

SEMIOTICS INTERTEXTUALITY OF POLITICAL HUMOR MEMES

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM

MALANG

2021

SEMIOTICS INTERTEXTUALITY OF POLITICAL HUMOR MEMES

THESIS

Presented to

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.)

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MALANG

2021

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Semiotics Intertextuality of Political Humor Memes**” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, i am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 22 December 2021

The researcher



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APPROVAL SHEET

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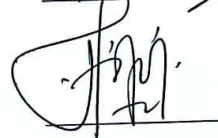
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MOTTO

“Be authentic by knowing and controlling what you want”.

Ki Ageng Suryomentaram & Dr. H. Fahrudin Faiz, S.Ag., M.Ag.

DEDICATION

This thesis is incredibly dedicated to my beloved parents, Moch. Zubaidi and Choiriyah who always give me love, prayers, and support. I also thank my friends who also motivate me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillahirabbil'alamin, all praises are to Allah S.W.T, who always gives me his blessings and mercies. Finally, I can Finish this thesis under the title "Semiotics Intertextuality of Political Humor Memes" as partial fulfillment of the Sarjana Degree requirement. I am aware that many people have given their participation and support to finish this thesis. Without their contribution, my thesis would never be completed.

First, my sincere gratitude goes to the Dean of Humanities Faculty, Dr. M.Faisol, M.Ag. Second, to the Vice Dean of Humanities Faculty Dr. Halimi, M.Pd. Third, the Head of Department of English Literature, Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.D. Last but not least, I would like to say my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Ulil Fitriyah M.Pd, M.Ed, who has patiently guided, helped, motivated, and give me advice in conducting this thesis. Thank you very much to all the lecturers of the faculty of humanity, especially the English literature department, who taught me very valuable lessons.

My sincerest gratitude also goes to my parents, Moch. Zubaidi and Choiriyah, who always give me their loves, prayers and support. My closest friends in the English Literature who also support me.

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ABSTRACT

Mufidah, Ariny Nur (2022). *Semiotic Intertextuality of Political Humor Memes*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Ulil Fitriyah, M. Pd, M. Ed.

Keywords: Political Memes, Signs, Intertextuality, Meaning

Political memes are a creative way to express an idea of political reality by composing verbal and visual signs. The meaning of political memes will be obtained when the verbal and visual signs are interpreted using semiotic and intertextuality. Further, understanding how semiotic and intertextuality are worked to construct the meaning of political memes can train the cognitive. Therefore, the coherency of Semiotics and Intertextuality to find out the meaning of political memes becomes the objective of this study to examine the meaning and how intertextuality is performed in the creation of political memes especially made for criticizing Donald Trump incompetence in dealing with the USA coronavirus pandemic.

This research used a qualitative method to describe the meaning and how intertextuality works in signs of Donald Trump's political memes. The data are in the form of political memes of Donald Trump – coronavirus taken from the Instagram account of Political Comedy and The Progressivist using a smartphone to do screenshots. The number of data are 15 memes and posted on March 15, 16, 24 & 25, April 5, 10 & 25, July 3, 4 & 14, and October 2, 3 & 4, 2020. The data are analyzed by identifying expression (signifier), intertextuality, content (signified), and interpreting the meaning of Donald Trump – Coronavirus political memes.

The researcher found in the analysis that the meaning of Donald Trump – Coronavirus political memes are used for mocking, insinuating, and criticizing Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with The USA coronavirus pandemic. The intertextuality in the Donald Trump memes is the quotation, allusion, parody, and metatextuality. The researcher suggested for future research to conduct other research on semiotic intertextuality of political humor memes that depicted a leader's figure by involving a qualitative and quantitative analysis method.

ABSTRAK

Mufidah, Ariny Nur (2022) *Semiotics Intertextuality of Political Humor Memes*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Ulil Fitriyah, M. Pd, M. Ed.

Kata Kunci: Meme Politik, Tanda, Intertekstualitas, Makna

. Meme politik adalah cara kreatif untuk mengekspresikan gagasan tentang realitas politik dengan menyusun tanda-tanda verbal dan visual. Makna dari meme politik akan diperoleh ketika tanda-tanda verbal dan visual diinterpretasi menggunakan pendekatan semiotik dan intertekstualitas. Lebih lanjut, dengan memahami bagaimana semiotik dan intertekstualitas bekerja untuk mengkonstruksi makna meme politik ini dapat melatih kemampuan berfikir. Oleh karena itu, koherensi Semiotika dan Intertekstualitas untuk mengetahui makna meme politik menjadi tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengkaji makna dan bagaimana intertekstualitas bekerja dalam penciptaan meme politik yang khusus dibuat untuk mengkritisi ketidakmampuan Donald Trump dalam menangani virus corona pandemi di Amerika Serikat.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mendeskripsikan makna dan bagaimana intertekstualitas bekerja dalam tanda-tanda meme politik Donald Trump. Data tersebut berupa meme politik Donald Trump – virus corona yang diambil dari akun Instagram Political Comedy dan The Progressivist menggunakan smartphone untuk melakukan screenshot. Jumlah data sebanyak 15 meme dan diposting pada tanggal 15, 16, 24 & 25 Maret, 5, 10 & 25 April, 3, 4 & 14 Juli, dan 2, 3 & 4 Oktober 2020. Data dianalisis dengan mengidentifikasi ekspresi (penanda), intertekstualitas, konten (petanda), dan interpretasi makna meme politik Donald Trump – virus corona.

Peneliti menemukan dalam analisis bahwa meme politik Donald Trump – Virus Corona memiliki makna yang digunakan untuk mengejek, menyindir, dan mengkritik Donald Trump. Intertekstualitas yang ditemukan dalam meme Donald Trump adalah kutipan, kiasan, parodi, dan metatekstualitas. Peneliti menyarankan untuk penelitian selanjutnya untuk melakukan penelitian lain tentang semiotik intertekstualitas meme humor politik yang menggambarkan sosok pemimpin dengan menggunakan metode analisis kualitatif dan kuantitatif.

مستخلص البحث

مفيدة، أريني نور (2021) سيميائية التناسل لمذكرة الفكاهاة السلساسفة. البعث العلمف. قسم الأءب الإنءلسزف، كلفة العلوم الإنسانفة، ءامعة الإسلامفة الحكومفة مولانا مالك إبراهم مالانء. المشرفة: أولة الفطرفة الماءسفر

الكلمات المفتاحفة: المذكرة السلساسفة، الإشاراا، اناصا، المعنى

المذكرة السلساسفة هف طرفة إءاعفة للعبفر عن الأفكار حول الواقع السلساسف من ءلال ءمفع الإشاراا اللفظفة والبصرفة. سفرم الحصول على معنى المفماا السلساسفة عنءما فرم ءفسفر الإشاراا اللفظفة والمرئفة باسءءءام منهب سفمفائف ومءءءل. علاوة على ذلك، فإن فهم كفففة عمل السفمفائفة واناصا لبناء معنى هءا المفم السلساسف فمكن أن فءرب مهاراا اناصا. لذلك ، فإن ءماسك السفمفائفة واناصا لمعرفة معنى المفماا السلساسفة هو الغرض من هءا البعث لفحص المعنى وكفف يعمل اناصا فف إنشاء المفماا السلساسفة المصممة ءصفصافا لاناصا عءر ءونالء ءرامب عن اناصا مع ءائءة ففروس كوروناف فف الولافاا المءءة.

ءسءءم هءا البعث طرفة نوعفة لوصف المعنى وكفف يعمل اناصا فف إشاراا المفم السلساسفة لءونالء ءرامب. البفاناا فف شكل مفم سلساسف لءونالء ءرامب - ففروس كوروناف مأءوء من ءساب الكومفءفا السلساسفة على إنسءاeram و باسءءءام هاءف ذكف لاناصا لقطاا لشاشة. كمفة البفاناا هف 15 مذكرة وءم نشرها فف 15 و 16 و 24 و 25 مارس و 5 و 10 و 25 أبرفل و 3 و 4 و 14 فولفو و 2 و 3 و 4 أءءوبر 2020. ءم ءفلل البفاناا عن طرف ءءفء اناصا واناصا و المءءوى وءفسفر معنى المفم السلساسف لءونالء ءرامب - ففروس كوروناف.

وءءء الباءءة فف اناصا أن المذكرة السلساسفة لءونالء ءرامب - ففروس كوروناف له معنى فسءءم للسءرفة واناصا واناصا واناصا. اناصا الموءوءة فف مءءراا ءونالء ءرامب هف اناصا وإشاراا ومءاكاة ساءرة وما وراء النص. ءقءرء الباءءة إءراء مزفء من البعث لإءراء أبعءا أءرى حول اناصا السفمفائفة لمذكرة الفكاهاة السلساسفة اناصا ءصفا ءصفا القاءء باسءءءام أسالفب اناصا الكمف واناصا.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is written to arrange the background, problems, objectives, significance, scope, and limitation of the study with key terms. Furthermore, the research design is also included in this chapter for analysis purposes. This research method comprises research design, research instrument, data and data source, and data collection.

1.1. Background of the Study

As one popular social media that is increasingly being used today (Sari, 2017, p.2; Kwon, 2020, p.12), Instagram is used by individuals or groups for specific purposes. One of the purposes is to express opinions regarding political issues in the form of political memes (Wiggins, 2019, p.23; Rastogi & Kashyap, 2019). Political memes constructed from semiotic (signs) and intertextuality are posted on Instagram to demonstrate ideology towards political actors in the form of verbal and visual criticism (Wiggins, 2019, p.65). Fascinatingly, in 2020 there are two Instagram accounts as Democratic Party supporters called Political Comedy and The Progressivists posted political memes to criticize the 45th president of United States, Donald Trump. Donald Trump was criticized for his incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus in his country, which began to endemic in early 2020. Therefore, this present study makes these Donald Trump's memes the focus of research to find the meaning of signs

of Donald Trump's political memes and analyze how intertextuality is presented and manifested in Donald Trump's political memes.

As a verbal, visual criticism, political memes are created from two elements: semiotic and intertextuality (Wiggins, 2019, p.xv). Semiotic (signs) of political memes are in the form of verbal and visual signs expressed satirically. Satire makes the signs of political memes to be exaggerating. Through this exaggeration, political memes are intentionally made to cause of laughter of its reader, so that makes it entertaining. In addition, this exaggeration is the characteristic of satire as a language style to expose, mock and criticize (Young, 2020, p.3; Purwaningrum & Sudana, 2020, p.778). Therefore, the role of satire in building up the political memes signs makes political memes an effective device for political communication that delivers the critical message through its humor production (Thabroni, 2014; Leiser, 2019, p.39).

Meanwhile, intertextuality is something needed before creating a semiotic of political memes. Before creating a semiotic of political memes, intertextuality is required as a reference to produce a new text that is verbal and visual criticism text in the form of political memes. The text used as a reference conceives content, then absorbed by semiotic to create meaning (Wiggins, 2019, p.34). Whereas, for the sign that indicates intertextuality, it is inserted in the semiotic of political memes by quotation, parody, or images and text that refer to the previously emerged content (Wiggins, 2019, p.35). Therefore, examining how intertextuality

works in semiotic of political memes shows that intertextuality is purposive and cannot be avoided in constructing semiotic of political memes (Wiggins, 2019, p.35).

There are several previous studies researched political memes. The study on how political memes represented the presidential candidate based on gender had been researched by Lincoln (2016). Besides, the study of Ahmed (2019) examined how political memes appeared in trending issues. Moreover, Ludwig (2019) identified how political memes made of fake news disseminate hoaxes toward the political actor. The two papers of Leliyanti et al. (2020) and Roos & Rivers (2017) had a similar discussion regarding how political memes delegitimize presidential candidates. On the other hand, the present study of political memes emphasizes the finding of meaning of political memes signs involving the role of intertextuality. Therefore, if previous studies discuss political memes in the matter of how they are used for specific purposes, in contrast with the present study, it will disentangle political memes in terms of encountering their meaning.

