



THE ANALYSIS OF BEST-SELLER FANTASY NOVEL COVERS IN 2019 THROUGH MULTIMODAL LENS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analyze ten covers of 2019 best-seller fantasy novels through multimodal. The research method used was qualitative research. The objects in this research were ten book covers of 2019 best-seller fantasy novels. The instruments used were documentation that aimed at obtaining data, including relevant books, study, activity reporting, relevant research data. Content analysis was used to obtain the data. This study used five phased cycles in analyzing the data, i.e. compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The result of analyzing the novels is emphasized in two focuses, including representation and interactive function. Several novels have a narrative aspect, while others contain conceptual interpretation, which is part of a representative function. It was very challenging to interpret some implicit meaning of the symbols in some of the novels as it requires mythical knowledge. Therefore, it is expected that understanding the implicit meaning comprehensively will make readers easier to understand the story outline of the novel.

Keywords: *semiotic resources, representational function, interactive function, multimodal.*

INTRODUCTION

Book is one of the vital objects in life. Apart from being a source of insight, books can also be a source of entertainment. Moreover, a book is divided into two sections, including cover and content. The book cover

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is a material protector that provides essential information regarding its content. Therefore, a cover design should be attractive as it tends to attract readers to purchase a book, and the expression "do not judge a book by its cover," which is commonly used to emphasize that the cover is not an essential element of a book part might be irrelevant to this study. The cover contains certain information for the readers. As stated by Drew and Sternberger (2005, p. 8), "the cover is a book's first communication to its reader, a graphic representation not simply of its content, but of its point in history" (as cited in Gallagher, 2015). It means that a book cover could give the reader the general idea and historical background of the book. There are several types of books available in the market, including novels. Novel is a type of literary work and one of the most popular genres is fantasy novels. This genre contains imaginary stories that are likely impossible to happen in the real world, such as the palace's story in the sky, a witch riding a broom, a fairytale, animals that can talk, and others (Encyclopedia, 2020). One of the aspects that attracts the reader to purchase to read a novel is its cover design. Therefore, the cover is the most crucial part of any printing book or work. Barrett (2018) said the appealing book cover display could attract readers in the first 3 seconds. The book cover designs often define and communicate the contents or the book sales' absolute commercial value as a visual language text. The book cover could influence the readers, make the readers excited or disinterested to read the book. The novel cover designed typically includes various visual signs or symbols., Those symbols are used to convey messages or knowledge of the context. In order to be able to understand the meaning of those elements, these signs or symbols can be analyzed through semiotic analysis.

Based on the statements outlined above, two questions are formulated regarding the novel covers and the study objective is to find out how the covers are presented based on the interactive meaning of the ten book-covers from 2019-bestseller fantasy novels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotics

Semiotic is a research method used to study signs or symbols that give an in-depth meaning to the viewers. It composes meaning based on how the viewers interpret the signs or symbols. Similar to that statement, Herrmann (2018) stated that semiotics is a thought system that tries to explain how and why people find meaning in any object seen or

associated with it. The analysis of signs and symbols that concentrate on words is a sign of communication. Moreover, semiotic is the study of sign that lets people gather more knowledge and communicate better and more effectively by understanding the signs around them. According to a semiotician Eco (1979) who focused on communication semiotics, semiotics deals with everything that can be taken as a sign. Studying semiotics makes the researcher aware that these signs and codes are usually transparent, and it disguises our reading task. By making the codes clearer with the interpreted signs, we can do semiotics analysis on them. The semiotic analysis offers a way to connect particular texts to the message system in which they operate. This study uses a semiotic framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) proposed a framework called the ‘grammar’ of visual design: Just as grammars of language combine in clauses, sentences, and texts, visual ‘grammar’ describes the way in which depicted elements—people, place, and things—combined in visual ‘statements’ of greater or lesser complexity (as cited in Kress and & Leeuwen, 2006, p. 1).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) stated that visual images, like words fulfill the metafunctions of the depiction on the experiential world (representational meaning), the interaction between the participants depicted in visual design and their viewers (interactive meaning), and the compositional arrangements of visual tools (compositional meaning). In other words, this structure aims at systematizing the regularity of the picture elements used to render sense; it means defining the visual communication grammar. Visual grammar considers a social semiotic type of language. The use of vocabulary and other semi-forms in a speech makes the argument substantive and vivid. Visual grammar is used to analyze the discourse in various semiotic forms. Here is a table showing the visual grammar framework.

