

## PEIRCE'S SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS TOWARD COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON 9GAG MEMES IN SEPTEMBER 2021

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### Abstract

Semiotics and semantics are branches of linguistics. Semiotics is a science or method of analysis in studying signs and semantics is a science of meaning. The purposes of this study are to analyze Peirce's semiotic signs and understand the interpretation of the contextual meaning contained in the 9GAG memes containing the COVID-19 narrative. As a tool to analyze, the researcher uses Peirce's semiotic as main theory which consists of representamen, object, and interpretant, while in the semantic field, the researcher uses the supporting theory, namely the contextual meaning of Lyon to discuss each context in the words in the narrative in the meme. The objects used in this study were 30 memes containing the COVID-19 narrative originating from one of the largest online meme platforms, 9GAG. The meme object was chosen because many internet users use memes as a medium to express opinions about COVID-19. The form of the method used in this research is qualitative research. This form of research was chosen because it produces written descriptive data that explains the process of semiosis and the contextual meaning contained in 9GAG memes. For the result of this Semiotics analysis, researcher found on three semiotics signs, 30 data of qualisign, sinsign, index, and rheme. They become the most dominant element. Then, followed by 9 data of icon and 6 data of argument. Meanwhile, legisign, symbol, and dicent only found 1 data. In contextual meaning analysis, researcher found 19 data of context of person and becomes the most dominant types of contextual meaning on these memes above. Then, followed by 15 data of context of subject-matter, 7 data of context of mood, 3 data of context of time, 2 data of context of place, and 1 data of context of formality. The conclusion is each meme on this research has representamen, object, and interpretant then the narrative in it contains meaning about public opinion regarding life aspects affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, Meme, 9GAG, Semiotics, Contextual Semantics Meaning*

### INTRODUCTION

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. The 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 3.9 million deaths worldwide.

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.

According to Pierce (Kaelan, 2009), linguistics 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 representamen 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 contained in the meme narrative is then dissected using semantics analysis. Semantics is a branch of linguistics that explores and examines vowel units' meaning that leads to relationships in the meaning of the units in question. According to (Tarigan, 1985), semantics can reveal signs interconnected with one another to the influence of humans and society. Then Semantics has the following elements: signs and symbols, referential relationships and lexical meaning, and naming. Based on these elements, semiotics and semantics are interconnected. Semiotic semantics is a form of meaning that speakers want to convey through the expression of its form.

The type of semantics analysis that uses by the researcher is contextual semantics meaning analysis. Lyon (Lyons, 1977) said, contextual meaning has 6 types, there are context of person, context of context of place, context of time, context of formality, context of mood, and context of subject-matter. As a supporting theory, the researcher uses contextual semantics meaning to interpret the narration on the memes conforming to western culture.

Not surprisingly, the level of internet users in the world during pandemic 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. Dawkins (1976) said 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 internet but they also must be wise in using it because there are negative and positive effects contained in those memes.

We are not surprised that 9GAG is an online comedy platform that has been visited by more than 65 million visitors per month. 9GAG is an online comedy site 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. With the factors above, the researcher took data

from memes containing narratives of the impact of COVID-19, which were uploaded on the 9GAG site in September 2021.

From the research background that has been discussed above, the researcher will analyze the representamen, object, and interpretant that occurred on 9GAG memes containing the COVID-19 narrative related with semantic contextual meaning and examine the interpretation of the semantic contextual meaning of the COVID-19 narrative described on 9GAG memes following the reality in society of American culture.

The researcher discusses semiotics and contextual meaning because semiotic analysis can help to understand images in memes so that people can interpret them more easily and contextual meaning analysis helps to understand the context of words in narratives because everyone has a different culture so when people from different cultures see memes it will be easier for them to understand the meaning. Then, the researcher chose meme containing the COVID-19 narrative on 9GAG because meme is a medium that is often used by internet users, easy to understand by people who see it and not rigid in shape, while 9GAG was chosen because 9GAG is one of the online comedy platforms that is often used by people around the world.

