

## Verbal and Non-Verbal Sign in “Elemental” Movie Posters

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**Abstract:** *The title of this study is Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs In “Elemental” Movie Poster. This study is focused on the analysis of verbal and non-verbal signs found in movie posters and the meaning of the signs. There are two aims of this study, they are to identify the verbal and non-verbal signs and explain the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal signs in these movie posters. The data in this study were in the form of images of Elemental movie posters. In this study, there were three movie posters were discussed. Documentation method was used to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively based on the theory of semiotic by Saussure, the theory of verbal and non-verbal signs by Dyer, and the theory of color meaning by Cerrato. The result shows that there are two types of signs found in those movie posters namely verbal and non-verbal signs. There are eight verbal signs found in these movie poster, namely “Opposites React”, “Disney”, “PIXAR”, “ELEMENTAL”, “2023”, “Get Fired Up”, “Only In Theater June 16” Those verbal signs give the information to the people about the title of the movie, creator of the movie, and the name of the company, the year of the movie released, the elements of the characters in the movie, the date of the movie released. The nonverbal sign in movie posters consists of appearance, manner, activity, and background.*

### INTRODUCTION

Lasswell (1948) states, “Communication is the process of delivering messages by communicators to communicators through media that cause certain effects.” This highlights the crucial role of communication in human social life. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal and utilizes various media. One prominent medium is advertising, which serves as a channel for conveying messages from producers to consumers. According to Dyer (1982), advertising aims to draw attention, inform, and persuade. It is particularly effective when advertisers seek to promote products or services, making it an ideal tool for attracting consumer interest.

Among the various advertising media, movie posters stand out as an essential tool for announcing and persuading audiences to watch films. They not only attract curiosity but also provide vital information about the movie. Movie posters incorporate numerous verbal and non-verbal signs to convey messages. However, interpretations of these signs can vary, leading to

potential misunderstandings. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, examines these signs and their meanings within language, art, and mass media. Saussure, as cited in Chandler (2001), defines semiotics as the science of signs in society, encompassing both verbal signs (words) and non-verbal signs (images).

In the context of movie posters, semiotics analyzes the combination of images, colors, and words. A movie poster functions as an advertisement and promotional tool, providing details about the film such as the title, production company, characters, actors, and release date. Its primary role is to captivate viewers and entice them to watch the film. The "Elemental" movie poster, from the American animated film released on June 21, 2023, serves as an intriguing case study. Written by Peter Sohn, the movie draws from his experiences as a South Korean immigrant in the United States and depicts a world of anthropomorphic natural elements, focusing on the characters Ember (fire) and Wade (water).

Analyzing the "Elemental" movie poster involves exploring its verbal and non-verbal signs to uncover the messages it conveys. This analysis helps prevent misinterpretations and enhances understanding of the poster's intended meanings. By dissecting these elements, one can appreciate the nuanced communication within movie posters and the effectiveness of their persuasive power.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this section is an important theoretical framework for the research. It includes key ideas such as Saussure's (1983) semiotics, the theory of verbal and non-verbal signs proposed by Dyer (1982), and Ceratto's (2012) theory of color meanings. In the context of research, each of these ideas supports the understanding and analysis of verbal and nonverbal aspects, as well as color elements.

### Theory of Semiotics

Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a "sign," according to Umberto Eco (Chandler, 2007). This means that semiotics involves the study of anything that can be taken as a sign, in addition to as we typically refer to as "sign" in everyday speech. Saussure (Chandler, 2003) defined semiotic as a science sign. A sign, according to Saussure (1974, 67), is everything that becomes from the combination of a signifier and a signified. According to Saussure (1983: 117), the term "signifier" highlights the unique form of each sign and their distinction from one another. "Signification" refers to the connection between the signifier and the signified. Saussure, as described in Chandler (2001), defined a sign in terms of these two elements:

- i. Signifier (significant): The form the sign takes, not the material sign itself, but the linguistic elements such as letters, sounds, or symbols used to convey meaning.
- ii. Signified (signifier): The concept represented by the sign, not the material object, but an abstract idea of what the signifier signifies.

