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COMPLUTENSE

[en] A Study on Contemporary Culture in Indonesia Through Semiotics Perspective

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Abstract. Cultural phenomena are the most prolific field for developing semiotic studies. Study on philosophy of signs in contemporary culture is a set of irresistible logics to deepen our understanding on semiotic studies. This paper propos the philosophical analysis, in particular analytical philosophy on semiotics itself pinpointing progress towards the logic of meaning, various rules of the game in the philosophy of signs, also multiple contemporary cultural phenomena, such as: hypertextuality, hypersemiotics, and hyperreality. Logics of meaning still holds an important role in accordance with Logical Atomism and Logical Positivism's views, but plurality of meanings also developed in various contemporary cultural discourses. Every human action in culture is a reflection of signs and disclosure of whole individual dimension involving diverse attitudes and behaviors as signs of community's sustain life dynamics. Contemporary cultural phenomena in Indonesia from semiotic perspective based on the notion of signs would be discussed in this writing.

Keywords: Hypertextuality; hypersemiotics; hyperreality; hypermodernism; *homo significans*.

Un estudio sobre la cultura contemporánea en Indonesia a través de la perspectiva de la semiótica

Resumen. Los fenómenos culturales son el campo más prolífico para desarrollar estudios semióticos. El estudio de la filosofía de los signos en la cultura contemporánea es un conjunto de lógicas irresistibles para profundizar nuestra comprensión de los estudios semióticos. Este trabajo propone el análisis filosófico, en particular la filosofía analítica sobre la semiótica que señala el progreso hacia la lógica del significado, varias reglas del juego en la filosofía de los signos, también múltiples fenómenos culturales contemporáneos, tales como: hipertextualidad, hipersemiótica e hipereality. La lógica del significado sigue teniendo un papel importante según la perspectiva del atomismo lógico y del positivismo lógico, pero la pluralidad de significados también se ha desarrollado en varios discursos culturales contemporáneos. Cada acción humana en la cultura es un reflejo de los signos y la revelación de una dimensión individual completa que involucra actitudes y comportamientos diversos como signos de la vida de una comunidad. Este trabajo debate los fenómenos culturales contemporáneos en Indonesia desde una perspectiva semiótica basada en la noción de signos.

Palabras clave: Hipertextualidad; hipersemiótica; hiperrealidad; hipermodernismo; *homo significans*.

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1. Contemporary Culture: A Definition

The term of culture possesses a lot of meanings, of which were proposed by Triandis as cited by Samovar that culture is subjective and objective elements made by human beings in the past in order to improve their chances of survival and resulted in the satisfaction of behavior in ecological room. Samovar underlined the most important thing in the definition which is human creation to reinforce that culture is associated with non-biological aspect of human life. This aspect is different to biological aspect that need not to be studied such as: eat, sleep, cry, and fear (Samovar, 2010: 27). Signs belong to non-biological aspect because they need to be learned, and even developed into a longer and instilled process of habituation in human thought.

The term of contemporary itself refers to the actual time span, by today or nowadays, therefore contemporary refers to time dimension situating a subject's involvement at an era. Contemporary culture refers to something that had become a habit at the present day. Contemporary cultural phenomena showed that habituated acts in a present day society were mostly influenced by lifestyle, along with the aspect of framing supported by technology, especially a globalized information and communication technology. Even though a culture of rational science is advancing in Indonesia, the fact showed that emotional irrationality still thrives in Indonesian society. Some examples could be referred to an explanation behind Mount Merapi eruption on November 6, 2010 and earthquake in Yogyakarta on May 27, 2006. There were some who explained those natural disasters phenomena were scientifically rational, but most people gave explanations on what they believed as superstitions and irrationally emotional (Besari, 2008: 334). It could indicate that contemporary culture in Indonesia is likely still frivolous, a fusion between rational scientific aspect and irrationality-emotionality.

Arthur Asa Berger argued about contemporary culture, giving plenty illustrations about imaginary cultures such as: verbal representations, dreams, hallucinations, shadows, and a variety of deceiving signs (Berger, 1989: 57-61). Contemporary culture thus refers to a sign or thing happens at the present time as an observable phenomenon existed today. A contemporary culture is a formation of the new habits that became a trend, a cutting-edge style.