### **Semiotics**

Semiotics is a science or method of analysis in studying signs. According to Kriyantono (2008), signs, systems, rules, and conventions that allow for signs as meanings are studied in semiotics. Umberto Eco explains semiotics as a discipline that studies all things to be used as a means of lying because if it cannot be used to lie, otherwise it cannot be used, to be honest, and it is not used for anything. This definition is quite profound because we can represent something through signs.

Semiotics is the science of signs and is a branch of philosophy that studies and fixes "signs". Ferdinand de Saussure, in his *Course in General Linguistics*, explains that "semiotics is a study that studies the typology, types, structures, and relationships of signs in their use in society. Semiotics is a science that studies events, cultures, and objects broadly as signs and semiotics is also not limited by a language symbol, but all signs in human life.

Terminologically, semiotics can be defined as a science that studies a wide range of objects, events, and the whole culture as a sign. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, an essential tradition in traditional thought communication. The semiotics tradition includes the leading theories about how signs represent objects, ideas, situations, circumstances, feelings, and so on outside the self. The study of signs alone does not provide a way to study communication. But it also has an effect significant in almost every aspect (perspective) used in communication theory.

### **Semiotics of Peirce**

According to Peirce, semiotics is based on logic because logic learns how people reason, reason according to Peirce done through signs. Signs allow us to think, relate to others and give meaning to what displayed by the universe. We have vast possibilities in the diversity of signs, and among them, linguistic signs are an essential category, but not the only one (Zainuddin, 2018). With developing semiotics, Peirce pays attention to his work sign in general. However, it gives an essential place to linguistics, not the only one. In general, what applies to signs also applies to linguistic signs, but not vice versa. According to Peirce, the signs concerning objects that resemble them, existence has a causal relationship with signs or because of the relationship with these signs.

Peirce made three trichotomies based on each element. First, representamen are divided into three, there are:

- 1) Qualisign is a quality that can be a sign. It cannot act as a sign until then embodiment, but the model has nothing to do with the character as a sign. A quality mark is a connection description where something can be seen or understood based on quality. Therefore, quality is descriptive and questionable because it implies the usual likeness or climax. In other words, the qualification must be to become an icon. For example, many of the flags flown on August 17th are red and white. This sign is interpreted as a sign of the Indonesian state. The red and white flag has a qualitative level because the color forms its representation.

- 2) Sinsign is a person's question or occasion. A sinsign must be generated in a critiquing sign and a connection consisting of a qualisign and also, sinsign is a marker linked to reality. For example, the red and white flag signifies the Indonesian State. This red and white flag represents flowers placed in a particular context or an actual event.
- 3) Legisign is a sign of law or regularity that links identification and conviction. Legisign is a rule-bending marker. For example, red and white flags signify the general agreement used to sign Indonesia State.

Second, object (O) or reference is a social context that becomes a reference to a sign or thing to which it refers. Objects have three classifications representamen and always related objects.

- 1) Icon is signs similar to the reality to which it refers, or a sign that represents and has the subject's characteristics, whether or not the Entity exists.
- 2) Index is the sign which is connected to the object by cause and effect. The relation between sign and object is a concrete.
- 3) Symbol is a general rule or idea that only works in a particular situation, area, or society. It should be noted that it is necessary to distinguish symbols with legisign and also, it related to the subject matter of the agreement.

The last is the interpretant or sign user, namely the concept of thinking about the object referred to by a sign in the user's mind. It is divided into three, there are:

- 1) Rheme is a sign of quality. It is an implicit interpreter, spoken of as a character or sign, even if it may be a symbol, a list, or an image. The rheme objected for several reasons. Rheme is a sign that allows it to be understood in different meanings.
- 2) Dicent or dicensign is a sign based on facts. In a way, the dicensign is a more developed sign incorporating rheology and is featured as a recommendation. Dicensign is right or wrong. The dicensign indicates actual existence, and the signified interpreter is represented as an index. However, it can be an index or a symbol.
- 3) Argument is a sign that contains a reason for something. The argument that represents it is an object of right or inclination that, implicitly interpreted, is considered symbolic.

