

Semiotic Analysis of Visual Signs in the Movie Poster of Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince (2009) by Warner Bros

Nur Hanifah¹, Fajar Imam Murifqi²

Department of English Language Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Nur Hanifah

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260228>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the visual signs in the movie poster of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Applying a descriptive qualitative method, the research analyzes the poster as a visual text by identifying six iconic, six indexical, and four symbolic signs within its imagery, color, character positioning, and textual elements. The findings show that iconic signs represent characters and objects from the film, indexical signs convey mood, conflict, and narrative tension, and symbolic signs communicate meaning through culturally recognized conventions such as titles, logos, and taglines. Together, these elements construct a darker thematic message about responsibility, sacrifice, and divided loyalties in the wizarding world. The study highlights how movie posters function not only as promotional media but also as systems of visual communication that shape audience interpretation and expectations.

Keywords: Harry Potter, Movie Poster, Semiotic, Visual Sign Analysis,

INTRODUCTION

This research analyzes a movie poster, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009), for several reasons; Movie posters as communicative artifacts: A movie poster is

not just promotional, it's a visual text. It uses imagery, color, typography, layout, and symbolism to communicate genre, tone, narrative hints, character roles, target audience, etc. Layered meaning: From a semiotic perspective, a poster provides visible signs (images, icons, typography) plus cultural codes (references to other texts, symbols of fantasy, good vs evil, etc.). Thus, it's rich for applying sign theory (icons/indexes/symbols). Audience mediation: Posters serve as audience interfaces. Before a viewer watches the movie, the poster frames expectations, associations, and emotional responses. In terms of media studies and visual communication, it plays an important role. Visual culture & fandom: For a cultural phenomenon like "Harry Potter", the poster is part of the broader visual culture, marketing, and fandom community. Investigating it helps researchers understand how meaning is constructed for popular culture. A poster is a fruitful object because it sits at the intersection of marketing, visual semiotics, narrative clues, and cultural codes. Cultural/contextual dimension: Many semiotic analyses focus on Western movie poster culture. This research focuses on the Indonesian market, or cross-cultural variants, and points out the gap. Limited research has examined how the Harry Potter movie poster is adapted for Indonesian (or Southeast Asian) audiences and how semiotic resources

(colors, symbols, typography) differ or produce meaning in that context. Combination of semiotic theories: While many studies apply, e.g., Charles Sanders Peirce's icon/index/symbol or Roland Barthes' denotation/connotation/myth, only a few integrate multiple semiotic frameworks, and few apply them to posters of a major franchise like Harry Potter in the last few years. To identify: There is a gap in applying the icon/index/symbol triad plus a culturally situated reading of myth (Barthes) to modern film posters in global popular culture.

While descriptive semiotic analyses exist, research rarely examines how target audiences interpret the visual signs of a poster. Thus, the 'interpretant' stage is under-explored in poster studies.

Saussure (1915/1966) explained that a linguistic sign connects not a thing and its name, but a concept with a sound-image. He defined the combination of these two elements a concept (the signified) and a sound-image (the signifier) as a sign, noting that in common usage, the term often refers only to the sound-image. His view that the link between signifier and signified is arbitrary played a pivotal role in developing semiotics. In contrast, Peirce emphasized three dimensions of signs: the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic.

Semiotics refers to the study of signs, focusing on how a text generates meaning using signs and how these meanings relate to wider "systems of meaning" (Rose, p. 69). It is often argued that such signs reinforce ideological codes within society. To begin, it is useful to outline some key terms in semiotic analysis, which Ferdinand de Saussure introduced in his *Course in General Linguistics*.

Semiotic analysis how audiences derive meaning from codes (Peirce in Manon de Reeper, 1997, p. 20). The American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839) defined a sign as "something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity" (Zeman, 1977, p. 24). Language itself functions as a sign, code, or

communication system established by mutual agreement within a particular community. This community, individually or collectively, uses language to convey messages, intentions, or meanings. As a sign or symbol, language enables humans to identify themselves and others, facilitating understanding of various aspects of life. People often represent different aspects of reality as signs to simplify comprehension and interpretation. Signs can appear in words, images, sounds, smells, tastes, actions, or objects, but they hold no inherent meaning, becoming signs only when meaning is assigned to them.