There are several dominant characteristics in this contemporary era:

— Firstly; plurality can be considered as one of contemporary characteristics, because the idea of diversity were frequently conveyed by the philosophy of our time, namely the postmodernism. There are two orientations of postmodernism, skeptical postmodernism and affirmative postmodernism. Sceptical postmodernists

such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Derrida, and Richard Rorty insisted that there is only radical pluralism by the end of modernism, meaning there is no single truth serving as key point. On the other hand, affirmative postmodernism rejects tendency of nihilism. For them pluralism does not necessarily oblige nihilism and deny the idea of truth, but rather to put truth in a local context and mini narratives as in Lyotard's point of view (Sahal, 1993: 66-67).

— Secondly; relativism comes as a substantial issue posed by the postmodernist. Disappearance of the absolute truth as noted above left relative truth remains, as positivism was the most dominant during colonial period. Relativism acknowledges that every cultural unit possesses criteria, truth, and meaning of its own. Collective truth was no longer existed as each things are incommensurable and are at a similar level. Gellner stated that knowledge or morality is generally regarded as mere wishful thinking (chimera). Every culture must carry on their own knowledge and morality. Meaning is incommensurable and a cultural construct. Cross-cultural investigation or cross-semantics is only possible if honor, dignity, and similarity of another culture are being appreciated (Gellner, 1992: 73).

— Thirdly; discourse on the truth is more likely to be oriented to the collapsing claim over absolute truth in an epistemological debate. Contemporary paradox about the truth according to Sudarminta appears by the emergence of two extremes, namely crisis of confidence against every truth claim influenced by sceptical relativism on one hand, and absolute truth claimed by religious fundamentalist groups and the ideological dogmatist on the other hands (Sudarminta, 2007: 1-2).

— Fourthly; local-narrative themes are more popular than the grand-narratives. The downfall of grand narrative myths that were replaced by mini narratives according to Lyotard marked the birth of contemporary era called postmodernism (Lyotard, 1984: 302). Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* uses language-games to analyze what he regarded as an era (Turner, 2000: 183). Language-games itself was derived from Wittgenstein's idea in *Philosophical Investigations* which refers to language diversity in daily life with an emphasis on the aspect of use instead of a mere logic of language. Thus, meaning is in use showing a pragmatic indication and contextuality (Wittgenstein, 1983: 20).

— Fifthly; hypermodernism is distinguished from postmodernism because the latter did not reckon major changes in contemporary society. The concept of postmodernism emphasizes more on discontinuity of modernity or a form of resistance, while hypermodernism conversely led to radicalization of modernity. Haryatmoko concluded that hypermodernism does not mean the death of modernism, but an attempt to reach a peak of modernism through globalizing liberalism, lifestyle commercialization, and excessive instrumental rationality exploitation (Haryatmoko, 2009: 8).

Despite upholding postmodernism to hypermodernism themes, the need for clarity of signs within contemporary cultural phenomena cannot be avoided. Logic of meaning upon signs still obtains substantial place in contemporary culture.

2. Logic of Meaning

There are decent relations between logics and meanings, particularly in the form of statement as has been argued by Logical Atomism and Logical Positivism's thoughts. The meaning of a statement is most defined by logical structure embodied in language structure. A statement is deemed to be conceivable phrase if only it embodies logical truth. However, on contemporary culture adhered by the postmodernists, meaning of a statement does not have to be supported by logics in a strict sense. A statement could often be understood in a certain scope, but is difficult to be realized by another party. For example: "In a democratic state system, monarchy system as adopted by sultanate in Special Region of Yogyakarta is against the spirit of democracy". This statement uttered by President SBY at the time he took office was possible to understand by politicians, especially among the Democrats, but might not be the same for others, including Sultan Hamengkubuwono X supporters who consider the statement as illogical because it humiliates Yogyakarta's privilege status. The political statement were deemed to spark contentious logic of meaning.

Logic of meaning in various signs, including those that were conveyed verbally belongs to core problems discussed by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* indeed no longer dominates the whole notion of signs, but the nature of logics along with its varied possibilities lies in the fact, thus Wittgenstein himself asserted: "A logical entity cannot be merely possible. Logic treats of every possibility, and all possibilities are its facts" (Wittgenstein, 1995: 31). The essence of logic does not posit on possibility, but fact. Therefore, when one conveys a statement without basing on fact, his/her statement becomes senseless.

