

SEMANTIC EXPRESSIONS OF POSTERS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC; TRIBUNNEWS.COM

Arfian Hikmat Ramdan

[STIKES DHARMA HUSADA BANDUNG/ arfian@stikesdhh.ac.id](mailto:arfian@stikesdhh.ac.id)

Abstract. Covid-19 is becoming a pandemic of such magnitude that it has caused a global issue to society. The research aim is to know the effectiveness of posters of Covid-19 Pandemic which were taken from *Tribunnews.com* Mass Media. The research uses the Semiotic method which is used to uncover the semiotic meaning from the poster expressions of Covid-19 Pandemic. The research aims to find signs that represent the posters; to find out meanings that contain on the poster. This study uses a qualitative method. The findings of the research shows that there are 3 meanings on the poster namely semantic lexical, grammatical and contextual. Each sign has meaning. The way the illustrator attracts the audience's attention is very smooth. Although the poster looks simple, the visual and the way s/he uses the colours. By the written, the slogan, the colour, and the design, the illustrator is successful in building people's enthusiasm on the posters.

Keywords: *Semantics, Educational Posters, Mass Media.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the life of people around the world; socially and financially. It devastated the world's situations but may leave a lasting legacy of improving how the world addresses the situations. The effort to develop and distribute the needs demonstrated how much can be completed with global collaboration, lessons that can be applied to ambitious improvements in well-being. COVID-19, in some parts of the world, seems to be moving to endemicity. Some of the pandemic's damaging consequences are now being assessed and understood. We looked at the pandemic's remaining effects on society and financially and examined how long it might take for some things to go back to how they used to be and why others never will.

The use of social media has increased manifold and thus, has a number of available platforms, including websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Newspaper etc. People had become accustomed to posting every aspect of their lives on it. This includes their achievements, worries, and travels on a daily and hourly basis. People started gathering information posted on the groups and unknown pages and believing them. Religious pages also started attracting people amid crises by spreading unscientific information regarding the prevention and treatment of the virus.

Hence, the role of media is inseparable from human growth and development in the rapid and modern era. It cannot be denied that humans have always followed the media. Media has become a special tool in distributing particular information to the circumstance; knowledge, politics, healthcare, religion, and even the personal life of people. Halim (2017: 56) explains

that media unintentionally becomes a tool in expanding values or dominant discourses that are considered right until it comes to people's minds and makes it to be truth. Nevertheless, Gerbner (1967) mentioned that "Mass communication is the technologically and institutionally based production and distribution of the most broadly shared continuous flow of messages in industrial society"

Poster is a means of communication and has been used for various purposes such as to give information to people, persuade people to do something, change their thoughts, and mobilise them. Posters used social content are meant to make the readers make evaluations in their thoughts. Poster is generally a graphical expression of pictures and words and or only words. It is created on the "basis of design and artistic thinking" (Gökaşan, 2017, p.47). Graphics and pictures in compositions visualise the text as the interaction of verbal and nonverbal messages (Bouzida, 2014; Sifaki & Papadopoulou, 2015).

Poster is a large notice, often with picture on it, put in a public place to advertise something; is a large picture that is printed on paper and put on a wall as decoration (Oxford, 2010: 1142). Poster is a placard placed in a public place) in the form of announcements or advertisements) (KBBI, 2008: 1096). Posters are an information medium that emphasises the meaning of the message to be conveyed, and shows a strong character in influencing a person's attitude and behaviour in doing something. It's often used in the world of education, the main thing that is highlighted is ideas that are tangible in the form of main illustrations and focus on the image object used and are made in large sizes. Poster is a medium that combines visual designs with colours and messages intentionally to attract the audience's attention but it needs time to understand the meaning ideas in memories. Commercial posters are useful to advertise a product, an activity, an entertainment event, or certain events. It becomes one of the promotional media that is widely used by industries especially health industries.

In the health field, posters are used to provide knowledge, activate people's awareness, and change people's ways of thinking and behaving as messages in health campaign posters convey. Some studies discovered posters as an effective media in health campaigns to appeal to people's awareness and influence positive behaviours. Posters can be a means of advertising, education, propaganda and decoration. In addition, it can also be a copy of a famous work of art. Posters of Covid-19 is a poster as a means of education, because it contains the meaning of how important health is by following all government instructions; use masker, wash hands, and avoid crowds by complying proper rules; writing, layout, and the use of colour.