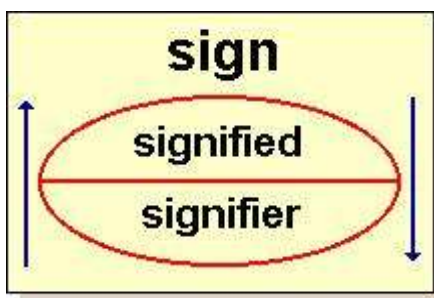


Figure 1. Saussure's model of the sign

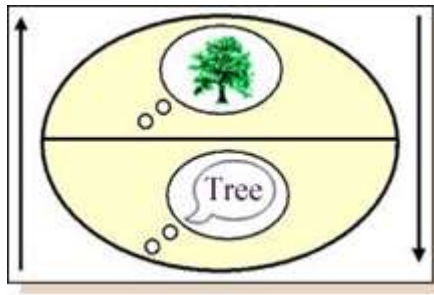


Figure 2. Concept and Sound Pattern

### Verbal Signs

The verbal sign is a process of communication through written or word. In analyzing, every person has a different point of view. According to Dyer (1982, p. 144) "In verbal conversation, a conjunction connecting two phrases is lost, the visual counterpart is an image that has been cut up into pieces",

Inquiring into the author's intentions is a non-textual analysis method that can be used to determine a text's meaning. However, it is not always possible to determine a writer's intentions with absolute certainty. This is especially true when a communication has multiple authors or senders.

In the advertisement, verbal and non-verbal signs have a relationship. Verbal signs always have to emphasize the meaning of non-verbal signs by showing some text or word that gives a brief explanation about the non-verbal sign, which are pictures or logos displayed in the advertisement. It may help viewers to understand more about the advertisement itself.

### Non-Verbal Signs

Non-verbal communication occurs without using any spoken or written word. In an advertisement, the non-verbal communication can be defined as the picture that represents the logo of the company, the kinds of the product, and the background of the advertisement. Dyer (1982, p. 92) stated that non-verbal signs can be divided into appearance, manner, activity, and setting.

#### 1. Appearance

Appearance includes gender, age, nationality, race, body type, facial features, hairstyle, and size.

#### 2. Manner

Manner refers to emotions and behavior. It encompasses eye contact, facial expressions, clothing, and posture.

#### 3. Activity

This category represents movement, body gestures, and posture, which can convey what the actor is doing. It includes body movement, nonverbal communication, and physical touch.

#### 4. Settings

Advertisements do not always feature specific settings. The setting carries meaning and is rarely neutral. It serves as context that enhances the foreground. Settings can take the form of background and can be categorized as the setting of place and setting of time. It also encompasses weather conditions.

### Color Meaning

In essence, an advertisement consists of several aspects, such as expressions or terms that describe the film being advertised. To explain or show the ideas or themes discussed in the ad, visuals must be included in addition to words or sentences. Moreover, the writing is done perfectly to attract the viewers and inspire them to watch the film. However, color is very important in convincing readers that seeing a film advertisement will enable them to gain the meaning and intent of the advertisement. The following statements contain color (Cerrato, 2012):

1. Red

Red is the color of fire and blood, so it is associated with energy, war, danger, strength, power, and determination, as well as passion, desire, and love, according to Cerrato (2012). Red is a highly emotional color. The color red draws attention to text and images. Red is a warm and positive color in business, a very physical color that draws attention to itself and calls for action to be taken. Red is associated with energy, passion, sensitivity, and love in color psychology. Furthermore, red stimulates the physical senses, including appetite, lust, and sexual passion. Dark red represents vigor, willpower, rage, anger, leadership, courage, longing, malice, and wrath. Red is the color of vitality. It is linked to movement and excitement.

2. Orange

According to Cerrato (2012), orange combines the energy of red and the happiness of yellow. It is associated with happiness, the sun, and the tropics. Orange is associated with excitement, fascination, happiness, creativity, determination, attraction, success, encouragement, and stimulation.

3. Yellow

Yellow is the color of the sun. It is associated with happiness, joy, intelligence, and energy. Yellow has a warming effect, cheerful, stimulates mental activity, and generates muscle energy (Cerrato, 2012).

