A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: SOCIAL PROPAGANDA IN ENGLISH JOKE MEMES

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Abstract

Discourse analysis as the study of language is based on a pragmatic approach. Meme is one of new inventions of mediated strategy by utilizing electronic media. People on social media continuously make meme as a strategy to deliver their special messages. This phenomenon makes netizens and readers tend to get influenced or persuaded called propaganda. The objectives of the research are describing ideological assumption in English Joke Memes, message content in English Joke Memes, social cognition and social analysis of English Joke Memes. This study used a qualitative approach with both knife discourse analysis by Teun A. van Dijk and visual semiotic analysis by van Leeuwen. The meme makers used the perspective of society and government. The memes bring the paradigm of society through government as segmentation. By image and sentence that are easy to understand, they try to let society open their minds and give opinions about leadership of government. The makers introduced themselves to the public through advertising their creations, made memes with interesting images and text to bring the viewers to a new ideology. By the access of influencing discourse, society can take over social media, also netizens' mindsets.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Memes; Propaganda

Abstrak

Analisis wacana sebagai studi bahasa berdasarkan pendekatan pragmatik. Meme adalah satu dari penemuan baru strategi media dengan cara memanfaatkan media elektronik. Orang – orang di media sosial secara berkelanjutan menggunakan meme sebagai strategi untuk menyampaikan pesan-pesan khusus. Fenomena ini membuat netizen dan pembaca cenderung terpengaruh dan terbujuk yang disebut propaganda. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan asumsi ideologi di meme *English Joke*, isi pesan di meme English Joke, kognisi sosial dan analisis sosial di meme *English Joke*. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis wacana pisau oleh Teun A. Van Dijk dan analisis semiotik visual oleh van Leeuwen. Pembuat meme menggunakan perspektif dari masyarakat dan pemerintah. Meme membawa pradigma dari masyarakat lewat pemerintah sebagai segmentasi. Pembuat meme memperkenalkan mereka sendiri ke publik dengan mengiklankan buatan mereka, membuat meme dengan gambar dan teks yang menarik untuk membawa penonton ke ideologi baru. Dengan akses mempengaruhi wacana, masyarakat dapat mengambil alih media sosial juga pola pikir netizen.

Kata kunci: Analisis Wacana Kritis; Meme; Propaganda

INTRODUCTION

Finocchiaro in Sumardi (1992: 75) classified the language function into into five sections: personal function, interpersonal function, directive function, referential function, and imaginative function. Discourse analysis as the study of language is based on a pragmatic approach means reviewing the language of discourse in its use. Brown and Yule (1983: 83) stated that discourse analysis is an attempt to analyze the language in its use as a tool to communicate. Therefore, the analysis is not limited to the forms of language apart from the purpose and function language, but connecting these forms to use in communication, which is influenced by things outside of language. Kasnadi *et al* (2019) added that learning language ideally learns the culture, meaning, and social message as well.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) refers to a diversed collection of socio-theoretical perspective on discourse in society, encompassing a wide range of applications and approaches in discourse analysis. CDA, as it has been commonly understood, is thus concerned with the production, circulation, and interpretation of text which relation to domination and control. In this case, text then defined as the actual use of language in spoken or written form (Arifin, 2015). CDA also present critique to ideology which perceive as a legitimation for inequality relation and provide power or domination for certain group (Fairclough, 2010). This type of analysis can be used for any language phenomena happen in the new form of media, such as in electronic media.

Meme is one of new invention of mediated strategy by utilizing electronic media (radio, television), advertising, waiting tone on mobile phones, Blackberry, mars, hymn, print media (magazines, newspapers), online media (Facebook, Twitter, Websites), other media (leaflets, banners, billboards, banners and brochures). Dawkins (2006) stated that meme is an idea which takes the form of behavior, lifestyle, belief, fashions, etc., which is imitated and propagated to be diffused from one to another individual within social culture or subculture through interaction by using several media, such as writings and photographic images. Within Internet culture the term is commonly used to refer to phrases, videos, images, or a combination that are widely propagated by Internet users. Shiftman (2014:2) suggested that internet meme was used as propagation of items such as jokes via the internet. This usage of the term has further evolved to refer to a specific type of Internet artifacts consisting of a combination of images and text and generally understood as intending to be found humorous by viewers.

