


Atıf/Citation

Yılmaz, B. ve Sazak, N. (2023). A semiotic evaluation of cover images of the ten most held Turkish pop music on the 2021 spotify list. *Online Journal Of Music Sciences*, 8 (2), 238-259.

<https://doi.org/10.31811/ojomus.1395149>

Cilt/Volume: 8 Sayı/Issue: 2 Aralık/ December 2023	Geliş Tarihi/Received: 23.11.2023 Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 29.12.2023 Yayın Tarihi/Published: 29.12.2023	Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article  https://doi.org/10.31811/ojomus.1395149
---	--	---

Banu YILMAZ

*Doktora Öğrencisi, Sakarya Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler
Enstitüsü, Müzik Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı,
banu.yilmaz@ogr.sakarya.edu.tr*



Nilgün SAZAK

*Prof. Dr., Sakarya Üniversitesi, Devlet
Konservatuvarı, Ses Eğitimi Bölümü,
sazakn@sakarya.edu.tr*



A SEMIOTIC EVALUATION OF COVER IMAGES OF THE TEN MOST HELD TURKISH POP MUSIC ON THE 2021 SPOTIFY LIST

ABSTRACT

Semiotics, or semiotics as it is commonly known, is an interdisciplinary research field that examines the sign strings of studies in many fields such as music, sociology and linguistics. Today, semiotics, which makes metaphorical analysis of various disciplinary fields such as literature, art, music and cinema and has a wide range as a field of study, has been an important communication tool in this sense. The science of semiotics, which has both a principled and free movement environment due to its multidisciplinary structure, has explained objects, figures and situations in this way by revealing the meaning and establishing a connection with the place of that meaning in society. Among these fields, especially in music, graphic designs used in the creation of album covers, concert posters, posters have an important role in conveying the message that the musical product wants to convey. In this research, it is aimed to make a semiotic analysis of the cover images of the ten most listened songs in the field of Turkish pop music in the Spotify 2021 list. Within the scope of the purpose of the study, cover images were evaluated semiotically in terms of elements such as writing styles, color preferences, use of figures and objects. In this case, questions such as how the current album cover designs examined are, what kind of differences they have with the album covers of the past, how the effects, colors, figures, etc. used in the design of the album covers are,

whether the album covers are meaningfully compatible with the title of the album. According to this analysis, ten cover images determined by scanning reliable sites on the internet were reached. The covers were analyzed semiotically in four groups with the criteria of object, human, digital photograph and color under the elements of signified and signifier according to the sign method created by F. Saussure. In addition to these examinations, the content of the lyrics in the albums was also evaluated and it was determined whether they were meaningfully compatible with the album title and cover image. In the light of the evaluations made, it has been concluded that some of the album covers are compatible with the name of the album and some are not. It has been observed that the design of the album covers is influenced by the general fashion sense of the global music industry, and for this reason, they are far from the old album covers in terms of design and meaning.

Keywords: Semiotic, Spotify, Turkish Pop Music, Album Cover

2021 SPOTİFY LİSTESİNDE EN ÇOK DİNLENEN TÜRK POP MÜZİĞİ ALANINDAKİ ON ŞARKININ KAPAK GÖRSELLERİNİN SEMİYOTİK AÇIDAN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

ÖZ

Müzik, sosyoloji, dil bilimi gibi pekçok alana ait çalışmaların gösterge dizelerini inceleyen semiyotik ya da yaygın olarak bilinen diğer adıyla göstergebilim, disiplinler arası bir araştırma sahasıdır. Günümüzde edebiyat, sanat, müzik, sinema gibi çeşitli disiplin alanlarının metaforik çözümlemesini yapan ve çalışma alanı olarak geniş bir yelpazeye sahip olan göstergebilim, bu anlamda önemli bir iletişim aracı olmuştur. Sahip olduğu multidisipliner yapı itibarıyla hem ilkeli hem de özgür bir hareket ortamına sahip olan semiyotik bilimi, anlamı ortaya çıkararak ve o anlamın toplumdaki yeri ile bağlantı kurarak bu şekilde nesnelere, figürleri ve durumları açıklamıştır. Bu alanlardan özellikle müzikte, albüm kapaklarının, konser afişlerinin, posterlerin oluşturulmasında kullanılan grafiksel tasarımların, müzikal ürünün iletmek istediği mesajı aktarmasında önemli bir rolü vardır. Bu çalışmada, Spotify 2021 listesinde Türk pop müziği alanında en çok dinlenen on şarkının kapak görsellerinin semiyotik analizinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı kapsamında kapak görselleri yazı stilleri, renk tercihleri, figür ve nesnelere kullanılması gibi unsurlara ilişkin göstergebilimsel açıdan değerlendirmiştir. Bu durumda incelenen mevcut albüm kapak tasarımlarının nasıl olduğu, geçmiş dönemdeki albüm kapakları ile ne gibi farklılıklar barındırdığı, albüm kapaklarının tasarımında kullanılan efektlerin, renk, figür vb. unsurların nasıl olduğu, albüm kapaklarının albümün adı ile anlamca uyumlu olup olmadıkları gibi sorulardan yola çıkılmıştır. Bu incelemeye göre internet üzerinden güvenilir sitelerde yapılan tarama ile belirlenen on kapak görseline ulaşılmıştır. Belirlenen kapaklar F. Saussure'ün oluşturduğu gösterge metoduna göre gösterilen ve gösteren öğeleri altında nesne, insan, dijital fotoğraf ve renk kriterleri ile dört grupta semiyotik açıdan incelemeye alınmıştır. Bu incelemelere ek olarak albümlereki şarkı sözlerinin içeriği de değerlendirilmiş olup, albümün adı ve kapak görseli ile anlamca uyumlu olup olmadıkları tespit edilmiştir. Yapılan değerlendirmeler ışığında albüm kapaklarından bazılarının, albümün adıyla uyumlu bazılarının ise uyumlu olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Albüm kapaklarının tasarımında global müzik sektörünün genel geçer moda anlayışının etkisinin olduğu bu sebeple eski albüm kapaklarından tasarım ve anlamca uzak olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Semiyotik, Spotify, Türk Pop Müziği, Albüm Kapağı

