



BOOK SELECTION BASED ON CHILDREN'S BOOK COVERS: ANALYSIS MULTIMODALITY

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Abstract

This study discusses the results of investigations into book selection research based on covers in children aged 3-12 years. The aim is to find out how verbal and visual modes are represented in children's book covers and identify whether they influence children's decisions to buy books. This research focuses on the identification of multimodality texts and visual modes in children's books "Words of Life" and "A Dash of Magic." The Multimodal Discourse Analysis Theory (MDA) by Kress and van Leeuwen is applied by systematically describing the data found on the covers of children's books. Based on the analysis, it was found that there were three metafunctions found; representational, interactive, and compositional; each plays a certain role in the cover of this child's book. Moreover, research also shows that children aged 3-12 years buy books because they are interested in book covers, with 83.3% of children agreeing to buy books that have engaging titles, images, colors, and designs.

Keywords: *Children Cover Book, Multimodality, Word of Life, A Dash Of Magic.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas hasil investigasi terhadap penelitian pemilihan buku berdasarkan sampul pada anak usia 3-12 tahun. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana mode verbal dan visual diwakili dalam sampul buku anak-anak dan mengidentifikasi apakah mereka memengaruhi keputusan anak-anak untuk membeli buku. Penelitian ini berfokus pada identifikasi teks multimodality dan mode visual dalam buku anak-anak "Words of Life" dan "A Dash of Magic." Teori Analisis Wacana Multimodal (MDA) oleh Kress dan van Leeuwen diterapkan dengan menggambarkan secara sistematis data yang ditemukan di sampul buku anak-anak. Berdasarkan analisis, ditemukan bahwa ada tiga metafungsi yang ditemukan; representasional, interaktif, dan komposisi; masing-masing memainkan peran tertentu dalam sampul buku anak ini. Selain itu, penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak berusia 3-12 tahun membeli buku karena mereka tertarik pada sampul buku, dengan 83,3% anak-anak setuju untuk membeli buku yang memiliki judul, gambar, warna, dan desain yang menarik.

Kata Kunci: Sampul Buku Cerita Anak, Multimodal, Words of Life, A Dash of Magic.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the international survey 2019, Indonesian societies do not like to read books as well as they do not have the habit of reading. This causes the interest of the nation's children in reading to decline at a lower level, and it becomes a challenge for children's book publishers to display the book's image to attract children's interest in reading. So Publishers objectify through the book's cover and its influence on the children buying interest. Agustian (2015; 2) explained that the aesthetics and the ability to sell the cover should be a major concern publisher. In business competition, every actor tries to market his product, so consumers are interested to see and buy it. This strategy is crucial for publishers, so they have to design the book cover well and attractive.

The front cover functions as a wrapper for a book or can be categorized as packaging. It is usually used as the visual language of a book that describes and expresses the contents of a book or has a commercial value that determines the sale of a book. Every effort is made to attract consumers. In other words, there is an assumption that there is a

relationship between book covers and reading interest. Alternatively, in other words, all the elements that are the result of the book cover design will influence the reading interest of consumers to buy. Lirola (2006; 27) described that the cover discourse is multimodal and presents an increased emphasis on representation mode that is not written text, especially an increase in the dominance of visual mode to draw people's attention. This makes us consider how the visual elements and context of a text contribute to the overall experience of the text, as there is a clear combination of verbal and visual significance.

In the previous research, D'Astous et al. (2006) conducted a study where he examined the impact of five variables on reader interest in new book releases: the reputation of authors and publishers, the attractiveness of book covers, the extent to which covers represent the contents of the book. Books and types of books. The results showed that the first three variables (including the attractiveness of the book cover) have a statistically significant impact on readers' interests and can be used to influence people's interest in new books.

The study conducted by Leemans and Stokmans (1991) identified the perceived attributes used in the elimination and comparison phases of the decision making process regarding book purchase. The results show that characteristics such as "book appearance" and "cover" are quite crucial for decisions. In the introduction to *Judging Books by Its Covers*, Matthews and Moody (2007) described covers as markers of literary value and ensure that book covers have become an essential part of book marketing and play an essential role in promoting sales and shaping reader preferences.

