



Representations of Child Violence in Sidiq Aryadi's Benalu (Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis)

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the meaning of the denotation and connotation of forms of verbal abuse against children as well as the meaning of the myth of verbal abuse against children in the film Benalu by Sidiq Aryadi. The data analysis technique used is semiotic analysis, namely, Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis, to reveal the meaning of connotative, denotative signs, and myt. Verbal abuse is "violence against feelings". Belittling or mocking children can take the form of demeaning the child, insulting names, making adverse treatment between children, stating that the child is not good, worthless, ugly or something that is obtained from mistakes. Oftentimes, parents are not aware that they have committed acts of verbal abuse. The primary and most common causal factor for parents committing verbal abuse is education. Many parents educate their children firmly and harshly, and without realizing it, verbal abuse can have a negative impact on children, even more significant than the impact of physical violence.

Keywords: *Movies, Verbal Abuse, Semiotic, Roland Barthes.*

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1. Introduction

Violence against children is an iceberg phenomenon that is close to our lives. From year to year the level of violence against children continues to increase. Social issues in society like this are captured by the media as discourse that needs to be socialized. The delivery of messages regarding issues in society is not only conveyed through various news, both in print and electronic media, but can also be conveyed through films. Film is a popular culture product that represents and constructs the life of a society.

This view implies the position of film as a recording or reflection of social reality. With film we can convey a message that can influence people's attitudes and perceptions. Movies also have the power and ability to reach social segments. There are many violent scenes or words shown through this medium. One of them is the film "Benalu" by Sidiq Aryadi, who is also the director of the film. Violence itself has many meanings which can be through words, writing, and words that cause others to become vengeful, hurt and can also cause hatred.

Benalu tells the story of a mother, named Sri (40), who works as a rubber squeezer as well as a mother who always supports the life choices of her son, Joko (13). Joko wanted to become a girl band member, but always received verbal abuse from his father. The father could not accept Joko's situation. She was very embarrassed to see her son who acted like a girl, liked to dress up and dance like a girl. Joko's father often said threatening words so that Sri could change Joko's behavior. He also often said inappropriate things about his own son in front of Sri. How can a mother not be hurt when the child she loves is hurt even by her own father. Sri tried to endure her husband's rude attitude in words, all for the sake of the integrity of her family.

In her husband's view, in this world it seems to only admit everything in two conflicting areas, such as life and death, rich poor, stupid clever. Even in the area of gender and sexual orientation, it recognizes only male and female types, and there is no place for other types. For most people, it

seems that the appearance of a male resembling a woman or a female resembling a man is quite a strange form of life.

When Sri was down, all she could do was contact her mother. He called the mother to hear the voice of his mother's greeting. Sri certainly did not tell her mother what she was going through in her household. For Sri, hearing her mother's voice is part of comfort and encouragement to stay strong in her life. What Sri's husband did, both to his wife and child led to verbally abusive behavior. Verbal abuse is "violence against feelings". Downplaying or playing tricks on children can take the form of demeaning children, denouncing names, making negative distinctions between children, stating that children are not good, worthless, ugly or something that comes from mistakes.

To end violence against children, UNICEF calls on governments to take immediate action and support the INSPIRE guidelines agreed and promoted by WHO, UNICEF and the Global Partnership to end violence against children, such as adopting coordinated national action plans to end violence against children, incorporating education, social welfare, justice and health systems, as well as communities, and children themselves. Change adult behavior and respond to factors that contribute to violence against children, including economic and social inequalities, social and cultural norms that support violence, inadequate policies, and legislation, insufficient services for victims, and limited investment in effective systems to prevent and respond to violence.

2. Research Methods

This study used Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis to reveal the meaning of connotative and denotative signs. A connotative sign is a sign whose marking has an openness of meaning or meaning that is implicit, indirect, and uncertain, meaning that it is open to the possibility of new interpretations. In Barthes' semiology, denotation is a system of first-order significance, while connotation is second-order significance. Denotation can be said to have a fixed objective meaning, while connotation is a subjective and varied meaning (Vera, 2014).

