

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives explanation about the background of the study, the statement of the research problems, the objectives of the study, the significant of the study, the significant of the study, and the scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 The Background of the Study

The term meme derived from a Greek word “*mimema*” which means ‘imitated things’. Merriam-Webster dictionary stated that meme is an idea and behavior spreads by the help of imitation from person to person in any cultures. Dawkins (as cited in Blackmore, 1998) stated that Meme often carries certain meaning that representing a particular phenomenon through imitation. Richard Dawkins was the first person who coined the word ‘meme’, as he himself described it as a cultural transmission that will keep evolving over time. M. Knobel & Lankshear (2007) have explained that memes include things like popular melodies, key phrases, ways of doing things, icons, jingles, as a hypothesis that one can view many cultural entities as replicators.

Gabora (1997) stated that Memes evolve through adaptive exploration and transformation of an information space through variation, selection, and transmission. Considering humans do not always copy memes perfectly, they may refine, combine or modify them with other memes to create new memes. Therefore, they eventually can change those memes over time. Memes can have a lot of variations. But it would depend on the cultural and social abilities of the people to replicate the existing memes or to create the new one based on their current knowledge.

The idea of a meme itself was never fully implemented and famously known as what it is now. Knobel (2006) stated that with the advent of social networks, memes have become a practice to propagate and circulate communications, which has a significant dimension in cultural production and transfer. As in the 2005 the Internet was at its rising, a website named Reddit was one of the pioneers in opening its first media-sharing platform.

The website started as a simple online media-sharing platform by allowing its users to share photos and videos to many other users that happened to use the platform. As the better development of the internet and the media devices in coming years, other similar platform was beginning to emerge in 2010. There are some notable websites such as 4Chan, 9Gag, Twitter, Tik-Tok and Instagram which are in later years also became as mainstream meme sharing platforms.

Every media that had been posted in these websites are usually known as 'Post', while the person behind the idea of such post is usually known as OP or Original Poster. Any OPs of the current platform may give comments and/or recognition by giving 'up-vote' or 'down-vote', like or dislike to other OP's posts in which later counted by their numbers as an approval. This system can give a significant impact on the dispersion of the meme itself. Any posts happened to have many up-votes would likely to become famous and re-shared by other OPs. Thus, the possibility of a post becomes a meme will happen.

The most basic idea of early meme is comprised of an image and text. This particular format is known as 'Macro Image' format. Wright (2014) said that image macro consist of a normal or manipulated image that has been paired with an ingenious phrase that is usually silly, spelled wrong and uses incorrect sentence structure or otherwise creating a humorous effect.



According to Dancygier & Vandelanotte (2017), There are no single and unified grammar theory and typology of internet memes ever to be made to use for particular meme analysis. Instead, selecting particular memes within a meme group is the best thing to have more focused and rooted analysis of what is actually happening in that particular meme group. The reason is that memes have common characteristics, created with awareness of each other, and spreading worldwide (Shifman, 2013). Thus a famous meme set so called 'Rage Comic' is one of a kind for having many similarities in the shape, pattern, and its usage compare to other mainstream memes.

Rage Comic is a set of a meme group based on drawing or pictures format. It is shown as a set of pre-made faces and reactions, which usually express emotions (Boutin, 2012). Rage Comic is usually comprised of many expressions, characters, shapes, formats, figures that always representing certain emotion within each picture. It is quite often these pictures will be added with word or clause to elaborate more with the expression. These differences are actually one of many variations within the Rage Comic meme itself.

As stated by Shifman (2014) that memes has the unique features of being universal, highly visible, and a global routine. Any characters in Rage Comic are usually based on the real life experiences in which most of people around the globe have been encountering. So much so that they just turned those experiences into representation of those people's thoughts.

Memes have been evolving from a traditional person to person cultural transmission to modern technology communication activities of exchanging information. As many theories and ideas out there, one thing than memes have in common is certain rules to be followed. Unfortunately, many users of this massive internet-based meme sharing platform are not really understand the unwritten yet important rules of making the proper and worthy of memes. These so-called 'unwritten rules' are the reason that memes are still around and relevant.

Meme is a phenomenon that has been greatly evolving from time to time. It must be understood that 'meme' is an effect of mutual agreement in public interests of having desired information. Memes have become a significant point within the whole social media and internet systems all over the world for their support in giving critics for the latent issues of racism, educational, welfare, human rights, political matters and other worldly misdemeanours.

This study is intended to analyse the meaning in a group of meme called *Rage Comic* meme. It focuses on analysing the relation between each of meme's faces and its meaning based on semantic theory by Geoffrey Leech. Each of the memes will be analysed and categorized based on the context and meanings that will be found later on the analysis. It will also be elaborated and illustrated in macro image and/or story format to further strengthen the analysis.

Furthermore, the writer analyses and categorises each of the found meaning based on the Ironic sense so that one can have true relation between the reasons and purposes of why this meme existed in the first place. This study aims to help people in knowing more about meaning and the relation to the types of Irony that are found in *Rage Comic* memes.

1.2 The Statement of the Research Problems

The research of the problems is described follows:

1. What types of meaning are conveyed in *Rage Comic* memes?
2. What types of irony are present in the *Rage Comic* memes?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

1. To identify and categorize the various types of meaning conveyed in *Rage Comic* memes.
2. To identify and categorize the different types of irony depicted in *Rage Comic* memes.

1.4 The Significances of the Study

The existence of this study leads to two main reasons as listed below:

1. Theoretical Significance

The analysis is expected to give a contribution about Memes analysis to the development of English Study Program. It can be used also as an additional reference and information regarding to linguistic idea of Semantics analysis and the elements of irony that are correlated with the meaning of each *Rage Comic* memes.

2. Practical Significance

The analysis is expected to help the reader in understanding more about Memes and their unique features of meaning that are based on actual real experience of a person. The writer provides collection of different memes with their descriptions and significant meanings for the reader from the Meme itself through the writer's perspectives.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The writer conducts an analysis of meaning and irony in Rage Comic memes by using Semantic theory by Geoffrey Leech (1981), particularly in analysing meme's contextual meaning related to its available features of text and drawing. Roger Kreuz's (2020) theory of Irony is also used in order to classify the ironic sense in each of Rage Comic memes. The analysis is limited to data of Rage Comic memes found in knowyourmemes.com.