

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS MESSAGE IN THE POSTS OF THE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT 'SYSTOGREEN.ID' (A STUDY OF ROLAND BARTHES' SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS)

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### ABSTRACT

*Social media is an online platform used for interaction, information sharing, and promoting businesses or personal branding. Instagram, as one of the photo and video-based social media platforms, is used to share visual content, interact with other users, and promote products, services, or personal branding. One Instagram account that focuses on environmental issues is @systogreen.id, which conveys messages and education about environmental awareness through its posts. Each post contains both verbal and non-verbal messages that can be analyzed to understand the underlying meanings and how these messages encourage environmental awareness in society. This study aims to describe the messages, both explicit and implicit, contained in the Instagram posts of @systogreen.id. The research method used is qualitative, with an approach based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and environmental theory. The results of the study show that the Instagram posts of @systogreen.id convey a variety of messages related to waste separation, organic waste management, as well as education and environmental awareness. These messages are effectively packaged through visuals and text, capable of inspiring society to be more environmentally conscious.*

**Keywords:** Instagram; semiotics; environmental awareness

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization and technological advancements have brought about major changes in the way humans interact and share information. In this digital era, social media has become one of the main pillars of global communication, allowing people from all over the world to connect and share experiences. Instagram, as one of the most popular social media platforms, offers a unique and visual way to communicate. With features such as Stories, IGTV, and Reels, Instagram allows users to share photo and video content, as well as promote products, services, or personal branding.

This makes Instagram a very effective tool in building relationships between users and global audiences. In the context of globalization and ever-evolving technology, social media is not only a communication tool but also a platform used to spread ideas and influence public opinion. Instagram, with its strong visual approach, is an effective means of conveying educational and inspirational messages.

One Instagram account that uses the platform for educational purposes is @systogreen.id, which focuses on environmental issues. This account uses the power of visuals and text to spread awareness about the importance of a sustainable and eco-friendly lifestyle. By combining eye-catching images and powerful messages, @systogreen.id has succeeded in inspiring its followers to care more about the environment. Through its various uploads, @systogreen.id conveys messages that encourage the audience to take real action to protect the environment. The content presented covers topics such as waste separation, organic waste management, and the use of environmentally friendly products.

Each post not only serves as a means of education, but also as a call to action, with the hope of changing the mindset and behavior of its followers towards a more environmentally responsible lifestyle. These messages are delivered using a combination of engaging visuals and easy-to-understand text, so they can reach a wide range of audiences, from teenagers to adults. The approach used by @systogreen.id shows how social media can be an effective tool in spreading environmental awareness.

Through semiotic analysis, we will see how each visual element and text in the uploads on this account has a certain meaning designed to influence the audience. Roland Barthes, a semiotics expert, stated that signs in a text or image have denotative (literal meaning) and connotative (additional,

deeper meaning) meanings. In this context, every element in the uploads of @systogreen.id, from the color, image composition, to the choice of words, can be analyzed to understand the message they want to convey and how the message is interpreted by the audience.

This study uses a qualitative method with Roland Barthes' semiotic theory approach to analyze how @systogreen.id conveys environmental messages. By analyzing the signs and symbols in each upload, this study aims to understand how the meaning of the environment and sustainability is constructed in the content.

This analysis will not only explore the explicit meanings seen on the surface, but also the implicit meanings contained behind both verbal and non-verbal elements. With this approach, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into how social media can be used as a tool to influence public opinion and encourage more pro-environmental actions.

The reviewed studies explore the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in analyzing various visual and verbal messages across different contexts, including health campaigns, political billboards, and advertisements. The Secret (2020) analyzed Covid-19 prevention campaigns in Indonesia, showing how semiotics can be effectively used in crisis communication to influence public behavior (Adella Halim et al., 2020; El Alaoui, 2020). The Power of Allah (2021) and The Sultan (2019) focused on political campaign billboards, highlighting how icons, indices, and symbols shape public perception and voter decisions in political contexts. In contrast, Patriansah et al. (2022) and Lesilolo et al. (2021) explored advertising, with emphasis on environmental messages and sustainability narratives, showing how semiotics reveals both denotative and connotative meanings in marketing campaigns.

Although these studies contribute to the semiotic literature, they exhibit several gaps. Each focused on a single medium, campaign, or brand, limiting the generalizability of findings. For instance, The Secret (2020) limited its focus to Covid-19 health messages, while The Power of Allah (2021) analyzed only one political figure. Similarly, Patriansah et al. (2022) and Lesilolo et al. (2021) analyzed one advertisement each, and The Sultan (2019) was confined to one electoral context. These limitations highlight the need for broader research that captures varied contexts, especially within emerging digital media platforms such as social media.