## Semantics

The word semantics comes from the Greek word *sema* (noun) which means “sign” or “symbol”. The verb is *semaino* which means “to mark” or “to symbolize”. The term semantics itself has existed since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When considered through the phrase semantic philosophy. Semantics can be interpreted as the science of meaning, which is one of the three levels of language analysis, such as phonology, grammar, and semantics. Semantics is also more commonly used in linguistic studies, which has a broader scope of objects, which includes the meaning of signs or symbols in general and is the essential part of language structure related to the meaning of expressions in general (Nur'aini, 2010).

## Types of Semantics

Chaer (2013, p. 7) argues that semantics is an arrangement of language that has elements and is related to the structure of meaning and expression of meaning. The meaning analyzed by semantics can be studied in many aspects, especially schools and theories in linguistics. There are four types of semantics, namely lexical semantics, grammatical semantics, syntactical semantics, and intent semantics.

## Contextual Meaning

Dash (2008, p. 2), in his research paper, define context as an immediate linguistic environment (rarely detached or isolated) in which a particular word occurs. Dash has classified context into four types: Local Context, Sentential Context, Topical Context, and Global Context; adding two more types from Miller and Leacock (2000) classifications of contexts (Local context and Topical context).

Lyons (1977), in his book, defines context as a theoretical construct. Linguists and all participants in a linguistic event use all possible elements. It is a consideration when communicating points and influences the utterance's meaning. These factors are explicitly related to location and time as needed. Utterances and sometimes factors are characteristic of participants as humans. Ability to interact and knowledge of each participant's topic matter. The author of this work concludes six main types of contexts from his book as a basis for advancing this research.

### **Types of Contextual Meaning**

#### 1) Context of Person

For each utterance, each participant needs to know their role and status linguistically. According to Lyons (1977), there are two linguistic types. Related roles: deictic and social roles. The deictic role is usually derived from Speaker behavior when speaking his utterances to others use of personal or directive pronouns related to the recipient or to other people or things. The pronoun used is determined by attendance speaker and target or destination at the time of utterance name or description. This role is not found in all languages but most languages. Languages, including English, are targeted at that grammar. For example:

*I will give you an apple.*

Gender and age also determine factors in choosing options pronouns and other grammatical components. The terms someone uses to address a person of the opposite sex or a person younger than an older person may be different terms used by people of the same sex or age, even when events occur in similar situations. Social roles are generally reciprocal for each participant, for example, the function of teacher to student and the student to the teacher.

*I will bring the student's assignments to your room, Sir*

The use of pronoun *Sir* represents the gender and age of the target: a male who is older than the speaker. The phrase *bring the student's assignments* realizes the social function between a student to a teacher.

#### 2) Context of Place

The location of the ongoing speech event for choosing the meaning and vocabulary used. Usually, speakers and targets share the exact location on live calls, but participants are divided by location. For example, for long-distance calls the speakers and targets are expected to know the target and the target's location to know the speaker's location if the participants do not share the exact location. during the event. If you know the location, the meaning is easy to understand of utterances. The location may or may not be specified by the event. For example:

*The winter in Indonesia is very cold.*

The speaker mentions the location explicitly and very clearly: Indonesia, but even though the sentence is grammatically correct, it does not make sense semantically due to the geographical criteria of the country Indonesia which does not have a winter season.

#### 3) Context of Time

The other necessary type of context that influences how the participants interpret meanings from utterances and choose the vocabulary to use is time. Just like the other previous types, knowing the time of the utterances makes more sense of utterances. For example:

*Good morning!*  
*Happy Eid Mubarak!*

The use of both greetings is similarly dependent upon the speaker's knowledge of the time at which he is producing them. The greetings become semantically appropriate given the correct time, which are morning for Good Morning! and during Muslim's holy day for Happy Eid Mubarak!