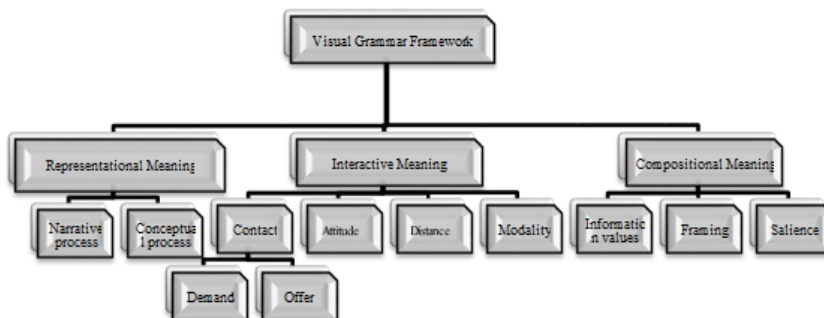


Figure 1. Visual Grammar Framework

The following sections will provide a summary of the framework that is relevant to this research analysis.

Representation

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) identified the relationship of two patterns or processes, i.e. narrative and conceptual. Narrative process is the definition of an image associated with a vector; a line generated by image components. Vectors can be created by acting bodies, limbs, or tools when participants represent something to or for each other. Moreover, the participant creating the vector is called ‘actor,’ and the participant receiving it is the ‘goal.’ One type of narrative processes called ‘reactional processes’ occurs in images that form a vector and create a reaction rather than an action.

Unlike narrative processes, conceptual processes are static (no vectors) and represent participants in terms of their “more generalized, more or less stable and timeless essence, class or structure or meaning” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). In other words, conceptual processes involve representing ideas in images where participants can be analyzed, classified, or defined (e.g., charts, tree structures, scientific diagrams). The two main types of conceptual processes used in analyzing this research are analytical and symbolic processes. For example, a photograph depicts a model (carrier) wearing a business suit and tie (possessive attribute). By minimizing background and other contexts, the visuals bring the reader’s attention to the business outfit, represented by features that define minimal features (striped shirts, ties, and pants). Another example of this is a map.

Interactive

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), semiotic resources related to gaze, social distance, horizontal angles, and vertical angles are how these relations are communicating.

Multimodal Text

In particular, the study of multimodal discussion has been used to interpret meaning-making in various genres, such as movies, advertisements, posters, photographs, etc. It can be inferred that understanding multimodality has been commonly used in discourse research to interpret the underlying meaning. A multimodal text can be taken from explaining modes and their semiotic relations only as a text containing those modes. It can also be regarded as a multimodal ensemble of meanings realized through more than one mode and relationships between the modes (Ananda et al., 2019). Moreover, multimodal texts include picture books, textbooks, graphic novels, comics, and posters, where a particular mix of visual written languages and spatial modes convey meaning to the readers.

Book Cover

Book covers have indeed gradually become the subject of serious attention. A limited number of studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between the content and the book cover. Those three sections have their meaning and are the first part that the readers can examine (Suhaimi et al., 2019). The purpose is to know the outline of the book's contents, understand the meaning, and the writing that appears on the front of the book cover. The novel cover designs are likely to be inspired by society who usually becomes a trendsetter. The information contained on the cover intends to inform and attract consumers to purchase the book. Furthermore, a book cover's function is to protect the product and make it easier for the reader to carry the book not to be easily damaged.

Fantasy Novel

Novel is a type of book we can find in bookstores or libraries. Grant (2016) claimed that the genre provides a valuable reference frame that helps readers to identify, select, and interpret texts. It defines the literary style and type that the works are classified according to their common characteristics, either in formal style or in subjects' treatment. A fantasy novel can be fiction or non-fiction. Usually, a novel tells about human

life having interaction with its environment. Zimmerman (2010) stated that the word fantasy comes from the Greek word 'Phantasia,' which means to make visible. The term fantasy is a form of the literary genre that cannot occur in real life. Fantasy usually involves magic or something that happens on an undiscovered planet and an unknown world.

