

## Analysis of Signs on Online ads: Roland Barthes' Perspectives

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**ABSTRACT:** Advertising serves as a persuasive communication tool that employs various signs and symbols to attract consumer attention. In the contemporary marketing landscape, the incorporation of foreign cultural elements has become a prevalent strategy to enhance product appeal. One notable example is the influence of Korean culture in the promotion of instant food products in Indonesia, particularly in alignment with the global spread of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). This study examines the advertisement for *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*, which features King Nassar as the central figure and integrates vibrant visuals, expressive performances, and adapted Korean linguistic elements such as *Kiyowo*, *Omoo*, and *Duabak*. This study employs Roland Barthes' (1964) semiotic analysis, focusing on the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth to decode the advertisement's meaning. The research method includes qualitative content analysis, where visual and linguistic elements are examined to understand their symbolic and cultural significance. The findings reveal that the advertisement effectively constructs a myth that associates Korean culture with modernity, excitement, and desirability, making the product more appealing to Indonesian consumers. The study concludes that integrating foreign cultural elements in advertising enhances consumer engagement but also reflects the growing impact of globalization on local branding strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** Semiotics, Denotation and Connotation, Myth, Advertisement

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a form of persuasive communication that employs various signs and symbols to capture the audience's attention. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), advertising is a paid form of communication designed to inform, persuade, and remind audiences about a product or service. Meanwhile, Fill (2009) defined advertising as a communication medium that influences consumer opinions and behavior through creatively delivered messages. In the era of globalization, marketing strategies increasingly adapt foreign cultural elements to enhance product appeal. One prominent phenomenon is the use of Korean culture in the marketing of instant food products in Indonesia, aligning with the rising popularity of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) (Andika, 2024; Putri et al., 2025; Ardina et al., 2024; Youngsun et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2019). However, this phenomenon also raises questions about how foreign cultural elements are adapted in advertisements and how Indonesian audiences interpret them.

A compelling example is the advertisement for *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*, which features King Nassar as the main figure, using an expressive style, striking colors, and playful adaptations of popular Korean terms such as *Kiyowo*, *Omoo*, and *Duabak*. In this advertisement, various visual and linguistic

elements are employed to create an impression that the product carries a Korean nuance, despite being a local brand. The use of red and gold colors, dance movements, and King Nassar's dramatic expressions not only aim to attract attention but also to construct a product identity aligned with popular cultural trends. This reflects how modern marketing strategies seek to associate products with global lifestyle trends.

Semiotics, as the study of signs and meanings, is highly relevant in advertising analysis. Roland Barthes (1964) developed a two-stage semiotic theory—denotative and connotative meanings—that can be used to understand how advertising messages are constructed. At the denotative level, the advertisement provides basic information about the product, whereas at the connotative level, it builds deeper emotional or cultural associations. In the *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement, for example, the use of the word *Kiyowo*, meaning "cute" in Korean, functions not only as a linguistic gimmick but also as a tool to establish the product's fun and trendy K-Pop-inspired image.

Furthermore, Barthes introduced the concept of myth, referring to a grand narrative that shapes society's understanding of a phenomenon. The myth in this advertisement is linked to Hallyu, the global spread of Korean culture. By incorporating Korean cultural elements, the advertisement indirectly reinforces the myth that anything associated with Korea holds greater appeal among Indonesian consumers. This demonstrates how the advertising industry leverages cultural trends to enhance a product's marketability.

In the context of marketing strategies, the *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement illustrates that globalization affects not only cultural consumption but also the construction of local product identities. By adapting foreign cultural elements, local products can be more easily accepted in markets influenced by global trends. However, this also raises discussions about the extent to which foreign cultures can be adapted without diminishing the original identity of the product.