3. Rules of the Game in the Philosophy of Signs

Contemporary culture reflected through sort forms of hyper, such as hypersemiotics, hypertextuality, hyperreality, and hypermodernism pinpoints development in various communities reside in our society, and thus different kinds of *rules of the game* were also emerged. Problem of meaning in hypersemiotics denotes symptom of excessive use of signs in contemporary life. It is signified by several characteristics covering: signs transformation, immanent principle, distinction, language games at the level of *parole*, simulation, and discontinuity (See Yasraf Amir Piliang, 2010: 50-52).

In turn, *pseudo-sign* and *false-sign* tendencies emerged in cultural reality, propelling many kinds of crime in law and politics (Yasraf Amir Piliang, 2009: 171-172). Statement presented in various printed and electronic media often showcasing pseudo-signs and false-signs in public communication.

When rules of the language games in signs accentuating an event more than a system, in may violate the nature of rules of the language games itself since the rule is not regarded as a part of the system. Wittgenstein emphasized that:

"Is what we call obeying a rule something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life? This is of course a note on the

grammar of the expression to obey a rule. And hence also obeying a rule is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule privately; otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it" (Wittgenstein, 1983: 80- 81).

It underlines that rule compliance is a practice in collective life environment that does not precede individual basis.

Rules were meant to be obeyed and not to think about because people involved in a game per se understand and implement the rules spontaneously. Law and politics are not comparable to lies, but firmness, honesty, and ability to persuade others. If persuasion is exercised by means of lies, then the rules of the game are being violated. This kind of phenomenon presents in our political space today.

4. Hypertextuality

The role of computer and Internet in the communication world nowadays could no longer be neglected, even feasibly claimed to have central role in the intellectual's life across the world. Laptop, computer, and Internet network have become the main needs for the intellectuals. Through those means and media, they can express and sharpen their ideas, so that new ideas always come up. Computer according to Danesi (2010: 202) had introduced a form of textuality referred to as hypertextuality, an interconnected system of text enabling a user to travel from one text to another. Text interchange in the Internet world were possible through the invention of *hyperlinks*, part of document that could be connected with other related documents. When a *hyperlink* is clicked, a user would immediately get connected to a document referred by the link. Hypertextuality according to Danesi enables a user to browse through diverse related topics without looking at the sequence of topics. Hypertextuality was introduced as common feature of computer systems in 1987 by the Apple Company which distributed new program called *hypercard*. This program provides link functionality that allows users to browse in a variety of text and graphic files in the computer by clicking on keywords and icons provided by the *programmer* (Danesi, 2010: 203).

Danesi added that attempts to interpret a text in a computer require three types of processes:

— First, it requires the ability to access content of the text at the level of signifier. It implies an ability to interpret words, image, and a series of visual images. Therefore, only those who possess knowledge concerning text unification codes (verbal and non-verbal) could perform well.

— Second, it also requires knowledge on how A=B relations could be unfolded in a certain text. It means how a text (A) may create meaning (B) through a series of internal and external signification processes.

— Third, the presence of contextual factors penetrating to the entire process to provide constraints on *interpretant* about author's intention (Danesi, 2010: 204).

Skill and knowledge acquisitions upon the use of icons on the laptop and computer show that prevailing nature of signs tend to be logical-universal. Applicable icons found in laptop and computer represent the logical-rational language as implied by the adherents of Logical Atomism and Logical Positivism which is a standard language having universally applicable unique and limited meaning. Logical languages represented in the form of an icon indicates that the accuracy of meaning and clear reference are still very much needed in the contemporary world. Computers and the Internet today have become means or cross-cultural bridges which make distance between cultures are getting closer.

5. Problem of Meaning in Hypersemiotics

Evolution of thoughts towards signs in contemporary era are marked by set of cultural, politics, media, and imaging concept dynamics that encourage people to optimize the use of signs in accordance with their field of interests. The term of hypersemiotics itself according to Yasraf Amir Piliang points to a hyperbolized semiotics or semiotics beyond the limit (Yasraf Amir Piliang, 2010: 49). *Hyper* means "over": *hyperkinesis*, "exaggerate", "beyond" or "trancend", "over-limit": *hyperemia*, *hyperbole*. Terminologically, it refers to exaggerating attitude upon signs, causing meaning associated with goes beyond the real thing. Yasraf Amir Piliang identified that hypersemiotics is used to describe a growing tendency of current semiotics thinkers such as: Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Jacques Derrida. There are some principles embodied in hypersemiotics as follows.

