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Decoding educational spaces

A geosemiotic analysis of signs from macro to micro perspectives

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Abstract

The placement of signs and the visual elements employed therein significantly shape the meaning construction of those who perceive them. This study investigates the function of signage in meaning-making within schools, examining both macro and micro perspectives through placement semiotics and visual semiotics. Drawing on Scollon and Scollon's (2003) Geosemiotics (GS), the study analyses how factors such as spatial positioning, colour, font-weight, and language influence interpretation. The findings demonstrate that the meaning of signs is deeply linked to their spatial context within classrooms and the surrounding areas. Simultaneously, the findings suggest design elements, particularly colour choices, and typography, are pivotal in shaping the meaning of signs. Further, the study also argues the exclusionary impact of monolingual English signage, which can create barriers for non-English speakers. Ultimately, the study accentuates the need for a more inclusive signage-making approach in educational spaces, with implications for policy-making development; thus, addressing language diversity and social accessibility.