This current study introduces a novel approach by applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to environmental messages on Instagram, particularly through the account @systogreen.id. Unlike previous studies that focused on traditional media like billboards and print advertisements, this research explores how social media posts—through a combination of images and texts—shape public environmental awareness and influence behavior. It fills a critical gap by showing how visual and narrative elements on Instagram contribute to environmental consciousness, underlining the transformative role of social media not just in information dissemination, but also in fostering sustainable behavioral change (Jeka et al., 2023; Muchlas & Hariyanto, 2013:47; Ibba et al., 2015; Statista, 2018; The Last Supper, 2018).

## **METHOD**

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative. Research using semiotic analysis is a research technique for communication studies that tends to be more directed at the source and recipient of the message. The part studied is the Semiotic Analysis of the Meaning of Photos in environmental care messages on the Instagram account post "systogreen.id" taken using observation techniques. I made direct observations on the Instagram account "systogreen.id". The data that has been collected is then analyzed qualitatively using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis.

To collect data from Instagram posts for this study, we first identified the Instagram account @systogreen.id, which focuses on environmental awareness and sustainability issues. A total of 15 posts were selected for analysis, covering a variety of topics including waste separation, organic waste management, and the promotion of eco-friendly practices. The sampling strategy used was purposive sampling, ensuring that posts relevant to environmental messages were included in the analysis. These posts were then qualitatively analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which involves examining both the denotative (literal) and connotative (symbolic) meanings of visual and textual elements in each post. The analysis focused on identifying how the signs (images, text, and symbols) in the posts convey messages of environmental responsibility and sustainability. By interpreting these signs, we sought to understand how @systogreen.id's posts contribute to promoting environmental awareness among its followers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Instagram accountsystogreen.id discusses waste management education and can be analyzed using Roland Barthe's semiotics. In each post there is the use of certain signs to influence perception and an invitation to the message of caring for the environment on Instagram account systogreen.id The use of this mark can be seen in several of his posts.

The first stage in examining a sign is seeing background of the sign, namely the signifier and the signified. At this stage, the assessment focuses more on the denotative meaning of the sign, which is related to the language used. After understanding the denotative meaning of the sign, we can proceed to the second stage, namely, examining the connotative meaning of the sign. At this stage, cultural aspects also play an important role in assessing the meaning of the sign.

**A. Post June 8, 2024**



**Figure 1. Instagram Post**

This post contains information about organic waste, which, if not managed properly, can become a nest for flies that transmit diseases such as diarrhea and typhoid.

1. Signifier, The organic waste depicted in the post is the primary visual and verbal element. The image or description of the poorly managed organic waste is the focus of the message.
2. Signified, Unmanaged organic waste symbolizes potential health hazards, such as the spread of diseases caused by flies, such as diarrhea and typhoid. Organic waste becomes a source of problems if not handled properly.
3. Denotative Sign: Denotatively, this information shows the literal fact that piled up and unmanaged organic waste can attract flies, which can then spread disease. This is the direct meaning of the message conveyed explicitly in the post.
4. Connotative Signifier: At the connotative level, organic waste that is not managed properly can also be seen as a symbol of negligence in maintaining the environment and health. Negligence in managing waste reflects the lack of public awareness of the importance of proper waste management.
5. Connotative Signified: Diseases caused by flies that thrive in organic waste provide symbolic meaning that lack of environmental management can lead to serious consequences, both for human health and the ecosystem. This also symbolizes the close relationship between environmental cleanliness and community welfare.
6. Connotative Sign: The connotative message of this post is that proper waste management is essential not only to maintain cleanliness but also to protect public health. Ignored organic waste becomes an environmental myth, where waste is considered unimportant, when in fact its impact is very dangerous for health and the surrounding environment.

**Table 1. Roland Barthes Analysis**

Information	
Denotation	Organic waste can become a nest for flies that transmit disease if not managed.
Connotation	Poor waste management shows negligence in protecting the environment and health.
Myth	An environment that is not well maintained will have a negative impact on public health.

**B. Posted June 12, 2024**



**Figure 2. Instagram Post**

This post provides information about the three benefits of managing organic waste: reducing the volume until it ends up in the landfill, reducing environmental pollution, and empowering the community's economy.

