

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates the general descriptions of the research, including background of the study, research question, research objectives, research significance and organization of paper.

1.1. Background

As long as human life, the advancement of technology will never stop. It has been once become the largest side of the progression of human's life. With this, another part of human's life is influenced to be more interesting yet useful. It is also included in language as tool of communication.

People use language to deliver message through verbal or written text. But as the technology improved, they create images or pictures to communicate or even convey something. These images and pictures, undeniably speak a lot. Pictures, or image texts as a more scientifically term we can now use, are often thought of being worth a thousand words. They can be interpreted in many different ways by different people (Hermawan, 2011: 141). The recent picture that worth implicit meaning and become popular nowadays is Meme.

Meme is derived from Greek, "mimoumai", meaning to copy, to reproduce. The word meme for the very first time is used by Robert Dawkins in his book entitled *The Selfish Gene* (1976). Dawkins defines 'meme' as a unit - like gen - which load the idea or thought of someone spreading within textual,

verbal, pictorial thing, or even gesture and anything that can be imitated by the others. This term then is used for scientific importance and has wide meaning.

But then, *netizen* – internet citizen – used the term ‘meme’ as a picture or image or video contains the thoughts, jargon and texts which is spread widely through the internet. That picture or video oftentimes relates to pop cultures. Meme is made simply and interestingly, so that people can understand the meaning easily. Not sure if the term ‘meme’ that netizen use is derived from Dawkin’s term, but one thing for sure, both of them have the same keywords: spreading thought (Maulana, 2014).

Meme that is analysed in this research is mostly spread through internet, therefore to differ it from Dawkin’s, many people name it as ‘internet meme’. This internet meme spread rapidly, they transform and depending on their success they are forgotten or become established as parts of that public sphere. It is remarkable that for the first time we are considering an extremely wide, if not global, public sphere, for its boundaries match those of the World Wide Web.

Pictorial meme emerged as social construction at the moment. But in the language aspect, it can be analysed through visual grammar. At the heart of semiotics is Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1983) proposal that the basic situation in which meaning occurs is the exchange of signs. The sign that is involved can be text, symbol, or picture as well (Rintel, 2011: 5).

Since image can mean a thousand words, people can give a lot of interpretation to one image. But then Kress and Leeuwen came up with Visual Grammar theory (1996) to give a proper instruction of how picture is analysed.

They negotiate Barthes's idea that images are open to too many varieties of possible meanings. They refute Barthes's idea that the meanings of an image are always related to and dependent on verbal text. For Kress and Leeuwen, visual component of a text (image) is an independently organized and structured message, connected with verbal text but not dependent on it.

In relation to analysing images, various methods of images analysis have readily been available to use, for example content analysis. It is a method of analysis which is frequently used to investigate how social issues are represented in the mass media. Another method is visual anthropology which is concerned with the use of visual records for the description of the present and past ways of life of specific communities and last but not least psychoanalytical image analysis which can be used to see among others, how drawings produced by children can be used to reveal their representation of dreams (Hermawan, 2011: 140).

What interested in meme is the contents which are mostly humorous. The humorous element in fact, is a very strong factor of coherence for Internet users that consider themselves members of particular cyber-communities. The manner of communication, that is characterized firstly by textuality, in combination with the use of images, signals the birth of the Internet memes (Constantineas and Vlachos). In their turn, Internet memes functioned as the cement that kept those communities firm and alert. However, meme is created by someone just for having fun. There is sort of satisfaction when succeeds bring laughter for people who see it.

However, as a social representation, meme sometimes not only contains humour but also sarcasm. Sarcasm depends for its effect on “the use of bitter, caustic and other ironic language directed against an individual” (Oxford English Dict.). It means that sarcasm is refer to someone as a victim. But, structurally, sarcasm is still part of humour because it will always explicit, not directly spoken out. Humour indeed involves a paradox, because laughter is a universal physiological reaction to a very great variety of different complex intellectual and emotional stimuli (Krikmann, 2006: 28).

People use sarcastic humour usually to speak more polite to show the real meaning. They also intend to mock people with harassment way. They may want to soften their criticism about something or someone.

Meme from every country must have their own characteristics. Not only the language that is used is different, but also how the pictorial text related to the issue behind the image. Mostly, meme is created towards famous people, the government for example. Political critique will always be highlight. It may be involved this kind of sarcastic humour. Though, the memes are created attractively, so people notice the fun first, then camouflage the real intention and meaning. Hence, this research will analyse the sarcastic humour in those memes with visual grammar analysis.

Many researchers have been working on this theme. One of them is Vlachos (2011) who concerns on Internet Memes. With his journal, he finds out that Internet Meme is created as the product of modernity as it contains a lot of sarcastic and thought of individual.

Then, there is Nurlita (2012) whose thesis is about analysing pictorial children's book through Visual Semiotics Analysis. She states that visual grammar or semiotics can express the individual difference and multiculturalism. When it comes to arising interpretation about the pictures, visual grammar analysis is also taking a part a lot.

Hence, with the previous study stated, this research will try to discuss sarcastic humour in bureaucrat critique memes as the most created memes, through Visual Grammar Analysis.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Based on the background above, it can be drawn the problem of this research is about the expression of sarcastic humour in Western and Indonesian meme by using Kress and Leeuwen's visual grammar theory.

Finally, to make the problem clear and limited, the researcher constructs the research questions are as below:

1. How do Western and Indonesian memes express sarcastic humour through their visual text?
2. What are the similar and different features that found in those memes?

1.3. Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to analyse the sarcastic humour between Western and Indonesian memes about the government critiques through visual grammar analysis. Specifically, this research is about to take these two aims:

1. To find out the way Western and Indonesian memes express sarcastic humour to government through its visual text.
2. To compare those memes which are discussed and to discover the similarity and the differences between them.

1.4. Research Significance

This research is expected to contribute in, particularly, the field of Visual Semantic study concerning Visual Grammar. Furthermore, it is expected to give a wider knowledge about how the pictorial text like meme can express sarcastic humour.

From the theory that is used, the researcher hopes that this research gives some impact directly or indirectly in analysing the image which has the text as well and how are they related each other. Moreover, this research is aimed to prove and practice the theory in reading the visual image.

Moreover, one of the requirements for becoming a Scholar is doing a scientific research or making a scientific, and doing this research is an absolute certain to student in the University for getting Scholar academic title. Therefore, this research help in doing the study process researcher. Based on the statement above, this research is benefit to us for giving new knowledge and open new horizon about reading and analysing an image with pictorial text.

The research about the way visual text express sarcastic humour also gives impact to the readers. First, the reader will get knowledge about how the text and

the picture correlate each other expressing the humour. With this research, reader may know what the real meaning behind the sarcastic memes. Additionally, this research shall give reference to the reader to get to know the comparison between Western and Local memes.

1.5. Organization of Paper

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction of the study which consists of the background study, the research problem, the research objectives, the significance research, the scope and limitation, the research method, and the organization of the research. The second chapter presents the review of related literature. The third chapter is the methodology in which the writer discusses the research approach and how the researcher identifying, classifying, analysing the data. In chapter four, the findings and discussion are presented. The last chapter is about the conclusion of the overall study. The researcher also includes the bibliography.

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