

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter divides into six sections. There are research background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, previous studies, and definition of key terms.

1.1. Research Background

The world is now being hit by a terrible pandemic that has spread to almost all countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a pandemic increases the spread of a virus and disease transmission that spreads to several worlds or countries and occurs suddenly (Cucinotta & Maurizio, 2020). The Coronavirus 19 pandemic, better known as COVID-19, comes from the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2), it has occurred from the end of 2019. This COVID-19 virus originated in China, allegedly from the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, causing respiratory system infections and is now recorded as having caused more than 4,6 million deaths worldwide (Shelavia, 2021). Then the first positive case of COVID-19 in Indonesia occurred on March 2, 2020. Many suspects that the origin of this virus is a transmission of disease from animals and then infected to humans.

The ongoing pandemic causes so many impacts; six sectors are greatly affected, such as the tourism, manufacturing, economic, transportation, social, and food sectors. Then the lockdown policy began to be implemented in various countries. This lockdown is an effort made to minimize the spread of COVID-19. According to Cambridge, a lockdown is when it is not allowed to enter or leave a building or an open area due to an emergency. With this lockdown, people will not be free to carry out activities as usual. It makes some people confused about what to do and limited to express their direct expression of the current state of the social environment.

In line with the state of the world that is currently experiencing a pandemic; many people's expressions are channeled through social media. The

place to convey this expression can be writing, video or images. The signs contained in it can be understood through a science called semiotics. According to Van Zoest (Sobur, 2001), semiotics is the science of signs related to functions, relationships. In other words, senders and receivers are interpreted by those who use them. The science of semiotics makes it easier for people to understand the signs contained in a text or outside the text observed. There are three significant figures of semiotics that many people know. The first are Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Roland Barthes. The researcher used Charles Sander Peirce's theory with the Peirce meaning triangle model as a qualitative analysis method in this study.

According to Pierce (Kaelan, 2009), linguistic signs do not apply in general, but signs, in general, can certainly apply to linguistic signs. Then, Charles Sanders Peirce also said, the fundamental nature of the sign is representative and interpretative. A representative has the meaning of a sign representing something else, and interpretative means the sign itself depending on who wears and receives it. Peirce's semiotic theory has reasoning based on logic so that it allows someone to give meaning to the observed signs. Semiotics has three areas of study: the sign itself, the system or code of study developed in society and the culture where the sign or code of study works according to its users.

Peirce's theory is known as the trichotomy concept, which consists of a representament or form that functions as a sign, an object or something that represents a sign, and an interpretant or sign form contained in the user's concept of an object that refers to a sign. In examining objects through the concept of trichotomy, the representamen is further divided into three parts, namely qualisign, sinsign, and legisign. Then objects are classified into icons, index, and symbols. Finally, the interpretant is divided into rheme, decisign, and argument. Peirce's triadic model is a combination of elementary particles in a sign whose components are recombined into a single structure.

The meaning of narrative on the meme then dissected using deixis theory. Deixis is one of the areas discussed in pragmatics. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics and study of the use of the language in communication, particularly the relationship between sentences, context, and situations in which they are used (Richard & Schmidt, 2002). Semiotics and pragmatics are both related to the way meaning is derived from language. Semantics studies the meaning that words and certain combinations of words hold for both the speaker and listener. Pragmatics deals with how the context in which words are used can dictate their true meaning at that particular time.

The lengthy implementation of the lockdown due to the high number of COVID-19 cases has made people spend much time surfing in cyberspace. Not surprisingly, the level of internet users in world is increasing and creating a new phenomenon, namely expressing ideas or creativity through memes. Meme is a form of change and imitation of ideas or concepts outlined in images, artifacts, or rituals. According to Dawkins (1976), a meme is considered a new form of culture through the mechanism of copy, replica, and imitation. Memes are also images accompanied by text that offend a sense of humor to users on social media.

The presence of memes on social media risks democratic freedom and social media repression. Many internet users also use memes as a means of opinion or communication. The popularity of this meme is also caused by the content, which always follows the hot phenomena in society so that internet users can readily accept this meme culture. Starting from politics, sports, lifestyle trends, economics, social, culture, fashion, and do not forget memes about the COVID-19 pandemic are also circulating widely on the internet. Dawkins considers memes to be something that pops into his head and spreads quickly like a virus (Brodie, 2009). Therefore, the young people use meme as one of communication tool to express they response of something happened in cyberspace but they also must be wise in using it because there are negative and positive effects contained in those memes.

9GAG is an online comedy platform that has been visited by more than 65 million visitors per month. *9GAG* founded by Ray Chan, Brian Yu, Chris Chan, and Derek Chan in 2008. *9GAG* has a very active user community compared to other online comedy sites. *9GAG* allows users to upload images or videos and then to social media. *9GAG* also shows the types of memes that are very popular. This site can be accessed through a website on a computer or an application downloaded on device. This application makes it easy for visitors and users to access *9GAG* anytime and anywhere.

The results of Peirce's semiotic analysis of memes containing the impact of COVID-19 on the *9GAG* site are then represented in terms of the reality that occurs in society during this pandemic. In addition, according to Albin (2014) *9GAG* also has its own characteristics, criticized the posts that containing women issue, national, gender issues, and certain ethnicities by the users. Then, *9GAG*'s active community might produce a publication of a pre-constructed semantic system in view of social or cultural reproduction. Furthermore, this might trigger a common understanding of importance for users, contingent upon the communicational imperatives of the website. With the above factors, the researcher took data from memes containing narratives of the impact of COVID-19, which were uploaded on the *9GAG* site in September 2021.

