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Throughout many years there are many different design objects that have been created. Some of them have changed the way we interact with things as well as how we communicate. Signs and symbols can be used to help individuals understand their environment. Some very important signs and symbols that changed the world are warning signs. Warning signs are a type of sign which indicates a message of potential hazard, anything that requires your attention. There are many different warning signs but one that stood out from the rest is a caution sign known as the Immigrant Sign created by John Hood in the 1990s. John Hood was asked to create the sign because of the many immigrants who were killed while crossing to get into the United States. There were over hundreds of immigrant pedestrian deaths due to traffic accidents from 1987 to 1990. This sign was located in California at Interstate 5 along the San Ysidro Port of Entry at the Mexico–United States border, later on removed in 2018. The sign’s purpose was to warn drivers to look out for people that may be running across the highway lanes to hide from border security.

This picture shows the sign placed in the highways



Photo credit: <https://www.providencejournal.com/>
Cindy Carcamo/Los Angeles Times/TNS

The Immigrant warning sign may look like just a regular sign you see when walking in streets and near roads but this one shows a silhouette of a family running with the word caution above them. The sign shows a deep meaning, a family running away from something. “It doesn't just mean they are running across the freeway,” Hood said. “It means they are running from something else as well. I think it's a struggle for a lot of things, for opportunities, for freedom.” (John Hood) The sign is to communicate with drivers so they know to be more aware of their surroundings when driving through the area. As for what's on the sign, it shows a man, woman holding a little girl running with the word caution above it.

This immigrant sign is an example of how language plays a role in design, without needing to communicate you can understand what you need to do by looking at the sign. Language in design is understanding how the elements in the design will convey a message to

the viewer. Ferdinand De Saussure was a swiss linguist. Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories consist of two elements, concept and sound image. For example, "The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image." (Course in General Linguistics, Saussure) Saussure replaces the sound image as the signifier and the concept is the signified.

"The linguistic sign is then a two-sided psychological entity that can be represented by the drawing"

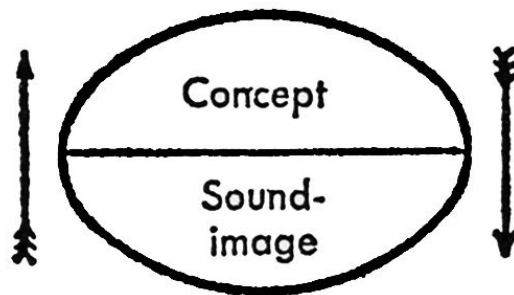


Photo credits: Course in General Linguistic, Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theories consist of two elements, concept and sound image or known as signified and signifier. "I propose to retain the word sign [signe] to designate the whole and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by signified [signifie] and signifier [signifiant]; the last two terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts." (Course in General Linguistics, Saussure) The signified is the idea or concept of a thing and the signifier is the sound associated with the object or image, when combined together it's a sign.

Signs and symbols are basically visual communication. Symbols can represent an object or concept. In our society now, symbols and signs are part of our everyday life. Throughout many years humans slowly recognize the meaning behind signs and symbols. We use signs and symbols to guide us, from train stations to shopping malls to schools, we find it everywhere we go. Signs and symbols are a universal form of communication so no matter where people are or what language they speak, they will be able to recognize and understand them.

Sources:

Saussure, Ferdinand, Charles Bally, and Albert Sechehaye. *Course in General Linguistics*
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966

<http://www.americanindiansource.com/hoodart.html>

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