

Course

**Multimodality
in Literary Text**

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Lecture 1

**Introduction to
Semiotics:
The Study of Signs**

Learning Objectives

At the end of this meeting, you are expected to understand:

1. All the topics will be covered in this course
2. The basic concept of Semiotics
3. The three “fathers” of semiotics and their semiotic concepts
4. The connection between English Literature and Semiotics
5. The literary works for semiotic analysis
6. The examples of semiotic analysis in literary works

Topics of this course:

- 1. Semiotics**
- 2. Social Semiotics**
- 3. Multimodal Discourse Analysis
(MDA)**
- 4. Critical Discourse Analysis
(CDA)**
- 5. Writing a research paper**

Semiotics

Will cover the basic concept of semiotics and the social semiotics. The main reference will be taken from Daniel Chandler's book entitled "Semiotics the basics" the fourth edition published in 202. We are discussing it today in more details.

Social Semiotics

will elaborate how sign and symbols are used in society to create meaning. This chapter will look at the ways in which language, images, and other semiotic resources are used to convey messages and ideas in the society as well give impact to the social construction. The main references would be taken from Michael Halliday, Theo van Leeuwen, Robert Hodge and Gunter Kress.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

will focus on the three metafunction concept from Kress and Van

Leeuwen:

1. representational metafunction
2. interactional metafunction
3. compositional metafunction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA in this course will shell the Machin & Mayr book entitled “How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis” (2012). Text and articles form various media will be taken as examples on how CDA is being implemented.

Writing a Research Paper

Especially the typical of Indonesian research paper format. This part will be deeply discussed in week 12. I will show my own research paper as the example in writing a research paper related to this course.

Basic Concept of Semiotics

Simply saying, semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.

Semiotics focuses on the meaning making and how it represents and constructs the reality through signs, sign systems, and process of signification

(Chandler, 2021).

So what is SIGN?

Sign is something which stands for or **represents** something else. For human beings like us, something becomes a sign when we **interpret** it as **signifying** something

(Chandler, 2021)



Figure 1
Source: Nazila, 2019: online



Figure 2
Source: Rosyid, 2019: online



Figure 1
Source: Nazila, 2019: online



Figure 2
Source: Rosyid, 2019: online



Figure 3
Source: Sparham, 2021: VOGUE India



Figure 4
Source: "Gwen Stacy", 2023: Wikipedia



Figure 5
Source: "Peace Symbols", 2023: Wikipedia



Figure 6:
Source: "International Symbol of Access",
2023: Wikipedia

So what is SIGN and SYMBOL?

A word, an image, a sound, a smell, a flavor, **words, images, sounds, or gestures** that stand for something else. Symbols are **signs that represent abstract concepts** such as love, freedom, or justice.

The Fathers of Semiotics

1. Ferdinand de Saussure:
“Sign, Signifier, Signified”
2. Charles Sanders Peirce:
“Representamen, Interpretant,
Object”
3. Roland Barthes:
“Denotative, Connotative, and Myth”

Ferdinand de Saussure

Saussure

Sign

The object / thing



Signifier

The physical existence
(sound, word, image)

Red / Leaf / Round / Apple

Signified

The mental concept

Fruit / Apple / Freshness / Healthy
/ Temptation / Teacher's pet /
Computer

Figure 7

Source: European Structuralism Ferdinand de Saussure
Université Setif2 EL Hidhab.

Charles Sanders Peirce

1. **Symbolic** is the conventional signs that are culturally specific between the signifier and signified. For example: male and female sign in front of the public toilet which has the same representation as the real male and female.
2. **Iconic** is the signs where the signifier resembles the signified. For example: the symbol in figure 5 which indicates the peace meaning.
3. **Indexical** is the signs where the signifier is caused by the signified. For example: there is no smoke without fire, therefore smoke signifies the fire.