Fantasy stories do not possibly happen in the real world. A lot of people argued that fantasy can be employed to evaluate the demands of the real world. The theme and arrangement of a fantasy story involve a combination of technology, architecture, and language. In addition, the most exciting thing about fantasy stories is the existence of witches, mystical creatures, and animals that talk like humans and other things that have never happened in real life. Furthermore, a book cover is one type of language communication containing messages about the book material that the author wants to convey. It communicates a message in a common language and often gives the message a real meaning. Most of the fantasy novels have an enticing cover appearance and are often difficult to understand. The semiotic analysis may also promote interpreting the purposes and implications of fantasy novels cover themselves. They updated their product all the time, including covers of fantasy novels downloaded by researchers as research material in 2019.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type

This research used qualitative techniques and defined and represented a semiotic analysis that uses Grammar Visual theory by Kress and van Leeuwen on fantasy novel covers. It is qualitative because it is written based on qualitative data. According to Flick (2013), qualitative data analysis describes and interprets linguistic (or visual) content to make claims on implicit and explicit aspects and meaning-making processes in the content and what it represents. Qualitative research may attempt to describe in some detail a phenomenon.

Research Object

The object in this research was the book cover of the fantasy novel cover itself. The sign, such as images and text that appear on the novel cover can be analyzed using semiotics. The other aspects were the interactive dimension which includes gaze, social distance, and modality that appear on the 10 book covers of the 2019-Best Seller Fantasy Novel.

Kinds and Source of Data

The primary data source for the research was the 10 (ten) book covers of 2019 Bestseller Fantasy Novels. The researcher only focused on the fantasy genre novels of the fantasy best-seller novel list on Amazon website. The reason for choosing the novel covers as research material is because the novels were awarded the bestselling award on the website for the fantasy novel category in 2019.

Research Instrument

The instrument is the tools required to obtain the information. Corbin and Strauss (1997) described that document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic material. Documentation aims to obtain data directly from the research, including relevant books, study, reporting activity for relevant research data.

Technique of Data Collection

Content analysis was used in this research to obtain the data. Luo (2020) stated that content analysis is a method used to identify patterns in recorded communication. It gathers knowledge from various texts that can be in written, verbal, or visual forms for content analysis such as in books, newspapers and magazines, speeches and interviews, web content and social media artwork, photos, and films. In this research, the researcher would like to focus on interpreting and understanding the semiotic meaning that appears on the fantasy novel covers.

Technique of Data Analysis

Yin (2011) stated that qualitative analysis has five-phased techniques to collect the data. This study used the 5 (five) phased cycles in analyzed the data; compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding.

Compiling is the first step in data processing. At this point, the researcher gathered all related novel covers. Then, the researcher distinguishes the covers that have been collected in a variety of sections. *Disassembling* is the second stage. The researcher then separated the covers to be included in the review, namely the novel's cover with the fantasy genre arranged in table format for analysis. *Reassembling* is rearrangements and recombination encouraged by clearly defining or organizing the fantasy novel covers in lists and other table forms. In the


interpreting stage, the researchers analyzed and described the research data, namely the cover analysis of fantasy novels using the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). *Concluding*, at this last stage, the researcher concluded the results of the research. The researcher explained the data and research results. The data and results that the researcher would explain are (1) The ways the participants were represented; 2) The relationships suggested between the viewer and represented participants; Recommendations, conclusions must be relevant to interpretation. Conclusions help explain more interpretations in this study.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results



This part describes the 2019-Best Seller Fantasy Novel analysis based on the visual grammar theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The book covers used in this research were obtained from the 2019-Best Seller Fantasy Novel on the Amazon website. This part aims to answer the two research questions by providing an analysis of the novels, where the represented subjects are based on the representational meaning of the 10 book covers of 2019-Bestseller Fantasy Novels. The represented subjects relate to the viewers according to gaze, social distance, and modality aspects based on the interactive meaning on the 10 Book Covers from 2019-Bestseller Fantasy Novels. The following is the cover analysis based on representational and interactive meaning using Kress and van Leeuwen framework.


