

## Semiotic Study In Minion Memes

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### *Abstrak*

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa makna dan juga fungsi dari beberapa popular minion memes yang terdapat pada despicablememinions.org dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua teori semiotik untuk menjawab dua pokok permasalahan. Adapun teori yang digunakan adalah teori dari Saussure (1983) mengenai signifier (tanda) dan signified (pertanda) serta teori dari Chandler (2001) mengenai fungsi dari tanda. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan fungsi dan makna dalam memes diakibatkan karena adanya perbedaan tanda dan pertanda dalam karakter dan juga ungkapan yang digunakan pada setiap post. Bahwa setiap karakter memiliki makna dan fungsinya masing-masing apabila dipadukan dengan ungkapan yang tertulis pada meme tersebut.*

*Kata kunci: minion, meme, makna dan fungsi*

### **1. Background**

The development of entertainment toward internet is unlimited nowadays, especially *memes*. *Mememes* can be ideas, symbols or practices formed in various forms, such as melodies, catchphrases, clothing fashion or architectural (Shifman, 2011:101). In the beginning when memes appear in media, their characters are not as much as today. Now, people are able to use various types of pictures as memes and usually there are quote on it. One of the interesting characters to discuss is Minion. Since it emergence in the movie “Despicable Me” in 2010 a lot of creative people bring unique characters in the development of the memes. Minions have a lot of expression such as angry, sad, silly, happy, mad and many more.

Internet memes covers very wide scope, therefore it is limited to understanding about (a) the signifier and signified of minion *mememes* and (b) the meaning and function

of minion *memes*. These are “Kevin”, “Dave“, and “Bob”, five of the most popular character who are emergence in despicablememinion.org as *memes* then get their fame spread toward many *memes* website like 9gag.com, memecenter.com and also some social media like Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook etc.

This study is very important because in order to find out the meaning and function of *minion memes*. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the signifiers and signified of each minions *meme* used in *despicablememinions.org* by using 3 minion characters to find out the meaning and function of each post.

## **2. Problem**

1. What are the signifiers and signified of each minion *meme* used in despicablememinions.org?
2. What is the function of each minion *memes* used in despicablememinions.org?

## **3. Aims**

This research analysis focuses on finding the language used on memes of minions found in website despicablememinions.org,

1. To identify the signifiers and signified of each minion *meme* used in despicablememinions.org
2. To explain and analyze the function of each minion *meme* when they are used in despicablememinions.org

## **4. Research Methods**

### **4.1 Data Source**

Data source of this study was one of minion meme websites which is [www.despicablememinions.org](http://www.despicablememinions.org). This study focused on 3 *memes* as explained before in the background that contain 3 minion characters, they are “Kevin”, “Dave“, and “Bob” characters.

The reason why only these 3 minion characters are used, because they are the most popular in *despicablememinions.org* and often shared via social networks such *Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook etc.*

#### **4.2 Methods and Techniques of Collecting Data**

In collecting data, library and documenting method were applied. First, library documentation was used to obtain information about semiotic theories, the concepts of signs, and meaning theory. Next, this documenting method was applied to collect the data from *despicablememinions.org*.

Data were collected from *despicablememinions.org* were the picture of 3 minion memes characters: “*Kevin*”, “*Dave*“, and “*Bob*” . The two posts in each characters were then selected which ones are appropriate for the study.

#### **4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data**

The collected data was used qualitatively, analyzed meaning and function from each symbol and icon that used in minion *memes* based on theory of semiotics. First, the theories used to analyzing this study are the theory of semiotics from Saussure were used to analyze and find out the signifiers and signified of 3 minion meme characters; “*Kevin*”, “*Dave*“, and “*Bob*”.

In analyzing the signifiers and signified of the minion *memes*, the features of each characters were analyzed using semiotic theory from Saussure (1983) about signifier and signified. The signifiers of each memes were analyzed to get the signified. Next, the function of each minion *memes* in the post was analyzed using the theory of semiotics and signs by Chandler (2001).

### **5. Result and Discussion**

#### **5.1 The Signifiers and Signified of Each Minion Memes Used in *despicablememinions.org***

This chapter presents the analysis of 3 minion characters in minion *memes* which post in *despicablememinions.org*.

### 5.1.1 Kevin

Kevin *meme* is one of the Minions which is the protagonist. Kevin has wise performance in the movie. So, that is why Kevin is usually called by Sir Kevin because every minion respects and honours him. This minion character is used quite often in [despicablememinions.org](http://despicablememinions.org) posts. Kevin usually appears by looking-up his eyes and chin, the tallest minion, has two-eyed minion, yellow skin and uses blue jeans jumpsuit and black gloves also shoes.

From the signifiers and signified for each features of “Kevin” minion character above, it can be concluded that “Kevin” character indicates facial expression of someone who has confidence and intelligence. With his intelligence this character always feels curious with kind of issues.

### 5.1.2 Dave

“Dave” character *meme* is the form of facial human being expression which is used quite often found in [despicablememinions.org](http://despicablememinions.org) posts. Dave has two eyes, nice combed hair, flat and have centerparted, yellow skin and uses blue jeans jumpsuit, black gloves also shoes.