1.2. Research Questions

From the research background that has been discussed above, the researcher concludes that two focus questions will be discussed in this research, there are:

1. What are the representamen, object, and interpretant that occurred on *9GAG* memes containing the COVID-19 narrative?
2. What types of deixis are used in representamen on *9GAG* memes that contained COVID-19 pandemic?

1.3. Research Objectives

Based on the statement of problem above, the researcher is intended:

1. To analyze the representamen, object, and interpretant occurred on 9GAG memes containing the COVID-19 narrative.
2. To examine types of deixis are used in representamen on 9GAG memes that contained COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4. Research Significances

As indicated by the clarification about this explanation in the research background, research questions, and research purposes. This analysis is very significant for superior getting semiotics. Hence, the meanings of this review are the researcher extraordinarily separates into two meanings; they are theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically, the purpose of this study is generally to expect readers to understand semiotics more easily because, according to researchers, this science needs to be studied so that there is no misunderstanding when interpreting a sign in a meme by Peirce's semiotics that collaborated with deixis analysis, this research is made so that it can be a reference for other people.
2. Practically, People who are interested in analyzing aspects of semiotics and deixis in pragmatics that are relevant to COVID-19 pandemic reality contained in a meme in the aspect of linguistics. This research is also helpful for opening our eyes to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in all aspects of life that is still ongoing today.

1.5. Previous Studies

In addition to supporting this research, the researcher reviews several previous studies that other researchers have studied. Five previous studies have the same topic as this research:

The first research is entitled *Peirce's Semiotics Analysis of Icon and Symbol on Perfume Advertisements*, written by Audia Friana (2015). This thesis discusses the icons and symbols found in perfume advertisements and explains them using the semiosis process from Peirce's semiotic analysis. The perfume

advertisement object is taken from the Sephora website (www.sephora.com). There are about 194 ads from 29 brands on the site. The author then uses simple random sampling, and the data analyzed there are 29 brands. The results of this study are that the authors found 29 icons and 23 symbols from 29 advertisements. In addition, the authors also found that each advertisement has a meaning and sign so that it produces different interpretations.

The second research is a thesis entitled *Semiotics Analysis of Meme for Woman at @9gaggirly Instagram Account* (Murtaisah, 2020). This study with descriptive analysis method discusses the meaning of the sign in the meme image, which is explained using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiosis process. The object used in this study was taken from the Instagram account @9gaggirly from 9-31 August. The author determines the icons and symbols in the meme as data to be analyzed. After analyzing the data, the writer gets the interpretant and gives meaning to the meme. The result is that the writer finds 39 symbols and 27 icons in the meme. Then with this semiotic analysis, the researcher can quickly convey the meaning of the meme, which contains satire and messages to women in general.

The third research is a thesis entitled *A Semiotics Analysis on Logos of Indonesian Islamic Association* by Ananda R. Manurung (2020). This study is in the form of a qualitative descriptive and then focuses on the representament, object, and interpretant contained in the Muslim Student Association logo with the semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce. Data in the form of the logos are taken from the <https://www.pbhmi.co.id> site. This research shows that every visual logo has a powerful meaning supported by its verbal sign. Then, the logo's background can also explain the true meaning of the logo. Each interpretation in this study is expected to make it easier for the reader to know the message and meaning.

The fourth research is a journal entitled *The Semiotics Analysis on The Environment in "The Journey to Atlantis" Picture Book* written by Darsita

Suparno and Laksmi Ady Kusumoriny (2020). This journal discusses explaining the symbols identified in verbal and non-verbal meanings contained in *The Journal to Atlantis*. Then this journal also discusses the process of semiosis in environmental symbols in *The Journal to Atlantis*. The data analyzed was taken from Elisabetta Dami's *The Journal to Atlantis* (2012) Picture book. The result is that there is 36 onomatopoeia as verbal symbols and 40 icons in word form, 18 colors as nonverbal symbols related to the environment and 40 images describing the environment of Atlantis.

The fifth research is a journal entitled *Three Famous Coffee Shop Logos in Cianjur: An Approach to Semiotical Analysis* by Fitria Aulia Latifah and Jauhar Helmie (2020). This study discusses the semiotics explanation of the coffee shop logo to explain each characteristic and identity of the coffee shop. The three coffee shops are *Tjerita Coffee*, *Ar7*, and *Imah Kopi*. This study shows that the symbol, icon, and index in each logo have a relationship between the history, purpose, and concept of each coffee shop.

Various kinds of previous studies above show that Peirce's semiotic analysis can be helpful for various things. The significant difference between this research and previous research is on object memes, which highlight those environmental conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have made many netizens channel their expressions through social media that are easily accessible by anyone. The next difference is different from the previous studies above, which on average use only semiotics theory, the researcher uses contextual semantics as a supporting theory to make this research more focused in the linguistic area, because there are differences in the analysis of memes and narratives in memes so it needs understanding for more in-depth understanding of the interpretations of the memes in chapter four. This was not found in the previous studies above.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings in understanding the contents of this study, the researcher concludes that there are several key words that must be understood, as follows:

1. Semiotics; a science or method of analysis in studying signs. In addition, according to (Kriyantono, 2008) signs, systems, rules, and conventions that allow for signs as meanings are studied in semiotics.
2. Pragmatics; a part of linguistics that discusses the use of the language in communication, particularly the relationship between sentences, context, and situations in which they are used.
3. Meme; is an image or video that represents the feelings and thoughts of a specific audience.
4. 9GAG; an online comedy to that allow the users to upload and share types of memes in form of image or videos and then to social media.