Further, the discrepancy in the analysis of political memes in the present study with the previous ones above makes the present research unlikeness. The unlikeness of this research is the need for knowledge about issues that become the subject of criticism by political memes because this research will interpret the meaning of signs of Donald Trump's political memes. More importantly, this knowledge will help

judge the probability or plausibility of meaning resulted from the construction of political memes signs . Given these points, from the unlikeness of the present study, it denotes that conceptual thinking is highly needed in scrutinizing the creation of meaning in symbols or signs.

In addition, semiotic and intertextuality are chosen as frameworks for executing the analysis in the present study. Semiotic and intertextuality are used as frameworks because both of them had previously been successfully employed by previous studies to conduct analysis. For instance, semiotic and intertextuality are utilized to reveal the hidden meaning of a symbol in Cinderella fairy tale (Snayer, 2017), to read advertisement marketing strategies (Ahmed & Abdullah, 2019 and Li, Songqing 2019), to discover the message of environmental awareness from photojournalism (Arifin, 2019) and to identify people's opinion in the form of text followed by the use of emoticons (Wang, 2019). Accordingly, semiotic and intertextuality are the appropriate approach to make sense of the system of meaning of Donald Trump'sTrump's political memes.

Afterward, semiotics Hjelmslev (1943) in Chandler (2017) and intertextuality Genette (1997) in Chandler (2017) are used as frameworks. The semiotic framework is employed to accomplish the first problem of study, which is what meanings are found in Donald Trump's political memes. Meanwhile, the framework of intertextuality is adopted to comply with the second problem of the study: how intertextuality is performed and manifested in the signs of Donald Trump's political memes. Therefore, in

general, researching the semiotic intertextuality of political humor memes can be helpful as a medium to stimulate awareness about the role of political memes signs as something that is not merely accepted as such. However, it is an entity that can help train the cognitive by construing the political memes signs, which are created as reflections and criticisms of what is happening in the existing political reality.

Overall, this present study about the semiotic and intertextuality of political humor memes denotes that the visual of political memes occurs language system. This language system is indicated from former signs of political memes, verbal and visual signs. Suppose the political memes are only constructed with an image without a word. In that case, the language system still works here because an image has implicit meaning which can be verbalized to produce meaning. Thus, this research has significance from the linguistic aspect as the knowledge that states whether signs of political memes are linguistic entities that have a role as a creator of meaning proposed to criticize problems in reality that exists in the world, especially from political aspect about the incompetence a president as a political actor.

1.2. Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study stated above, the formulated research problems are as follows:

1. What are the meanings of signs of Donald Trump's political memes?

2. How is intertextuality performed and manifested in Donald Trump's political memes?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the two problems of the study above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To uncover what are the meanings of Donald Trump's political memes.
2. To examine how intertextuality is performed and manifested in Donald Trump's political memes.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The result of the study is supposed to provide theoretical and practical contributions:

The theoretical contribution of this study is it serves the role of semiotic and intertextuality as the combination of frameworks that are helpful to reveal the meanings of political memes signs. The meanings of political memes are necessary to be known by people because they can provide us knowledge about what is happening in political reality from its judgment towards political problems expressed by using satire. Moreover, this study can be used as a reference to conduct other research by adopting semiotic and intertextuality approaches.

Meanwhile, this study's practical contribution is that it can provoke the reader's awareness by this work that political memes are not simply looked at as an attractive visual. Still, it has a deep meaning which is

essential to be comprehended. It is significant to be understood because if the reader understands the way political memes text is composed to represent political reality, it can practice the cognitive and criticality of the reader in viewing political memes text.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is carried out to identify the meanings of signs of Donald Trump's political memes with associating the role of intertextuality. Hence, the semiotic framework of Hjelmslev (1943) in Chandler (2017) and the intertextuality of Kristeva (1980) in Chandler (2017) are used as a scope to conduct the research.

The 15 data of Donald Trump - Coronavirus political memes were chosen because they consist of two forms, namely a combination of verbal and visual and full of visual only. Then, based on those forms of political memes signs, it is used to demonstrate whether semiotics are verbal and visual, as Hjelmslev (1943) proposed in Chandler (2017). Besides, it is also to denote that political memes that are only full of visual form are still categorized as linguistic signs because they still can be verbalized through their implicit meaning, as noted by Jakobson (1973) in Chandler (2017). Further, the data were obtained from the Instagram account of @politicalcomedy and @theprogressivists that expected as Democratic Party supporter.

In addition, these political memes are taken from two Instagram accounts suspected of being supporters of the Democratic Party (United

States) with the account names @politicalcomedy and @theprogressivists. These two accounts are construed as supporters of the Democratic Party because they constantly criticized everything done by Republican Party people one of them is Donald Trump. Besides, the data are obtained from the two accounts because sometimes they posted each other about the same political memes.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Semiotic Intertextuality:

The framework used to discover the meaning of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes signs (verbal and visual) involving the intertextual process in the form of quotation, parody, allusion, etc.

Political Humor Memes:

A medium of visual art is employed to assert criticism towards political actors implicitly and explicitly by using satire as a subcategory of humor.

1.7. Previous Studies

Previous studies from several approaches have investigated the phenomenon of political memes. The political memes of the 2016 US presidential election become the object of research by Lincoln (2016) and Roos and Rivers (2017). Each of them uses a different approach to identify the memes. Lincoln (2016) used the feminist theory to reveal the gender representation in political memes of the US presidential election with Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton as candidates. It was found that man was more appropriately represented as leaders than women in political

memes content. It also showed that politics was a man's profession, not a women's. Hence, the number of political memes about Donald Trump was more than Hillary Clinton's.

While in the study Roos and Rivers' (2017) focused on the memes created to respond to Donald Trump's proposed border wall policy and Hillary Clinton's email controversy. Roos and Rivers (2017) analyzed how political actors are delegitimized by using strategies of delegitimation of Van Leuween (2007). These strategies involved authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis. From those strategies used in delegitimizing Trump and Clinton, the results demonstrated all the memes created to criticize and blame the two controversies. Based on ideas presented by memes, Clinton's behavior and Trump's statement were not appropriate with the authority and morals that presidential candidates must have. Even based on Roos and Rivers' (2017) analysis, it included the irrational thing and could be called a nightmare scenario for the future of a country.

Afterward, in the study of Ludwig (2019) utilized pragmatics as an approach to analyzing political memes. He is concerned about the fake news used by political memes as textual references to deliver the idea. Ludwig (2019) concluded that a fake quote looks like trustworthy news because double quotation marks and source names accompany it. People who looked at that meme just from the surface level would believe and later copied paste and share it. Actually, by doing those acts, they had also

spread political memes accompanied by fake news without realizing it. That was one of the strategies used by fake news spreaders. Moreover, the emergence of memes in trending issues on social media was inquired by Ahmed (2019). He elaborated how memes emerged, thus discussing them by analyzing the memes' life span, diachronic linguistic, grammar structure, and political discourse. It was obtained if a statement that triggers propaganda and a variety of humor make memes trending on social media.

Furthermore, political memes consumed by digital society have previously gone through the production stage. These productions of political memes were analyzed by Rodriguez (2018), and he adopted content analysis and interviews with participants who were involved in the meme production process. Political memes in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican Diaspora become the research matrix to find out the people behind its production. Further, the result indicated that creators, remixers, curators, and sharers are producers of political memes. Creators were people who created original content from memes. Remixers were people who added new elements to the original meme content. Curators were people who collected various memes to be shared on social media, and sharers were people who viewed memes online and shared them with their community to be discussed.

Another study of political memes related to the presidential election is political memes of the 2014 Indonesia president election with

Jokowi and Prabowo as candidates. This study was conducted by Leliyanti, Irawaty & Diyantari (2020). They adopted the Hallidayean transitivity system and social semiotics as the framework. One of the transitivity systems used in political memes was the word *nyembah* had a similar meaning to bowing. The action of *nyembah* was supported with the picture that showed Prabowo was bowing in front of the tomb. This action was not appropriate with Islamic values, which were embraced mainly by Indonesian society. In addition, the social semiotics aspect was derived from *peci* used by Prabowo when he bowed in front of the tomb, which was not proper with Islamic teaching. As a result, based on those previous studies, political memes have been analyzed in terms of delegitimization, gender representation, pragmatics, production of political memes, and transitivity system and social semiotics.

Meanwhile, in the present study, political memes that problematize Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic will be examined in terms of meaning from former signs of political memes. The meaning is interpreted with the approach of semiotics and intertextuality.

Further, semiotic and intertextuality are also used by some previous studies to conduct researches. In a study of Ahmed and Abdullah (2019) and Li, Songqing (2019) utilized advertisement as the focus of the research. From the different advertisements, the results demonstrated that semiotic and intertextuality was functioned to read marketing strategies

using a modified picture and parodied proverb as a slogan (Ahmed & Abdullah, 2019) and to reveal the value of individualism in a sports advertisement to attract the attention of China young generations (Li, Songqing, 2019).

In addition, Arifin (2019) used semiotic and intertextuality to read the delivery of messages for environmental awareness from photojournalism of public space photos in Jakarta. Furthermore, the political representation of Cinderella existed on the image inside fairy tales book also had a semiotic and intertextuality meaning found in the study of Snayer (2017). By applying semiotic and intertextuality, it is denoted that the offensive elements that look non-offensive related to the social and political problem in real life through symbols contained in a fairy tale of Cinderella can be revealed. Moreover, Wang (2018) employed semiotic and intertextuality to examine the textual and semiotics realization of China's netizen's opinions about China's cultural confidence on social media platform called Sina Weibo. It is concluded that china netizens' opinions are expressed through pictures and expressions followed by emoticons.

Based on those previous studies, semiotics intertextuality has been used to determine intentions related to business, social, political, and cultural values through visual signs or symbols in the form of words and images. On the contrary with the present study, semiotic and intertextuality are utilized to find out the meaning of signs of political

memes that are intended to mock and criticize Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the epidemic of coronavirus.

1.8. Research Method

1.8.1 Research Design

This research used a qualitative method to discover meaning and analyze how intertextuality worked in signs of Donald Trump's political memes. Based on Rahardjo (2010), the type of research was document study which emphasizes the interpretation of written objects based on context. The written objects were political memes of Donald Trump. The context was political memes as a tool for mocking and criticizing Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with coronavirus spread in the United States employing verbal and visual signs.

1.8.2 Research Instrument

Ma'ruf (2021) stated that in qualitative research, the primary instrument in looking for and collecting the data was the researcher herself, who observes the data directly by viewing the data. The data itself was in the form of political memes taken from the Instagram account of Political Comedy and The Progressivists select 15 political memes. The 15 data of Donald Trump - coronavirus political memes were chosen because they consist of two forms, namely a combination of verbal and visual and full of visual only. Then, based on those forms of political memes signs, it

was used to demonstrate whether semiotics are verbal and visual, as Hjelmslev (1943) proposed in Chandler (2017). Besides, it was also to denote that political memes that were only full of visual form are still categorized as linguistic signs because they still could be verbalized through their implicit meaning, as noted by Jakobson (1973) in Chandler (2017).

1.8.3 Data and Data Source

The founded data of the research were approximately 60 memes. Nevertheless, the researcher selected the 15 political memes to be analyzed. The 15 chosen data were posted on March 15, 16, 24 & 25, April 5, 10 & 25, July 3, 4 & 14, and October 2, 3 & 4, 2020. The 15 Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes were chosen because they consisted of two forms, namely a combination of verbal and visual and full of visual only. Then, based on those forms of political memes, signs were used to demonstrate whether semiotics are verbal and visual, as Hjelmslev (1943) proposed in Chandler (2017). In addition, it was also to denote that political memes that were only full of visual form were still categorized as linguistic signs because they could still be verbalized through their implicit meaning, as noted by Jakobson (1973) in Chandler (2017). Besides, 15 of Donald Trump's political memes are chosen to represent the chronology of Donald Trump called incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic in

the USA. Initially, Donald Trump downplayed the coronavirus widespread and considered it was like common flu. Then, he admits that it was vicious, and in the end, Donald Trump was declared positive for coronavirus. Meanwhile, the data of Donald Trump's political memes were obtained from the Instagram account of @politicalcomedy and @theprogressivists expected as Democratic Party supporters.