#### 4) Context of Formality

Formality means the rigid observance of rules of convention or etiquette. In every language event, participants must categorize or assume the degree of formality. The scale of formality occurs in probably all languages. Formal registers come in two primary forms: informal and formal. The informal register is what we use with friends and family and when we meet people at casual venue. The official register is reserved for professional settings such as: classroom, workplace, job interviews. Joos (1967) categorized the degree of form in English. It is intended to correlate with systematic phonological, grammatical, and vocabulary differences. There are frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate.

#### 5) Context of Mood

Mood context deals with the state of mind or feelings of the participants during the conversation. The current state of mind of a speaker and the target can affect the interpretation of the meaning and the production of vocabularies. For example:

*Don't cry, I will be there for you.*

On sentence above, we can conclude that the speaker is feeling sad from the use of word *cry*.

#### 6) Context of Subject-matter

Crystal and Davy (1969) define subject matter as one of the factors among many which contribute to a province's (the features of language which identify an utterance with those variables in an extra linguistic context which is defined with reference to the occupational or professional activity being engaged in) definition, and in any case has predictive power only in a minority of extremely specialist situations.

Understanding the subject matter is essential in understanding the meaning of utterances with homonymous or polysemous lexemes. The subject matter is determined by the terms of the occurrence surrounding the lexeme. For example:

*Hey buddy, spill the tea please!*

The word *tea* has different meaning with the literal meaning. In this case, it has the role as a noun. The noun *tea* belongs to the truth of people's life because in general these words widely used by people who like to gossip.

### **Culture in COVID-19 Pandemic**

Culture is a term that refers to the broad and diverse scope of the almost intangible aspects of social life. According to sociologists, culture consists of values, beliefs, language systems, communications, and customs that people have in common and can define them as a collective. Culture also includes material objects that are common to the group and society. Culture is different but related to society's social structure and economic aspects. Culture continuously informs them and is declared by them.

Culture in this case can be interpreted as style community life. Borrowing opinion from Kotler (2002, p. 192), lifestyle is a pattern one's life in the world is expressed in activities, interests, and ideas. That is a lifestyle identified by how people spend their time (actions), what they consider necessary in their environment (interests), and what they think about themselves and the world around them.

Judging from these definitions, we can relate to the lifestyle of today's society. Since the implementation of the lockdown and the appeal at home is just a little more affect activities and habits in public. For example, in education field, before COVID-19 ended, the method's learning now replaced by online learning.

## Meme

The Meaning of memes himself was introduced by an expert in the field of biology, namely Richard Dawkins (1976) in his book *The Selfish Gene*. In the book Dawkins said: “we need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of imitation. *Mimeme* comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that it sounds a bit like 'gene.' I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate *mimeme* to meme.”

From what he said above, Dawkins made it clear that he needed a new name (noun) to convey his idea of a unit imitation. *Mimeme* itself comes from a Greek word that sounds like a gene. He hoped no one would mind because, from that *mimeme*, he shortened it to meme. Moreover, Meme continues to grow on all social media and spread faster. So, it can also be interpreted that a meme is an image that is written to use to support the expression of the image. This meme is none other than in the form of humorous pictures or videos, parodies, or funny pictures that are inserted to satirize even criticize something.

## Social Media

Social media is a special collection of online communications channels dedicated to content sharing, interaction, community-based input, and collaboration. (Rouse, 2016) Talking about media social, Curtis (2017) assumed that there are ten types of it those are media for sharing, and social networking site, also forum for discussion, content and bookmark, and then some networks such as blogging and publishing, consumer reviewing, economy sharing, social expensing, and interest-based networks. Based on the types of social media, most of the people, even adults or children, prefer to use media sharing networks. They not only find information from it but also share the photo, video, live video, and other media online which are interesting.

