

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain the general description of the paper. It consists of the research background, statement of problems, research purpose, and research significances.

1.1 Background of the Problem

In our world today, a lot of developments have taken place, especially in the entertainment media and in each of these media, of course, it must have its own meaning, whether it is just entertainment, satire or even parody. Entertainment media refers to any form of media that is audiences use for pleasure-seeking and the avoidance of pain (Trepte, 2004). This can include various types of media such as movies, television shows, music, video games, and social media. One area of research that discusses the meaning of things is semiotics, such as discussing the meaning of traffic signs, the meaning of a logo, etc.

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their meaning in language and communication in the form of devices or symbols that writer use in human relations (Ibrahim, 2020). It is concerned with how meaning is created and communicated through various sign systems, including language, images, gestures, and other forms of communication. There are many experts in the field of semiotics, one of which is Roland Barthes. Roland Barthes is one of the experts in this field who focuses on discussing the meaning of a sign.

Roland Barthes was born in 1915, he is known as a structuralist thinker who is actively practicing linguistic models so that it is separated from semiology which was previously discovered by Ferdinand De Saussure (Wibisono, 2021). Barthes developed Signs ranging from speech, body language and symbols to painting, music and Morse code. Barthes' semiotic theory breaks down the process of reading signs and focuses on their interpretation by different cultures or societies.

According to Barthes, signs have both signifiers, being the physical form of the sign that writer perceive through our senses and the signified, or interpreted meaning (Siregar, 2022). So, the two markers on a sign according to Barthes are those that writer can recognize by means of our senses, for example they can be seen, touched, heard and smelled and those that writer recognize by their interpretation, for example their name.

Barthes also argued that signs can be classified into two categories: denotative and connotative (Wibisono, 2021). Denotative signs are those that have a meaning according to the original and there is no change in meaning (Antika, 2020), such as a traffic sign that indicates a stop. Meanwhile, connotation is the opposite of denotative, that has an unreal or figurative meaning (Antika, 2020). For example, the word "apple" may denote a specific type of fruit, but it can also carry connotations of innocence, knowledge, and temptation, depending on the context in which is used.

Signs range from speech, body language and symbols to paintings, music and morse code. Barthes' semiotic theory broke down the process of reading signs and focused on their interpretation by different cultures or societies. Barthes also believes that every ideological sign is a denotative sign system or a connotative sign system. He used the term "order of signification". The first is signification which means denotative meaning. While the meaning of the second order is the connotative meaning. The first order is the signifier and the signified is a sign. This sign is called denotative meaning. Then the meaning comes from another sign called connotation (Marunung, 2018). Connotative and denotative meanings are both important aspects of communication, including in the creation and interpretation of memes.

Memes are often created in the form of images, videos, or text and are typically intended to be humorous or satirical. They can be spread through various forms of media, including social media, messaging apps, and online forums, and are often used to express a particular point of view or to comment on current events or cultural phenomena. They comprise such media objects as images, image-macros, videos, GIFs, phrases, or emojis that emerge from popular culture's

practice of remixing and remaking (Mina, 2019). Meme is a concept, behavior, or idea that spreads from person to person within a culture (Brown, 2020). That is why memes spread very easily in society, especially in cyberspace platforms accordance with the concept of the meme itself.

The concept of meme was first introduced by Richard Dawkins in 1976 in his book entitled "*The Selfish Gene*". In this book, Dawkins used the term "meme" to describe a unit of cultural transmission that spreads from person to person in a similar way to how genes spread from one generation to the next (Raevskaya, 2019). Dawkins mentioned: The meme is 'selfish' because it lives through us, at our expense (Lettelier, 2022). Since then, the term has been adopted by internet users and has taken on a new meaning as a way to describe viral internet content. Overall, memes are an important part of internet culture and have played an important role in shaping the way people communicate and interact with each other online in various ways and types.

There are many different types of memes, each with its own unique characteristics and cultural significance. Most of these images are simplistic, often low quality and mundane in style. Such as image macro memes, reaction memes, video memes and even political memes. These are just a few examples of the many different types of memes that exist (Börzsei, 2013). As the internet and social media continue to evolve, new types of memes are sure to emerge, each with its own unique cultural relevance and impact.

One of a type of meme that is quite interesting to the writer's attention to examine its connotations and denotations, namely the 'Virgin vs. Chad' meme which is an image macro memes. The writer found many denotative and connotative symptoms in the 'Virgin vs. Chad' meme through several examples of memes used as data and all of them contain denotative and connotative symptoms. The memes that will studied are of two types, one is the 'Virgin vs Chad' meme itself and the second is the 'Swole Doge vs Cheems' meme, which is a remake version of 'Virgin vs Chad', having the same concept but different figures. The reason why researchers decided to choose this type of meme is because this meme is a meme that has a simple and easy to understand concept, a meme that only contains the concept of

comparing two things and this meme can be customized as creatively as possible by the meme maker.