A sign is composed of two elements: the signifier, which is the physical form of the sign, and the signified, which is the concept it represents. Drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce, Zoest explains that a sign can indicate its referent in three ways: (1) through resemblance, (2) through convention, and (3) through a direct or contiguous relationship.

An icon is a sign that conveys meaning through resemblance. Icons are the simplest type of sign, presenting something straightforwardly and easily understood, such as a clear directional plan using arrows. In textual form, an icon might be a simple sentence that shows the sequence of events. A sign that functions through convention or an agreed-upon system is called a symbol. Symbols represent a more advanced sign system because they require prior learning to be understood. The Morse code system, for example, demands knowledge of its symbols before one can interpret a sequence of signals. Language itself is also a symbolic, conventional sign system. For instance, in formal correspondence, a letter often begins with the salutation "respectfully" as part of established writing conventions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on observing signs and examining the essence of the meaning of these signs.

They are (Purwaningsih, 2023; Mudjiyanto et al., 2013; Rifa'I, 2010; Dewanto, 2012; Burty, 2013). The research was descriptive qualitative method and the true meaning

using the semiotic method, along with the discussion. The method emphasizes more on observing signs and examining the essence of the meaning of these signs. The thoughts of sign users are the result of the influence of various social constructions in which these users are located. Is dissected using the semiotic method, which examines the signified system by examining the information contained on icons, symbols, and indexes. Reveals that the function of the sign in each movie poster is to illustrate and guide the audience about the story of the film. The color schemes of the movie posters establish the film's genre and themes. Based on the category of the sign, it is found that symbol is mostly used rather than icon and index. They study uses a qualitative approach in terms of a document or content analysis because it focuses on identifying the signs found in movie posters of Harry Potter. His study applied the theory of connotative meaning proposed by Chandler (2002) and also Peirce's (1982) forms of sign theory. Research on the implications of understanding the signifier, the signified, and the meaning. Some researches were conducted by the experts: (Ridwan, 2013; Pertiwi, 2010; Rahmat, 2009; Mansyur, 2010; Dhanis, 2013). In an analysis semiotic by using Roland Barthes' theory. The method used a qualitative descriptive method, there are nineteen signifiers, and a signifier found is conspiracy. The author explores the implications of this research, which is to give understanding of the signifier, signified, and meaning for the reader who would like to know more about semiotics. The research is aimed at finding out the meaning of symbols and reveals the ideas. This method tried to describe, explain and analyze the use of symbol using the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes that there kinds of signifier and signified: a) Icon, the sign that inherently have the same pointed meaning, b) Index, the sign that show the causal relation with signified within it, c) Symbol, the sign that has a meaning in relation to the arbitrary signified, suitable, with the certain social convention.

A sign cannot be regarded as a "sign" unless it refers to something else or conveys meaning. In other words, anything can function as a sign if it carries meaning.

a) Iconic Mode

According to Peirce (1931, p. 58), an icon is a sign that represents its object primarily through similarity or likeness, relying on perceived resemblance. Icons possess qualities that "resemble" the objects they represent and evoke similar sensations in the mind. They may look, sound, feel, taste, or smell like the object. Examples include portraits, cartoons, scale models, onomatopoeia, metaphors, and realistic sounds in a music program.

b) Symbolic Mode

In Peirce's framework, a symbol is based entirely on conventional associations. It refers to its object by virtue of a socially or culturally established rule, habit, or general principle that determines how it will be interpreted (Peirce, 1931, p. 58). Symbols function through shared agreement and require learning to understand. Examples include language (spoken or written, encompassing sentences, phrases, words, punctuation marks, and letters), Morse code, numbers, traffic signals, and national flags.

c) Indexical Mode

The index, as defined by Peirce (1931: p.58), is a sign that "indicates" something through a genuine, direct connection to its object one that does not rely solely on the interpreter's mind. Unlike the icon, which is based on similarity, the index is characterized by contiguity, and can serve as evidence of the object's existence. Examples include natural signs (smoking, thunder, footprints, echoes), medical symptoms (pain, rashes, pulse rate), measuring instruments (weathervanes, clocks, thermometers), signals (a door knock, a ringing phone), recordings (photographs, films, audio recordings), and personal markers (handwriting, catchphrases).

