a brief view on a Theory of Product Semantic
based on a Work of Jochen Gros (Darmstadt)
Why?
Why »Theory of produkt semantic«?

- only the known can be named,
- only the named can be communicated,
- only communicated points can be proved and improved.
Use
Use of the theory

- as an analytic instrument very usefull

--but:

- rational approach doesn’t substitute formative competences

- a bad design will not really be improved with endless argumentation
When
When to use this theory

The discussion on product semantics is always on sensual functions, on sensual perception and their effects to the viewer.
User \[\text{functions}\] Product
functions

User

practical functions

formal-esthetic functions

signal functions

Product

product semantic functions

signaling functions

symbolic functions
practical functions
Pragmatic-practically

- a chair for sitting,
- a car for driving,
- a pan for cooking.
formal-aesthetic funktions
»Shape«: structur, form, colour, ...

- simple – complex
- closed – open
- uniform – different
- symmetric – asymmetric
- clear – unclear, foggy
- in a grid – free formed
- static – dynamic
- well known – new.
signal functions
»Push the button!«

• Signals to the use (the practical function):
  * big display + keypad: mobile phone,
  * small display + keypad: pocket calculator;

• Signals/keys how to use:
  * arrow-shaped knob shows how to turn,
  * carved handle says where to grip,
  * button gives a click.
symbolic funktion
Meaning in a context

Meanings and und imaginations which are connected to a certain material or shape: _golden surface, huge chair back, to drive a Harley-Davidson, ..._

Symbols always need a certain context, they are always subjective: _a three-days-beard can stand for a cool Designer, a Leader from Arabia or a homeless person._
...any questions?
I want to know more!

Dagmar Steffen u.a.:
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(sorry, I don’t know an englisch source)