(Chandler, 2021)

Charles Sanders Peirce

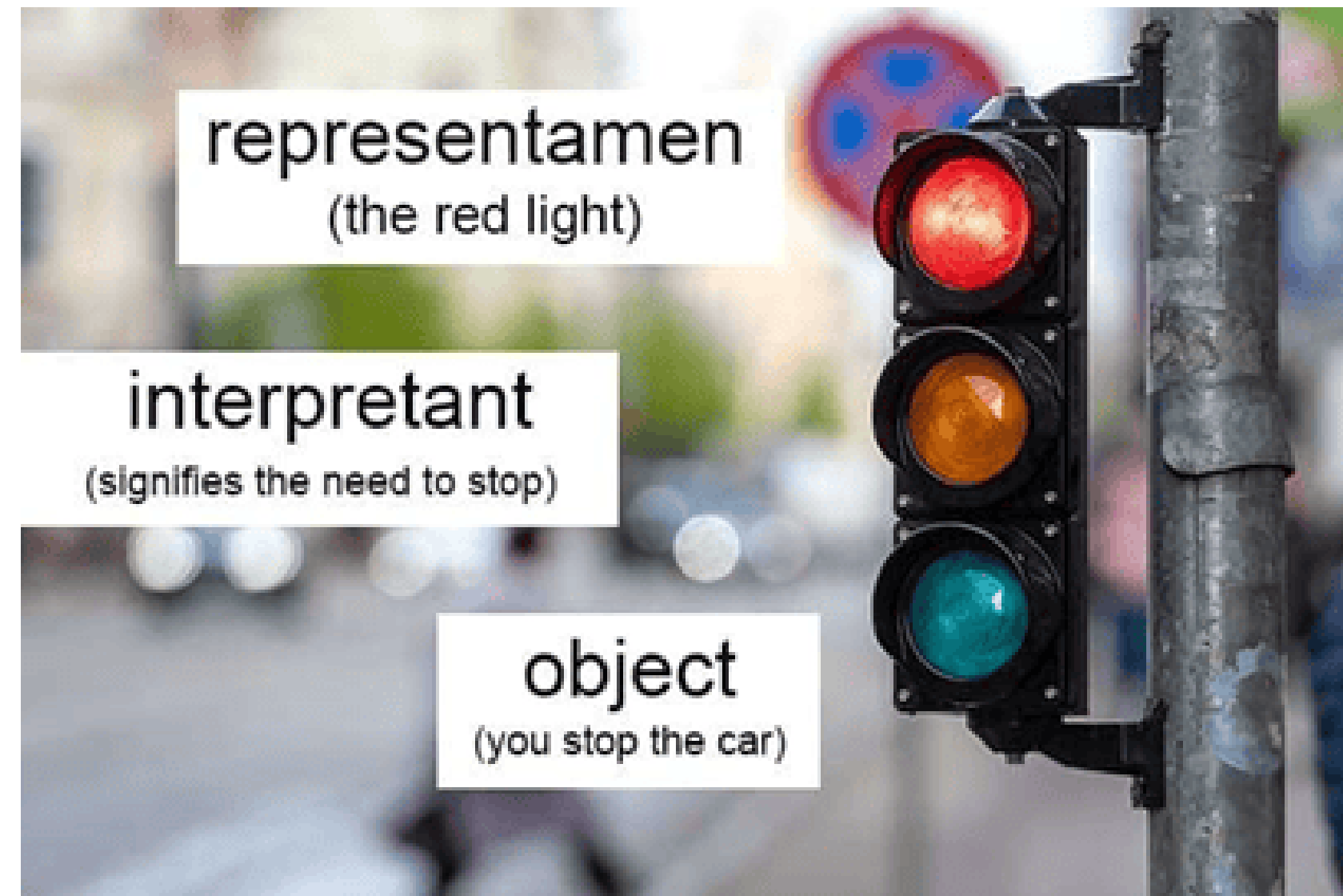


Figure 8
Source: media studies: online

Roland Barthes

1. **Denotation:** literal, obvious or commonsense meaning of a sign (Chandler, 2021).
2. **Connotation:** refer to the socio-cultural and personal associations (ideological, emotional, etc.) (Chandler, 2021).
3. **Myth:** relates more to the value and norms in the society (Vera in Daniela, 2021)

Roland Barthes



Figure 9
Source: Chandler, 2021: Semiotics the Basics

Semiotics and English Literature

Saussure, who is a linguist, saw linguistics as a branch of the 'general science' of semiology. The strongest discipline ties to philosophy and linguistics (Chandler, 2021).