1. Signifier: Information about the benefits of organic waste management, including reducing the volume of waste in landfills, reducing environmental pollution, and empowering the community economy.
2. Signified: This message implies that organic waste management can significantly benefit the environment and society. These three benefits lead to positive outcomes in various aspects of life: environmental health, reduced burden on landfills, and economic empowerment through waste management.
3. Denotative Sign: Denotatively, this information conveys the direct fact that organic waste management can:
  - a. Reducing the volume of waste that ends up in landfills.
  - b. Reducing environmental pollution caused by waste.
  - c. Increasing the community's economic potential through recycling or utilization of organic waste.
4. Connotative Signifier: At the connotative level, the benefits of organic waste management also serve as a symbol of environmental awareness and responsibility. This shows that organic waste, which is usually considered waste, can have added value if managed properly, and the community can reap good results from proactive actions in protecting the environment.
5. Connotative Signified: Organic waste management symbolizes the relationship between environmental sustainability and economic well-being. Environmental care actions affect environmental cleanliness and health and have economic potential that can help empower communities.
6. Connotative Sign: This information's connotative message is that organic waste management is a multifunctional solution that not only maintains environmental cleanliness but also opens up economic opportunities for the community. Environmental myths that often ignore the potential of organic waste are challenged by the reality that such waste can be a valuable resource if managed properly.

**Table 2. Roland Barthes Analysis**

	Information
Denotation	Organic waste management can reduce the volume of waste in landfills, pollute the environment, and empower the community's economy.
Connotation	Organic waste management is a symbol of environmental responsibility that can also generate economic benefits for the community.
Myth	Ignored organic waste can have a big impact if processed wisely, both for the environment and the community's economy.

**C. Post June 14, 2024**



Figure 3. Instagram Post

In this post, there is information about the benefits of compost fertilizer, including reducing the use of chemical fertilizers, plant roots becoming stronger, reducing diseases, pests, and weeds, and chemical-free plant products.

1. Signifier: Information about the benefits of compost fertilizer, which includes:
  - a. Reducing the use of chemical fertilizers.
  - b. Strengthens plant roots.
  - c. Reduces diseases, pests, and weeds.
  - d. Produces chemical-free crops.
2. Signified: This message shows that compost brings many benefits to agriculture and plant health. The use of compost is not only an environmentally friendly alternative but also a solution to improve plant quality and maintain soil health.
3. Denotative Sign: Denotatively, this information conveys the direct fact that the use of compost fertilizer:
  - a. Reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers that can damage soil and plants.
  - b. Strengthens plant roots, allowing plants to grow healthier.
4. Reduces the risk of attacks by pests, diseases and weeds that commonly occur in plants.
5. Produces healthier plant products because they are free from harmful chemical residues.
6. Connotative Signifier: On a connotative level, compost can be seen as a symbol of sustainability and natural farming. Compost represents a healthier and more environmentally friendly approach to farming, where the harvest is free from chemical contamination and emphasizes natural methods.
7. Connotative Signified: The use of compost provides a symbolic meaning that organic farming is a way to keep the soil and plant ecosystem healthy. It also shows that sustainable farming not only protects the environment but also produces safer and healthier products for consumers.
8. Connotative Sign: The connotative message of this information is that compost reflects ecological awareness and the importance of maintaining the balance of nature in agricultural practices. Compost challenges the myth that chemical fertilizers are necessary for successful farming, and instead offers a more natural and sustainable alternative.

Table 3. Roland Bathres Analysis

Information	
Denotation	Compost reduces the use of chemical fertilizers, strengthens roots, reduces pests, and produces chemical-free crops.
Connotation	Compost fertilizer is a symbol of sustainable agriculture that maintains ecosystem balance and produces healthy products.
Myth	The myth that modern farming requires chemical fertilizers is challenged by the fact that compost offers a better natural alternative.

**D. Posted July 9, 2024**



**Figure 4. Instagram Post**

In this post, there is information about KLHK appealing to Indonesia to reduce 10.92 million tons of waste ending up in landfills with independent composting which can reduce GHG emissions.

1. Signifier: Information regarding the KLHK (Ministry of Environment and Forestry) appeal regarding the reduction of 10.92 million tons of waste ending up in landfills through independent composting and its impact on reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
2. Signified: This message illustrates the importance of self-composting as a practical solution that is expected to reduce the amount of waste in landfills and, at the same time, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.
3. Denotative Sign: Denotatively, this information shows the literal fact that KLHK urges the public to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills by means of independent composting. With this, the public can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from unmanaged waste.
4. Connotative Signifier: At the connotative level, the appeal of KLHK can be seen as a symbol of national awareness and collective responsibility in addressing environmental issues. Independent composting is a sign of individual action that can have a major impact on environmental sustainability, especially in terms of tackling emissions that are harmful to the global climate.
5. Connotative Signified: Independent composting reflects ecological awareness and real action in facing the challenges of climate change. This shows that community participation in small efforts such as composting at home can have a significant impact on reducing GHG emissions and improving the environment in general.
6. Connotative Sign: The connotative message of this information is that independent composting is not only a waste management solution, but also a strategic environmental action that can help Indonesia achieve its emission reduction targets and maintain ecosystem balance. It also illustrates the important role of every individual in protecting the earth from the threat of climate change.