According to Sardar & Loon in Sobur (2009: 128), film and television have their own languages with different syntax and grammar. Movies can basically involve forms of visual and linguistic symbols to encode the message that is being conveyed. Movies are generally built with a lot of signs. The signs include various sign systems that work well together in an effort to achieve the expected effect. The most important in are images and sounds: the spoken word (plus other sounds that simultaneously accompany the pictures) and the music of the film.

According to Van Zoest (Sobur, 2001: 96) semiotics as "The science of signs and everything related to them: how they function, their relation to other words, their transmission, and their acceptance by those who use them". Semiotics is the study of the meaning and analysis of events that give rise to meaning. Semiotics was chosen as a research method because it can provide ample space for interpretation of films. So that in the end you can get the hidden meaning in a symbol in a movie. The data in this study itself is the film *Benalu* by Sidiq Aryadi. The data analysis technique used is using semiotic analysis.

3. Discussion

The power of influencing films affects many social classes, and authoritative experts believe that films have the ability to influence a wide audience. Since then, much research has focused on the impact movies have had on our lives. As seen in various film studies, including the impact of film on children, film and aggression, film and politics, etc. (Sobur, 2017:127).

Roland Barthes was a structuralist thinker who adhered to Saussure's linguistic and semiological model. He argues that language is a sign system that shows the assumptions of a certain society at a

certain time (Sobur, 2013: 63). The system of meaning, according to Barthes there are two, namely Connotative and Denotative. Connotation, although it is the original nature of the sign, requires the activeness of the reader in order to function. Barthes discusses at length what is often called the second-order system of meaning, which builds on other systems that have existed before. Literature is the clearest example of a second-order system of meaning built on a language system as the first system. This second system is called connotative by Barthes, which in his *Mythologies* is expressly distinguished from the denotative or meaning system (first state).

In Barthes' framework, connotation is synonymous with the operation of ideology, which he referred to as myth and served to reveal and provide justification for the dominant values prevailing in a given period. As in myths there are three-dimensional patterns of markers, signifiers and signs. While the second state is a myth. In myth, we again find three-dimensional patterns of markers, signifiers, and signs.

Through Barthes' description of "Two Order Signification" or Two Stage Signification (Sobur, 2002: 12) it can be understood that the first stage of signification is the relationship between signifier and signified in a sign containing external reality. Barthes called it denotation, the most obvious meaning of a sign. The significance of the second stage is termed by Barthes as connotation. This describes the relationship of signs intersecting with the feelings or emotions of the reader and his cultural values. According to Fiske (Sobur, 2012: 128) connotations have subjective or at least intersubjective meanings.

On both significations the sign works through myth (Myt). Myths are cultures that explain or interpret reality or natural phenomena. Myths are the result of social classes about life and death, humans and gods, and so on. Fiske (Sobur, 2001: 128) says current myths are for example about femininity, masculinity, science, and success.

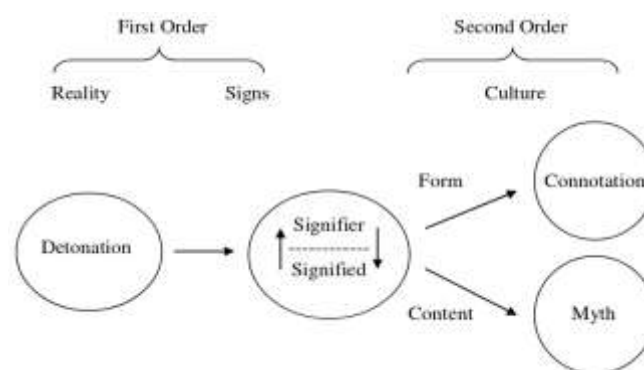


Figure 1: Roland Barthes' two-stage signification
(Source: Sobur, 2001:12)

Barthes explains the significance of the first stage is the relationship of signifiers and signifiers in a sign to external reality. Barthes calls it a denotation. Connotation is the term Barthes used for significance towards both. It describes the interaction that occurs when a sign meets the feelings or emotions of the reader as well as the values of his culture. On the significance of the second stage relating to content, signs work through myths. Barthes argues that the most important way myths work is to naturalize history. This points to the fact that myths are actually the product of a social class that has gained dominance in a particular history: the meaning disseminated through myth inevitably carries history with them, but its execution as a myth makes them try to deny it and present that meaning as natural, rather than historical or social.