Table 1. Results of the study

No	Cover	Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference	Representatio nal Function	Interactive Function		
				Gaze	Social Distance	Modality
1		Twilight by Stephanie Meyer / Doobinin, G. (2005)	In the cover, the apple is portrayed as forbidden fruit. In Genesis, it is told about	In Genesis, it is told about Adam and Eve's story, who were banished from heaven when	Social aspects are related to different relationships that can be clarified by the gap shown by the	It is conveyed visually by instruments showing increases or decreases in how true an image should be drawn,




No	Cover	Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference	Representational Function	they eat that fruit.	Interactive Function	including the preceding useable modality indicators. Then, illumination, a scale from the fullest reflection of light and shadow to its absence. In terms of contextualization, it has a low scale because the absence of background and the representation of the participant's aspects are not apparent.
2		Ninth House by Leigh Bardugo/ Hayes, K. (2019)	This kind of mechanism is considered symbolic suggestive. It can be seen in the picture, the black- scaled snake doing curling downwards.	Some pictures are presented to us implicitly. There is no contact made. In the picture, there is no facial expression of the represented participant.	On the social distance aspect, the image of the snake's entire body is visible.	It has a minimum scale of color saturation, which is dominated by black and white color. The black color is the absence of color. Black is a formal, sophisticated, and prestigious color.
3		Disenchanted by Brianna Sugalski/ Bowater, C. & Moses, C. (2019)	This novel has two participants, a woman and a man looking at the viewer. Ribeiro asserts that women's clothing developed into various	In this image, the participant makes contact with the viewer. In this case, the two participants face and look directly at the viewer. They may think of viewers as their enemy.	The figure image on the cover shows their head area to the waist is visible on the social distance aspect.	The figure image on the cover shows their head area to the waist is visible on the social distance aspect.


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No	Cover	Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference	Representational Function	Interactive Function		
4		Dead Until Dark by Charlaine Harris/Desimini, L. (2001)	national costumes during the French Revolution. It also relates to the novel's contents about the main character, Lilac. The male participant's gaze faces the right side, and the female participant's body is facing the right with her eyes closed. This action is in line with the novel's content, which tells of a blonde woman named Sookie Stackhouse, who can read other people's minds.	The male participant's eyes are facing the right, not the viewer. In this case, the represented participants, namely the vampire and the woman, did not directly contact the viewer because they did not look directly at the viewer.	The relationship between the represented participant and the viewer is general and does not have personal closeness	The modality marker relates to how the viewer assesses the credibility and accuracy of an image. The position of the novel's author name slightly obscured the participants. The described atmosphere is dim. The brightness scale value is also minimal because it describes the atmosphere before the night and looks natural
5		Sin & Magic by K.F. Breene/Breene, K.F. (2019)	The actor takes action against an unknown goal. In non-transaction, it only involves	The contact is realized through gaze on the image, like the participant's gaze looking at the viewer.	On the social distance aspect, this image's cover has close personal distance. Hall says that we carry invisible	The image has a low scale of color saturation in this modality aspect because the colors depicted look more washed-out or pale.

No	Cover	Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference	Representational Function	Interactive Function
6		<p>Of Blood and Bone by Nora Roberts/ Roberts, N. (2018).</p>	<p>actors and vectors without any purpose. To be concluded, it is according to the novel's title, which deals with sin and witchcraft, told of a girl named Alexie, usually called Lexie.</p> <p>It will feel the need to be more grounded because we need stability in our life. People are attracted to us, like honeybees. As we have seen in the elaboration above, the meaning conveyed on the cover of the novel is related to the contents of the novel's story itself; the use of symbols or signs above is related to this</p>	<p>boundaries to allow certain types of people to enter.</p> <p>The image's strength has a full value scale in the depth aspect because the participant is portrayed in a stable and parallel position right in the middle of the novel's cover.</p> <p>The symbols that appear on the cover have no participant to make the social distance to present the relationship between the participant and the viewer.</p> <p>The modality aspect is quite good because the viewer can see the object that the producer or image-maker wants to show in the image, a feather burns by fire.</p>