In the research entitled "Judging a book by its cover: Preschool children's aesthetic preferences for picture books," McGHEE et al. (2017) analyzed the results of research investigations on aesthetic preferences children, ages 2-5, regarding the choice of the cover of their picture book. The aim is to assess the nature of children's aesthetic preferences by observing which picture books they like as they glance through their choices (abstract, representational, color, and black and white illustrations).

Different from my research in 2019 entitled "*Compound Words in Children's Bo-*

oks Title as a Mean to Accelerate Children Vocabulary Acquisition," which is more focused on verbal, this research focuses on cover verbal and visual modes. Also, it aims to describe how verbal and visual mode represents children's cover book and identify whether the cover influences the children's decision to buy books, especially in children aged 3-12 years old. This study used a mixed-method approach to get the findings. And, Multimodal discourse analysis approach by Kress & van Leeuwen was applied to see the visual modes in the children's book cover, such as verbal, visual, and color can be a message and to catch the reader's attention.

II. THEORITICAL REVIEW

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) has become one of the most accepted theories when presenting an emphasis on the mode of representation in the covers of children's books that not only written verbal text but also increases the dominance of visual modes to attract children's attention. Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress are pioneers in the analysis of the Multimodality through visual dimensions of printed text. They consider the verbal text from a "multimodal perspective" to include the semiotic modes that accompany language or through which language is manifest-

ted (Harrett and Bell in Fairclough 1995: 14). The textual analysis must describe interactions between verbal and visual modes, and effectively analyzes the meaning visually exposed (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 186-7). Also, according to O'Halloran (2011:1), multimodality is the 'paradigm that arises in the study of discourse that extends language studies to language studies in combination with other resources, such as images, colors, scientific symbolism, movement, action, music, and sound.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a mixed-method approach. Mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study to get a full understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2010: 5). In the research, the first stage analyzing qualitative data, then in the second stage, collecting and analyzing quantitative data based on the results of the first stage. The qualitative used to describe the verbal and visual modes contained on the cover of the children's book. Also, the quantitative describes the data that were obtained through questionnaires with participants in the Togamas and online.

In this research, the data collection method used the questionnaire. The questionnaire is available in printed and online. The data collection can be shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The data collection

Feature	Description
The research site	Togamas Supratman, Bandung
The way the questioner implemented	Printed and Online
Age of respondent	3-12 years old
Based on filling out the questionnaire	3-7 years old -Helped by their parents by conducting interviews with their children to make choices 8-12 years old Filling the questionnaire by themselves to make choices.
Participation	100 Respondens
Selection of book	English title and attractive cover
The object of the research	Front cover of "Words of Life and a Dash of Magic."
The data analysis technique	Descriptive

From table 1 can be understood that Togamas Supratman served as the research site for this investigation. Togamas was chosen because it is one of the bookstores in Bandung that provide/sell a lot of children's books also a large number of children that come to buy books. The subject for this research was 30 children aged 3-12 who visited Togamas. The printed questionnaire was conducted in Togamas because it was possible to directly observe respondents who came to Togamas to buy a book whether they bought the book by its cover or not. Also, 70

children 3-12 years old who did the online questionnaire; in this case, responses were received in electronic format because children can easily access it, and they can directly see various books online before deciding to buy. So in total, 100 children participating in this research. In practice, some limitations are applied in the data collection, namely if children aged 3 to 7 years, helped by their parents to fill out a print or online questionnaire with the way parents ask the children to determine their choice. Furthermore, the book used in this study had an English title and attractive cover. Observation using visual modes in children's book covers related to the multimodal theory is the next step of this research. After observing the method conducted, the data collection method was continued by recording the notes. In this step, all the data are taken and input into data classification. Also, multimodality was designed to help analyze the verbal and visual modes in the children's book cover. Kress and van Leeuwen developed the semiotic social analysis method of visual communication, based on Halliday's social semiotics, and created a multimodality descriptive framework, representational, interactive, and

composition meanings to the images. It can be shown in Figure 1.

