

The Meaning of Creativity Message in Xu Bing's Work: Square Word Calligraphy (Ferdinand De Saussure Semiotics Analysis)

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ABSTRACT

Exhibition is an activity to present works of art from various artists. In an exhibition, an artist aims to communicate the work that has been made so that it can be enjoyed and appreciated by the public. MACAN Museum is a place for contemporary artists to display their works. XU BING is a contemporary artist from China with a work entitled Square Word Calligraphy. This artwork tells about how language and words become a barrier between individuals and other individuals. XU BING makes Chinese characters that can be understood by everyone who reads them without having to learn Chinese characters because they have meanings that can be read not only in English but can be adapted into Indonesian. This study aimed to find out how the meaning of the message of creativity in calligraphy works. The theoretical review used in this research is Verbal and Nonverbal Communication, Message Meaning and Creativity. To answer the formulation of the problem, this study uses a qualitative research approach with semiotic analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure, who sees the phenomenon of signs using a sign triangle, namely Sign, Signify, and Signifier. The research results using Saussure's semiotic analysis are shown in several calligraphy works that have the meaning of proverb messages that are included in the syntagmatic type and have the characteristics of creative thinking.

Keywords : Calligraphy, XU BING, Semiotics, Message Meaning

1. INTRODUCTION

Exhibition is an activity to present works of art from various artists. In an exhibition, an artist aims to communicate the work that has been made so that it can be enjoyed and appreciated by a large audience. According to Goyer [1] Humans can share experiences indirectly or understand the experiences of others. The same applies to the art exhibition held at the contemporary art museum, Museum Macan, Jakarta. The Macan Museum is an institution that provides public access to a significant and growing collection of modern and contemporary art from Indonesia and around the world [2].

The Macan Museum is a venue for an art exhibition by XU BING: Thought & Method which will be held from August 2019 to January 2020. XU BING is an artist who was very influential in his generation in China who has a work entitled Square Word Calligraphy. This artwork tells about how language and words become a barrier between

individuals and other individuals. XU BING made the typical Chinese character use a brush and black ink into a character that can be understood by everyone who reads it without learning Chinese characters because it has meanings that can be read in English.

However, in the MACAN museum exhibition, XU BING's calligraphy works are not adapted using only English but also Indonesian which discusses Indonesian proverbs. XU BING's work incorporates a new calligraphy that can be adapted according to the language you want to use but still has meaning like Indonesian proverbs.

Meaning and message have a close relationship, especially with the artworks done by XU BING. Messages are content or information that is shared with other individuals or groups in the communication process [3]. Messages are essential and abstract. Messages can be in the form of verbal messages and non-verbal messages. Verbal messages contain words and language can be in spoken or written form. In contrast to non-verbal messages, non-verbal messages contain Gesture Communication (signs, gestures, expressions, or colors). In XU BING's work, the message

conveyed is a verbal message in written form. When a verbal message in the form of writing is delivered, the message becomes a communication tool. Messages can be meaningful if there is meaning in the message.

The meaning of the first communication is the process involving the exchange of symbols and signs, both verbal and nonverbal, the second has a jointness between the sender and the recipient of the message [4].

Meaning is the meaning of a word, meaning will be successful if the communicator and communicant have the same interpretation of a word. For example, A sees the color red as having a brave meaning, as well as B which has the same interpretation as A.

XU BING's artwork has great potential in the field of communication. Because of the creativity in writing, this work has the potential to be used in the field of advertising and copywriting. Creative thinking is not just making new things. Humans can only find what has not been discovered, change or combine things that already exist and are found by others [5].

