

Harry Potter Film Afişlerinin Semiyotik Bir Bakış Açısıyla Dilbilimsel, Tarihsel ve Kültürel Analizi *

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Öz

İnsanlar, tarih boyunca yaşadıkları çevreyi anlamaya çalışmış; düşüncelerini ifade etme ve geleceğe iletme ihtiyacı duymuşlardır. Yaşarken yeteneklerini ve eserlerini başkalarına göstermeyi arzuladıkları için birçok tarihi ve kültürel eser üretmişlerdir. Bunlarla sadece kendi çağlarının insanlarıyla iletişim kurmaya çalışmamış, aynı zamanda gelecek nesillere ve toplumlara mesajlar göndermeyi amaçlamışlardır. Sanat eserleri ve diğer eserlerinde bazı açık ya da gizli mesajlar ve semboller bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, görsel iletişim günümüze kadar en önemli iletişim türlerinden biri olmuştur. Bu görsel öğeler de yaşam hızı ve modern yaşam tarzı ve gelişen teknolojiyle paralel olarak gelişmiştir. Dolayısıyla, hayatımızda önemli bir yere sahip olan görsel iletişimi adlandırma, çözme ve analiz etme ihtiyacı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmada, sekiz Harry Potter film posterinin semiyotik bir bakış açısıyla dilbilimsel, tarihsel ve kültürel analizlerinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmada incelenen film afişleri, Ferdinand de Saussure'ün gösterge, gösteren ve gösterilen öğeleri ile Roland Barthes'ın yan anlam kavramı üzerinden çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Harry Potter, Afiş, Göstergebilim, Dilbilim, Tarih

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Linguistic, Historical and Cultural Analysis of Harry Potter Movie Posters from a Semiotic Perspective *

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Abstract

Human beings have tried to understand the environment in which they have lived throughout history; and need to express and communicate their thoughts for the future. While living, they have produced many historical and cultural artefacts because they have coveted to show their talents and works to others. Thanks to these, they have not only tried to communicate with the people of their time but also intended to send messages to the next generations and communities. In their artifacts and other works, there are some clear or secret messages and symbols. Within this context, visual communication has been one of the most important type of communication up today. These visual elements have also developed in parallel with the speed of life and modern lifestyle and developing technology. Therefore, there has emerged a need to name, decode and analyze visual communication that has an important place in our lives. In this study, It Is aimed to carry out linguistic, historical and cultural analyses of eight Harry Potter movie posters from a semiotic perspective. The movie posters that have been examined in the study were tried to be analyzed through Ferdinand de Saussure's sign, signifier and signified elements and Roland Barthes' concept of connotation.

Keywords: Harry Potter, Poster, Semiotics, Linguistics, History

* Ethical Statement: * It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.

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Introduction

People are generally eager to highlight the products and innovations they produce to the public so that they can be informed about the developments. This issue is on the agenda; thus, posters act as one of the most important materials used in visual promotion. The definition of a poster in the Great Turkish Dictionary is as follows: "*A wall advertisement, mostly with pictures, applied to announce and promote something*" (Büyük Türkçe Sözlük.pdf, n.d., 50). Besides, communication is regarded as the process of transferring emotions, thoughts, information, and beliefs among people via several tools; for instance, Graphic Language is one of these tools; thus, a poster made using this language is referred to as a textual and graphic product intended to promote and propagandize, publicize an idea, and express thoughts (Değerli, 2021: 180). In addition, the person who designs a poster explains the message he/she wants give the society with this poster; thus, he/she equips it with visuals to convey the information he/she wishes to give in a direct way as much as possible (Küçük, 2022, 1584). Therefore, the designer must ensure that the first message to be given through the poster is clear, short and visually understandable. At this point, the poster can be called one of the advertising tools aiming to convey simple visual design to the recipient in an impressive and quick way (Holat, 2021, 295).

In semiotics, the structural relationships of signs are examined when creating meaning; hence, for an advertisement to reach the target audience and create the desired effect, it is of great importance to use target signs correctly (Değerli, 2021: 180). Ahmadoghli (2017) states that "*Ferdinand de Saussure is considered to be the founder of modern linguistics*", and "*sémiologie*" is a branch of science studying the sign systems used in social life. Since language is a system of signs that convey thoughts, according to Saussure, "Linguistics" is a section within "Semiology" that investigates and examines all sign systems. While the task of a psychologist is to determine the place of "Semiology", the task of a linguist is to distinguish the unique system and structure of language within "Semiology"(Ahmadoghli, 2017, 12). Towards the mid-1900s, semiotics held an impact on other branches of art, especially cinema (Yetkiner, n.d.: 5). Marşap (2024) is in the idea that the posters' target to transfer to the viewer is to imply the place of the visuals they reflect in the historical process. Marşap similarly states that the art of cinema cannot find the opportunity to influence the viewer's perception and views of the world with the films presenting life as a historical process. In this direction, the use of visual elements and cinema to create awareness in the viewer of historical development processes is noteworthy (Marşap, 2024, 54).

It is also stated that symbols have been divided into two in the course of history; the first one is similar in appearance and meaning, which are called "icons" in Greek; the second one is the signs that are the difference between form and message incorporating musical notes, line, alphabet and morse as examples (Ahmadoghli, 2017). People name all signs for a cultural environment and use them in some way. Thus, they find the opportunity to use them in some way. Each sign used has a reason and purpose for its production and the sign gains meaning in a certain system in which it is included. Most of the signs produced are related to the accumulation, culture, history and social structure of that society that has gained up to that time. Ahmadoghli (2017:81) also states that culture comes from the Latin word 'cultura', meaning to live, cultivate and preserve in a place, and is derived from 'colere', meaning to repair, process, cultivate, build and improve; therefore, all the material and spiritual values that societies create in the course of history and pass on from generation to generation are interrelated, and hence, it may be inferred that culture has a visible and an invisible aspect. While the works of art produced by that society form the visible aspect of culture, the invisible aspect is formed by the values, norms and beliefs of that society. In this respect, it is seen that there are differences between cultures in the visual language, in the production of works as well as in their reading.