4. Green

Green is the color of nature. It represents growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility. Green has a strong emotional association with safety. When advertising drugs and medical products, green denotes safety. Green has exceptional healing properties. Green represents stability and endurance. The darker green is commonly associated with money, the financial world, banking, and Wall Street. In business, green represents self-reliance, dependability, generosity, kindness, loyalty with a high moral sense, and dependability (Cerrato, 2012). The color pink is also present in poster one, located in the film title. According to Cerrato (2012) pink is concerned with compassion, nurturing, love, and romance. So, this film refers to the depiction of the character's pink color in the film *Elemental*.

The green color is located in the color part of the ELEMENTAL film title. Green is the color of nature. It represents growth, freshness, generosity, kindness, and fertility, (Cerrato, 2012). This reveals that green is one of the colors of the characters present in the ELEMENTAL film series, whose depiction, as explained by Cerrato, is of kindness and generosity.

a. Blue

According to Cerrato (2012), blue is the color of the sky and the sea. It is frequently linked to depth and stability. It represents faith, truth, and heaven, as well as trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, and intelligence. Blue is thought to be beneficial to both the mind and the body. It reduces human metabolism and has a calming effect.

Blue is best used in business for conservative corporate matters where trust, dependability, and honesty are important. Loyalty, integrity, tact, caring, concern, idealism, responsibility, devotion, peace, calm, and perseverance are all associated with blue.

b. Purple

Purple combines blue's stability with red's energy. The color purple is associated with royalty. It represents strength, nobility, luxury, and ambition. It represents wealth and extravagance. Purple represents wisdom, dignity, independence, creativity, mystery, and magic. Purple is associated with wealth, extravagance, fantasy, and the world of dreams in business. It promotes spiritual growth and enlightenment. Purple increases people's sense of beauty and their reaction to more creative thoughts. Purple is frequently associated with high-quality or superior products, such as Cadbury's chocolate or some women's cosmetics (Cerrato, 2012).

c. White

White represents light, goodness, innocence, and purity. It is regarded as the color of perfection. White represents security, purity, and cleanliness. White, as opposed to black, usually has a positive connotation. White is the color of new beginnings in business, so to speak, of wiping the slate clean. White is physiologically calming because it creates simplicity, organization, and efficiency out of chaos. White's primary characteristic is equality, which implies fairness and impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Cerrato, 2012).

d. Black

Cerrato (2012) defines black as dealing with power, elegance, formality, death, evil and mystery. Black is an enigmatic color associated with terror and the unknown (black holes). In the business world, black represents authority, power, and control. It has the appearance of being sophisticated, dignified, and serious. Black also conveys a sense of mystery and secrecy.

e. Pink

Pink is concerned with compassion, nurturing, love, and romance. It is feminine and youthful in its softer shades, with more passion and energy in its deeper shades. Pink is inspiring, warm, and comforting, implying, hope for the future. Pink is commonly used in female-oriented businesses such as cosmetics, fashion, beauty, and romance. Pink with darker colors adds sophistication and strength (Cerrato, 2012).

f. Gold

Cerrato (2012) defines gold as the color of inner wisdom, quality, and wealth. It is associated with prestige, luxury, and material wealth, implying that a product or service is expensive and exclusive. It can cause extreme happiness and bliss, or extreme anxiety and fear. Gold represents the generosity of time, money, and spirit. This is the color of victory, which is why gold is used for winners.

g. Silver

According to Cerrato (2012), silver is a color associated with prestige and wealth. It is regarded as a refined color associated with females, energy, prosperity, and modernity. It is a reflective quality that is associated with intuition, clairvoyance, and mental telepathy.

h. Grey

According to Cerrato (2012), grey is a conservative color that symbolizes

neutrality, indifference, and reserve. Depending on the amount of lightness and white in the grey, it can drain your energy and be depressing or up lighting. Dark gray is darker than light gray. The positive color meanings in business are intellect, knowledge, wisdom, security, and maturity. Boring, rigid, melancholy, lonely, lifeless, bareness, and subtle are some negative color meanings in business.

i. Brown

Cerrato (2012) adds that Brown appeals to the majority of men because of its strength, dependability, durability, and practicality (it hides the dirt). Women are less accepting unless they are involved in outdoor activities or farming. Brown is appropriate for businesses that promote outdoor products and services because of its connection to the outdoors and down-to-earth activities.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method section outlines the processes used for collecting, verifying, identifying, and analyzing data. This component comprises four main points: the data source, method and technique of data collection, method and technique of data analysis, and method and technique of presenting the results.

