

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

We know that language is a source of human life. Human expresses communication in the world of language and signs. Sign takes the form of words, images, gestures or objects. Language is the system of sign to communicate. The system of a sign in a language has arbitrary relation and meaning of a language object. Human uses the sign or symbol to communicate to other people who have the same feeling, idea, or desire (Cobley, 2001:5).

A symbol or a sign of a language is manifested by everyone in many forms. It is used such as in logo, slogan in advertisement, billboard, even in film. All of symbols or signs in that forms design meaning. The symbol or sign of the design gives a message or meaning to their viewers, readers, or users itself.

When we talk about film, so, it has a closer relationship with television as one of media environments, which offers people opportunities to select their entertainment. Therefore, television viewers are motivated to watch television in order to satisfy their various wants, needs and desires at the time. This does not mean that viewing behavior is always pushed by strong psychological drives but, for most of the time, that people watch television and, this applies to some extent even to the young or children, they do so for a reason. This reason may be as simple as to pass the time.

When children watch television, it can't be denied that cartoon is mostly watched by them since the earlier channel TVRI. The first cartoon which is viewed on TVRI for example is Si Unyil. Si Unyil is a kind of traditional cartoon,

which is firstly viewed on TVRI and it becomes the favourite children cartoon in 1990s.

Due to the development of technology, cartoons are also having progress. From traditional cartoon until animated cartoon which are viewed by many television channels nowadays and Shaun the sheep, an animated cartoon, is one of the top ten cartoons mostly waited and watched by children in most all over the world today. It is viewed everyday in the afternoon on MNC TV.

Not like other cartoon, Shaun the Sheep is a British stop motion animated children's television series produced by Aardman Animations and commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The episodes have many combination of slapstick in Aardman's recognizable animation style. There is no spoken dialogue, even by human characters. In this way, it is reminiscent of silent comedy cartoon. Moreover, simple grunts, bleats, and signs are all used to add subtle expression to each character's moods and feelings.

Interpretation towards the film is not always the same for individuals. That's why people may have different interpretation toward the same object. It can be influenced by the different level of education, economical status, family background, and many more. When the cartoon "Shaun the Sheep" is then watched by children, we cannot deny that misinterpretation of various signs acted by all characters can be happened. It happened by the children around the age of 10, or at the 4th level of primary students in the Institution of Sultan Iskandar Muda. They had misinterpretation of understanding signs in the episodes of Bull Vs Wool" and "The Coconut."

In the episode “Bull Vs Wool”, most children did not understand why Bitzer and Timmy are chased by the Bull and the rest of them had interpreted to the colour of “Red” which made the Bull angry and chased Bitzer and Timmy. Actually, in the story, Bitzer plays the Red wool by shaking it to Timmy and the Bull watches them. It is not true that because of the Red wool played by Bitzer makes the Bull angry but it is because of the Bitzer’s action in shaking the wool.

In the episode of “The Coconut”, most children did not understand why the two characters, the farmer and Bitzer tossed their glasses together after they succeed in cutting the coconuts. They did not understand why the characters do so. It actually relates to the western culture when they have succeeded in doing something and they will celebrate it by tossing their glasses and drinking together.

What makes children interpret the meaning of signs in the story “Shaun the Sheep” in such a way encourages the researcher to make a deep research on it. The researcher is interested in finding the children’s interpretation toward the film and find the factors of the children interpret the story in such a way.

In analyzing such kinds of facts above, the writer refers to semiotics as a study of sign. Semiotic stresses the idea that images are collection of signs that are linked together in some way by the viewer (Langrerhr, 2003). Besides, semiotics provides us with a conceptual framework and a set of methods and terms for use across the full range of signifying practices, which include gesture, posture, dress, speech, photography, film, television and radio. It can help to make us aware of what we take for granted in representing the world, reminding us that we are always dealing with signs, not with an unmediated objective reality, and that sign systems are involved in the construction of meaning (Chandler, 2002)

Signs can take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or object (Peirce,1931). (Saussure, 1966) divides a sign into two components – the signifier (the sound, image, or word) and the signified, which is the concept the signifier represents, or the meaning. In other words, signs can mean anything and they can mean different things to different people.

As well as Peirce (1931:24), one of the American Philosophers, also ever argued that interpreters have to supply part of the meanings of signs. He wrote that “a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity”. It means that Peirce considered semiotics important because whatever we do, can be seen as a message.

Pierce categorized the patterns of meaning in signs as iconic, symbolic, and indexical. An iconic sign is one which is, in one or more respects, the same as the object signified; a symbol, as Pierce reminds us, originally meant something ‘thrown together’ making a contact or convention; in a contemporary setting, a symbol refers to conventional signs used, for instance, in speaking and writing (Lechte, 2000). An index is a sign physically linked to, or affected by, its object. For example, a cry for help may indicate someone in need. Similarly, a knock on the door may indicate that there is someone at the door.

As sign system are involved in the construction of meaning and film makes use of signs to convey its message, therefore this study attempt to investigate how well the children’s understanding in interpreting the signs or gestures from the cartoon film ”Shaun the Sheep.” The cartoon film “Shaun the Sheep” is chosen because it is one of the children favorite cartoons, which is always watched by them although there are no spoken dialogues in it.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of the study, there are some problems to be identified by the researcher:

1. How do the children interpret the “Shaun the Sheep” film in the Episode of *Loony Tic*?
2. What gestures do the children interpret well in the episode of *Loony Tic*?
3. What types of the children’s interpretation do have in the Episode of *Loony Tic*?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The researcher intends to find out the understanding of “*Shaun the Sheep*” stop motion animated cartoon. The objectives of the research are:

1. To find out how the children interpret the film “Shaun the Sheep” in the episode of “*Loony Tic*”.
2. To find out the gestures that the children interpret well toward the Episode of *Loony Tic*.
3. To find out types of interpretations that the children have in the Episode of *Loony Tic*.

1.4. The Scope of the Study

There are so many wordless cartoons which are shown on many television programs such as Bernard Bear, Oasis, and many more. But in this research, the scope of the study is limited on the story of “Shaun the Sheep” in the episode of “Loony Tic” because this cartoon had won Oscar Award because of the character of Shaun as a clever and a creative sheep with also full of comedy and it had been

being played in more than 170 countries since 2007. It was based on BBC Network on April 25, 2013.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The findings of the research are expected to be useful for the readers both theoretically and practically in some aspects.

Theoretically the finding can be useful for enriching the theories on semiotics particularly for:

- Improving and widening the knowledge about semiotics and interpretation.

Practically the finding can be useful for those who have focus on semiotics. Moreover, the ideas and the point of views of the finding can significantly be useful to be used for:

- Researchers as their review of literature in analyzing semiotics and interpretation with different object.
- Students as their material references in understanding semiotics and interpretation.
- Movie Audiences as materials for helping people especially children in comprehending the messages in the cartoon.