In sum, the semiotic analysis of movie posters has not received enough attention, even though semiotics and visual communication have been thoroughly investigated. Most of the research that is currently available focuses on their promotional role rather than their function as cultural and ideological signifiers. The current study attempts to fill in this research gap by investigating how movie posters use semiotic frameworks to create meaning and influence viewer perceptions, and the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of posters as narrative and symbolic representations within the discourse by fusing visual analysis with semiotic theory.

Literature Review

Semiotics

Semiology, also known as semiology or semiotics in literature, is a branch of science that studies the meanings of signs and symbols. This branch of science tries to investigate and solve how language, images, sounds, symbols and signs produce meaning and how they transmit these meanings.

In general, semiology is defined as all kinds of forms, objects, phenomena and similar matters that represent something other than themselves and therefore have the characteristics that may

replace the thing they represent (Rifat, 2009, 11). While communication is an indispensable aspect of social life, semiology is a science encountered in almost every area of life (Çağlar, B. 2012, 22). In order that people can communicate effectively with each other, they should solve all signs that they come across in every phase of life (Suzan and Babayiğit, 2024, 90). Every living thing in the world establishes communication with the beings that meet with signs and actions and sounds and different symbols to survive (Elden, 2009, 21). The language that people use to understand each other, the behavior that they demonstrate, jests and mimics, the alphabets that the dumb use, the traffic signs in the cities, the location of a town in a specific place, a music work, a paint, a theatre play, the posters prepared for ads and announcements, fashion, literary works, all kinds of scientific languages, the order of human desires, the structures of the roads in a country, architectural order, in another words, all meaningful materials that either have reporting aim or not are strings formed from various units. Each string has a unique realization, and these string units are referred to as signs. In the light of this information, semiotics is the science that studies codes, languages, indications, and semiotics strings similar to those included (Guiraud, P. 1994, 11; Özgür A. 2006, 5). Denli (1997) states that it will be wrong to name semiotics as a science merely investigating and examining the meanings of signs, and that this definition will be a narrow and a barren definition. Thus, semiotics is the discipline that studies all signs and means with the goal of communication, as well as the relationships that they create and the kinds of relationships that are attempted to be established (Denli, 1997, 5). Eco (1976), with a simpler but broad definition, stated that semiotics is busy with everything accepted as signs.

When the issue is taken into consideration from this perspective, it is possible to observe that semiotics has the aspect of culture and cultural communication. This is a plain truth that communication carried out through signs has a method. In addition to this, it is necessary that a definition of signs should be made.

Semiotics Analysis in the Views of Barthes and Pierce

In the semiotic analysis of a visual or image, three elements come to the fore. These are the sign, the signified and the signifier. These three elements constitute the basis of the theory of signs (Atabek and Atabek, 2007, 68). However, Rifat (2009) states that today, the field of influence and activity of semiology has gained a wider and different dimension than the total meaning of the terms 'sign' and 'science' that constitute it. This means that semiotics focuses on meaning and enables the viewer to make sense of the sign by establishing the relationship between the signified and the signifier.

Barthes (1976) states that the denotation and connotation obtained in the context of meaning are the most important areas of semiotics. Three elements come forward in analyzing a visual or an image in terms of semiotics. These are sign, signified object and signifier. As a species, we appear to be motivated by the need to create meaning; we are unquestionably *Homo significans*, meaning-makers. We create and interpret signs in a unique way that gives us meaning. In fact, Peirce asserts, "we think only in signs." Words, pictures, sounds, smells, flavors, actions, or objects can all be signs, but they lack inherent meaning and only acquire significance when we give them meaning. According to Peirce, "nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign." (Peirce, 1931: 51-58). Whatever someone sees as "signifying" something—that is, referring to or standing for something other than itself—can be a sign. We relate things to well-known systems of conventions to interpret them as signs, usually without realizing it. The core issues of semiotics are related to this purposeful use of signs (Chandler, 2007: 18). The 'dyadic' or two-part model of the sign was proposed by Saussure. According to his definition, a sign is made up of two parts: the "signified" (*signifié*), which is the thought it represents, and the "signifier" (*signifiant*), which is the shape the sign takes. The whole that emerges from the signifier and signified being associated is known as the sign (Saussure, F. 1959: 65-67). 'Signification' is the relationship between the signifier and the signified, and the arrows in the Saussurean diagram represent this. 'The bar' is the horizontal line that separates the two components of the sign (Chandler, 2007: 18).



Figure 1. Saussure's model of sign
(Chandler, 2007: 18)

Both a signifier and a signified are necessary for a sign to exist. It is impossible to have a signifier or signified that is utterly meaningless (Saussure, F. 1959: 98-101). A distinguishable pairing of a signifier and a specific signified is called a sign. In the case of a push-button in an elevator ('push to open door'), the same signifier (the word 'open') can represent a different signified (and so be a distinct sign). Similar to this, a variety of signifiers may represent the idea

of "open" (for example, a little sketch of a box with an open flap on top of a packing carton for "open this end"); once more, each distinct pairing would represent a distinct sign (Chandler, 2007: 19).

Peirce, who is accepted as one of the founders of Pragmatism, worked on the theory of signs and semiotics. Peirce's semiotics is grounded in three key components: the sign, the object, and the interpretant.

1. **Sign:** Something that represents something else to someone in some context. This could be a word, an image, a sound, or any other form of communication.
2. **Object:** The actual thing or concept that the sign refers to.
3. **Interpretant:** The understanding or meaning that arises in the mind of the interpreter when they encounter the sign.

His definition of semiotics is broad, which consists of a crucial division of signs into three classes such as Icon, Index and Symbol.

