SEMIOTICS OF TEXT-VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN UKRAINIAN SOCIAL POSTERS: INTERPLAY OF SIGNS, SYMBOLS, AND CULTURAL NARRATIVES

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Abstract. This article examines the semiotics of text-visual communication in Ukrainian social posters, focusing on the interaction between textual and visual elements as a unified system of signs. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of Ukrainian social posters is rooted in the harmonious integration of text and imagery, where each component complements and amplifies the other to create emotionally charged and conceptually rich messages. The posters analyzed demonstrate how semiotic mechanisms–such as metaphor, symbolism, and intertextuality – are employed to evoke empathy, provoke critical reflection, and inspire social action. Furthermore, the research underscores the transformative potential of social posters as tools of cultural memory, capable of preserving historical narratives and fostering a sense of collective identity, particularly during times of societal crisis. This study contributes to the broader field of visual communication and semiotics by providing insights into the role of text-visual interaction in the construction of meaning within social posters.

Key words: semiotics, text-visual communication, Ukrainian social posters, icons, indices, symbols, cultural identity, visual rhetoric, typographic design.

Introduction. The semiotics of text-visual communication has emerged as a critical area of inquiry within contemporary research on visual culture, particularly in the study of social posters. Social posters, as dynamic forms of graphic design, operate at the intersection of art, communication, and ideology, where the integration of text and imagery serves not only an aesthetic purpose but also a profound socio-political function. The symbolic language embedded within these posters acts as a powerful tool for conveying complex ideas, emotions, and cultural narratives in a manner that is both accessible and impactful. In the Ukrainian context, social posters have played a significant role in reflecting and shaping public consciousness, particularly during periods of social transformation and political upheaval. The recent history of Ukraine, marked by the Revolution of Dignity, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, and the struggle for national identity, has witnessed an intensified use of visual media as a means of social mobilization and resistance. Posters addressing themes such as war, national resilience, environmental issues, and human rights have become not just artistic expressions but also instruments of cultural memory and collective identity.

The research aims to explore the semiotic dimensions of Ukrainian social posters, focusing on how textual and visual elements interact to create meaning within a broader cultural and historical context. By applying semiotic theories, the study investigates how icons, indices, and symbols function as key components of visual rhetoric. Special attention is given to the role of cultural symbols–such as the sunflower, the trident (tryzub), and traditional Ukrainian embroidery (vyshyvanka)–which, especially in the context of contemporary military conflicts, have acquired heightened emotional and mobilizing significance.

Materials and methods. The research employs a qualitative methodology grounded in semiotic analysis, focusing on the interaction between text and imagery as components of a unified communicative system. The primary analytical framework draws on Ch. S. Peirce's triadic model of signs–

icons, indices, and symbols–to classify and interpret the various sign types present in the posters. This model facilitates a systematic examination of how visual and textual elements function independently and in combination to convey meaning. Additionally, Roland Barthes' theory of myth as a secondary semiotic system is applied to explore how cultural phenomena are transformed into symbolic representations within poster design, particularly in relation to national identity and collective memory.

Semiotics of text-visual communication in social posters. Semiotics, as an academic discipline, facilitates the exploration of the interaction between text and imagery, revealing the mechanisms through which these elements influence the perception and comprehension of messages. The study of Ukrainian social posters within this framework enables an understanding of how textual and visual elements establish emotional and cognitive connections with the viewer. Scholars and practitioners in the field of graphic design emphasize that the key to the successful integration of text and images lies in achieving a balance between form and content, with the text complementing–rather than duplicating–the visual component. At the same time, images should convey ideas without the need for verbose explanations, as the application of principles such as conciseness, generalization, unification, and clarity ensures harmony between textual and visual content.