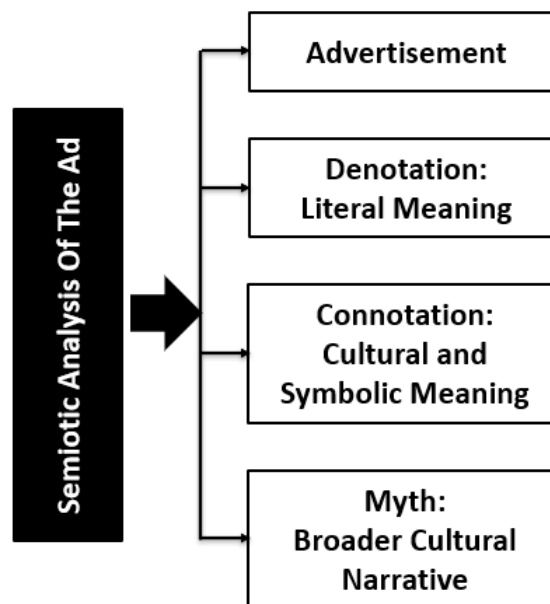
## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND STUDY SIGNIFICANCE

### 1. Meaning in Advertising through Roland Barthes' Semiotic

This study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as the primary approach to analyzing the advertisement for *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*. Barthes (1964) explains that signs in semiotics have two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal or objective meaning of a sign, while connotation involves more complex subjective, emotional, and cultural aspects (Barthes, 1972; Kravchenko, 2024; Shyam, 2024; Yaumi et al., 2024; Andini et al., 2022; Muchtar et al., 2023; Adinda et al., 2023). Additionally, Barthes introduces the concept of myth, which represents a hidden grand narrative within signs that shapes specific social understandings. In the context of this advertisement, the emerging myth relates to the construction of Korean cultural imagery within Indonesia's instant food industry.

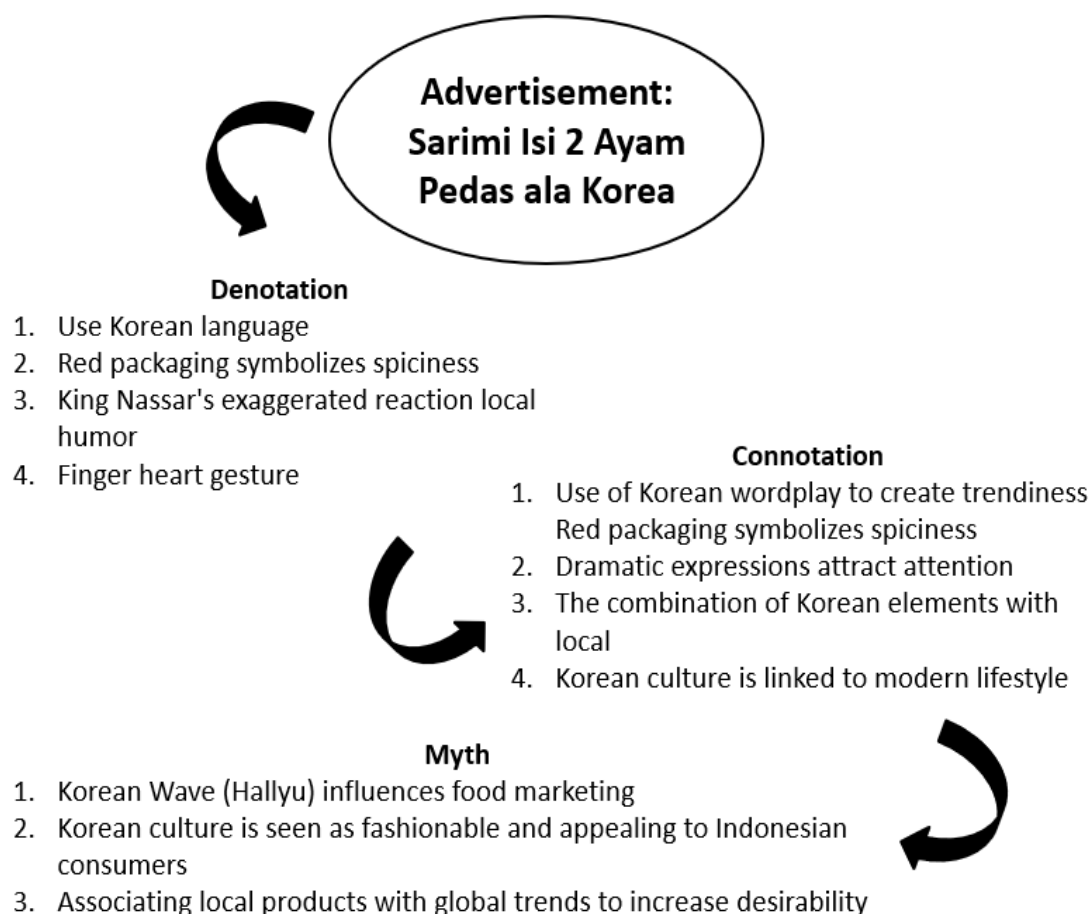
### 2. Advertising and Semiotics Studies