- **Icon:** A sign that resembles its object (e.g., a photograph of a person).
- **Index:** A sign that is directly connected to its object (e.g., smoke indicating fire).
- **Symbol:** A sign that is arbitrarily or conventionally related to its object (e.g., words in a language).

Peirce has a different approach to the language philosophy that goes beyond the language to a theory of signs, and this 'semiotic' is profoundly embedded within his broader philosophical works. Therefore, it is beneficial to do two things to understand this: 1) Understanding the breadth of his semiotic and 2) differentiating it from other philosophical theories of the field (Thornbury, 2011: 49). A symbol is a sign that, by a law—typically an association of general concepts—operates to cause the symbol to be regarded as referring to the item it represents (Peirce, 1998: 292). For Saussure semiotics is a science that studies the functions of signs as a part of social life. He adds that language is a system of signs expressing as can be seen in a system of writing (Chandler, 2002: 2). On the other hand, Pierce utters that semiotics is the formal doctrine of sign, closely related to logic (Chandler, 2007: 3).

The classical philosophers thoroughly examined deduction and induction, but before Pierce, no logician had acknowledged the significance or unique nature of this third type of reasoning, which he named abduction. However, it is a method of reasoning that is employed in both

scientific study and the most everyday situations, and in this regard, Peirce foreshadows Karl Popper's epistemology.

Four steps can be used to characterize the interpretative process of abduction, often known as the process of deductive hypothesis:

1. We come upon an oddity that defies explanation based on our prior knowledge; in other words, it surprises us with our routines and biases. There is currently no explanation that can explain the fact in the context of scientific inquiry.
2. We came up with a theory that could account for the fact. Our reasoning is based on firstness since the fact suggests the hypothesis that automatically comes to mind. The fact and the potential outcomes of implementing the hypothesis are, in fact, analogous.
3. After that, we apply the hypothesis deductively and draw conclusions about its implications. We live our lives with an attitude consistent with the hypothesis. This involves carefully identifying which tests would enable us to refute the hypothesis, if necessary, in scientific study (to prove it is wrong or does not match the facts). A theory can be disproved by a single experiment, but it would require an endless number of trials to be proven correct.
4. Until there is evidence to the contrary, we draw the conclusion that the results, at least provisionally, support the hypothesis by employing a form of induction, or drawing generalizations from a series of positive test results (Everaert, N.-D. 2011: 4-5).

Semiotics fundamentally can be a suitable theory to analyze the secret meaning beyond the signs. This study has numerous discussions relevant to signs. For this reason, the authors use this science to assist interpreting textual and visual data accurately. In addition, it helps the writers to stop misunderstanding while analyzing both textual and visual data (Burty, 2013: 8). Semiology, according to Barthes, "aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention, or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification" (Barthes, R. 1967: 9).

The overall literature review indicates that some minor studies have been conducted on the semiotic analysis of Harry Potter movie posters, thus, considering the semiotics-significant contributions of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Pierce, the current study attempts to close this gap and offer a perceptive examination of the linguistic, historical, and cultural interpretation of Harry Potter posters.

Methodology

The main purpose of the current study is to carry out a linguistic, historical and cultural analysis of the Harry Potter movie posters in terms of semiotics, in the light of the concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes and Pierce who have outstanding contributions to semiotics.

The current study employs a qualitative research design to conduct a semiotic analysis of *Harry Potter* movie posters. Methods such as phenomenology and ethnography provide an adaptable framework for examining social phenomena from participants' viewpoints in natural environments for qualitative studies (Gephart & Saylor, 2020). Therefore, this study is about examining the Harry Potter movie posters consisting of 8 series released from 2002 to 2011 in the light of semiotics (Hürriyet, 2021). The relevant posters were accessed by queries on internet search engines and these posters were downloaded. When selecting the posters, it was taken into consideration that they had good image quality and were clear. In addition to this, it was intended to choose posters with different layouts to prevent similar semiotics analyses. Thus, it was aimed to conduct linguistic, historical and cultural analyses of the posters in the light of semiotics. In other words, selection criteria focused on visual diversity, linguistic elements, and cultural references, aiming to capture both connotations and denotations relevant to the analysis. While collecting the data, multiple visual materials were collected for each movie poster, and then the ones with clear and understandable images were selected to be used in the research since most of them have common images such as the trio, the leading actors of the movie.

The stages of this research are sampling, data collection and finally data analysis, and thus, during the data collection process, multiple visual materials were taken into consideration for each poster, focusing on clear and comprehensible images. Besides, the semiotic theories of Saussure, Peirce, and Barthes were put into action. Saussure's structuralist approach follows up the examination of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds in the posters, while Peirce's triadic model (icon, index, symbol) categorizes the signs and their meanings. Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth are applied to explore the cultural and ideological messages embedded within the visuals. Hence, the whole data analyses were conducted using semiotic analysis methods. The analysis also highlights the researchers' role as essential tools in data collection and interpretation, emphasizing holistic-contextual discoveries through descriptive analysis and inductive reasoning (Fadli, 2021). This methodological approach enriches the insights gained from the study, enabling a

comprehensive exploration of the semiotic meanings reflected in the Harry Potter movie posters.