## 9GAG

9GAG is an online media for users from around the world to sharing the content in form of Meme. 9GAG was made in 2008 by Ray Chan, Chris Chan, Marco Fung, Brian Yu, and Derek Chan. 9GAG is a startup based in Hong Kong with an open and collaborative platform, this site makes it is easy for users to spread visual entertainment quickly and easily. This 9GAG site has been visited by more than 47 million followers and more than one billion monthly page views, 9GAG has the most active user community of any other online comedy site and 9GAG has the slogan of "Go Fun Yourself".

Most of the 9GAG posts are written in English. 9GAG community has a complex cultural element that all users worldwide. It also has a limitation of using language and Anglo-American Culture. According to Albin (2014), each item is manufactured in the language will be criticized by 9GAG users and the most popular announcements are women, gender, ethnic or even national peculiarities.

## METHOD

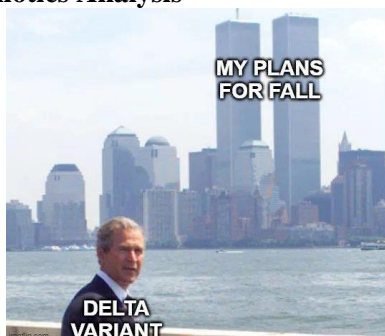
In this study, the researcher uses qualitative research methods to explain and describe the representamen, objects, interpretant and semantic contextual meanings contained in the 9GAG meme about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975, p. 5), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of oral or written from the object being observed. Then, researcher focuses on the visual aspects contained in the meme as analytical material for semiotics analysis, and the researcher focuses on writing as analytical material for semantics contextual analysis.

Qualitative research produces non-systematic results. This method can produce data obtained from various means such as observations, interviews, tests, and archives or documents. The reason researchers use social research is the researcher beliefs based on his experience, the characteristics of the problem being studied. Therefore, the researcher wants to describe it as a phenomenon that has not been revealed.

In this study, researchers took data in the form of 30 memes containing elements of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from the website [www.9gag.com](http://www.9gag.com) downloaded in 1-30 November 2021. Then the researcher analyzes the representamen, objects, and interpretant contained in the meme with a narrative of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic using Peirce's semiotics analysis. Furthermore, to answer the second question in the statement of problem above, the researcher uses the semantics method and then adjusts it to the type of contextual semantics meaning. The results of this study are tables that show what elements of Peirce's semiotics are used in memes and what types of contextual meaning are in the COVID-19 narrative in the meme.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Semiotics Analysis



#### 1. Representamen

- **Qualisign:** US president, Joe Biden is in a suit, staring at something from afar without expression against a backdrop of rivers and tall buildings on a sunny day.
- **Sinsign:** "Delta Variant" is a new variant of coronavirus, and the tall buildings behind him "My Plan for Fall" as the context of the main problem in the meme.
- **Legisign:** The man in the black suit in the meme is the 46th president of the USA, Joe Biden, who was sworn in on January 20, 2021, after winning the election against Donald Trump.

#### 2. Object

- **Index:** President Joe Biden, with an expressionless face and text above him "Delta Variant" representing the coronavirus variant delta, can be contagious to anyone without exception and can disrupt or cancel someone's plans that have been made, which are represented by tall buildings behind that read "My plan for Fall."
- **Icon:** As head of state and tall buildings, Joe Biden represents America and asserts that the country is a developed country with significant influence.

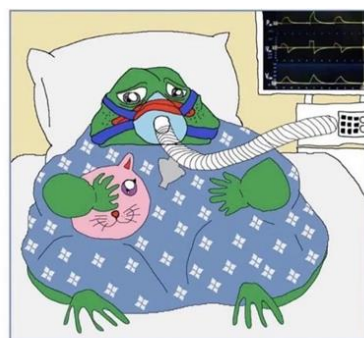
#### 3. Interpretant

- **Rheme:** From the meme above, it can be seen that coronavirus is a hazardous virus that can spread easily and quickly. Then this virus can also mutate quickly, one of which is this delta variant. Americans are also advised to limit outdoor activities in the fall that occurs at the end of September-late October 2021 because there are usually many festivals held, such as pumpkin, apple, and other festivals, to welcome the typical autumn harvest.