Denotation

Barthes (Wibowo, 2013: 21) explained that denotation is a first-level signification system which is a relationship between signifier (expression) and signified (content) in a sign against external reality. Denotation is the most tangible meaning of sign. Denotation is a true meaning, which is socially mutually agreed upon, which refers to reality (Vera, 2015: 28). The meaning of denotation is direct and can be referred to as a description of a sign (Berger, 2010: 65). Denotational meaning is the main initial meaning of a sign, text, and so on. At this stage explain the relationship between signifier and signifier in sign, and between sign and object it represents (its referent) in its external reality. Barthes calls it a denotation. Denotation refers to what common sense believes, the ultimate meaning of a sign.

Connotation

Connotation is a second-level signification system which is an interaction that occurs when signs meet the feelings or emotions of readers and the values of their culture (Wibowo, 2013: 21). Connotation is a sign whose signifier has an openness of meaning or meaning that is implicit, indirect, and uncertain, meaning that it is open to the possibility of new interpretations (Vera, 2015: 28). According to Berger, the connotation meaning of some signs will be a kind of myth or mythical clue (which emphasizes these meanings) so that in many ways the meaning of connotation becomes a very influential manifestation of myth (Berger, 2010: 65). Connotation is a term Barthes used to describe one of the three ways a sign works in the second stage of sign signification. Connotations describe interactions that occur when a sign meets the feelings or emotions of users and values within their culture. For Barthes, the main factor in connotation is the sign marker of connotation. Barthes argues in the photograph that at least the difference between connotation and denotation will be obvious. Denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how the process of taking the photo.

Myth

According to Barthes (in Budiman, in Rusmana 2014: 206) myth is not reality but a communication system or message that functions to express and provide justification for dominant values that prevail in a certain period. The myth lies on the second level of marking, once a sign-signifier-system is formed, the sign will become a new signifier which then has a second signifier and forms a new sign. A sign that has a connotational meaning then develops into a denotational meaning, then the meaning of the denotation will become a myth (Berger, 2010: 66). Myths are always displayed in the form of discourse so that the important thing about the message is not only the content of the message (object), but also the way the message is taught (in this case, myth can be interpreted as a speech model). Roland Barthes (in Rusmana 2014:207) places myth as the deepest meaning and is more conventional. Barthes explains that the second way signs work in the second order is through myth. Its usual usage is words that show the distrust of its users. Barthes used myth as the one who believed it, in the truest sense. A myth is a story in which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature.

In Barthes' theory, he developed semiotics into two levels of signs, namely the level of denotation and connotation (Rusmana, 2014: 200). According to Barthes, denotation is a sign whose signifier has a high degree of agreement that produces its true meaning. For Barthes, denotation is a system of first-order signification while connotation is a system of second-order signification.

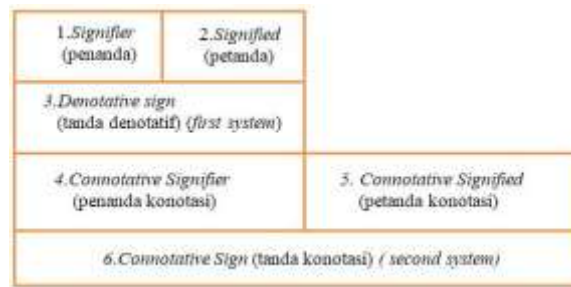


Figure 2: Roland Barthes Sign Map
(Source: Sobur, 2009)

From the Barthes map above, it can be seen that the denotative sign (3) consists of a marker (1) and a marker (2). At the same time, however, a denotative sign is also a connotative marker (4). In other words, it is a material element: only when you recognize the sign of "lion" can connotatives such as self-esteem, fierceness, and courage become possible. Thus, in Barthes' concept, the connotative sign not only has additional meaning but also contains both parts of the denotative sign that underlie its existence.

Violence

Verbal abuse is "violence against feelings". Issuing abusive words without physical touch, defamatory words, words that threaten, frighten, insult or exaggerate the mistakes of others are forms of verbal violence (Sutikno, 2010). Emotional violence or verbal violence, for example carried out in the form of scolding, nagging, yelling, and cursing in an excessive and degrading way, including issuing words that are not worth hearing (Huraerah, 2012).

