

**INTERPRETATIONS AND CLAIMS OF CHAIR SYMBOL IDEOLOGY
ON *TEMPO* MAGAZINE'S COVER, MARCH 2024 EDITION****Sukur Oda¹, Muhammad Hasyim², Nur Ilmi³, Yusniati N Sabata⁴**^{1,2}Universitas Hasanuddin, ³Akademi Sekretari dan Manajemen Atmajaya Makassar,⁴Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk,Email: sukur.oda@pasca.unhas.ac.id¹, hasyimfrance@unhas.ac.id²,
nurilmirauf@gmail.com³, yusniati.n.sabata@gmail.com³**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini berupaya untuk menjelaskan klaim ideologi kursi yang terkandung dalam sampul Majalah Tempo pada edisi 25-31 Maret 2024. Metode penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan teori semiotika Roland Barthes, yaitu deskripsi denotasi, interpretasi konotasi dan klaim mitos/ideologi. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam kajian ini menggunakan teknik observasi pustaka pada dua gambar sampul majalah Tempo edisi 25-31 Maret 2024. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ideologi kursi yang digambarkan dalam sampul majalah Tempo menunjukkan keserakahan manusia dalam bingkai kekuasaan. Perspektif ideologi ini diperoleh dari identifikasi mendalam dari karakteristik kursi dengan keinginan manusia.

Kata kunci: Sampul Majalah Tempo; Roland Barthes; Semiotika**Abstract**

The research seeks to explain the ideology claim of the chair depicted in the cover of Tempo magazine on March 25-31, 2024 edition. The research method employs qualitative analysis with Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, including denotation description, connotation interpretation, and myth/ideology claims. Data collection for this study was conducted through literature observation techniques, focusing on two cover images from the March 25-31, 2024 edition of Tempo magazine. The research reveals that the ideology represented by the chair on the magazine cover reflects human avarice within the framework of power. This ideological perspective is derived from an in-depth analysis of the chair's characteristics in relation to human desires.

Keywords: **Keywords:** Tempo Magazine Cover; Roland Barthes; Semiotics**Introduction**

The growth of digital marketing, online entrepreneurship, and e-commerce requires workers in the business and marketing fields to adapt. This online-based environment has changed how consumers behave and created new lifestyles (Grubor & Jaksa, 2018). This development of this online technology can also reach consumers from the whole world quickly and easily. Thus, appropriate business and marketing strategies must be considered for effective communication. In order to reach people around the world, people who work in business and marketing need to have English communication skills. This English communication skill is not only focused on general English (GE) but needs to be learned, more specifically, English for specific purposes (ESP). This means all students should acquire English skills to respond to the global world's development and challenges (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). So, to accommodate the need for worldwide communication, business and marketing students must be provided with ESP.

Mass media fundamentally find it challenging to remain neutral due to various interests that haunt them. Moreover, both the media's ideological aspects and business and political interests significantly influence the framing of specific events. *Tempo* Magazine is a massive mass media outlet that distributes its content extensively on political issues in Indonesia. The magazine covers are uniquely crafted and boldly critical to capture public attention. These works are created by Kendra Paramita, a senior designer and illustrator at PT. *Tempo Intimedia Tbk* (Enmar, 2021). Kendra's creations have successfully captured the public's attention, leading many of her works to become subjects of academic study. Among these are cartoon illustrations, caricatures, and even depictions of animals using Indonesian political figures.

In semiotics studies, Nuriarta and Sujayanthi (Nuriarta & Masyuni Sujayanthi, 2020) emphasize that cartoons serve as visual works that contribute significantly to symbolism and often act as a medium for criticism. Generally, cartoons are categorized into two types: pure cartoons and editorial cartoons. Pure cartoons are typically humorous and feature jokes, while editorial cartoons are used to visually represent the main topics in media, often with a focus on political issues.

The editorial illustrations presented on *Tempo* magazine covers hold considerable power in shaping public opinion and actions. The symbols used on *Tempo*'s cover should be easily understood and interpreted by the public, ensuring that their understanding aligns with the communicators—in this case, the media. Differences in understanding signs or symbols between communicators and recipients can create communication barriers.

