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English as Lingua Franca (ELF): Building Intercultural Competence in Global Communication

**SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK COVER
“INSECURITY (IS MY MIDDLE NAME)” ALVI SYAHRIN**

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Abstract

Literary works in their current development are very rapid which are able to adapt to technological advances, especially cultural changes to the needs of books for the reader's situation. There are various types and genres of books in literary works, but currently self-healing or self-improving books are more popular. The passion of young people who experience many unsafe psychological conditions due to the culture of community life with this type of book is expected to be a solution to make peace with themselves and their surroundings. In a book entitled "Insecurity Is My Middle Name" by Alvi Syahrin is a new book that has quite a lot of enthusiasts because of the relevance of the book's content to the reality of today's youth. The purpose of this study is to examine the meaning of the book cover which is one of the most important elements in a book, where the essence of the book contained therein is summarized into a visual force that can attract the attention of the audience to buy and read the book. This research uses descriptive method with Peirce's semiotic approach. The research was conducted to determine the image relation or image from the sign construction on the cover of the book. The results of this study found that the cover of the book has a philosophical meaning related to icons, indexes, and symbols that deeply describe the contents of the book.

Keywords: Semiotic Analysis, Insecurity Books, Peirce Theory, Cover Meaning, Visual Design.

INTRODUCTION

The cover is one of the most important elements in a book, where the essence of the book contained therein is summarized into a visual force that can attract the attention of the audience to buy and read the book. The visual elements of the book cover are in the form of objects or shapes that are depicted or illustrated, context and other subjects as well as typography that provide strength of meaning. According to Powers (2001) book covers, hereinafter referred to as covers, are promotional media that are quite promising in the field of books. Covers that keep up with the times, can also compete with other products that are currently busy in the market.

The development of book cover design was influenced by the culture that was becoming a trend at that time. The information contained on the cover aims to make

consumers more informed and convincing so that the products being sold can be purchased. The cover serves to protect the contents or make it easier for consumers to carry the product so that it is not damaged when carried or stored. Along with the times, changes in functional values and the role of Cover in all marketing lines as one of the main indicators in market competition. Cover basically can be analyzed to find the meaning contained therein.

The cover of a book also has a philosophical meaning and its own image if according to Sutherland and Sylvester (2005) Image in addition to making the positive characteristics of a brand or product easier to remember can also increase probability, that is when we think about the brand, we will automatically think about positive traits. The image is formed from the visual to understand



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the character's personality. Perceptions are created through experiences and values, both cultural and social, that occur in their environment. Perception is the formation of a person's image to stimulate personal experiences in capturing the phenomena.

In general, readers will form their own fantasies or imaginations, readers are invited to enter so that their emotions can enter, feel and interpret what they read. The cover is important to attract the reader's attention, the idea of displaying realistic images creates an emotional atmosphere, because images are easier to understand than writing. Regarding the message contained therein, images have high power to present shapes or forms as visual information. With a cover, this can be answered because of the elements contained in the cover. The importance of a cover to attract reading interest and interpretation prompted researchers to examine the visual meaning of the cover from the book *Insecurity Is My Middle Name* by Alvi Syahrin.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive interpretive method with Peirce's semiotic analysis method by analyzing the visual cover of *Insecurity's* book. The stages of this research were carried out using Edmund Feldman's visual patterns in Aland & Darby (1992) in Widiatmoko, analyzing visual works can be divided into fundamental stages:

1. Description in the description stage is to identify a work, where the information obtained will be a clue about the meaning and intent of work.
2. Analysis (analysis) is supported by a theoretical basis related to the discussion.
3. Interpretation is the most imaginative and creative stage it is also useful for other stages. Interpretation is a way of

explaining thoughts about what is meant or what lies behind a visual work.

4. Judgment is an opinion or determination of values about what has been seen and what has been described, analyzed and interpreted.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Charles Peirce's Semiotics Theory

Signs are all things (objects, cues, colors, mathematical formulas, eye winks, etc.) that describe something other than themselves. The term semeiotics was introduced by Hippocrates (460-377 BC), semeion (b. Greek) for physical "indicator" or "sign" (Danesi, 2010:6). Nearly four centuries later, the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) finally introduced a formal study of signs to philosophy in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), calling it semeiotics for the first time (Danesi, 2010). According to Peirce in Danesi (2010) states that signs are in the form of representations as well as objects, ideas, concepts and then become objects of reference. The meaning (cognition, feeling, impression and others) that is obtained from a sign has a term, namely interpretant.