From the signifiers and signified for each features of “Dave” *memes* above, it can be concluded that “Dave” *meme* indicates a facial expression of someone who is an intelligent, kind, caring, and funny, but sometimes very sloppy.

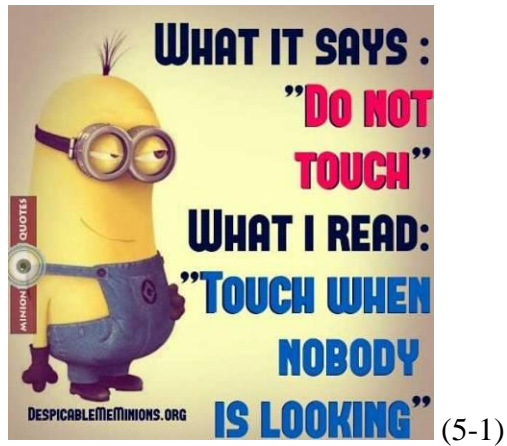
### 5.1.3 Bob

“Bob” a minion who is more childish and immature than most. This also character *meme* is the form of facial human being expression which is used quite often in [despicablememinions.org](http://despicablememinions.org) posts. The characteristics and appearance of this *meme* is described he is two-eyed minion, has yellow skin, bald head small body, uses blue jeans jumpsuit and black gloves also shoes.

From the signifiers and signified for each features of “Bob” *memes* above, it can be concluded that “Bob” *meme* indicates a facial expression of someone who childish and immature. This character represent someone innocent and sincere .

## 5.2 Analysis the meaning of function in each minion *memes*

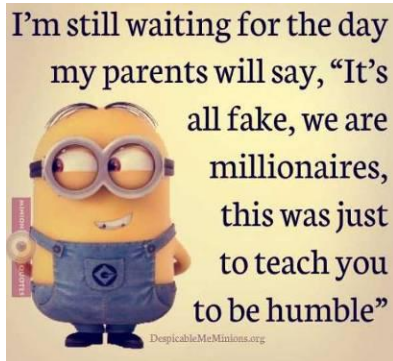
### 5.2.1 Kevin Post 1



There are two utterances in Post 2 they are **What it says: “Do not touch”** and **What I read: “Touch when nobody is looking”**. The two utterances are actually dialog within the character’s mind. Specifically, his mind talks about the nature of human curiosity. So, he wants to break the rules whenever nobody know. That state in the second utterance "**touch when nobody looking!**". It seems like in our daily life for example, doodling in a wall that have a clear sign stating a prohibition to do so or, pressing a red button that clearly no one allowed, except under certain command.

So, the message is that the post is to represent human curiosity towards forbidden things, describing about how a forbidden sign encouraging our mind to do anything opposite from the rules. And this meme, actually inspired by the popular quote from Douglas MacArthur (general of army AS, 1950) which said "Rules are meant to be broken."

### 5.2.2 Dave Post 2

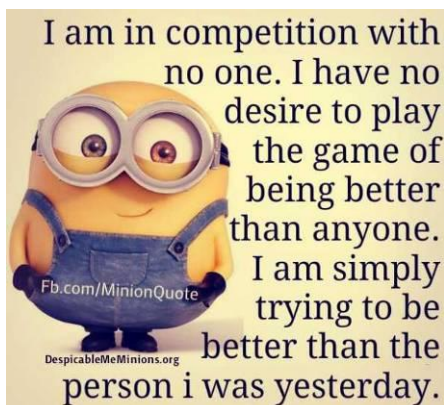


(5-2)

There are two utterances in Post 3 they are **I'm stil waiting for the day my parents will say**, and **"It's all fake, we are millionaires, this was just to teach you to be humble"** The two utterances are self conversation in character's mind. From both utterances state unsatisfying life tend to make us dreaming about a better life, such as the poor want to be wealthy.

So, the message in the post is to remind us about human bad habit which is always complaining because unsatisfying life. This meme tells us to stop complaining since it cannot change anything unless we change our self to be a better person. This meme also serves as a joke and entertainment purposes.

### 5.2.3 Bob Post 3



There are three utterances in Post 9. They are **"I am in competition with no one"** , **"I have no desire to play the game of being better than anyone"**. and **I am**

**simply trying to be better than the person I was yesterday "** . All utterances are actually perspective within the character's mind. Specifically, his mind says that he declares do not want to have competition with anyone . He prefers to try to be a better person than he was yesterday.

So, the message in the post is to represent about the measurement of success based on the comparison between who we are today with our past. Everyone should challenge to be better person than they were in past by focusing on theirselves first. \

## 6. Conclusion

This study has discussed the three minion characters which are post as minion *memes* in [despicablememinions.org](http://despicablememinions.org), *Kevin*, *Dave* and *Bob*. From the feature or the signifiers of each minion *meme* characters, can be known the meaning and function of each *memes*. Every character on the post give different meaning and also function. Kevin showing general function about curiosity *memes*, Dave showing function of satirical but in entertainment purposes *memes*, and the last Bob showing function of motivational *memes*.

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