CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Memes, in general, are associated with user-generated online content in the form of image macros, videos, GIFs, etc. These kinds of memes are referred to as "Internet memes" in order to specify the terminology (Yoon, 2016). Internet memes have their own cultural community in internet society because memes are not only about funny things or jokes but also a representation of offline reality that is delivered with appealing visuals. Memes are always associated with young people's cultures; this is no exception for high school students in Indonesia. Internet memes are used as an information or knowledge source for some people. Internet memes often focus on current events, engaging people with some issues, even if only for humor (Borzsei 2013). Usually, Indonesian high school students create memes about their classroom activities or their school problems.

Social media has become the main tool for spreading internet memes. Facebook has the largest user base in Indonesia, according to Cloudflare (2022). Meme communities on Facebook are relatively higher than other social media because Facebook has a feature called "groups," which means people can gather and connect with people with the same interests. Users always insert a reference or hidden meaning in a meme that they make. Similarly, high school students also make memes to express their views about classroom activities or some school policies that become problematic for them. Thus, memes can have a satirical or offensive meaning based on an issue that becomes a problem in society.

It is important to understand the memes created by high school students because, usually, on social media, students can anonymously share the memes they want, even using vulgar language or an inappropriate picture (Suler, 2004). Furthermore, it also

be analyzed for its meaning. The meanings of the memes can be in the form of protest, giving an opinion, or just making fun based on their experience.

Previous research has been conducted related to internet memes. For instance, Yoon (2016) conducted research on memes that become media for making racist jokes. The findings indicate that the reason for the existence of racist memes is stereotypes. For example, Afro-American and black people in the USA always related to fried chicken or criminals, and Asian people are related to "yellow skin" and rice. Moody-Ramirez and Church (2019) finds memes are used to respond to the 2016 USA presidential election event between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The memes are used to promote their choice or make fun of their opposite choice.

Similar to the previous research, this research is to find out the meaning and purpose in internet memes associated with Indonesian schools. The difference between previous research and present research is the context of the research. The previous research focused more on social and political contexts while the current research focuses on educational contexts.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The research question addressed in this study is "What is the meaning of the Internet memes about classroom activity in Indonesian high schools?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this research, the researcher provides some definitions related to this research, as follows:

1.3.1 Internet memes: The memes that spread on the internet contain pictures with additional words. Usually, it contains meaning that explains the picture or issue that the maker wants to deliver.

1.3.2 Multimodal analysis**:** This is a ground-breaking approach to visualize analysis of all forms of communication (modes) such as visual language and verbal language. It has been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social function

1.4 Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to know the ideology of internet memes by examining the elements of the image and text that represent the meaning.

1.5 Significances of the Research

1.5.1 Theoretical use

This research will expand meaning of internet memes that associated with classroom in Indonesian school and enrich the literature on the meaning of internet memes about Indonesian school

1.5.2 Practical use

Practically, this research can be used for teachers to reflect to the students and respond to the opinion from the memes that students created. And for students to be aware of the inappropriate word that is used in a memes that they created

1.5.3 Empirical use

This research will give insight into how memes are associated with Indonesian schools. And to reflect the memes became unique media for students to giving opinion about their school problems or school policy.