

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter dealt with five components, they are the background of the research, statements of the problem, research objective, research significance, and the definition of the keys term.

1.1 Research Background

At present, human interaction using language has developed far. Now humans did not even have to meet face to face to communicate. Any person could interact with hundreds or even thousands of people at once at one time. Anywhere, anytime and with anyone, online. It is through the many interactions with other people on online social networks that language develops. Modes or ways of communicating are becoming more creative and certainly different than in the past. The presence of a network or social media is a place for everyone to express themselves. In cyberspace, everyone can say whatever they want while still complying with the rules and regulations that apply. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are now playing an important role in determining the direction of language use in cyberspace.

According to Nations (2021) social media consists of two parts, namely "media" and "social." The first word refers to the communication instrument which in this case is the internet, as an intermediary. On the other hand, the second word refers to the activity of interacting with other people by receiving or sharing information.

Based on the above understanding, information is the main commodity exchanged on social media.

The form of this information can also be very diverse. It can be names, locations, events, news, and so on. The way of delivery is no less diverse. This information can be communicated via written text, images, videos, sounds, or memes. All of these things include language. The reason is, whatever is conveyed, is a sign. These signs are related to meaning outside the text so that everyone can know what happened. Of the many social networks chosen by many people, one of the most popular media for exchanging information in any form is the social media created by Mark Zuckerberg, namely Facebook.

Facebook is an American multinational technology company headquartered in Menlo Park, California. In today's time, Facebook's popularity has not waned. In contrast to other social media such as Twitter and Instagram, Facebook thrives as a place to share interests and hobbies, and even a place to buy and sell. There are lots of groups that everyone can access and join. These groups operate in very diverse fields. Starting from joke groups, discussions, philosophy, literature, finance, and many more. But unfortunately, there are still people who think that Facebook is old. They consider that Facebook is no longer relevant to the times and is only used by parents. In fact, Facebook is not much different from social networking in general.

There are features such as, "Share," "Upload," "Save," or, "Download," and so on. In fact, Facebook's features are more varied than Twitter's. The reason is, Twitter is basically just a tweet sharing platform. Twitter also does not provide an option to edit tweets that have been uploaded. Apart from all the stigma regarding

the existence of Facebook, both negative and positive, it cannot be denied that now Facebook is the main source of a form of visual communication that conveys a meaning, namely memes. Many people don't realize that the majority of memes currently circulating or currently circulating on the internet originate from Facebook. The presence of social media especially Facebook makes the process of community social interaction experience very significant changes. Communication through social media is a very important social interaction in human life. Through this communication, humans can exchange messages and information. Along with the increasing use of social media, it has spawned new phenomena among social media users, one of which is creativity in making memes (Owen & Zatori, 2021). Memes can be in the form of text or images that contain issues and events in a style that intrigues and becomes a hot topic of discussion because they spread and comment so quickly on social media (Woods & Hahner, 2019). Memes contain entertaining social messages, parodies, and satire. A meme is one of the phenomena of conveying messages in a new form by combining verbal language with nonverbal communication (expression) (Porubay & Sotvaldieva, 2022).

The popularity of memes can no longer be doubted. Now memes have become a trend that may never fade away. This is due to the cuteness factor that he offers. Memes are often a means of entertaining netizens on various social networking platforms. On Twitter itself, there are tons of meme accounts. Call it Kucingbot, Memelord, Berflovrer, and Ibnu Tasrip al-Wibuwi. On Instagram, there are lots of accounts that dedicate memes as daily content, including Awrekeh, Dagelan, Rolldepan, and many more. However, all that does not cover Facebook's fame.

Now, Facebook seems to be the home for fresh memes. However, because there are too many forms and formats of memes that are scattered everywhere, defining what a meme is is a little difficult.

Richard Dawkins in his book entitled, "The Selfish Gene" first used the term, "Mimeme" which was taken from Greek. He used the word to refer to a cultural unit that is reproduced and spread over time through imitation. As he said in a quote, "We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. 'Mimeme' comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like 'gene'." (Dawkins, 2006).

Nowadays, the definition of meme itself is more varied. Langlois (2014) suggests that

"It now refers, in Internet language, to pictures, sounds, videos or websites that are shared or reproduced from person to person through social media and user-generated content websites like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Tumblr, Reddit, etc. This examination considers Internet memes that are composed of an image, either an illustration or a photograph, accompanied by text."

From the two definitions above, we can conclude that in essence, a meme is any content that is deliberately created and shared by netizens in cyberspace. Based on the explanation above, memes have become an intermediary for communication. This is because the meme is shared from one person to another to convey information. This is in line with the notion of communication expressed by Crystal (2005), that communication is the activity of conveying and receiving all kinds of information between living things. For this reason, memes are actually signs that have meaning.