— First, the principles of changes and transformations in hypersemiotics emphasize more on transformation of signs, signs production, and dynamic reproduction of signs rather than the structure of signs, code and meaning reproductions, and constant relations. Signs were no longer rely themselves on existing conventions, codes or meanings, but are endlessly produced by semiotic engine.

— Second, principle of immanence where hypersemiotics emphasizes more on the nature of the immanence, philosophy of the surface, logic of the signifier, shape-processing, play of the outer look, exploration of the simulation universe rather than the nature of transcendence, (metaphysical) depth, signifier, immutability of meaning, content clarity, and canonical representations. A sign no longer relies itself to the referral reality, but rather to develop itself in the realm of *pure simulacrum* which make up the world of hyperreality.

— Third, the principle of *difference* where hypersemiotics put more emphasis on differentiation rather than identity, convention, and social codes. Hypersemiotics produces sign distinction that does not necessarily have to be new, but more like roaming into pastiche in order to create dialogical relations between time and space into a single spacetime dimension.

— Fourth, *language-games* principles meaning that hypersemiotics emphasizes language-games at the level of *parole*, *event*, and *sign reinterpretation* rather than *langue*, *system*, and *restructurisation*. Hypersemiotics is a language games engine

producing sign games as commodity without attaching itself to a fixed system, thus there is no room left for the meaning.

— Fifth, simulation principle where reality-making does not refer to the *first reality* any longer, but taking shape as *second reality* which references are itself (*simulacrum of simulacrum*). In short, it is a merge between sign and reality found in a digital media such as Internet.

— Sixth, discontinuity principle means hypersemiotics tend to put more emphasis on semiotics discontinuity rather than continuity. Hypersemiotics led people to get away from the initial system or structure that binds them. The world is ruled by commodities and signs of capitalism (Yasraf Amir Piliang, 2003: 49-52). These six principles are closely linked to language as means of communication in a cultural life.

Language is the essential means of human life. Spoken and written languages have formed the culture and play a vital role for science development. Communication between people and between civilizations could take place due to the merit of language. Fern Johnson, an expert of culture associated language, communication, and culture into six following assumptions: (1) all communication activities take place within the framework of culture, (2) all individuals cultivate cultural knowledge that they use to communicate, (3) in a multicultural society, dominant linguistic ideology which replaces other cultural groups exists, (4) members of marginalized groups will cultivate knowledge of two cultures at once, namely their own culture and the dominant culture, (5) knowledge of culture, either those preserved or those went through, are constantly changing; (6) all cultural companion get interplays and utilize each other (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009: 263). Language is closely linked to culture since it constitutes collective symbols that refers to cultural stereotypes, meaning that it acts within interaction among community members in their collective memory, allowing them to portray their life realities (Jager, 2007: 35).

Norman Fairclough, a linguist expert in Lancaster University, UK, exemplified relations between semiosis, language, and social life. Semiosis bears all forms of meaning-making, including visual image, *body language*, nor colloquial language. Fairclough observed social life and denotes it as *interconnected networks* of social acts in various sectors such as: economy, politics, culture, and so on where each actions bear semiotic elements. Social relations, social identity, cultural value, and consciousness are parts of semiotics. *Critical Discourse Analysis* issued by Fairclough constitutes dialectical relations analysis between semiosis (including language) and other social act elements (Fairclough, 2007: 122). An understanding of the text according to Zoest does not solely cover the written and oral ones. Text is the epitome of unity which are interconnected encompassing: facial expressions, posture, and body gestures (Zoest, 1996: 106). Wittgenstein during his *Philosophical Investigations* period viewed all of them as a form of *language-games* that does not only understood as a form of verbal expression, but also as *body language* expressions. All of them are reality that grow and develop in social life. The development of social life in contemporary era also affects public perception towards surrounding reality, and thus also affects semiotics. In turn, it

makes semiotics shifts onto a deeper level than semiotics the people used to know, namely hypersemiotics.

The growth of social and cultural life in Indonesia could exert hypersemiotics as tool of analysis, for instance for a multicultural phenomenon in Indonesia. The first phenomenon that correlates to the principle of signs transformation in cultural scope in Indonesia is that the signs are no longer tie themselves up to existing conventions, codes or meanings. Even though *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as a form of convention is still expected to unite diversity in the spirit of unity, in fact this kind of bond is getting weaker due to number of factors such as: regional autonomy, economic discrepancy, corruption, and other factors detracting government credibility in citizens' point of views.