1.8.4 Data Collection


The data was collected by screenshot images of political memes regarding Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus problem in the USA from Instagram of @politicalcomedy and @theprogressivists accessed on a smartphone. The data were determined based on Donald Trump's behavior and statement towards coronavirus on the particular dates and months in 2020, which was considered the inability to deal with the coronavirus.

1.8.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this research which were political memes of Donald Trump – coronavirus, was conducted by answering the two research questions. The first research question was about the meaning found in signs of Donald Trump's political memes will be revealed through the semiotics of Hjelmslev (1943) in Chandler (2017). The second research question was about how

intertextuality was implemented and manifested in signs of Donald Trump's political memes would be disentangled by employing the intertextuality theory of Genette (1997) in Chandler (2017).

A sample of data analysis of Donald Trump – Coronavirus political
memes

No.	Political Memes	Expression (Signifier)	Intertextuality	Content (Signified)	Meaning
1.					

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter accounts for the current research theory that consists of semiotics, interpretive system, intertextuality, type of intertextuality, humor, and political memes.

2.1. Semiotics

According to an Italian semiotician, Umberto Eco (1932-2016), all things that can be performed as a sign are called semiotics. Everything treated as semiotic denotes that it is meaningful, including verbal and visual, to construct political memes. Hence, how meaning is produced and how reality is depicted is studied in semiotics through signs and signs structure (Chandler, 2017, p.2).

The structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the founder of semiotics, stated that language is a sign system that reveals thought or ideas. Semiotic or Saussure named it semiology (from Greek, semeion “signs”), has the concept that language sign consists of signifier and signified. A signifier is an embodiment of understandable sound, and signified is a concept of thought or linguistic value of a signifier. The relation of signifier and signified cannot be separated. It is because when the particular sound of signifier refers to an object, for instance, “POLITICAL MEME” is pronounced and heard by someone, then, the concept of “POLITICAL MEME” as humor and insinuation on political

issues in the form of visual will appear automatically on people's mind. It also applies vice versa. If the idea of visual humor and satire against political problems is first provided, it directly points to the sound produced by the noun phrase of POLITICAL MEMES (Sukyadi, 2013, p.2, 4; Chandler, 2017, p.14).

The scheme of Saussure's language sign consists of signifier and signified was then developed by another structuralist semiotics, Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1966). Hjelmslev's sign concept establishes signs are planes (structure) of expression and content. The classification of planes is similar to the Saussure concept of signifier and signified (Chandler, 2017, p.65). Hjelmslev's expression refers to Saussure's signifier, and Hjelmslev's content is similar to Saussure's signified. Further, each expression and content has substance and form, which then to be a unified sign as categorized in the following table.

Table 3.1 Hjelmslev's Planes (structure) of Signs

Planes (Structure)	Substance	Form
Expression (Signifier)	Substance of expression	Form of expression
	Physical objects like sound, printed words, pictures	Language, design constituent
Content (Signified)	Substance of content	Form of content

	The creation of thought, social circumstances, textual sphere	Particular ideas, values, concepts
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Source: Chandler, 2017, p.65

The table above denotes that to convey meaning in signs construction, it requires a plane of expression and a plane of content. Both of them have mutual relation in terms of function to establish a text. Moreover, in the column of the substance of expression, it is written physical objects like sound, printed words, pictures. This point shows the difference between the semiotic of Saussure and Hjelmslev lies. If in Saussure's concept, the signifier is in the form of sound, which is also part of language, conversely in Hjelmslev structure, expression or signifier is not just in the shape of the language of sound and printed words but also pictures. As proposed by Hjelmslev, that signifier or expression is more varied. It is not simply language but also other semiotic orders. One of them is a picture. Besides, expression of sign or signifier in the lines of language and other semiotic structures still work in language system which this system must be viewed to have fundamental relation to the meaning or thought (Mambrol, 2017; Chandler, 2017, p.66). Therefore, it is derived that Saussure and Hjelmslev's concept of semiotic is identical. However, Hjelmslev expands and clarifies more about the variety of signs.

Furthermore, the schema of Hjelmslev's semiotic above is used to analyze signs of political memes in the present study. Thus, if Hjelmslev's planes of expression and content are contextualized with political memes as a text, the structure will be like the following table.

Table 3.2 Planes (structure) of Political Memes Signs using Hjelmslev's concept

Planes	Substance	Form
Expression (Signifier)	Substance of expression	Form of expression
	Physical object of words and images	Language, design constituent of satire and parody
Content (Signified)	Substance of content	Form of content
	The creation of thought, political circumstances or context, political sphere	Particular ideas of political values and concepts of criticizing

The table of planes of expression above and planes of the content of Hjelmslev that already contextualized with the semiotic of political memes, it informs that, if semiotics is studied, the act of taking the existence of political memes offhanded simply as the visual text will change to be aware of the deep meaning had by political memes. It involves the reader of political memes (in terms of ideas or thought showed in the column of substance and form of content) and other elements (regarding materialization of signs written in the column of

substance and form of expression) to construct meaning about political realities. Thus, it can be thought that semiotic is a framework that directs the reader's cognition and experience about the world of political memes to create perception towards the world (Chandler, 2017, p.8).

As previously stated, semiotic can help build awareness of the importance of comprehending the meaning of political memes. This awareness can bring excitement when the reader explores former signs of political memes and can enrich knowledge when the reader knows the context of the creation of politics derived from another reference. Every text that includes political memes starts from previous references to produce the new text, or it is called intertextuality (explained in the following). As a result, meaning is determined through an interpretive system that the reader of a text actively interprets (Chandler, 2017, p8).

2.2. Interpretive System

A text delivered cannot be comprehended without associating it with the reference structure. Because codes or signs form every text, either verbal, the combination of visual and verbal or audio-visual, reference is significant to help in interpreting such kinds of codes, which then this process results in perception. Further, this reference is derived from our experience of seeing, reading, or hearing of the textual world, and it is called knowledge about context. Consequently, the sensory system (seeing, reading, hearing) helps the readers understand a text, make their

perception towards a text, and challenge their perception to be strengthened or denied (Chandler, 2017, p.187).

Moreover, perception is an idea about reality represented by a text. Therefore, to have a perception of reality always involves interpretation. Interpretation is needed because reality is designed by codes or signs in language or other semiotic forms which only can be understood through interpretation. Further, this interpretation is based on previous knowledge from various references. When the reader of a text already knows the intended context of a text thus, its author wants to express ideological intention that represents the author's purpose, and even it could influence the reader's mind towards issues or phenomena. Hence, codes or signs are shaped to frame values in human lives that come from everything done and produced by humans or called culture (Chandler, 2017, p.188).

Furthermore, the interpretation process is required to find the meaning of political memes as a text model in verbal and visual form or sometimes created by visuals. The way of interpretation in the combination of verbal and visual signs of political memes is helped by the verbal description so that the reader of political memes will be easier to discover the meaning. Meanwhile, for the interpretation of political memes full of visuals, if the readers are already very familiar with the given codes or signs, they will still be able to understand the meaning. It may be harder to interpret the signs for the readers who do not know the codes provided by political memes. Consequently, they should add their knowledge about

the codes or signs to interpret the meaning. Therefore, examined from the process of interpretation of political memes, sufficient references about codes or signs are greatly entailed (Wiggins, 2019, p.xv, 35).

Besides, the political memes codes or signs are composed with incorporating the element of satire. Satire is applied to the codes or signs of political memes formed by verbal and visual or codes entirely composed by visual. The use of satire in constructing codes or signs of political memes makes political memes have a purpose for exposing, mocking, and criticizing political actors because of their errors that bring adverse effects to society (N.I, 2019, P.86; Purwaningrum & Sudana, 2019, p.778). Moreover, in the process of interpretation, the three functions of exposing, mocking, and criticizing political memes have an ideology towards political actor mistakes (Chandler, 2017, p.191). In all semiotic forms, political memes always contain an ideological purpose that can affect the reader's perspective on real problems. As a result, signs, references, interpretation, and ideology are sequence to create the reader's perception of a text representing the real world.

2.3. Intertextuality

Intertextuality was acquired by Julia Kristeva (1980) to associate Saussurean semiotics about the way signs obtain meaning within the construction of text and with Bakhtinian dialogism that in work occurs dialogical relationship between the work with other content and other writers (Wignis, 2019, p.34). Kristeva indicates that a text consists of

horizontal and vertical axes. For horizontal axes, it connects the writer and reader of a text. Meanwhile, the vertical axis links a text to other text. Further, if the two axes are united, some codes will be shared as stated by Kristeva that there are always previous codes in every content or text and every literature or reading. The text does not stand independently but exists because it experiences a structured process from a prior text composed to be the new text (Chandler, 2017, p.252). Accordingly, from Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, it is suggested that the creation of a text is always based on the other texts that existed before.

In the political memes that become an object in the present research, intertextuality is also valid. Intertextuality has a role in making understandable meaning resulting from signs of political memes. Because every text is intertextual, knowledge of the content or principal of the previous text is used by the creator of political memes to determine signs in the form of verbal and visual signs. Afterward, verbal and visual signs are composed to be a unified semiotic of the political meme, which produces understandable meaning for the reader who has the same knowledge of the intended content of political memes (Wignis, 2019, p.35). In this point, the horizontal axes of Kristeva about the relation between writer and reader occur. The relation is the reader knows the intended content implicitly stated by the writer of the political meme. Later, it is called context (Jakobson, 1960 in Chandler, 2017, p.223). The reader of political memes can understand the context from everything

seen, read, and heard from vernacular media or online. Therefore, the reader of political memes cannot decide the meaning of signs of political memes on their own, but it is based on the knowledge of the supposed content. Then for the last, the reader himself, who becomes the main subject interpreting the meaning of political memes signs, not the writer. Given this point, intertextuality impress that text and reality are not two things that work alone. However, both of them are related to each other. Text is a representation of reality which, because of this, everything that happens in the world can be known (Chandler, 2017, p.261-262).

2.3.1. Types of Intertextuality

Based on Genette (1997) in Chandler (2017), the transtextuality term is preferred to be used than the term intertextuality because it encompasses broader about the relation of a text with other text. Then, five subtypes of transtextuality suggested by Genette are as follows:

- a. Intertextuality: quotation (a copy of a statement from an author or famous figure directly by embedding quotation marks and indirectly by paraphrasing or summarizing the main idea); plagiarism (the act of taking the work or thought of an original author and making it as if it is their work); allusion (text that alludes to other text or content to offend a person, place or event, so as not to directly hit them).

- b. Paratextuality: the relation that happens in a text that connects to the main body of a text, for instance: titles, headings, introduction, etc.
- c. Architextuality: the relation between a text with a genre or genres of a text that can be known by the reader merely from reading this title, and then it emerges the reader's expectation about the possible content of this text (Lanir, 2019). For instance, if someone reads the title of a book, 'HARRY POTTER,' the reader directly or indirectly will refer it to the genre of novel which this book is about the fantasy of magic.
- d. Metatextuality: a critical argumentation text delivered explicitly or implicitly without obviously citing the reference (Lanir, 2019).
- e. Hypertextuality: the relation between text (before it becomes hypertext) and other text, or it can be said the transformation of a text to be a different genre of a text (being modified). Hypertextuality includes parody (exaggerating the images of a famous figure in a funny way); spoof (the story in the past event that is retold by involving the plot twist at the end of the story (British Course, 2017)); Sequel (making a film from a preceding narrative story that exists before (Meriem Webster, 202)); translation (an act of translating one language to another).

2.4. Humor

Humor works by presenting two contradictory frames. The first frame is the apparent information through a particular expression of language. In contrast, the second frame is information presented without specific language expression, but it is the whole part of the intended matter or hidden information (N.I, 2019, 85). The audience of humor will savor humor if they comprehend the second frame, then the audience reinterprets to the news meaning through language expression obtained from the first frame. Therefore, seen from humor that works with involving cognitive, thus it can be called intellectual humor (Young, 2020, p5; Douthwaite, 2017).