Memes as a sign can carry a meaning that is relatable to current's world, one of those means can be a social problem, Putra (2022) said that there is a connection between memes, social behaviour and discourse about social problems, those discourse has a relationship with social habits that circulate in society. Those habit can be combined and reconstructed through linguistics aspect, so like language, this allows memes to be studied further within the scope of linguistics.

Linguistics is a field of study that examines in depth a language using scientific methods. This statement is reinforced by the linguistic understanding put forward by Curtiss et al. (2000). They say that, "The scientific study of human language is called linguistics." Linguistics allows us to analyze words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and even discourses and the meanings contained therein. Linguistics is divided into several branches of science, including phonology which examines linguistic sounds through phonemes and morphology which analyzes word structures through morphemes. On the other hand, syntax analyzes the parts of a sentence, then there is historical linguistics which studies how a language changes, evolves and develops. Historical linguistics also identifies similarities and differences between languages within a synchronic scope.

Then there is semantics and pragmatics which observe the meaning of written and spoken sentences. Meanwhile, psycholinguistics examines the relationship between language and the human brain or soul. Furthermore, sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society in a social context. Apart from that, there is also neurolinguistics, which investigates the relationship between language and the neural networks (neurons) of the human

brain. Then there is semiotics. Semiotics studies language as signs or symbols that have meaning. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that each field of study has an object of study that is different from one another. Even so, research studies complement our knowledge of language. In accordance with the above explanation, memes as signs that represent information will be analyzed through a semiotic perspective.

Broadly speaking, semiotics is the science of signs and their meanings. Through semiotic studies, we are able to examine and study various phenomena and events in society. Not only that, semiotics can also be used to identify natural signs such as earthquakes, cloud shapes, storms, and so on. This definition of semiotic is in line with the definition of semiotic stated by Culler (in Jappy, 2013). He argues as follows.

"Semiotics, which defines itself as the science of signs, the semiotician wants to discover what are the species of signs, how they differ from one another, how they function in their native habitat, how they interact with other species. Confronted with the plethora of texts that communicate various meanings to their readers, the analyst does not pursue a meaning; he seeks to describe signs and describe their functioning."

The memes to be analyzed have been sourced from the Sarcasm Society Facebook page. "Sarcasm Society" is a Facebook account known for sharing relatable, humorous content that highlights common grievances experienced by people. This page was established on June 6, 2009, and by early 2023, it had accumulated more than 4 million followers. The content shared on the page often takes a slightly offensive or sarcastic tone, and it frequently addresses various aspects of our daily lives.

Through the lens of semiotics, the researcher aim to decipher the underlying meanings conveyed by the memes posted on the Sarcasm Society page. One example is the "Bad Luck Brian" meme, which illustrates how social problems and predicaments can be imposed on an individual and expressed through a meme, with "bad luck" serving as a signified concept. To gather the necessary data from Sarcasm Society's Facebook page, the researchers have restricted their data collection to posts made in early January. This selective approach ensures that the data analyzed will be current and representative of the content shared on the page during that specific time frame.

A lot of problems are related with our daily lives. The small sample is that human has always got mood changed by any situation and meme itself went from any anxiety that people have experienced, for example, problem that many people got is insecurity which makes people feel that missing something or feel having many minuses from themselves.

In this research semiotic is used to reveal the meaning behind the signs used in communication. Regarding memes, the researcher used Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory to dissect the meaning or information they contain. Because the scope of semiotic studies does not only cover vocal language, but also others. Barthes (in Pauzan, 2018) says that pictures, gestures, musical sounds, or even anything, can be a sign of something. Whatever its substance, semiotics aims to observe any sign system. Barthes' statement was also reinforced by Eco (in Chandler, 2017) who revealed that "Semiotics is concerned with everything that

can be taken as a sign." This implies that memes can also be included in semiotic studies.

Based on the explanation above, the author will conduct an in-depth study of memes that carry social problem meanings with literary and linguistic themes through semiotics. The selection of the topic for this study was based on the following considerations. First, nowadays memes have become very familiar to everyone and became a media to express people opinion in the internet. Whenever we access social media, it doesn't matter what social network it is, it is very likely that memes will appear on the homepage and it is most likely people opinion are expressed through it, Sarcasm Society has a big fan-base and often advertised to came out in the main page of Facebook, those opinion even though posted by a Facebook page can carry social problems. Second, the researcher wanted to find out how those memes can convey the social problem analyzed through Saussure's semiotics. From that reason the researcher decided the title of this research to be "Social Problem Represented in Memes Posted Sarcasm Society Facebook Page: A Saussure's Semiotic Study".