Verbal abuse can happen anywhere, and home is no exception. When home should be the safest and shelter place for children. There are 10 types of verbal abuse (Schaefer, 1997), including:

1. **Rejection or Withdrawal of love**, such as *"No one loves you."*
2. **Verbal put-down** or condescension, such as *"You're stupid"*
3. **Perfectionism** or perfectionism, a phrase to always require children to always be perfect, such as *"Why don't you be the first?"*
4. Negative predictions, such as *"You'll never amount to anything."*
5. **Negative comparisons**, such as *"Why can't you be like your brother?"*
6. **Spacegoathing**, such as *"You are the reason why my mother and I separated."*
7. **Shaming** or shaming, which is inviting everyone to pay attention to children in situations that make children embarrassed.
8. **Cursing or swearing**, e.g. *"Go to hell."*
9. **Threats**, such as *"I'm going to kill you!", "I'm going to leave you!"* and so on.
10. **Guilt trip** or insinuation that causes guilt, such as *"Can you do that, after what I have given you all this time."*

Often parents are unaware that they have committed an act of verbal abuse. The main and most commonly encountered causative factor of parents committing verbal abuse is to educate. Many parents who educate children firmly and harshly, without realizing it verbal violence can have a bad impact on children, even greater than the impact of physical violence. For example, psychological problems, such as lack of confidence, distrust in others, closed, depression and reluctant to go to school (Maulida, 2017). Children are not only victims, but can also be perpetrators. Children with a history of verbal abuse then have the possibility to continue the chain of violence in their lives.

According to Christianti (2008) more detailed forms of verbal violence are as follows:

1. Not dear and cold
This unaffectionate and cold action is in the form of showing little or no affection for the child such as hugs and words of affection.
2. Intimidation actions
Bullying can take the form of yelling, screaming, threatening a child, and bullying a child.
3. Downplaying or humiliating a child
Downplaying or playing tricks on children can be: demeaning children, denouncing names, making negative distinctions between children, stating that children are not good, worthless, ugly or something that comes from mistakes.
4. The habit of reproaching the child
The act of reproaching a child can be exemplified such as: saying that everything that happens is the child's fault.
5. Not heeding or rejecting a child
The act of ignoring or rejecting the child in the form of: not paying attention to the child, giving a cold response, not caring about the child.
6. Extreme punishment
Extreme punitive measures can be: confinement of the child in the bathroom, confinement in a dark room, tying the child to a chair for a long time and terrorizing. There are various forms of verbal violence (Tower, 2005), namely:
 - a. Snapping, that is, scolding in a loud voice, among others:
 1. To rebuke, is to berate with strong words.
 2. To judge, is to try or act as a judge.
 3. Swearing, is to spit out obscenities.
 - b. Cursing, namely saying vile, inappropriate words, not good at expressing anger or irritation, among others:
 1. To denounce, that is, to blatant insult.
 2. Spouting, is spraying words from inside the mouth.
 3. Swearing, is to utter obscenities to take an oath.
 - c. Giving negative nicknames / labeling, namely giving identification marks through the form of words, including classifying, is a classification, grouping based on something that is in accordance with its class.
 - d. Downplaying and harassing children's abilities, namely making the child's existence low, among others:
 1. To ignore, is to neglect, to waste.
 2. Sideways, is getting rid towards the edges.
 3. To underestimate, is to look down upon.
 4. Lightening, is to make or take lightly.
 5. It's easy, it's easy, it's making it easy.
 6. Blasphemous, is despicable, despicable.

Benalu Movies

Email	Sidiqariyadi.film@gmail.com
Movie Title	Parasitic plant
Producer's First Name	Fadhilah
Producer's Last Name	Khairani
Director's First Name	Sabina

Director's Last Name	Ariyadi
First Name Screenwriter	Daiva Enda
Last Name Screenwriter	Marsha
Country	Indonesian
Logline	Surviving is sometimes the best option for verbal abuse in the family and neighborhood.
Synopsis	About a Sri (40) who always supports the choice and circumstances of Joko (13) to become a girl band member, but always gets verbal abuse from her husband, she tries to survive for the sake of the integrity of her family
Director Profile	Sidiq Ariyadi, a man born in Temanggung is a filmmaker who likes personal and simple story ideas. His previous film "Gimbal" won best film at Solo Documentary Film Festival, Visual Documentary Project Finalist, Japan, screened at Jogja Asian Film Festival, Seashort Film Festival and Piala Maya nomination in the best short documentary category.
Duration	12:12 minutes

Object Analysis with Roland Barthes' Semiotic Approach

The following is one scene that implies verbal violence, at the minute scene 07.30 – 07.38.