Here is a picture of Peirce's semiotic elements in semiosis:

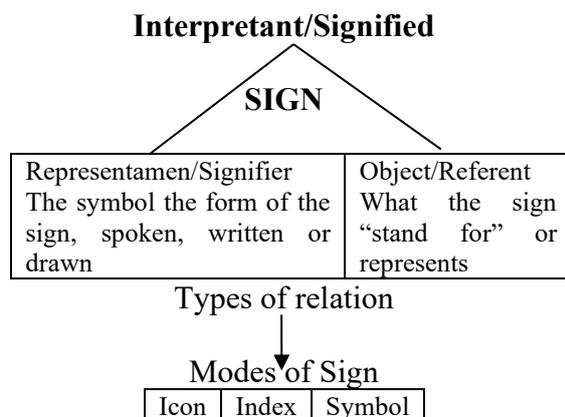


Figure 1. Triadic semiosis concept of Peirce

A movie poster is a promotional medium designed to advertise a movie, primarily aiming to attract audiences to watch it in theaters. Studios often produce multiple versions of a poster, varying in size and content, to cater to different domestic and international markets. Typically, a film poster combines imagery with text, and modern designs frequently feature printed images of the lead actors.

A movie poster is a form of advertisement used to promote a film, serving as a medium to convey specific intentions through carefully arranged visual and textual elements that communicate the essence of the movie. It can also provide key information about the film's production context. The primary purpose of a movie poster is to attract and engage audiences.

According to Scott Stoneham (2009), the typical features of a movie poster include a prominently displayed title to draw attention, bold colors that stand out from the background, compelling imagery designed to spark viewer interest, persuasive language to encourage audiences to watch the film, the inclusion of the main actors' names for promotional appeal, and the film's certification to indicate its intended audience. Beyond its promotional function, a movie poster also operates as a work of art encapsulating the film's identity in a single striking image and acting as a visual handshake between the movie and its

audience, intended to intrigue, inform, and entice

The use of movie posters dates to the earliest public film screenings, when they appeared as placards displayed outside venues to list the short films being shown. By the early 1900s, posters began incorporating illustrated scenes from the film or composite images from multiple scenes. Some posters instead presented artistic interpretations of a scene or the film's overall theme, rendered in diverse artistic styles. In recent years, film posters have gained popularity among art collectors, valued for their relative rarity, preservation, artistic merit, and significance in art history.

Research on movie posters explores human understanding of life issues (Tirana, 2013; Murod, 2021; Asih, 2016; Jan, 2022). Generally, such studies identify the signs and their meanings as expressed by the characters, classify these signs using Peirce's theory, and apply Roland Barthes's approach grounded in Saussure's theory to determine their signification. This method draws from structural linguistics to analyze cultural sign systems and examine how meaning is constructed within a culture. A notable approach involves analyzing movie posters through Barthes's semiotics to reveal their denotative and connotative meanings. These studies typically employ a descriptive qualitative method, with analysis conducted subjectively. The results are presented systematically in written form, interpreting the posters based on the researcher's own knowledge and insights.

In this study, the Harry Potter movie posters are selected as the objects of analysis, examined through a semiotic approach. Every element within a movie poster carries meaning, which makes it a relevant subject for analysis, as demonstrated by similar previous studies. To construct an interpretation of the eight Harry Potter posters, the researcher identifies several issues that can be addressed using semiotic theory. The primary focus is on signs, which are the fundamental elements a poster's creator uses to convey meaning. These signs

may take the form of icons, symbols, or indexes, representing words, images, or objects. Each sign has its own meaning, and combining multiple signs can reveal deeper interpretations.

The Meaning of Colors

In movie posters, color is a crucial element. Various colors can significantly affect a poster's ability to capture attention, as each color carries its own symbolic meaning. Beyond aesthetic appeal, color in a poster serves as a form of communication shaped by religious, cultural, and social influences. Consequently, the choice of colors in a movie poster reflects specific purposes and ideas. Including color as an element in semiotic analysis is essential, as it also functions as a sign conveying meaning. A dominant color or overall color scheme can set the tone of a poster, while colors can be used strategically to attract certain audiences and evoke specific emotional responses.

a) Black

Black is commonly linked to power, fear, mystery, strength, authority, elegance, formality, death, evil, aggression, rebellion, and sophistication. It often symbolizes the unknown or the negative, representing seriousness, control, and authority. Psychologically, black can influence the mind and body by creating a sense of concealment, enhancing self-confidence, or evoking emptiness, gloom, or sadness. In Western cultures, it is traditionally associated with mourning, death, and grief, while among youth, it can signify rebellion (Jennifer Bourn, 2010).