Human beings communicate by using signs: such as pictures, posters, words, numbers. Sign is one of the communication arts that is often used in conveying messages by individuals or groups. Posters is one of the examples relaying information in everyday life. The study of signs and everything related to signs is 'symptom' (Oswald, 2012: 8). Oswald (2012: 8) uses 'semiotic' to refer to the ensemble of signifying operations at work sign systems, such as a brand, an advertising text, or a retail setting.

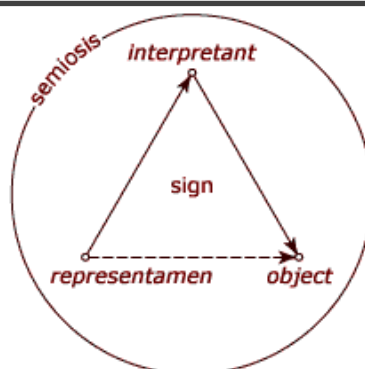


Figure 1. Triadic Signs

To be obvious, Pierce puts forward the theory of triangle meaning consisting of three main elements namely representation (sign), object, and interpretation. Pierce continued by saying that a sign or representation is something that represents other than the sign itself. The other is called interpretation of the first sign and it will refer to a particular object. Signs consist of symbols (signs emerge from agreement), icons (signs appear from physical representation) and index (signs that arise from the causal relationship) and this is called object.

In expressing their feelings, people use its language in order to communicate and interact with each other. Language as a sign of a sound system agreed to be utilised by the group of people or communities in communicating and identifies itself. Nevertheless, in linguistics, one of the sciences to study the sign of human beings is “semiotic”.

There are many researchers who have done comparable research in the field of Semiotics. For example, Natasha (2015), Da Silva (2017), Nuryani (2019) Rasha Zaid (2022) had analysed an advertisement by applying Semiotics Semantics analysis as a tool. First of all, in the research, Natasha was concerned with the concept of beauty in her research. Second of all, Da Silva was concerned with the four main aspects of Semiotics in her research. Third of all, Nuryani is concerned with the meaning of signs on posters. Lastly, Zaid had analysed posters against domestic violence. In accordance with the meaning of signs, the problems of the study are what signs that represent the poster of covid -19; what meanings are contained on the poster of covid-19; and how is poster design of poster of covid -19 attracting the audience’s attention. The research aims to find signs that represent posters of covid -19; to find out meanings that are on posters; and to find out how the design used to attract attention of the audience.

The analysis of semiotic expression in relation to the situation in Covid-19 Pandemic is conducted which aims to know how effective the posters that are described by mass media. The research is essential to be further explored as it is known that the spread of the virus has become a serious problem. The purpose of the research is to show the semiotic expression of posters of Covid-19 that have been shown in one of Mass Media of Indonesia; Tribunnews.com.

2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method in examining the posters of Covid-19 pandemic. It is a method for examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of

conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. Qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms (Kirk and Miller 1986: 9). The research approach was semiotics which emphasises the attention to the signs system about how meaning is constructed through the poster; there are posters of Covid-19 Pandemic as the primary data. The data were compiled from one of Mass Media of Indonesia; Tribunnews.com, 14 of July 2021. The method describes the expression shown by the posters which aims to find out the semantic meaning; the analysis is useful in mass communication and cultural studies. It can help us to realise the information or meaning not contained in books, computers, or audiovisual media (Chandler, 2007).

The data were twenty health posters of Covid-19 which were exhibited on the page of online webs from the Tribunnews.com, but it's only four posters used for the analysis. We didn't use the rest of them because there is too many textual information. In analysing data, the analysis of this research is focused on semantic meaning aspects and their relation to the poster elements system as the interaction of various symbols with the imagery to produce messages that appeal to self-awareness of anti-stigma appear since the pandemic of COVID-19 in Indonesia.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study was obtained from the analysis of each poster in terms of their two signs system of poster, image and linguistic sign to get their meanings. Furthermore, the analysis is presented to get a cultural message conveyed in each detail of the poster.