In summary, the symbols or signs on *Tempo* magazine covers carry meanings that can be explored. In other words, these symbols serve as a symbolic language to create focal points of attention. Understanding signs and their relationships is a key to semiotic analysis. Essentially, semiotics theory explores how to interpret various objects or concepts (Hunter, 2022). This extends beyond objects that aim to communicate and also encompasses the structured system of signs. Semiotics of communication specifically emphasizes sign production rather than the overall sign system (Sobur, 2009). It focuses on combining existing signs to create meaningful language expressions.

As a result, the illustrations on *Tempo* magazine covers often spark controversy, especially in the realm of politics. For instance, let's consider an analysis conducted by Haikal, Anjasmoro, Arisak, and Kusrandi (2019) on the cover of *Tempo* magazine's September 14, 2019 edition. The cover depicted an illustration of Jokowi Widodo with the shadow of Pinocchio. The connotation on the cover "Janji Tinggal Janji" alongside the silhouette of Pinocchio could potentially diminish Jokowi's credibility in the eyes of the public. The phrase "Janji Tinggal Janji" trivializes the act of making promises without ensuring they are fulfilled. Additionally, the Pinocchio silhouette implies that he may be lying about the promises he made. The myth conveyed through *Tempo*'s cover in that edition aims to portray Jokowi as a deceptive figure regarding his promises. Until now, campaign promises or proposals have not fully aligned with what he communicated to the public before his second term inauguration. The analysis concludes that *Tempo* magazine maintains balance in presenting conclusions from news stories (Haikal et al., 2023).

The study titled "Semiotics Analysis of *Tempo* Magazine Cover 'Abah Masuk Istana' Edition October 21, 2019," conducted by Riri Apriliani, explores the differences in meaning between signifiers (denotations) and signified (connotations) influenced by ongoing events. The denotations and connotations are intricately related to each other (Apriliani, 2019).

Additionally, I Wayan Nuriarta and Niwayan Masyuni Sujayanthi conducted a study on the mythological aspects of political cartoons in the *Jawa Pos* newspaper. In their analysis, they found that denotations on the cover of *Tempo* magazine portrayed politicians conveying their visions and missions ahead of elections. However, the connotations

revealed a struggle for political vision and mission dominance to win the election, with promises and aspirations aimed at capturing public attention. Interestingly, the presence of politicians sometimes distances society from the true meaning of prosperity. The myth constructed in this study suggests that cartoon imagery serves as a communication medium with the public, but as often proven, political promises during campaigns often remain mere slogans (Nuriarta & Masyuni Sujayanthi, 2020).

Similarly, another study by Aji, Muhlis, and Nur (2021) examined the cover of *Tempo* magazine's November 11-17, 2019 edition. The denotation in this analysis depicted Anies Baswedan submerged in a can of Aibon glue, with efforts to extricate himself. The connotation highlighted Anies's panicked expression due to the revelation of irregularities in the Aibon budget. Through this portrayal, the study revealed a myth of non-transparency regarding the budget planning information for DKI Jakarta (Aji et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Rujito and Nawawi (2023) explored the ideology of the rat depicted in *Tempo* magazine covers from January to March 2021. Their perspective on rat ideology was derived from identifying rat characters with human traits. These rat symbols were used as a critique of political issues. The study explained that the rat ideology portrayed humans losing their conscience, responsibility, and idealism (Rujito & Nawawi, 2023).

By given these various analyses, *Tempo* magazine covers have become a focal point for academic study. Their layered meanings continue to attract researchers, and it's possible that other objects and phenomena could serve as alternative subjects for investigation. In the current study, we narrow our focus to the semiotic meanings within the covers of *Tempo* magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition, post the 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections. Specifically, we seek to understand the denotations, interpret the connotations, and analyze the myth/ideology claims within these covers.