Semiotics, which evolved as a distinct field in the 20th century, investigates the complexities of communication. From a semiotic perspective, a social poster can be viewed as a graphic object designed to transmit information (Potapenko, 2019). In the creation of a poster, the graphic artist determines the most effective way to convey the core message embedded in both text and imagery. At the heart of this communication process lies the information intended for the target audience. The transmission of ideas or content occurs through the use of objects, signs, codes, and communication methods, alongside the active roles of the sender and the recipient. The key components of a poster are the message's content and the method of its realization. Media serve as the channel through which encoded information reaches the target audience, which may consist of individuals or groups.

As the science of signs and sign systems, semiotics is fundamental to understanding communicative processes in social posters. Its foundational principles allow for the analysis of the interaction between textual and visual components within a unified semiotic structure. Notably, Ch. S. Peirce, one of the leading figures in this field, proposed a classification of signs into icons, indices, and symbols, offering a deeper understanding of the semiotic nature of posters. The classical foundations of semiotics are elaborated in The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Peirce, 1931–1958; Afisi, 2020), an eight-volume work that presents his triadic model of signs (iconic, indexical, and symbolic). The influence of this theory is evident in the analysis of visual communication, including the graphic design of social posters.

For a more comprehensive understanding of Peirce's sign classification, modern Ukrainian scholars such as O. Shepetiak offer detailed analyses of the relationship between Peirce's sign categories and the structures of language and visual communication. This research is invaluable for understanding how signs function in social posters and which types are most frequently employed to convey socially significant messages (Shepetiak, 2014). Y. Sysoieva (2017) explores psychological experiments on color perception across different cultures, examining its connection to emotional states and symbolism. This work is particularly relevant to poster design, as it highlights the semiotic significance of color as a communicative element. T. Mamchenko (2020) focuses on Peirce's core semiotic categories: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, which enable the interpretation of posters not merely as visual messages but as complex semiotic constructs that shape societal narratives.

Ch. S. Peirce, the founder of pragmatism and semiotics, made substantial contributions to the understanding of the nature of signs and their role in communication. His classification of signs into icons, indices, and symbols has become a cornerstone in semiotic studies (Mamchenko, 2020). According to Peirce, icons are signs that bear resemblance to their referents, meaning the objects they signify. In social posters, icons often manifest as realistic images, photographs,

or illustrations that accurately depict objects or phenomena. For example, a realistic image of a crying child in posters addressing domestic violence requires no additional explanation for the viewer. Such iconic images elicit immediate emotional responses, establishing a direct connection with the target audience. In the context of Ukrainian social posters, icons are particularly effective in addressing specific social issues such as environmental disasters, military conflicts, or violence. The realism of these images ensures their accessibility to a broad audience, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation.

Indices, as defined by Peirce, signify objects through causal relationships or physical associations. In social posters, this type of sign plays a crucial role in establishing connections between events and their consequences. For instance, images of tire tracks on asphalt, shattered glass, or car debris serve as indices of traffic accidents, clearly indicating the dangers of violating road safety rules. Similarly, in posters addressing environmental issues, indices may include images of deforested landscapes, polluted waterways, or deceased wildlife, instantly evoking associations with human activities that have harmed the environment. Indexical signs in posters enhance emotional impact by illustrating consequences that viewers can relate to through their own actions or inactions.

Unlike icons and indices, symbols have an arbitrary relationship with their referents, based on cultural or social conventions. In social posters, symbols function as carriers of abstract ideas that often transcend specific images or texts. For example, the blue and yellow national flag in posters promoting national identity symbolizes freedom, independence, and unity. In environmental posters, the color green symbolizes nature, sustainability, and life. Symbols are highly significant in social posters because they can be easily adapted to various cultural contexts while retaining their core meanings. In Ukrainian posters, symbolism frequently draws on national heritage, adding depth to the message and contributing to the formation of collective identity.

In conclusion, the semiotic analysis of text-visual communication in social posters reveals the complex interplay between different types of signs–icons, indices, and symbols–that collectively create multi-layered systems of meaning. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of visual messages but also underscores the role of posters as influential tools in shaping public consciousness and fostering social change.