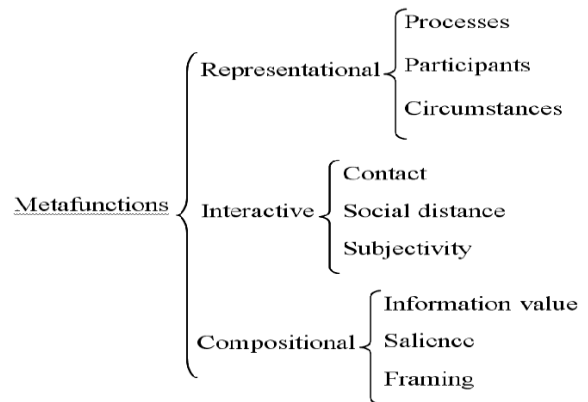


Figure 1. Metafunction of Multimodality. This figure was adapted from <https://www.researchgate.net>.

Kress & Leeuwen (2008) adopted from Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Language (SFL) are Representational/ideational (structures verbally and visually construct the nature of events, the objects and participants involved, and the circumstances in which they occur); Interactive/interpersonal (verbal and visual resources build the nature of relationships among speakers/listeners, writers / readers, and viewers and what is viewed); and Compositional/textual (meanings are concerned with the distribution of the information value or relative emphasis among elements of the text and image).

The object of this research is the front cover of Words of Life and Dash of Magic, which is marketed in bookstores located in

Bandung, precisely Togamas. And, both books were chosen because they have covers that are appropriate for the age of the child determined in this study, and both book covers have attractive covers and use English.

The data analysis technique used is descriptive by describing the verbal and visual modes in the cover book by applying Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of Multimodal discourse analysis. So the selection of book based its cover for children aged 3-12 old can be indicated.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Children's Book Cover Meaning

The cover is an inseparable part of a book. Although the meaning of a book lies in its contents, it has an essential function to express the author's ideas and creativity. The cover book to be analyzed can be seen in figures 2 and 3;

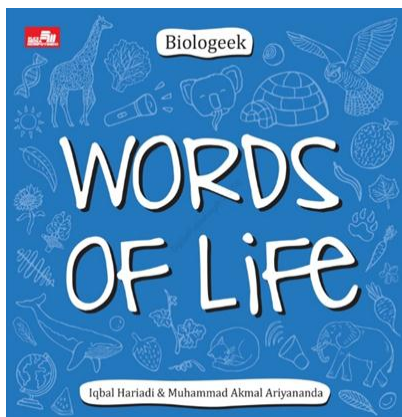


Figure 2. The children's cover book, "Words of Life."

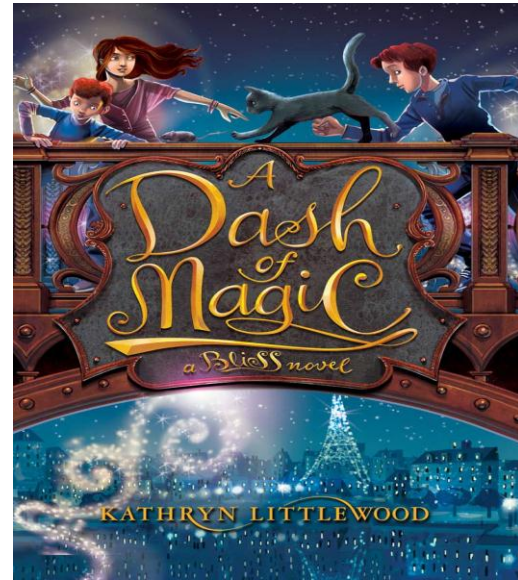


Figure 3. The children's cover book "A Dash of Magic."

Representation Metafunction

The representational metafunction of the book cover is revealed in the participant represented, such as on the people, objects, and landscapes depicted. Regarding the process, participants, and circumstances, related to representational/ideational meta-function, we can say that in both cover children book:

In the front cover of the Words of Life book in figure 2.1, the language used in the illustration is a written (verbal) with a pictorial background (image) that displays a variety of animals, fruits, plants and things related to science where its illustrations have a specific purpose for the general public mainly for children. Also, the use of Blue as background

color gives the impression of something. Blue can describe feelings of calm and comfort. Role in mental escort, "clarity and creativity." The use of color in the front cover of the novel is not just to convey a message but as a tool to attract attention.