Humor has two subcategories, parody, and satire. Parody is a transformation of familiar people, places, or events into an exaggerated image with the purpose of entertaining. Meanwhile, satire is humor that has two elements, jokes, and criticism. Jokes are proposed to release laughter, whereas criticism is used to expose, ridicule, and criticize someone's fault or the fool that negatively impacts society. Further, parody is always existed in satire to make meaning, but satire is not always in the parody. If satire applies exaggeration to picture or words, it brings up two things, jokes and arguments.

Meanwhile, in parody, if exaggeration of pictures or words is employed, it only produces humor without argument. Moreover, parody and satire also use the exact role of irony, or it means what is expressed is

different from what is intended. The use of irony makes the audience of parody and satire text think of the covert meaning to affirm the point (Young, 2020, p.3). Thus, the creation of humor can sharpen the thinking ability of its reader.

In addition, humor itself has three functions: liberation, anomaly, and supremacy. The three functions are interrelated with political context. Liberation function had by political humor, is utilized as a liberator of tension and a carrier of fun for readers who are tired of the negative news conveyed by the media. It is found in the comic or parody of politics, which is not severe and can make the reader enjoy reading. Afterward, for anomaly function, it is available in political satire. This anomaly lies in humor generated by political satire not only serves to entertain but also makes it easier for the reader to understand the meaning or political information that political satire wants to convey. Then, political satire is available in political memes.

Meanwhile, the supremacy function is humor adopted to delegitimize figures of politics with creating their images or physical characteristics to be ridiculed or targeting their blunder on speech. This humor allows the reader to feel more morally supreme than the people who are humiliated or being subordinated (Leiser, 2019, p.39). As a result, the humorous text is used by its reader for entertainment, understanding, and conveying emotional expression.

2.5. Political Memes

A meme expresses ideas in a combination of text, photos, video, etc., resulting from popular culture. Political memes are a subtype of internet memes and mediums for asserting ideas to engage in political conflicts, responding to them, and then spreading them online on social media (Wignis, 2019, p.38, 116). What political memes respond to can be in the form of approval or rejection of government policies, voicing for war or peace, corruption, and the inability of political actors. In responding to this, political memes assert it critically. This critical aspect is because political memes contain political justifications against the government or an argument about what a country should do with a particular way to be achieved(Wiggins, 2019, p. 65);. Besides the critical aspect of political memes, humor is also used in political memes to state arguments. Using humor for asserting criticism causes easier for political memes readers to permeate messages that want to be communicated by political memes because it is amusing to be read. Therefore, because of the existence of political memes, it is crucial to provide a means for people to express opinions towards the government elite in humorous ways (Leiser, 2019, p.44).

In addition, political memes created for satire concern the political actor or government actor who has made mistakes or foolishness until it causes harm to society. The use of satire is to bring to light, mocking and criticizing the foolishness. By bringing to light mocking and criticizing, it

is purposeful for making society aware of the foolish thing done by political or government actors. It motivates society to engage with the right thing that should be. Thus, the messages resulting from political memes conveyed in a satirical way aim to influence the readers' perspective of political memes (N.I, 2019, p.86).

Furthermore, political memes are also products of digital culture. Digital culture is marked with online media platforms such as youtube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Because these platforms connect society worldwide through the internet, it is called social media. Social media is a place where political memes are produced, shared, accessed, and read. People who produce, share, access, and read political memes are connected on social media. When the creator of political memes upload political memes on social media, it will gain a response from other people by accessing, reading, and giving like or dislike, or commenting on it. Even if the readers of political memes agree with the idea presented by uploaded political memes, they will share it again on their individual social media account. Thus, it is concluded that the existence of political memes that can be uploaded, shared, and accessed on social media, makes it easier for people to participate in politics to enroll in politics and also to demonstrate their perspectives (Leiser, 2019, p.35, Wiggins, 2019, p.21,22,34).

Moreover, based on Wiggins (2019), political memes are established by semiotic and intertextuality. Semiotics construct political

memes because verbal and visual signs form political memes. From the construction of signs, the meaning of political memes has resulted. Meanwhile, intertextuality (the relation between a text and other texts in the form of allusion, parody, and quotation) has an essential role in determining political memes' verbal and visual signs choices. The creation of political memes is based on the previous text, which becomes the context (what is being discussed as a whole) of political memes. After the context is decided, thus, the appropriate signs of political memes are chosen to represent the context. Then, this context becomes a fundamental knowledge to interpret signs meaning of political memes. As a result, semiotic and intertextuality are the proper combinations of frameworks to construct signs of political memes (Wiggins, 2019, p.33, 35).

CHAPTER III

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher describes the findings and discussion of the data of political memes especially created for criticizing Donald Trump's incapability in handling pandemic of coronavirus as the 45th of United States president. In addition, the data in the form of political memes are analyzed using the framework of semiotic of Hjelmslev (1943) in Chandler (2017) and Intertextuality of Genette (1997) in Chandler (2017). Both of the semiotic and intertextuality frameworks are used to discover meaning and how intertextuality works in Donald Trump's political memes.

3.1. Finding

The founded data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political memes are available in the form of pictures composed of verbal and visual and visual only, which amounts to approximately 60 memes. However, the researcher utilizes the 15 selected data to confine the analysis. The data were derived from the Instagram account of @politicalcomedy, and @theprogressivists indicated as Democratic Party (United States) supporters and then collected through the smartphone screenshot. The data was taken from two accounts of Instagram because each of them criticizes the same problems. One of them is about Donald Trump-coronavirus, and sometimes they upload the same political memes.

Moreover, the 15 chosen data are posted by the two Instagram accounts of @politicalcomedy and @theprogressivists on March 15, 16, 24, 25, April 5,10, 25, July 3, 4, 14, October 2, 4, 2020. The 15 Donald data of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes were chosen because they consist of two forms: a combination of verbal and visual and full of visual only. Then, based on those forms of political memes signs, it is used to demonstrate whether semiotics are verbal and visual, as Hjelmslev (1943) proposed in Chandler (2017). Besides, it is also to denote that political memes that are only full of visual form are still categorized as linguistic signs because they still can be verbalized through their implicit meaning, as noted by Jakobson (1973) in Chandler (2017).

Datum 1 (March 15, 2020)



The first data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political memes are a combination of verbal and visual signs. If these political meme signs are elaborated into the Hjelmslev model of semiotic, there are two compositions as former of political memes, namely expression (signifier) and content (signified). The verbal expressions (signifiers) created in this meme are *"THE BUCKS STOPS HERE" – HARRY S. TRUMAN* and *"I*

DON'TDON'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL" – DONALD J. TRUMP.

Meanwhile for the visual expressions (signifier) consist of the image of Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, at the top and the image of Donald J. Trump, the 45th the President of the United States is at the bottom. The top image shows that Mr. Truman is sitting on his seat with body gestures and facial expressions as if listening to the interlocutor's words in front of him, and on his desk, there is a rectangle board that says *The BUCK STOPS here!* Meanwhile, the bottom image denotes Donald Trump standing with his palms facing the other person before him, which means to convey a "no" statement from this gesture. Another gesture of Donald Trump is an open mouth which indicates the sound of the word "all," which has the complete sentence "I don't take responsibility at all," as quoted above.

In addition, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) in this meme are derived through intertextuality of quotation and marked with the double-quotes. President Truman's utterance of "THE BUCK STOPS HERE" is his famous motto, which meant when he was a President of the United States, he asserted that all the final decisions to solve the problems are the responsibility of a president. This statement can be quoted by the creator of political memes because, in the past, Mr. Truman was interviewed to be asked about his motto, *THE BUCK STOP HERE*. Moreover, this interview is available on youtube, uploaded on March 21, 2020, by account name of HarrySTrumanLibrary and written in an article

of Truman Library websites with the title "The Buck Stops Here" Desk Sign.

Meanwhile, the utterance "I DON'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL" is quoted from Donald Trump's answer to the journalist's question about whether the lag in procuring coronavirus tests to the Americans was his responsibility or not. He says if it is not his responsibility because he thinks that the regulations in the government of Trump's predecessor, President Obama, to handle swine flu do not provide such a test as a coronavirus test. Hence, the coronavirus test is not President Trump's responsibility to be conducted. This Donald Trump statement happened in the press conference on March 13, 2020, uploaded by the youtube account of Global News on March 14, 2020. Besides, the controversial statement of "I DON'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL" of Donald Trump is reported by the online media news by politico.com published on March 13, 2020, with the title 'I don't take responsibility at all': Trump deflects blame for coronavirus testing fumble.

The role of intertextuality in the quotation above produces the content (signified), or it can be called an idea had by the meme's verbal and visual expressions (signifiers). The idea is when Mr. Truman was a President of the United States, and he asserted that the final decision related to the problem that occurred in a country he leads was his responsibility through his statement "THE BUCK STOPS HERE." Meanwhile, when Mr. Trump's decision and action as 45th President of the

United States are needed for breaking problems, one of them is the lag of coronavirus test for his citizen, he considered it was not his responsibility by saying, "I DON'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AT ALL."

As a result, the meaning generated from the verbal and visual signs of the first political meme is the insinuation for Donald Trump's performance as of 45th President of the United States. As a president, he represents an attitude of irresponsibility towards his duties for establishing coronavirus tests for Americans, which is different from Mr. Truman as the 33rd President of the United States responsible for any problems in a country. In addition, the meme wants to emphasize that as a leader, President Trump must have an attitude of responsibility, not the other way around, especially when the country is in a state of emergency with the coronavirus pandemic.

Datum 2 (March 16, 2020)



The second data of political memes are in the form of a combination of verbal and visual signs. Based on Hjelmslev model of semiotic, cited as expression (signifier) and content (signified). The verbal expression (signifier) is the words *Coronavirus for DUMMIES*, and the

visual expression (signifier) is the image of Donald Trump. He is reading a book with the title Coronavirus for DUMMIES.

Further, the choice of verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the second political meme is based on the intertextual reference which has content about the downplaying behavior of Donald Trump through his statement in responding to coronavirus cases in the United States, reported by media, for instance, vox.com, edition.cnn.com, and cnn.com. It was reported on January 22, 2020, when Washington was an area that first confirmed coronavirus; Donald Trump disparaged the risk of the outspread of coronavirus by saying it was totally under control and told it would be fine. On January 30, 2020, when WHO announced the coronavirus became a global health emergency, President Trump still said it was under control. Further, on February 24, 2020, Donald Trump said that coronavirus in the USA was very much under control when the first death because of coronavirus in the USA was reported on February 6, 2020. On February 26, 2020, Donald Trump stated that the total number of coronavirus cases was 15 when there are at least 60 cases, and he claimed it would be close to zero. On February 27, he thought coronavirus would disappear like a miracle. March 9, 2020, Trump correlates coronavirus with the common flu. It was irrational because the fact showed that on March 13, 2020, coronavirus reached at least 1.666 cases and 41 deaths in the USA. After knowing this fact, Donald Trump finally announced a national emergency due to coronavirus. He then discharged billions of federal funds to deal

with the coronavirus problem even though WHO had declared coronavirus as pandemic on March 11, 2020. Then, on March 16, 2020, Trump urged Americans to conduct 15 days of social distancing to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Afterward, the sequence of the disparaging attitude of Donald Trump-related coronavirus has alluded. Therefore the form of the intertextuality of the second meme is an allusion. This allusion provides content (signified) that Donald Trump's attitude of disparaging towards the widespread of coronavirus is identical with treating coronavirus problems in America like dummies rested on his lack of seriousness and irrationality by comparing coronavirus with the flu.

As a result, the meaning resulted from the second meme is an insinuation to Donald Trump that he had played up a severe problem in his country, which is coronavirus pandemic, through his attitude as a leader who, instead of being alert and immediately taking decisions to deal with even underestimates the spread of the coronavirus by saying it was very much under control when there were 41 deaths and correlates coronavirus with the common flu.