#### 1. Representamen

- **Qualisign:** A news story that shows a frog with a sad face dressed in blue patterned pajamas is being treated at the hospital holding a pink cat head doll. Blue in the meme represents sadness, and pink in the doll represents love.





**PEPETODAY**  
HEALTHY 37 YEAR OLD PEPE HOSPITALIZED WITH COVID-19 –  
HAS CHILLING WORDS TO THOSE UNVACCINATED

- **Sinsign:** A meme with a frog being treated and then packaged like a news story reads, “Pepe Today, Healthy 37 year old Pepe hospitalized with COVID-19 has chilling words to those unvaccinated”.

## 2. Object

- **Index:** Pepe, who feels his body is healthy, does not guarantee that he will be spared from the coronavirus, let alone people who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19.
- **Icon:** Hospitals are places for people to seek treatment, and during this pandemic, hospitals are also used as quarantine places for COVID-19 sufferers.

## 3. Interpretant

- **Rheme:** Referring to the meme above, many people's beliefs about the existence of this virus agree and disagree. Generally, people in an area where the virus has infected no one will have less confidence about the coronavirus. Then, some people feel healthy but do not want to be checked even though they have felt symptoms of being affected by the coronavirus, such as disturbed breathing, high fever, weakness, the sense of taste is not



working, and many others.

## 1. Representamen

- **Qualisign:** A black and dark blue coffin container truck is on the road. It means that the container truck is going somewhere.
- **Sinsign:** The words "Don't get vaccinated" are on the back of the container truck belonging to the Wilmore Funeral Home company. This sentence is an invitation not to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

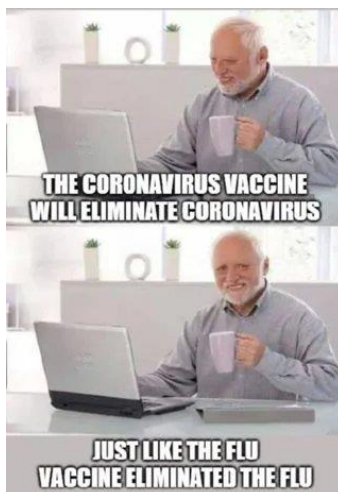
## 2. Object

- **Index:** The sentence follows the company that owns the container truck. the more people who do not want to be vaccinated, the more likely they are to catch and die from corona, so that they will order a coffin from the Wilmore funeral home company.

- **Symbol:** Traffic signs beside the car mean that parking is prohibited around the road.

### 3. Interpretant

- **Rheme:** Referring to the meme above, the Wilmore Company indirectly reminds anti-vaccine agents to get vaccinated as soon as possible before contracting COVID-19. Otherwise, these people could die from COVID-19, so they could not help but order a coffin.
- **Dicent:** Traffic signs no parking means people driving are prohibited from parking in the area because it will create congestion on the road.



### 1. Representamen

- **Qualisign:** A meme with two scenes showing a parent in a room using a laptop. In the above scene, the parents look serious, and the second scene shows the parents smiling. This change in an expression meant that he might find something interesting on his laptop.
- **Sinsign:** The scene above says, “The coronavirus vaccine will eliminate coronavirus,” and the scene below says, “Just like the previous vaccine eliminated the flu”. The sentence means that the vaccine is made based on the type of virus to be eliminated.

### 2. Object

**Index:** The change in expression shown by the older man above after looking at the laptop means that he remains calm about the coronavirus because the coronavirus will be wiped out by the COVID-19 vaccine, like the flu. Simple analogy.