Further, meme also serves as mediated strategy; an effective strategy on social media continuously to deliver their special messages for *netizens*. This phenomenon makes *netizens* and readers tend to get influenced or persuaded called propaganda. Therefore, there was a need to do critical analysis on both visual and verbal language on a single text which relies on buried ideology and revealing the hidden from the surface (Machin and Myer, 2012), especially since the emerge of the internet (Van Leeuwen, 2013). The analysis will contribute to the comprehensive understanding of linguistic phenomena.

There are some researches which underlies this study. The first research was done by Putra and Triyono in 2016. The research entitled *The diversity of internet memes interpretations: A discourse analysis of incongruity of popular memes made by Indonesian netizen* claimed that most of the

Indonesian internet communities often force memes and use them in an inappropriate context.

The next research is Rahardi and Amalia's research in 2019. Their research, 'Meme as political criticism towards 2019 Indonesian general election: A critical discourse analysis, confirmed that Nurhadi-Aldo's memes indicate the skepticism value of Indonesian youth and that the function of the meme is not limited to entertainment purpose only, but also to deliver political criticism. A research by Siregar in 2018, Stereotyped Language about Women on Internet Memes of Meme Comic Indonesia (A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis) revealed five kinds of stereotyped language about women. The stereotypes are women's personality traits, women's cooking domestics' behavior, women's physical appearances, women's teaching occupation and women's driving motorcycle behavior which considered as new kind of stereotype about women. It is also revealed that the process of realization of stereotyped language about women is by seeing the context of the features used by the creator of the internet memes. The reasons of using stereotyped language about women as humor can be seen as critics and warning attempting by the creator of the internet memes

Hasanah's (2018) critical discourse analysis of memes in Facebook and Instagram, using theory from van Leeuwen, found that the most used strategy to legitimate and de-legitimate the memes' position were authorization and moral evaluation. Only few used rationalization and mythopoesis.

Those researches are different to this research as objectives of this research are to describe ideological assumption in English Joke Memes, message content in English Joke Memes, social cognition of English Joke Memes and social analysis of English Joke Memes.

METHOD

Method serves as a basic to elaborate a problem, so a problem can be described and explained clearly and understandably. Bogdan and Taylor as quoted by Moleong (1997:3) define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces the descriptive data form of written or spoken words of the people and behavior which can be observed.

This study used a qualitative approach with both knife discourse analysis which is developed by Teun A. van Dijk and visual semiotic analysis by van Leeuwen through Machin and Mayr. This research collected the data and selected 7 memes that are appropriate with the research. The following months, the researcher made the proposal and analysis from the memes that have been selected. Then the researcher described the result of analysis and concluded it as well. The primary data which is used in this research is 7 English Jokes Memes. These are taken from English Jokes Facebook page, which were shared from some websites and the secondary data of the research is reference book and literature that are related to this research.

Data collection techniques are done in various ways. To select the memes, the researcher accessed Facebook page English Jokes and sorted the archive for each meme about government to be arranged from most popular to least popular. After being selected, the researcher used a pen to mark which numbers out 1 to 7 memes. Then these observation activities were done by finding and collecting memes which are related to the study. Documentation can be done by collecting, reading and studying the various forms of written data (books, magazines, or journals) that are in the library, the internet or other sources that can be used as the analysis in this study.

After the data were collected and categorized which are appropriate with the purpose of the study for analysis and it was given interpretation by classifying with related theoretical framework. Analysis of the memes began by considering the images used as the backgrounds for the memes. The researcher limited the sample to instances of each meme that criticizes the government. Analysis of the visual element will consider many salient components, including iconography, poses, and gaze. For text, it will be analyzed by using the model of discourse analysis Teun van Dijk (2008) who relies analysis on the dominant and inequality which consists of three elements: text dimension, social cognition and social analysis. From the several data analysis techniques, researcher feels to need research the text by using van Dijk's because this analysis also tends to study the elements of social cognition (*netizens*'s mental of understanding the events) and the social analysis (analyzing the growing discourse on community), as well as analyzing the structure of the text.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis from 7 memes can be represented by meme 7 "Government".