Datum 3 (March 24, 2020)



The third data of political memes is a combination of verbal and visual signs and called expressions (signifiers) under Hjelmslev semiotic. The meme's verbal expressions (signifier) are the words of *essentials* and *non-essentials*. Meanwhile, the visual expressions (signifiers) in the meme are the image of grocery store workers on the top left, truck driver on the top right, medical workers on the bottom left, and Donald Trump and William Barone (the members of the coronavirus task force) on the bottom left.

Moreover, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) established in the third meme above are acquired from an intertextual process called metatextuality. It means the previous texts that become references are not cited obviously to criticize in an explicit way like the one in the third meme. Furthermore, the metatext or the intended reference of verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) in the third meme is Donald Trump's conference on March 23, 2020, regarding coronavirus response reported and published by abcnews.go.com on March 24, 2020. At the conference,

Donald Trump, accompanied by members of the coronavirus task force, stated that it could not be allowed if the medicine (quarantine) was worse than the problem itself. The medical problem should not turn into a long-term financial problem. The statement came from Donald Trump because the effect of 8 days from 15 days of quarantine to slow the spread of the coronavirus forced the many activities of one of them was economic activity to be stopped. This suspension of economic activity caused an economic crisis in America. To solve the coronavirus problem, Trump mentioned that the drug chloroquine, or hydroxychloroquine approved to treat and prevent malaria since 1944, was paired with an antibiotic commonly used to prevent contracting the coronavirus. It was expected by consuming these drugs, Americans could prevent being exposed to the virus, and America could reopen businesses after 15 days of quarantine amid the economic downturn. Donald Trump insists that America could do both things at once.

On the other hand, dr. Fauci (an American physician and immunologist who serves as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases) stated that there was no evidence yet that the drug, chloroquine, or hydroxychloroquine with antibiotic mentioned by Trump could treat the virus because no drug has yet been approved to treat the coronavirus disease. Besides, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) created in the third meme also has a basis on texts reported by the media, for instance, cbsnews.com on March 20, 2020, about the

essential workers such as grocery store workers, truck drivers, and medical workers who inevitably had their lives threatened to serve and provide food stocks for Americans in the amid of coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, this meta-text is explicitly presented by calling the essential workers as essential and Donald Trump as non-essential.

Then, the two references used to construct verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the third political memes have content (signified) that the essential workers like grocery workers, truck drivers, and health care workers are vitally important because during coronavirus pandemic they are the ones who were very instrumental in treating patients and keeping food and beverage stocks filled with meeting the needs of the American community. Especially when working, they were in a state of risking themselves to exposure to coronavirus. Meanwhile, Trump and his coronavirus task force were not essential because his statement was not based on laboratory tests that to prevent coronavirus exposure was to take hydroxychloroquine and antibiotic and kept insisting on reopening the country to run the economy amid the virus outbreak.

Thus, the meaning from the verbal and visual signs of the third meme is about ridicule and criticism of the way Donald Trump thinks in dealing with the coronavirus problem in America on his own without a transparent and accountable basis and without considering the more severe risks by saying if hydroxychloroquine and antibiotics as anti-coronavirus drugs and to keep wanting opening up America's economy amid the

widespread coronavirus outbreak. Therefore, Donald Trump is considered no more essential than the essential workers that they must continue to work to maintain the survival of the American people even though they are more vulnerable to being exposed to the coronavirus because they may not be able to do their work from home like other jobs.

Datum 4 (March 25, 2020)



The fourth data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political meme is verbal and visual signs and entitled as expressions (signifiers) based on Hjelmslev semiotic. The fourth meme's verbal expression (signifier) is the utterance *MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN*. Meanwhile, the visual expressions (signifiers) are Donald Trump's image on the left and dr. Fauci's image is right (National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director). Moreover, the visual show dr. Fauci is telling people in front of him using his index finger like explaining something, and Donald Trump, with her mouth plastered, is listening to dr. Fauci's words.

In addition, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) in the fourth meme come from the intertextual process called metatextuality and parody. The metatext is about dr. Fauci's response when Donald Trump

made a plan to reopen the country after 15 days program of quarantine on March 24, 2020, as reported by thehill.com. Dr. Fauci said that if Donald Trump wanted to lift the virus restrictions and reopen the country, it needed flexibility. This flexibility meant that it was necessary to evaluate day by day and week by week whether reopening the country was feasible in the midst of this coronavirus outbreak. Besides, the parody is Donald Trump's slogan for the 2016 presidential campaign, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, as informed by dictionary.com, to be parodied by the creator of the political meme into MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN, and Donald Trump faces modified with plastering his mouth. Both things are parodied because when Donald Trump listens to dr. Fauci's suggestion is if wanting to reopen the country, it should be flexible. After that, he remained saying that Easter was the possible date to reopen the country to stimulate the economy, as reported by thehill.com on March 24, 2020. Therefore, the mouth of Donald Trump is modified to be plastered to silence him and only focus on dr. Fauci's explanation in deciding the coronavirus problem.

Furthermore, the metatextuality and parody employed to compose verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the fourth political meme conceive content (signified) that the meme 'orders' Trump to be quiet and let dr. Fauci speaks to give direction on what to do when the coronavirus pandemic hits to MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN.

Consequently, the meaning inflicted from the fourth meme is to satirize Donald Trump with making jokes from Donald Trump's slogan from MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN to MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN by plastering Donald Trump's mouth so that he is silent and does not make any statements in response to the coronavirus pandemic because he always justifies his thoughts which uttered without considering many aspects. Hence, focus enough on dr. Fauci to listen to his explanation regarding what to do as Americans in this pandemic situation.

Datum 5 (April 5, 2020)



The fifth data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political meme is in the shape of visual signs only and called as expressions (signifiers) by Hjelmslev semiotic. The visual expressions (signifiers) of the meme include the picture of Donald Trump with stuff on his head cosplaying the shape of the coronavirus.

Moreover, the visual expressions (signifiers) formed in the meme above are from the intertextuality of parody and allusion. The text before being parodied and alluded to is about America, which on March 26, 2020,

became the country with the number one cause of coronavirus, as reported by vox.com. It is caused by the fault of Donald Trump as 45th President of the USA for stripping public health agencies of the staff, resources, and authority needed during the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, Donald Trump is handling these coronavirus cases with wrong information and in a way that is not responsive. Donald Trump also cut the budget and destroyed many of the institutions needed to deal with the problem of this coronavirus pandemic. Afterward, this matter is parodied and alluded by the meme with modifying Donald Trump's head by being given an image similar to the appearance of the coronavirus, so that Donald Trump is alluded to as 'coronavirus' itself because of his downplaying behavior towards the existence of coronavirus.

The content (signifier) had by the visual expression of the meme is the idea concerning Donald Trump who becomes 'coronavirus' because indirectly he was the one who spread the coronavirus through the policy mistakes he decided.

Thus, the meaning produced from the visual signs of the political meme is about the criticism to Donald Trump for making the wrong decision during the virus pandemic to disarm public health agency staff, resources, and authority they need to function, and then deal with the crisis quickly. In addition, Donald Trump also cut the HHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) budget by 1.2 billion and the CDC 35 million. As a result, at the beginning of the coronavirus in America, the

CDC could not immediately detect and prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic by strengthening CDC laboratories because Donald Trump had cut the fund. This matter makes America be the country with the most number of virus cases in the world in late March 2020. Therefore, the meme creates the parody of Donald Trump's image by adding something similar to a virus and likening Donald Trump to a virus which indirectly through his disparaging attitude and making wrong decisions, Donald Trump made the virus quickly spread in America until it caused America to become a country with the most coronavirus cases.

Datum 6 (April 10, 2020)



The sixth data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political meme is verbal and visual signs and cited as expressions (signifiers) based on Hjelmslev semiotic. The fifth meme's verbal expressions (signifiers) are interrogative sentences – *I got the virus. So what now?* And the answer – *Touch Donald Trump!* Simultaneously, the visual expressions (signifier) are the picture of the prime minister of Great Britain, Boris Johnson, on the left and the picture of Queen Elizabeth II. The visual reveals that Prime Minister Boris Johnson is on the phone with Queen Elizabeth II and asking

the Queen what he should do as he has the coronavirus. Then, Queen Elizabeth II asks him to touch Donald Trump.

Furthermore, the sixth meme's verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) are acquired from the intertextual process called metatextuality and parody. The metatext is the information about Great Britain Prime Minister Boris Johnson tested positive for coronavirus as reported by [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) on March 27, 2020. Besides, the meta text is also gained from the White House coronavirus Press Briefing on March 31, 2020, as reported by [vox.com](https://www.vox.com). Donald Trump said that the coronavirus was not the flu at the briefing. The coronavirus was vicious. He said that because he got a call from his friend who said goodbye when he caught the virus and went to the hospital. Donald Trump also got word that his friend was in a coma due to the coronavirus. Afterward, the two references or the metatext are parodied. Donald Trump's telephone conversation with his friend in which his friend said goodbye to him when exposed to the virus, was parodied into a telephone conversation between Britain's prime minister, Boris Johnson, who reportedly tested positive for the virus, and Queen Elizabeth II to ask the Queen what Prime Minister Boris Johnson should do it because he was exposed to the coronavirus. In this parodied telephone conversation, Queen Elizabeth asked Prime Minister Boris Johnson to touch Donald Trump so that Donald Trump, who in the end believed that the virus was not the flu, could also be infected by a coronavirus and felt

the viciousness of coronavirus as experienced by his friend who told by Donald Trump that he was coma due to coronavirus.

Moreover, the content (signified) from the parody of verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) above is the idea to insinuate Donald Trump that too late to acknowledge that coronavirus is vicious. Therefore, when A coronavirus infected Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Queen Elizabeth II asked him to touch Donald Trump to prove his late acknowledgment.

Thus, the meaning developed from signs of the sixth political meme is about jokes that intend to insinuate Donald Trump, who previously said that the coronavirus was the flu to rectify his words that the virus was not the flu and was vicious because it caused his friend to experience coma. Furthermore, the jokes of Queen Elizabeth II asking Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was declared positive for the virus, to touch Donald Trump, it purposes to make Donald feel how vicious the coronavirus is in his body.

Datum 7 (April 25, 2020)



The seventh data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political meme is in the shape of verbal and visual signs and mentioned as expressions (signifiers) predicated on Hjelmslev's semiotic. The sixth political meme's verbal expressions (signifiers) are the command word *Relax* and an informational sentence - *The injectable disinfectants team is here and reporting for duty!* Further, the visual expressions (signifiers) consist of former Vice President Mike Pence on the left and Donald Trump on the right. In the visual, Mike Pence is represented by wearing a women nurse for a Halloween costume complete with the hat, and Donald Trump wears a white doctor lab coat with the diaphragm of the stethoscope on his head.

Moreover, the seventh meme's verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) are obtained by adopting the intertextuality form of parody and allusion. Before being parodied by the meme, the original text is Donald Trump, accompanied by the head of Coronavirus Task, former Vice President Mike Pence, who provided suggestions to inject disinfectant as coronavirus treatment as reported by bbc.com on April 24, 2020. This suggestion got a reaction from many parties. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), American Cleaning Institute, and BBC health reporter were three of them. The FDA warned Americans not to buy disinfectants sold in the form of fake miracle drugs that claim can treat all kinds of diseases from autism to AIDS and hepatitis. The FDA provided a report that the fake miracle drug has been life-threatening to consumers due to dehydration and acute liver failure after drinking the product. Then

the American Cleaning Institute, representing the US cleaning product industry, said that disinfectants are meant to kill germs or viruses on hard surfaces and should not be used on someone's skin, consumed, or injected internally. In addition, the BBC's Health reporter, Rachel Schraer, also revealed through her analysis that using disinfectants could kill viruses on surfaces. It was a good idea to keep things you touch clean, using products with anti-microbial properties high in alcohol. It emphasized that disinfectants were used only for infected objects and surfaces - not to ward off viruses residing in the human body. Furthermore, consuming or injecting disinfectant into the body was not only a risk of poisoning and death. It was even impossible for it to be effectively used for treatment.