The general objective of this study is to explain the ideological meanings within images and prevent misinterpretation of visual messages. The specific objectives include understanding denotations, interpreting connotations, and analyzing myth/ideology within the *Tempo* magazine covers from March 25-31, 2024, following the 2024 presidential election.

Research Method

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. According to Sugiyono and Lestari (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021), qualitative research seeks to understand, delve into, and penetrate phenomena, subsequently interpreting and drawing conclusions based on their context. The objective is to achieve an objective and natural conclusion aligned with the observed phenomena within that context. The subject of this study is the cover images of *Tempo* magazine. The research object specifically focuses on the denotation descriptions, connotation interpretations, and myth/ideology claims embedded within the cover images of *Tempo* Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition.

For data sampling, the researcher employs purposive sampling, a technique where sample selection is based on specific considerations. In this case, the chosen samples are the two cover images from *Tempo* Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition. These two images depict the myth concept as portrayed by *Tempo* in the post-2024 Presidential Election (PilPres) government activities. Consequently, the researcher can draw conclusions and obtain data relevant to the theme addressed by *Tempo* Magazine, specifically events occurring after the 2024 presidential election.

The data collection in this research involves literary observation as a series of behaviors, including selection, modification, recording, and decoding. According to Sugiyono and Lestari, literary observation is the systematic recording of behavioral patterns

exhibited by subjects (individuals) or objects without direct questioning or communication with individuals. The data collected are generally unbiased, more accurate, detailed, and free from response bias.

In this study, the researcher observes directly and scrutinizes every sign within the research object, which consists of two cover images from *Tempo* Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition. The research method employs semiotic analysis, specifically using Roland Barthes' semiotics model. This model focuses on three interpretations of signs: denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, the study seeks to understand the ideological meanings embedded within the cover images selected as samples for this research.

Findings and Discussion

Roland Barthes, in his semiotics, adheres to three layers of meaning in his analysis: denotation, connotation, and myth. Quoting Piliang (in Fatimah), denotation refers to the apparent meaning—the sign whose signifier has a high level of convention or agreement. On the other hand, connotation operates at the second level of signification, explaining the relationship between the signifier and the signified. It encompasses meanings that are implicit, indirect, and uncertain (meaning they are open to various possibilities). Additionally, myth represents meaning that undergoes distortion due to the dominance of specific social groups (Fatimah, 2020).

Furthermore, according to Hoed (2014), the fundamental rule of Barthes' semiotic study is that denotation represents what the sign describes about the object. In other words, connotation is the way to depict the meaning of that denotation. In Barthes' view, denotation constitutes the first-level sign, consisting of the signifier and the signified. Meanwhile, connotation operates as the second-level sign, utilizing the signified of the denotation (Hoed, 2014).

According to Barthes (Barthes, 1964) and (Barthes, 2004), myth is a type of discourse. For Barthes, myth constitutes a communication system—a message. Through myth, individuals are led to assume that myth cannot be an object, concept, or idea. Therefore, myth serves as a way of signification for a particular form. Myth operates as a second-level semiotic system. In this context, it builds upon the first-level semiotics. Because myth itself is a system, connotation also contains signifier-signified pairs, signified-signifier relationships, and the process that unites signifiers and signifieds (known as signification). These three elements are essential for describing the system inherent in myth.

This study seeks to uncover the ideology of the chair depicted on the cover of *Tempo* Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition. By utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which encompasses three elements—denotation, connotation, and myth—we will explore the connections within the ideology conveyed through *Tempo* Magazine's cover.




Figure 1. *Tempo* Magazine's Cover March 25-31, 2024
Source: *Majalah Tempo.co* (Tempo, 2024a)

According to Tempo Magazine’s March 25-31, 2024 edition, there is a recurring issue of political horse-trading in Indonesia. The practice of bargaining for cabinet positions occurs between political parties and the presidential candidate declared the winner by the General Election Commission. Parties demand their share based on the sweat they shed to support the winning candidate. The denotations in the cover image depict the following scenes; (1) A chubby person wearing a blue shirt, eyes closed, and a disgruntled expression, holding a wooden chair seat, (2) Another chubby person wearing a yellow shirt, eyes closed, smiling, and holding the backrest of a wooden chair. (3) A thin person wearing a white shirt, eyes closed, with a disgruntled expression, holding the feet of a wooden chair.