The verbal in the cover *Words of Lives* shows the emphasis on the contents of the book, and it intends to invite children to learn biology in a unique, easy, and fun way. The representational/ideational meaning in the picture is marked by a vector that shows the actor and the goal of the action. In this cover book, the actor is the image of varieties of animals, fruits, plants, and the other meanwhile, the goal is the children as the customer.

In the second front cover, *A Dash of Magic* in figure 2.2," it shows there are 5 'participants'; 3 children, with 2 boys in blue and 1 girl in purple and two cats and mouse. With one hand, the girl pointed to another 'participant,' a boy who appeared to be running in a blue shirt. Position the children on the left and right of the image while the mouse and cat are in the middle. A girl's eyes and forefinger look in the direction of a boy while another boy seems going up a bridge with the cat next to him chasing a mouse. The arrangement in the image shows that this is on the bridge with

the atmosphere of Paris at night surrounded by lighted houses accompanied by winks of magic. Vectors in images are realized through, primarily, with a child's index finger. The direction of the girl's gaze is directed towards the boy. The vector direction positions girls as 'actors' while boys are 'goals.' Also, the cat as an actor the mouse as a goal. The use dark blue as background color tends to bring pressure, mysterious, intriguing, and nightlife. The title in the cover *A Dash of Magic* used italic and bold to emphasize and make the reader understand the main points of the title. The title also supports the image to convey the meaning of the book.

Interactive Metafunction

The interactive function is reflected in the way the image attracts the customer's interest in what is depicted. When dealing with interpersonal meaning. In both book covers, we can also see the relationship between customers and what they see about the cover. When analyzing interactive/interpersonal aspects of an image, especially the relationship between the main character/participant and reader, built through a focus system, it is possible to observe that in the cover book of *words of life* and *a dash of magic* there is no

eye contact between the reader and the participant.

Compositional Metafunction

In interpreting the book's cover, verbally we must understand what is given as a theme and what is new as rheme information. The difference in each children's cover book, the figure 1 theme "Words Of Life" and figure 2 "A Dash Of Magic." The reader will easily understand these two themes; there is not even an interesting explanation about it. Of course, the theme took the curiosity of customers and readers. While the rheme is the images of the cover book. The first cover display of various images related to the science and the second cover shows children try to escape.

From the two covers, it can be seen that the first cover shows more in the verbal, which is the title by making all the words of capital to emphasize the purpose of the book reader while the image is used as a background complement with a small size. On the first cover, the children tend to focus on the verbal and see less on small and many objects (images) so that the first cover tends to be monotonous and less interesting for the child. Meanwhile, the cover of the second book is more interesting for children because there are elements of color, titles, images that are packaged attrac-

tively. The second cover tends to evenly distribute each element, making it easier for children to understand the cover of the book.

The Influence of Children's Cover Book

The meaning of visual modes represented in children's book covers can influence children's decision to buy books. The power of visual mode persuade/motivate the children decision Based on the result of the questionnaire as follows as;

From the data that has been obtained, according to the results of the questionnaire that has been distributed, the factors that influence the buying interest of children in books in the age category 3 to 12 years are based on the book cover because 83.8% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that the book cover was the factor that became their reason in buying. Likewise, with the results of the questionnaire conducted in Togamas, 26 respondents from 30 agreed that the book cover could determine the choice of books to be purchased. So, The cover book is not only useful as an attention drawer, but rather as a communication tool that provides information about the contents of the book that makes children buy it and had a statistically significant impact on readers' interests and could be used to influence children's interest in books.

Meanwhile, 16.2% of respondents did not agree to buy a book because, according to them, the content of the story was more important than the cover book. As well as Togamas visitors who were respondents in this study stated that as many as 4 respondents from 30 stated that they did not agree that the book cover could determine the choice of buying.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) assume that images, colors, music, typography, and other visual modes are similar to language and that they can simultaneously fulfill and manifest three broad communicative meta-functions such as language. Also, images and other visual modes can represent certain social relations between the producer, audience, and the object represented. Some modes are presented on the Children book cover, namely:

1. Title

Children's cover books need to be designed well and artistically to be able to attract the attention of the child to read and buy it. The selection of the title (verbal) must be short, easy to read, easy to understand, and can directly inform the content contained in the book.

