



Interpreting Symbols in Photographs: A Semiotic Perspective.

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Abstract

This research consisted of 3 objectives. They are to 1) investigate the Semiotic Principles of Photography Symbols as they apply to visual communication in photography, 2) explore the historical and Cultural Dimensions of Photography Symbols, and 3) analyze the Role of Technology in Shaping Photography Symbols. This study employed a qualitative research methodology to investigate photographic symbols through the lens of semiotic theory. The research process integrated multiple methods, including a comprehensive review of the literature, field investigations, and the application of case studies to validate the proposed explanatory model. The study's findings indicate that the iconic representation of photographic symbols encompasses nine key dimensions: (1) fundamental principles of colour theory, (2) application of colour in photographic composition, (3) influence of colour on photographic effects, (4) utilisation of colour harmony in photography, (5) symbolic meanings associated with colour, (6) incorporation of emotional and symbolic significance through colour, (7) employment of colour contrast and blending techniques, (8) foundational principles of colour harmony, and (9) strategic use of colour contrast in photographic imagery. The dissertation analyzes the picture expression of photographic symbols, the narrative expression of photographic symbols, the emotional transmission of photographic symbols, and, lastly, the activity of photography production through the lens of semiotics. Color theory is one of the fundamental concepts that a photographer must understand. Color is defined by the wavelengths and frequencies of visible light. Color discrepancies are primarily caused by variations in light absorption and reflection. The iconic representation of photography symbols has been discussed

Keywords: application, photography, symbols, significance

Introduction

Photography has evolved into a pervasive and influential means of visual communication, playing a crucial role in shaping our understanding of the world. As a visual language, photography employs symbols and signs to convey messages, emotions, and narratives. The study of these symbols within the field of photography from a semiotic perspective provides a theoretical framework to explore the complexities of visual communication. Semiotics, as a field of study, originated from the work of scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. It delves into the analysis of signs and symbols and their interpretation within different cultural and social contexts. Applying semiotic principles to photography allows us to go beyond the surface level of images and decipher the underlying meanings embedded in visual elements. The development of photography as an art form and a documentary tool has been accompanied by a conscious and subconscious utilization of symbols. Photographers, knowingly or unknowingly, incorporate symbols into their work to enhance communication and provoke reactions from viewers. Whether it's the choice of subject, framing, composition, or post-processing techniques, symbols are integral to the photographer's toolkit. Despite the ubiquity of photography and its role as a powerful form of visual communication, there exists



a gap in our understanding of how symbols within photographs operate from a semiotic perspective. While numerous studies have explored the aesthetics, technical aspects, and cultural significance of photography, there is a need for a focused investigation into the semiotic dimensions of symbols in this visual medium. The problem lies in the limited exploration of how symbols contribute to the construction of meaning in photographs and how they are interpreted by viewers. Understanding the language of photography necessitates an examination of the signs and symbols employed by photographers and the ways in which these symbols interact with cultural, historical, and contextual factors. (Broughton, K. (2011)& Bowen, T. (2020).

Photographers often utilize symbols deliberately or unintentionally to convey messages, emotions, or narratives. However, a systematic analysis of these symbols, considering their semiotic implications, is lacking. The problem to be addressed is the absence of a comprehensive understanding of how symbols operate within the visual language of photography and how they contribute to the overall semiotic framework of an image. Additionally, the evolving nature of photography, influenced by technological advancements and changes in societal norms, introduces new challenges and opportunities in the interpretation of symbols. The problem extends to the need for an updated and nuanced understanding of how contemporary photographers navigate the semiotic landscape, considering the impact of digital technologies, social media platforms, and a globalized visual culture. (Campbell, P. (2006). Davidson, H., & Perez, T. (2019).

Research Objectives

- 1.To Investigate the Semiotic Principles of Photography Symbols as they apply to visual communication in photography.
- 2.To Explore the Historical and Cultural Dimensions of Photography Symbols.
- 3.To Analyze the Role of Technology in Shaping Photography Symbols.

Literature Review and Concepts

The world of photography is rich with visual elements that go beyond mere representation. Photographs are not just frozen moments in time; they are compositions carefully crafted to convey messages, emotions, and narratives. By delving into the realm of semiotics, we can unravel the layers of meaning embedded in the symbols present within photographic images. The semiotic perspective allows us to examine how signs and symbols in photography function as a language, influencing our perception and understanding of the world. Whether it's a portrait, a documentary photograph, or a work of art, each image is a visual text that speaks to viewers in a language of signs that may be universal or culturally specific. (Davidson, L.,2017). This study aims to explore the semiotics of photography symbols, and investigate how these visual elements serve as carriers of meaning including the ways in which photographers employ symbols to convey messages, evoke emotions, or challenge preconceptions. Through a semiotic analysis of selected photographs, this study seeks to uncover the intricate interplay between the signifier (the symbol itself) and the signified (the meaning it represents). Additionally, this study considers the cultural, historical, and contextual dimensions that influence the interpretation of photographic symbols. Symbols can carry diverse meanings in different cultural or social contexts, and understanding this variability is crucial for a comprehensive analysis. Based on embarking on this exploration of photography symbols through the lens of semiotics, it focuses on contributing to a deeper



understanding of the visual language that shapes our perception of the world captured through the camera's lens. (Harrison, J.,2009). Five researchers did the research based on symbolism in photography as follows:

1.Jia YaoCheng, In 2023, he published a paper 《Preliminary Study of Symbol Communication and Self Display of Photography》,the samples are 500 Photos, The final findings are with the advent of the era of picture reading, photography, which is good at image, has become an important means of information dissemination. From the perspective of semiotics, photography is a dissemination of visual symbols through complex coding. The audience can understand and understand the objective information of symbols according to their own experience and knowledge reserve, and form subjective judgment.

2.Zhang YiYang,, In 2023, he published a paper 《The cultural memory behind the lens —— is based on the perspective of semiotics》,the samples are 500 pieces of photojournalism,The final findings are as a theoretical tool, semiotics can help the audience to deeply explore the cultural connotation and historical information in photography works, enhance the understanding and respect for different cultures, serve as a medium of cultural exchange, and enrich the research field of photography art.

3.Li ZiLiang and Zhu AiMin, In 2022, they published a paper 《Symbol analysis of constructive subthreshold disaster news photography》,the samples are disaster news photojournalism award-winning works at the 29th-31st China Journalism Awards,It analyzes its portrait, directivity and symbolic visual symbols, anchored language symbols, metaphors and metaphors and rhetoric methods,The final findings are the news pictures in the disaster news photography report are more real, vivid, vivid and intuitive than the text, which can directly mobilize the emotions of the readers. At the same time, due to the strong social traction of disaster events themselves, news photography reports can achieve the positive effect of negative factors and bring huge positive social effects.

4.Wang XiaoYa,In 2021, she published a paper 《Study of photographic language in the field of semiotics》,the samples are 500 Photos, The final findings are photography language is more to express the internal factors and implicit factors indicated in the photos formed through photography.

5.Zhang Qiao,In 2020,she published a paper 《Analysis of the "self" in Chinese contemporary photographic art from the perspective of semiotics》,the samples are 500 art photographic works, The final findings are with the development of The Times, contemporary photography art has become more diversified and inclusive. Chinese photography artists and the public involved in the creation of "we media" are constantly updating the dimension of photography art, from "photography" to "image". And no matter what kind of group, there is no lack of "self" symbols in the works, trying to achieve content and form, thinking and expression of "self", some naked strong, some euphemistic, like "personification" symbol rhetoric and language, become a kind of image expression of aesthetic ideology.

Conceptual / theoretical framework

1. This study contributes to the advancement of semiotic theory within the realm of photography, offering a nuanced understanding of how symbols operate as a visual language. It enhances our comprehension of the semiotic principles underpinning the interpretation of symbols in photographic imagery.

2.The study enhances visual literacy. It equips viewers, photographers, and educators with tools to decipher and critically engage with the complex visual narratives embedded in photographs, fostering a more profound appreciation of the art form.



3. The research provides valuable insights into the historical and cultural dimensions of symbols in photography. Understanding how symbols have evolved and vary across cultures enriches our awareness of the diverse ways in which images communicate meaning within different societal contexts.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method to explore a study of photography symbols from the perspective of semiotics. This process requires multiple research methods, including literature research and field investigations, and the use of case studies to validate the explanatory model. The literature review comprehensively summarizes the existing research and related theories of photography symbols. This helps to fill and establish the theoretical and empirical foundation for photography symbols. Conducting on-site investigations as part of a study on photography symbols from the perspective of semiotics involves physically visiting locations where photographs were taken or where visual symbols are present. This approach allows researchers to gather context-specific information, observe environmental factors, and gain a deeper understanding of the semiotic elements within the photographs. By incorporating on-site investigation methods, the study enhances the depth and richness of the semiotic analysis by considering the real-world context in which symbols are embedded. The case study method includes using the perspective of semiotics involving an in-depth analysis of specific instances or cases where photographs with significant symbols are presented. Case studies provide an opportunity to explore the complexity of semiotic elements within a particular context, allowing for a detailed examination of symbols, meanings, and their cultural or social implications. Overall, this study adopts a qualitative research method to conduct a comprehensive survey of photography symbols and its performances. The combination of literature research, field investigation, and case study methods enables people to understand the symbols and cultural significance of photography symbols from multiple perspectives. (Crow, D.,2003). García-Sánchez, F., Therón, R., & Gómez-Isla, J.,2014).