b) White

White is typically seen as a positive color, associated with purity, innocence, light, goodness, safety, and perfection. It often symbolizes new beginnings and, in heraldry, represents faith and purity. In popular media, white is frequently used to portray "good" characters, contrasting with black's association with antagonists. In Western cultures, brides wear white to signify purity

and virginity, while in some Eastern cultures, white is linked to mourning and funerals. In certain traditions, it also denotes royalty or religious figures, such as angels depicted in white (Jennifer Bourn, 2010).

c) Blue

Blue, connected to the sky and the sea, evokes associations with openness, freedom, imagination, trust, loyalty, wisdom, faith, and stability. Heraldry symbolizes piety and sincerity, and in many cultures, it carries religious significance, offering peace or warding off evil spirits. While soft blues suggest calmness and serenity, vibrant shades such as electric blue convey energy and drama. However, excessive use or certain tones of blue can also appear cold, distant, or depressing (Jennifer Bourn, 2011).

d) Green

Green, the color of life and renewal, is tied to growth, harmony, freshness, safety, fertility, and environmental awareness. Known for its calming and restorative qualities, it is considered the most relaxing color for the human eye. Green symbolizes hope, new beginnings, and rebirth particularly in spring, when plants return to life after winter. It may also represent inexperience or the need for growth (Jennifer Bourn, 2011).

e) Red

According to Jill Morton (2009), red is a color of extremes, representing both danger and passion. It is linked to blood and fire, symbolizing violence, anger, adventure, as well as love, desire, passion, joy, strength, leadership, courage, and determination. Red's intensity makes it a powerful and emotionally charged color, capable of evoking strong and immediate responses

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This research on the Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) movie poster employs a descriptive qualitative method to describe, evaluate, and explain the data collected. The design is intended to analyze visual and verbal elements to uncover the

meanings the poster conveys through a semiotic approach. Document analysis is used as the primary technique, as the data sources consist of written text and images found in the movie poster. This method allows the researcher to collect and examine the data in depth and describe and interpret the findings. Specifically, the analysis focuses on identifying and explaining the iconic, symbolic, and indexical signs present in the poster.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The semiotic analysis of the Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) movie poster reveal the meanings of its iconic, symbolic, and indexical signs. By applying semiotic theory, the study identifies these elements and interprets their underlying meanings, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings.

No.	Semiotic Signs	Definitions
1	Icon	An icon is a sign whose form bears a resemblance to its referent
2	Index	An index is a sign whose relationship to its referent is causal or directly connected
3	Symbol	A symbol is a sign whose meaning is established through convention and agreed-upon associations

Figure 2. Three elements of semiotic signs

These three elements reflect pluralism as a system of cultural signs within the movie poster and reveal its dialectical relationship with the public.

The data for this study is collected through document analysis. The Harry Potter movie posters are examined systematically using Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of signs Icon, Index, and Symbol as the main analytical framework. This qualitative method follows an iterative close visual examination, interpretation, and categorization process. The data collection involves the following steps:

Data Retrieval: The posters are obtained from official and reputable online sources

and downloaded in high-resolution formats to enable detailed analysis of visual elements.

Data Organization: Each poster is labeled with its film title and release year, then organized into a dedicated folder for easy access during the analysis process

The researcher devoted significant time to analyzing the Harry Potter movie posters, using various reference materials and online resources. To ensure consistency and objectivity in the analysis, the following supporting instruments were employed:

Poster Samples: The primary data for this study comprises movie posters from the Harry Potter film series, published by Warner Bros., which serve as the main documents for the semiotic analysis.

Observation Checklist: An observation checklist was designed to systematically identify and classify signs based on Peirce's icons, indexes, and symbols typology.

The researcher examines the visual elements in the posters resembling their real-world counterparts and categorizes them as iconic signs based on Peirce's triadic model. Each icon is then analyzed in terms of its representational role and its ability to connect the audience to the film's narrative world.

The researcher analyzes symbolic signs grounded in convention and collective cultural understanding to determine their function in expressing themes such as magic, identity, and conflict.

Applying Peirce's notion of indexical signs, the researcher investigates how specific elements generate meaning through a direct or causal relationship, interpreting them in relation to mood, narrative foreshadowing, or indicators.