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<i>N^o</i>	<i>Cover</i>	<i>Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference</i>	<i>Representatio nal Function</i>		<i>Interactive Function</i>	
7		The Tiger at Midnight by Swati Teerdhala/Curtis, D. & Marsicano, M. (2019)	novel's contents. There is only a reactor that comes forth in this sample. The tiger is a spirit animal; its definition represents willpower, bravery, and personal strength.	In this image, no participant looks at the viewer.	The relationship between the represented participant and viewer is impersonal. It explains a public relationship and no personal closeness between the figure on the cover and the viewer.	In this image, no participant looks at the viewer. In this case, the figure on the novel's cover wants the viewer to focus on her activity.
8		The Lord of The Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien	Several symbols can be analyzed on the cover of the novel, dominated by a red background. In certain traditions and philosophical practices, the circle is the eternal life-force or spirit that holds our reality in motion. It is a symbol of vitality, completeness, fulfillment, and perfection.	In this image, no participant looks at the viewer.	The symbols that appeared on the cover have no participant to make the social distance to present the relationship between the participant and the viewer.	This novel cover has a low scale of color saturation on the modality aspect, dominated by two colors: red and gold. Besides, the illumination and brightness have a low scale because the novel cover's background has unmodulated color.
9		Who Fears Death by Nnedi Okorafor/	The female's body is seen turning her back on the	On the novel's cover, the participant does not make a direct	Concerning this novel, the image distance is far from a social	This aspect is related to how the viewer assesses the credibility of an

No	Cover	Novel's Cover Title/ Art Reference	Representational Function	gaze at the viewer. The woman seems to have something that hurts her, making her unwilling to face the audience directly.	Interactive Function	distance, showing the whole figure and the space around the participant visible. It means that the female model's relationship as represented participant and viewer can be analyzed as formal and interpersonal.
		Muinde, Y. (2010).	audience, which means that she refuses to make a direct gaze because she does not want to get the viewer's attention or prepare for something that she will do later.			image. The cover used an orange color as the background.
10		Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling/ GrandPré, M. (2015).	The lightning symbolizes a terrible event and negativity. Why is this message essential and confidential? The envelope has an "H" seal, which means that the message was sent from someone or an institution with an initial "H" seal.	The first aspect of the interactive function is the gaze. On the cover, the owl's gaze is indirect. It is looking at something and turns away from the viewer.	The subject on the cover of this novel is an owl. It can be said that the participant is not so close to the viewer.	This cover has a medium color saturation of the modality element. It can be inferred that the cover has a lesser degree of modality.

Discussion

The analysis of these novels was emphasized on the two foci, i.e. representation and interactive function. The narrative process concerns unstable, active participants who deliver the image's meaning through action and reactionary processes (Ananda et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the conceptual process deals with the static and motionless actors who

convey the visual image's meaning by sub-processes, such as grouping, analytical and symbolic processes.

There are several differences in representing the images and symbols on the novel covers in this research. First, these aspects connect to the real meaning of the images or symbols on the novel covers. Sometimes these aspects can or cannot be related to the novel content. Besides, the symbolic process which is part of the conceptual meaning was also analyzed on several novel covers. It requires in-depth analysis, which must discover the meaning of the symbol from other relevant sources. For example, there is a symbol that uses one eye, which appears in *The Lord of the Rings* novel; thus, one eye's meaning must be related to the mythology, which must be explained more broadly.