With this Square Word Calligraphy work able to convey the meaning of messages with high creativity through works of art with language, the researchers are interested in choosing the title "**The Meaning of Creativity Messages in XU BING's work: Square Word Calligraphy**"

Previous Research

Research on the meaning of creativity in verbal and nonverbal messages in the @MIMI.PERI Instagram account uses Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotics with the Dyadic model and the constructivist paradigm with descriptive qualitative. [6] The results of this study prove that Mimi Peri has a creative nature by making unique costumes with recycled materials and named with unique jargon. Mimi Peri also has original creativity and has a non-verbal message that Mimi Peri cares about the environment. The equation discusses the meaning of creativity from a verbal and nonverbal message. The current study discusses Sign, Signify, Signified from Xu Bing's painting: Square Word Calligraphy.

Then in the study of semiotics analysis of signs in this visual communication design work using Semiotics from Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce and Roland Barthes and using descriptive qualitative methods. [7] The results of this study apply several logos to a brand or product into several semiotic theories that Visual Communication has a language component and a sign that is conveyed to the audience, so the use of semiotics as an analytical method is expected to be applied and used according to the context. The similarities are in the use of the semiotic method as a reference in journal research. The difference is the semiotic method used by the author, namely Ferdinand de Saussure, so that the writing can be more conical and the work used comes from only one artist.

In the Creative Hashtag research (Descriptive Analysis of the Meaning of Using Hashtags in Tokopedia Ads #MulaiAjaDulu on Youtube) [8] using mass communication theory and meaning analysis and using phenomenology with descriptive qualitative methods. The meaning of the word "Start" is the driving word and the hashtag is useful to find out how the audience is interested in Tokopedia ads. Then because creativity in making hashtags is able to increase the rate of audience interest. The similarity of meaning and creativity are taken together from a writing or word that is the material for analysis. The difference is the use of the author's theory is more inclined to verbal and nonverbal communication.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Communication

According to Tubbs and Moss [9] defines communication as the process of creating meaning between two people (communicator 1 and communicator 2) or more. According to Bernard and Gary [9], communication is the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, and so on by using symbols in words, pictures, figures, graphics, and so on. The act or process of transmission is what is usually called communication. According to Diana K. Ivy and Phil Backlund [9], communication is an ongoing and dynamic process, receiving and sending messages to share meaning.

2.1.1. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

According to Deddy Mulyana [1] Verbal communication is a type of verbal communication that uses one or more words. On the other hand, nonverbal communication is all communication that is conveyed without words or other than the words we use. Categories in nonverbal communication are very broad such as facial expressions, tone of voice, body cues, and others.

2.1.1.1. Verbal and Non-verbal Messages

Verbal and nonverbal messages are two different types of messages. According to Kusumawati [10], "Verbal communication is sending messages in the form of words and language in the form of writing and orally. The use of verbal communication is most often used because it becomes a means of communicating directly and easily in conveying ideas, opinions, or decisions so that communicators and communicators easily understand them.

Language is a structured system of communication symbols and signs that can give meaning to communicators. According to Larry L. Barker [9], language has 3 functions: naming, interaction, and information transmission. Naming has a function to identify actions, objects, or people by mentioning their names so that they can be included in the communication.

For example, when a lecturer wants to take attendance for a student, he or she must mention the name so that there is no mistake in attendance and the lecturer is able to identify the student according to his name. Then the interaction function is centered on various kinds of ideas and emotions so that it can invite various responses such as: empathy, sympathy, joy, sadness, anger or confusion. With the language, the process of disseminating information can be done every day, directly or indirectly, this is the function of transmitting information. Through language we can set the response, environment to the desired output. However, the farther the language difference between the communicators, the more difficult it is to reach an understanding between one another.

According to Kusumawati [10] the word is one of the important elements besides language. Words are the smallest symbols compared to language. Meaning is not attached to words but words evoke meaning in people's minds. The words that are often used are abstracts that are agreed with the meaning so that the word must share the words with the people involved in the communication.