Picture 1: Meme 7 "Government"

This meme is unique because in one big frame, there are 7 images that show different point of views about government. So, the researcher divides the analysis into seven parts:

The first image ("What my friends think they do") shows us the cover of a movie. There are six people standing and they are weird, have been made up like what they act on that movie. The important images from them are only 3 people that are standing in front. Their expressions are so serious, cool, arrogant and scary. It can be seen from their facial expressions and gesture. The woman on the left side put her hands in front, and she folded them. She has long-black hair, but it isn't tidy. She is wearing necklace and makes up 'gothic' style. Her chin is up, indicates she is brave. The man on the right side has long-white hair. His pose is not straight to the camera, little bit at an angle. His chin is up. There is no hand gesture because he poses steadily. The man in the middle is the most important image of this frame. It can be seen from the focus of camera, and the position of the man. It indicates the main point of this image. The man's face is weird. He has no nose. He is bald. He is wearing black surplice. His right hand is pointing at viewer. The gazes of them are a demand image. Their gazes encourage viewer to watch and focus on what the image shows viewer. The size of the image nearly fulfils the frame, because there are six people and they were shot almost full of their bodies. The background is like they were in a cave or lane. Its color is silver and blue. It indicates that they are underground creature or secretly move to watch and supervise.

In the second image ("What my mom thinks they do"), there is a close-up photograph. It is a man. He has bald-head and the unique one is his eyes are dollars. He is wearing tidy suit, indicates he is smart and an executive. His facial expression is arrogant. His eyes indicate he is money-oriented. There is no gaze in this

image because his eyes have been edited and put dollars. However, it can be classified as a demand image, because it encourages viewer to pay attention to it. The background is featureless because it is red and blurring.

The third image ("What society thinks they do") shows us a pose of an old movie. He is facing his enemy. He is wearing old-fashioned outfits; tidy black suit, bowtie, skinny trousers, cowboy hat, black shoes and a hand gun on his right hand. He threatens by pointing his gun to his enemy. It indicates he is a mafia or criminal in 1950's. His gaze is categorized as an offer image because he is facing his enemy. It encourages viewer as an observer. It makes viewer think what it is going to do. The size of the image is small; it is mostly fulfilled by background. The background is on the street with old buildings around. The color is black and white, indicates it is an old picture.

The fourth image ("What their boss thinks they do") is a photograph that shows the shadow of a family. The meme consists of six people; 3 kids and 3 adults. They are on the top of hills. They are side by side. It indicates that they are close and have an intimate relationship. The size of the photograph fulfils the right and the left side, while the bottom side is fulfilled by the shadow of hills. The background is sunset which has orange color and the sun appear only one-third part; the rest is closed by hills. It indicates they enjoy seeing sunset with arms in arms.

The fifth image ("What I think they do") is a close-up photograph of a man. He is wearing suit, and necktie. He has short-black. His eyes are closed, and his left hand is holding his chin. He leans on the chair. His facial expression is relaxed, smile and enjoyed. It indicates he is happy and he sleeps. The gaze of the man is closed, because he enjoys sleeping. It can be classified as am offer image. The size of the photograph nearly fills the frame. The

background is featureless because it is white stark.

The sixth image ("What they think they do") is 2 policemen and 1 police woman. They are wearing uniforms. The man on the left side has bald-head. He is fat and tall. He puts his hands on his waist. It indicates a challenge pose. His facial expression indicates arrogance. The woman on the right side is black-skinned woman. She has black hair. Her hands are put in front, indicates politeness. Her facial expression shows politeness. The man in the middle is white-skinned. He has bald-head. His pose is at an angle; his hands are folded in front of his chest. It indicates arrogance. Their gazes are classified as a demand image because they encourage viewer to watch and focus on them. The size of the photograph is balanced with the background. It indicates they are important elements. The background is in the office. There are some clues such as walls, window, computer and work desk. There is one cultural symbol in this image that is the relationship between black-skinned woman and white-skinned men. They look like close friends. It is also the culture of western culture after 1950 that there are no more racism and discrimination.