Advertising is a form of persuasive communication aimed at influencing consumer opinions and behaviors (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Motreniuc, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2024; Wicaksono et al., 2021). According to Leiss et al., (1990), advertisements utilize various signs and symbols to create meanings that audiences can recognize. Chandler (2007) stated that in semiotic analysis, advertisements can be understood as a system of signs that function by associating a product with specific ideas or values. In this case, the use of Korean cultural elements in the *Sarimi* advertisement establishes an association between instant food products and the popular Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) trend in Indonesia.



**Figure 1. Semiotic and Advertisement**

This diagram illustrates how the elements in the advertisement are processed through three levels of meaning in Barthes' semiotics—denotation as the literal meaning, connotation as the cultural meaning, and myth as the social construct that links the product to global trends, particularly the Korean Wave.



**Figure 2. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of the *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement**

The *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement can be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which consists of denotation, connotation, and myth. At the denotative level, the ad features King Nassar with exaggerated expressions, bright red packaging symbolizing spiciness, and Korean-inspired phrases like *Kiyowo*, *Omoo*, and *Duabak*. The connotative meaning emerges through the playful adaptation of Korean language and gestures, aligning the product with the *Hallyu* trend and making it appear trendy and exciting for Indonesian consumers. The myth constructed in the advertisement reflects the idea that consuming this product allows individuals to partake in Korean pop culture, reinforcing the notion that Korean trends symbolize modernity, fun, and global connectivity.

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study aims to analyze the denotative and connotative meanings in the advertisement *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*. The analysis examines how visual, linguistic, and symbolic elements in the advertisement construct meaning on two levels: first, the denotative meaning, which relates to literal aspects such as the red and gold colors, King Nassar's exaggerated expressions, and the use of Korean language wordplay in the advertisement's slogan. Second, the connotative meaning, which reflects cultural and emotional aspects, such as how the wordplay on *Kiyowo*, *Omoo*, and *Duabak* not only gives a Korean nuance but also creates the impression of an appealing product that aligns with global trends.

Furthermore, this study also aims to uncover the myth constructed within the advertisement, particularly regarding the portrayal of Korean culture in Indonesia's instant food industry. Using Barthes' semiotic perspective, this research will examine how the advertisement leverages the popularity of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) to attract Indonesian consumers. The narrative built in the advertisement suggests that consuming food with a Korean flavor is not merely a taste experience but also part of a broader cultural trend. Thus, this study will explore how such marketing strategies not only sell products but also shape perceptions of Korean culture in the minds of Indonesian society.

### IV. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the semiotic aspects of the *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena, particularly when understanding meanings and interpretations is central to the research. This approach enables researchers to examine how visual, linguistic, and cultural elements in advertisements construct meaning within a specific social and cultural context.

The research utilizes semiotic analysis as the primary method, drawing from Roland Barthes' (1964) theory of denotation, connotation, and myth. The study focuses on identifying and interpreting the signs and symbols used in the advertisement and how they contribute to constructing a Korean cultural image in Indonesian marketing. By analyzing the advertisement's textual and visual components, this research seeks to uncover the implicit messages embedded within the promotional content.

### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data and analyzes the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings embedded in the advertisement. By embedding Korean elements into a local product's marketing strategy, the advertisement constructs the myth that associating with Korean culture enhances desirability and modern appeal. This layered analysis demonstrates how the advertisement not only promotes a product but also participates in shaping cultural perceptions and consumer preferences.