Figure 2. Data 1

Poster NUMBER 1 contains both linguistic signs and image signs. There is a linguistic sign which is the main text of the poster "PAKAI MASKER!". The text is placed on top of the picture, and it uses a white bold capital letter which aims to emphasise the words is very important.

a. Lexical semantics

The poster contains the words "PAKAI MASKER!" The meaning of each word is as follows:

1. "PAKAI" is a verb which means an order or instruction that someone is required to follow.
2. "MASKER" means a noun that functions to cover the facial area, especially the mouth and nose area.
3. "Exclamation mark (!)" has the meaning of an affirmation of a word which usually means a command.

b. Grammatical semantics

The poster has a grammatical meaning consisting of the words "*PAKAI MASKER!*" which means a confirmation of orders or instructions to anyone, anytime and anywhere and under any conditions without exception in accordance with instructions from the government.

c. Contextual semantics

The situation depicted on the poster is a person wearing a green shirt who is wearing a white mask covering the mouth and nose with his right hand pointing to the area of his face where the mask is worn, while his left hand shows a thumbs up symbol which means top, great, enthusiastic. Apart from that, in the upper right corner there is an image resembling a green virus, and in the upper left corner there are three logos from government institutions (*KPC PEN, KOMINFO, KEMENKES*).

So, the contextual meaning contained in poster 1 is that if we (during the pandemic) always wear masks to avoid the Covid-19 virus in any condition recommended by the government (in accordance with the 3 logos above) then people in this case may have the role of the government/health workers will think we are cool and great because we have protected ourselves from exposure to the Covid-19 virus.

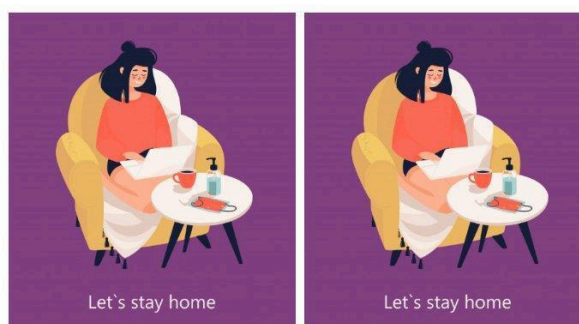


Figure 3. Data 2

Poster NUMBER 2 contains both linguistic signs and image signs. There is a linguistic sign which is the main text of the poster "**LET'S STAY HOME**". The text is placed under the picture, and it uses a white bold capital letter which aims to emphasise the words that are very important.

a. Lexical semantics

The poster consists of the English words "Let's stay home". The meaning of each word is as follows:

1. "Let's" means an invitation to anyone to do something.
2. "stay" is a verb which means an order to remain or remain silent; do not carry out any activities or actions.
3. "home" is a noun which means a place where a family lives or takes shelter.

b. Grammatical semantics

The poster has a grammatical meaning consisting of the words "Let's stay home" which means an invitation to anyone to continue carrying out all activities at home (work, worship, etc.)

whenever and wherever and under any conditions without exception in accordance with instructions and recommendations. from the government.

c. Contextual semantics

The situation depicted on the poster is a woman who is relaxing. He was sitting on the couch, opening a laptop; maybe he is working, then you see in front of him there is a table and on it is a cup of coffee or tea and there is a mask and a bottle of sanitizer.

Last, the contextual meaning contained in poster 2 is that we follow the government's recommendation to stay at home doing all activities, including work, while continuing to implement health protocols such as using masks and washing hands (pictured there are masks and sanitizers), so that we avoid accidents. exposure to the covid-19 virus.