**Table 4. Roland Barthes Analysis**

Information	
Denotation	KLHK calls for a reduction of 10.92 million tons of waste in landfills through independent composting, which can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Connotation	Independent composting is a symbol of individual participation in protecting the environment and contributing to reducing GHG emissions.
Myth	The myth that only big steps can save the environment is debunked by the fact that small actions such as self-composting can have a big impact on reducing emissions and managing waste.

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The effectiveness of Instagram posts in promoting environmental sustainability largely depends on how different segments of the audience interpret the messages conveyed. Instagram, as a social media platform, hosts a diverse audience with varying levels of awareness, attitudes, and engagement

with environmental issues. These segments could include individuals with a high level of environmental concern, individuals who are indifferent to environmental issues, and those who may not be fully aware of the implications of their actions on the environment. Each segment might interpret the messages in Instagram posts differently, based on their pre-existing knowledge and attitudes towards sustainability.

For example, individuals who are already environmentally conscious might interpret the messages in a post as reinforcing their beliefs and practices. They may perceive the post as a validation of their own commitment to sustainability and, as a result, are more likely to share the content and act on it. On the other hand, individuals with little concern for the environment might not pay much attention to the post or may view it as irrelevant to their lifestyle. In this case, the message might not be effective in changing their behavior, unless it is framed in a way that resonates with their values or highlights the personal benefits of sustainable practices (such as cost savings or improved health).

For those in between—those who may have a general awareness of environmental issues but have not yet taken significant action—the message can serve as a catalyst for change. This group might interpret the message as a gentle nudge to reconsider their behavior. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), individuals' behavior is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. If an Instagram post aligns with an individual's attitude towards environmental sustainability and portrays social norms that support sustainable behavior, it can create a stronger intention to adopt environmentally friendly practices. By using relatable messages, visual elements, and calls to action, the post can shift an individual's mindset, ultimately motivating behavior change.

Previous research supports the idea that social media can play a significant role in altering public behavior. For instance, studies by Reitzel et al. (2015) found that social media messages with clear calls to action and relevant visual content are more likely to encourage pro-environmental behaviors, especially when they are perceived as socially accepted or popular. Additionally, the Social Norms Theory (Cialdini et al., 1990) suggests that people are more likely to adopt behaviors that they perceive as widely practiced or accepted by their peers. Therefore, Instagram posts that show environmental practices as normative and widespread can enhance the perceived social pressure to act sustainably.

In terms of effectiveness, the impact of Instagram posts in changing public behavior is likely to be most significant when posts not only raise awareness but also offer practical guidance and create a sense of community. If the Instagram account fosters engagement and creates a space for dialogue around environmental issues, it can encourage followers to share their own experiences, thereby reinforcing a culture of sustainability. The more the audience feels a part of a collective movement, the more likely they are to internalize the message and make lasting changes to their behaviors. Thus, while Instagram posts alone may not be a panacea for large-scale behavior change, they can serve as an important component of a broader strategy aimed at fostering sustainable lifestyles.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussion of environmental care messages in the posts of the Instagram account "systogreen.id" shows that each post contains signs that convey messages about the importance of environmental management, especially organic waste. Denotative analysis shows direct facts, such as the dangers of organic waste that can transmit disease or the benefits of using compost. Meanwhile, connotative analysis digs deeper meanings, such as symbols of the lack of public awareness in managing waste and the importance of environmental responsibility. The connotative messages of this account emphasize that simple actions, such as waste management and self-composting, can have a significant impact on the environment, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This account also challenges the myth that only big actions can save the environment, by showing that small steps are also important in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem and public health. When associated with the concept of the environment, this account explains that the environment is a unity of all physical, biological, and social aspects that affect the lives of living things, as explained by Otto Soemarwoto and Salim Emil. The @systogreen.id account consistently shows the importance of human interaction with the environment, both natural and artificial, by emphasizing the importance of environmentally conscious behavior. This attitude is in line with the definition of the environment according to Law no. 32 of 2009, which underlines that human behavior has a significant impact on the well-being of living things and ecosystems.

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