

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Internet Meme

The term “meme” was first coined by Dawkins (1976) in the book *The Selfish Gene* as something that spreads throughout a culture. In recent years, the Internet has allowed content to spread rapidly from person to person, creating a media environment suitable for the creation of Internet memes (Borzsei 2013). The Internet meme has been defined as “a piece of culture, typically a joke, gains influence through online transmission” (Davison 2012, 122). When a meme has been spread to the point of losing comedic value, it is often labeled "dank." However, the term is also sometimes used ironically as a synonym for “cool” (Klee 2017). An Internet meme can be generated in multiple formats, including a still image or a video, and the presence of websites that allow people to easily generate internet memes has created an environment ripe for sharing information, including false information (Borzsei 2013).

In the present day, memes have become synonymous with Internet memes, which Shifman (2014) described as “(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users(p. 41). Internet memes typically cross-reference a host of popular cultural events, artifacts, and practices through images, videos, catchphrases, and musical tunes that individuals share with others via platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (Knobel & Lankshear, 2015).

There are so many kinds of memes throughout the world. It can be in the form of a picture, video, or even song. Every year, the memes are always updated. They can

be following some event, such as the presidential election, pop culture, or even trending movies and songs.



Picture 1 & 2. The example of internet memes

2.2 Pictures Analysis

Hodge and Kress (1993) define ideology as “a systematic body of ideas organized from a particular point of view (as cited in Ghaderinezhad, 2015, p. 879). Based on the definition above, Ghaderinezhad (2015) argued that humans look at and perceive things, treat things, consider things, judge things, and draw their ambivalent attitudes in their lives depending on the ideas stored in their minds. These ideas can be based on culture, religion, and the political stance of their own beliefs. Furthermore, John (2006) argued that ideology is a belief system of the individual that is typically shared with an identifiable group and that organizes, motivates, and gives meaning to political behavior broadly construed (John, 2006). In addition, ideology has a relation to social human activity. Then, Sturken and Cartwright (2001) stated that ideologies are systems of belief that exist within all cultures. In addition, images or pictures are an important means through which ideologies are produced and ideologies are projected by producers. Moreover, pictures and ideology are connected. Therefore,

knowledge and experience greatly facilitate pictorial understanding and give meaning to the reader. Hence, every picture that is drawn by a writer has a meaning that contains the ideology of the writer.

To reveal ideology in a picture, there are two elements to analyzing the visual component of the academic posters: Hyland's (2017) theoretical approach to meta-discourse interpretation and Kress and van Leeuwen's (1998, 2001, 2020) visual analyses. First, interactive elements stand for organizing information and guiding the viewer in the comprehension of a multimodal text consisting of the following interrelated systems: information value, framing, connective elements, conversion processes, taxonomies, flowcharts, and networks. Second, interactional elements are used to attract, involve, and engage viewers that evolve around the concepts of salience, size of frame, and perspective.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020), in interactive elements, the researchers can analyze the pictures on the poster through several elements in the pictures. The first is the information value that is created through the placement of elements, which endows them with specific informational values attached to the various 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, center and margin. The second are the elements of framing, which are realized by elements that create dividing lines or by actual frame lines and instead disconnect or connect elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense. The third is connective elements such as vectors that are used in different sizes, shapes, and colors in an attenuated or amplified way, denoting density or frequency. The fourth is graphs, conversion processes, taxonomies (covert or overt), flowcharts, networks, and tables that show information visually.

Furthermore, in the interactional element, the researcher investigates the picture in terms of three elements. The first is the concept of salience, which is made to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees, as realized by such factors as

contextualization (a scale running from the absence of background to the most fully articulated and detailed background), representation (a scale running from maximum abstraction to maximum representation of pictorial detail), placement in the foreground or background, contrasts in tonal value or color, use of pictures of real people and/or objects instead of schematic analytical pictures, depth in pictures and images, illumination, brightness, and use of font (size, type, and color). The second size of frame ranges from "extreme close-ups", which attract and interest the viewer more, to 'very long shots', which are much less salient. And the last is perspective, which is used in front of the viewer explicitly or vertically, conferring more or less power to the viewer.

2.3 Multimodal Analysis

Multimodal analysis extends the social interpretation of language and its meaning to a whole range of modes of representation and communication that employ culture (Kress, 2009; van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 183). Multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes in which to analyze meaning resources that people use in different contexts, such as action, visual, spoken, gestural, written, three-dimensional, and others, depending on the domain of representation. Then, all forms of communication or modes have been shaped through cultural, historical, and social uses to realize social functions (Bezemer, J., & Jewitt, C., 2010). Thus, through multimodal analysis, the researcher can reveal the hidden ideology in internet memes. It was related to Bezemer, J., and Jewitt, C. (2010) that multimodal concerns with the socially and culturally situated construction of meaning can be applied to investigate power, inequality, and ideology in human interaction and artifacts.

Ideology and language are related to each other because language provides a link between linguistic and social forms and structures. Piller (2015) stated that language ideologies are beliefs about language where linguistic difference is called upon to

rationalize social organization. Furthermore, language ideology, or standard language, had an important role to play in maintaining the hegemony of the nation-state because language ideologies were deployed in the interest of a society. After all, language ideologies are deployed in the interest of a society's dominant group and serve to justify social inequality and language as a site of social struggle and contestation (Piller, 2015).

Ideology and language can be found in internet memes because a meme contains a picture that is embedded with a word or phrases that are related or unrelated to the picture itself, and containing a few words introduces them as acceptable visual texts. The manner in which materials are perceived is questioned (Clayton, 2019). Distin (2005) defines memes as “units of cultural information” characterized by the representational content they carry, and the representational content is considered “the cultural equivalent of DNA.”

Like the explanation above, hidden meaning can be found in internet memes because they use some languages, such as visual language and written language. Hence, multimodal analysis has an important role as a methodology of research for revealing hidden meaning in internet memes. It can be proved through Chandler’s research about how to reveal the ideological components of the First World Problems (FWP) and Third World Problem Success (TWS) internet memes. His study used multimodal critical discourse analysis as the research design because the researcher used two methodologies for analyzing the data. The first method is critical discourse analysis (CDA) for analyzing the texts, and the second is multimodal analysis for analyzing texts and images. The result of the research found that the text and images featured in the memes are ideologically salient and discursively construct oppositional binaries between “us” and “them” in terms of wealth disparity.

The research above proved that multimodal analysis is appropriate for analyzing hidden ideologies in internet memes associated with Indonesian high school,

particularly in visual analysis. As Chandler (2013) stated, multimodal analysis integrates the visual and text of internet memes as part of the process of meaning-making in social issues.