### Data Source

The data for this study was sourced from Disney's website, specifically focusing on three movie posters for Disney-Pixar's animated film "Elemental." This film has achieved significant popularity in South Korea, with 5.03 million moviegoers within 40 days of its release. "Elemental," a 2023 romantic comedy-drama written by Peter Sohn, tells the story of immigrants creating new lives in a foreign country while maintaining aspects of their original culture and beliefs. The film's posters are rich with verbal and non-verbal signs, making them an ideal primary data source for this study.

### Method and Technique of Data Collection

Data was collected from the Internet using the documentation method and note-taking technique. The process involved several steps. First, the researcher visited the website and sorted the "Elemental" movie posters. Once sorted, the posters were classified based on their verbal and non-verbal signs, distinguishing between the two types.

### Method and Technique of Data Analysis

This research employs a qualitative method for data analysis. The data was analyzed in accordance with the study's scope, theoretical framework, and relevant theories. The analysis involved several steps. Initially, the data was classified according to Dyer's (1982) theory of verbal and non-verbal signs. Next, the meanings of the signs were analyzed using Saussure's (1983) theory of the signifier and signified, as well as Cerrato's (2012) theory of color meaning to interpret the colors used in the movie posters.

### Method and Technique of Presenting Data

In this study, a descriptive method was used to analyze and clarify the various verbal and visual signs identified in the "Elemental" movie posters. The images were examined individually, and the data was categorized into two sections: one for verbal signs and the other for visual signs. Finally, the meanings of these signs were described in detail.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Identification of the Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs Found in “Elemental” Movie Poster

The “Elemental” movie posters feature both verbal and non-verbal semiotic signs. Verbal signs in these movie posters include text that provides information about the movie, such as the production company, director, and release date. Dyer's theory of verbal signs is used to identify these elements, noting that people interpret text in their own way. Non-verbal signs encompass appearance, activity, manner, color, and background. The analysis is divided into two parts: the first discusses verbal signs, while the second focuses on non-verbal signs.

#### Verbal Sign in Poster 1



Poster 1. *Elemental* (#1 of 18): Extra Large Movie Poster Image - IMP Awards

From the first poster above there are five verbal signs found, namely the verbal signs of the title of the movie, company names, release date, and also a slogan.

Those verbal signs are explained as follows:

1. The slogan "Opposites React" is located at the top of the poster. Written in white on a black background to emphasize its presence. This word emphasizes the reaction between two different and contradictory elements, where this poster shows that the characters in this film refer to the film *Elemental*.
2. The other verbal sign inside the poster is the word “Disney”. The word Disney in this poster was written in the Disney Company’s logo. This sign is placed under the main text of the poster and Disney is written white color. Disney is known as the name of the company that produces and provides entertainment. Disney sign emphasizes that the Inside Out movie is produced by this company.
3. Beside the word “Disney”, there also found the word “Pixar”. This verbal sign has the same size and color as “Disney”. “Pixar” is written as their Company’s logo. Pixar Company is a company that produces computer animation. It is a company that produces Inside Out movie animation.
4. The main text in this poster is the word “ELEMENTAL”. The word “ELEMENTAL” is the title of the movie. This main word is written in the capital letters with rainbow color. This sign was the biggest size in this poster. In that poster the world was very flashy. It is placed in the middle of the poster and above the word “Disney” and “Pixar. There are many ways to make people or the reader pay attention to the word of the poster. The placement and the size of the word easily attract the audience. It indicates the title of the movie in the poster above is the most important information than others sign in the poster.