The motivation behind this research was not a result of a random impulse but has been prompted by previous research and ongoing developments that support the advancement of semiotics in academic field. The significance of this discipline is demonstrated through its potential for contributing to society. In particular, there were several previous researches that helped and encouraged researchers to make this research related to the research topic as a reference for completing this research, including:

First, there is a study by Juditha (2015) with the title “*Meme in Social Media: Semiotic Analysis of Hajj Lulung Memes*” this study uses the similar object but different theories, not only that this study also analyze the social impact of Hajj Lulung memes that was trending in 2015. The author of the thesis used barthes theory, with this research the output of the thesis is the how the Hajj Lulung Memes affected the social, what persona that Hajj Lulung Memes gave to the audience and what was the meaning of Hajj Lulung Memes.

Second, there was a study by Listiyorini (2017) with the title “*Humor Discourse in Memes in Online Media as Portraits of The Life of Some Indonesian Communities*” this study uses the similar object but different theories, this research analyze the use of memes as a way to express people opinion on the internet. This research has provided the discussion upon Memes and Humor as portrait of some Indonesian communities that represented by memes. The chapter was focused on how the community interact with memes as a tool to express their lifestyle.

Third, there was a study by Chudori (2022) with the title “The Value of Friendship in Film The Ron’s Gone Wrong (2021) Through Semiotics Analysis” This study uses the different object but same theories, this research analyze the value of friendship through semiotics analysis. The study represented how semiotic used in the scope of literature in specific theme; Friendship. In this study the author represented the “Friendship” theme with Saussure theory by examine the intrinsic element of the movie itself.

Those previous studies provide a reference that related to the researcher topic with a various approach and theory such as literary criticism, semiotic and

narrative structure. This research has similar issue with previous research that discuss about meme and semiotic. However those previous research did examine the meme with different scope and theory from this thesis that makes this research different from those previous studies. Even though the essential topic in this research have several similarities with the previous studies, the approach and method were are different by focusing on social problem that could possibly represented by meme in *Sarcasm Society* Facebook page.

1.2 Statements of Problem

As regarded the ignition from research background, research question can be constructed as a matter of research thesis in such display down below:

1. What signifier and signified are represented in The Memes posted by *Sarcasm Society* Facebook page?
2. How the social problems represented by the memes posted by *Sarcasm Society* Facebook page?

1.3 Research Purposes

By doing so, in answering the research question above. This research can be claimed has objective aim which determine the following work, as follows:

1. To find out signifier and signified represented in The Memes posted by *Sarcasm Society* Facebook page.
2. To analyze how the memes were posted by *Sarcasm Society* Facebook page can represent social problem.

1.4 Research Significance

This research thesis is obviously causing the significance impact. The impact can be classified in two terms. The terms which may called as theoretically is rejoicing the development about the sign and signifier and its performative to analysis the quality over data analysis in such a term and context of discourse into. It also follows to evaluate memes and social problem discourse from semiotic understanding. The last significance which can be constructed is rejoicing the notion of interaction form as a matter of semiotic understanding to exact synchronically.

Practically, this research offers the form of analyzing and criticizing in the medium general of semiotic and focusing the evaluation upon the tool which called as signified and signifier. This is also offering evaluation from academic side upon media as the representative of social media lifestyle. Therefore, The goal of this study is to gain a better comprehension of semiotical study in memes for the reader. Furthermore, this research can be used as a reference for other students who are interested in learning more about semiotic and meme analysis. They can also analyze signifier, signified and how to apply them. It can also be used to study English.

1.5 Definition of key terms

Some of terms which are very important to describe the research related to the topic and title; *Social Problem Represented in Memes Posted Sarcasm Society Facebook Page: A Saussure's Semiotic Study*.

1. Semiotics

Semiotics also known as semiology, is the study of signs, symbols, and their interpretation. It is a field of study that explores how communication and meaning are created through various signs and symbols, including words, images, gestures, and other forms of representation. Semiotics is concerned with understanding how these signs and symbols convey information, represent concepts, and influence human perception and understanding.

2. Signified

The mental or conceptual content associated with the signifier. It is the idea, concept, or meaning that the signifier represents or evokes in the mind of the interpreter.

3. Signifier

The physical form of the sign, which can be a word, an image, a sound, or any other sensory element that represents something.

4. Meme

Meme is a piece of internet content, like an image or video, that spreads quickly and is often humorous or carries a cultural message. It's easily shared and modified by users, making it a common form of online humor and communication.

5. Social Problem

Social problem is a condition, issue, or situation that affects a significant number of people within a society and is perceived as undesirable or harmful. These problems often involve aspects of social life, such as

poverty, inequality, discrimination, crime, substance abuse, and other issues that impact the well-being of individuals and communities.

6. Sarcasm Society

Sarcasm Society is a Facebook account that uploads the grievances experienced by most people delivered in a humorous format.

7. Facebook

Facebook is a widely used social media platform that provides an online space for individuals to create personal profiles, connect with friends and family, and engage with various communities and interests. Users can share text-based updates, photos, videos, and links, as well as interact with content posted by others through comments, likes, and shares. Facebook also offers features such as private messaging, events, and groups, enabling users to stay connected, express themselves, and participate in a wide range of online activities and discussions.