The second phenomenon is the extension of immanence principle where a sign no longer engages itself to reality, instead evolves itself in a *pure simulacrum* realm as discussed by Baudrillard in *The Consumer Society*. Baudrillard differs *simulacra* onto three phases which are *counterfeit/imitation*, *production*, and *simulation*, where each stage correlates to signification process. At the *counterfeit* phase, Baudrillard assumed a central role in the structure of society and signification of reality. During this phase, nature becomes functional paradigm in societal life, therefore human lies under natural law. This phase is reflected in the middle age and feudal societies. Next is the phase of *production* began by industrial revolution where production advances and object reproduction happens rapidly, therefore signs attribute themselves to the law of changes and are situated under commercial law. *Production* phase occurs in modern era. The third phase was named as *simulation* and reflected into three stages, which are masks and perverts as basic reality, followed by the absence of masks as basic reality, and in the end is no relation to any reality, a *pure simulacrum*. At the *counterfeit and production* phases, signs according to Baudrillard are still attributed to reality in several ways, but at the stage of simulation, references to reality disappear at all (Ramirez, 2005: 83).

The third phenomenon is the principle of differentiation emphasizing sign distinction which does not necessarily new, but rather refers to the past pastiche in order to create dialogical relations over time and space in a single spacetime dimension. Pretension upon novelty of signs simply wanted to show that new is analogous to progressive. Whereas in modern life, novelty is identical to obsolete, meaning that a product of modernity as a sign of modern society creates a commodity that quickly becomes obsolete in order that consumers would continuously update the items they use.

The fourth phenomenon took form of language games engine which produces signs game as a commodity without attaching itself to a fixed system, so that the meaning does not have any room as seen in the case of *codeswitching*. One of famous examples for this kind of language games was known as *codeswitching* as proposed by Kasijanto Sastrodinomo in his article published in TEMPO entitled "Umar Kayam dan Alih Kode". *Codeswitching* is a practice of those utilizing two or more language variations in a conversation. *Codeswitching* could be found in all *speech communities* having more than one conversing ways in his/her language repertoire (Kasijanto, 2011: 54).

The fifth phenomenon is reality making that no longer refers to the real world (first reality), but turns to second reality with reference to itself (simulacrum of simulacrum). Societal life altered from something authentic to pseudo-objects and pseudo-events as Baudrillard asserted:

“It is in the form that everything has changed: a neo-reality has everywhere been substituted for reality, a neo-reality entirely produced by combining elements of the code” (Baudrillard, 1998: 126).

The sixth phenomenon is swift hypersemiotics that leads modern people to get away from the initial system or structure which binds them. Modern world is dominated by commodities and signs of capitalism. It is indicated by the widespread of advertising deals throughout media, either visual, audio, or audiovisual. Austin’s theory on perlocutionary act is still very relevant because advertisement is a form of capitalist signs attempting to persuade people to buy their products as much as possible. The ability to persuade others became the most prominent phenomenon to sell goods and services, even though it often sacrifice moral values through fraud victimization. For example: A deceiving short message service sent to public which promise prizes and so on.

6. Concoction of Meaning in Hyperreality

Eco in his writing *Theory of Semiotics* posits the concoction of meaning in semiotic theory which he called as “theory of the lie” because semiotics deals with everything regarded as signs. A sign according to Eco is everything applicable to substitute something else significantly. That something else which was replaced by the sign does not ought to actually be exist or be somewhere in order to be substituted by the sign. Based on such things, Eco concluded that semiotics principally is a discipline examining everything that could be used to lie. The reason is that if something cannot be used to reveal lies, meaning that it cannot be used to reveal the truth as well (Eco, 1979: 7).

Semiotics could serve as tool of analysis for cognition of signs in human life from ancient to contemporary periods. It works as a starting point of an approach against various problems spurred in contemporary human life, including hyperreality. In the entire study of hyperreality also resides significant role of language, both orally and written because problems of meaning and concoction of meaning in contemporary culture as seen on hypersemiotics and hyperreality involves language.

7. Cross-cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication is one of contemporary cultural phenomena drove by globalization. Globalization does not solely influence economic sphere, but also penetrates to various fields covering politics, culture, technology, and even religion. According to Samovar, it consists of act or process involving the world

and brings extensive impact to various life aspects (Samovar, Cs, 2010: 3). Almost no social life aspects today is set apart from the influence of globalization and media, especially through rapid flow of information and communication technology.

