

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

A cartoon aimed to entertain the reader or the viewer in such images or pictures contains messages, ideas or thoughts for certain purposes. Cartoons serve a variety of purposes, including amusement (comic art), making life more pleasant (social cartoons), and bringing order through government action (the effective political cartoon). Also, according to Sanaky (cited in Robingah, 2020:86), cartoons are a type of graphic media that includes interpretive images that use symbols to convey a message quickly and succinctly, or an attitude toward specific persons, circumstances, or events. Thus, the researcher stated cartoons are not only the media to bring entertainment to the people but also as a bridge to express messages or information.

Cartoons can be divided into three categories; humorous cartoons, social cartoons and political cartoons. Humorous cartoon purpose to amuse people by bringing some daily life and problem into such good-humoured art. This kind of cartoon is usually known by the majority of people, especially kids. Caricatures and exaggerated settings are used to produce humor and delight in humorous cartoons, a type of visual entertainment. A hilarious cartoon's main goal is to make viewers grin or laugh by showing scenarios that are funny, relevant, and frequently satirical. Then the social cartoon prefers to comment on the daily life and problem on the social side. The artist's goal is to elicit a wry smile of recognition, thereby making life and its annoyances a little easier. Fetsko (2001: 3) said the political cartoon's point of view is highly subjective. The political cartoonist's goal is to bring perspective from partisan for reader or viewer on some issue in terms of politics.

Nowadays cartoons are mostly published in digital media such as websites and social media. The existence of the internet is evidence of the spread of technology. Also, Surokim As (2017: 10) stated the development of information communication and internet access brings an effect on the majority. Thus, drawing as language is unavoidable in today's world, especially in the information

communication era, where the role of drawing is expanding. As stated in Das (2020: 2744), people could access any sites or places on the internet to get government, commercial, educational, social, entertainment, etc. purposes.

Downtoearth.org.in is an online website in India that has a purpose to make changes to alter the way we manage our environment, safeguard public health, and ensure everyone's livelihood and economic security. As their goal above, this website presented information on different topics such as climate change, food, health, water and agriculture. Besides publishing information in form of news and article on current issues, *Down To Earth* also releases cartoons as their content.

Among many cartoons with numerous topics, *Down To Earth* published political cartoons regarding COVID-19 issues which are satirizing to the government. According to Hidayat et al., (2020: 644), satire is a language style that uses irony, sarcasm, and parody to insinuate someone or a situation. Some critical cartoonists turn the cartoon into a tool to express their opinions and to bring inspiration to realize people of current issues happen in form of humorous and symbolic characters.

In this case, one of the cartoons contains satirical issues during the COVID-19 vaccination found by the researcher.



Figure 1. (Simply Put; The Cartoon of COVID-19 Vaccination Period)

There is a direction post which points two ways, the first one points to the right (based on the reader's point of view) namely “claims by the govt” with a rabbit in a running pose as the character, and another one to the left namely “Universal Vaccination” with a turtle in slow-walking pose and he is holding a walker (a tool usually uses by old people). From this example, the researcher is interested in revealing the hidden messages in texts and images conveyed by a cartoonist with semiotics study which is the study of signs to find the meaning of signs. Also, the cartoons of *Down To Earth* are using simple text even though there are some words or terms that need more deep interpretations.

Hasanah & Hidayat (2020: 325) said semiotics is closely related to signs and aim to interpret and comprehend the hidden meaning of signs. The research considers analyzing several cartoons related to COVID-19 using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory to describe its semiosis process. Through the representamen, interpretant and object that will uncover the messages in the cartoons.

B. The Focus of the Study

Based on the background of the research above, the research focuses on the analysis of symbols and icons in twelve cartoons that have been sorted from a website in India namely *DownToEarth.org.in* which contains cartoons related to political cartoons on COVID- 19 issues. Moreover, the semiosis process in this research uses the theory of Charles Sanders Peirce.

C. Statement of the Problem

This research is necessary to reveal the satirical messages contained in the political cartoons of *Down To Earth* on COVID-19 using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory. Furthermore, to get the reader's understanding of the current condition and the facts behind the pandemic COVID-19. Since cartoonists also create many arts on an online platform, it will help the reader or viewer to get a broad insight into the present situation.

a. Research Questions

Based on the focus of the study above, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How does the semiosis process occur in cartoons of *Down To Earth* Website on COVID-19 issues containing satirical messages using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory?
2. How does the analysis of satirical messages by texts and images in cartoons of *Down To Earth* Website on COVID-19 issues?

b. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research consist of:

1. To know and deal with how the semiosis process occurs in cartoons of *Down To Earth* Website on COVID-19 issues contain satirical messages using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory.
2. To know and understand the hidden satirical messages of the texts and images in cartoons of *Down To Earth* Website on COVID-19 issues.

c. Research Significance

This research is expected to give a contribution to the development of linguistics. Also, to give benefits to students of the English Department and to the students who are interested in the semiotics field about the triadic concept of Charles Sanders Peirce's theory on cartoon subjects.

This research is expected to be a tool to implement the Semiotics study in the real-life world. It is also expected to give a contribution to more development in Semiotics study.

d. Definition of Key Terms

It is significant for the researcher to provide the appropriate essential terms to prevent misunderstandings regarding the terminology. Some terms are

defined as follows:

1. Triadic of Semiosis process
2. Political Cartoons on *Down To Earth* Website
3. Satire on Cartoons