Morris stated that Semiotics composed three branches: Syntactic, Semantics, and Pragmatics (Long, 2019).

Semantics: the meaning of signs
Pragmatics: the use of signs
Syntactics: the relations between signs
(Chandler, 2021)

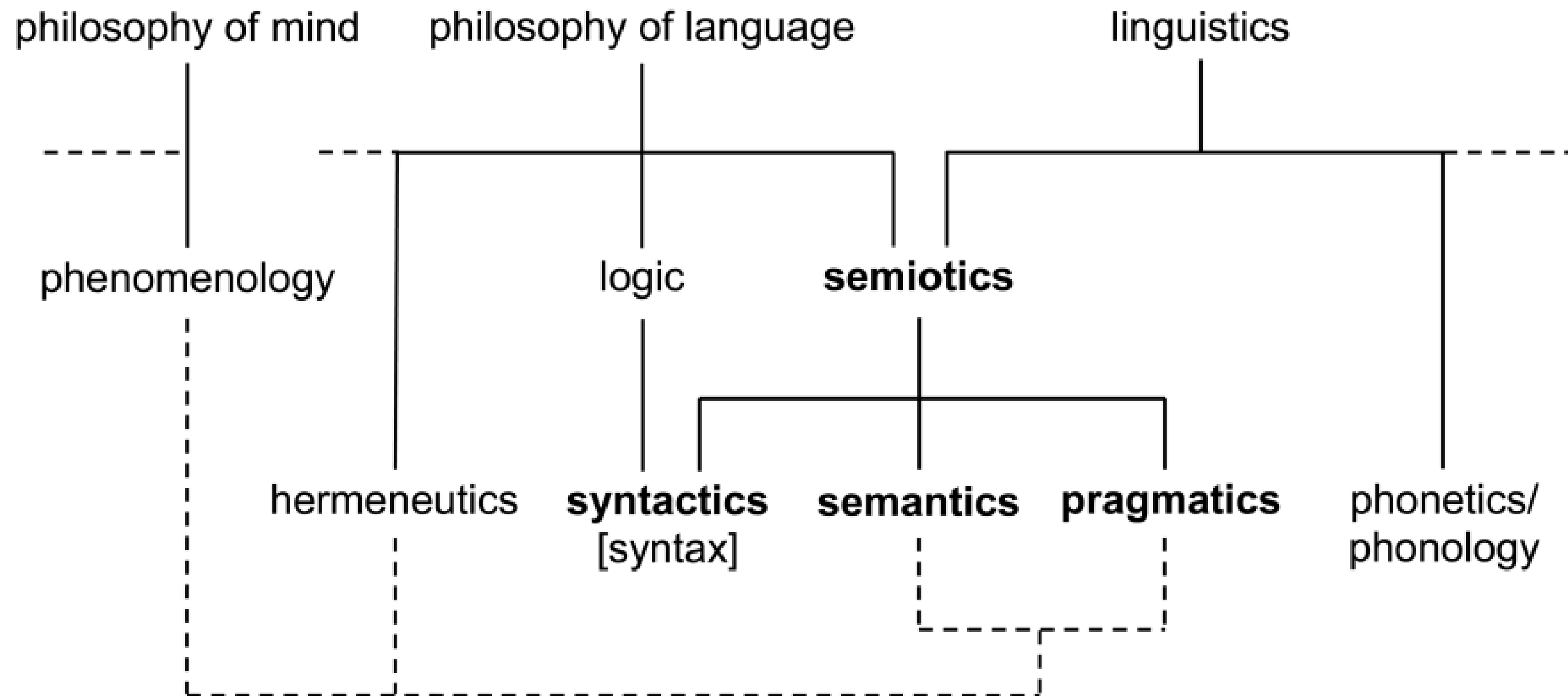


Figure 10
 Source: Chandler, 2021: Semiotics The Basics

What can Semiotics do?