The Interaction of Icons, Indices, and Symbols in Social Posters: A Semiotic Perspective. The interplay of icons, indices, and symbols within a single poster creates a multidimensional communication structure that proves highly effective for social influence. In posters dedicated to military themes, realistic depictions of warriors (icons) are complemented by images of destroyed buildings (indices) and symbols of freedom, such as a white dove or the national flag. This integration of different sign types allows for the creation of an emotionally charged and conceptually profound message that resonates with viewers on multiple levels.

The semiotic structure of a social poster is a crucial component of its effectiveness as a communicative tool. Icons provide direct and emotional engagement, indices establish logical connections, and symbols add abstract and cultural meaning. Analyzing Ukrainian social posters in this context enables a deeper understanding of how designers and artists utilize semiotic resources to achieve their objectives. Furthermore, this approach highlights the role of poster art in shaping public consciousness, disseminating cultural values, and mobilizing social activity.

The analysis of text-visual sign systems in the context of social posters is grounded in the foundational works of leading scholars. Roland Barthes, a French semiotician and social theorist, conceptualizes myth as a secondary semiotic system built upon the primary system of language. He examines how cultural phenomena acquire symbolic significance through the process of mythologization, transforming real objects and events into carriers of ideological meanings (Hatam, 2021). This approach is particularly valuable for understanding how social posters employ visual and textual elements to convey complex ideas and influence public consciousness (Barthes, 1957).

In Ukrainian academic discourse, significant contributions to the study of graphic design and semiotics have been made by O. Fedoruk, whose research focuses on the analysis of visual arts, particularly graphic design, and its role in cultural contexts. The author explores how graphic design functions as a medium of artistic and communicative systems, affecting the perception and interpretation of visual messages (Fedoruk, 2006).

Scholars such as D. Solodka, O. Strekalova, and S. Ohanesyan have made noteworthy contributions to the study of semiotics and graphic design, analyzing the semantic differences of graphic signs within various scientific frameworks (Solodka et al., 2020). Their research underscores the importance of semiotics as the study of signs and sign systems, formulating a typology of graphic signs and their role in visual communication. Among other Ukrainian researchers examining the semiotic aspects of graphic design, O. Zalevska (2019) deserves mention. Her studies explore the specificities of graphic design, systematizing the concept of "graphic design" in academic literature and defining the aesthetic impact of art on the creation of graphic objects.

Research in the field of graphic design and visual communication plays a crucial role in developing principles for integrating text and imagery. The works of Ukrainian scholars provide deeper insights into the mechanisms of constructing effective visual messages. In particular, they emphasize the significance of symbolism, metaphor, and cultural relevance in shaping multilayered text-visual messages. The systematic classification of scientific approaches to the analysis of text-visual sign systems is based on the works of leading researchers who have studied the semiotic, cultural, psychological, and structural aspects of communication. This allows for a more profound understanding of the principles governing the interaction of text and imagery in visual media, particularly in social posters.

Semiotic Approaches to the Analysis of Text-Visual Sign Systems. The analysis of text-visual sign systems in social posters is grounded in a range of semiotic theories that offer diverse methodological frameworks for understanding the interaction between text and imagery. Semiotics, as the study of signs and their meanings, provides tools to uncover the deeper layers of communication embedded within visual media. This paper explores key semiotic approaches that contribute to the comprehensive analysis of text-visual compositions, emphasizing their relevance to the study of Ukrainian social posters.

One of the foundational concepts in semiotic theory is R. Barthes' analysis of myths, where myth is viewed as a secondary semiotic system constructed upon the primary system of language. Barthes differentiates between denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (associative meaning), illustrating how texts and images acquire symbolic significance through cultural contexts (Barthes, 2006). This approach is instrumental in analyzing how posters transform everyday objects and visuals into carriers of ideological messages.