Findings

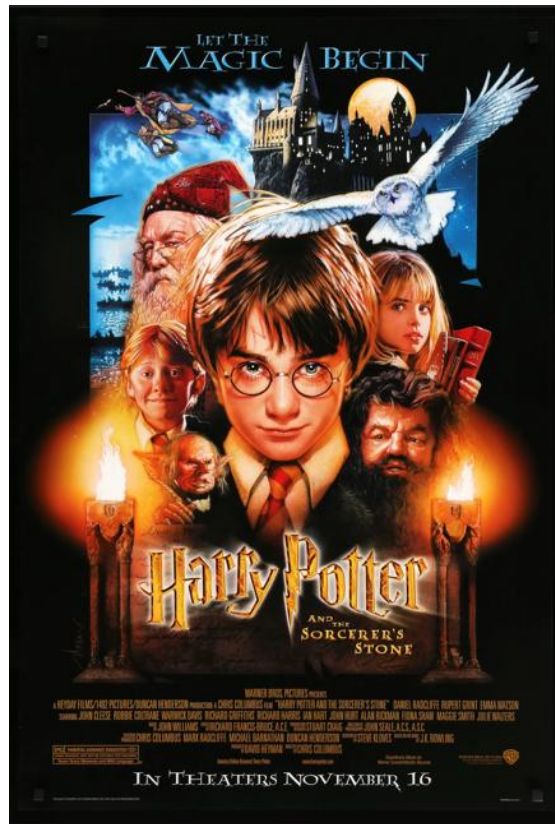
Semiotics Analysis of Sample Harry Potter Posters

In this part of the study, 8 posters in total belonging to the Harry Potter film series, which have been watched by a huge number of viewers, will be analyzed in terms of signifier, sign, signified, denotation and connotation in the context of semiology and in linguistic, historical and cultural terms.

Picture 1: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

The first of the Harry Potter film series, 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone', has taken its place in the memory of viewers both as a film and as a poster. The protagonist of the film is prominently featured in the focal point of the poster, while the supporting actors are placed in smaller forms slightly behind the lead actor encircling him. The text of the poster evokes an old writing style, while the background expresses the mystery of the darkness of the night. The flying eagle owl in the upper right corner gives mystery to the environment. Since the eagle owl is a bird that appears at night, it symbolizes both the peaceful silence of the night and its disturbing solitude. The castle in front of the full moon in the upper right adds historical value to the picture, as well as offering fear and enchantment. This view gives the feeling that the castle is an environment where wizards live. On the left corner of the poster, there are some wizards flying with the help of a magic broom. In addition, on the left middle edge there are some boats driven by some Invisible dark clothes wearing people. In the character circle on the left, the famous wizard Dumbledore is seen with his magic hat and adorable and humble look on his face. Below Dumbledore is Ron with his cynical and lovely look. Just on the right, Hermione can be seen with her intelligent and knowledgeable look and holding some books. Down in the circle is Hagrid with his big hairy head and long beard but sympathetic face. On the left appears Kreacher with his Alf look. This view adds both mystery and fear to the poster. Finally, the burning torches placed on the bottom right and left of the poster represent the power and influence of magic. The poster has some semiotics messages with colors. Black frame gives the message of tense of horror, while shades of blue inside symbolize peace and serenity. The bright yellow colors of torches imply success and victory. The poster conveys both historical aspects such as the medieval castle on the rocks and a prehistoric bird. However, children seem not to belong to medieval times as they wear uniforms worn in ordinary schools in the modern world. The inscription 'Sorcerer's Stone', which means the stone of magician, has a linguistic

element to convey the audience. The poster carries some cultural elements such as the full yellow moon, which means magic time, and conical hat of Dumbledore, which represents magicians.



Picture 1. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (URL 1)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Quiet, sympathetic, academic	A teenage boy face with glasses	Confident, intelligent, determined
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Cynical, academic	A red haired teenage boy	Confident, cocky
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Serious	A blonde teenage girl	Confident, determined, knowledgeable
Human	Facial Expression (Dumbledore)	Serious, virtuous, wise	An old man wearing wizard hat with glasses and white beard	He represents knowledge, virtuous and magical power.
Human	Facial Expression (Hagrid)	Mighty, determined	A middle-aged man with long	He represents might, determination, and support.

			dark hair and beard	
Human	Facial Expression (Kreacher)	Frightening	An old Alf-like man with donkey ears and long nose.	He represents fear and anxiety and seems to have bad magical powers.
Phenomenon	Color	Dark Blue	Sky Color at night	Silence
Phenomenon	Color	Black	The darkness of castle	Anxiety, fear, mystery
Place	Castle	Castle	A middle age building	Middle age, fear, mystery
Action	Male and Female	Male and Female	Three teens Harry in the front two at the back	They appear to support each other, indicating their self-confidence.
Action	People	People	People sitting at a desk wearing cloaks	Occult and magical studies
Action	Eagle owl	Flying eagle owl	An eagle owl flying	Bad luck
Object	Boats	Boats on the sea	Boats ridden by black clothes wearing people under the moonlight.	Secrecy, fear
Object	Burning Chandeliers	Right and left bottom Corner	Two burning chandeliers	Solution, salvation, victory
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone'	Harry Potter and his struggle to get sorcerer's Stone

Picture 2: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

The Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets poster, at first glance, presents the film's protagonist Harry Potter and his friends Ron and Hermione to the attention of the audience. Harry Potter stands out with his sword in his hand, his student uniform, his sweaty and messy hair that shows he has come out of a tough fight, but with his brave and determined stance. The school crest on his chest indicates that he is from Gryffindor School. Right behind him, Ron

looks surprised and a little scared with his magic wand with a broken tip. The crest on his school uniform chest also shows that he is from the same school as Harry Potter. Hermione, on the other hand, holds the book tightly in her hand with her brave and determined look. She shows this stance as if she is sure that the one who reads and applies the book will be successful in the struggle. The interior of the old historical building belonging to the Middle Ages in the background gives the feeling that magic and wizardry activities are learned and practiced in such a place. In addition, Harry holds a medieval sword. Both the building and sword have historical messages. It is possible to see the surprised look of the free elf named Dobby in the lower left corner of the poster. His way of look seems to be astonishing, whereas its impact on the audience is frightening since it is like an alien. The inscription, *'Something evil has returned to Hogwarts!'*, makes the audience feel curious and a little afraid, thus the poster preparer aims to attract their attention linguistically. In addition, this time 'Harry Potter' is written in golden yellow, which connotes richness, prestige, success and power. The yellow color that the trio's clothes have implies the same message. Although the building and sword belong to the medieval ages, the uniforms of the actors are modern, which connotes that the modern children have passed the old times through a time tunnel.



