

ABSTRACT

PUTRI, ALDILA DWI SEPTANIE. (2022). **Functions of Irony Employed in the U.S. Covid-19 Pandemic Posts Compiled By *Bored Panda* in 2020.** Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Verbal irony is a common communication strategy widely found in ordinary language. Scholars argue that it is employed intentionally due to failed expectations. Thus, it can serve various functions ranging from criticism to humor, depending on the interlocutors' relationship and the communication context. In the context of the unfavored U.S. pandemic situation impacting all aspects of social life, irony production is an expected phenomenon in the communication among Americans, including the virtual one through social media. *Bored Panda* has compiled various U.S. pandemic-related posts in 2020, including ironic ones. This study focuses on observing the use of irony in *Bored Panda* in response to the U.S. pandemic situation.

This study covers two objectives. The first is to identify the forms of verbal irony in *Bored Panda*'s U.S. pandemic posts and interpret their intended meaning by examining the ironic marker occurrences and various levels of irony factors. The second objective is to reveal the functions of irony employed in *Bored Panda* posts by further analyzing the irony construction, including the distinctive elements, targets, and conveyed issues from the previous interpretation.

Purposive sampling was applied to collect the data for this study. Ironic posts regarding the U.S. pandemic compiled in *Bored Panda* in the form of textual utterances, memes with captions, or basic additional pictures were chosen using Verbal Irony Procedure (VIP). After collecting the ironic utterances, their forms are categorized based on their significant marker occurrences. The ironic interpretation was made by employing pragmatic theory and VIP. The relevant context and the existing co-text were referred to analyze the irony factors to reveal the implied intended meaning. The functions of irony were found by examining the connection between irony targets, the implied meaning highlighting the pandemic issues, and other distinctive elements constructing the ironic utterances.

As a result, out of 30 ironic utterances, there are nine (9) echoic irony, seven (7) hyperbolic echoic irony, eight (8) ironic hyperbole, one (1) hyperbolic ironic understatement, three (3) ironic understatement, and two (2) other forms. The ironic utterances are all included as ironic praise, mostly implicitly evaluative and targeting the third party. They are directly or indirectly relevant to the co-text or context in a similar number of occurrences. The irony functions as criticism toward Republicans (20), criticism-humor toward Republicans (7), humor ridicule toward Trump (1), and social bonding (2). Republican-associated targets that are criticized include anti-science society, governmental conduct, and other issues outside the pandemic that are still related to Trump as a member of Republican party and as a policy maker.

Keywords: irony, form, function, implied meaning, VIP

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Ironi verbal adalah strategi komunikasi yang banyak ditemukan dalam bahasa keseharian. Para ahli berpendapat apabila ekspektasi tidak terpenuhi, ironi verbal sengaja digunakan untuk mewujudkan beragam fungsi, mulai dari kritikan hingga humor tergantung hubungan interlokutor dan konteks komunikasi. Di masa pandemi yang kurang menyenangkan yang berdampak pada semua aspek sosial, ironi verbal menjadi fenomena wajar dalam komunikasi orang Amerika, termasuk komunikasi daring melalui jejaring media. *Bored Panda* mengompilasi beragam unggahan terkait pandemi Amerika Serikat (AS) pada 2020, termasuk unggahan mengandung ironi. Studi ini difokuskan pada penggunaan ironi dalam *Bored Panda* sebagai respons orang Amerika terhadap situasi pandemi di negaranya.

Studi ini memiliki dua tujuan. Pertama, studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk ironi verbal pada postingan tentang pandemi AS di *Bored Panda* dan menafsirkan makna tersiratnya dengan mengamati penanda ironi yang muncul dan beragam tingkatan unsur ironi. Kedua, studi ini bertujuan untuk menemukan fungsi ironi yang digunakan pada unggahan di *Bored Panda* dengan menganalisis lebih jauh susunannya, termasuk komponen pembeda, target, dan isu-isu yang terungkap dalam penafsiran.

Studi ini menerapkan metode pengambilan sampel purposif. Uggahan ironi terkait pandemi AS yang dikompilasi *Bored Panda* dalam bentuk tuturan tertulis atau meme dengan takarir atau tambahan gambar sederhana dipilih dengan mengacu pada *Verbal Irony Procedure (VIP)*. Selanjutnya, bentuk ironi verbal dikategorikan berdasarkan penanda ironi yang dominan muncul. Ironi ditafsirkan menggunakan teori pragmatis dan *VIP*. Konteks yang relevan dan konteks yang ada menjadi acuan dalam menganalisis unsur ironi dan makna tersirat. Fungsi ironi ditentukan dengan mengamati keterkaitan antara target ironi, isu-isu pandemi yang terungkap, dan element berarti lainnya dalam susunan tuturan ironi.

Sebagai hasilnya, dari 30 tuturan ironi, terdapat sembilan (9) *echoic irony*, tujuh (7) *hyperbolic echoic irony*, delapan (8) *ironic hyperbole*, satu (1) *hyperbolic ironic understatement*, tiga (3) *ironic understatement*, dan dua (2) bentuk lain. Semua tuturan ironi termasuk dalam pujiann ironis, kebanyakan evaluatif secara implisit dan menyasar pihak ketiga. Tuturan yang relevan dengan konteks maupun konteks secara langsung maupun tidak langsung berjumlah sebanding. Ironi berfungsi sebagai kritisasi terhadap Republikan (20), kritisasi-humor terhadap Republikan (7), humor celaan terhadap Trump (1), dan ikatan sosial (2). Target terkait Republikan yang dikritisai meliputi masyarakat anti-ilmiah, pemerintahan, dan isu-isu lain di luar pandemi yang masih berhubungan dengan Trump sebagai anggota partai Republikan maupun pembuat kebijakan.

Kata kunci: *irony, form, function, implied meaning, VIP*