The references about Donald Trump's suggestion for injecting disinfectant and response by the three parties above are then parodied. The image of Donald Trump is parodied by modifying his half body wearing a white doctor's coat with a diagram of a stethoscope on his head. The addition of the image of a stethoscope on Donald Trump's head is meant to be a joke. If a doctor usually hangs a stethoscope around the neck, it's different for Donald Trump. The latter attached the stethoscope to his head to show his irrationality due to his suggestion to inject disinfectant into the body of a virus patient.

Meanwhile, the image of Mike Pence is parodied by modifying the clothes he is wearing with a woman nurse as a Halloween costume of complete with a hat on his head. This costume is intentionally edited on a photo of

Mike Pence's half body because it is intentionally made for a joke. Aside from being a joke, the Halloween costume is used at Halloween celebrations synonymous with horror and ghosts. Therefore, Donald Trump and Mike Pence are alluding as a doctor and a nurse for a disinfectant team, and they are ready to lead their patients to death and become ghosts.

Afterward, the content (signified) from the parody of verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) is Donald Trump. Mike Pence will be the team of disinfectant injection for bringing Americans to death. Therefore Americans are expected to relax

As a result, the meaning of signs of the seventh political meme is about the insinuation towards Donald Trump. He recommends doing disinfectant injection to relieve coronavirus on the body in the coronavirus press briefing accompanied by Mike Pence, former Vice President and Head of the coronavirus task force. Then, by modifying Donald Trump's Trump's half body to wear a white doctor coat and Mike Pence's Pence's half body to use female nurse Halloween costume, Donald Trump and Mike Pence have alluded as the doctor. The nurses reporting for duty and Americans are expected to be relaxed because they are ready to lead you to death and become like ghosts or spirits of the dead who appear when Halloween arrives.

Datum 8 (April 25, 2020)



The eighth data of political meme is in the design of verbal and visual signs and named as expressions (signifiers) lean on the Hjelmslev's concept of semiotic. The verbal expressions (signifier) in the seventh meme are the words consist of *THE TRUMPTINI*, *1 part bleach*, *1 part disinfectant*, *1 Tide pod*, *Take with your morning covfefe*, *GUARANTEED TO CURE CORONAVIRUS*, *SIDE EFFECT: CERTAIN DEATH*. Meanwhile, the visual expressions (signifier) are composed of a picture of a disinfectant bottle with the brand Fabuloso, one bottle of bleach branded Clorox, and one glass of pod (POD is slang words and the acronym of Pass Out Drunk) for drinking alcohol filled with liquid detergent brand Tide.

Further, the seventh meme's verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) involve the intertextuality of parody. Before parodied, the previous text is Donald Trump's idea on March 31, 2020, white house press briefing to cure coronavirus with injecting disinfectant. Hereafter, Donald Trump's idea is parodied to name the disinfectant *THE TRUMPTINI*, including 1 part bleach, 1 part disinfectant, and 1 Tide pod.

Besides, something parodied by the meme is the word coffee becomes covfefe. This word of covfefe has an intertextuality form of metatextuality that Donald Trump made a misspelling of his tweet which resulted in the word coverage being covfefe as reported by theguardian.com on May 31, 2017, ago.

In addition, based on Hjelmslev's semiotic, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) elaborated above has content (signified). The content (signified) is if you drink The three TRUMPTINI products of disinfectant with covfefe (coffee) in the morning to heal coronavirus, the side effect you get is certain death.

Consequently, the meaning produced from the eighth political meme signs is about the insinuation to Donald Trump's illogical suggestion for injecting disinfectant to cure coronavirus by making the jokes of THE TRUMPTINI as the products of disinfectant which consist of 1 part of Fabuloso disinfectant, 1 part 1 glass of pod of Clorox bleach and Tide liquid detergent. Then, drinking the disinfectant products with covfefe (coffee) in the morning to cure coronavirus is not healing but a certain death that you will get.

Datum 9 (July 3, 2020)



The ninth data of political meme signs are verbal and visual signs and called expressions (signifiers) based on Hjelmslev semiotic. The verbal expressions (signifier) are the words of *A mask is not a political statement. It's an IQ test.* Meanwhile, the visual expression (signifier) is the picture of a face mask.

Moreover, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the ninth political meme above are originated from metatextuality. The intended metatext is the text informed by the media. One of them is [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) on July 2, 2020, about Donald Trump's behavior that he did not want to wear a mask. When the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended people to wear a mask to help stop the spread of coronavirus, Donald Trump responded that following CDC recommendation to wear a mask is a personal decision. Further, he also said if that anyone who wears a mask was a political statement that did not agree with his decision not to wear a mask, even though wearing a mask was not a political statement, but this was an attempt to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus from one person to another.

Afterward, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) and how it is composed intertextually has Hjelmslev's concept of semiotic of content (signified). The content (signified) of the ninth meme is to wearing a mask is not a political statement but an IQ test. IQ test serves to measure a person's intellectual potential whose results are divided into two, namely high IQ scores and low IQ scores. If IQ tests usually are in the form of questions about grouping things and looking for relationships and analogies from a concept, this is different from IQ test questions referred to by memes. The form is found in the use of masks during this pandemic. If someone wears it, he cares about himself and others about the dangers of transmitting the coronavirus through droplets while talking, and he is classified as having high intelligence in this IQ test. Meanwhile, for anyone who does not wear it, he is endangering himself and others to be infected and transmit the virus through droplets; thus, he is classified as a person who has low intelligence.

Therefore, the meaning of signs of the ninth political meme is about the insinuation to Donald Trump that he is as categorized as someone who has a low score of IQ test by not wearing a mask to protect himself and others from infecting by a coronavirus and even says that people who wear a mask indicate political statement against him.

Datum 10 (July 4, 2020)



The tenth data of political meme is in the form of verbal and visual signs and cited as expressions (signifiers) rested on Hjelmslev's construction of semiotic. The verbal expressions in the ninth meme are the words of *I LoOk LiKe tHe LoNe rAnGeR*. These words are written by mixing capital, and lower case letters called alternating caps and showing sarcasm. Whereas the visual expression (signifier) is the image of Donald Trump, this is with a face mask modified to make two eye holes to imitate a mask as the lone ranger used.

In addition, the verbal and visual expressions (signifier) are intertextually acquired through parody. Before being parodied, the source text is the Donald Trump statement when he interviewed with Fox Bussiness on July 2, 2020, as reported by cbsnews.com, that he had no problem wearing a mask because it was good and would make him like Lone Ranger. On Donald Trump's mind, a mask is a dark black mask used by Lone Ranger (a masked Texas Ranger in the American Old West, who stands up for the truth along with his American Indian friend Tonto, and his horse Silver) that only covers under the eyes and eyelids. He also said

he liked the way he looked with the Lone Ranger's mask, even though the intended mask used in this pandemic time was a face mask that functions to prevent coronavirus transmission through droplets. Then, the Donald Trump statement about if he wears a mask, he will look like Lone Ranger is parodied by the meme with modifying a face mask and giving it two eyes holes, and putting it on Donald Trump's face.

Moreover, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers), which are parodied later, create content (signified) that Donald Trump likes to wear a mask because he thought he would be like Lone Ranger. Therefore, the meme realizes what he said by putting a modified face mask on Donald Trump's face with the two eyes holes.

As a result, the meaning of signs of the tenth political meme is the mockery for Donald Trump saying that he likes how he looks when he wears a mask of Lone Ranger. The mockery is made by the meme parodying Donald Trump's face to wear a modified face mask becomes a mask with two eyes holes like Lone Ranger used. However, on the meme, he does not look like a Lone Range like what he expected. It looks like a fool as stupid as the statement he made.

Datum 11 (July 14, 2020)



The eleventh data of Donald Trump-coronavirus political meme is verbal and visual signs and entitled as expressions (signifiers) based on Hjelmslev semiotic. The verbal expression (signifier) in the tenth meme is the words of *The reason Trump agreed to wear a mask*. Meanwhile, the visual expressions (signifier) are the photo of Donald Trump that in public he stands and wearing a mask on the left and the picture of a face mask with a pacifier for baby.

Furthermore, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) above are intertextually obtained from metatextuality. The metatext is the information reported by bbc.com about Donald Trump. He finally wore a mask for the first time in public when visiting Walter Reed military hospital and meeting with injured soldiers and health workers. He said that when in the hospital, especially in certain places, they were talking to many soldiers and people, it was a good thing to wear a mask. In addition, it is delivered explicitly by providing information that Donald Trump wanted to wear a mask because there was a pacifier inside. Meanwhile,

implicitly, it is the insinuation for Donald Trump, who forcefully wore a mask for the first time in public when visiting the Walter Reed Hospital.

Hence, the metatextuality to create verbal and visual expressions (signifier) later also builds the content (signified) as in Hjelmslev's semiotic concept. The content (signified) had by the expressions (signifiers) of the tenth meme is why he wants to wear a mask because, inside the mask, there is a pacifier like the one in a baby mask.

Therefore, the meaning established from the tenth political meme signs is about mocking and criticizing Donald Trump, who first used a mask in public while visiting the Walter Reed military hospital and saying that when in the hospital, especially in certain places, we're talking to a lot of soldiers and people is a good thing to wear. Mask. The white house, where Donald Trump lives and works while being president, also met many staff and communicated with many people, but he never wore a mask, as evidenced by his many press briefings. Thus, it doesn't make sense if he said that masks need to be worn in particular places like hospitals because anyone can carry the coronavirus, including people who work in the White House. Therefore, Donald Trump was quipped about why he finally wanted to wear a mask after previously refusing because the mask contained a pacifier like a baby mask. Babies have a habit of squeezing. Therefore, to make the babies not wear a mask, they are given a pacifier inside.

Datum 12 (October 2, 2020)



The twelfth data of political meme is in the shape of verbal and visual signs and called expressions (signifiers) in Hjelmslev's semiotic. The verbal expressions (signifier) are the words of *Covfefe-19* and *@WELING* (name of an Instagram account that make the meme of Donald Trump). Meanwhile, the meme's visual expression (signifier) is Donald Trump, who is likened to the Hulk of coronavirus.

Further, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the meme above experience the intertextual process of parody and allusion. Before parodied, the original text is about Donald Trump misspelling on Twitter that the word of coverage becomes written to be covfefe. Then, the word covfefe was slipped into covfefe-19 to refer to the actual word in question, namely Covid-19. Besides, Donald Trump alludes to coronavirus Hulk. Hulk is one of the Avenger superhero characters who has an extensive and robust body, so he is tough against his enemies. However, the parable of Donald Trump as the Hulk here is not as a big hero who is strong and tough to face the enemy. Still, the opposite is the figure of a big hero who doesn't even fight the enemy (Covid-19) but allows the enemy to dominate

America so that many deaths occur. 200,000 as reported by vox.com due to the spread of Covid-19.

After that, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) obtained from intertextuality of parody and allusion have content (signified) as composed in Hjelmslev's semiotic. The content (signified) in the meme is Donald Trump, who became the hero of covid-19 Hulk, who was instrumental in letting the enemy (covid-19) dominate in the US and caused many deaths in the country led.

As a result, the meaning generated from signs of the twelve political memes is the insinuation and critique for Donald Trump. He allowed covid-19 to attack the US because of his downplaying attitude, incompetence, and slow attitude in responding to the problem of covid 19, resulting in the death of Americans until it reached 200,000 people. Therefore, unlike the original Hulk character, Donald Trump is described as a big hero who is strong and rigid in fighting the enemy. Still, Donald Trump is described as a big Hulk, but with a big body, he instead of fighting the enemy instead of letting the enemy, namely Covid-19 (covid-19) -19), be widespread to attack US citizens. Further, the twist on the word cofveve to cofveve-19 is to insinuate Donald Trump, who considers this coronavirus case like a play or joke through nonsensical statements such as mixing hydroxychloroquine with antibiotics and injecting disinfectants as a treatment for the coronavirus and wearing masks is a

way to show political the opposite statement because he chose not to wear a mask in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

Datum 13 (October 2, 2020)



The thirteenth data of political meme is in the design of verbal and visual signs and marked as expressions (signifiers) based on Hjelmslev's semiotic. The verbal expression (signifier) in the meme is the words of *THE WHITE HOUSE*. Meanwhile, the visual expressions (signifier) in the meme the picture of Donald Trump riding a swing in the form of a coronavirus, and behind it is a picture of the White House. He indicates that the open mouth sounds like "Ohh" because it hurts when swinging on the coronavirus.