In significance, these three dimensions are always present. Peirce identified 66 different types of signs, and among them there are three that are commonly used today in various semiotic works. These three signs are Symbol, icon and index. The icon is a sign that represents a source of reference through a form replication, imitation, equation, or simulation. The index is a representative sign of the initial reference using a way of indicating the presence or association



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(implicit or explicit) with reference to other sources. The symbol is a sign that represents the object passing by specific agreement on context or agreement (Danesi, 2010:33).

1.1 Iconicity

Before Peirce used the term to refer to a specific type of sign, icons were used in art to refer to images of religious figures or events. Even today it is still used in that sense. Icons are believed to be sacred within themselves and therefore can guide people to make contact with the figure they represent. Iconicity shows that the perception in humans of repeating patterns in dimensional shapes, colors, sounds, tastes, movements and others is very high (Danesi, 2010:34).

1.2 Indexicality

Indexicality is manifested in many kinds of representative behavior. The most specific manifestation can be seen in pointing with the finger, where all people around the world instinctively use it to find or point out people, events, and things in the world.

1.3 Symbolism

The symbol represents the source of reference in a conventional way. Words are generally symbols. But any signifier of an object, sound, figure, and so on can be symbolic. These meanings are built through social agreements or through channels in the form of historical traditions (Danesi, 2010:38).

2. The concept of the book “Insecurity Is My Middle Name” Alvi Syahrin

Insecurity is My Middle Name is a self-improvement category book that can help readers to make peace with themselves. This book by Alvin Syahrin is entitled self-healing and insecurity which of course is experienced

by almost everyone, especially among teenagers. The meaning of the title of this book comes from feelings of insecurity caused by the low evaluation we give of ourselves, with this the book "Insecurity Is My Middle Name" answers all questions about shame, lack of confidence, anxiety, and fear, as well as other questions about the "insecurity" in your head.

A simple and beautiful cover page will attract you to open the next pages. Beginning with an understanding of the mindset of "good looking", will lead readers to understand that physical beauty is not important and will not be the most important part. "If you still associate 'beautiful' with the physical, well you've missed a lot of real beautiful things. In my opinion, there are many kinds of 'beautiful'. There is something beautiful in what he says, the gentle way he speaks, so careful in every word he says and soothing to hear. There are also beautiful behavior. Maybe not much talk, but always try to do good in silence. Always looking for ways to help. Isn't beautiful?" wrote Alvi on pages 53-54 in this book.

Not only does it contain Alvi's beautiful writings, this book is also filled with pieces of Al-Quran and hadith verses which are certainly related to feelings of insecurity. Every part of this book will make you calm, this book is also ready to be your travel companion in making peace with the insecure feelings you feel. Although there are many inspiring things, the lines of words and sentences in this book are not at all patronizing. The choice of simple sentences is one of the attractions of this book. It doesn't really have many flaws, but the words that are repeated are a little disturbing for readers to enjoy it.



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3. Pierce's Semiotic Analysis of the Book Cover "Insecurity Is My Middle Name"