1. INTRODUCTION

“Mankind has searched for different meanings in order to survive in the historical process. Efforts such as drawings on Stones, skins and cave walls and the discovery of the first musical instrument, besides expressing a search for meaning, became a communication element to meet the needs of the period” (Yılmaz et al., 2022).

These communicative efforts, which emerged from this search for meaning and emerged as a natural result of living together, took on different shapes and sizes in the visual sense over time and entered the ways of giving meaning to symbols at the communicative level and within various needs. These visual communication tools started with a set of symbols and pictures drawn on the cave walls in primitive times and with the formation of the typeface along with the formal changes a visually original process in communication began.

In this way, symbols have formed an indispensable place in life in the visual sense in the process of change and development of communication tools from the past to the present. These communication elements, which have evolved over time according to social needs and are a part of culture, have also become manifestations of the social structure. In addition to visual expressions, music has become another communication tool that meets the needs of the society in terms of providing sensory messages. In addition to be an indispensable part of life, music has become an element that contains behaviours and symbols that reflect culture and identity (Lull, 2000). In parallel with the verbal and melodic structure of the created musical product, an audience has also emerged. Today, the active role of music genres in reaching the audience provides visual tools. Although these tools have changed form from past to present, they have been cassette pictures, album covers, clips, billboards, posters, concert posters and stage designs. Among these tools that stand out with their visual features, album covers played a direct role in the marketing of music with both the photograph and pictures chosen. The music market, which was shaped according to the wishes and cultural movements of the period, continued its existence by preserving its currency. In this sense, the designed album covers followed the same timeliness and periodicity. Stated that this periodicity is that in the process of reaching the audience of the music products of the past, the writings are more common on the records or on their packaging. He attributed the reason for this to the music genres that have not yet diversified and the lack of an intense audience (Aydın Öztürk, 2014). With the change of social life over time and the development of technology, changes have occurred in the designs of album covers. The album covers designed today, due to reasons such as the free culture movements brought by the age and the rapid increase in consumption, differ from the visuals of the past, show features that do not resemble each other with wider borders, do not worry about the message, and are not very interested in the content of the music produced. With the rapid consumption of pop music culture, which especially appeals to the young audience, the line of change in album covers has emerged in this direction. Today, with the CD industry coming to an end, it has become easier and faster to reach albums through the decline of the culture of buying products from sales points and the social applications that are the result of technology. Applications such as You

Tube Music, Google Play Music, Deezer, Fیزی, Souncloud and Tidal, especially Spotify are among the most widely used applications to Access music today.

The main problem of this research is how the visuals of the album covers of the ten most listened songs in Turkish Pop music on the 2021 Spotify list are in terms of semiotics criteria.

In addition, answers to the following questions were sought in the study:

- 1- What are the most listened Turkish pop music cover visuals on the 2021 Spotify list?
- 2- Are the pictures and photographs selected for the cover visuals, the colors and writing styles used, are they compatible with each other according to semiotics theory and have they achieved their purpose?
- 3- Is there a message to be conveyed to the other party with the designs used in the cover images?

1.1. Purpose of the Research

In line with the purpose of the study, the intended effect of the album covers to be analyzed on the potential target audience and the messages they want to give were tried to be made sense of. The color characteristics of the album covers, the writing styles on the covers, the selection of the pictures and photographs used were examined according to the classification of signifier and signified in Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics theory and it was aimed to make sense of the data obtained.

1.2. Importance of the Research

When the development adventure of semiotics, which has a multidisciplinary field, is examined from past to present, it is seen that its shine in Turkey came to the fore especially towards the end of the 1990s. The research is important in terms of the fact that semiotics is handled through the music platform, which is a current issue. Spotify, which appears as an Online Music Platform, is also a medium where images are also used, and even as a display advertising area, not only on the sound plane, but also on the image plane. Therefore, examining the aforementioned medium from the perspective of semiotics in future studies will contribute to the literature. After that, it is expected to direct the studies to be done on the subject.

2. SEMIOTIC ETYMOLOGY AND CONCEPT

Semiology, which includes many fields such as art, literature, communication and human behaviour over time, is rich with a multidisciplinary structure that serves many other fields. Semiotics is defined as follows by different people in terms of its etymological meaning:

“The Word originates from the Greek term semiotic, and the Word semiology is a combination of the Greek words semion (sign) and logia (theory; logos meaning Word)” (Oruç Civelek & Türkay, 2018).

In French, Sémiotique and Sémiologie; The term, which is known in English as Semiotics and Semiology, is used as Semiology in Turkish (Çiçek, 2016). The English philosopher John Locke was the

first to give semiotics its name. Locke used the term semiotics its name. Locke used the term semiotics for the first time in his work "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding". Describing semiotics as the doctrine of signs, Locke also stated that it should be one of the three main branches of science (Deely, 1990).