Moreover, the verbal and visual expressions (signifiers) of the meme above are obtained intertextually in the form of parody. The previous text parodied is the information that on October 2, 2020, as reported by [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com), Donald Trump and several other White House officials tested positive for coronavirus after previously as reported by [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) on September 22, 2020, Trump urged not to worry about the coronavirus which at that time nearly 200,000 Americans were confirmed

to have died from Covid-19 and instead said that the coronavirus affected virtually nobody and this was a fantastic thing. In addition, on September 30, 2020, he mocked his debating opponent for wearing a mask. He said that he did not wear a mask like Biden, who was always seen wearing it and insinuated Biden, who could talk 200 feet from Donald Trump even though Biden wore a mask which Donald said Trump was the most oversized mask he had ever seen. With such an attitude towards Biden, Donald Trump was seen as arrogant to protect himself from the coronavirus. In the end, Donald Trump's arrogance led him to be exposed to the coronavirus.

Hence, the information on Donald Trump's exposure to the coronavirus is then parodied by memes by showing an image of Donald in shorts and Trump without a shirt so that his body shape is visible but still wearing shoes complete with socks. The reason why Donald Trump is being parodied in this way is based on information that according to health experts, people aged 64-74 with Covid in the US were five times more likely to need hospitalization and 90 times more likely to die than someone in their 20s. Besides, based on physical analysis, Donald Trump's weight is 110.7kg which was considered obese because his height is 190 cm. According to health analysis experts, this coronavirus also seemed to attack men and overweight people. Thus, it is possible for Donald Trump tested positive for coronavirus because he was a man who was 74 years

old at that time and was obese and could also possibly die of the coronavirus.

Further, the verbal and visual expressions (signifier) of political memes derived from the intertextual process of the parody have content (signified) that The White House is experiencing problems felt by the American people, namely the coronavirus that attacks Donald Trump and several White House officials another.

Thus, the meaning of signs of the thirteenth political memes is the mockery and criticism of Donald Trump and another White House official who tested positive for coronavirus. Donald Trump himself previously said not to worry about the coronavirus because it doesn't attack anyone when at that time, as many as 200,000 Americans died from coronavirus, being arrogant about the coronavirus. After all, he ignored the use of masks and mocked his debate opponent, Joe Biden, who always wore a mask. As a result of his arrogant attitude, he and some of The White House officials tested positive for coronavirus. The meme intends to mock Donald Trump's positivity towards the coronavirus by sitting Donald Trump on the swing of the coronavirus. He then feels the pain of the coronavirus which can be seen from the expression of the mouth, like saying the word "Ohh" because of feeling the pain. In addition, the meme also mocks Donald Trump, who is depicted in a shirtless form, which aims to show his obese body weighing 110 kg with a height of 190 cm. According to health analysis experts, men aged 64-74 years and obese are

more susceptible to the coronavirus and are more at risk of dying. Thus, all the characteristics mentioned by the health analyst correspond to what Donald Trump was experiencing at that time.

Datum 14 (October 3, 2020)



The fourteenth data of political memes are in the form of verbal dan visual signs and cited as expressions (signifiers) in Hjelmslev's semiotic. The verbal expression (signifier) in the meme is the word *Clorox*. Whereas the visual expressions (signifier) in the meme are the picture of Donald Trump lying in a hospital bed with a face that grimaced in pain, and beside Donald Trump, there is a female nurse installing disinfectant as an IVs for Donald Trump's treatment.

Furthermore, the verbal and visual expressions (signifier) in the meme above are derived from the intertextuality of parody. The text before parodied is about Donald Trump has suggested at the coronavirus press briefing on April 24, 2020, as reported by vox.com to inject disinfectant as a coronavirus drug and about the announcement that Donald Trump tested positive for coronavirus on October 2, 2020, as reported by bbc.com and had to do the treatment at Walter Reed Hospital. Then, based on the

previous text, the picture of Donald Trump is parodied being hospitalized because of the coronavirus. His suggestion to inject disinfectant to prevent and overcome the coronavirus is realized by the nurse beside him injecting Clorox bleach as a powerful disinfectant. In addition, Donald Trump's head is exaggerated and making his expression grimacing in pain because of the Clorox infusion intended to make it a joke.

In addition, the verbal and visual expressions (signifier) parodied above establish content (signified) that Donald Trump is being treated in hospital because he is optimistic for corona. Therefore, Donald Trump's suggestion last April to inject Clorox disinfectant Bleach to get rid of the coronavirus in a person's body was later realized by the nurse in the meme and made her make an expression like grimacing in pain because of the disinfectant infusion.

Thus, the meaning from signs of the fourteenth political meme is the insinuation and criticism towards the irrationality of Donald Trump. He once suggested injecting disinfectant as an effort to destroy the coronavirus in the body, and when he was tested positive for coronavirus and not enough with quarantine in the White House but had to undergo treatment at the Walter Reed Hospital. Then, Donald Trump's suggestion to inject the disinfectant is realized by the nurse beside him, who is seen putting Clorox bleach, the most potent disinfectant, as a solution to destroy the coronavirus in his body. He looked like he was wincing in pain because of the Clorox infusion.

Datum 15 (October 4, 2020)



The fifteenth data of political memes are in the form of visual signs only and named as expressions (signifiers) as in Hjlemslev's semiotic. The visual expressions (signifiers) are the image of the Lord Jesus in a white robe with a mocking facial expression touching the shoulders of Donald Trump, who is sitting and with a face that looks like fear.

In addition, the visual expressions (signifiers) of the meme above are being parodied. The case that is being parodied is the announcement about Donald Trump tested positive for coronavirus on October 2, 2020, as reported by [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com). Another meta-text is about a statement by a health analyst reported by [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) about people aged 64-74 with Covid in the US being five times more likely to need hospitalization and 90 times more likely to die than someone in their 20s. In addition to health analysis experts, this coronavirus also seemed to attack men and overweight people. Based on the expert's statement, the physical characteristics of Donald Trump, who at that time was 74 years old, are called obese. According to Donald Trump's physician, Donald Trump's weight at that time reached 110 kg with a height of 190 cm. Therefore, the death due to

coronavirus may be experienced by Donald Trump as has been experienced by other Americans in the age of 64-74. Then, the two cases above are parodied by showing an image of the Lord Jesus with a curvy face that intends to make fun of touching both Donald Trump's shoulders, where Donald Trump's facial expression when touched by Jesus is like fear. Meanwhile, it is implicitly conveyed that Donald Trump is getting ready to be pulled off his life by Jesus because of the coronavirus in his body as in other Americans who died of coronavirus.

Furthermore, the visual expressions (signifiers) gained in metatextuality, result content (signified) as proposed in Hjelmslev's semiotic. The content (signified) is the idea about Donald Trump, who may die like many Americans who died from exposure to the coronavirus. Thus, Donald Trump is warned to get ready to be picked up by the Lord Jesus to his death.

Thus, the meaning served from signs of the fifteenth of political memes is the ridicule to Donald Trump. He tested positive for coronavirus after dismissing him, responding to this coronavirus problem unreasonably and slowly, and taking the wrong decision to deal with the coronavirus that has affected many people. America was exposed to the coronavirus and died from this coronavirus. At the time, Donald Trump, who finally felt the entry of the coronavirus in his body, was made a joke by a meme that he is informed to be warned to get ready to be picked up by the Lord Jesus to be escorted to his death. The face of Jesus who is ready to pick up

Trump in the meme looks like a sad wimp who intends to make fun of Donald Trump, who Jesus will take his life because of the coronavirus because Lord Jesus must have known that previously Donald underestimated the coronavirus and was arrogant by not wearing a mask to protect himself from the coronavirus. Then Donald Trump's face is shown in memes like fear when picked up by the Lord Jesus.

3.2. Discussion

This part provides the discussion of the analysis of Donald Trump-coronavirus political memes using the semiotic of Hjelmslev (1943) in Chandler (2017) and Intertextuality of Genette (1997) in Chandler (2017) towards the data in the part of finding. The findings demonstrated by the three tables about function, forms of intertextuality, and theme of the behavior of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes which occur in the 15 data of political memes or its called as Datum 1-15 (hereafter D.1-15).

Table 3.3.a Function of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes

	Function of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes		
	Mocking	Insinuating	Criticizing
	D.3; D.10; D.11; D.13; D.15	D.1; D.2; D.4; D.6; D.7; D.8; D.9; D.12; D.14	D.3; D.5; D.11; D.12; D.13; D.14
Total	5	9	5

Table 3.3.b Forms of Intertextuality of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes

Forms of Intertextuality of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes				
	Quotation	Allusion	Parody	Metatextuality
	D.1	D.2; D.5; D.7; D.12	D.4; D.5; D.6; D.7; D.8; D.10; D.12; D.13; D.14; D.15	D.3; D.4; D.6; D.9; D.11; D.15
Total	1	4	10	6

Table 3.3.c Theme of Behavior of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes

Theme of Behavior of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes				
	Irresponsibility	Downplaying	Irrationality	Ignorance
	D.1; D.12	D.2; D.5; D.11 D.13; D.15	D.3; D.7. D.8; D.9; D.14	D.4; D.6; D.10
Total	2	5	5	3

Further, table 3.3.b Intertextuality forms of Donald Trump – Coronavirus Political Memes above shows that parody is the most common to make political memes of Donald Trump. According to Young's (2020) concept of humor, parody and satire are subtypes of humor. Young also adds that all satire contains parody and not all parody contains satire. Then, by using Parody as the most common way to criticize Donald Trump, this 45 the president of America is parodied in terms of his physical appearance. It is because what Donald Trump said

and did as a leader in responding to and dealing with the coronavirus crisis was entirely unacceptable for common sense. When the leaders of other countries are trying their best to deal with the coronavirus, he is doing the opposite, and it can even be said to be stupid. For example, he parodied himself as a doctor of disinfectant in his white coat, which did not hang a stethoscope around his neck but on his head. It is used to illustrate the irrationality of his statement about injecting to prevent and kill the coronavirus in the human body (D.7). In addition, Donald Trump's physical appearance has also been parodied as Corona Hulk, "The Hero". He spreads the coronavirus because of his slow attitude in dealing with the spread of the coronavirus, which resulted in many deaths in America (D.12). As a result, Donald Trump's words and words that are considered unreasonable in dealing with the coronavirus are the reason for the Parody of Donald Trump with certain characters.

Moreover, Political Comedy and The Progressivist are suspected of being Democratic Party Supporters. As haters of Donald Trump, they want to convey through the memes they created and share that Donald Trump is an incompetent leader. It correlates with what was noted in Wiggins (2019) that the function of political memes is to respond to the incompetence of political actors. Then, the term incompetence for Donald Trump is based on Donald Trump's statement and attitude, which says that it is not his responsibility to provide coronavirus test for American society, disparaging attitude towards the world which is currently experiencing a

corona emergency by saying that it is under control, and his unreasonable thinking by suggesting to inject disinfectant into the human body to kill the coronavirus and his stupid statement that if he wore a mask, he would look as good as the Lone Ranger. Donald Trump's attitude and thoughts in responding to and dealing with the spread of the coronavirus in America is the reason that Donald Trump for Political Comedy and The Progressivist account as critics and haters to consider Donald Trump that he is not much more important than the essential workers such as grocery store workers, truck drivers and medical workers who must continue to work to maintain the survival of the American people by providing food stocks for Americans in the amid of coronavirus pandemic (D.3). Besides, the creator of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes also wants to convey related to the spread of the coronavirus in America that Donald Trump is a virus itself. It is because indirectly he has accelerated the spread of coronavirus in America by making the wrong decision during the virus pandemic to disarm public health agency staff, resources, and authority they need to function, and then not deal with the crisis quickly. Therefore, the creator of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes posted on the Instagram account of Political Comedy and The Progressivist wants to express an idea that Donald Trump is an incompetent leader for leading The USA.

