

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FILM POSTER "HOME SWEET LOAN"

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Abstract

Film posters as visual media have a very important role. Apart from being a promotional medium that aims to attract the attention of the audience or potential audience, film posters are also very important in conveying the content of the message or meaning contained in the content of the film. This study aims to analyze the meaning contained in the movie poster "Home Sweet Loan" with Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach which emphasizes the relationship between signifier and signified in the process of forming meaning. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method to describe the visual elements contained in the film poster. The data collection techniques in this study include visual documentation in digital form and visual communication theory. The data analysis technique to be used is Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics. The results of the study show that Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory can be used to show the meaning contained in the movie poster "Home Sweet Loan".

Keywords: Semiotics, Movie Poster, Ferdinand de Saussure

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, film posters as visual media play a very important role. Besides serving as a promotional medium aimed at attracting the attention of audiences or potential viewers, film posters are also crucial in conveying the message or meaning contained within the film. Symbols, text, and images often found on film posters provide an overview of the storyline, genre, and main characters in the film, and also serve as a powerful visual force to build expectations or an image of the film (Ali et al., 2024). A poster is an image that is a combination of various visual elements, such as photos, lines, and words, and aims to attract attention and convey news or messages concisely (Nugraha et al., 2022). According to (Munawarah.P.A & Tomi.M, 2023), there are several elements typically found in a poster, namely illustration, typography, layout, and resemblance.

To understand and interpret the meaning of a visual element or sign in a poster, a semiotic approach is needed as a data analysis technique capable of explaining the relationship between visual elements and their inherent meaning, so that the messages contained in the visual elements can be deeply understood. According to (Mudjiyanto & Nur, 2015), semiotics is a discipline that studies signs, the function of signs, and the process

of sign production. A Swiss linguist known for his semiotic theory, Ferdinand de Saussure, stated that meaning can be formed through the relationship between the signifier and the signified, where the relationship between the two can create a deeper meaning (Sabawana et al., 2023). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, semiotics consists of the signifier and the signified. This sign system can function well depending on the cultural background where the sign is created and used (Alya et al., 2023). Therefore, by applying a semiotic approach, the messages contained in film posters can be explored and understood, revealing how the poster conveys its message through the visual elements used.

A poster is a form of work included in the scope of visual communication design that contains a combination of letters, colors, images, or illustrations (Sugiyanto et al., 2022). Visual communication design is a branch of design science that studies the relationship between communication and creative media for specific purposes by utilizing existing visual elements. The purpose of the message to be conveyed can also be a social or commercial message from an individual or group to other individuals and groups, with information content that can be a product, service, or other idea as an effort to enhance an image (Wulandari et al., 2025). Signs in visual communication design play a very important role. The function of signs in this context includes functional, aesthetic, and communicative aspects, which aim to effectively convey messages to the audience (Muhibbatun, 2024).

One Indonesian film that successfully entered the top 10 best-selling films in Indonesia in 2024, titled "Home Sweet Loan" (Tifani, 2025), is a film that has garnered considerable attention and discussion among viewers due to its storyline being considered relevant to the lives of some viewers or those commonly referred to as the sandwich generation. This film tells the story of an office worker named Kaluna, who is the youngest child in her family. Kaluna dreams of owning her own home, but that dream is shattered by her family's financial problems, which rely on Kaluna to find a solution. In addition to having an interesting storyline, This film also has a very unique poster featuring an unusual layout, namely a slanted or asymmetrical design layout, which is also closely related to the film's storyline. This is also one of the reasons the author chose this film poster.

Therefore, this paper will discuss the analysis of the "Home Sweet Loan" film poster, based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory using the concepts of signifier and signified. This analysis aims to identify and analyze the visual elements on the poster, as well as understand how the meaning contained within them provides a comprehensive overview of the film's content and message.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

Research methods are essentially scientific ways to obtain data for specific purposes and uses (Sugiyono, 2013). In this analysis, the author uses a qualitative descriptive research method with a descriptive analysis approach using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic study of visual or verbal signs found on the "Home Sweet Loan" film poster.

Qualitative research is research that cannot be achieved through statistical procedures or quantification. According to (Sugiyono, 2013), qualitative research is more descriptive because the data collected is in the form of words or images, so it does not emphasize numbers in its research.