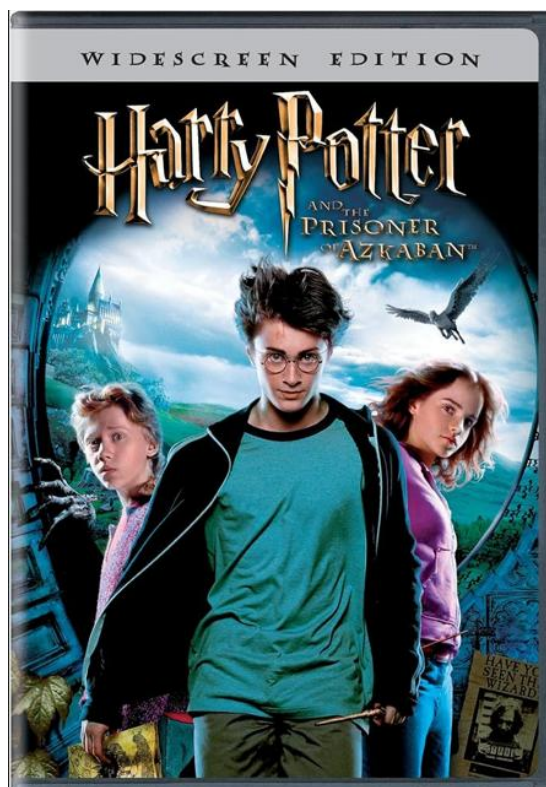
Picture 2. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret (URL 2)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
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Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Bravery	A teenage boy wearing glasses, holding a sword	Confident, fearless, mighty, intelligent
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	fear, astonishment	A teenage red-haired boy holding a broken wand	Scared, astonished
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Determined	A teenage girl with blond hair holding a book	Confident, determined, mighty
Phenomenon	Color	White	A white light at the back of teenagers	Characters will eliminate the problem and bring peace after struggle.
Phenomenon	Color	Black	Darkness in the bottom of the poster	Anxiety, mystery
Place	Inside the castle	castle	Multi floor castle rooms with historical engraving	Fear and mystery
Action	Male and female	Male and female	Three teens Harry in the front two at the back	They seem to support themselves after a tough fight and ready for another attack.
Creature	Facial Expression (Dobby)	Free Elf	An Elf's picture.	Frightened, confused, trying to understand what is happening
Object	Sword	An old sword	An old sword in Harry's hand.	Power, Might
Object	Broken magic wand	A magic wand	A broken magic wand in Ron's hand	The secret power that the wand had is gone now.
Object	Book	A quite thick book	The book Hermione clutched tightly in her hand	Knowledge is power, so do not give it up.
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. 'Harry Potter' sheds light around.	The magical and mystery struggles of Harry Potter and his friends in the chambers of secrets.

Picture 3. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

The Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban poster shows a stance symbolizing the togetherness of the leading characters of the film. In the front, Harry Potter poses with a confident look with the magic wand in his hand. The slight smile on his lips may be a sign that he has solved the problem or overcome the difficulty. In the back, Ron on the left and Hermione on the right are looking in the same direction. This shows that they are united in purpose and struggle. The bright color reflected in the clouds behind the trio seems to indicate that the weather will improve, and the problem will be solved. The castle on the left adds the mystery of magic and wizardry to the poster, while the Pegasus flying on the right denotes the bravery of the trio and togetherness of them against challenges. The castle is a symbol of medieval buildings, and it denotes that the story takes place in a historical environment. The skeletal hand seen on the left edge of the circular window shows the danger behind the trio. On the right, the book with the words 'Have you seen the Wizard' on it adds anxiety to the atmosphere. The object and the green leaf held by Potter in his right hand on the left of the poster show that the danger has passed. The poster has inscriptions such as 'prisoner of Azkaban', which historically and linguistically implies a historical prison, and its name, which are not used nowadays. Although there is a medieval castle in the poster, the trio wears modern clothes, which shows the diversity of the cultures.



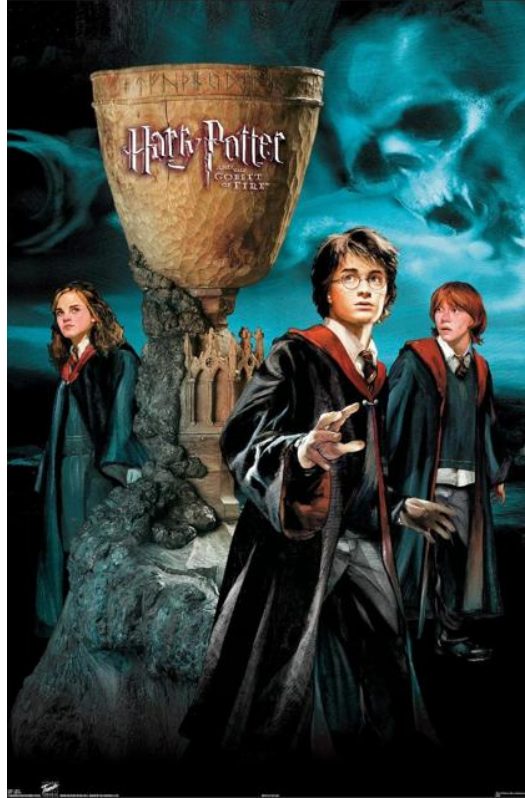
Picture 3. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (URL 3)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Happiness	A teenage boy wearing casual clothes holding magic wand in one hand and a poster in the other	Happiness of success, looking straight to the target with determination
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Curiosity, concern	A teenage red haired boy wearing casual clothes	Interest and anxiety and looking at the same target as his friends
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Supporter	A teenage blonde girl wearing casual clothes	Ready to help and looking at the same target as her friends
Phenomenon	Color	White	Circular window with white clouds	Characters eliminated the problem, so it is light and peaceful
Phenomenon	Color	Green	The leaves on the left bottom corner are fresh and green	Peace and tranquility
Phenomenon	Color	Black	The upper part of circular window is black	Previous difficult and dangerous vicinity.
Place	Front of circular window	Exit	The trio are in front of the window	Exiting from difficulty and danger safe and sound
Action	Male and Female	Male and female	The trio, Harry, Ron and Hermione	The trio look the same direction focusing on the target with supportive manner
Creature	Flying Pegasus	A flying Pegasus	On the right middle of the window there is a Pegasus looking at the trio.	Togetherness and bravery of the trio.
Object	Book	A book	A book with pictures on it held by Harry	Power, might, knowledge
Object	Book	A book	A Yellow cover book on which It writes ‘have you seen the wizard?’ and there is a picture of man’s head.	Approaching danger