Documentary Research.

This study provides an extensive review of literature on photography symbols as an important reference in the writing process. The insights gained from this literature study contribute to the understanding of relevant theories in photography symbols research and provide valuable support for current research. Literature research provides a comprehensive overview of the current research status of photography symbols, identifying and categorizing its features from a semiotic perspective, and examining its significance.(Blackwell, P.,2017).

Fieldwork.

To fully understand the cultural traditions of photography symbols, participation in the photography is crucial. Participation in the photography is an important method for observing and analyzing the symbols and plot arrangement of photography symbols from different perspectives. Through this method, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the various symbols that appear in photography, and deepen their understanding of the current situation and evolution of photography symbols. In order to conduct effective field investigations and participation in the photography and typical examples, researchers can explore the language, elements, and symbolic meanings of photography symbols within the framework of semiotics. Using this method, this article aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the cultural significance of photography symbols. (Broughton, K. ,2011).

Case Study

This article adopts a case study method to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed interpretation model of photography symbols in China. Therefore, this study first provides a



comprehensive background of Chinese culture and tradition, and places the analysis of photography symbols in a broader cultural context. Then analyze, classify, and classify photography symbols based on their significance and significance in rituals. In order to further understand their interpretation and communication, the symbolization of symbols was also studied. In addition, logical reasoning patterns and explanatory scope were explored to conduct in-depth analysis of photography symbols. The effectiveness of this explanatory model in explaining photography symbols in China was tested and validated by carefully observing them using multiple analytical lenses. This method enhances the understanding of the significance of photography symbols and traditional Chinese culture, and helps to protect and explain photography symbols culture. (Carter, R.,2017).

Population and samples

Population consisted of 500 pictures of photography symbols culture from 2015 to 2024, however the sample consisted of 100 pictures of photography symbols culture from 2015 to 2024 selected by simple random sampling. Qualitative research methods were adopted, including collecting data through literature research and field investigations, designing and distributing survey questionnaires targeting photography symbols . The questionnaire interviewed over 1000 participants, including people of different ages and cultural backgrounds. The main focus of this study was to analyze the characteristics of photography symbols, examine the significance of photography symbols culture, and also focused on the difficulties encountered by photography symbols in modern communication and possible directions for solving problems. This study adopted a semiotic approach to analyze photography symbols and their meanings, including their historical, geographical, and cultural backgrounds, as well as their social and psychological meanings. The study started with an overview of photography symbols culture , providing a background for analyzing the characteristics of photography symbols. Then, this study analyzed, and classified different cultural symbols of photography symbols, and examined their interpretation and dissemination from a semiotic perspective. In addition, the logical reasoning mode and explanatory scope was explored to conduct a comprehensive analysis of photography symbols culture. (Hamilton, F.,2011).

The questionnaires about photography symbols were designed. More than 1000 people were interviewed to find out people's acceptance and love of photography symbols .Next: Population were 500 pictures from 2015 to 2024, Samples were 100 pictures selected by simple random sampling and make a summary as the basis of my research.

Questionnaire on photography symbols

These are thoughtful answers to the photography symbols questions, each backed with relevant academic or scholarly references:

1) What comes to your mind when you see a photograph with a solitary tree against a sunset?

These are some answers:

A solitary tree against a sunset often evokes feelings of loneliness, reflection, or resilience. The tree can symbolize life, endurance, or solitude, while the sunset may signify the passage of time, closure, or transformation. This kind of image is typically interpreted as metaphorical or poetic. These answers were in accordance with Barthes, R's photographic elements. Barthes discusses the symbolic weight of photographic elements, particularly how objects like trees and lighting conditions influence emotional and narrative interpretation.



2) After viewing a photograph with a person looking directly at the camera, what emotions or messages do you associate with it?

These are some answers:

A direct gaze often conveys confrontation, honesty, confidence, or sometimes vulnerability. It creates a strong emotional connection, making the viewer feel acknowledged or challenged in accordance with Kress, G., & van Leeuwen's concepts who discuss "demand" and "offer" images, noting that a direct gaze (demand) engages the viewer and prompts interaction or emotional response. They discuss "demand" and "offer" images, noting that a direct gaze (demand) engages the viewer and prompts interaction or emotional response.

3) How would you interpret a photograph featuring an hourglass or clock based on the symbols?

These are some answers: Clocks and hourglasses are strong symbols of time, mortality, urgency, or the

inevitability of change. Their presence can imply a race against time, the fragility of life, or contemplations on the past and future in accordance with Hall's representation. Symbolic items like clocks are discussed in terms of semiotics and cultural encoding, representing abstract ideas through visual forms.