Semiotics is known as the branch of science that investigates sign systems and indicators in the most common way known according to the subject discussed. Semiotics can also be defined according to the method used. In this way, it is the science that adapts linguistic expressions (musical pieces, gestures, facial expressions, religious rites) to objects and tries to explain non-linguistic expressions by transforming them into language metaphors (Dervişcemaloğlu, 2008).

According to the definition of Gençer (2016) related to semiotics, sound, image, text, etc., which make human life easier in daily life. Things that are made meaningful by the coming into life of the elements can be defined as indicators. Examples of indication are flags, gestures, alphabets, facial expressions.

On the other hand, expressed the structural state of the sign as an abstraction from semantics that reconciles semiotics with the lofty goals of reference (Hatten & Monelle, 2010)

Theorists have agreed that classification is the main issue in semiotics (Vodinalı, 2016). Semiotics the American philosopher C.S It is identified with the work Peirce and the Linguist F. de Saussure (Berger & Emir, 2012). Saussure divided the signs into two as indicating and the shown. According to Saussure, the shown is a concept that takes shape according to the psychological object. The indicating is defined as the image and sound that takes shape according to the sensory or physical object (Civelek, 2020).

On the other hand, according to Barthes, the sign consists of a indicating and a shown. In this definition, the plane shown represents the plane of content, and the plane shows refers to the plane of expression. Existing uses within the social sphere turn into their own indicators. Societies create standardized objects depending on a certain rule and measure. These objects form the words of the semantic language. The sign is the 'thing' that the receiver understands from the signified. The signifier creates different readings in each individual only as a mediator (Barthes, 2016).

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Model

The research is based on qualitative research technique and document analysis method. Document analysis involves the analysis of written materials containing information about the phenomenon or phenomena targeted to be researched (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2013). Descriptive explanations were made on the text obtained.

3.2.1. Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, when Turkish pop music is typed into the Spotify categories search button, the playlist with the most subscribers was scanned in order to obtain the cover images for the years 2021 and 2020. According to the scan, ten cover images were identified in the study. Expert opinion was obtained for the semiotic analysis of the visuals. Theses, articles and articles that are found to be suitable for the purpose of the research are evaluated. In the study, four groups, namely human, colour, object, and digital photography were formed and analysed according to the two classification methods, the indicating and the show, created by F. Saussure, one of the semiotic theorists, and discussed in tables.

3.2.2. Meaning of Colours in Semiotics

Colours have an extremely important role in analysis in semiotics. Because colours can have various effects on human nature in terms of psychological, sensory and visual aspects. Colours can create different meanings in the human mind from person to person. For example, while the colour blue symbolizes infinity for some, it can leave a suffocating and cold effect for others. The semantic dimension of colours in semiotics is tabulated and shown as follows (Kırık, 2013).

3.3. Ethical Statement of the Research

In this study, all the rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", were carried out.

In addition, according to ULAKBIM TR Index 2020 criteria, there was no need for any data collection requiring ethics committee approval in the study.

Table 1

Colour Visual Table (Kırık, 2013)

Colours	Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions
Red	It expresses feelings such as vitality, happiness, sociability, extroversion, willpower, power, love, affection, sexual power.	Anger, greed, death, egoism, attainment, possession items expresses feelings such as
Orange	Energy, courage, physical vitality, dynamic strength, enthusiasm and joy, friendly, sociable, enthusiastic, fidgety that is, it expresses excitement and emotions.	In dark orange, depressed, angry or nervous states are expressed.
Yellow	It is a color of joy and delight. Mental effort expresses feelings of mental brilliance, enlightenment, wisdom, optimism, love, and compassion.	Illness, separation, sadness, past

Green	It expresses emotions such as soothing, healing, peaceful, calm, relaxing, renewal, revitalization, joy and contentment of the nerves.	It expresses feelings such as jealousy, laziness, depressing, sometimes debilitating
Blue	It expresses emotions such as calmness, tranquility, productivity, peace, freedom, eternity, comfort, seriousness, loyalty, reality, devotion.	Cold, dull
Purple	It expresses sobriety, nobility, nobility, wealth, might, respectability, mystical and physical powers.	It expresses emotions such as arrogance, sadness, introversion, distorted-unstable moods, cockiness, impatience.
Brown	It expresses fertility, the earth, the earth, efficiency, authority, determination, self-confidence.	It expresses feelings of ambition, introversion, comfort, death.
Black	It expresses feelings of power, passion, formality, nobility, authority, trust.	Grief, death, mourning, mischief, resentment it expresses feelings of bad faith, pessimism
White	It expresses the feelings of purity, cleanliness, innocence, truthfulness, impartiality, honesty, reassurance, faith, holiness and peace.	Death, mourning
Grey		It expresses feelings of depression, low energy, fear, reticence, melancholy, distress
Pink	It expresses the feelings of harmony, joy, cuteness, love, comfort, happiness, dreams, creativity, youth.	

Colours can evoke a variety of emotions on the viewer. Warm colours are stimulating just as cool colours are relaxing. Each colour has emotions that evoke in human psychology. blue; loyalty and sincerity, green; jealousy, brown and purple; uniformity, tediousness, white; surrender, red; activity and courage, while black evokes emotions such as pessimism. The graphic designer should take into account factors such as the colour choice of the target audience, the cultural association of the colour, the approach in the design (Özdemir, 2011).

