

A Study of Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotics in the Film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the relationship between the form of the signifier and signified and to interpret the signs found in each scene and dialogue in the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The data collection techniques used are repeated observation, note-taking, and documentation by capturing several images from scenes in the film and analyzing the meanings contained within them. The data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that there are 31 scene and dialogue data containing signs in the film. A total of 148 data consisting of signifiers and signifieds were identified, involving Indonesian, English, and Korean languages. The findings indicate that the relationship between signifiers and signifieds, as well as the dialogues in the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia, does not merely function to construct the storyline but also represents moral, social, religious, and cultural values. Therefore, this film contains various symbolic meanings that reflect the identity of Muslim women, cultural interactions, and religious values in a global context.

Key words: Semiotics; Film; *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea*, Ferdinand de Saussure

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has encouraged increasingly intensive interactions among individuals from various religious, cultural, and social backgrounds. The movement of people through tourism, education, employment, digital media, and cultural exchange has created opportunities for individuals to encounter different environments beyond their original cultural identities. However, religious identity remains an important

aspect of personal representation, particularly when individuals interact within multicultural settings. In this context, signs do not possess inherent meanings but obtain meaning through social interaction, cultural agreements, and the contexts in which they are interpreted.

One of the media that plays an important role in representing cultural, social, and religious values is film. As an audiovisual medium, film does not only function as entertainment but also serves as a communication tool that conveys messages through visual, verbal, and nonverbal signs. Elements such as dialogue, facial expressions, costumes, settings, colors, gestures, and cinematographic techniques contribute to the construction of meaning for audiences. Therefore, film can be understood as a cultural text containing various symbolic representations that reflect social realities and human experiences.

In Indonesia, film has become a significant medium for representing diverse identities, including religious identity and cultural interactions. As a country with a Muslim-majority population and diverse religious backgrounds, Indonesia produces various films that portray Islamic values, social relationships, and cultural encounters. Through cinematic representations, religious symbols such as the hijab can function not only as clothing but also as a marker of identity, faith, and adaptation within different cultural environments.

One Indonesian film that presents these issues is *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea*, adapted from a novel by Asma Nadia. The film portrays the journey of Rania Timur Samudra, a Muslim woman who travels across various countries while searching for meaning, identity, and life experiences. Through the character of Rania, the film represents the relationship between religious identity and global cultural interaction through various signs, including dialogue, body language, facial expressions, costumes, and settings.

Based on this background, this research aims to analyze the relationship between signifier and signified and interpret the meanings of signs found in the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia. This study is expected to contribute to the development of semiotic studies, particularly in analyzing audiovisual works, and to provide a deeper understanding of how films represent moral, social, religious, and cultural values through various systems of signs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotic Theory

The study of signs in film can be conducted through semiotics, particularly Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. Saussure explains that a sign consists of two inseparable elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of a sign, such as images, sounds, or words, while the signified refers to the concept or meaning represented by that sign. The relationship between these

two elements allows researchers to analyze how meaning is constructed through cultural and social contexts.

The application of Saussure's semiotic theory in film analysis enables researchers to examine various forms of signs, including visual, verbal, and nonverbal elements. In *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea*, signs such as the hijab, traditional Korean clothing, travel objects, religious symbols, and intercultural communication represent meanings related to identity, morality, religion, and cultural diversity. These signs demonstrate that film narratives contain deeper meanings beyond the visible storyline.

Previous Related Studies

Previous studies have examined *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* from different perspectives, including moral messages, gender representation, and semiotic analysis using Roland Barthes' theory. However, studies focusing specifically on the relationship between signifier and signified based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic framework remain limited. Therefore, this research provides a different perspective by analyzing symbolic meanings through visual, verbal, and nonverbal signs contained in each scene of the film.

METHOD

Design and Data Source

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the signs and meanings contained in the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia. The qualitative approach was selected because this study focuses on understanding and interpreting meanings found in visual, verbal, and nonverbal signs rather than analyzing numerical data. Through this approach, the researcher describes and interprets the relationship between signifiers and signifieds based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. The focus of this research is the analysis of the relationship between the signifier and signified and the meanings represented through scenes in the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea*. The study examines various elements that function as signs, including dialogue, facial expressions, body movements, costumes, settings, and other visual elements that appear throughout the film. These elements are analyzed to reveal the symbolic meanings constructed within the film narrative. The primary data in this research consist of selected scenes and dialogues from the film that contain semiotic elements. The data include verbal signs, such as conversations and utterances delivered by the characters, as well as nonverbal signs, such as gestures, expressions, costumes, and settings. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from relevant sources, including books, journals, articles, and other references related to semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, and film studies.

Instrument and Procedure

The data collection technique used in this research includes observation, note-taking, and documentation. The observation technique was conducted by repeatedly watching the film to identify scenes, dialogues, expressions, settings, and symbols that contain semiotic meanings. The researcher then recorded relevant data containing signifiers and signifieds and documented several scenes from the film as research evidence. The analysis procedure consisted of several stages. First, the researcher watched the film repeatedly while identifying and grouping relevant data, including scenes, dialogues, character expressions, settings, and symbols. Second, the collected data were examined by applying Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic framework to understand the meaning behind each sign. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the results of the analysis and presented descriptively in written form.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was conducted using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic model. The researcher identified and classified the signs found in the film into verbal and nonverbal categories. Each sign was then analyzed by examining the relationship between the signifier (the physical form of the sign) and the signified (the concept or meaning represented by the sign). Through this process, the researcher interpreted both explicit and implicit meanings contained in each scene.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia contains various semiotic signs that can be analyzed through Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. The analysis focuses on the relationship between signifier and signified found in scenes, dialogues, visual elements, and nonverbal expressions throughout the film. The findings demonstrate that the signs presented in the film construct meanings related to personal identity, religion, culture, and human relationships. Based on the analysis, the researcher identified 31 scenes and dialogues containing semiotic elements. These data include verbal and nonverbal signs represented through character conversations, gestures, facial expressions, costumes, objects, locations, and cinematic settings. Each scene provides a combination of signifiers and signifieds that contribute to the development of meaning within the film narrative.