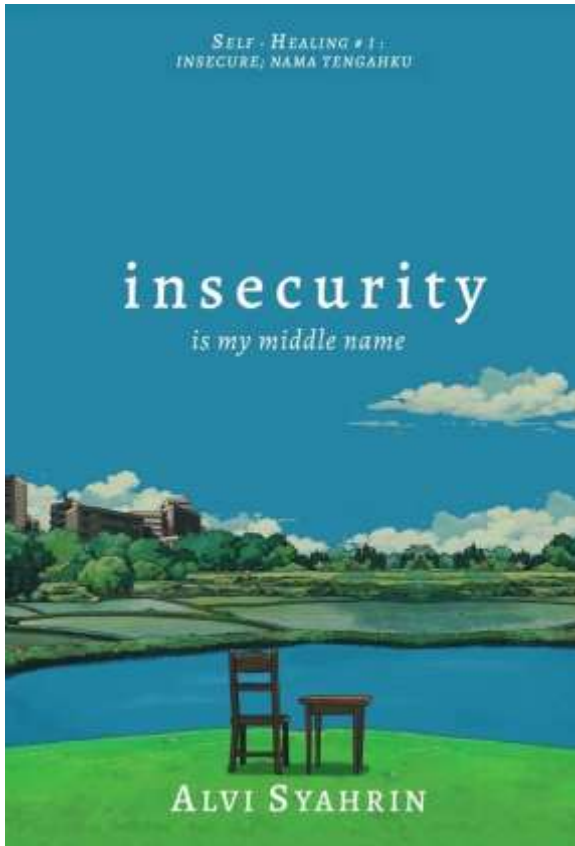


Figure 1. Book Cover

The book cover design has a bright and calm first impression with the dominant selection of basic colors such as blue and green. This is easy for everyone to see by depicting everyday objects such as the green color for the grass beside the river, and across the green river the landscape of rice fields and trees slightly gives rise to city buildings. It can have the meaning that the author of the book intends that the blue and green colors symbolize feelings of calm and peace. As for

other objects such as empty chairs and small tables beside the river overlooking the scenery, they symbolize simplicity and solitude in conditions to be able to make peace with feelings until recovery from the conflicts of life that are felt.

4. Value Relations Between Sign



Figure 2. Visual Title Font in The Sky

4.1 Icon

There is a cloud icon above the bright blue sky with the writing of the book title and italicized letters as subheads of the book.

4.2 Index

There is indexing that the feelings experienced by many people can be a means to improve oneself not only as an identity, but an opportunity to find a purpose in life to grow



to become a better person.

4.3 Symbol

Symbolizes serenity and simplicity.

Figure 3. Visual of Nature and Buildings

4.1 Icon

There are broad icons depicting natural objects like rice fields as well as trees and city objects with high-rise buildings and white clouds at the ends.



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4.2 Index

There is indexing that every phase of life has its own challenges to be the reason for people to keep trying to move on to fight and make sacrifices, but it also takes time to just look away from busyness so that they care more about feelings and inner peace.

4.3 Symbol

Symbolizes the peace of life and thoughts that are far and wide.

Figure 4. Visual of Riverside Chairs Tables



4.1 Icon

There is an empty chair objective icon and a small table object by the river.

4.2 Index

There is indexing that by choosing to be alone and temporarily away from the crowd of activities can provide calm and peace over all worries and bad judgments about oneself to better understand the meaning of life.

4.3 Symbol

Symbolizes solitude and rest.

Based on the three results of the analysis looking for value relations between symbols, it can be seen that the index of philosophical meaning in the cover of the book is deeper. First, the letters on the title cover have a relationship between the value of simplicity in calm by depicting worry through the blue color of a bright cloudy sky. Both natural landscapes and cities with vast

expanses of rice fields as well as trees and multi-storey buildings have a value relationship of peace and awareness in life by opening a broad view and for a moment to escape from the busyness of everyday life. The three objects are an empty chair and a small table by the river facing the surrounding scenery which has a relationship between the values of solitude and simplicity in seeking peace in life and trying to find peace over all conflicts within oneself.

5. Image of the Book Cover "Insecurity Is My Middle Name"

The cover image of the book successfully represents the content in the book which is meant for readers who are experiencing discomfort with feelings and psychological conditions. Today's young generation has experienced many changes in the social environment, this greatly affects thoughts and feelings that are often uneasy or unable to make peace with living conditions. In the book, the author gives many sentences to make him realize that all the things that young people feel, there must also be a solution. Even though the design of the book cover looks simple, choosing the object of an empty chair, a small table, a city building, the surrounding natural conditions and the right elements can captivate those who see it to become curious to read what is in it.

CONCLUSION

The results of examining in this study the book "Insecurity Is My Middle Name" by Albi Syahrin is highly recommended for people who often feel insecure. Insecure is something that is normal for everyone at all ages, but there are still many of them who cannot make peace with themselves. The book invites you to learn in a positive way to keep growing and living to be yourself. Reading the



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book "Insecurity is My Middle Name" is like talking and exchanging ideas with close friends, there are many inspiring sentences and open perspectives on life regarding "insecurity". There will be many results of interpretation if you examine deeper into the contents of the book, the author's way of establishing interpersonal communication with readers through the visualization of a light book cover communication design. After the results and discussion of this study, the researcher can suggest for further research that more findings will be obtained if the research is carried out with a different method or theory and focuses more on the contents of the book review.

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