Figure 4. Data 3

Poster NUMBER 3 contains eight linguistic signs and image signs. If we compiled it, there are eight linguistic signs which is the main text of the poster "YOU STAY @HOME FOR US, WE STAY @ WORK FOR YOU ❤️". The text is placed in the centre of every health practitioner, and it uses a blue bold letter which aims to emphasise the words is very important.

a. Lexical semantics

The poster consists of the English words "We Stay @Work For You, You Stay @Home For Us". The meaning of each word is as follows:

1. "We" is a pronoun which means in Indonesian "us"
2. "Stay" is a verb which means an order to remain or remain silent; do not carry out any activities or actions.
3. "@Work" is a noun which means in Indonesian "at the office" for work.
4. "For You" is a combination of words or phrases that have the meaning in Indonesian "for you"
5. "You" is a pronoun which means in Indonesian "you"
6. "Stay" is a verb which means an order to remain or remain silent; do not carry out any activities or actions.
7. "@Home" is a noun which means a place where a family lives or takes shelter.
8. "For Us" is a combination of words or phrases which means in Indonesian "for us"

b. Grammatical semantics

The poster has a grammatical meaning consisting of the words "We Stay Work For You, You Stay Home For Us" which means an appeal to anyone (the Indonesian people) to continue carrying out all activities at home (work, worship, etc.) whenever and wherever and under any conditions without exception in accordance with instructions and recommendations from the government. The

aim is to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus, which is becoming increasingly worrying day by day.

c. Contextual semantics

The situation depicted on the poster is that there are 8 health workers (doctors/nurses/midwives/public health workers, etc.). Each of them is showing a poster that says "We Stay Work For You, You Stay Home For Us". There is something unique about this picture. Health worker holding the words "For You with a heart symbol" and "For Us with a smile emoticon"

So, the contextual meaning contained in the poster is that we follow the recommendation from the government (NAKES) to stay at home doing all activities, including work and so on, by leaving us (NAKES) to work outside.



Figure 5. Data 4

Poster NUMBER 4 contains six linguistic signs and image signs. If we compiled it, there are six linguistic sign which is the main text of the poster:

1. *“Sering Cuci Tangan Pakai Sabun”*
2. *“Tetap Tinggal di Rumah”*
3. *“Jaga Jarak dan Hindari Kerumunan”*
4. *“Tidak Berjabat Tangan”*
5. *“Pakai Masker Bila Sakit atau Harus Berada di Tempat”*

All texts are placed along with the picture in the poster, and a white letter which aims to emphasise the words is very important. The texts on poster 4 are written in Bahasa Indonesia. The texts are also followed by the meaningful picture, so the people can see and understand what the illustrator plans to do with the poster. Here is a semantic analysis of the poster.

a. Lexical semantic

The first sentence is *“Sering Cuci Tangan Pakai Sabun”*

-
- “*Sering*”. Is an adjective which means “Always”
 - “*Cuci Tangan*”. Is translated into “Wash Hand”. The World Health Organization mentioned there are 7 steps in washing hand procedures.
 - “*Pakai Sabun*”. In English, it is ‘using soap’. It is advisable to wash hands using a liquid soap, not others.

The second sentence is “*Tetap Tinggal di Rumah*”.

- “*Tetap Tinggal*”. Is a verb which means “stayed”. Do not move.
- “*Di Rumah*”. Is a noun which means “at home” with family. If we combine those words, the message would be “just stay at home”. Do not move or go out from home.

The third sentence is “*Jaga Jarak dan Hindari Kerumunan*”

- “*Jaga Jarak*” means keep your distance and avoid the crowd.
- “*dan*” is one of the connectors. It is to connect one word to another; one sentence to another.
- “*Hindari*”. It has the same meaning as the previous. It is “avoided”.
- “*Kerumunan*” means the crowd. A lot of people in one situation.

b. Grammatical Semantic

The first sentence of the poster is written “*Sering Cuci Tangan Pakai Sabun*” means that we have to clean our hands as much as possible. It is shown by the word “*Sering*” which means the emphasis for people in a pandemic situation have to follow it.

The second sentence is “*Tetap Tinggal di Rumah*”. The sentence also has the meaning that we have to follow the advice from the government to stay at home. In the previous poster we can see “we stay at work for you, you stay at home for us. Just staying at home and doing the work from home.

The third sentence is “*Jaga Jarak dan Hindari Kerumunan*”. Since everybody is expected to stay at home, people have to follow another suggestion from the government to stay away from crowds. It can easily spread the virus by several pieces of evidence such as coughing, sneezing, touching etc.