Y. Lotman's concept of the semiosphere expands the understanding of cultural semiotics by defining it as the space in which various sign systems interact. Lotman emphasizes the dialogic nature of texts and their capacity to form cultural narratives through the dynamic relationship between text and image (Lotman, 1990). This perspective highlights how posters operate within a broader cultural ecosystem, engaging with existing discourses while generating new meanings. Ch. S. Peirce's triadic model of the sign offers a systematic classification of signs into icons (based on resemblance), indices (causal or direct connections), and symbols (conventional associations). This model provides a framework for analyzing the multifaceted dimensions of text-visual communication, allowing researchers to dissect how different types of signs function within posters to convey complex messages (Peirce, 1931–1958).

In the context of Ukrainian poster art, O. Fedoruk's research conceptualizes graphic design as an artistic-communicative system, exploring its impact on perception through national symbols, cultural contexts, and typography. Fedoruk emphasizes the role of graphic design in shaping visual narratives that resonate with the audience, particularly within socio-political frameworks (Fedoruk, 2006).

The semantic analysis of graphic signs by scholars such as D. Solodka, O. Strekalova, and S. Ohanesyan further refines the understanding of how visual elements interact with textual components to create meaning. Their typological approach to graphic signs reveals the semantic variations that influence the communicative effectiveness of design elements (Solodka et al., 2020).

G. Kress and Th. Leeuwen's grammar of visual design introduces a multimodal approach, analyzing how the structure of visual messages operates within a unified communicative act. Their framework considers both textual and visual modes as integral components of meaning-making processes in media (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1990). Another influential model is A. J. Greimas' semiotic square, which facilitates the analysis of semantic relationships between textual and visual elements. This tool helps uncover the deeper structural dynamics underlying the organization of meaning in posters (Greimas, 1983). J. Kristeva's theory of intertextuality highlights the interconnectedness of texts, including visual texts, demonstrating how they reference each other to construct new layers of meaning. Intertextuality reveals how posters draw upon and transform existing cultural codes to create fresh, contextually relevant messages (Kristeva, 1980). The psychosemiotic approach developed by O. Zalevska examines the psychological impact of text and imagery, uncovering the emotional potential of posters. This perspective provides insights into how visual media influence cognitive and affective responses in viewers (Zalevska, 2015). Finally, D. Chandler's framework for the semiotic analysis of media texts explores how media function as sign systems that generate meaning through cultural, social, and political contexts. This approach is particularly relevant for understanding the role of posters in shaping public discourse and social consciousness (Chandler, 2007).

The integration of these theoretical perspectives allows for a compact and systematic presentation of scientific approaches to analyzing text-visual sign systems in posters. Applying these semiotic frameworks reveals key principles underlying the construction of visual messages and their practical manifestations in Ukrainian social poster art. For instance, posters addressing environmental issues often combine emotionally charged images of nature with concise, impactful slogans such as "Save Forests for the Future" or "Don't Throw Plastic into the Water". These messages are not merely informational but also motivational, making them powerful tools for influencing behavior.

Similarly, the integration of text and imagery plays a crucial role in anti-war communications. Posters that address the theme of war frequently employ stark contrasts between brutal imagery and peaceful messages. A photograph of a devastated city, for example, might be accompanied by a simple phrase like "We All Want Peace". This juxtaposition amplifies the emotional impact and directs the viewer's focus toward the core message. Through the systematic application of semiotic theories, it becomes possible to decode the complex interplay of signs within social posters, thereby enhancing our understanding of how visual communication operates as both an artistic and socio-political phenomenon.

The Semiotic Role of Textual Elements in Ukrainian Social Posters. Textual elements play a dual role as both signifiers and structural foundations within the composition of social posters, serving as powerful tools in visual communication. In the poster "Bakhmut", the word "Bakhmut", formed through the interaction of fragmented text streams, functions as an index, pointing to the chaos and tension associated with war. In this context, the text becomes a symbol of resilience, utilizing typographic design as a visual instrument to evoke emotional responses. This illustrates Roland Barthes' concept of the mythologization of signs, where the word "Bakhmut" transcends its literal meaning to become a carrier of ideological messages.