5. The last sign on this film poster is the number "2023". This sign is placed below the main text of the poster. The number "2023" is written in white with the size of the verbal mark "2023" being larger than the verbal mark "Disney" and "Pixar", but smaller than the verbal mark "ELEMENTAL". This sign confirms and provides information to the public that the film will be released in 2023.

### **Non-Verbal Sign-in Poster 1**

On this film poster, there are 2 characters' hands extending towards another. Therefore, the nonverbal signs contained in the poster are nonverbal parts in the form of appearance, manner, activity, background, and color.

1. Appearance

The poster shows an image of the character's hands that appear to be reaching out to join together, with both sides showing opposing hands that want to join their hands.

2. Manner

The character in this poster only shows his hand on a different side. From the reader's point of view, the poster can be seen from the left side showing a blue hand followed by a combination of water droplets, while on the right side, the hand is seen in a color dominated by the color of a person symbolizing the fire element and also followed by small flames flying.

3. Activity

In this poster, there were no many movements did by the characters. Their only trying to react their hand each other.

4. Background

The setting in this poster was only the background itself. The background of the poster is dominated by black color.

5. Color

There are some colors found in the movie poster. Those colors are white, black, blue, orange, green, purple, pink, and red.

- a. The blue color is used as the color of the left side character's hand and also this color use as of the title of the poster.
- b. The orange color is used as the color of the right-side character's hand and also this color use as of the title of the poster.
- c. The white color is used as the color of the words in the poster, such as Opposites React, Disney, PIXAR, and 2023.
- d. The black color is used as the color of the poster's background.
- e. Other colors like red, yellow, green, pink, and purple is used as the color of circles in the poster.

### **The Meaning of Verbal Sign**

This part consists of the analysis of the meaning of the verbal signs found in the movie posters. There were eight verbal signs found in three of the movie poster. Those verbal signs have meanings and messages as follow:

- a. **Opposites React**

The first signifier on the first poster says "Opposites React" in white at the top. This suggests that the film explores the relationship between two opposing elements. The signifier signifies the movie maker want to tell that the story is about how these elements of opposites try

to unite while respecting their differences. This sign encourages the audience to watch the film to see how these opposing elements come together.

### **The Meaning of Non-Verbal Signs**

This section explained the non-verbal signs in the "Elemental" movie posters, which complement the verbal messages. In the first poster, various colors convey specific meanings and enhance the film's themes. The white background and text symbolize new beginnings, simplicity, and neutrality, making the poster easy to read. The black background suggests mystery and secrecy, drawing attention to the intriguing relationship between the opposing elements. Orange appears on a character's hand and in the title, representing excitement, creativity, and determination. Red, used alongside orange and in the title, signifies passion, love, and emotional intensity. Blue, seen on the character's other hand and in the title, symbolizes loyalty, wisdom, and peace, reflecting the film's themes of unity and coexistence. Purple, found in the title and background, combines stability with energy, signifying mystery and ambition. Pink, present in the title, denotes compassion, love, and romance, aligning with the film's romantic elements. Finally, the green in the title represents nature, growth, kindness, and generosity, suggesting these traits in the characters. Together, these colors create a rich tapestry of meanings that enhance the film's narrative and appeal to the audience.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis, it is concluded that the "Elemental" movie posters effectively use a blend of verbal and non-verbal signs to communicate the film's themes and attract viewers. The posters feature eight key verbal signs: "Opposites React," "Disney," "PIXAR," "ELEMENTAL," "2023," "Only In Theaters June 16," "Get Fired Up," and "Make It Splash." These signs serve to highlight the movie's focus on unifying opposing elements, emphasize the involvement of renowned production companies Disney and Pixar, provide essential release information, and underscore character traits and themes. In addition to verbal signs, the posters utilize various non-verbal signs, including appearance, manner, activity, background, and color. These elements encompass details like gender, race, expressions, poses, gestures, and the strategic use of colors such as black, white, red, blue, purple, gray, pink, orange, and green. The backgrounds are kept simple with dominant colors to direct focus on the characters and their interactions. Together, these verbal and non-verbal elements work synergistically to convey important information, set the tone of the movie, and captivate the audience, thereby enhancing interest in the film.

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