The variety of meanings conveyed by colours shows its effect in the field of music as well as in many different areas. Knowing the effect of colours on society has shown its effect in parallel with design culture. In this sense, the way to reach the target audience in album covers depends on successfully using colours, writing styles and other visual elements in the design.

3.2.3. Usage Of Spotify

Headquartered in Sweden, Spotify is a digital music service that offers subscribers an unlimited stream of music data. Founded on 23 April 2006 by Martini Lorentzon and Daniel Ek in Stockholm, the company's R&D management is based in London (Spotify, 2023). The company, which works with the marketing method called freemium worldwide, started to be used in Turkey five years after it started to serve in 2008 (Ergün, 2016). With its application that serves at the desired place and time, it offers easy use over phones and tablets. Spotify is a podcast program that provides free services to its listeners as well as monthly paid subscriptions worldwide. These services offer different services depending on usage. While the free use includes ads between songs, paid subscriptions can listen to an unlimited number of music without ads. Paid accounts have different subscription features in themselves and these are charged according to the content of the service provided. There are four different options in the form of individual, duo and family accounts, including student accounts, and accounts that vary according to the content of the service.


3. FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the cover images of the ten most listened songs in the field of Turkish Pop Music in the 2021 Spotify list were examined within the principle of semiotics. These ten cover images were examined by being evaluated in terms of object, human, digital photo and colour elements.

1- Seyfullah Sagir – Bilmem Mi (Would Not I Know)

Table 2

Semiotic Analysis of Sagir's "I Don't Know" Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Clouds, planet, seashells, water	Child (puppet)	A digital photo from an anime view was used	Blue, white, yellow, grey
	Shown	An artificial earth's atmosphere created by depicting a sandy planet in water	Anxiety, despair, closeness, a dull expression		Depth, calmness, eternity, purity

The album cover given in Table 2 is taken from (Spotify – Bilmem Mi). When the cover photo of the album “Would Not I Know”, which was released as a single by Seyfullah Sagir, also known as Sefo in 2021, is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that there are geometric shapes and depictions of clouds and planets on a blue background. The cover illustration shows the figure of a child sitting on a planet designed from a round beach using a predominance of white, blue and yellow colours.


“This thing I feel, am I left unfinished?” in the lyrics. It seems that there is a semantic expression between the expression and the child sitting alone on the planet in the image.

When examined in terms of what is shown; it is seen that an artificial world atmosphere is constructed with anime shapes and clouds, planets and child depictions. The figure of the child was left alone on a desert island; it is constructed with a desperate, hopeless, dull expression. The phrase “the world shifted over time” in the lyrics refers to the artificial planet view in this visual and the lonely child of the lonely World. The fact that blue and white, which constitute the main colours of the photo in terms of intensity, emphasize calmness, eternity and purity, and the expression of despair on the face of the child figure are combined in a contrasting way. When these details are taken into consideration, it is understood that an artificial world is depicted in terms of fiction. According to the semiotic evaluation, it can be said that the album title and album cover are not compatible. But there is a semantic expression between the album cover and the lyrics.

2- Madrigal – Seni Dert Etmeler (Don’t Worry About You)

Table 3

Semiotic Analysis of Madrigal’s “Don’t Worry About You” Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Tear	Human face	Digital photo	Blue
	Shown	Sorrow, innocence, purification	Sadness, longing, grief, thoughtfulness	The photo used is a close-up shot, with emphasis on the expression on the human face	Infinity, distance, depth


The album cover given in Table 3 is taken from (Spotify – Seni Dert Etmeler). When the cover photo of the album “Don’t Worry About You”, released by the group Madrigal in 2020, is examined in terms of

A semiotic evaluation of cover images of the ten most held Turkish pop music on the 2021 spotify list

those who show it, a close-up picture of a human face on a blue background is seen. When examined in terms of what is shown, there is a depiction of a crying human face in a way that is also identified with the name of the album. The lyrics of the song, "don't worry about you", harmonized with these visuals. a sad image was created with the depiction of a crying human face in the background where the blue colour is used as the backdrop, it is tried to evoke a sense of infinity, depth and distance. The depiction of tears and the eye with a faint expression that slides far away also supports this expression of distance and longing. According to the semiotic evaluation, it can be said that the album title and album cover are compatible. The lyrics semantically reflect the album title and the image on the album cover.

3- Edis – Martılar (Seagulls)

Table 4
Semiotic Analysis of Edis' "Seagulls" Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Chains, jackets, t-shirts	Edis (singer)	Digital photo	Pink, black, white
	Shown	Youth, fashion, extravagance	A photo of the singer herself in an outfit reflecting the fashion sense of the period	In the photo, a close-up of Edis himself was used to emphasize	Comfort, youth, black and white fashion


The album cover given in Table 4 is taken from (Spotify – Martılar). When the cover photo of the album "Seagulls" released by Edis in 2021 is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that the artist's own photo has been placed. In the photo where the pink colour is used as a backdrop, the artist is seen with his black leather jacket and a white t-shirt and a large necklace around his neck. When examined in terms of what is shown, the pink colour used in the background and emotions such as comfort and youth are brought to the forefront. In addition, Edis' posing with a simple jacket and t-shirt reinforces the emphasis on the expression of comfort in the background of the photo and at the same time presents a visual of trying to impress the young audience with the expression 'I am one of you' with today's fashion sense. It is thought that the cover photo is only because of Edis' own picture, as if this is my work, to care about himself and to reflect the image of young girls as his lover. When the lyrics of the album, which has been analyzed so far only in terms of visual aspects, are analyzed, it is not seen that they are

in harmony with the cover image and the album title in any respect. Although the lyrics of the song include the phrase "seagulls", which is the title of the album, there are no elements that support each other visually and semantically. According to the evaluation, it can be said that the album title, album cover and lyrics are not compatible both semiotically and semantically.