Upon closer examination, the cover of Tempo Magazine’s March 25-31, 2024 edition contains several symbolic meanings. These denotations likely represent power struggles, negotiations, and the distribution of political positions within the government. The imagery suggests that the process of forming a cabinet involves intricate maneuvering and jockeying for influence among various political actors. For further insights, you can refer to the detailed analysis in the following symbols.

Table 1. Meanings of Tempo Magazine’s Cover March 25-31, 2024

Visual Sign (Objects)	Denotative Descriptions	Connotative Interpretations
	Seat	A sign to occupy power
	Feet	A sign to establish power
	Backrest	A sign to lean on for power
	Chair	Avarice

The cover of Tempo Magazine’s March 25-31, 2024 edition provides a critique of the current government and the newly elected president. The cover is titled ‘Saling Kunci Kursi Menteri’. In this edition, Tempo criticizes the newly elected government, specifically Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming, urging them to avoid engaging in political horse-trading, a practice that occurred during President Jokowi’s previous term. The president should have the prerogative to select cabinet ministers based on their expertise rather than party representation (Tempo, 2024a). This is especially relevant considering that many ministers involved in corruption cases are affiliated with political parties. For instance, former Minister of Social Affairs and Gerindra party politician Juliari Batubara was implicated in a bribery case related to COVID-19 social assistance funds in 2020. Similarly, former Minister of Communication and Informatics Johny Gerrand Plate from the Nasdem Party received substantial sums from the 4G Base Transceiver Station (BTS) procurement project. Additionally, Idrus Marham, a politician from the Golkar Party who previously served as Minister of Social Affairs in Jokowi’s cabinet, was implicated in a bribery case related to the Riau power plant project. Most recently, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, a cadre of the Nasdem Party and former Minister of Agriculture, faced allegations of extortion and gratification. These cases serve as crucial points for evaluating and improving the country over the next five years.

The connotative meaning of the cover image in *Tempo Magazine’s* March 25-31, 2024 edition revolves around the ambition to acquire power within a government. Through the depiction of this news, the analysis reveals a significant agenda for the newly elected

government, which will continue the leadership legacy for the next five years. The involvement of political elites in positions of power is evident.

Meanwhile, the fragmented depiction of a chair represents the efforts of political elites to seize control within the newly elected government. Specifically, President Jokowi, holding the wooden chair feet, symbolizes his significant role in establishing and perpetuating his power through his son Gibran, who was elected as Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia. Tempo Magazine positions the chair as an object with political implications within the realm of power. This relevance becomes apparent when the chair's portrayal is included in the context of the public's crisis of trust in the government. Moreover, this crisis of trust is exacerbated by the long list of corruption cases involving officials from political parties in Indonesia.

Thus, the myth depicted on the cover of *Tempo Magazine's* March 25-31, 2024 edition speaks to the presence of a chair and its association with power, suggesting that positions can be occupied when integrated into the governance of a nation.



Figure 2. Contents of Tempo Magazine Cover, March 25-31, 2024
Source: *Majalah Tempo.co* (Tempo, 2024b)

On figure 2 above, which is a part of Tempo Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition, there is a discussion about political power-sharing in Indonesia. The Golongan Karya Party (Golkar), as one of the supporting parties, claims to have contributed 25% of the votes for Prabowo-Gibran. Additionally, Golkar currently holds the second-largest number of seats in the People's Representative Council (DPR) (Tempo, 2024b). The caricature in the image likely contains the following symbols.

Table 2. Meanings of Tempo Magazine's Cover 25-31 March, 2024

Visual Sign (Objects)	Denotative Descriptions	Connotative Interpretations
	Fork	Tools for taking power
	Plate	A tool to put power
	Knife	Tool to share power
	Tarts	A sign for sharing the joy of power
	Round table	A sign for togetherness in power
	Chair	Avarice

The cover of Tempo Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition provides a critique of the newly elected government, specifically Prabowo-Gibran. The cover is titled "Ramai-Ramai Minta Jatah Menteri". In this edition, Tempo criticizes the president-elect, Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming, urging them to avoid engaging in power-sharing politics with political elites, whether they are supporting parties or not, following the 2024 Presidential Election.