Often we find people communicating without using verbal but the other person has understood the message conveyed. Nonverbal communication is communication that is carried out using Gesture Communication or gestures and silent language. With verbal communication, we are able to know the emotional state of a person. According to Huang, L. [11], nonverbal communication is more often used than verbal communication, and it is an important part of human communication that plays an important role. Ignorance of nonverbal messages will result in incompleteness. According to Jurgen Ruesch [9], there are 3 parts of nonverbal cues, namely Sign Language (sign language), for example, waving to friends who are going to school. Action Language (action language) is a body movement that is not used specifically for example, walking. Object Language (object language) other nonverbal symbols such as music, object performances, clothing, pictures, paintings, etc.

2.2. Message Meaning

According to Marcel Danesi [12] said that meaning is something that is not determined absolutely. But always in relation to other signs. Words represent symbols that exist in life around humans which are then used to communicate so that humans communicate with the symbols they mean and have the same meaning between both parties.

According to Mulyana [9] said that meaning arises from a special relationship between words (as verbal symbols) and humans. Meaning is not attached to words, but words are able to evoke meaning in one's thoughts. According to R. Brown [9] defines meaning as a total tendency to use or react to a form of language.

So the meaning of the message is the meaning that is in a message and has a purpose to be conveyed. For example, the word 'plate' has no meaning if it only becomes words,

but when someone mentions the word 'plate' to others, the word 'plate' will be interpreted as a tool to put food.

2.3. Creativity

A person's ability to create new ideas, ideas or products is creativity. The definition of creativity according to Munandar [13] "Creativity is a process that manifests itself in fluency, in flexibility as well as in originality of thinking." That is, creativity is a process that is reflected in fluency, flexibility (flexibility) and originality in thinking.

Munandar [14] stated that creative products have the following characteristics:

- a. Fluency (fluency), fluency is centered on a number of ideas, ideas, or alternatives in solving problems. Fluency implies one's understanding.
- b. Flexibility (flexibility), flexibility is centered on the results of ideas that show various possibilities. Flexibility includes the ability to see things from different perspectives and use a variety of different strategies or approaches.
- c. Elaboration (Elaboration), elaboration is centered on the process of increasing ideas in more detail. Additional details will increase interest and understanding of the topic
- d. Originality, centered on the results of unusual or unique ideas. Authenticity involves conveying information in a new way.

2.4. Ferdinand de Saussure Semiotics

At first the sign was defined as something that refers to something else. Semiotics comes from the Greek word Semeion which means sign. In everyday life we can find various kinds of signs. For example, a sign from an electricity meter that reads indicates that the electricity token has run out and the fragrance on the clothes after the laundry indicates the clothes are clean.

Ferdinand de Saussure is the father of Semiotics and one of the most important theorists in linguistic studies. Saussure believed that there was structuralism in a language and became the originator of the structuralism movement in France in the early 20th century. According to Ferdinand de Saussure [15] semiotics is a method of analysis or science that studies signs. One of the important concepts of Saussure semiotics is the Saussure sign triangle.

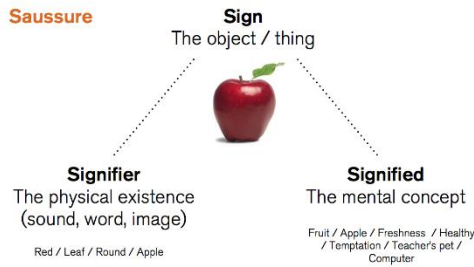


Figure 1. Saussure's Semiotic Signs of Meaning Triangle Model

Source:

<https://www.slideshare.net/AbulhasanAbedi/reading-media-through-sign-signifier-and-signified>

According to Sobur [16] Saussure places the sign in the context of communication with the signifier and the signified. A signifier is a verbal sound or scribble that has meaning. In contrast to the signified or signified, it is a mental picture of thoughts or mental concepts from language. Sign shows the initial picture of an object, for example a laptop. Then proceed with the Signifier which is the physical appearance of the Sign in the form of colors, lines, sounds and other signs.

