

## **Semiotic Study Of Anthems And Flags Of The United States And The United Kingdom**

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### **Abstrak**

*Semiotik dapat didefinisikan sebagai ilmu tentang sistem tanda. Semiotik bertujuan untuk mengetahui makna-makna yang terkandung dalam sebuah tanda atau menafsirkan makna tersebut sehingga diketahui bagaimana komunikator mengkonstruksi pesan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan makna verbal dan visual yang terdapat dalam lagu kebangsaan dan bendera United States dan United Kingdom. Data dikumpulkan melalui proses membaca dan mencatat lalu menganalisis data berdasarkan teori yang digunakan. Terdapat tiga jenis makna pada masing-masing lagu kebangsaan berdasarkan teori dari Leech (1974) dan empat elemen visual pada kedua bendera berdasarkan teori dari Berger (1984) dan Wierzbicka (1996). Selain itu terdapat hubungan semiotik antara masing-masing lagu kebangsaan dan benderanya.*

*Kata Kunci: makna verbal, makna visual, hubungan semiotik.*

### **1. Background of The Study**

The United States and United Kingdom are the powerful and influential countries in the world. Together, they have given the English language a dominant role in many sectors of the modern world. The United States shares with United Kingdom many threads of cultural heritage. Since English is the language of both the British and the Americans, both nations belong to the English-speaking world. However, the common language does come with differences in spelling, pronunciation, and the meaning of words.

The United Kingdom and United States national anthems have similarities between them. Both of the national anthems have long lyrics but only sung in the short verse. Besides, another similarity of them is the same color of their flags. Blue, red and white are the colors of United Kingdom and United States flags. Halliday (1985) argued that semiotics can be defined as the study of sign systems. It is an aspect of the study of meaning. Halliday intended a more specific interpretation of the word 'social' to indicate the relationships between language and social structure, considering the social structure as one aspect of the social system. Halliday (1978) proposed some essential ingredients or elements in a social semiotics theory of language. There are the text, the situation, the text variety or register, the code, the linguistic system, and the social structure.

Relevant with Halliday, Leech (1977) states, the word 'meaning' and its corresponding verb 'to mean' are among the most ambiguous and controversial terms in the theory of language. Related to the anthem lyrics, this study tried to find the meaning of United States and United Kingdom anthem.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

1. What are the verbal messages presented in the anthem's lyrics of United States and United Kingdom?
2. What are the visual messages of the flags of United States and United Kingdom?
3. What are the semiotic relationship between the anthem's lyrics and the flags of United States and United Kingdom?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

1. To present the verbal messages in the anthem's lyrics of United States and United Kingdom according to concept of meaning.
2. To describe the visual messages of the flag of United States and United Kingdom.
3. To describe the semiotic relationships between the anthem's lyrics and the flag of United States and United Kingdom.

## **4. Research Method**

### **4.1 Data Source**

The data in this study are anthems and flags of United States and United Kingdom. The anthems are national anthems of United States and United Kingdom. A part from the anthem of both countries, the primary data of this study are the flags of United States and United Kingdom. Both of the countries were chosen as the primary data because they are the biggest countries in the world. They also have similarities in regard to the colors in their flags.

### **4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

In collecting the data, the library research and documentation methods were applied. Library research was used to collect the data of United States and United Kingdom. Firstly, the written lyrics of anthem and flag's picture of United States and United Kingdom were searched and collected. Then, audio visual of the anthems was searched on the internet. Next, deep information about the data was searched from the internet, books and online articles and journal. While collecting the data, note-taking was adopted. Then the data were selected and classified according to the need of the research.

### **4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data**

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using the qualitative method. The theories used in analyzing data were the theory of Meaning by Leech (1974) and the theory of Visual Aspect of Sign by Berger (1984). The analysis of this study took several steps. First, the information on the historical background of the two countries were collected. Then, the selected information was noted as data research. The data were analyzed according to the theory used in this study. Next, the meaning inside the anthem's lyrics of United States and United Kingdom was presented. Last, the visual aspects that appeared on both flags of United States and United Kingdom were described.

## **5. Result and Discussion**

### **5.1 The Verbal Message of "The Star Spangled Banners" Anthem Lyrics**

#### **First Part:**

*Oh, say! can you see by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:*

The first part of the anthem's lyrics reflects thematic meaning because the American wants to emphasize the existence of the flag during the war. Leech (1974:19) states that thematic meaning is what is communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus, and emphasis. Line two and four have intonation in the words "What so proudly" and "O'er the ramparts" to emphasize the information.

**Second Part:**

*Oh, say! does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

The second part of the anthem's lyric is conceptual meaning because the lyric represents the chorus of the anthem's lyric and it shows a condition in the middle of war.

**Third Part:**

*On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In fully glory reflected now shines in the stream:*

The third part of anthem's lyrics is conceptual meaning because the American literary tells about condition in the middle of war.

**Fourth Part:**

*'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh, long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*

The fourth part reflects thematic meaning because the American wants to emphasize the power of the United States flag.

**Fifth Part:**

*And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion  
A home and a country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution!  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:*

The fifth part of the anthem's lyrics is affective meaning because the American describes their feeling of the war and condition of the effect of war.

**Sixth Part:**

*And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

The sixth part of the anthem's lyric is conceptual meaning because the lyric meaning represents the chorus of the anthem's lyric.

**Seventh Part:**

*Oh, thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust":*

This part of anthem's lyrics is conceptual meaning and it shows a condition of the end of war.

**Eighth Part:**

*And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave*

The eighth part of the anthem's lyric is conceptual meaning because the lyrics meaning represents the chorus of the anthem's lyric and literary tells the condition in the middle of war.