This seventh image ("What they actually do") is an animation image. It shows the character of Uncle Sam, the icon of United States of America. He has long-blonde hair. He is wearing blue suit, bowtie and starred-tall hat. The color and the stars indicate the flag of United States of America. His facial expression looks so serious and angry. His right pointer is pointing at viewer, indicates blaming, or stressing. His gaze is directly towards the camera. It can be classified as a demand image. The size of the photograph nearly fulfils the frame. Beside the man, there is a rounded callout which has a word 'tweet' inside of it. It indicates that the word 'tweet' is associated

with the man. The background is featureless because it is sky blue.

Those analyses represent a big frame of meme 7's images. They are combined and given text each picture to indicate the combination of point of views. The arrangement is 3-3-1. The last image is the most important point of view, because it is the reality according to this meme. The big background of the frame is featureless, because it is black.

The theme of Meme 7 is perspective or point of view of various people about government. This meme's schemata are the opinion about what actually government does. It can be seen from all of the images and text, which has different story and background knowledge about government. The information that appears in this meme is fact that what government does is assessed by all society in the nation. They always have something to say, and it mostly is negative. The word "actually" has a special meaning for the meme maker and viewer. 'Actually' means in real life, it means the meme maker criticizes government that what government does in real life is tweeting. Tweet can be meant by being exist in social media or giving untrustworthy speech or promise to society. The pronoun "they" refers to government. Government is the one who is focused on by the meme maker. The word "think" is stressed because it indicates the opinion from some people in the meme. It is also the sort that makes the meme is creative

Through 7 memes that bring the paradigm of society through government as a segmentation. By image and sentence that are easy to understand, those memes try to let society open their mind and be smart to criticize and give opinion about the leadership of government. They try to reach all levels of society through social media which can be accessed by anyone. The contents of the

message in the display, while the images raise various levels of people, can be accepted as segmentation of the memes.

The meme makers introduce themselves to the public through advertising their creations; this is one of the mediated strategies by applying this approach. The existence of the memes makers as a creator in the social media, which is a public media and millions users in the world, they made it to introduce themselves and their websites to the public. They published the memes with caption and hash tags. They put their initial name or *a.k.a* and their social media address even websites to their memes. It makes the meme makers become well-known and get many likes from viewers. The meme makers are tendentious to support the public, but from 7 memes, there are some memes that has tendentious message to government. These memes prove that government is not only the one to blame for people's problems.

In the context of the memes, the addresser and the addressee are government and society. Every nation of the world has government, but only a few of them can make society feel satisfied of their works. Most of them are failed to satisfy society, even they do not believe in government anymore. The meme makers are the medium between government and society to publish and make government memes, to open their eyes about how the real situation that happens in their both sides. The construction of power practice in the memes is government which has full authority to society. This thing makes society feel that they are ignorance, when government is busy managing their own business in the office, while people outside scream and ask for justice for what government has done to them. It can be seen from the text and images of the memes that most of them criticize government. The meme maker took the topics

of their memes with a plan that it is hot topic, and what everybody talks about. The image setting and the text that supports the memes are made simply and easy to understand. Then they published in their websites and social media to let viewers know what's happening in the politician and state apparatus. The memes show discourse that society mustn't be silent to face government. The meme makers invite society to be creative and also give such awareness to them that they have rights to speak. This propaganda is the thing that the meme makers want. The meme makers made memes with interesting images and text to bring the viewers to a new ideology and mindset that change their social assumption to government.

CONCLUSION

After passing the analysis and discussion of the data, it can be concluded from the previous problem statement that English Joke memes have various ideological assumptions that have been analyzed by visual semiotics and textual analysis such as the general opinion about the activity of the government and the problems that the society faces. The images have been analyzed through the fine gazes and gestures. They are suitable for the text that support and give easy information and dictions for viewers although they are lack of grammatical. English Joke memes show the detail message contents through image and text that have been combined to make the memes clear and easy to understand. The messages are conveyed through the images which contain expressions of faces, hand gestures and outfits, while text is conveyed by meaning, pronoun, implicature and graphics. The social cognition in the memes is between the government and the society. The meme maker is the medium among them to convey

their real problems or what's happening through the memes. The social analysis in the memes is that the society has dominant power because the meme makers are a part of the society and also the meme makers have strategies that can make viewers get influenced by the discourse that the meme makers made.

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