



# **Semiotic Analysis of The Logo and Sign Posts as Found in PT KAI Medan 2024**

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## **Abstract**

This research focuses on a semiotic analysis of the logo and directional signs at the PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) Medan Station. Utilizing Peirce's theory, this study identifies nine semiotic sign elements emerging from the analysis, with symbols dominating as the most frequently occurring element. The logo of PT KAI Medan, characterized by the use of dark blue color and a line crossing the letter "A," symbolically represents stability, professionalism, and reliability of the company, while directional signs within the company's environment are strategically positioned to provide clear information to station users. This research provides a profound understanding of the use of semiotic signs in assisting station users' navigation and offers a foundation for further research on the effectiveness of semiotic sign usage in the context of public transportation and its impact on user experience.

**Keywords:** PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI), Medan Station, Semiotics, Logo, Directional Signs, Peirce's Theory, Visual Communication, User Experience;

## **Introduction**

Linguistics is a scientific discipline that focuses on the study of language. This field encompasses various aspects of language, such as structure, history, the usage in different contexts, and the processes of language learning and processing by humans. Additionally, linguistics also investigates the development and changes in language, as well as how language is influenced by cultural, social, and psychological factors. Thus, linguistics aims to understand everything related to language, both descriptively and explanatorily.

Semiotics is a branch of linguistic science that studies signs and meaning systems in language and communication. It includes the analyses of how signs are produced, interpreted, and used to communicate in various social and cultural

contexts. The history of semiotics can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, but modern semiotics is influenced by the works of figures such as Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Roland Barthes. Semiotics studies signs, including signifiers (the physical form of signs) and signifieds (associated meanings), with a focus on analyzing the structure of signs within systems and the influence of cultural and social contexts. Subdisciplines of semiotics, such as structural, social, cultural, and visual semiotics, each examine specific aspects of sign analysis. Research methods in semiotics vary, including text analysis, iconographic analysis, and content analysis, depending on the object of study and theoretical approach. Semiotics is used in various fields, including literature, visual arts, mass media, and advertising, to understand how signs influence viewers and consumers, and continues to be a major focus in linguistic and cultural studies.

A logo is a graphic symbol representing a company or brand. Its purpose is to provide a visually memorable identity and clearly communicate the the message of the brand to the audience. Logo often consist of symbols, icons, or a combination of both. In the business world, Logo is crucial as they can influence customers' perceptions of the brand or company. Logo design should be unique, easily recognizable, and reflect the character or values of the brand it represents.

PT KAI (Perseroan Terbatas Kereta Api Indonesia) Medan Trains are a ground transportation tool that have become a mobility solution in various countries. The history of trains began in the 19th century during the rapid industrial revolution in Europe. At that time, trains emerged as a leading innovation in overcoming mobility constraints by connecting remote regions. When George Stephenson built his first steam locomotive, the "Rocket," in 1829, it marked the beginning of the revolutionary era of railway transportation. On September 27, 1825, the world's first railway line was opened to the public between Stockton and Darlington in England. This success marked a turning point in the history of ground transportation. After widespread development worldwide, in Indonesia PT KAI expanded its branches throughout Indonesia, including PT KAI in Medan.

The main advantage of trains as a ground transportation tool compared to other transportation methods is speed, large carrying capacity, and efficiency. By using rails, trains can achieve high speeds, connect major cities, and overcome difficult terrain. The large carrying capacity allows for mass transportation of passengers and goods efficiently, making it the preferred choice in meeting the mobility demands of society and the logistical needs of industries. Over time, train technology continues to develop. In the 20th century, electrification and dieselization of trains improved energy efficiency and reduced environmental impact. At the same time, innovations in train design and station facilities continue to improve the user experience.

The Writer's goal in writing this thesis is to uncover the meaning of the Logo and signposts used by PT KAI Medan. By applying semiotic analysis based on Charles Sanders Pierce's theory, the Writer aims to understand each Company Logo

and Sign Posts clue contained in the PT KAI Medan environment, as well as explore their visual meanings that may not be directly interpreted by users. This analysis is expected to provide in-depth insights into the identity and values conveyed by PT KAI through the Logo used by the company and the Sign Posts found in the station environment.

## **Method**

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach using observation to explore the meaning in Logo and Sign Posts at PT. KAI Kota Medan. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand the phenomenon deeply, particularly in the context of Logo and Sign Posts, which are part of the company's visual identity. The data obtained by the Writer is sourced from the PT KAI Medan Unit Station. The data used consists of relevant symbols of PT KAI Medan in the year 2024.

Additionally, more data to be gathered will include signposts located within the station area, such as information on service tariffs, directional signage for accessibility, and several other signposts. In the context of this research, the Writer implements a documentation approach, following the guidelines provided by Sugiyono (2018), to gain a deeper understanding of the KAI Logo and Sign Posts at KAI Medan Station.

The documentation approach provides the researcher with the ability to gather data and information from various sources such as books, archives, documents, written records, and images. The focus of data collection in this study is the KAI Logo and Sign Posts found at KAI Medan Station. Data analysis is the process by which an individual works with a dataset to collect, sort, identify patterns, uncover significant findings, and determine relevant information to convey to others. The analysis process begins with filtering all data obtained from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents.