## 5.2 The Verbal Message of “God Save The Queen” Anthem Lyrics

### First Part:

*God save our gracious Queen,  
Long live our noble Queen,  
God Save The Queen.  
Send her victorious,  
Happy and Glorious,  
Long to reign over us,  
God Save The Queen.*

The first part of the anthem’s lyrics is conceptual meaning because the Britain literary tells the condition of the Queen. In the last sentence from first part reflects thematic meaning because the Britain wants to emphasize the motto of United Kingdom.

### Second Part:

*Oh, Lord our God arise,  
Scatter her enemies,  
And make them fall.  
Confound their politics,  
Frustrate their knavish tricks,  
On thee our hopes we fix,  
God save us all.*

Second part of God Save the Queen is about The Queen and it reflects a conceptual meaning because the Britain describes the hopes of United Kingdom society.

### Third Part:

*Thy choicest gifts in store,  
On her be pleased to pour,  
Long may she reign.  
May she defend our laws,  
And ever give us cause,  
To sing with heart and voice,  
God Save The Queen!*

This part reflects conceptual meaning and it’s about how people feel for the Queen. In the last sentence from third part, the anthem’s lyric is thematic meaning because the Britain wants to emphasize the motto of United Kingdom.

**Fourth Part:**

*Not in this land alone,  
But be God's mercies known,  
From shore to shore.  
Lord make the nations see,  
That men should brothers be,  
And form one family,  
The wide world o'er*

Fourth part reflects conceptual meaning and it's about God's goodness.

**Fifth Part:**

*From every latent foe,  
From the assassin's blow,  
God Save The Queen.  
O'er thine arm extend,  
For Britain's sake defend,  
Our mother prince and friend,  
God Save The Queen.*

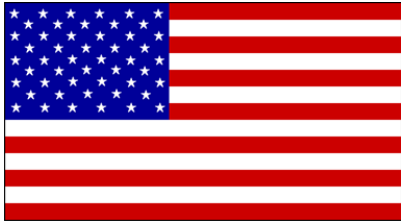
The fifth part of anthem's lyrics is conceptual and thematic meaning. The thematic meaning is used in the third and last sentence of fifth part because the Britain wants to emphasize the motto of United Kingdom.

**Last Part:**

*Lord grant that marshal wade,  
May by thy mighty aid,  
Victory bring.  
May he sedition hush,  
And like a torrent rush,  
Rebellious Scots to crush,  
God Save The Queen.*

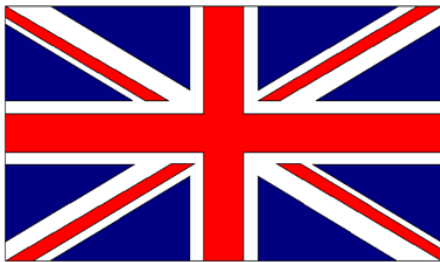
The last part of anthem's lyrics is affective meaning because the Britain tells their opinion about the power of God. The last sentence of this part reflects thematic meaning because the Britain wants to emphasize the motto of United Kingdom.

### 5.3 The Flag of United States and the Visual Analysis



The flag of United States only uses four elements from six elements of visual aspect of sign. The four elements that occur in the flag are the use of color, shape, size, and contrast. In the United States, red represent hardiness and valor, white represents purity and innocent and blue represents perseverance and justice. The flag of United States consists of fifty stars and thirteen equal horizontal stripes of red alternating with white. The thirteen equal horizontal stripes represent the thirteen British colonies that declared independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain, and became the first states in the Union. The fifty stars on the flag represent the fifty states of the United States of America.

### 5.4 The Flag of United Kingdom and the Visual Analysis



The flag of United Kingdom only uses four elements from six elements of visual aspects of sign. The four elements that occur in the flag are the use of color, shape, size, and contrast. In the United Kingdom, red represents bravery and strength, white represents peace and honesty and blue represents truth and loyalty.



### **5.5 The Semiotic Relationships between the Anthem's lyrics and Flags.**

The anthem's lyrics and the flags of United States and United Kingdom show a relationship. The writer of United States anthem has inspired to write the anthem because of his experience during the war. The American soldier saw the United States flag still flew over and got inspired to write the anthem. The patriotic lyrics of United States anthem also show the appearance of the colour of the flag.

The anthem's lyrics and the flag of United Kingdom show a relationship of the color of the flag with the lyrics meaning of the anthem. The color meaning of the flag shows the meaning of the anthem lyrics. "God Save the Queen" shows how the United Kingdom societies love their Queen. The color of the flag also shows the bravery of the leader of United Kingdom.

## **6. Conclusion**

The anthem's lyrics of "The Star Spangled Banner" have eight parts which are have conceptual, affective and thematic meaning in the anthem's lyrics. The meaning of The Star Spangled Banner is about the American soldier's experience in the middle of the war. It also shows the power of United States soldiers in the Fort McHenry during World War II. This war makes the United States lose their families and properties. The spirit of the soldier made the United States win the war.

The anthem's lyrics of "God Save the Queen" have six parts which have conceptual, affective and thematic meaning inside the lyrics. The meaning of "God Save the Queen" is the greatness and honor of the Queen. As the leader of the United Kingdom, the Queen was expected to bring prosperity and happiness to United Kingdom society. People always pray to God for the Queen's health. People believe that their leader is a gift from God to them.

The flags of United States and United Kingdom only use four elements from six elements of visual aspect of sign. The four elements that occur in the two flags are the use of color, shape, size, and contrast. Both flags use red, white and blue in their flag.

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