4- Berkcan Guven – Begefendi (Begefendi)

Table 5

Semiotic Analysis of Berkcan Guven’s “Begefendi” Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Glasses, fez, shirt, jacket	Berkcan Güven (singer)	Digital photo	Orange, red, blue, green, yellow
	Shown	The harmony that arises from the union of the old and the new, the harmony of opposites, authentic, modern, dynamic	Bringing the old and the new together, bringing together differences and contrasts	The photo was a close-up using neon colours	Energetic, mobile, dynamic, lively, fresh

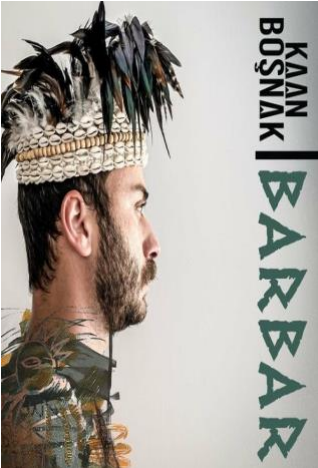
The album cover given in Table 5 is taken from (Spotify - Begefendi). Berkcan Güven's album "Begefendi", released in 2021, is a twelve-track work of the singer. Since it was not released as a single, there are multiple songs in the album. For this reason, only a visual semiotic analysis of this album was made instead of lyrics. When the cover photo is analyzed in terms of signifiers, it is seen that the singer himself is wearing an Ottoman fez and sunglasses on his head.. When examined in terms of what is shown, the orange colour used in the background and the feelings such as vitality and dynamism are brought to the forefront. In addition, the artist's posing with a jacket, shirt and green sunglasses consisting of vivid colours of yellow and blue reinforces the dynamism effect in the background of the photo. The combination of Ottoman fez and sunglasses creates the image that opposites, old and new, are open to differences and innovations with the use of contrasts, old and new together, in accordance with today's modernization. However, the reference to the concept of "Gentleman", known for the fact that the album cover name is "Begefendi", does not fit together with the contrasts in the modern sense.

According to the semiotic evaluation, it can be said that the album title and album cover are not compatible.

5-Kaan Bosnak –Barbar (Barbarian)

Table 6

Semiotic Analysis of Kaan Bosnak’s “Barbarian” Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human being	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	The hood on the head	Kaan Bosnak (singer)	Photoshop application used digital photo	Cream, green and black, yellow, shades of coffee
	Shown	Projecting the image of being strong with an upright look facing the face	Tthe marginal air desired to be reflected by the designed image	A model posture posed from the front, made with a fringe image with photoshop application on her head	A combination of vivid and static colors use


The album cover given in Table 6 is taken from (Spotify - Barbar). When the cover photo of the album "Barbarian", released by Kaan BOSNAK in 2020, is examined in terms of those who show it, there is a title that is likened to the title barbarian on his head. On her body, there is a depiction of a feathered costume that matches the style of the headdress on her head. In the photo where the gray colour is used as a backdrop, only the artist himself is involved, and the headdress on his head and the feathered costume on it are the first elements that attract attention. The feathers used in the headgear and the images in the neck area were made with photoshop. When examined in terms of what is shown, simplicity and flatness are emphasized with the gray colour used in the background. In this visual of the singer's own photo, her strong and confident posture is supported by her direct gaze to the other side. The power message to be given by including a single model posture in the cover photo was successfully

given. In the song "come, my beauty, if you come to me, If I find the right and wrong, or send a soldier to your heart, If I build barbarian states" don't have a coherent meaning within themselves. But there is a harmony between the word Barbarian, which gives the album its name, and the album cover. According to the evaluation made in this direction, although it can be said that the album title and album cover are semiotically compatible, it can be said that they are partially compatible in terms of lyrics.

6- Tugkan – Kusura Bakma (Sorry)

Table 7

Semiotic Analysis of Tugkan's "Sorry" Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital/ Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Name on album cover, reflections on the glass	Tuğkan (singer)	processed photo	Black,white,gray
	Shown	Singer's name, even the hood is used in gray in accordance with the contrast, flu , vague and inanimate reflections	An image of nostalgia with a photo taken in black and white, depressed and a state of thoughtfulness	A close-up photo of the singer himself was used	A fuzzy perception of space where black and white are used together

The album cover given in Table 7 is taken from (Spotify - Kusura Bakma). When the cover photo of the album "Sorry" released by Tugkan in 2020 is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that there is a black and white photo of the singer himself. A blurred perception of space is created with the black and white colours used. When examined in terms of what is shown, the sense of nostalgia is revived with the black and white photo, while at the same time the meaning is strengthened by giving the expressions of sadness and longing together with the distant gaze of the singer. In the song "I'm sorry I couldn't forget you, It's my fault I couldn't make it happen, my cage is on fire" and the sad and regretful facial expression on the cover image seem to be in harmony with each other. According to the evaluation made, it is seen that the title of the album and the album cover are compatible in terms of


A semiotic evaluation of cover images of the ten most held Turkish pop music on the 2021 spotify list

semiotics. At the same time, it can be said that the lyrics are semiotically compatible with the album title and cover, thus strengthening the semiotic expression.