Whereas in the interactive concept intends to see how the relationship between viewer and participants. It can be seen by paying attention to the gaze aspect that sees how the participant makes contact with the viewer. Meanwhile, social distance clarifies the distance and social relations displayed between the participant and the viewer. The last one is the modality aspect which explains how an image's credibility is displayed. Moreover, the covers have a high modality in some novels, making the novel pictures look real and alive. This high modality also influences and attracts readers to purchase the novels.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), in the narrative process, the participant acts in two ways; actional and reactional. In actional, the participant is depicted in three ways, actor, vector, and goal. While the reactional shows reactor and phenomena that appear on the image. Moreover, conceptual images do not require action or responses, but their more generalization, such as classification, analytical and symbolic processing. In other words, in this process, the participants in the image do not take action. Furthermore, the interactive function is about how the viewer sees the participant in the image. It can be in eye gaze, social distance, and modality generated in the image. In other words, it shows how the viewer views the participant and how the participant. Moreover, modality in a picture is another aspect related to interactive meaning. It also refers to the viewer's perspective on assessing the credibility of an image. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the modality levels are divided into high, middle, and low modality, described by color, depth, illumination, brightness, etc. There are several differences in representing the images and symbols on the novel cover in this research. First, these aspects connect to the real meaning of the images or symbols on the novel's cover. It is related to

the contents of the novel story. For instance, there are novel covers with representational meaning, including the narrative aspect, and some others are the conceptual aspects. Sometimes these aspects can or cannot be related to the novel content. Besides, several novel covers also analyze the symbolic process, which is part of the conceptual meaning. It requires in-depth analysis, which must discover the meaning of the symbol from other relevant sources. For example, there is a symbol that uses one eye, which appears in *The Lord of the Rings*; thus, one eye's meaning must be related to the mythology, which must be explained more broadly. Whereas, in the interactive concept, it has an intention to see the relationship between viewer and participants. It can be seen by paying attention to the gaze aspect that sees how the participant makes contact with the viewers. Meanwhile, social distance clarifies the distance and social relations displayed between the participant and the viewers. The last one is about the modality aspect, which explains how an image credibility is displayed. Moreover, the cover has a high modality in some novels, making the novel pictures look real and vivid. This high modality also influences and attracts readers to purchase the novel.

The seven previous studies mentioned in Chapter 2 used semiotic analysis in diverse study fields such as journals, commercials, and books. The researcher examined the fantasy novel covers using semiotic analysis within the multimodal dimension scope in conjunction with this study. This research also used Kress and van Leeuwen's theory (2006) about a visual grammar design that focuses on representational and interactive analysis though it focused on examining the fantasy novel covers. The novels were rated best-seller on Amazon's website in 2019. Kress and van Leeuwen's impressive research offers the readers significant benefits of using their theory to analyze semiotic areas. This very comprehensive theory explains visual grammar, something new for the current literature. People can also implement the theory for not only novels but also other materials as previous research studies used the theory for advertisements, posters, films, and many others. Perhaps using this framework in designing an English textbook will also be very helpful. The teachers, educators, or anyone in language acquisition areas is expected to use this theory and becoming more knowledgeable of a design, be it meaningful or not in the semiotic aspect.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study aims to apply the visual grammar theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to the 10 book covers of 2019-best-seller fantasy novels. The researcher concluded that to understand the meaning conveyed by an image, especially the images or symbols displayed on the covers of fantasy novels requires in-depth and further analysis. This novel cover analysis focused only on the representational and interactive meaning. The representational meaning analyzed the narrative and conceptual aspects, while the interactive meaning analyzed the aspects of gaze, social distance, and modality.

It cannot be denied that this research involves some of the limitations set out such as the limited time frame which resulted only ten novels were analyzed. It is also very challenging to interpret some of the symbols in such novels because they are derived from the producer's thoughts and ideas even though the novels chosen are based on the researcher's personal preferences as the materials are already available. Thus, it cannot be denied that the analysis may contain a subjective perspective that may be incongruent with other studies.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that the people who discuss multimodal text need to enrich their knowledge more as it cannot depend entirely on mastery and understanding only an endeavor to interpret the meaning of an image. We should practice how to read pictures, which is considered insufficient to represent thousand words. The educators or anyone involves in language acquisition studies are suggested use the theory in designing teaching materials or textbooks. Lastly, the researcher also suggests other researchers who want to conduct similar study to use broader sources and more compositional aspects such as image layout, letters, the font used, and others.

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