### 3. Interpretant

- **Rheme:** The meme above is like human hope for the COVID-19 pandemic. After doctors and scientists find the vaccine, it is hoped that the coronavirus will disappear because people have been vaccinated so that the transmission of COVID-19 is reduced or no longer exists.
- **Argument:** “Just like flu vaccine eliminated the flu,” which was analogous to the old man above. Hopefully, the COVID-19 vaccine can work with humans to form new immunity against COVID-19.



### 1. Representamen

- **Qualisign:** You can see people in front of a virus institute building on the left and an illustration of a bat with a virus on the right. The institute is currently studying the Coronavirus that originated in bats.
- **Sinsign:** Seen the name of a building called "Wuhan Institute of Virology" and "Wuhan scientists discover 23-times deadlier Coronavirus in bats". That means that the Coronavirus in bats is very dangerous.

### 2. Object

- **Index:** The findings from scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology are that COVID-19 present in bats is 23 times more dangerous than that in infected humans.
- **Icon:** The Wuhan Institute of Virology building is where scientists research the Coronavirus in China, and bats are the origin of where the Coronavirus originated and is very dangerous.

### 3. Interpretant

- **Rheme:** The interpretation is that this is good knowledge because people there might reduce or stop eating bats, which are the first source of COVID-19 transmission to humans.

## Contextual Meaning Analysis



### 1. Context of Person

- The pronoun *me* is fulfill deictic roles as the object of the sentence "Don't tread on me" and as the target of action *tread*. It has meaning the people who are limited in every time and situation by COVID-19.

## 2. Context of Subject-matter

- The word *tread* is homonymous because it has several meaning. As a noun, *foot sounds when walking* and as a verb, *to put your foot on something or to press something down with your foot*. It referring to the word *tread* as a verb. It has meaning, Americans' activities are limited by COVID-19. A survey by SingleCare Team writes survey of how the coronavirus is hindering Americans' daily activities, the results are: (1) 74% of US residents are practicing social distancing; (2) 41% of working US residents are concerned about losing their jobs; (3) 35% of U.S. residents believe that COVID-19 will affect their daily lives for more than six months; (4) 29% of US residents cancelled or postponed travel plans; (5)13% of parents quit or work less to care for their children.

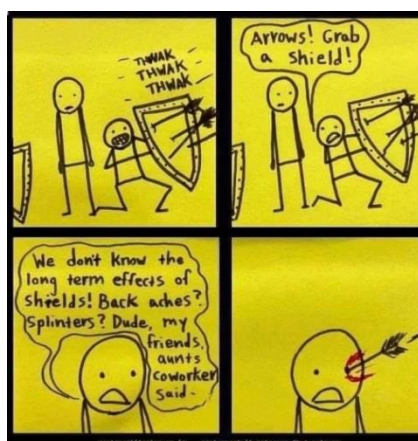


## 1. Context of Person

- Pronoun *you* is fulfill deictic role as the target of the sentence “The more you know”. It has meaning the reader of this data.

## 2. Context of Time

- The word *season* has several meaning *one of the four periods of the year; spring, summer, autumn, or winter; the period of the year when something that happens every year happens*. The word *season* in sentence “Flu season USA” is referring to the period of flu in America. According to datum 13, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) writes in the United States, flu season occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses spread year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, but activity can last as late as May.



## 1. Context of Person

- The pronoun *we* fulfills the deictic role as the subject of action know. It can be interpreted as people who are confused about the good or bad of vaccination.

## 2. Context of Formality

- The word *dude* in sentence “we don’t know the long term effects of shields! Back aches? Splinters? Dude, my friends, aunts coworker said” is used by the speaker in conversation between him and his friend. Therefore, the utterance is in the mode of casual degree of formality.