The poster "Mirror Accusation" demonstrates semiotic complexity through its dual-layered text structure, emphasizing the opposition of two narratives. Here, the text serves both as an icon, representing real-world discourses, and as a symbol embodying conflict and manipulation. The mirrored linguistic planes highlight the polarization of perspectives, uncovering the socio-cultural and political

dimensions of reality perception. Simultaneously, the text interacts with the poster's spatial composition, creating a metaphorical visualization of the concept of conflict.

In the poster "Ukraine – United", text is integrated into the visual form, creating a multilayered symbolic image. The letters of the word "Ukraine," stylized as birds, interact with the poster's color palette, functioning as both an icon of national identity and a symbol of freedom. According to Y. Lotman's theory of the semiosphere (Lotman, 1990), this poster operates within a cultural context where text and image coexist within a unified semiotic structure. The interaction between these elements emphasizes the idea of unity and patriotism, generating a synergistic effect that amplifies the poster's message.

The poster "We Stand" employs text as an indexical sign, indicating resilience and resistance. The large font size, bold lines, and bright colors reinforce the focus on the core message while simultaneously symbolizing collective solidarity and the spirit of struggle. This aligns with Barthes' theory, where text becomes a key element for conveying ideological messages. The typographic design ensures readability and visual dominance, seamlessly integrating into the poster's overall composition. The use of text as an iconic image is vividly demonstrated in the poster "Hatred," where the letters form the contours of eyes, symbolizing observation or judgment. This approach to typography illustrates the concept of visual-textual interaction in graphic design, where text not only contributes to the composition but also retains its semantic significance. The text functions within the semiotic space as a sign system that interacts with cultural and social contexts, enhancing the poster's interpretative layers.

In the anti-war poster "No to War", text serves as the dominant compositional element. The large word "NO" acts as an iconic representation of protest, while the symbolic depiction of a bullet in the center intensifies the anti-war message. This design reflects Barthes' ideas on denotation and connotation, where the text performs not only an informative function but also an emotionally motivational one, amplifying the poster's persuasive power. The poster "Map of Ukraine" illustrates the integration of text and visual elements as a cohesive semiotic system. Typographic components form an iconic representation of the country, serving as a symbol of national unity. The use of the yellow and blue color scheme reinforces the patriotic context, creating a profound cultural and emotional impact that resonates with the audience.

All the analyzed posters exemplify a multifaceted approach to the use of text within the framework of visual-textual communication. The integration of icons, indices, and symbols establishes a multidimensional structure that bridges cultural, social, and emotional dimensions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of communication. The semiotic analysis of these posters reveals how text can simultaneously function as an instrument of information transmission, an aesthetic element, and a vehicle for ideological messaging.

According to the outlined semiotic frameworks, the text-visual sign systems in these posters operate as part of a broader cultural discourse, contributing to the shaping of public consciousness. Based on the analysis of contemporary studies in the field of text-visual communication and an extensive review of social posters, a generalized table has been formulated to systematize the key semiotic aspects that define the interaction between text and visual content. This synthesis not only highlights the complexity of semiotic processes in poster art but also underscores the pivotal role of text in constructing culturally resonant visual narratives.

The Integration of Textual and Visual Content in Social Posters: A Semiotic Perspective. The integration of textual and visual content in social posters is a multifaceted process that requires a profound understanding of both semiotic principles and the specificities of visual communication. Contemporary research and practical examples confirm that the effective combination of text and imagery creates optimal conditions for maximizing the impact on the audience, transforming the social poster into not only an informative medium but also a powerful tool for social transforma-

tion. Graphic design is fundamentally based on two key components: images (iconic signs) and text (abstract written signs). The harmonious interplay of these elements determines the success of communication, as signs–being material manifestations–convey messages and facilitate the cognition of objects and phenomena. These signs are formed from simple graphic elements that, in turn, construct complex messages. The meaning of such messages emerges through the interaction of signs, their creation, and subsequent perception.