Place	Castle	A historical castle	A historical castle stands on the sharp cliffs with lights coming from its windows	The historical castle shows the culture and magic activity places in a frightening but powerful way.
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban is written on the top of the poster on a black ground	The title shows that the trio will safely run away from the prison.

Picture 4. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

The focal point of the Harry Potter and the Goblet of the Fire poster is the historical goblet made of wood in the center. The name of the movie is also written on the goblet. The color of the goblet denotes peace and happiness. This picture implies that the entire story of this movie will take place around this goblet. There is a single line of mysterious letters surrounding the goblet on the outer upper part of the goblet. This line implies that the goblet is magical and shows that the old magicians used such inscriptions to make magic historically. The goblet stands on an interesting base in the poster and its handle is strangely decorated, which denotes that it is an artefact that has historical and cultural value. The trio of Harry Potter, Ron and Hermione, dressed in school uniforms, stand around the goblet, at its three corners, which means that the goblet is in the center of action. All three leading actors have bright red color over their robes, which connotes that they are alarmed, yet they have the energy to cope with the challenge. Harry is in the foreground of the trio. Harry is anxiously waiting, as if he has taken his guard against a great menace. This stance gives the impression that he is preparing to fight his opponents. Hermione is on the left of the picture behind the goblet's base. As always, she is strong, intelligent and determined, and somewhat condescending to her opponent. However, Ron, who is on the right of the poster behind Harry, is looking anxiously at a different direction from the direction his friends are looking. The dark color of the sky is partly illuminated by the blue flame coming out of the goblet and partly by the skeleton head with sharp canines on the right. It means that there will be a great fight and in the end the trio will defeat their enemy. The Ghost Skeleton head and the dark environment show that attack and fear are trying to capture the trio together, which gives the message of terror, threat and tension.



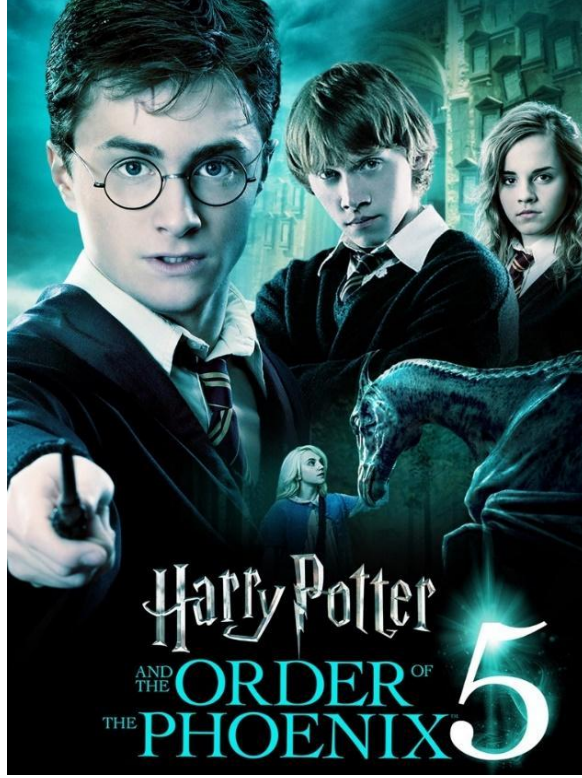
Picture 4. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (URL 4)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Agitated	A teenage boy with glasses and wearing school uniform	A little uneasy, locked to his rival ready to attack
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Frightened, astonished	A red haired teenager wearing school uniform	Looking frightened in a different direction having seen a danger.
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Scornful, determined, brave	A blonde girl wearing a school uniform.	Looking at the same direction t as Harry with scornful and brave look
Phenomenon	Color	Dark and grey colors	Grey skeletal ghost dark ground and sky	Frightening and scary atmosphere
Phenomenon	Color	Green	The goblet's color	The goblet represents nature, luck, freshness
Place	Open area	Open area	Goblet in the open area	The trio are around the goblet in the open air connoting the trio are defending it
Action	Male and female teenagers	Young magicians	The trio are around the goblet	The trio seem to be defending the goblet against rivals
Creature	Skeletal ghost	Skeletal ghost	In the right upper corner, a skeletal ghost	The skeletal ghost is in danger of a terrible attack from rivals.
Object	Goblet	Goblet	On a strange base a historical goblet	The magic goblet with spiritual beings in chooses the racers for competition

Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	In the middle stands an old goblet on a strange base	The goblet has magical powers to choose the racers and produces blue flames due to spiritual creatures
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Picture 5. Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix

In the poster of Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix movie, the trio are in the focal point. Harry, holding his magic wand, seems to challenge the difficulties. With his professor-like eyeglasses, he looks smart and intelligent. Ron, at a little back of Harry, has a confident and determined look on his face. Hermione, as usual, exhibits a determined and brave look at the back. The environment at the back shines white in the castle, which is the indication of salvation after the difficulties. Here the sign, castle, reminds us of medieval ages historically, which means the story takes place in the castle. Down above the title, a blonde woman is stroking the head of a Thestral, which is quite different from a Pegasus with its physical and biological dark skeletal skin and reptile-like head. The creature seems to obey the woman's order. The image of Thestral denotes that it is a creature of legend. The creature has both cultural aspects in terms of semiotics. The word 'phoenix' has linguistic meaning, which makes the audience think of the prehistoric times and the terminology used at that time. The clothes that the trio are wearing are the clothes of students, yet their robes seem to be medieval type. The clothes have messages about the culture of the time. The dominant color in the poster is dark color and its fading shades of grey, green and blue. Dark and grey color connote the challenges waiting for the leading actors.