7- Kaan Bosnak – Sen Varsın Diye (Because You Are)

Table 8

Semiotic Analysis of Kaan Bosnak’s “Because You Are” Album Cover

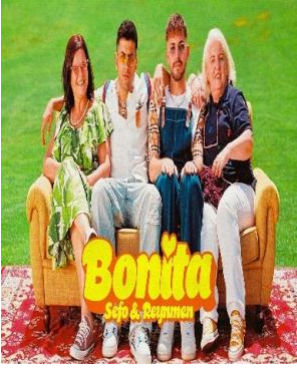
Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital/ Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Curtains, windows	-	Digital photo	Grey, black
	Shown	Flying, lost, void	-	Only the window image is useful.	Melancholy absence dramatic weather of mourning

The album cover given in Table 8 is taken from (Spotify - Sen Varsın Diye). When the cover photo of the album "Because You Are", which was released by Kaan Bosnak in 2021, is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that there is a black and white photo. The photo was dramatized using a flying curtain image from an open window and black and white colours. When examined in terms of what is shown, the expressions of longing, sadness and absence are represented by the composition of the curtain flying from an open and empty window in the photo with black and white colours. The expressions "because you exist" in the lyrics, which also give the album its name, do not seem to be compatible with the album image and title when their semantic connection is analyzed. However, the expressions in the other lyrics of the song, "Those who could escape from here have left, there has been a lot of migration", reminds the departure, i.e. migration, with the curtain flying from the open window, and the past, i.e. the past, with the use of black and white colors. In this respect, it is thought that the album title is not compatible with the album cover, but some expressions used in the song are compatible with the cover image.

8- Sefo And Reynmen – Bonita (Bonita)

Table 9

Semiotic Analysis of Sefo and Reynmen's "Bonita" Album Cover


Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Carpet, armchair	Two young men (singers) and two old women sitting on the couch	Digital photo	Green, yellow, blue, white, red, navy blue, blue, orange
	Shown	Home atmosphere, warm and friendly atmosphere	Mothers and sons, family	The photo was taken at a close angle with an emphasis on people	Vibrancy, positive, multi-colorfulness

The album cover given in Table 9 is taken from (Spotify - Bonita). When the cover photo of the album "Bonita", released by Sefo (Seyfullah) and Reynmen in 2021, is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that two young men and two old women are sitting on an armchair. Looking at the photo, it looks like a family album with "mothers and sons". When examined in terms of what is shown, a home atmosphere is created with the carpet and sofa in the outdoor area. The image of women and young men sitting on the sofa reflects the family atmosphere in this warm home atmosphere. The combination of many vibrant colours on the cover characterizes the main feeling of the warm and intimate photo frame created. The word "Bonita", from which the album takes its name, is of Portuguese origin and represents what is beautiful in a feminine sense. At this point, if the concept of beauty here is shaped through the image in the photo, it can be thought that it symbolizes the mother and the woman. When the lyrics of the song were analyzed, it was seen that they were not meaningful in themselves, such as "I can't stop in that place again, be mine lil bonita", and that the melodic structure was constructed by arranging them only with rhyming syllables. The rest of the song continued with similar lyrics. Since the concepts of woman and mother in Turkish culture represent the sacred, the good and the beautiful, it can be said that the album cover is compatible with the title of the album according to the semiotic evaluation.

9- Gunes Taskiran and Uzi (Utku Yalcinkaya) – Dua (Prayer)

Table 10

Semiotic Analysis of Gunes Taskiran and Uzi’s “Prayer” Album Cover


Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Album title (Prayer)	Günes Taskiran (singer)	Digital photo	Grey, black, white
	Shown	Plain and simple, the mystical feeling of prayer in a mystical sense of pure and pure feeling	Bringing both hands together in prayer in support of the album's title, namaste symbol of the Hindu faith tradition	A close-up photo of the singer himself was used	Melancholy, reticence, mourning, intention, purity, innocence, faith

The album cover given in Table 10 is taken from (Spotify - Dua). When the cover photo of the album "Prayer", which was released by Günes Taskiran and Uzi (Utku Yalcinkaya) in 2021, is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that the singer's own photo has been placed. In the photo, where the gray colour is used as a backdrop, the singer is seen with a black leather jacket. When examined in terms of what is shown, the gray colour used in the background and emotions such as blurriness, silence and melancholy are brought to the forefront. In addition, Günes Taskiran's posing with a black jacket representing the simplicity similar to the simplicity of her hairstyle refers to the name of prayer in the album. When the lyrics were analyzed, it was determined that the expression "I prayed every night again" and the album visual were compatible in meaning. The album cover is a digital media photo and it can be said that the name of the album and the representative stance of the cover photo are compatible from a semiotic point of view.