Cross-cultural communication has become part of global society's life because distances between cultures are getting closer due to influential communication and information technology. Information and communication technology accelerate speed and ease for world's citizens to get connected each another. Technological advancement also portrayed by Samovar to secure increased access of information in the future. A new Internet system named as *The Grid* could operate and 10,000 times faster than the broadband connection in general. Information technology era between 2006-2010 had brought to accretion and acceleration of information in the digital world each year, thus it increases over six times than the previous period (Samovar, 2010: 7). Digital communication system according to Danesi gave ease online services such as news, bulletin board, journals, games, library, and so on. Electronic mail (*e-mail*) is one of those digital communication systems used by many, as well as *facebook*, *twitter*, and various communication systems enabling closer interaction across people, culture, and countries (Danesi, 2010: 208).

Cross-cultural communication involves people-to-people interaction whose cultural perception and system of symbols are slightly different. Communication between cultures according to Samovar Cs involves the dominant culture and the subcultures. The dominant culture is a group owns authority, control, and power to set pattern of relations among people, nations, and states. Pattern of interstate relations in contemporary world is dominated by developed countries such as: United States of America, United Kingdom, Japan, China, France, and some others. Whereas subcultures are social groups or communities who possess characterized communication, perceptions, values, beliefs, and actions that distinguish them from other groups and communities, as well as from the dominant culture (Samovar, 2010: 14-15). Interactions between the dominant culture and the subcultures generally influence communication, thus affecting the role of signs in related societal life. Communication in this case is a dynamic process where people try to share their internal problems with others through the use of symbols. Human being according to Ernst Cassirer is an animal symbolicum, a symbol-maker. Symbols in people communication are the expression representing or signifying something else. Men use symbols to give meanings and allows a culture to be communicated from one generation to another. It is important to know that signs turned to be symbols when a number of people agreed to make it as symbols. Although there is no cultural connection between symbols and its meaning, their relations might change and vary in all cultures (Samovar, 2010: 18-20).

Samovar Cs identified five elements of culture which are history, religion, values, social organization, and language:

— First; history embodies stories of the past, providing identity, values, rules of behavior, and such things to the members of cultural community. In case of Indonesia, it provides lessons on motivation behind the creation of Borobudur, Proclamation text of Independence, and so forth.

— Second; religion in the form of ceremony, ritual, taboo, and celebrations as cultural activities and social belief serves as social control, conflict resolution, solidarity group empowerment, an explanation of the irrational, and emotional support.

— Third; value is a critique against overall cultural preservation. It represents a perceived quality by the community for the sake of their interests and life sustainability.

— Fourth; social organization represents diverse social units such as family, government, and school which helps community members to organize their life.

— Fifth; language as a forum to share thoughts, feelings, and information, even works as the main method to spread culture among community members (Samovar, 2010: 29-31).

The sign system in the aforementioned five cultural elements holds a very important role. History would mean nothing if there is no process of interpretation, and the interpretation does not have to be exactly the same for one to another generation. Religion in the form of ceremony, ritual, taboo, and other things also involves signification system which possesses particular meaning for its followers. Value as a form of quality is believed to contribute to sign system. A community shall believe and implement it if they want to be existentially acknowledged by other communities. A social organization owns a unique and distinctive rules of the game depend on their shape and interests, so that the sign system is variously developed. Meanwhile, language as a symbol system is mostly linked to those commonly shared by the members of a community. It is a reflection of community's cultural identity. It is a set of signs or symbols that were agreed upon community members to generate meaning. The relations between selected symbol and agreed meaning sometimes fickle, hence varied symbol could be used by different cultures to identify a specific term (Samovar, Cs., 2010: 268). Thus the role of signs and symbols depend on the culture in which they were formed.

8. Conclusion

Signs have essential role in human life. They serves as an instrument to interpret condition at its time as in human life existed today. Similarly, its meaning appertains a culture that reflects current social conditions. Contemporary culture in Indonesia are influenced by globalization and generally appear through massive flow of information and communication such as the use of Internet, social media, or another means of information and communication technology. Even the media embodies certain signs and symbols, such as the use of computers and programming languages on the Internet which are getting familiar into contemporary societal life. In addition, other aspects such as political behavior are occupied with political games, false-signs, either by individuals or particular interest groups. These examples pinpoint to a conclusion that Indonesian society has become part of postmodern society, characterized by the presence of hypersemiotics in various life aspects.

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