4) Do you believe that certain colors in a photograph convey specific emotions or meanings? If yes, please provide examples.

These are some answers:

Yes, colors strongly influence emotional perception. For example:

- Red can signify passion, danger, or love
- Blue often suggests calm, sadness, or depth
- Yellow may represent happiness or caution
- Black often conveys mystery, power, or grief

The answers are in accordance with Zettl's concepts about the colours. Zettl explores the psychological effects of colors in media and how they impact audience interpretation.

5) After viewing a photograph, how important are the facial expressions of the subjects in conveying a message or story?

These are some answers:

Facial expressions are crucial; they serve as visual cues for emotions, intent, and narrative context. They allow viewers to connect with subjects on a human level and interpret the story being told, especially in portraiture and documentary photography in accordance with Ekman & Friesen's concepts about facial expressions. Their research on facial expressions supports the idea that universal emotional cues in the face play a key role in non-verbal communication. These are thoughtful and comprehensive answers to the photography symbols questions:

1) What comes to your mind when you see a photograph with a solitary tree against a sunset?

A solitary tree against a sunset evokes a sense of isolation, reflection, and resilience. It may symbolize the passage of time, the cycle of life, or solitude in beauty. The contrast between the still tree and the fading light can also suggest endings, peace, or hope amidst silence.

2) After viewing a photograph with a person looking directly at the camera, what emotions or messages do you associate with it?

A direct gaze often communicates honesty, confidence, confrontation, or emotional intensity. It creates a sense of connection or challenge, as if the subject is directly addressing the viewer or inviting them into their world.



3) How would you interpret a photograph featuring an hourglass or clock based on the symbols?

An hourglass or clock is a powerful symbol of time, often representing urgency, mortality, the inevitability of change, or the fleeting nature of life. It can suggest themes such as reflection on the past, anticipation of the future, or pressure and deadlines in the present.

4) Do you believe that certain colors in a photograph convey specific emotions or meanings? If yes, please provide examples.

Yes, colors carry strong emotional and symbolic meanings. For example:

- Red: passion, danger, love
- Blue: calmness, sadness, trust
- Yellow: happiness, warmth, caution
- Green: growth, nature, envy
- Black: mystery, grief, power
- White: purity, peace, emptiness

These associations may vary slightly across cultures but are widely recognized.

5) After viewing a photograph, how important are the facial expressions of the subjects in conveying a message or story?

These are some answers:

Facial expressions are crucial for interpreting emotions, mood, and narrative context. They provide immediate, non-verbal insight into what the subject is experiencing, making them central to storytelling in photography.

6) How would you interpret a photograph with an open book or a stack of books as a focal point? What do you think it might symbolize?

An open book or stack of books often symbolizes knowledge, learning, curiosity, or storytelling. It can also imply wisdom, education, intellectual pursuit, or even a journey through ideas or time. Depending on the context, it might also suggest secrecy, unfolding stories, or open-mindedness.

Research Discussion

This part corresponded to three research questions that matched the three research objectives. The results of questionnaire on photography symbols with five results or insights emerged from a questionnaire on photography symbols, based on understanding, and interpretation.

1. Varied Interpretation of Symbols: Respondents may interpret common photographic symbols (like a red rose or a broken mirror) differently based on their cultural background, age, or personal experiences.

2. Symbol Recognition Gaps: Some participants may struggle to recognize or correctly interpret symbolic elements in photos, suggesting a need for more visual literacy education.

3. Emotional Impact of Symbols: Certain symbols (e.g., light/dark, water, birds) consistently evoke strong emotional responses, indicating their effectiveness in conveying mood or narrative.

4. Preference for Literal vs. Abstract Imagery: Results may show a divide between those who prefer clear, literal photography and those who enjoy abstract or symbolic imagery, helping artists tailor their work to their audience.

5. Influence of Prior Knowledge: Respondents with a background in art or photography are more likely to identify and appreciate symbolism, highlighting the role of education and exposure in interpretation



This part corresponded to three research questions that match the three research objectives. The three research questions are listed below:

1. How does semiotic theory guide the selection and integration of design elements to effectively convey the essence of intangible cultural heritage within an exhibition space?
2. What influences do different semiotic strategies in ICH display design affect audience engagement and interpretation?
3. How can display designers work with cultural bearers and communities to ensure that symbolic representations of intangible cultural heritage are culturally authentic and significant?

These are comprehensive, well-researched answers on semiotic theory in exhibition design:

1. How does semiotic theory guide the selection and integration of design elements to effectively convey the essence of intangible cultural heritage within an exhibition space?

