

## Semiotics with Special Reference to Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar Memes

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### Abstrak

*Artikel yang berjudul “Semiotika dengan Referensi Khusus Leonardo Dicaprio Oscar Memes” ini bertujuan untuk menjawab dua pertanyaan dasar di dalam penelitian ini; pertama, tanda Verbal dan tanda Non-Verbal di setiap meme dan kedua, pesan yang disampaikan oleh kedua tanda. Penelitian ini berfokus pada penyajian makna yang disampaikan dalam tanda Verbal dan tanda Non-Verbal dari setiap meme.*

*Data diambil dari dua situs web di Internet yaitu [www. memecenter.com](http://www.memecenter.com) dan [www. memegenerator.net](http://www.memegenerator.net). Semua data adalah meme yang bertujuan mengejek orang. Metode dokumentasi digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data dan metode yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif berdasarkan dua teori: pertama, teori Semiotika yang diusulkan oleh Saussure. Teori ini digunakan untuk mengklasifikasikan dan menjelaskan pesan dari tanda Verbal dan tanda Non-Verbal dari setiap meme. Kedua, teori yang diusulkan oleh Dyer tentang Jenis-jenis Komunikasi Visual. Teori ini digunakan untuk menganalisis setiap tanda yang terkandung dalam Non- Verbal.*

*Berdasarkan analisis dan pembahasan ditemukan bahwa semua meme di penelitian ini memiliki dua tanda: tanda Verbal dan tanda Non-Verbal yang diformulasikan dalam meme. Tanda Verbal berasal dari setiap kalimat atau kata yang muncul di meme, sementara tanda Non-verbal berasal dari gambar di meme. Selain itu, dari segi makna meme, dapat dilihat pertanda atau konsep abstrak dari setiap meme. Setiap meme memiliki tanda dan fitur khususnya sendiri yang menyebabkan pesan dari setiap meme berbeda . Pesan dari meme ini kebanyakan tentang lelucon yang mengandung humor yang memiliki tujuan untuk menghibur.*

*Kata kunci: meme, tanda Verbal dan tanda Non- Verbal, penanda , pertanda*

### 1. Background of the Study

Semiotics is the study that is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. According to Hornby (2008:410), sign is mark of symbol used to represent something. It takes the forms of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. Images and words can be seen in the daily life, such as in advertisement, poster and meme. A

meme itself is human behavior or culture which widely talks about popular issues and phenomena in the world. Furthermore, it is a new way of combining few things such as art, creativity, message and humor.

Nowadays, characters in meme are not only in mimics of human face in a form of cartoon pictures, but also use a picture of an actor or actress. People also add some quotations or captions related to the picture itself. One of the characters in meme is Leonardo Dicaprio. He is one of the Hollyworld stars who is famous in some movies that bring him as one of the nominators for Leading Actor in Academy Award. After five times as the nominator, he did not obtain Oscar yet. His defeat to win an Oscar makes people interested in creating his meme.

This semiotic study is interesting to be conducted because there are many signs in our lives. It focused on the memes in order to classify the verbal and non-verbal signs and to explain the messages conveyed by the verbal and non- verbal signs in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes.

## **2. Problems of the Study**

- a. What verbal and non-verbal signs are found in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes?
- b. What messages are conveyed by the verbal and non- verbal signs in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

- a. To classify the verbal and non-verbal signs found in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes.
- b. To explain the messages conveyed by the verbal and non- verbal signs in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes.

## **4. Research Method**

The data of this study were taken from two websites in the Internet site, they are memecenter.com and memegenerator.net. There are two Leonardo's Oscar meme taken as data. This study used documentation method. Collecting the data was done by

searching the website which only contains memes as the main contents and then downloading Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes from those websites. Third, the collected data were classified into mocking memes. The data of this study were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive method based on two theories. Analyzing the data were done by finding out and classifying the verbal and non verbal signs in each meme using Semiotics theory proposed by Saussure (1983) and Types of Visual Communication proposed by Dyer(1982). Both of those theories were used to explain the message conveyed in verbal and non-verbal signs in Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes. The result of the analysis was presented in the form of descriptive text and table.

### 5.1 Findings and Discussions

The discussion was focused on two important things. The first point is to classify the verbal and non-verbal sign found in each of Leonardo Dicaprio's Oscar memes; and explain the messages conveyed by the verbal and non- verbal signs in the those memes.

#### A. Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in "Hello, It's Me" Meme



This meme was taken from website [www. memecenter.com](http://www.memecenter.com).