Denotation:

Sri husband took issue with Joko's behavior, his son who was considered to have deviant behavior because he liked Girl Band music and threatened his wife if she could not take care of her properly, then she would solve it differently from his wife. In the scene, Sri can be seen looking terrified who hears her husband's stern reprimand.

Character (Sri's husband) dialogue: *"I finished Sri! If you can't take care of your child, I can't if things go on like this. How hard are you talking about, Sri!"*

Connotation:

The connotation in the scene is an example of emotional abuse that Sri has not directly conveyed to his son but through his mother or pressuring his wife. Of course, these words for a mother will make heartache, anxiety, even trauma, especially if the child hears it. Furthermore, it will cause bad effects and prolonged problems if her husband really does this to Joko.

Her husband's threats are one type of verbal abuse that can cause trauma and a form of verbal abuse. A father's cynicism clearly seems implicit. Cynicism is a view or statement of attitude that mocks or looks down on it, a view or idea that does not see any good and doubts the good qualities that exist in humans. Taunting or bullying behavior can have a physical or emotional impact on the victim. Emotional impacts such as low self-esteem, difficulty concentrating so that it affects the decline in academic grades, trauma, difficulty socializing, to depression. Bullying is the use of violence or coercion to abuse or intimidate another person.

Myth

The myth circulating in society states that children must fulfill the parents' will to become what because parents understand what children need in the future, and often found ways of discipline through violence. This is not only felt by young children, adults also feel pressure if their parents control (Rianti, & Ahmad Dahlan, 2022).

Photos in Benalu Movie Scenes



(Scenes of Joko dancing)



(Sri was called by her husband questioning Joko's behavior)



(Photo of Sri's husband/Joko's father)



(In a depressed state after a quarrel with her husband, Sri contacted her mother just to hear her voice)



(Sri often cried because she was really distressed by all her husband's words)



(While working, Sri couldn't contain her sadness)



(The expression on Joko's face when he knew his father and mother were fighting)



(The last scene of Benalu's film, Joko still conveys his wish on her mother to create a Girl Band with her friends)

4. Cover

Conclusion:

The film directed by Sidiq Aryadi premiered in 2022 at the Semarang City Film Gallery, then at the Lampung Film Festival, Purbalingga Film Festival, and in November at the International Photography and Short Movie Festival (IPSMF). In addition, this film is a new fiction short film because it was produced in 2022, and is not yet mass-accessible through YouTube. Nevertheless, Benalu documentaries represent reality and are creative ways of presenting events or reality.

The word representation refers to the explanations of people who help define and describe an object. Representation is also a form of constructed meanings, so representation does not only refer to the surface or how there is a visible object. Easier representation refers to making a meaning.

In Benalu, identification of verbal signs includes dialogue that supports verbal violence in Benalu, such as using condescending, subtle but stressful language, yelling and threatening. So that makes others afraid to be depressed / frustrated. Identification of non-verbal signs includes all body gestures, expressions or facial expressions that support players who are psychologically unwell, appear depressed, uncomfortable, and frightened. For example, in scenes expressing Sri crying after her husband's call or Joko's worries after her father contacted her mother, suddenly the mother told her to turn off the music.

Furthermore, based on these signs, various myths appear in this film, namely the language used is subtle but oppressive and threatening, seen from the good face that tends to be rude, the face that is

threatened is very scared, anxious, worried, and even crying. Harsh language is often considered to hurt feelings, but subtle language sometimes also pokes feelings even more painfully.

Suggestion:

The main purpose of documentary films is not just to convey information but to provide educational and moral messages to the public, so that Indonesian film connoisseurs are expected to be able to better digest every film watched or by not swallowing it raw, can take positive messages from the film, and are expected to be able to be critical of the messages in the film.

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