### 3. Context of Subject-matter

- The word *shield* in sentence “arrows! Grab a shield!” is homonymous, because it has two forms. As a noun, *in the past, soldiers had large, flat metal or leather objects in front of their bodies for protection; a large, flat object made of durable plastic that police officers hold in front of their bodies for protection; It is a flat object with two straight sides, a rounded or pointed bottom, usually a straight top, and a coat of arms on it.* As a verb, *to protect someone or something; if you get sick, you risk getting a severe illness, so you can protect yourself from the illness by staying at home and minimizing contact with people outside the house.* Referring to the sentence above, it word has the meaning as noun, *a metal object to protect themselves.* It can be interpreted as a COVID-19 vaccine whose long-term side effects on good health or even make it worse.



### 1. Context of Person

- The pronoun *we* is to fulfill the deictic role as the subject of sentence above, “we worked through the pandemic with no vaccine. Now they want to fire us!.” The pronoun *we* is referring to the medical staffs during COVID-19 pandemic.
- The word *heros* is fulfills the social role as a person who is admired for having done something very brave or having achieved something great. It reffering to medical staff who have worked hard to serve people affected by COVID-19.

### 2. Context of Time

- The phrase “this years” show the time when the medical staffs work. They worked during COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3. Context of Subject-matter

- The word *fire* is homonymous, because it has several meaning. As a noun, *(material that is in) the state of burning that produces flames that send out heat and light, and might produce smoke.* As a verb, *taking someone out of work because they did something wrong or to save on hiring costs.* Referring to the sentence above, the word *fire* has the meaning *taking someone out of work* and it can be interpreted a lot of medical staffs laid off from work. In addition, [abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com) writes hundreds of health care workers across the country (United States) are being fired or suspended in droves for not complying with COVID-19 vaccine mandates, impacting some 17 million health care workers in the nation.



#### 1. Context of Person

- The pronoun *I* is fulfill the deictic role as the subject in sentence “I ordered contactless pizza. Contactless!”. It has meaning a customer of pizza.

#### 2. Context of Mood

- The word *contactless* with an exclamation point indicates the subject's feelings that are sternly warning. if it is related to the condition of the covid-19 pandemic, it has meaning referring to understanding of social distancing. According to datum 14, [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org) explains social distance practices mean staying at home and as far away as possible from others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Social distance practices encourage things like online video and telephone communications instead of face-to-face contact. Some states allowed religious activities to continue, while others continued to open beaches and parks to the crowd. Some people wear a mask, while others do not.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, the Peirce's semiotics has three semiotics signs. There are (1) representamen consists of qualisign, sinsign, and legisign (2) object consists of index, icon, and symbol (3) interpretant consists of rheme, argument, and dicent. For the result of this analysis, researcher found on three semiotics sign, 30 data qualisign, sinsign, index, and rheme. It becomes the most dominant element. Then, followed by 9 data of icon and 6 data of argument. Meanwhile, legisign, symbol, and dicent only found 1 data. This is because the meme above does not contain related to law or something that represents a certain thing in real life.

On the contextual meaning analysis, contextual meaning has six types, there are context of person, context of place, context time, context of formality, context of mood, and context subject-matter. For the result, researcher found 19 data of context of person and becomes the most dominant types of contextual meaning on these memes above. Then, followed by 15 data of context of subject-matter, 7 data of context of mood, 3 data of context of time, and 2 data of context of place. The classification in determining the type of context in the meme above is caused by the choice of words in the narrative in the meme to accurately describe and convey the content of the meme itself.

Based on explanation using Peirce's Semiotics theory and contextual meaning theory, it can be concluded that there are representamen, objects, and interpretant in every 9GAG meme containing the COVID-19 narrative. Then, based on contextual semantics meaning, various kinds of public opinion are implied in words in memes about the COVID-19 pandemic in life, such economics, vaccination, government policies, the emergence of various new variants of COVID-19, people who are anti-COVID-19 or vaccines, some even associate with extraterrestrial beings or known as aliens. The selection of the right media, namely memes, also makes it easier for people, especially young people, to express their opinions and is easier for internet users to understand because they use images to support the narrative created.

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