Connotatively, the central theme of the cover image revolves around the depiction of chairs. The image portrays chairs placed on top of a tar-like substance, symbolizing the distribution of power after the happiness derived from winning the presidential election. The chair positioned at the highest point can be interpreted as the pinnacle of power.

Within the context of the news content in Tempo Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition, positioning the chair at the top signifies a form of criticism from the public toward the highest authority in the country. The portrayal highlights the ongoing power struggle. Additionally, the myth uncovered in the analysis (as shown in Table 2 of the magazine) suggests that happiness can be obtained through the sharing of power.

In Marx's perspective, as discussed by Falah (2018), the dissemination of ideology requires entities that function as message distributors. Ideology itself represents beliefs that obscure social class contradictions. The production of ideology aims to bring the lower class into compliance, channelled through consciousness. This is where social legitimacy becomes necessary (Falah, 2018). Consequently, messages that begin with factual descriptions and then attempt to justify those descriptions theoretically gradually gain acceptance among the public through a process of overcoding. For semiotics, we need not determine how a message originated or the political-economic reasons behind it; the semiotics of code merely defines what this new encoding can be called ideological.

Syas and Rusadi (2021) explain the concept of a chair as a physical entity that signifies a place to sit. Physically, chairs have various categories based on shape, function, strength, position within a room or building, and aesthetics. Thus, the physical metaphor of a chair encompasses something that holds value in terms of position, variation, function, purpose, and aesthetics. This source domain is applied to the ministerial position as the target domain. When viewed based on the meaning of a chair in the source domain, the ministerial position signifies a seat that is obtained and can have varying uses (Syas & Rusadi, 2021).

This study introduces the concept of chair ideology as a perspective that involves the mixing of codes between the ideological concept and power. From this perspective, the study deconstructs the ideology through illustrations of chairs and caricatures of political elites on the cover of Tempo Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition.

The mentioned ideology significantly influences the formation of public persuasion and raises important questions. For instance, what if media criticism of the government shapes negative perceptions among the public, leading to a crisis of trust in the country's governance system? Additionally, what happens when the ideology constructed through the depiction of chairs serves as support for the public to resist becoming entangled in government power?.

This study attempts to address these questions by examining the deconstruction of chair ideology on the cover of Tempo Magazine's March 25-31, 2024 edition. As many previous studies have emphasized, media criticism often highlights abuses of power and instances of corruption. In this edition, the cover of Tempo Magazine interprets chairs as symbols of the avarice for power among officials.

Through both analyses of the cover images in Tempo Magazine, this study reveals the myth that power can be obtained through various means. Regardless of whether these means are right or wrong, the chairs depicted on the cover tend to represent negative ambitions related to power.

Conclusion

After interpreting Roland Barthes' semiotics, this study identifies the chair illustration on Tempo Magazine's cover March 24, 2024 edition. It can be concluded that in this edition, the chair ideology speaks to the greed or avarice for power.

Through these two interpretations, the chair symbol is understood as an object with a sacred association to power. Furthermore, the depiction of separate parts of the chair coming together to form the complete anatomy represents the proportional sacrifices that a ruler must make. Additionally, portraying the chair as a tar-like cake signifies an attempt to distribute the happiness derived from power. The relevance and reliability of this depiction emphasize the perspective that the newly elected government in the 2024 election must be fulfilled the desires of each political elite according to the sacrifices they have made.

In other words, Tempo Magazine presents criticism of the government as a form of media resistance against a democratic system perceived as biased and detrimental to society. This critique is conveyed through the medium of illustrated caricatures in Tempo Magazine. Beyond capturing market attention, this concept serves as a resistance against the behaviors of greed and abuse of power within the realm of governance.

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