## **Findings and Discussion**

According to what has been explained in the previous chapter, the author presents data consisting of company logo images and Sign Posts, which were directly gathered from data sources namely KAI stations located in the city of Medan. Then, the data will be analyzed by the author using Charles Sander Pierce's theory. Data analysis is conducted with the aim of understanding Pierce's triadic concept, which depicts the correlation between Objects (such as icons, indexes, symbols), Signs (including qualisigns, sinsigns, and legisigns), and Interpretants (which include themes, decisigns, and arguments)

The data can be found in the Appendix on the last page of this research.

## **Data Analysis**

The collected data will first be classified by the author using the method of qualitative research, and then the existing images will be selected, identified, and classified by the author one by one into the types of signs in Charles Sander Peirce's triadic sign theory. The images and data to be analyzed contain qualisigns, sinsigns, legisigns, icons, indices, symbols, themes, dicentsigns, and arguments expressed in "semiotic analysis on the Logo and Sign Posts found in PT KAI Medan". Subsequently, the author will analyze the data.

## **Findings**

The Logo as found in PT KAI Medan serves as a visual representation that embodies the core values upheld by the company. The use of dark blue color in the logo reflects stability, professionalism, reliability, and trust. In the context of PT KAI, this color signifies the company's commitment to providing consistent and dependable services to its customers, while also asserting PT KAI's position as a leader in the transportation industry. Another significant element in the logo is the line crossing the letter "A," which symbolically represents the railway. The railway is not only an integral part of PT KAI's business but also symbolizes travel, connectivity, and mobility. Through this element, the logo not only identifies the company but also conveys PT KAI's vision and mission of connecting various regions and facilitating safe and comfortable travel for the public.

Signposts within the company's environment play a crucial role in conveying visual messages to users and employees. Each element on the signposts is carefully planned to ensure that the messages conveyed are not only clear but also aligned with the company's goals and values. The placement of signposts near stairs at stations is not coincidental. This location is strategically chosen to alert users to potential hazards around the staircase area, while also reaffirming PT KAI's commitment to user safety. Similarly, the image of a mother caring for her child in the nursing room reflects PT KAI's attention and care for the needs and comfort of users, especially mothers and children. By providing facilities such as comfortable nursing rooms, the company not only meets users' practical needs but also strengthens its image as a company that cares about customer welfare. Comparing research with the same topic can provide additional insights into how the topic is handled and analyzed by other researchers, thereby strengthening the conclusions drawn from the research under discussion. Here is an example of a comparison with another study on the same topic:

A previous study conducted by Syamsuhaidi in December 2023, titled "Efforts to Develop Tourism Through the Creation of Directional Signs and Maps as Supporting Facilities for the Tourism Destination of Labuhan Haji Village," also investigated the role of logos and company signage in reflecting values and conveying messages to stakeholders. In that study, the author highlighted the importance of color selection, design, and other visual elements in forming a strong company identity. The results showed that logos and company signage are not only identification tools but also representations of company culture, values, and vision.

Meanwhile, this study adds further understanding by focusing on semiotic analysis based on Peirce's theory. The authors explore how elements in the PT KAI logo and signage in the company's environment serve not only as visual representations but also as representamen's that lead to specific interpretations and understandings. By dissecting these elements using a semiotic approach, the authors identify how logos and signage are not just communication tools but also symbols that strengthen the company's identity and convey messages to stakeholders. Thus, this research provides an additional contribution to understanding the role of logos and company signage in the context of semiotic analysis, while also expanding insights into how companies use visual elements to convey messages and values to the public.

## Discussion

In this research, the analysis conducted through Peirce's theory provides a profound understanding of nine different semiotic signs, ranging from qualisign to argument. Considering the total of 82 data points analyzed, this analysis offers a comprehensive overview of how logos and directional signs can be comprehended and accepted by the public. Peirce's iconic approach emphasizes that the representation of objects does not rely on the objects themselves but on their unique characteristics. Therefore, this research significantly contributes to deepening the understanding of the use of iconic signs in social contexts. As a recommendation, further exploration of this research could involve expanding the scope of analysis or exploring relevant new aspects.

Furthermore, it is essential to highlight the role of sign posts at stations, particularly at PT KAI Medan. As a provider of railway transportation services, PT KAI utilizes numerous symbols and visual signs to communicate with passengers and the general public. Further analysis of the semiotic signs used by PT KAI Medan can provide valuable insights into how the company interacts with customers and how its visual messages are understood by the public. This is relevant not only in the context of visual communication but also in understanding the dynamics of the relationship between public transportation companies and their users. Considering the significant role of PT KAI in Indonesia's transportation infrastructure, such research could make a meaningful contribution to designing more effective communication strategies and engaging various segments of society.

## Conclusion

Based on Peirce's theory and the conducted research, the author successfully identified nine semiotic sign elements that emerged in the analysis of logos and sign posts at PT KAI Medan Station. Out of the total 82 analyzed data points, various sign elements representing diverse concepts in visual communication were found. The data revealed that icons appeared in 27 instances, indexes in 5 instances, symbols in 30 instances, qualisigns in 16 instances, egisigns in 1 instance, decisigns in 1 instance, and arguments in 1 instance. Thus, the most dominant

semiotic sign element on signage at PT KAI Medan Station is the symbol, indicating a preference for symbol usage in conveying information to railway users.

This analysis provides a deeper understanding of how PT KAI Medan utilizes various semiotic signs to assist the public in navigating the station. Although symbols dominate, it is important to remember that all semiotic sign elements play a significant role in visual communication. This study can serve as a foundation for further research on the effectiveness of semiotic sign usage in public transportation contexts and how it influences user experience. In conclusion, understanding the semiotic elements in visual design can help enhance communication effectiveness and information readability for the public.

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