The writer has read some research related to the object discussed in this research. The first research is written by Salsabila (2020) under the title '*The sign and the myth of sarcasm in meme @sarcasm_only*'. The similarity of this research is that she also researched hidden meanings in memes which were also taken from official meme accounts and also used Roland Barthes' theory. The difference is, in this thesis she also researched sarcasm and researched memes without a particular template, only a few memes which is felt to describe women.

The second research is written by Lestari, Duwila, and Probawati. (2022) under the title *Semiotics Study on Skripsi's Memes*. The concept of this study is very much in line with the research the writer is currently researching, namely examining memes with Roland Barthes' Sign theory, namely denotative and connotative. Complete with explanation and sample of data. although the concept of the research is similar, it is still different and the main difference is in the subjects studied, this research examines the object of thesis theme memes without a specific template, while the memes in the research that the writer researches use a particular meme template.

The third research is written by Ilham in his thesis under the title '*Representasi Budaya Populer Meme Comic Indonesia (Analisis Semiotika Meme Dalam Fanpage Meme Comic Indonesia)*', The concept in this study is also very much in line with the research that the writer will examine, because it discusses semiotics in a meme from a site or account. The difference is that the type of meme researched in Ilham's thesis is not specified and the site or account he is researching is a local meme site called Meme Comic Indonesia.

From the three studies above, research found differences, especially those the type of objects being used but use the same theory. Even though the theory is same but they use the different method of conveying the results under the object according to each researchers and for the research who have the same object but use different theories, they also have the different ways to analyze the object. The method Therefore, the writer is examining a meme object using Roland Barthes's

semiotic technique will raise the issue about hidden and direct meaning that exist in memes, especially Virgin vs Chad meme template. The researcher also will only focus to analyze the object that contain hidden and direct meaning using Roland Barthes' connotative and denotative theory.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of problems can be formulated into the research question, as follows:

1. What denotative and connotative meaning are provided in 'Virgin vs. Chad' meme?
2. What denotative and connotative meaning are provided in 'Swole Doge vs. Cheems' meme?
3. How the similarity and difference appeared between 'Virgin vs. Chad' and 'Swole Doge vs. Cheems'?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the purpose of this research is:

1. To explain the denotative and connotative meaning in 'Virgin vs. Chad' memes.
2. To explain the denotative and connotative meaning in 'Swole Doge vs. Cheems' memes.
3. To explain the similarity and difference that appeared between 'Virgin vs. Chad' and 'Swole Doge vs. Cheems'

1.4 Research Significances

The researcher expect that this research will be useful for anyone who reads it and that this research can contribute to English learners and to anyone who wants to study entertainment media, especially memes. Therefore, researchers propose the benefits of this research paper as follows:

1. Theoretically

- a. The benefit of this research is that we can find connotative and denotative meaning in memes.
- b. Another benefit is this research can provide information on how to analyze connotative and denotative in memes using Roland Barthes' theory.
- c. This research can also be useful as an overview of other researchers who want to research related topics.

2. Practically

- a. For readers

The researcher hopes that this research will provide the readers with a better understanding of the connotative and denotative meanings, especially in memes, as presented in form of visual object and analysis with Roland Barthes' connotative and denotative theory and hopefully, this research will have a good impact to the readers.

- b. For other researchers

This research can be a reference for other researchers who are interested in analyzing a meme with Roland Barthes' connotative and denotative meanings theory. This research can also provide more information about what meanings in memes, especially Virgin vs Chad memes.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Semiotics

The term semiotics is used in this research to show a field of science that studies the direct and indirect meaning of a text, sign, logo, sound, and symbol.

2. Denotative

This research uses the term denotative to indicate one of the meanings in semiotics which means a sign that has a direct meaning and as it is, without having another term.

3. Connotative

This research uses the term connotative to indicate is one of the meanings in semiotics which means a sign that has an indirect meaning, has a hidden term or meaning.

4. Meme

The term of meme is used in this research to indicate an entertainment platform that contains images or videos containing humor, satire or relatable commentary.

5. Virgin vs Chad

The term of Virgin vs Chad is used in this research to indicate a meme template that depicts a comparison between 'the weak' and 'the strong' from all aspects from a humorous and satirical point of view.

6. Swole Doge vs. Cheems

The term of Swole Doge vs. Cheems is used in this research is similar to Virgin vs. Chad, but used different figure, different positioning in template and different content, because usually Swole Doge vs. Cheems have a less text.