Analysis of Sign Found

A movie poster Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince (2009), the writer found the existence of icons, symbols, and indexes.

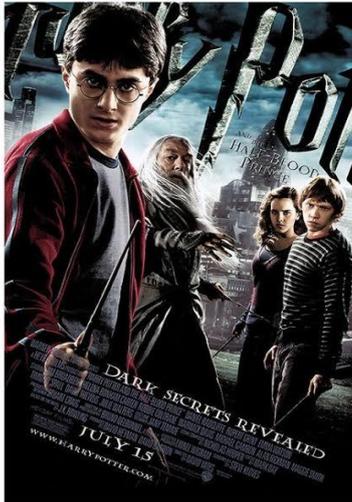


Figure 2. Movie poster Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince (2009)

The movie poster for "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" (2009) visually represents the film's central themes of love, sacrifice, and the looming threat of Voldemort. It highlights Harry's journey as he grapples with both his relationships and his destiny to defeat the dark lord.

The poster suggests that love and loss are intertwined, that even in the face of great danger, life continues, but the ultimate sacrifice is inevitable as they prepare for the final battle against Voldemort. Both Harry and Dumbledore find themselves constantly sacrificing their own peace and happiness for the greater good. Even though Harry would love to assume the life of a normal Hogwarts student, he understands that it is his destiny to fight and destroy Voldemort.

a. Iconic Mode

- Icon of a boy wearing glasses
- Icon of a glasses
- Icon of a wand
- Icon of an old man with long white hair
- Icon of a girl with long, curly, brown hair
- Icon of a boy with wavy red hair.

b. Symbolic Mode

- The tagline DARK SECRETS REVEALED
- The tagline JULY 15
- A printed Warner Bros logo

- The printed HEYDAY FILMS/1492 PICTURES
- A text "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince".
- Includes the website address www.harrypotter.com.

c. Indexical Mode

- The crumbling castle represents the fragility of the wizarding world and the growing threat of Voldemort, suggesting that Hogwarts is no longer a safe haven.
- The use of grey tones and muted colors creates a moodier atmosphere, reflecting the darker tone of the film and the looming war.
- An old man with a long white beard and long white hair. He was a remarkable wizard, widely considered to be the best in the world. He was the headmaster of Hogwarts, is Dumbledore.
- The serious expressions of the three actors in the poster are characterized by their straight faces, slightly raised eyebrows, piercing eyes, and unsmiling.

DISCUSSION

The meaning of Movie Poster Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince (2009)

The overall mood is bleak and oppressive, dominated by deep navy blues, desaturated blacks, and cold iron greys. These colors drain warmth from the image, signaling that the story has crossed a point of no return. The magic remains, but it no longer feels wondrous it feels dangerous, weaponized, and costly. Hogwarts is still present, but it's framed as a fortress rather than a sanctuary. Tower silhouettes are sharp and shadowed, windows glow faintly instead of warmly, and the castle feels watched, occupied, or under siege. The familiar comfort of the school is replaced by tension and uncertainty; safety is no longer guaranteed.

The tone suggests a world defined by war, betrayal, and moral compromise. Characters are no longer divided cleanly into heroes and villain loyalties are strained, choices carry fatal consequences, and survival often

demands sacrifice. Death is not implied but accepted as an ever-present reality.

Overall, the poster communicates that this is not a coming-of-age fantasy anymore. It's a cold, unforgiving chapter where innocence is gone, magic has teeth, and even home can turn hostile.

Harry at the side on the top, but stripped of hero framing:

- a. Posture: He is not standing tall. His shoulders are slightly hunched, like he's bracing for impact that never quite comes. His weight isn't evenly balanced one foot subtly back, as if retreat is always an option he's considering.
- b. Expression: His face is tight, jaw clenched, lips pressed thin. His eyes aren't wide with determination; they're narrowed, tired, constantly scanning. This is someone expecting betrayal or loss, not victory. There's a flicker of anger there, but it's buried under exhaustion.
- c. Age and wear: He looks older than he should. Not aged by years, but by repetition too many fights, too many funerals. Dark circles under his eyes. A faint crease between his brows that suggests he's been worrying nonstop for a long time.
- d. Glasses: Still on, but slightly askew or reflecting light in a way that hides his eyes. Instead of clarity, they act like a barrier he sees the world, but the world doesn't quite see him anymore.
- e. Wand: Present, but not raised. It's held low, loosely, maybe even tense in his gripless a symbol of power, more a reminder of responsibility. It looks heavy. Familiar. Unavoidable.

