

ABSTRACT

Fadilah Rais Al-Aziz (2025): Exploring The EFL Students' Ability in Analyzing Bias in Memes Using Perception Bias (A Descriptive Study at Third-Semester Students of English Education Department)

In the digital era, memes have become a dominant form of multimodal communication that conveys not only humor but also social, cultural, and ideological messages. However, EFL students often interpret memes subjectively, influenced by personal beliefs, experiences, and emotions, which may lead to misinterpretation or uncritical acceptance of biased messages. This condition highlights the importance of perception bias awareness as part of critical media literacy in EFL contexts.

This study aims to explore EFL students' ability to analyze bias in memes using perception bias, focusing on three aspects: (1) the Implementation of Analyzing Bias in Memes Using Perception Bias, (2) the EFL Students' Ability in Analyzing Bias in Memes Using Perception Bias, and (3) the EFL Students' Experiences in Analyzing Bias in Memes Using Perception Bias.

Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, this study involved third-semester students of the English Education Department. Data were collected through document analysis of students' written responses to meme analysis tasks and semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed qualitatively to identify patterns of interpretation, levels of analytical ability, and students' reflective experiences.

The findings reveal that the implementation of perception bias through meme analysis was carried out in three main stages: introduction, main learning, and reflection. During this process, students learned to identify different forms of perception bias such as confirmation, implicit, framing, and affective bias embedded in meme messages. Regarding analytical ability, students' performance varied across four levels adapted from Paul and Elder (2008): accomplished (9 students), competent (4 students), developing (1 student), and beginning (3 students). Students in the accomplished and competent levels demonstrated the ability to connect visual and verbal elements critically and interpret hidden ideological meanings, whereas those in the developing and beginning levels tended to focus only on surface meaning without linking it to perception bias concepts. Furthermore, students reported that engaging in meme analysis helped them become more reflective, critical, and aware of how personal beliefs influence interpretation in digital contexts.

In conclusion, the use of perception bias in meme analysis effectively fosters EFL students' critical media literacy by encouraging them to interpret multimodal texts more analytically, reflectively, and responsibly. Integrating this approach into EFL instruction can enhance students' critical awareness toward digital media and their ability to evaluate bias in online communication.

Keywords: *EFL students, perception bias, memes, critical media literacy, multimodal analysis.*