2. Color

Young children tend to enjoy bright

colors, along with subjects that include animals and children (Coffey 1968; Gardner 1982; Taunton 1980). Children's cover book is often found many colors in it. Color is an element that can affect the emotions of those who see it (Eiseman, p. 16). Compared to the other elements, the colors can stimulate and work synergy with the expression of the soul, symbol, concept, time, situation, and provide an emotional response. On a book cover, color must also be able to convey that information to the reader.

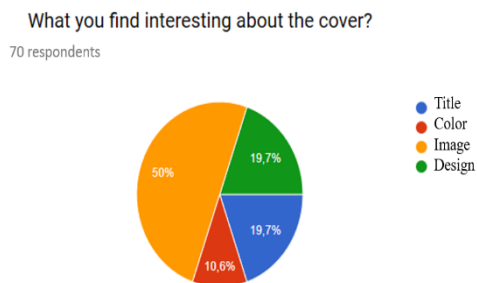
3. Image

Images more easily understood than writing. As a means of communication, the image is a non-verbal message that can explain and give a particular emphasis on the content of the message. Also, the role of images on the cover is compelling because it is easier to remember than words, and is the fastest for the children's understanding of its meaning.

4. Design

The cover design is essential to be designed beautifully and artistically. Good cover design can attract the attention of people who see it. Therefore the cover design is crucial in increasing the marketing of a book.

As for the results of the study showed the mode of multimodality that children aged 3 to 12 years most like the following;



According to children aged 3-12 years who conduct online questionnaires. The most interesting thing on the cover book is an image, with 50% of respondents agree. Title and design became the second choice, with 19.7% of respondents. The color does not seem to have a significant effect on children, with only 10.6% of respondents. Meanwhile, the results obtained by doing a print questionnaire in Togamas show that the picture is the most interesting than the other modes, with 13 respondents choosing from a total of 30 respondents. 7 respondents agreed to choose the title while the design and color got 3 respondents each. Also, 4 respondents disagreed and chose the story content rather than the other modes on the covers of children's books. Because visual images seem to be essential for children, as shown in this study,

it is suggested that when parents are planning to buy books for their children, they should show the books to the children and asked them to choose the books they want to read.

Multimodality and literacy in Children

Multimodality has an impact on education, especially on literacy. So as a response to the literacy program, the Indonesian government began to spread literacy in societies where the literacy movement is not just a reading movement but reading to understand and criticize and give other opinions from what has been read. And, Key to multimodal perspectives on literacy is the basic assumption that meanings are made (as well as distributed, interpreted, and remade) through many representational and communicational resources, of which language is but one (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Children become literate in many ways, not only through language but through learning to use a combination of different modes, such as pictures, layout, colour, design. Educational programs that start from it can be provided through book cover. Book covers are considered to influence and give motivation to children to read. Book cover readers or picture books need to process messages in words, pictures, and designs simultaneously.

There are several things that readers need to know to be able to 'read' the cover and start predicting how the narrative picture book with this title will develop in the plot (Walsh, 2006). While there are only three words from the title in Fig 2 and four words in fig 3 to introduce this story, the picture itself conveys meaning. Both contextual knowledge and background knowledge are needed for the reader to conclude that there is something. The multimodality approach to literacy events and practices broadens the scope of inquiry to consider how meaning is created through various modes of communication. Children develop literacy in many ways, not only through language but through recognizing and learning how combinations of various modes contribute to literacy practice. Research in this field has begun to reveal how children develop literacy in many ways, not only through language but by recognizing and learning how combinations of various modes contribute to literacy practice. Without a cover or at least a digital version of the cover, a book has no special form of visual communication and advertising. Especially in social environments that are becoming increasingly visually dominant, book covers

are an important part of reading culture practice O'Connell (2010).

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the result of this study, it can be concluded that the cover of children's books whose design elements are described in such a way can affect children's buying and reading interests. This research has answered the existing hypothesis because the conclusions of this study indicate that there is an influence on the front cover of children's books on children's interest in reading and buying. Both book covers show that the cover can represent the contents of the book through the verbal and visual modes used, such as letter font, size of the letter, colors, images, titles, and designs, and the cover can also display messages for the reader. The front cover is not just a wrapping device but as a first communication tool for consumers. Therefore the use of design elements such as color, image, text, and design is very necessary.

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