1. Research Object

The research object in this paper is the "Home Sweet Loan" film poster, which is used as a promotional medium for the film. The author chose this poster as the object to be analyzed because, in addition to successfully becoming one of the top 10 highest-grossing Indonesian films in 2024 with 1,720,721 viewers (Tifani, 2025), this film poster also has an unusual layout compared to typical film posters; it uses a slanted or asymmetrical layout. This layout is not used without reason; rather, with its slanted layout, the "Home Sweet Loan" film poster can help viewers delve deeper into the meaning of the poster. This will be explained further in the analysis results conducted using semiotic techniques to reveal the meaning contained in the visual display of the poster.

2. Data Collection Techniques

The data to be used in this research are primary and secondary data. Visual documentation in the form of the "Home Sweet Loan" film poster is primary data and the main object of the research conducted by the author. The film poster will be collected in digital form with high resolution so that the visual elements on the poster can be clearly seen.

The researcher will also collect secondary data sources through reviewed theories, visual communication theory, and Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach. This secondary data serves as a theoretical basis to strengthen the analysis or research conducted by the author. the "Home Sweet Loan" film can help viewers delve deeper into the meaning of the poster. This will be explained further in the analysis results conducted using semiotic techniques to reveal the meaning contained in the visual display of the poster.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Picture 1. Poster Film "Home Sweet Loan"

Source: (IMDB, 2024)

In this section, the author will explain in detail the results of the analysis of the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster. This film, released on September 26, 2024, is one of the Indonesian films that successfully entered the top 10 highest-grossing films in Indonesia in 2024. This family drama film is adapted from Almira Bastari's novel of the same title, "Home Sweet Loan". The film tells the story of Kaluna, the youngest child in her family and a female office worker who dreams of owning a house from her own hard work. Kaluna lives with her

parents and siblings, but almost all the needs and problems in her home are met by herself without help from her siblings. This is one of the reasons Kaluna wants to have her own house, even though that dream has to overcome several family financial problems.

The analysis of the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster will be carried out using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic method, focusing on the signifier and signified, with the aim of understanding the meaning of the visual elements contained in the film poster. The following are the results of the analysis of the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster.

1. Focal Point

A focal point is the most prominent and attention-grabbing area or visual element (Pangea, 2025) when someone views a visual work such as a poster, graphic design, illustration, or other work. The focal point itself functions as a visual attraction that can convey the basic message, meaning, or atmosphere of the film. There are several techniques that can create a focal point in a work, such as color contrast, size, placement, detail or sharpness, and leading lines that direct the eye to a point (Scott, 2021). Each focal point has its own role in determining the purpose or direction of view and helping to convey a meaning in a work; simply put, the purpose of a focal point is to tell a story contained in a work to its audience (Spowell, 2022).



Picture 2. Analyze result focal point

In the movie poster "Home Sweet Loan", there are 3 elements that serve as the focal points.

1. In the first focal point, there is a woman on the right side who appears to be supporting the people on the left, which is a large family sitting on the wooden stairs of a house with expressions contrasting with the woman on the right. The color contrast in this visual element also has a darker background color compared to the visual element on the left.
2. There is a visual element on the left that serves as the second focal point, which is a family sitting on the wooden stairs of a house with smiling expressions. What makes this visual element a focal point is that it is placed tilted to the right, towards a woman behind the stairs, and also has a brighter color contrast compared to the visual element on the right.

3. In the third focal point, which is a visual element in the form of the movie title and other information related to the film, located at the bottom of the poster. What makes this visual element one of the focal points on this poster is that the movie title and other information are placed in a tilted or asymmetrical position, unlike typical movie posters which are placed with a symmetrical layout.

2. Focal Line

A focal line is a line used to direct the viewer's gaze or attention towards a specific visual element that is the main focus (focal point). In the context of poster design, a focal line can be a real line, such as a line formed by other elements like shapes or colors (Soegaard, 2016). A focal line can also be formed by an imaginary or unreal line created through the eye gaze direction of characters, the arrangement of visual elements, or perspective lines to create a visual flow that can convey the message or meaning contained in the poster.

Focal lines also play a role in balance or rhythm in a design layout by gradually directing the viewers' gaze towards the focal or important points (Bradley, 2015). The image below is the result of a focal line analysis on the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster. There are 2 focal lines on the poster, which support the creation of focal points and also serve as a separator between one element and another.



Picture 3. Analyze result focal line

Here is a further explanation of the focal lines found on the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster:


1. The first focal line, marked with a red line, separates the two visual elements on the right, which is a woman behind a staircase, from the visual element on the left, which is a family sitting on a wooden house staircase. This focal line is a real or visible focal line, using the staircase element as a boundary between the two elements on the right and left.
2. The second focal line, marked with a yellow line, serves as an auxiliary line to draw the audience's attention to the visual elements of the movie title and other information located at the bottom of the poster. Unlike the first focal line, this focal line is an imaginary or unreal line, using an asymmetrical layout or arrangement as its focal line.