### 1. Denotation and Connotation in the Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea Advertisement



Figure 3. data for the phrase 'Mie nyaKiyowo'

Note:

- 1) Indomie brand, 2) Korean letters, 3) Indomie dish, 4) Mie-nyaKiyowo

Table 1. Cultural Significance and Meanings Table for 'Mie nyaKiyowo'

Sign	Denotation	Connotation
Mie-nyaKiyowo [4]	Gwiyeowo / cute	something charming, appealing, and delightful
Indomie dish [3]	A cooked instant noodle dish	Fast food, popular meal
Korean letters [2]	The characters of the Hangul	A symbol of Korean culture, K-pop, and Hallyu (Korean Wave)
Indomie brand [1]	brand of instant noodles	A globally recognized brand representing Indonesian cuisine

Denotatively, the phrase "Mie-nyaKiyowo" in the Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea advertisement expresses that the noodles possess a certain special quality. The word "Kiyowo" is a transliteration of the Korean term 귀여워 (gwiyeowo), which means "cute" or "adorable." However, in the context of this advertisement, the word is written using a Korean-style font, even though its phonetic spelling follows Indonesian pronunciation. This suggests that "Kiyowo" is incorporated into the advertisement's language as both a visual and linguistic element designed to attract attention while also constructing a unique and distinctive product identity.

From a connotative perspective, the use of "Kiyowo" in this advertisement extends beyond its original meaning in Korean, carrying a broader emotional association. In Korean popular culture, the term "Kiyowo" is often used to describe something charming, appealing, and delightful. By using this word, the advertisement aims to create the impression that the instant noodles are not only delicious but also entertaining and enjoyable, particularly for young consumers familiar with the Korean Wave (Hallyu) trends. Additionally, the use of a Korean-style font reinforces the product's Korean-ness, despite the fact that the instant noodles are a local product. This reflects a marketing strategy that leverages foreign cultural elements to enhance the product's appeal among Indonesian consumers influenced by Korean culture.





**Figure 4. data for the phrase 'PedasnyaOmooo'**

Note:

- 1) Indomie brand, 2) Korean letters, 3) Indomie dish, 4) *PedasnyaOmooo*

**Table 2. Cultural Significance and Meanings Table for 'PedasnyaOmooo '**

Sign	Denotation	Connotation
Baju merah [5]	A piece of clothing that is red in color	Symbolize passion and Spicy
Omooo[4]	A Korean exclamation	Excitement, surprise, or admiration in Korea
Pedasnya [3]	The intense, burning taste caused by chili or spicy food	imply an extreme or overwhelming sensation
fire image [2]	A visual representation of flames or burning	Symbolize passion, destruction, intensity, or something exciting and trendy
feeling spicy expression [1]	A phrase indicating that someone is experiencing a spicy sensation from food	explains how spicy the product is based on its brand

Denotatively, the phrase "*PedasnyaOmooo...*" in the *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Peda ala Korea* advertisement directly refers to the spiciness offered by the product. The word "*Omooo...*" is a playful adaptation of the Korean word *오모* (Omo), which means "Oh my!" or an expression of surprise. In the advertisement, this word is used to depict the reaction to the spiciness of the noodles. Visually and audibly, the elongated pronunciation ("*Omooo...*") adds a dramatic effect that emphasizes the intense experience of eating spicy food.

From a connotative perspective, this phrase carries a deeper meaning. "*Omooo...*" is not merely an expression of surprise; it also evokes associations with the signature reactions commonly seen in Korean dramas and K-Pop entertainment content. By incorporating this term, the advertisement seeks to create an emotional connection with audiences familiar with Korean culture, particularly young consumers who actively engage with K-Dramas and K-Pop music. Additionally, the use of this word in the context of spiciness reinforces the image of the noodles as a "challenging" and "flavorful" product, aligning with the

spicy food trend that is widely popular in Indonesia. Thus, this phrase not only serves as a description of taste but also as a branding strategy that links the product to sensations, trends, and a lifestyle that resonates with contemporary consumers.



**Figure 5. data for the phrase 'Bumbu Korea Saranghaeyo'**

Note:

- 1) Indomie brand, 2) Korean letters, 3) Indomie dish, 4) *Bumbu Korea Saranghaeyo*

**Table 3. Cultural Significance and Meanings Table for 'Bumbu Korea Saranghaeyo'**

Sign	Denotation	Connotation
The product [5]	An item	represent commercialism, quality, branding, or consumer choice
Bumbu Korea Sarangheyo [4]	A seasoning blend inspired by Korean flavors, with "Sarangheyo" meaning "I love you" in Korean	Evokes feelings of Korean culture, Hallyu (Korean Wave), and love or affection in food branding.
Finger heart [3]	A hand gesture where the thumb and index finger form a small heart shape	Represents love, affection, or appreciation, commonly associated with K-pop and Korean pop culture.
Eat heartily [2]	To consume food in a full and satisfying manner	Suggests enjoyment, enthusiasm, or indulgence in eating
Chopsticks [1]	A pair of thin sticks used as eating utensils, commonly in Asian cuisine	Symbolizes Asian culture, tradition, and dining etiquette from Korea