The study of semiotic aspects of text-visual communication demonstrates that the effectiveness of posters largely depends on the harmonious integration of text, symbols, indices, and icons. However, textual components are themselves multidimensional elements that exert influence not only through content but also through their form of presentation. The choice of typeface, its style, and placement within the poster significantly affect the emotional tone of the message, audience perception, and the emphasis on key aspects. Consequently, the next stage of analysis involves examining the role of typography in poster art as an integral element of text-visual communication.

The systematic classification of scientific approaches to the analysis of text-visual sign systems is grounded in the works of leading scholars who have explored the semiotic, cultural, psychological, and structural dimensions of communication. This systematization provides a deeper understanding of the principles governing the interaction between text and imagery in visual media, particularly in social posters, and serves as a theoretical foundation for further research. The social poster represents a unique form of visual art that combines artistic, textual, and semiotic elements to create effective communication. At its core, it is based on the principles of semiotics–the study of signs, their meanings, and functions. The semiotics of social posters is revealed through text-visual interaction, which generates a complex system of meanings aimed at influencing both the consciousness and behavior of the audience.

An analysis of Ukrainian social posters reveals that, within the framework of text-visual communication, text and imagery form a creolized text–a unified semiotic system where both elements complement each other, enhancing the emotional and semantic impact. The visual component ensures the immediate perception of the core message through symbols, metaphors, and graphic imagery, while the text provides specificity, clarifies the content, or serves as a call to action. It is important to note that the semiotic structure of a social poster is built upon the combination of iconic (images), indexical (references to specific objects or events), and symbolic (abstract signs) elements, which together form a multi-layered system of meanings.

Text in social posters can perform various functions: informational, explanatory, emotionally stimulating, and directive. Its role involves detailing the main message, creating contextual frameworks, and mobilizing the audience. Slogans or short phrases often contain vivid metaphors or alliterations that amplify the persuasive effect. Conversely, imagery is typically designed to capture attention instantly and engage the viewer emotionally. The artistic style, composition, and color palette are selected with consideration of semiotic mechanisms to enhance the overall impact of the poster.

The interaction of text and imagery in social posters is based on the principles of semantic integration, where each element reinforces the meaning of the other. Symbols and metaphors in the visual component can be supported by textual cues or explicit calls to action, creating a cohesive communicative image. One illustrative example is the use of the metaphor of the "green serpent" in anti-alcohol posters, where the visual image of the serpent is reinforced by textual appeals promoting sobriety. This type of semantic integration allows for the creation of multi-layered messages that appeal simultaneously to rational and emotional modes of perception.

Conclusions. Symbols in the text-visual communication of social posters play a crucial role in generating emotional resonance and shaping archetypal representations. For example, the depiction of hands clutching a child's toy symbolizes the loss of childhood due to war or social adversity. Such imagery has the power to evoke empathy, activate social consciousness, and motivate action. In these

instances, text serves as an additional means of clarifying and specifying the idea, thereby amplifying its communicative strength.

The integration of textual and visual content in social posters is not merely a technical or aesthetic consideration; it is a semiotic process that constructs meaning through the strategic interplay of signs. The effectiveness of social posters relies on this dynamic relationship, where text and imagery converge to create impactful messages that resonate with diverse audiences. This synergy underscores the transformative potential of social posters as instruments of cultural expression, social activism, and ideological influence.

Thus, text-visual communication in social posters functions as a complex semiotic system that integrates emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic dimensions. This system operates not only through the literal meanings of text and images but also through their connotative associations, which are rooted in the cultural and historical experiences of the target audience. The combination of visual symbols and textual elements enables posters to transcend language barriers, appealing directly to universal human emotions while simultaneously reinforcing culturally specific narratives.

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