For example, the laptop has the Apple logo. In the Signified section, it can be said that the laptop that has the apple logo is a Macbook brand laptop that has sophisticated engine specifications, looks luxurious and shows one's economy because the price is quite expensive.

According to Eriyanto [17], one of the important rules in a series of signs is Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic. This series is used in understanding the meaning of signs and was first introduced by Saussure. Syntagmatic is a relation between signs in the form of a combination or a linear series in a unit. For example I - drink - because - thirst.

According to Fanani [16] said that Paradigmatic refers to the arena of signs (eg synonyms) of all signs that are then selected. Examples include bowls and plates, spoons and forks.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The approach in this study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm [17].

The author uses a case study to investigate an event. The purpose of the case study is to seek to find meaning, investigate the process, and obtain a deep and even complete understanding and understanding of a particular individual, group or situation [18].

The subject of this research is a calligraphy work with the title "Three Indonesian Proverbs" which is displayed in the Square Word Calligraphy art installation. The object of this

research is the meaning of the message of creativity contained in XU BING's calligraphy work.

Technical analysis of the data in this study using semiotic Saussure analysis with a triangle of meaning.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the author will describe the results of a more in-depth analysis of the meaning of the message of creativity in the work of XU BING: Square Word Calligraphy by analyzing the meaning behind Chinese calligraphy which can be read using both English and Indonesian using the semiotic triangle of Ferdinand de Saussure's sign.

4.1. Meaning of Verbal and Nonverbal Messages in Calligraphy Works

The calligraphy work entitled three Indonesian proverbs at a glance does not give any meaning because the modified and foreign calligraphy makes the work difficult to identify. But with us, as humans, giving meaning to verbal symbols in the form of calligraphy text makes us interpret the calligraphy work. This calligraphy work is included in the type of verbal communication in the form of text or writing. By delivering verbal communication through writing, the audience will know what XU BING wants to convey in its exhibition.

In XU BING's calligraphy work entitled three Indonesian proverbs, it can be said that the sequences used in Indonesian proverbs fall into the Syntagmatic category. Because the combination in the proverb is a unity and the series of sentences unite linearly or in a straight line. The series of words in "Diligent Pangkal Pandai" and "Alah Can Because Ordinary" are one unit and are not seen as synonyms which are selected later.

In this series of signs contained verbal and nonverbal messages. Verbal messages conveyed in the work of three Indonesian proverbs are proverbs that are familiar to the Indonesian people "Diligent Pangkal Pandai" and "Alah Can Because Ordinary". This verbal message can be identified through Saussure's semiotics using a triangle of signs. After knowing how to read calligraphy in Square Word Calligraphy, the author is able to give Signify and Signifier to the calligrapher. With Signify, the reading method is from left to right, outside to inside and top to bottom and calligraphy strokes are made in such a way that it is similar to the alphabet, the author is able to proceed to the Signifier stage. At the Signifier stage, the writer gives meaning to the calligraphy text by reading and finding the results that what is written in the calligraphy text horizontally are "Diligent Pangkal Pandai" and "Alah Can Because Ordinary".

Reporting from *kompas.com* by Ernawati Waridah [19] proverbs are sentences or groups of words that have a fixed arrangement and contain one specific purpose. The function of proverbs is to give advice, provide observations of the world and circumstances, and beautify language. The meaning of verbal messages that can be found in the proverb "Diligent Pangkal Pandai" is that if someone does something diligently, he will get an intelligence or intelligence.

For example, if you study hard, you will become a smart person. In the proverb "Alah Can Because Ordinary" gives the meaning of the message that being active in practice will lead to success. For example, if you are actively practicing sports, it will lead to a healthy body and a healthy body is the result of practicing hard so that you can say success. These two proverbs are in accordance with their function, which is to give advice using beautiful language

Non-verbal messages have an important role in communication because they affect a person's emotional state. The meaning of nonverbal messages that can be found in the proverbs "Diligent Pangkal Pandai" and "Alah Can Because Ordinary" is an encouragement for someone when reading through the text to get motivated to be more diligent in order to achieve the desired results and realize themselves that not to be lazy in reaching desired thing.