From a denotative perspective, the tagline "*Bumbu Korea Sarangheyo*" directly refers to the distinctive seasoning that gives the instant noodles an authentic Korean flavor. The word "*Sarangheyo*" is a transliteration of the Korean phrase *사랑해요* (*saranghaeyo*), meaning "I love you." In the context of the advertisement, this word is used to emphasize the unique Korean taste of the seasoning, as if it is so delicious that it deserves to be loved.

From a connotative perspective, this phrase not only describes the deliciousness of the seasoning but also builds an emotional connection with consumers who are familiar with Korean culture. The word "Sarangheyo" carries romantic connotations and is frequently used in Korean dramas, K-Pop songs, and interactions between idols and fans. By incorporating this term into the advertisement, the marketing strategy aims to create the impression that enjoying these instant noodles is not just about taste but also an experience filled with excitement and "love" for Korean culture. Additionally, this phrase enhances the advertisement's appeal by incorporating the trendy K-Pop vibe, making it more relevant to young consumers who are enthusiastic about Hallyu (the Korean Wave).



**Figure 6. data for the phrase 'Mie Goreng Rasa Ayam Pedas Korea'**

Note:

- 1) Indomie brand, 2) Korean letters, 3) Indomie dish, 4) Mie Goreng Rasa Ayam Pedas Korea

**Table 3. Cultural Significance and Meanings Table for 'Mie Goreng Rasa Ayam Pedas Korea'**

Sign	Denotation	Connotation
Baru! [4]	Something recently created, introduced, or released	Suggests freshness, innovation, excitement, or exclusivity
Korean writing [3]	Text written in Hangul, the Korean alphabet	Represents Korean culture, Hallyu (Korean Wave), and global interest in Korea
Mie goreng rasa Ayam Pedas Korea [2]	A type of instant fried noodles with a Korean-style spicy chicken taste	Implies bold flavors, Korean food trends, and an exciting eating experience
Spicy facial expression [1]	A facial reaction showing discomfort or intensity due to eating something spicy	Symbolize excitement, challenge, or exaggeration for dramatic effect

The tagline "Mi goreng rasa Ayam Pedas Korea" has a denotative meaning that directly describes an instant noodle product with a spicy chicken flavor inspired by Korean cuisine. The use of red-colored text reinforces the product's spicy flavor identity. Additionally, the inclusion of Korean characters on the packaging creates the impression that the product has authenticity and is directly inspired by Korean culinary traditions.

From a connotative perspective, the use of red carries a deeper meaning. In food marketing, red is



often associated with spiciness, boldness, and passion. In Korean culture, spicy dishes such as *buldak* (불닭, *spicy chicken*) are often linked to intense and challenging flavors, aligning with the culinary trend in Indonesia, where spicy food is highly popular. The presence of Korean script on the packaging further strengthens the sense of globalization and gives the product a premium appeal, as if it is closely connected to authentic Korean cuisine. This illustrates how branding strategies combine visual and linguistic elements to attract consumers, particularly fans of Korean culture and lovers of spicy food.



Figure 7. data for the phrase 'UenaknyaDuaebak!'

- 1) Indomie brand, 2) Korean letters, 3) Indomie dish, 4) UenaknyaDuaebak!

Table 3. Cultural Significance and Meanings Table for 'UenaknyaDuaebak!'

Sign	Denotation	Connotation
Happy expression [6]	A facial expression showing joy or happiness	Satisfaction, excitement, or positive emotions in eating the noodles
Imitate Finger Heart [5]	The act of copying or mimicking the finger heart gesture	Represents admiration for K-pop culture, affection, or playful engagement in social trends
Example of serving [4]	A demonstration of how food or a product is presented	Suggests quality, deliciousness, or an appealing way to enjoy the item
Product [3]	A manufactured item available for sale	imply branding, consumerism, or innovation
Uenaknya DUAEBAK [2]	A phrase expressing that something tastes very good, with "DAEBAK" meaning "amazing" in Korean.	Highlights excitement, exaggeration, and Korean influence in food marketing
Fire image [1]	A visual representation of flames or burning	Symbolize intensity, spiciness, passion, or something trendy and exciting