Picture 5. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (URL 5)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Bravery, determination	A young boy wearing eyeglasses and school uniform and holding a magic wand.	Determination, bravery, intelligence
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Knowledgeable, determination	A young boy with red hair and school uniform.	Determination, self confidence
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Determination, bravery	A young girl with blonde hair wearing school uniform	Determination, bravery
Human	Facial Expression (Blonde woman)	Self-confidence, affection, authority	A young woman with blonde hair wearing a blue cardigan and dress, stroking the head of Thestral.	Self-confidence, affection, authority
Phenomenon	Color	Grey and Black	The upper part of the poster behind the trio shines white yet down is black.	Salvation from difficulties and danger.

Place	Castle	Castle	Inside the historical castle	Secrecy and scary
Action	Males and female	Two young boy and a girl	The trio are ordered in a line.	Locked to the target with determination and self-confident
Creature	Thestral	Thestral	A Thestral, a horse like creature with bat wings, dark skeletal body and reptilian head.	Scary but sweet, seems to be an assistant to people in need.
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	The title is written down on the poster in the middle.	It gives the sense of friendship of the trio with Phoenix

Picture 6. Harry Potter and Half Blood Prince

In the poster of Harry Potter and Half-Blood Prince, as in the other posters, Harry Potter is in the focal point, and his two devoted friends, Ron and Hermione, a bit back on the right, but this time Dumbledore, the well-known wizard, comes just after Harry. This scene implies that Dumbledore will help the trio in the fight. The trio and their professor, Dumbledore, are holding their magic wands as if they are ready to fight against a foe. They are all wearing casual clothes. The look in Harry's eyes is a kind of fearless and fighter look with his stance. Though Dumbledore sets a step back as if he tries to protect himself from a rival, he has no fear in his eyes. On the right, Ron, with the fearless look in his eyes, seems to challenge the enemy/enemies as if uttering the phrase 'come and see what will happen'. Hermione, a step back of Ron, looks brave. At the back part of the characters rises a tower-like building in a modern city, but on the left just over Harry's left shoulder appear some modern skyscrapers, which connote that the challenge is in different centuries and vicinities. The buildings denote that although magicians lived in the medieval ages with their wizard power, they can affect modern times historically. The style of Harry Potter title is a sign of threat and fear with its color and shape. The dominant dark color and its fading tons are the sign of a hard battle to be fought between the leading characters and enemies. The cultural aspect of the poster is that the clothes that the characters wear are from modern times but for Dumbledore who wears an old coat and has long white hair and beard. In addition, the poster linguistically uses the phrase "Half-Blood Princess" to express the tension between blood ties and power relations in the fictional world. It also symbolizes the interaction of magical elements and limited identities. In

semiology, this term can be considered as a complex structure that shows the confrontation of the main character with both a certain society and his own internal conflicts.



Picture 6. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (URL 6)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Bravery, determination	A brave young boy wearing casual clothes and holding a magic wand	Ready to fight since he is brave, determined and knows the power of magic wand.
Human	Facial Expression (Dumbledore)	Protecting, fearless	An old man with long white hair and beard and moustache	Though he stepped back, not frightened, but ready to attack.
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Self-confidence, determined	A young boy with short red hair, wearing T-Shirt and blue jeans holding a magic wand	Determined and fearless against foes, ready to attack them.
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Calm, fearless	A young girl with long wavy dark hair and casual clothes	Though she stays behind, she is fearless and always

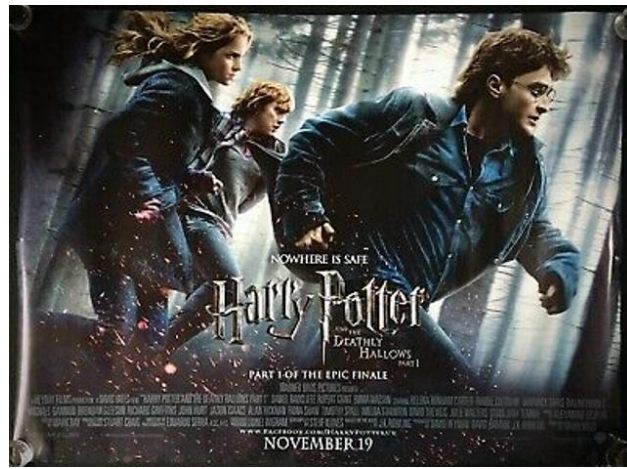
			holding a magic wand	ready to attack the rival.
Phenomenon	Color	White, grey and black	The middle zone of the poster has bright light making the color white, towards upper and lower parts it gradually darkens.	After a tough and unhappy time, a happy and comfortable time will come.
Place	City	A modern City	At the back, a modern city's silhouette is visible with high-rise buildings, towers and houses.	The characters will save the city and people living there
Action	Males and female	Three males and a female	Harry, Dumbledore, Ron and Hermione have a determined stance with their magic wands in their hands	The togetherness & determination make the people brave enough to stand against the foe under the leadership of their teacher, Dumbledore.
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	The title is written above the characters and the city as 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince'.	The title denotes the struggle between Harry and his friends and Voldemort with the help of a book called 'Half-Blood Prince'.