Answer:

Semiotic theory—rooted in the study of signs, symbols, and meaning—serves as a foundational framework for selecting and integrating design elements in exhibitions showcasing, which includes oral traditions, rituals, performances, and craftsmanship, often lacks physical representation, making symbolic communication essential.

Using Peircean semiotics (icon, index, symbol), designers choose visual, spatial, and auditory signs that *stand in* for intangible practices:

- Icons: Visual elements that resemble the practice, such as images or video of a dance or ritual.
- Indexes: Objects or materials that are directly connected to the practice, such as worn instruments or tools.
- Symbols: Culturally learned signs like colors, patterns, or language associated with specific meanings.

Designers use these signs to *construct meaning through layers*—by placing artifacts, soundscapes, and multimedia in deliberate spatial arrangements, they enable visitors to interpret cultural messages. Color, light, texture, and form are all semiotic choices that frame cultural narratives and values. Ultimately, semiotic theory ensures that design elements are not just aesthetic but meaningful, culturally coded, and emotionally resonant, making ICH experiences accessible and immersive even when the heritage itself is non-material.

2. What influences do different semiotic strategies in ICH display design have on audience engagement and interpretation?

Answer:

Different semiotic strategies shape how audiences engage with and interpret intangible cultural heritage by affecting clarity, emotional impact, and cultural resonance.

- Narrative-based semiotics (storytelling through signs) helps audiences form emotional connections. When a design uses familiar narrative cues—like a journey motif for migration stories—it becomes more relatable and memorable.
- Multimodal semiotics, integrating visual, auditory, and tactile signs, deepens engagement by stimulating multiple senses. For example, pairing a symbolic dance video (icon) with the sound of traditional instruments (index) reinforces meaning.
- Participatory semiotics, where visitors engage with interactive or symbolic elements (e.g., writing a message in a traditional script), encourages active interpretation, increasing retention and empathy.



- Contextual semiotics ensures that symbols are embedded in meaningful cultural contexts, avoiding abstraction. When signs are decontextualized, visitors may misinterpret or exoticize the culture.

Effective semiotic strategies increase interpretive accuracy, emotional immersion, and cultural respect, enhancing the overall experience and preventing miscommunication or cultural distortion.

3. How can display designers work with cultural bearers and communities to ensure that symbolic representations of intangible cultural heritage are culturally authentic and significant?

Answer:

Designers must engage in collaborative, ethical, and participatory practices to ensure cultural authenticity and significance:

- Co-creation and consultation: Involving cultural bearers from the outset in design decisions, from concept to execution, ensures that signs and symbols used are culturally accurate and meaningful. This may include workshops, interviews, or ongoing feedback sessions.
- Emic perspectives: Designers should privilege insider (emic) understandings of symbols rather than imposing outsider (etic) interpretations. What may seem symbolic to a designer could have an entirely different or sacred meaning within the community.
- Cultural protocols and permissions: Some intangible practices involve sacred or restricted knowledge. Designers must seek consent, follow local customs, and avoid misrepresentation or appropriation.
- Narrative sovereignty: Letting communities author their own narratives—via quotes, videos, or guided storytelling—respects cultural agency and supports accurate symbolic representation.
- Iterative prototyping and validation: Involving communities in evaluating symbolic elements during the design process ensures that meanings are preserved, not distorted.

By prioritizing dialogue, transparency, and respect, designers can create exhibition spaces but also empower communities and support heritage sustainability.

Research Results

Researching photographic works from the angle of semiotics is a way to correspond the shooting and watching to the "code" and "decoding" concepts in Semiotics. When the shooting starts, the coding process starts. The whole process of filming and post-production is corresponding to the "code" process. The process for viewers to understand the works is corresponding to the "decoding" process. It is helpful to analyze the symbolic function of the image and works during the process of shooting and transmitting, and also conducive to analyze the social significance and social value of culture transmission from the perspective of semiotic. From the semiotic point of view, transferring the image element in the real world into image symbol that bears some culture, emotion and idea, is the new understanding and interpretation of photographic art creation from photographic works transmission, photographers creation and photographic interpretation. Interpreting how the photographic creation form symbol is from the angle of rhetoric on photographic image symbol to the photographic creation and expression, and analysis of the symbol of image rhetoric rationally. Research the art of photography from the perspective of semiotics, is the new ideas of exploring and improving the system of photographic language.



After data collection, this study summarized the collected data to provide theoretical support for subsequent analysis. This study aims to provide a more comprehensive dynamic interpretation model for photography symbols from the perspective of semiotics.

Data analysis supplemented background knowledge for photography symbols to ensure a better understanding of the background.