As the method to analyze various literary works

Written works:

novels, biographies, short stories, poems, poetries, song lyrics, speech text/scripts, articles in magazines, or news articles in newspapers or digital websites.

Still image or still visual works:

article headlines, posters, flyers, brochures, magazine covers, social media feed posts, movie posters, book covers.

Moving image or visual and verbal works:

digital contents, podcasts, speeches, interview records, music videos, campaigns, movies, series, documentaries, advertisement.

What can Semiotic analysis?

Semiotics provides people with a new mode of thinking in analyzing phenomena or problems in the scope of linguistics, literature, social, culture, politics, art, and news communication.

(Long, 2019)

Examples of Semiotic Analysis





Love Language Portrayal in Bridgerton

The result of the research concluded that women in the British Regency era should behave and act nicely in the society. People create certain standards, manners, and values in the society based on someone else's opinion and perspective. People obey the society standard to avoid bad opinions to them. Research also found that women in the Regency Era were presented as the key of value in her family. Society in that era tends to believe if the woman is married to a wealthy man can increase the level of economy and reputation in society. Therefore, Daphne Bridgerton is urged to find a perfect suitor to be her husband to avoid rumors toward her family.

Figure 11
Source: Dailly, 2020: online



The backdrop is red, which is the most "appetizing" and hunger-inspiring color.

A bottle sliced like a ripe tomato connotes freshness, promoting a healthier way of life.

A sliced bottle looks like a sculpture, associating Heinz with innovation and art.

No specific age or gender here, appealing to those looking for healthier eating choices or, at least, those caring about their food freshness.

The word "grow" transforms a factory-made sugary condiment into a natural ingredient.

No one **grows** Ketchup like Heinz.

Figure 12
Source: Vos, 2021: online



Tattoo Artist from Philippines

The **signifiers** of this cover are depicted with an old woman sitting with her left hand supporting her chin. She is giving a slight smile with a red wine lipstick color on her lips. By wearing a tank top, readers can clearly see tattoos all over her wrinkled body. She is also wearing an ethnic fabric as a skirt and some accessories. The brown color background matches her skin tone. There is a caption “Apo Whang – Od Next of Skin The Beauty Issue” written on the bottom of the cover page.

Figure 13
Source: Nepomuceno, 2023: online



Tattoo Artist from Philippines

Signified:

Tattoo is commonly attached with bad attitude and rebellion of youngsters, even though some other consider it as an art. Therefore, it is not common to see an old woman with tattoos. Her appearance is beyond merely style and beauty standards but the representation of several indigenous members. She is trying to upkeep the thousand-year-old tradition of Kalinga region and its people by **imprinting the sacred symbols of their ancestors** on the body. Her hand-tapping-tattoos are the representation of scarification which is in line with the below caption "**beauty issue**". Unmarked women were considered imperfect and undesirable. Therefore, tattooed bodies were celebrated as **badges of honor, wealth, beauty, and bravery**.

Figure 13
Source: Nepomuceno, 2023: online

Summary

In summary, we have discussed in detail about the basic concept of semiotics as the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation. Semiotic focuses on meanings are made and how reality is represented and constructed through signs, sign systems, and process of signification. There were three famous fathers of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce and Roland Barthes

Summary

In English Literature, linguistics is the branch of semiotic study. This study is also related to Syntactic, Semantics, and Pragmatics which also learned in English studies. In English Literature, Semiotics plays a role as the theory or method to analyze various types of literary works, such as in written works, still image or still visual works, moving image or visual and verbal works. At the last discussion we also try to see the semiotic analysis in three different contents. As semiotic learners, we have to be critical in looking at a literary work. We cannot just 'enjoy' it but semiotic tries to reveal the deeper meaning of the literary work.

Thanks!

see you in the next lecture!



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