The fourth sentence is “*Tidak Berjabat Tangan*”. We had dealt with that during the pandemic situation. We shook hands with clenched fists. Whenever, wherever and whatever the situation is, we can clench our fist. The message of the sentence is that probably by shaking hands the virus can easily spread because our hands are vulnerable to touch anything.

Finally, the last sentence is “*Pakai Masker Bila Sakit atau Harus Berada di Tempat*”. One of the very sensitive senses from our part of the body is the mouth and nose. The massive transmission of Covid-19 according to the data is through mouth and nose or we can say respiration. Hence, the message is covering the area by masking. It is recommended to use a hygienist mask as a government advice.

c. Contextual Semantics

The situation portrayed on the poster is that there are 5 verbal and non-verbal information regarding health issues during pandemic. It is shown by the title “*5 Hal Penting Cegah Covid-19*”. Five important factors can help people to stay away from Covid-19. The data also showed that there was a decrease of transmission if people follow the government recommendation; just like in this poster. All sentences and pictures or symbols in the posters

are easy to understand by the people because they have already been accustomed to it for two years (during the pandemic).

4. CONCLUSION

Poster is a communication medium which has a variety of types and sizes, and can change from time to time according to its function and need. The poster can display a real life and can even affect the audience. The poster will often be seen on the road, on the building hospital, even on the front wall. The poster design is a key to influence people to see it. By applying Semantics in the research, it aims to find out what signs represent the posters of Covid-19; to find out meanings that are on posters; and to find out the way design used to attract people's attention. The findings of the research shows that there are 3 meanings on the poster namely semantic lexical, grammatical and contextual.

From the research results above, it can be concluded that the lexical meanings found in the coronavirus educational posters on social media are lexical verbs with 5 words, lexical nouns with 5 words, and the others are conjunctions with 3 words, pronouns with 2 words, and the rest are lexical adjectives, adverbs and interjection. With the theme of the coronavirus educational poster on social media, many words repeat words from the theme being researched.

As for the grammatical meaning of coronavirus educational posters on social media, there are three grammatical forms found in the analysis of coronavirus educational posters on social media, namely the grammatical form of verbs, the grammatical form of nouns, and the grammatical form of adjectives.

Contextual meaning in this research uses a lot of illustrations with a cartoon theme so it is interesting to look at, including illustrations of coronavirus images which are used on almost every poster, and other images are images related to the pandemic situation, namely: masks, paramedics, family portraits, farming, washing hands and crowd illustration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Mrs. Suryani, the Head of the STIKES DHARMA HUSADA, has provided an extraordinary opportunity to carry out our research in the campus. We would also like to thank all Health Promotion Students of STIKES DHARMA HUSADA who have helped us with a very good collaboration. This research would not have been successful without their cooperation and input.

REFERENCES

- Bouzida, F. (2014). The semiology analysis in media studies: Roland Barthes Approach. *In Proceedings of SOCIOINT14-International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1001–1007.
- Chandler, D. (2007). *Semiotics the Basic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203014936>
- Gerbner, George. (1967: 40-60). *Mass Media and Human Communication Theory*. Publisher: New York: Holt, Rinehart And Winston.
- Guiraud, P. (1975). *Semiology*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Gökaşan, G. (2017). Digital Collage, Poster Design and Stephan Bundi: The Semiotic Analysis of Theatre Posters. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 7(3), 46–64. Retrieved from <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/digital-collage-poster-design-and-stephan-bundi-the-semiotic-analysis-of-theatre-posters.pdf>
- Halim, S. (2017). *Semiotika Dokumenter: Membongkar Dekonstruksi Mitos Dalam Media*
- Kirk, J. & Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. *Dokumenter*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish
- Oswald, Laura R (2012). *Marketing: Sign, Strategies, and Brand Value*. Oxford University Press.
- Zaid Salhab, Rasha. 2022. *The Semiotic Analysis of Posters Against Domestic Violence in Jordan*. University of Oviedo

<https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2021/07/14/20-gambar-poster-covid-19-bisa-dibagikan-untuk-bahan-edukasi-di-facebook-twitter-atau-instagram?page=2>