Dumbledore is framed as both protector and obstruction. He is physically close to Harry, yet often visually separated half in shadow, looming, or positioned just out of reach. This staging mirrors his role: a mentor who guides Harry forward while deliberately withholding crucial truths. In this film, we begin to see that Dumbledore's silence isn't accidental it's strategic. The visual language suggests that adult authority operates through

managed knowledge: deciding when and how much truth a child is allowed to access. In the Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince movie poster, Hermione and Ron are placed slightly behind and apart from Harry, which visually signals that the story is becoming more focused on Harry's personal mission and secrets. They're shown facing different directions, suggesting uncertainty and emotional tension especially their complicated feelings, growing independence, and the larger conflict dividing the wizarding world.

The partial shadow on their faces symbolizes that they're not fully aware of everything Harry is dealing with (like Dumbledore's plans and the Half-Blood Prince mystery), and also reflects the darker tone of the film, where trust, loyalty, and identity become more complex.

More specifically, the black background symbolizes how Voldemort's influence is overtaking the wizarding world, leaving uncertainty, isolation, and no visible path to safety. The fading edges also focus attention on the characters' tense expressions, reinforcing the theme that war is approaching and escape is no longer possible.

The title "The Half-Blood Prince" matters in the poster because the visual tone reflects the character of the Prince (Snape), and the theme of uncertain morality. Dark blue-grey lighting suggests secrecy and hidden identity, matching the mystery of who the Half-Blood Prince is. Dumbledore and Harry placed together but surrounded by darkness reflects learning powerful knowledge that may be dangerous.

How this movie poster as in people issues?

The people issues in the Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince poster are communicated through spacing, body language, facial expressions, and lighting, which visually reflect the emotional tension in the story.

Harry standing in the front and center separates him slightly from the others, emphasizing how he is becoming more isolated by responsibility. As "the chosen one," he carries knowledge and pressure that

the others do not fully share. His serious expression and forward position suggest leadership, but also loneliness and emotional burden.

Dumbledore's position close to Harry but slightly behind him shows support and mentorship, yet not complete openness. His calm but grave expression suggests wisdom mixed with secrecy, reflecting how he guides Harry while still hiding important truths about Voldemort and the Horcruxes. This creates a subtle sense of unequal knowledge and trust between them.

Ron and Hermione being physically separated and angled differently represents their romantic tension and misunderstandings in the film. Instead of standing as a united trio like in earlier stories, their positioning suggests emotional distance. Hermione's tense, thoughtful expression shows jealousy, concern, and frustration, especially related to Ron's relationship with Lavender Brown. Ron looking away from Hermione reinforces his confusion, insecurity, and lack of awareness about Hermione's feelings.

The trio no longer forms a tight group, which visually symbolizes how growing up, romantic feelings, and the looming war are changing their friendship. They are still connected, but less emotionally synchronized than before.

The dark green and shadowy background strengthens this message. Green tones often suggest danger, secrecy, and the influence of dark magic, while the shadows falling across the characters imply hidden fears, uncertainty, and mistrust. This reflects the film's themes of suspicion, divided loyalties, and the difficulty of knowing who to trust, especially with characters like Snape playing unclear roles.

Overall, the poster uses character placement, distance, gaze direction, and lighting to show that the central conflict is not only against Voldemort, but also internal involving trust, relationships, and emotional change.

Inspiring Educational Themes in Curriculum

- Moral Education: Schools worldwide use Harry Potter as a tool to discuss friendship, courage, prejudice, and ethical decision-making.
- Critical Thinking: The magical mysteries and problem-solving in the plot can be used to develop analytical thinking in literature classes.
- Symbolism and Semiotics: Posters like this provide visual material for art, media, and cultural studies classes to analyze signs, colors, and composition turning pop culture into a study topic.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the movie poster of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) functions as more than a promotional image; it operates as a complex visual communication system constructed through semiotic signs. By applying Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of icon, index, and symbol, the analysis reveals how visual elements such as character images, color schemes, facial expressions, and textual components work together to convey meaning about the film's narrative, themes, and emotional tone.

