

Glossary of semiotic terms

Abstract: The following document contains my definitions for terms relating to and involving the field of semiotics

1. biosphere - The biosphere is the zone of life on Earth.
2. code - code is a system of rules to convert information—such as a letter, word, sound, image, or gesture— into another form, sometimes shortened or secret.
3. conative function (of communication) - A function of language or, more generally, communication, that is focused on, and concerned with influencing the behaviour of, the addressee, and thus concerned with persuasion.
4. conceptual metaphor - the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another.
5. conceptual metonymy - A name that is rejected because a valid name (based on another member) already exists for the same group.
6. connotation - a commonly understood cultural or emotional association that any given word or phrase carries.
7. context - context refers to those objects or entities which surround a focal event, in these disciplines typically a communicative event, of some kind.
8. conventional sign - Any of various signs, such as words or symbols, that acquire their function through linguistic custom.
9. denotation – the literal interpretation of a word or phrase.
10. Deconstruction - a method of critical analysis of philosophical and literary language which emphasizes the internal workings of language and conceptual systems, the relational quality of meaning, and the assumptions implicit in forms of expression.
11. Diachronic - concerned with the way in which something, especially language, has developed and evolved through time.
12. discursive symbols - occur over a period of time. Hence, it is not possible to perceive the whole unit except through the cognitive process of short term memory.
13. emotive function (of communication) - interjections and other sound changes that do not alter the denotative meaning of an utterance but do add information about the Addresser's (speaker's) internal state.
14. Firstness- Firstness is something that exists in itself.
15. Haptics - Haptics is the science and technology of transmitting and understanding information through touch.

16. Gesture - a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning.
17. Gesticulant – often expressing gestures
18. Grammar - the set of structural constraints on speakers' or writers' composition of clauses, phrases, and words.
19. Hyperreality - an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality.
20. Icon - a direct imitation of the object or concept. Icons bear a physical resemblance to what's being represented.
21. image schema - a recurring structure within our cognitive processes which establishes patterns of understanding and reasoning.
22. Interpretant - the effect of a sign on someone who reads or comprehends it.
23. Index - indexicality is the phenomenon of a sign pointing to (or indexing) some object in the context in which it occurs.
24. infinite semiosis - the signified is endlessly commutable—functioning in its turn as a signifier for a further signified.
25. Kinesics - body movements and gestures regarded as a form of nonverbal communication.
26. Langue - a language viewed as an abstract system used by a speech community, in contrast to the actual linguistic behavior of individuals.
27. metalingual function (of communication) - the ability of language to talk about its own features.
28. Modernism - Modernism refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life.
29. Myth - method of inquiry into the implicit signs present in the mental element of interaction with nature, or within a community.
30. Narrative - a spoken or written account of connected events; a story.
31. natural sign - Natural signs, sometimes called primary signs, are connected with their signified by causal relationships, concomitance, or likeness. And their acquisition is directed by both objective reality and past experience (memory).
32. Oculistics - the study of eye movement, eye behavior, gaze, and eye-related nonverbal communication.
33. Object - An object (or semiotic object) is a subject matter of a sign and an interpretant.
34. Paradigm - a paradigm is a distinct set of concepts or thought patterns, including theories, research methods, postulates, and standards for what constitutes legitimate contributions to a field.
35. Paradigmatic - serving as a typical example of something.

36. Parole - actual individual utterances, from language
37. phatic function (of communication) - the part of communication which keeps open the line of communication itself.
38. poetic function (of communication) - focuses on "the message for its own sake" (how the code is used) and is the operative function in poetry as well as slogans.
39. Postmodernism - a broad movement that developed in the mid-to-late 20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism, marking a departure from modernism.
40. Poststructuralism - Poststructuralism encourages a way of looking at the world that challenges what comes to be accepted as 'truth' and 'knowledge'. Poststructuralists always call into question how certain accepted 'facts' and 'beliefs' actually work to reinforce the dominance and power of particular actors within international relations.
41. presentational symbols – symbols perceived as complete units
42. Proxemics - the branch of knowledge that deals with the amount of space that people feel it necessary to set between themselves and others.
43. referential function (of communication) - what is being spoken of, what is being referred to. A context is necessary from which the object of communication is drawn.
44. Representamen - the product as distinguished from the act of philosophical representation
45. Representation - the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a certain nature.
46. Secondness - Secondness must be related to something else
47. Semiotics - the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.
48. Semiosphere - The sphere of semiosis in which the sign processes operate in the set of all interconnected Umwelts.
49. Semiosis - the process of signification in language or literature.
50. signifying order - the products of human beings and, therefore, subject to being changed constantly by them to suit any new need or demand.
51. sign (think something relatively abstract) - an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else.
52. sign (think Peirce) - a sign is something that stands in a well-defined kind of relation to two other things, its object and its interpretant sign.
53. sign (think Saussure) - Saussure, describes the sign and its arbitrary relation to reality. A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern. The link between signal and signification is arbitrary.

54. Signal - a gesture, action, or sound that is used to convey information or instructions, typically by prearrangement between the parties concerned.
55. Signified - the meaning or idea expressed by a sign, as distinct from the physical form in which it is expressed.
56. Signifier - a sign's physical form (such as a sound, printed word, or image) as distinct from its meaning.
57. Structuralism - a method of interpretation and analysis of aspects of human cognition, behavior, culture, and experience that focuses on relationships of contrast between elements in a conceptual system that reflect patterns underlying a superficial diversity.
58. Symbol - A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship.
59. Symptom - a sign of the existence of something, especially of an undesirable situation.
60. Synchronic - concerned with something, especially a language, as it exists at one point in time.
61. Syntagm - an elementary constituent segment within a text. Such a segment can be a phoneme, a word, a grammatical phrase, a sentence, or an event within a larger narrative structure, depending on the level of analysis.
62. Syntagmatic - a syntagm is a chain which leads, through syntagmatic analysis, to an understanding of how a sequence of events forms a narrative.
63. Text - A semiotic study of text scrutinizes the various signs in the text in an attempt to characterize their structure and identify potential meanings, especially socio-cultural meanings.
64. Thirdness - a fundamental category in Peircean philosophy consisting of the connecting bond between firstness and secondness and expressive of law, generality, purpose, and habit.
65. unlimited semiosis - the signified is endlessly commutable—functioning in its turn as a signifier for a further signified