10- Bedo and Patron – Ölebilirim (I Can Die)

Table 11

Semiotic Analysis of Bedo and Patron’s “I Can Die” Album Cover

Album Cover	Indicator	Object	Human	Digital / Photo	Colour
	Indicating	Album title, clouds, birds road	Bedo (Bedirhan) and Patron (Ege Kurt) (singers)	Digital photo	Black grey red, white
	Shown	A style of writing written in red, representing blood and death, eternity, freedom, end of life, loneliness	Suffering, exhaustion, despair, the desire to perish, the melancholy	A close-up photo of the singers	Mourning, death, melancholy, innocence, surrender

The album cover given in Table 11 is taken from (Spotify - Ölebilirim). When the cover photo of the album "I Can Die", which was released by Bedo (Bedirhan) and Patron (Ege Kurt) in 2020 and became a hit in 2021, is examined in terms of those who show it, it is seen that the singers' own photo has been placed. The photo uses a grey and cloudy sky as a backdrop, showing artists in black sweatshirts posing. When examined in terms of what is shown, the gray colour used in the background is blurred, reticent and melancholy; With the cloud representation, emotions such as infinity are brought to the forefront. Singers show that they are sad and hopeless with their unhappy, pale looks. The fact that they are wearing black sweatshirts represents that they are in a mood of mourning, the darkness of death. The human posture at the end of a narrow path under the photo is a reference to death, to dying. The album's title, I Can Die, emphasizes the main theme in terms of both its writing style and colour. When the lyrics of the song are analyzed, it can be said that it is influenced by the popular song theme and is partially meaningful in itself. In addition, the presence of expressions such as "die, if you say die, I can die," which also gives the album its name, shows that it is visually and semantically compatible with the

album cover. It can be said that the album cover, which is a digital photograph, is semiotically compatible with the album title and lyrics.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, one of the theorists of semiotics, F. The data from the album covers, which are examined according to Saussure's two classification methods of showing and showing, include the discussion, results and recommendations for these results.

- 1- Ten album cover tables examined according to human, object, digital photo and colour criteria. In addition, the lyrics were also evaluated in terms of meaning and included in the semiotic analysis by determining how compatible they were with the album title and album cover. According to this study, it was determined that unlike the old period album covers, modern lines were used, contrasting and vivid colours were combined, and elements other than the usual objects were included in the covers. The album covers, which include the singers' own pictures, are also designed with cold looks and dull expressions accompanied by modern lines and costumes, which are more distant from the intimate atmosphere of the old period. Along with these changes, in which cultural differences are clearly seen from the past to the present, it has been determined that the lyrics are partially harmonized with the meaning, album covers and the album title. As a result of this study, it was determined that some album covers have a meaning in themselves, while others are compatible with the album's name and even the lyrics. It is predicted that these albums, created with different designs and reflecting the musical fashion of today's World, will take on a more different appearance in the future and convey different meanings with the changing perception of music.
- 2- It was concluded that the majority of the singers who performed the ten most listened songs in the field of Turkish pop music in the 2021 Spotify list were men, and only one of them was a female singer. It was also determined that there were three singers singing together. All of the singers and songs on the list are local, which determines the current music market and the musical taste of the audience.
- 3- When the themes of the songs in the list were examined, it was concluded that the theme of love was used the most, as well as the themes of death and separation were used less. In the album Bonita, apart from all these, a theme that includes the names of world brands and uses fluid but meaningless expressions in its entirety comes to the forefront.
- 4- It was concluded that almost all of the songs on the list were in the range of 2 and 3 minutes, and the remaining very few were in the range of 3 and 4 minutes. From this result, it is thought that the songs are composed by adhering to the ideal music listening time.
- 5- It has been determined that the current music market and musicality are shaped under the influence of the popular music perception occurring around the world. When this situation is

evaluated in terms of cultural analysis, it is thought that the changing musicality also affects the lifestyle of the society with both the lyrics and the sounds used in music. If we look at the content of the album covers and lyrics analyzed in this study, it is determined that they mostly carry criteria that do not carry a message perception, are suitable for fast consumption, the lyrics are partially meaningful and are outside the usual norms of the society. In the light of this evaluation, it can be said that the global music market, by influencing the cultural structure, affects the society's world of ideas, clothing and speech styles, in short, its lifestyle, and transforms it into a global identity by moving away from local identity characteristics.

In the light of these evaluations, it has been seen that complex, animized or singers' own photos, which have become a trend in popular music platforms today, are designed covers. The album covers of today's fast-produced and fast-consuming music products have been created with an understanding that has become the general culture of the consumer world rather than leaving a message. The design of album covers plays an important role in reaching and preferring the music with the messages to be conveyed. In this sense, while the old period album covers are simpler, with message anxiety or more prominent singers; Today, dissimilar, complex and anime designs are used more in the foreground. In the light of this evaluation, it was concluded that the albums were designs that gave information about the appreciation understanding, social and cultural structure of the society to which they belonged at the time of their release. When other similar studies were examined, it was concluded that the contents were mostly designed to give a social message. (Vodinalı et al., 2022), one of the studies supporting this idea, reached similar results. In this study, in which album covers are analyzed, it is seen that while the social cultural structure and taste style of a period are revealed, the cover visuals also give social messages. (Yılmaz et., al 2019) is another study of album covers that aims to convey social messages. In this study, the philosophy and emotion of songs criticizing the destruction caused by wars, political power balances and social order were depicted on album covers. While these two studies have similar results in terms of the messages given and the meaning they contain, it has been observed that today's album covers produce different results in terms of theme and meaning. Because today's album covers are much less concerned with social messages than in the past; instead, they have turned into designs that use colorful, anime shapes and vaguely abstract expressions. While other studies in the field that examined album cover designs concluded that they also reflect the emotion of the song, it was also found that today's album designs are not concerned with reflecting the emotion of the songs and use designs independent of the content of the songs. When the studies were analyzed, it was seen that the semiotic analysis of the album cover of the ten most listened songs on the 2021 Spotify list produced different results from other album cover studies. For this purpose, with this proposed study, it is aimed to give ideas to future researchers and to encourage other studies to be carried out. In the light of the evaluations made, this study in the field of semiotics has achieved its purpose within the examples examined.