After completing data analysis, this study proposed an interpretation model for photography symbols. The case study involved photography symbols and applied explanatory models using these as examples. By analyzing the three elements of symbolization, logical reasoning mode, and explanatory scope, the effectiveness of the explanatory mode was tested and verified.

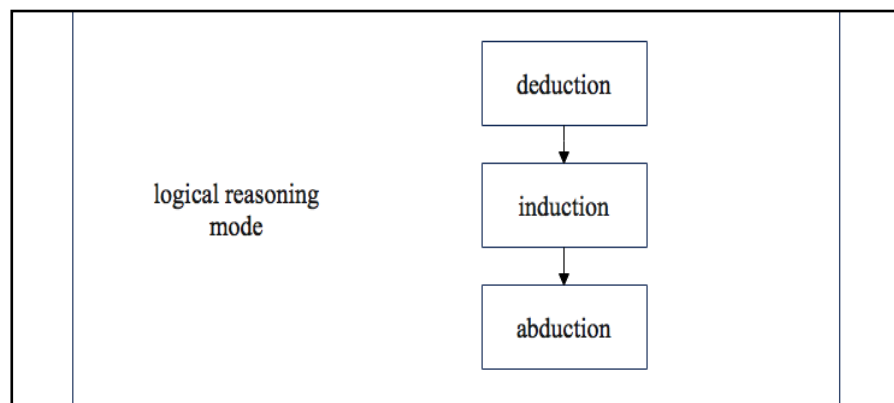


Figure 1 Data interpretation procedures 1-logical reasoning mode

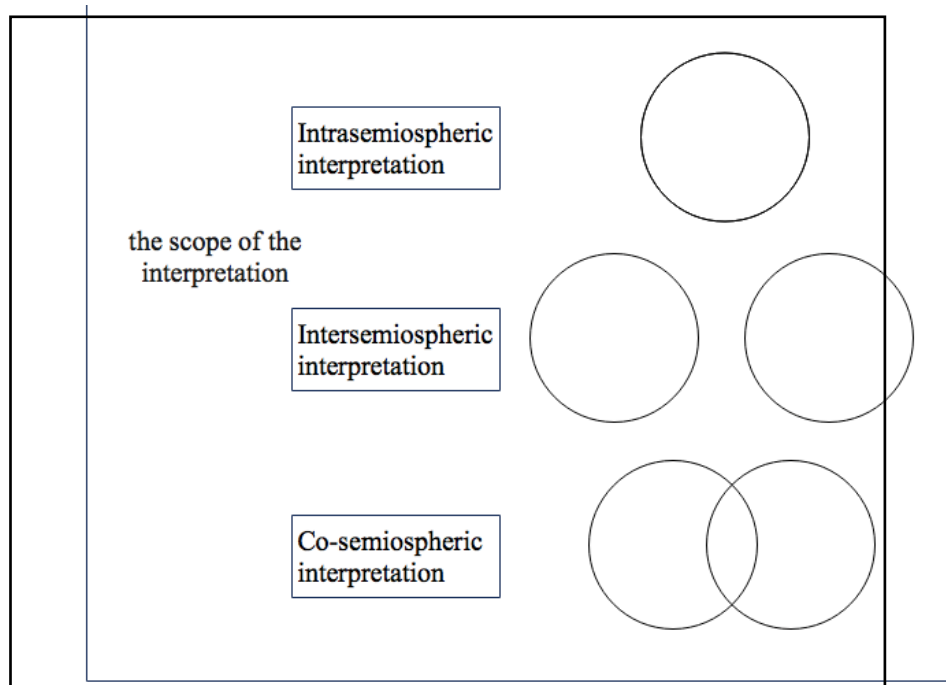


Figure 2 Data interpretation procedures 2-the scope of the interpretation.



The explanatory model proposed in the article provided a new perspective for semiotics in understanding photographic symbols and could be used for further research in this field as follows

Section 1: Color Symbols and Photography Expression

The basic principles of color and its role in photography

(1) The basic principle of color. Colour is determined by the different wavelengths and frequencies of the visible light. The differences in colors are mainly due to the difference in absorbing and reflecting light. First, the basic principle of color is to understand the concept of three primary color and three dimensional color. Three primary colors refer to the three basic colors of red, green, and blue, which constitute the basis of other colors. Different degrees of mixing can get a myriad of different colors. For the third-dimensional color, it is mixed again on the basis of the three primary colors, such as orange, purple and so on. Second, the color also has the characteristics of color lightness, saturation and color equality. The lightness of the color refers to the brightness or depth of the color, which is determined by the strength of the light. Saturation is the purity of the color, and the higher the saturation means the brighter the color. Third, color can produce emotional and symbolic meaning. Different colors can trigger different emotions and associations in people's hearts. For example, red often represents passion and power, while blue represents calm and calm. In photography, we can use the emotional and symbolic meaning of color to convey the themes and emotions.

