.
Connotative Sign : The meme creator was trying to share the same experience that many football fans had, which was the surprised and also upset feeling caused by the final matchup of Ronaldo against Messi that failed to happen because of the surprise result that Portugal was beaten by Morocco in the early stages, especially for Ronaldo and Portugal supporters who were really surprised by Morocco's performance.	

4.

Signifer : 1. Tom.	**Signified :** 1. Fictional character from Tom
2. Jerry.	and Jerry, (cat).
3. Spike.	2. Fictional character from Tom and Jerry,
4. Saudi Arabia flag.	(mouse).
5. Argentina flag.	3. Fictional character, (bulldog)..
6. Mexico, Croatia, Poland, Australia, and	4. A country who participate in FIFA world
Netherlands flag.	cup 2022.
7. Stick	5. A country who participate in FIFA world
	cup 2022.
	6. A country who participate in FIFA world
	cup 2022.
	7. A wood stick that used for hitting Spike.

Denotative Sign : This meme picture displays certain cartoon clips from the Tom and Jerry cartoon. When Jerry trolled Tom by hitting Spike with a stick and then passing the stick to Tom, it caused Spike to wonder if Tom hit him with a stick, Spike, who is looking angry, wondered if Tom hit him with a stick because Tom was holding a stick. There is also Saudi Arabia on Jerry, the flag of Argentina on Spike, and the flags of Mexico, Croatia, Poland, Australia, and the Netherlands on Tom.

Connotative Signifier : denotatively, the researcher saw the scenes in the Tom and Jerry cartoon where Jerry trolled Tom by hitting Spike when he fell asleep. After Jerry hit Spike, he immediately gave his stick to Tom, who was confused because Spike looked at him with anger.	**Connotative Signified :** The connotative meaning of this meme picture is that when Saudi Arabia surprisingly took a win over Argentina in the first week of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, it made Argentina really angry for the next matches, and it caused Mexico, Croatia, Poland, Australia, and the Netherlands to get beaten by Argentina because of the anger after the loss against Saudi Arabia..

Connotative Sign : The message in this meme picture is that Argentina took the defeat against Saudi Arabia as an experience to get better for the next matches. After that defeat, Argentina played really well and beat all their opponents to become the champions of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar in 2022.

Conclusion

The use of memes as a form of conveying information and also sharing experiences is not always successful, sometimes messages cannot be conveyed by the viewers because the signifiers and signifieds contained in memes are difficult to understand if there is no explanatory context. The objective of this paper is to answer the questions addressed in the introduction about determining the signified and signifier, as well as the denotative and connotative meaning, and the message of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as a reference. The answers to those questions already appeared in the results and discussion. The signifiers that showed up in the memes are very random and unique, such as the heartbeat display in the first image, scientists in the second image, actors in the third image, scientists, and cartoon characters with flags in the last image. These signs certainly have objective or literal meanings (denotation) and subjective or other meanings (connotation).

Most of the connotational meaning from memes that have been analyzed focuses on sharing the experience of watching the FIFA World Cup 2022 competition and also trolling the football supporters or event the players that participated. This means the connotation of the FIFA World Cup 2022 memes is sharing the experience as a viewer, such as the heartbeat of viewers when they watched the final match and giving thoughts or opinions about the matches, like the reason why Argentina can win the tournament is that Saudi Arabia made them angry in the FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar.

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