Ethical Statement of the Research

In this study, all the rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", were carried out.

In addition, according to ULAKBIM TR Index 2020 criteria, there was no need for any data collection requiring ethics committee approval in the study.

Declaration of the Contribution Rate of the Researchers to the Article:

1st author contribution rate: 60%

2st author contribution rate: 40%

Conflict of Interest Statement:

There are no personal or financial conflicts of interest between the authors.

REFERENCES

- Aydın Öztürk, T. (2014). Albüm kapakları; ben buyum demenin en kısa yolu mudur? *Journal of International Social Research*, 7(31), 796-803.
- Barthes, R. (2016). *Göstergebilimsel Serüven* (M.-S. Rifat, Trans.). Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
- Berger, A. A. & Emir, Ö. (2012). *Kültür eleştirisi: Kültürel kavramlara giriş*. Pinhan.
- Civelek, M. (2020). Göstergebilimin Kuramsal Açından İncelenmesine Yönelik Bir Araştırma. *Alanya Akademik Bakış*, 4(3), 771-784. <https://doi.org/10.29023/alanyaakademik.683974>
- Çiçek, M. (2016). Semiyoloji ve semiyotik üzerine düşünceler. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication-TOJDAC*, 6(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.7456/10602100/008>
- Deely, J. N. (1990). *Basics of semiotics* (Vol. 568). Indiana University Press.
- Dervişcemaloğlu, B. (2008, 6th of August). *Göstergebilim*. <https://www.ege-edebiyat.org/wp/>
- Ergün, E. (2016). Türkiye'de kullanılan online müzik platformları: Spotify örneği. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication - TOJDAC*, 6(2), 114-118. <https://doi.org/10.7456/10602100/005>
- Gençer, F. (2016). *1969-1973 yılları arası Türk filmlerinin mitolojik ve göstergebilimsel çözümlemesi: Tarkan filmi örneği* (Publication No: 448081) [Master Thesis, Selçuk University].
- Hatten, R. & Monelle, R. (2010). *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton University Press.
- Kırık, A. M. (2013). Sinemada renk öğesinin kullanımı: Renk ve anlatım ilişkisi. *21. Yüzyılda Eğitim ve Toplum Eğitim Bilimleri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2(6), 71-83.

Lull, J. (2000). *Popüler müzik ve iletişim*. (T. İblağ, Trans.). Çiviyazıları.

Oruç Civelek, M. & Türkay, O. (2018). Türkiye tanıtım afişlerinin göstergebilimsel bir analizi: Home of Turkey afişleri örneği. *Turkish Online Journal of Design Art and Communication*, 8 (2), 312-328.

<https://doi.org/10.7456/10802100/012>

Özdemir, F. (2011). Popüler müzik albüm kapaklarının tasarım sorunları. *İnönü Üniversitesi Sanat ve Tasarım Dergisi*, 1(1). 115-123.

Spotify. (2023, 8th of September). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotify>

Spotify.(2023, 4th of August). Barbar. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/6fBLCCARvyL2WNTR1QFJQB>

Spotify.(2023, 4th of August). Begefendi. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/4uzkcFaD6X2zpojul0Y1IT>

Spotify. (2023, 4th of August). Bilmem mi. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/0UFVuK7zZdjsiK1nb5F2wl>

Spotify.(2023, 4th of August). Bonita. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/track/3Obq1XTegJy7ISrAA9VjQk>

Spotify.(2023, 4th of August). Dua. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/6fHpLB45cLhowUDf1nHWkY>

Spotify.(2023, 5th of August). Kusura Bakma. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/track/7ng3MkDXpSUVFQEHn6vtqG>

Spotify. (2023, 5th of August). Martılar. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/track/1xEpgyKx4ZHtefFAh0SmU5>

Spotify.(2023, 5th of August). Ölebilirim. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/0P3wjoDhm36wTol7e2riWK>

Spotify.(2023, 5th of August). Sen Varsın Diye. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/track/3b8UW227uLkRDvd0w9e1Sw>

Spotify. (2023, 5th of August). Seni Dert Etmeler. In Spotify. <https://open.spotify.com/intl-tr/album/6fpzQNhureiJ6bOS2g2gYj>

Şimşek, H. & Yıldırım, A. (2013). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Vodinalı, S. (2016). Tüketim kültürü bağlamında reklam ve çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri: Maret yook mu? Reklamı üzerine bir çözümleme. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 2 (1), 197-222.

A semiotic evaluation of cover images of the ten most held Turkish pop music on the 2021 spotify list

- Vodinalı, S., Çanakçı, Y. Y. & Sazak, N. (2022). 1993–2010 Yılları Arasında “Kalan Müzik Şirketi” nde Yer Alan Türk Halk Müziği Albüm Kapaklarının Göstergibilimsel Açıdan İncelenmesi. *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, 17(1), 22-47. <https://doi.org/10.17550/akademikincelemeler.1037400>
- Yılmaz, B., Vodinalı, S. & Sazak, N. (2022). Minyatür Sanatında Müzik Unsurunun Kullanılışının Semiyotik Açıdan İncelenmesi. *Motif Akademi Halkbilimi Dergisi*, 15 (37), 270 - 290. <https://doi.org/10.12981/mahder.1048701>
- Yılmaz, M., Özbek, S. & Özdemir, G. (2019). Pink Floyd Albüm Kapaklarının Göstergibilim İlkelerine Göre İncelenmesi. *Sanat Dergisi*, (33), 57-63.