The findings show that iconic signs represent the main characters and objects directly connected to the story, symbolic signs communicate meaning through cultural conventions such as titles, logos, and taglines, and indexical signs indicate relationships between visual elements and the film's darker atmosphere and conflict. Together, these signs construct a message about maturity, sacrifice, divided loyalties, and the growing threat in the wizarding world.

Ultimately, the poster reflects a transition in the Harry Potter series from youthful adventure to a more serious and complex narrative about responsibility, trust, and moral struggle. This research highlights the importance of semiotic analysis in understanding how visual media, particularly movie posters, shape audience expectations

and communicate deeper meanings within popular culture.

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: No conflicts of interest declared.

REFERENCES

1. Arief, D. W. (2012). A semiotic study on Axe "Dark Temptation" fragrance's TV advertisement. Universitas Brawijaya. <http://repository.ub.ac.id/id/eprint/100478>
2. Burty, A. D. (2013). A semiotic analysis on the movie posters of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. Universitas Brawijaya.
3. Eco, U. (1986). *Semiotics and the philosophy of language*. Indiana University Press. <https://b-ok.as/book/2327951/719ec8>
4. Fatmawati, S. (2019). Semiotic analysis of educational advertisements course in Instagram. State Islamic Institute of Kediri.
5. Hawan, M. R. (2018). An analysis of semiotic signs found in movie poster of Pirates of the Caribbean. Universitas Sumatera Utara. <http://repositori.usu.ac.id/>
6. Isfandyary, F. H. (2017). The aspects of semiotics using Barthes's theory on "A Series of Unfortunate Events" movie poster. Diponegoro University. <http://eprints.undip.ac.id/>
7. Joesoef, M. V. (2020). The analysis of an IT film using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Buddhi Dharma University.
8. Leeuwen, T. van. (2005). *Introducing social semiotics*. Routledge. <https://b-ok.as/book/908921/dad5a7>
9. Mansyur, M. (2010). A semiotic analysis on the novel "The Five People You Meet in Heaven". Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University.
10. Margawati, P. (2022). Religious aspects in Negeri 5 Menara by Ahmad Fuadi: A semiotic analysis. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 17(2). <http://journal.unnes.ac.id>
11. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
12. Minbaev, A. (2013). The semiotics of advertising in post-socialist Russia: Culturally significant meanings in television commercials during the period of transition and globalization (Master's thesis). Central European University. https://www.etd.ceu.hu/2013/minbaev_alexander.pdf
13. Muazzomah, U. (2020). Semiotic analysis on Joker movie poster advertisement. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.
14. Murod, P. H. (2021). A semiotic analysis of Hala movie. State Islamic University of Raden Intan Lampung.
15. Muslimin, D. M. (2017). Denotative and connotative meanings in Masha and the Bear cartoon movie (A semiotic analysis). UIN Alauddin Makassar. <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/>
16. Noth, W. (1995). *Handbook of semiotics*. Indiana University Press. <https://b-ok.as/book/1168948/6e52ef>
17. Nurhayati, D. A. W. (2020). *Research methodology*. Akademia Pustaka.
18. Peirce, C. S. (1940). *Philosophical writings of Peirce (J. Buchler, Ed.)*. Dover Publications.
19. Prasojowati, W. M., Natsir, & Ariani, S. (2019). A semiotic analysis found on cigarette products. *Journal of English Literature*, 3(1). <https://e-journals.unmul.ac.id>
20. Purwaningsih, Y. R. (2023). Semiotic analysis of the poetry "I Want" by Sapardi Djoko Damono. *Journal of English Education*, 4(1). <http://jonedu.org/index.php/joe>
21. Saifuddin, F. (2018). Denotative and connotative meaning of signs in Lombok musical instrument (Gendang Beleg). *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 3, 97-99.
22. Suryasa, I. W. (2016). The roles played of semantic theory found in novel *The Moon That Embracing the Sun* translation. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 2(1). <http://sloap.org/journals/index.php/ijllc/article/view/83>
23. Utami, R., Setia, E., & Deliana. (2021). A semiotic analysis found on movie poster *Shutter Island*. *LingPoet: Journal of Linguistics and Literary Research*, 2(3). <http://talenta.usu.ac.id/lingpoet>

How to cite this article: Nur Hanifah, Fajar Imam Murifqi. Semiotic analysis of visual signs in the movie poster of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) by Warner Bros. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2026; 13(2): 284-293. DOI: [10.52403/ijrr.20260228](https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260228)