(2) Application of color in photography

Color is not only a visual feeling, but also can convey emotion and express meaning. In photography, the application of color can be presented in various ways to enhance the visual effect and emotional expression of photos.

(3) The emotional and symbolic meaning of color symbols

In photography, color, as an important means of expression, has a rich emotional expression ability. Different colors can evoke different emotions and feelings, and convey specific emotions and meaning. By skillfully using color symbols, photographers can better convey their themes and ideas. Red is often seen as a symbol of passion and strong emotion. In photography, using the red color can create an atmosphere full of passion and motivation. For example, in portrait photography, using a red background or a red dress can highlight the enthusiasm and personality of the main character, and increase the vitality and energy of the picture. Blue is often given a calm and calm emotion. The use of blue can express a thoughtful, calm and serene meaning. For example, in landscape photography, the use of blue sky and water can create a peaceful and peaceful atmosphere, giving people a sense of breadth and comfort. Yellow usually represents sunlight, energy, and warmth. Through the use of yellow, you can convey a happy, happy and positive emotion. For example, in travel photography, the use of yellow flowers and sunlight can give people a sense of pleasure and warmth, increasing the vividness and vitality of the picture.

(4) the symbolic meaning of the color symbols

In photography, color not only represents a certain emotion, but also has a rich symbolic significance. Different colors can convey different meanings and concepts, and through the clever use of colors, photographers can better express their own creative themes and emotions.

Red is often seen as a symbol of full energy and passion. In photography, red often represents passion, love, strength, and determination. For example, the use of a large number of red elements in a photo can make the viewer feel the strong emotion in the picture and create a warm atmosphere.



Blue is often seen as a symbol of calmness and serenity. In photography, blue can convey a sense of peace, serenity, and thinking. A blue photo can create a quiet atmosphere and guide the viewer into a state of introspection.

(5) Application of emotional and symbolic significance in photography.

Emotional expression in photography is mainly achieved through color light and shade, saturation, and cool and warm colors. Bright, bright, warm colors can often give people a warm and pleasant feeling, while dark, low saturation, cool colors will often bring depressed, lonely mood. This emotional expression can be achieved through the photographer's composition and post-processing.

(6) The use of color contrast and blending in photography

- (1) the basic principle of color contrast
- (2) the basic principle of color harmony
- (3) the use of color contrast in photography
- (4) the use of color and harmony in photography

(7) The relationship between color and photography theme

- (1) The connection between color and photography theme
- (2) The role of color in the expression of the photography theme
- (3) How to strengthen the photography theme through color.

Section 2 Line symbols and photographic Expression

- (1) Definition and classification of lines
- (2) the basic form of lines in photography
- (3) Characteristics of the line and photographic example analysis

Section 3: Space Symbols and Photography Expression

- (1) The relationship between space and photography
- (2) The display mode of spatial vision in photography
- (3) The importance of spatial vision in photography

Section 4: Light and shadow symbols and photographic expression

- (1) The basic concepts and principles of light and shadow
- (2) The visual effect of light and shadow
- (3) The practical application of light and shadow in photography

Section 5: A Nonlinear Narrative Analysis of Photographic Symbols

- (1) Definition and characteristics of the nonlinear narrative
- (2) The type of nonlinear narrative
- (3) The application of the nonlinear narrative

Conclusion

Photography, as a distinct visual art form, has captured the diversity of the world since its inception in its own language, reflecting human emotions and ideas. Photography language is more than just a basic mix of light, composition, color, and other components; it is also a complex symbol system that transmits rich information and meaning via the use of images. A detailed study of the photographic language from the standpoint of semiotics will help us have a greater grasp of the nature and charm of photography. The dissertation analyzes the picture expression of photographic symbols, the narrative expression of photographic symbols, the emotional transmission of photographic symbols, and, lastly, the activity of photography production through the lens of semiotics. Color theory is one of the fundamental concepts that a photographer must understand. Color is defined by the wavelengths and frequencies of visible light. Color discrepancies are primarily caused by variations in light absorption and reflection.

The iconic representation of photography symbols has been discussed as follows:



the basic principle of color

The rationale of color is one of the basics that should be understood.