In addition, the present study about Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes has similarities and differences with the study of Roos and

Rivers (2017), which also made Donald Trump memes an object of analysis. The similarity lies in the value criticized, namely Donald Trump's behavior that does not demonstrate himself as a good leader. Roos and Rivers (2017) study problematized Donald Trump's controversial statement before being the 45th President of the United States on the 2016 election campaign. Donald Trump stated anti-immigrants by promising to build a border between America and Mexico. Meanwhile, the present study is concerned with Donald Trump's attitude when he was the 45th President of the United States. Donald Trump was criticized for his incompetence in handling the coronavirus pandemic in America in 2020.

Moreover, the difference occurs in the aspect of analysis. The study of Roos and Rivers (2017) analyzed how memes create Donald Trump as a figure who looks negative so that Donald Trump's self-worth decreases due to his controversial statement to anti-immigrants by saying he would build a border between America and Mexico through an approach of delegitimation strategies. Meanwhile, the present study analyzes the meaning of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes signs and how intertextuality is manifested to determine the signs choices of political memes. Thus, it can be concluded from Roos and Rivers (2017) and the present study when before and until Donald Trump became President of the United States, his political behavior always caused opposition, protest, and criticism.

Moreover, another study by Ahmed (2019) that used Donald Trump memes as the object of research has similarities and differences with the present study. The similarity of the present study with the previous study of Ahmed (2019) is the use of intertextuality. The forms of intertextuality found in the present study are direct quotation, allusion, parody, and metatextuality. Meanwhile, the intertextuality of the indirect quotation was used in the Ahmed (2019) study. Furthermore, some cases differentiate between the present study and the previous study of Ahmed (2019). First, the present study makes the political memes used to criticize the incompetence of the 45th President of the USA, Donald Trump, in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. However, the study of Ahmed (2019) used the political memes about the impeachment of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the USA as an object of the research. Second, the present study involves the intertextuality for comprehending context, which becomes a key for interpreting the meaning of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes signs. Meanwhile, the previous study of Ahmed (2019) adopts intertextuality to elucidate the initial, intermediate, and closure chronology of how political memes appear to respond to trending issues about Donald Trump's impeachment.

Third, the present study only focuses on the political memes posted by the Instagram account of Democratic Party supporters, Political Comedy, and The Progressivist. The study discovers the meaning of political memes by conveying intertextuality, especially from the

perspective of the Political Comedy and The Progressivist as Democratic party supporters. They criticize Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the USA coronavirus pandemic. On the other hand, the study of Ahmed (2019) concerned with memes uploaded by Democratic and Republican Party supporters. It is because it is appropriate with the purpose of Ahmed (2019) study, which is to analyze how memes appear on trending issues, especially in the case of the impeachment of Donald Trump, the two kinds of political memes from the Democratic and Republican Party supporters are needed to know how they appear and respond each other using political memes to bring each other down. As a result, the similarity and differences between the present study and the previous study of Ahmed (2019) demonstrate if intertextuality is the starting point to create political memes about Donald Trump's incompetence and impeachment. Besides, when the political conflict of Donald Trump's incompetence and impeachment happen, political memes appear as a form of reaction for responding and engaging in the political conflict (Wiggins, 2019, p.66).

Therefore, the present study, the study of Roos and Rivers (2017), and the study of Ahmed (2019), which have the same object of research that is political memes of Donald Trump, result from the values to be concluded. The three political issues about Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the USA coronavirus, Donald Trump's policy to build border walls between America and Mexico, and Donald Trump's

impeachment are essential things that need to be responded to by creating political memes. It is denoted by Wiggins (2019) that political memes are created depending on how important an issue is essential to be criticized. The three issues resulting from Donald Trump's behavior become significant to be responded to by making political memes because it is considered unethical behavior.

Thus, by creating political memes about the three issues of Donald Trump, it is intended to expose and make people aware of the unethical of Donald Trump as a leader (N.I, 2019, p.84, 88). Besides, the creation of political memes even can influence people's thoughts or opinions about Donald Trump. Chandler (2017) noted that all semiotic forms, one of them being political memes, always contain ideological purposes that can influence the reader's perspectives in seeing problems in reality. The failure of Donald Trump to be President of America for a second period, perhaps one of them is a form of the effect of political memes that works to influence American society's thought towards Donald Trump and results in the political movement of them to vote for Donald Trump's opposition which is Joe Biden as the 46th President of the USA.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter concludes from the result of this present research about Semiotic Intertextuality of Political Humor Memes. Besides, it assigns to the next researcher suggestion for improving the research field.

4.1. Conclusion

The Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes are not enough to see only as of the visual art. Still, it provides crucial information for anyone who reads it. The vital information intended is the meaning resulting from the signs of political memes in the form of visuals only or a combination of verbal and visuals. The meaning of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes contains thought, idea, or criticism for the incompetence of the 45th President of the USA, Donald Trump, in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Further, the analysis results showed that Donald Trump is criticized through political memes because in responding to the USA coronavirus cases, Donald Trump pointed to irresponsibility, downplaying, irrationality, and ignorance behavior. Therefore, it is concluded from these points that political memes are a helpful tool for asserting ideas towards political actors in a more expressive way.

More importantly, the creative way of political memes in expressing an idea to criticize Donald Trump is categorized into the linguistic aspect. Even though political memes are only composed by

visual, they still can be verbalized through their implicit meaning, which the approach of semiotic and intertextuality can reveal. Further, criticism produced by Donald Trump's political memes is based on fact, so the exactness of the criticism can be examined by the readers of political memes. It is supported intertextually that many media report Donald Trump's incompetence in responding to coronavirus problem in the United States in the world like bbc.com, cnn.com, cbsnews.com, vox.com, etc. Consequently, the political memes created and posted to criticize Donald Trump's incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic are examples of a text representing the political reality.

As a result, the research on semiotic and intertextuality of political humor memes can contribute to building the awareness of the reader of this paper and the reader of political memes that political memes are something captivating to be known and studied because it helps to train the conceptual thinking about how semiotic and intertextuality are worked together to produce the meaning of political memes and how ideas are arranged and conveyed to express an opinion for political issues.

4.2. Suggestion

The present study regarding semiotics and intertextuality of Donald Trump – coronavirus political memes has research limitations. It can be seen from the amount of Donald Trump – coronavirus of political memes as data analyzed only 15 memes. The limited amount of data of political memes causes things about the depiction of Donald as an incompetent

leader that are included to be unobtainable. Then, the limited time in data collection, the researcher only focuses on one time, namely 2020. It has resulted in researchers cannot compare the controversial issues of Donald Trump related to the attitudes and actions of Donald Trump during his time as President of the United States. In addition, researchers only use qualitative methods in this research. Researchers cannot generalize whether most American people hate Donald Trump, especially concerning Donald Trump's way of dealing with the coronavirus in America.

Therefore, based on the research limitations above, the researcher intends to provide suggestions for future researchers to examine the semiotic intertextuality of another theme of political memes, such as how a political actor is represented by political memes using a qualitative and quantitative method of analysis. Qualitative is used to describe how semiotic and intertextuality work to make meaning of political memes about a political actor figure. In contrast, quantitative is used to support the exactness of the representation about the figure of a political actor by political memes from dominant people opinions.

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APPENDIX



Table of data and topic of Donald Trump – Coronavirus political memes

Data	Datum	Derived From	Topic
1	 <p data-bbox="424 992 592 1043">1.771 suka Lihat semua 76 komentar 30 Maret 2020</p>	<p data-bbox="818 584 1059 779">The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on March 15, 2020.</p>	<p data-bbox="1094 584 1362 869">Political memes insinuated Donald Trump's irresponsibility for not providing coronavirus tests for American society.</p>
2	 <p data-bbox="424 1478 756 1563">4.277 suka theprogressivists He has fucked us all!!! 🤮🤢🤡 ... lainnya Lihat semua 799 komentar 30 Maret 2020 · Lihat Terjemahan</p>	<p data-bbox="818 1095 1066 1290">The instagram account of @theprogressivists posted on March 13, 2020.</p>	<p data-bbox="1094 1095 1334 1462">Political memes insinuated Donald Trump, who had made coronavirus cases in America liked dummies through the downplaying attitudes.</p>

<p>3</p>	 <p>politicalcomedy</p> <p>Disukai oleh theprogressivists dan 2158 lainnya Lihat semua 92 komentar 29 Maret 2020</p>	<p>The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on March 24, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes mocked and criticized Donald Trump’s irrational suggestion by saying hydroxychloroquine and antibiotics as anti-coronavirus medicine. Thus, this case made his existence in the coronavirus pandemic time was no more essential than the essential workers in the USA.</p>
<p>4</p>	 <p>politicalcomedy</p> <p>2.040 suka Lihat semua 52 komentar 25 Maret</p>	<p>The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on March 25, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes insinuated Donald Trump’s ignorance about reopening the country amid the coronavirus outbreak. He claimed it was for recovering the USA economy as an effect of quarantine to prevent coronavirus widespread.</p>

5		The instagram account of @theprogressivists posted on April 5, 2020.	Political memes criticized the downplaying attitudes of Donald Trump. He took the wrong decision to disarm the public health agency's staff, resources, and authority needed to handle coronavirus cases.
6		The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on April 10, 2020.	Political memes insinuated Donald Trump's ignorance or stupidity, who just realized that the coronavirus was not the flu and said it was dangerous after getting a call from a friend in a coma due to the coronavirus.
7		The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on April 25, 2020.	Political memes insinuated Donald Trump's irrationality. He suggested doing disinfectant injection to someone's body as a way to kill and prevent coronavirus.

8	<p>politicalcomedy</p> <p>THE TRUMPTINI</p> <p>1 part bleach 1 part disinfectant 1 Tide pod</p> <p>Take with your morning covfefe.</p> <p>GUARANTEED TO CURE CORONAVIRUS. SIDE EFFECT: CERTAIN DEATH.</p> <p>1.334 suka Lihat semua 28 komentar 25 April</p>	<p>The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on April 25, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes insinuated Donald Trump's irrational thoughts. He asserted doing disinfectant injection to the human body as a coronavirus antidote.</p>
9	<p>politicalcomedy</p> <p>A mask is not a political statement. It's an IQ test.</p> <p>1.967 suka Lihat semua 32 komentar 3 Juli 2020</p>	<p>The instagram account of @politicalcomedy posted on July 3, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes insinuated Donald Trump's irrationality for wearing a mask indicated the political statement against him.</p>
10	<p>theprogressivists</p> <p>"i LoOk LiKe tHe LoNe rAnGeR"</p> <p>6.198 suka theprogressivists Much improvement! 🤔👍👍👍 ... lainnya Lihat semua 136 komentar 9 Juli 2020 · Lihat Terjemahan</p>	<p>The instagram account of @theprogressivists posted on July 4, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes mocked Donald Trump's ignorance or stupidity for saying if he liked how he looked by wearing a mask. He thought that a mask used in the pandemic time was Lone Ranger's mask.</p>

<p>14</p>		<p>The instagram account of @theprogressivists posted on October 3, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes insinuated and criticized Donald Trump's irrationality. He suggested doing a disinfectant injection as a killer of coronavirus inside the human body. This suggestion was also applied to him, who tested positive for coronavirus.</p>
<p>15</p>		<p>The instagram account of @theprogressivists posted on October 4, 2020.</p>	<p>Political memes mocked Donald Trump's illness because of coronavirus after all this time downplayed it. Thus, he was expected to be ready to be picked up by the Lord Jesus for meeting his death liked other Americans who in the same age as him were died because of coronavirus.</p>