3. Semiotic Analysis


In this analysis, the author uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics as the theoretical basis

for the movie poster to be analyzed. It is known that semiotics understands that a sign consists of two parts, namely the signifier and the signified (Sabawana et al., 2023). The signifier refers to the visual representation directly visible on the movie poster, such as images, text, colors, or symbols on the poster. Meanwhile, the signified is the meaning or concept contained in the movie poster that is constructed by the audience based on their experience and knowledge (Farikhin & Mediva, 2025). These two things (signifier and signified) are related in the process of meaning formation in the context of visual communication.

Through this approach, the author can conduct a deeper analysis of the visual elements found on the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster, which are not just decorations, but also a system of signs that have emotional messages or meanings and a narrative that will reveal how an image, color composition, or text used can create a meaning that represents the content of the film.

Signifier	
	
Signified	
<p>The visualization of a family sitting on the stairs with smiling expressions suggests that they are carefree. The position of the visual elements, tilted to the right, appearing unbalanced, relates to the previous element (Kaluna), where this visual element of a family is likened to something Kaluna must bear.</p>	

Signifier	
	
Signified	
<p>A woman (Kaluna) appearing to bear a burden on the stairs depicts the situation in the film where Kaluna has to handle her family's financial problems. In the background, there is a pile of items with dark lighting, which illustrates the situation in the film where Kaluna has to give in and sleep in a cramped maid's room for her older sibling.</p>	
Signifier	
	
Signified	
<p>A boy with an expression like someone screaming also serves as a marker in depicting this character. In the film, this boy has an unruly and annoying nature.</p>	
Signifier	
	

<i>Signified</i>	
<p>The title text uses white color to contrast with other elements that tend to have dark colors, also serving as a highlight so that the text can be understood as the title of the poster. The layout, tilted or slanted to the right, following other elements, also reinforces the meaning of the burden Kaluna has to bear. The word "Loan" means a money loan, which is the main problem in the film. While usually the term used is "Home Sweet Home," which is an expression to describe a comfortable or happy feeling when we are at home, the title "Home Sweet Loan" combines the connection between home and loans, in line with the conflict or problems in the film.</p>	
	

1. Icon



Picture 5. Analyze result Semiotika

With 8 people displayed in close proximity and visible harmony, and a character arrangement where older individuals are placed at the top, we can indirectly conclude that this is a family or a group.

2. Index



Picture 6. Analyze result Semiotika

The distressed expression shown by a woman on the right side of the poster indicates the character's condition in the story. In this position, it also suggests that the character is trying to hold up a ladder, which symbolizes a problem related to the family characters on the left.

3. Index



Picture 7. Analyze result semiotika

The presence of a ladder occupied by a family, tilted to the right towards a woman, indicates a position or imbalance in the roles or conditions within the story.

4. Symbol



Picture 8, analyze result semiotika

The boy character who is screaming shows a character behavior that has feelings of anger. This is also related to the character's nature in the story.

5. Symbol (Anchorage)



Picture 9, analyse result semiotika

The typography "Home Sweet Loan" is the title of the film. Not only does it serve as title, but this typography also has a meaning related to the story's theme. The word "Loan" means a money loan, which is the main problem in the film. While usually the term used is "Home Sweet Home," which is an expression to describe a comfortable or happy feeling when we are at home, the title "Home Sweet Loan" combines the connection between home and loans, in accordance with the conflict or problems in the film.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach, which divides the sign system into signifier and signified, it can be concluded that the visual elements on the movie poster function as a sign system that forms a specific meaning. By understanding the relationship between the signifier and the signified, we can understand how the poster conveys the message or meaning present in the "Home Sweet Loan" movie. The signifiers on the poster, such as the facial expressions of the characters, the placement of visual elements, color and lighting contrast, and the layout used, become physical works that can be directly observed. Meanwhile, the signified emerges through the relationships between characters, the conflicts that occur, the characteristics of the characters, and the storyline in the film. Through the relationship between these two aspects, the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster successfully demonstrates the effectiveness of using visual elements to interpret or generate meaning through the use of color, layout, lighting, character expressions, and existing images. Overall, the "Home Sweet Loan" movie poster proves its success in using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to effectively convey or communicate the meaning and theme of the film.

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