Colour is determined by the different wavelengths and frequencies of the visible light. The differences in colors are mainly due to the difference in absorbing and reflecting light. First, three primary colors refer to the three basic colors of red, green, and blue, which constitute the basis of other colors. For the third-dimensional color, it is mixed again on the basis of the three primary colors, such as orange, purple and so on. Second, the color also has the characteristics of color lightness, saturation and color equality. The lightness of the color refers to the brightness or depth of the color, which is determined by the strength of the light. Third, color can produce emotional and symbolic meaning. Different colors can trigger different emotions and associations in people's hearts. For example, red often represents passion and power, while blue represents calm and calm. In photography, the emotional and symbolic meaning of color is used to convey the themes and emotions.

application of color in photography

Color is not only a visual feeling, but also can convey emotion and express meaning. In photography, the application of color can be presented in various ways to enhance the visual effect and emotional expression of photos. The sharp contrast of colors can bring a strong visual impact. By using the high-saturation and complementary color contrast in the photos, it can attract the audience's attention and make the photos even more engaging. For example, if we take a picture of the blue sky and the bright yellow wheat field, the sharp contrast of colors will make the whole picture more lively, giving people a cheerful and bright feeling as follows:

A. The influence of color on the photographic effect

In the process of photography, different emotions and express specific meanings can be created through the rational use of color. Light and dark contrast of color is a common technique. The clever use of light can strengthen the sense of hierarchy and three-dimensional picture. The contrast between light and shade can make the picture more vivid and the color more prominent. In color photography, the use of light and shade contrast can make the color fuller and the effect more vivid. Through the clever use of cool and warm colors, the photographer can make the photos get richer emotional expression, so that the viewer can more deeply feel the theme and emotions to be expressed in the picture.

B. The use of color and harmony in photography

The composition of the color wheel also plays a vital role in the color harmony. The color wheel is composed of seven main colors, namely red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and purple. The relationship between them helps us to match and reconcile the colors. For example, orange and blue are complementary colors, and their combination can create a strong contrast effect, providing a visual impact force.

C. the symbolic meaning of the color symbols

Red is frequently interpreted as a symbol of intense energy and passion. In photography, red frequently denotes passion, love, strength, and resolve. For example, using a significant quantity of red elements in a photograph might make the spectator experience.

Blue is frequently interpreted as a symbol of tranquility and serenity. Blue in photography can evoke feelings of peace, quiet, and contemplation. A blue photograph can generate a peaceful environment and encourage the spectator to reflect. Yellow is interpreted as a symbol of vibrancy and hope. Yellow in photography can represent happiness, warmth, and optimism. A bright, bright yellow photo on the topic will give folks a good feeling.

D. Application of emotional and symbolic significance in photography

Color light and shade, saturation, and cold and warm colors are the most common ways for photographers to communicate emotion. brilliant, brilliant, warm colors can frequently give people a warm and happy sensation, but dark, low saturation, cool colors can sometimes create a gloomy, lonely



atmosphere. This emotional expression can be accomplished through the photographer's composition and post-processing. For example, in character photography, the use of bright and warm colors can emphasize the characters' warmth and happiness, whilst the use of dim and cool hues can show their grief and loneliness.

E.the use of color contrast and blending in photography

Color contrast plays a crucial role in photography. By comparing the characteristics of different colors of light and shade, cold and warm, complementary or similar, the photos can present a more vivid and rich expressive force. Contrast light and shade can enhance the hierarchy and stereo sense of photos. In the composition, we can use the contrast of light and shade to highlight the difference between the subject and the background, to make the subject more eye-catching. For example, when taking a night scene photo, by contrasting the bright light with the surrounding dark parts, you can highlight the light light and the mystery of the night scene.

F.The basic principle of color harmony

The basic principle of color harmony is to choose the appropriate color combination. In photography, the first consideration is the complementarity of color and similar. Complementary color refers to the two colors located in the opposite position of the color wheel, such as red and green, blue and orange. Their contrast can produce a strong visual impact, making the focus more prominent. Similar colors refer to the adjacent colors on the color wheel, such as red, orange, yellow, etc. The combination of similar colors has a harmonious, soft effect, suitable for the expression of warm, comfort and other themes.

G.The use of color contrast in photography

The color contrast can attract the audience's eye and convey a strong visual impact. Color contrast makes each other more distinct and prominent by placing elements of different colors in the same picture. Cold and warm color contrast is a common technique of color contrast. Cold tone and warm tone are opposite to each other, have distinct difference. When photographing the scenery, the blue sky can be used to face the yellow or orange sunset, forming a strong contrast between warm and cold colors, further highlighting the grandeur and emotional warmth of the scene. Complementary color contrast is also one of the common color contrast techniques. Complementary colors are colors that complement each other in the color ring. In photography, complementary color contrast can be used to highlight the importance of the subject and improve the brightness and three-dimensional sense of the image. Color saturation contrast is generated by comparing different colors with different saturation. Through the flexible use of cold and warm color contrast, complementary color contrast, light and shade contrast and saturation contrast and other means, photographers are able to create more artistic and attractive works.

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