4.2. Creativity in Calligraphy

In everyday life, we certainly have colleagues or friends who have more creativity than others. Creativity is an idea, creation, idea even a new product made by someone. Creativity has identical things so that it has creativity differences from one another.

In this study, it was found that XU BING as an artist has high creativity. The creativity produced by XU BING is a calligraphy work that is verbally in the form of text but with a combination of different cultures and languages.

According to Munandar [14] creativity has several characteristics, namely:

a. Fluency (ideas, ideas or alternatives in solving problems)

In his calligraphy work, XU BING solves the problem of language. Reporting from a press conference held at the MACAN Museum at the opening of the work in Jakarta, XU BING said that:

"A good artist must also be a good thinker. Suppose you only have good ideas or philosophical concepts. In that case, you may become a philosopher, but it may not be enough to be included in the history of art. Therefore, an artist must use a special way to express their ideas using an unconventional cultural concept."

It means, "A good artist must also be a good thinker. Suppose you have only good philosophical ideas or

concepts. In that case, you may become a philosopher, but perhaps not enough to be included in the history of art. Therefore, an artist must use special ways to express their ideas using unconventional cultural concepts."

XU BING's thoughts on the work he made show that XU BING uses a creative way of thinking by using concepts and ideas that are different from other people's culture. So that the work he creates is original and creative.

b. Flexibility (ability to see things from different perspectives and use different approaches)

XU BING says that: "Take Square Word Calligraphy I invented as an example. The characters look like Chinese, but they are actually English and have nothing to do with Chinese"

It means, "Take the Square Word Calligraphy I found as an example. The characters look like Chinese, but are actually English and have nothing to do with Chinese."

The ability of different perspectives and different approach strategies is reflected in his calligraphy work. XU BING wants to use the Chinese way of writing but with a language approach that is more inclined to English.

c. Elaboration (the process of improving an idea in more detail that will increase interest and understanding of the topic)

XU BING said that: "My real interest is to provide a new thinking perspective through my works and to change people's way of thinking. In the face of such new calligraphy, our existing knowledge system doesn't work."

It means, "My real interest is to provide a new perspective of thinking through my works and to change the way people think. In the face of such a new calligraphy, our existing knowledge system simply doesn't work."

The improvement of ideas in detail is shown by XU BING when his calligraphy works are not just writing but are used to communicate by changing Chinese calligraphy, which can be conveyed using the perspective of XU BING's creative thinking, namely Chinese calligraphy can be read in English.

d. Authenticity (the result of unusual or unique ideas and conveying information in new ways)

XU BING said that "We must find a new anchor point, a new concept, and retrieve the origin of thoughts and cognition."

It means, "We have to find new anchor points, new concepts, and take back the origins of thought and cognition."

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion carried out on XU BING's calligraphy work to find out the meaning of the message of creativity using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic sign triangle, the following are the conclusions made by the author:

First, the meaning of verbal and nonverbal messages in XU BING's calligraphy works can be achieved when we have interpreted the calligraphy writing displayed by XU BING. By using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics in analyzing the calligraphy work, it makes it easier for us to know the form and how to read calligraphy followed by the meaning of the messages contained in the work. The meaning of the message verbally gives the meaning of the proverb, namely if someone is diligent and enterprising in doing something, they will get results and success. Followed by the meaning of nonverbal messages that affect a person's emotions, which can lead to motivation that exists within a person.

Second, XU BING's creativity is very high by showing how he thinks that is unusual with others and uses a unique approach strategy and uses his work as a tool to communicate with people who see his work. It can be said that XU BING is a very creative artist because he is able to use his original work, namely calligraphy and then adapt it according to the language he wants to use without losing the meaning in it.

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