1. Verbal Sign

Table 1.1 The analysis of signifier and signified of verbal sign in “Hello It’s Me” Meme

Components	Signs	
	Signifier	Signified
Upper Word	Hello	This is kind of greeting in a conversation on a phone
Middle Text	It’s me	This means that he wants to introduce and make sure himself to someone else.
Lower Text	I was wondering if after all these years you’d like to meet	He wants to make sure that he will meet something after waiting for several years.

2. Non- Verbal Sign

Table 1.2 The analysis of signifier and signified of non - verbal sign in “Hello It’s Me” Meme

Components	Signs	
	Signifier	Signified
Left Image	A middle-aged man is good looking. He is wearing informal clothes, black shirt. He has a phone in his hand. His expression is serious. He is staring at something or someone else.	It presents someone who is making conversation on the phone and looks elegant.
Right Image	A golden knight statue, holding a crusader's sword and standing on a reel of film. The eye contact is staring at something in positive expression.	This presents power, positive thing, and precious statue; Oscar trophy.

Verbal and non-verbal signs in the data above are complementary, it means that either the verbal or nonverbal signs has no meaning if it stands alone. From the data, there are two non-verbal signs. First, the image of someone in serious conversation on a phone and the second is an Oscar trophy image. It can be concluded that someone is in serious conversation about Oscar. Furthermore, there are three sentences that make the message of meme clearer, they are **Hello, It's me, and I was wondering if after all these years you'd like to meet.** The first and second sentences are the ways of introducing himself that the only him who is speaking. Then the third sentence supports the explanation about the aims of the conversation on the phone.

Therefore, the message in the data represents the confidence of someone toward something. In this meme, someone is confident and believes that would win the Oscar trophy. This meme tells us never to give up reaching and obtaining the high achievement in our life, although it needs long time and hard work. We can pass it through big effort.

## B. Analysis of Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in "I Smell Oscar" Meme



This data was taken from website [www.memegenerator.net](http://www.memegenerator.net).

1. Verbal Sign

Table 2.1 The analysis of signifier and signified of verbal sign in “I Smell Oscar” Meme

Components	Signs	
	Signifier	Signified
Upper Texts	Greet performance Leo	It shows someone who feels amazed to the good performance of Leo.
	I smell Oscar	This sentence refers to someone’s feeling or recognize of an Oscar sense.
Lower Text	Oscar, take a shower please	‘Oscar’ here refers to someone’s name. This is an imperative sentence to tell Oscar to take a shower.

2. Non- Verbal Sign

Table 2.2 The analysis of signifier and signified of non - verbal sign in “I Smell Oscar” Meme

Components	Signs	
	Signifier	Signified
Upper Image	A middle-aged man with glasses and well-dressed. His is standing with open mouth and holding a board. His expression is surprise and his eye contact is staring at Leo.	It presents the man who is enjoying the conversation and surprise by performances of Leo.
	A superman-dressed man is in happy expression. He is standing and his eye contact is staring at something or someone else.	It presents a happy gesture of someone after admired by someone else.
Lower Image	A middle-aged man with	It presents someone who

	glasses, and well-dressed. His mouth is open and holding a board. He is in angry expression toward someone else.	feels annoyed at something. In the movie, the man feels annoyed to the bad smell of Oscar.
	A superman-dressed man with sad expression, and his eye contact is staring at someone else.	It shows someone who feels disappointed with something.
	A fat man is standing. He is wearing informal clothes with hat. He also in flat expression. His eye contact is staring at someone else.	It presents someone who is disbelief of what is said by the speaker.

How this meme is used in the society is by putting the sentence that refers to something happening out of our expectation. From the images, it can be concluded that the characters are in enjoyable conversation about the pride of someone's ability and suddenly the conversation is continued by discussing the other topic that makes the main character feel disappointed. Furthermore, there are three sentences in the data above to support the message of the meme, they are **Greet performance Leo, I smell Oscar,** and **Oscar, take a shower please.**

Therefore, the message of the data above reminds us of stopping over expecting for something. This meme reminds us of human habits, which means that we always expect too much toward something, depending on our interpretation without understanding the statement. We need to listen clearly before drawing the conclusion.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be known that both memes are kinds of mocking. They used Leonardo's facial expression in some of his movies such as sad, happy, and serious expressions. From the features or the signifier of Verbal and Non-Verbal signs of each memes, the abstract concept or the signified from each meme can

be known that the Verbal signs come from every text or sentence in the image, and the Non- Verbal sign comes from the image in the meme. Furthermore, the messages conveyed by Verbal and Non-Verbal signs can be explained by the applied theories in this study, the results are that “Hello, it’s me” meme represents the confidence of someone toward something. A meme that reminds us of stopping over expecting for something is “I smell Oscar”. In this analysis, we can also understand that both of the memes have a satirical message toward Leonardo Dicaprio and they are served as jokes and humors for entertainment purposes.

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