The analysis identified a total of 148 signifier and signified data contained in the selected scenes. These signs appear through various forms, including visual symbols, spoken language, and character actions. The findings reveal that the film utilizes multiple sign systems involving Indonesian, English, and Korean languages, reflecting the multicultural background presented in the story. The first category of findings relates to visual signs. Several objects and appearances function as signifiers that represent particular meanings. For example, the hijab

worn by the main character Rania functions as a signifier that represents Muslim identity, religious commitment, and the ability of Muslim women to interact within global cultural environments without abandoning their beliefs. Other visual signs, such as travel equipment, cameras, maps, and religious symbols, also represent journeys, exploration, and spiritual experiences.

The second category consists of verbal signs found in dialogues between characters. The dialogues do not only serve as narrative elements but also contain meanings related to religious understanding, social values, tolerance, and cultural interaction. The use of Indonesian, English, and Korean languages in the film represents communication across cultural boundaries and demonstrates the diversity of human interaction. The third category involves nonverbal signs, including body movements, facial expressions, and character actions. These elements function as supporting signs that strengthen the meanings conveyed through dialogue. Expressions of happiness, curiosity, respect, and confidence shown by the characters contribute to the representation of emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships within the film.

The findings also reveal that the signs in the film represent various values, including moral, social, religious, and cultural values. The combination of visual, verbal, and nonverbal signs creates a broader interpretation of the film as not merely a romantic drama but also a representation of Muslim identity, personal development, and intercultural encounters. Overall, the results indicate that Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory is relevant for examining meaning construction in audiovisual works. The relationship between signifier and signified found in the film demonstrates that every element displayed in the scenes contributes to the formation of messages and meanings that can be interpreted by audiences.

The findings of this study demonstrate that *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* contains complex systems of signs that represent meanings beyond the surface level of the story. Through Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic perspective, the relationship between signifier and signified explains how visual, verbal, and nonverbal elements in the film produce particular interpretations. The film becomes a medium where cultural and religious meanings are constructed through signs. The representation of the hijab as one of the dominant signs in the film shows how clothing can function as a symbol of identity. The hijab is not only presented as a physical object but also as a representation of faith, confidence, and Muslim women's identity in a global environment. This finding supports the idea that signs obtain meaning through social and cultural contexts rather than through their physical appearance alone.

The use of travel-related objects such as cameras, maps, and bags also illustrates symbolic meanings related to exploration and personal growth. These objects act as signifiers that represent Rania's journey, not only geographically but also emotionally and spiritually. The journey portrayed in the film reflects the process of understanding oneself and discovering values through interactions with different

cultures. The verbal signs found in the dialogues demonstrate that language plays an important role in constructing meaning. According to Saussure's concept, language functions as a system of signs where words and expressions represent particular concepts. The conversations among characters reveal themes of tolerance, religious values, relationships, and cultural differences, showing that dialogue contributes significantly to the interpretation of the film.

The use of three languages, namely Indonesian, English, and Korean, strengthens the multicultural representation in the film. The linguistic diversity reflects communication between individuals from different backgrounds and emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural differences. The film presents language not only as a communication tool but also as a cultural marker. The nonverbal signs found in the film, including gestures, facial expressions, and character behavior, provide additional meanings that support the narrative. These signs demonstrate that meaning in film is constructed through the interaction between different elements. A character's expression or movement can communicate emotions and intentions even without direct verbal explanation.

The findings of this study also indicate that the film carries moral, social, religious, and cultural messages. The representation of Muslim identity in a foreign cultural environment shows that religious values can coexist with modernity and global interaction. The film presents a perspective that cultural differences do not necessarily create barriers but can become opportunities for understanding and mutual respect. Therefore, the application of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory provides an effective framework for understanding how meaning is produced in films. The relationship between signifier and signified reveals that every scene, dialogue, and visual element contains symbolic meanings. Through this analysis, *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* can be understood not only as an entertainment medium but also as a cultural text containing various social and religious messages.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the film *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* by Asma Nadia contains various forms of semiotic signs that can be analyzed through Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, particularly the relationship between signifier and signified. The signs found in the film are represented through visual, verbal, and nonverbal elements, including costumes, objects, dialogues, gestures, facial expressions, and settings. These elements construct meanings that are not only related to the storyline but also represent broader social and cultural messages. The analysis shows that the relationship between signifier and signified in the film produces meanings related to Muslim identity, religious values, cultural interaction, and personal development. The hijab, travel equipment, religious symbols, and intercultural communication displayed in the film function as signs that represent the experiences of a Muslim woman navigating a global environment. These

findings indicate that the meaning of signs is shaped by social and cultural contexts, as emphasized in Saussure's semiotic theory.

The study identified 31 scenes and dialogues containing semiotic elements, with a total of 148 signifier and signified data involving Indonesian, English, and Korean languages. The findings demonstrate that the film does not merely present a romantic and travel narrative but also conveys moral, social, religious, and cultural values through its system of signs. Therefore, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach is relevant for analyzing audiovisual works because it enables researchers to uncover hidden meanings behind various elements presented in films. Through semiotic analysis, *Jilbab Traveler: Love Sparks in Korea* can be understood as a cultural text that represents identity, tolerance, spirituality, and intercultural relationships. This research is expected to contribute to the development of semiotic studies, particularly in the analysis of films as media for communicating meaningful social and cultural messages.

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