Picture 7. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1

In the Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1 poster, the trio are trying to run through a dense forest with their full speed. They wear warm clothes, which means that the weather is cold. The fact that they run straight forward makes the audience think that they are trying to reach their target in full determination. They are running towards the light. That means that salvation is at the place they are running towards. The thick forest makes their running challenging and dangerous, but they must cope with it. Again, Harry Potter is in dominant form because he stands out better than the other characters. The splattering red flakes are an ominous

sign of the battle that lies ahead. The use of dark color reflects the feelings of horror and tense. The date below shows the date when the movie will be released to give the audience the message of invitation. On the poster, it says, “Nowhere is safe”. With this expression, it is intended to give the message that the entire world is unsafe; namely, everywhere is dangerous semiotically. The written form of ‘Harry Potter’

The Deathly Hallows symbol represents deep human desires for power, immortality, and escape from death. The symbol also represents destiny and man's relationship with death. From a semiotic perspective, the symbol's meaning offers a wide range of interpretations, relating to both individual and universal themes.



Picture 7. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1 (URL 7)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Determination, and power	A young boy with dark hair and glasses wearing warm clothes.	He is trying to reach his destination with determination.
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Determination, resistance	A young boy with red hair wearing warm clothes and running.	He is trying to reach his destination with determination.
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Determination, resistance	A young girl with blonde hair wearing warm clothes and running.	She is trying to reach his destination with determination.
Phenomenon	Color	From Black to white	The white light comes through the trees, but the left side is black.	From danger and difficulty to salvation and ease

Place	Forest	A thick pine forest	There are many high pine trees here.	Dark and thick forests connote difficulty and danger.
Action	Male and Female	Two males and a female	The trio are running to their target.	The trio try to reach their target urgently
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1	The trio resist against their enemy, try their best to kill his soul

Picture 8. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-2

The poster of the final movie of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 displays the trio at the focal point; however, Harry is at the forefront as he is the leading character. The trio seem to finish their duty since all of them are slightly injured and exhausted, yet they still hold their magic wands in their hands. On the ground, there are some sparks and rubbles, which denotes that a great fight has been fought between the trio and their enemy in the end of which Harry and his friends defeat their foe. Although the trio are looking ahead, all students and professors of four wizard schools look another direction behind the trio, which cannot be seen by us. It is contemplated that it is the last soul part of Voldemort killed by the main characters. In the background of the poster, towering medieval buildings rise into view, symbolizing safety from once-threatening dark-souled wizards. These buildings denote that the art of magician and wizard was very common in medieval ages. It can be clearly seen that there is a cultural diversity between the leading characters in the front and the wizard professors and students in the background. The leading characters are wearing modern clothes; however, the others are wearing traditional medieval clothes that teachers and students used to wear. The poster employs a dark color scheme dominated by varying shades of black, grey, blue, and green, which effectively evokes an atmosphere of horror and tension.



Picture 8. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-2 (URL 8)

Sign	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation
Human	Facial Expression (Harry Potter)	Tired, but happy	A young boy with dark hair and glasses wearing casual clothes and holding the magic wand.	Tired from a deadly struggle, but victorious.
Human	Facial Expression (Ron)	Calm but tired	A young boy with red hair wearing casual clothes and standing behind Harry on the right and holding the magic wand.	Calm but tired after a tough struggle with the foe.
Human	Facial Expression (Hermione)	Tired but happy	A young girl with blonde hair wearing warm casual clothes and standing behind Harry on the left and holding the magic wand.	Exhausted but happy because the victory was won against their enemy.
Phenomenon	Grey	Grey	Because of the grey clouds, dust, and smoke from the ruins everywhere is grey, but there is white light coming through the old buildings.	The danger and challenges end and the hope starts to rise.

Place	The old magic country	The old magic country	There are many historical buildings and towers at the back and the rubble of a building in the front.	The historical magic country and its schools, yet Voldemort and his school are destroyed
Action	Male and Female	Two males and a female	The trio are standing in the front part of the poster.	The trio are injured and very tired as they had a great deadly fight against Voldemort that they overcame.
Statement	Title	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part-1	The trio do their best and are injured and very tired from the struggle but fulfill their mission.

Conclusion

Harry Potter movies were rather popular in the previous two decades, and the audience both liked the story of the series and enjoyed the magic actions of young magicians educated by different teachers at different schools in a middle-aged castle exhibiting linguistic, historical and cultural aspects. The Harry Potter movie series has different posters for each movie. Like movies, the posters also convey linguistics, historical and cultural elements, which need to be cautiously analyzed in terms of semiotics. When analyzed together, the posters display linguistic characteristics through the titles denoting various magician names and magical terms. For example, 'Goblet of the Fire' denotes a historical cup; however, in terms of magic it connotes some magical power. Another example: Azkaban was a fortress on an island in the middle of the North Sea. It served the magical community of Great Britain as a prison for convicted criminals. Azkaban was built in the 15th century and it had been in use as a detention facility since 1718. Using certain charms, Azkaban was hidden from the Muggle world, and was unplottable (Fandom, n.d.). Therefore, the movie posters try to make the audience feel the atmosphere of the magical world by using the terminology. In addition, the posters serve as a very valuable historical source since they set the middle age environment and magical activities, which were very common then. The first one is the frightening feature of castles both outside and inside. The medieval buildings, the lifestyle of the wizards, their atmosphere, inside and outside of the buildings convey many historical messages in terms of semiotics. In some cases, the actors wear medieval clothes, sometimes they, especially the leading actors, wear modern

clothes, so that the audience feel as if they feel the taste of both periods. The posters convey many cultural elements from the middle age and types of clothes and magical customs. Last but not the least, Harry Potter movie posters transfer many semiotics messages. Furthermore, the messages hidden with the objects and colors of the posters convey secrecy, terror, and tough fights against foe magicians. The posters also give the message of loyalty, togetherness, faith and honesty, which are helped by magical power. The animals and creatures have frightening, bravery and secret semiotic messages sensed by the audience. The authors think that this article will have a contribution to the semiotics analyses of posters; however, they suggest that detailed research is entailed to be performed in this field.

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