"Uenaknya" is derived from the Indonesian word "uenak", which means delicious. Meanwhile, "Duaebak" is a playful blend of two languages: "Dua," which refers to Sarimi with two servings (a popular Indonesian instant noodle), and "Daebak," which is a cool Korean slang term meaning wow. So, "Uenaknya Duaebak" combines both Indonesian and Korean slang to express something incredibly delicious or

amazing. Denotatively, the phrase "*Uenaknya Duaebak!*" is a playful twist on the Korean word Daebak (대박), which means "amazing" or "great." In the context of the advertisement, this phrase is used to emphasize the deliciousness of Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea instant noodles. Additionally, King Nassar's gesture of crossing his thumb and index finger to form a small heart (finger heart), which is popular in Korea as a symbol of affection or appreciation, further enhances the message.

From a connotative perspective, the phrase "*UenaknyaDuaebak!*" reinforces the idea that this product is not only delicious but also aligns with the current Korean cultural trend. The wordplay on Daebak creates a sense of familiarity and makes the phrase more memorable for Indonesian consumers, particularly those familiar with K-Pop and K-Drama terminology. Meanwhile, King Nassar's finger heart pose carries a deeper symbolic meaning. In Korean culture, this gesture is commonly used by K-Pop idols and celebrities to express love and appreciation toward their fans. By incorporating this pose, the advertisement does not only promote the taste of instant noodles but also associates the product with the joyful and communal spirit of the Hallyu (Korean Wave) trend. This reflects how marketing strategies blend visual and linguistic elements to capture attention and build an emotional connection with consumers.

## 2. Myth in *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*

According to Roland Barthes, myth is not merely a story or legend but a system of signs that shapes social meanings and ideologies within a culture. Myth functions by transforming connotative meanings into something that appears natural and universally accepted as truth. In the advertisement for *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea*, the constructed myth is that Korean culture—especially its cuisine—is something special, modern, and worth following.

The phrase "*UenaknyaDuaebak!*", derived from Daebak (대박), not only highlights the product's deliciousness but also conveys the idea that Korean-flavored food has an extraordinary appeal and is superior to regular instant noodles. The use of the Korean language in the slogan and packaging strengthens the myth that this product is authentic and directly connected to the global Hallyu trend.

Furthermore, King Nassar's finger heart pose creates an association that eating these noodles is not just about taste, but also about experiencing a connection with Korean pop culture, which is often associated with joy, friendship, and expressions of love. This myth constructs the perception that by consuming this product, one can feel closer to Korean culture and become part of a global community that follows K-Culture trends. Thus, the advertisement does not merely sell instant noodles—it sells a lifestyle filled with modernity and trendiness.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Advertising is a form of persuasive communication that utilizes various signs and symbols to capture the audience's attention. In the modern era, marketing strategies increasingly incorporate foreign cultural elements to enhance product appeal. One prominent phenomenon is the use of Korean culture in the marketing of instant food products in Indonesia, aligning with the global popularity of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*). The advertisement for *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* exemplifies this trend by featuring King Nassar as the central figure, employing vibrant colors, expressive performances, and playful adaptations of Korean terms such as *Kiyowo*, *Omoo*, and *Duabak*.

Through a semiotic perspective, particularly Roland Barthes' (1964) theory of denotation, connotation, and myth, this study reveals how advertisements construct layered meanings. At the denotative level, the ad provides basic product information, while at the connotative level, it creates emotional and cultural associations. The use of Korean linguistic elements and visual aesthetics in the *Sarimi* advertisement signifies more than just product promotion—it builds an identity that aligns with global trends. Furthermore, the myth conveyed in the advertisement suggests that associating with Korean culture enhances a product's desirability among Indonesian consumers.

This phenomenon illustrates how globalization not only influences cultural consumption but also shapes the identity of local products. While incorporating foreign cultural elements can increase market

appeal, it also raises discussions about the extent to which cultural adaptation should occur without overshadowing the original identity of the product. The *Sarimi Isi 2 Ayam Pedas ala Korea* advertisement highlights how modern marketing strategies connect products with global lifestyles and trends, reinforcing the idea that consumer preferences are increasingly shaped by cross-cultural influences.

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