

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

The growth of information and communication technology, along with the widespread usage of the internet, has created a platform for public discussion in a number of online forums. According to Chandler (2013) Internet memes are a new type of discourse that is currently popular in social media, online forums, and Internet culture in general. According to Alluri and Krishna (2021) memes have become an integral part of internet culture and digital communication. They are a form of creative expression that utilizes humor, satire, and cultural references to create resonant and impactful messages. Soviet Union memes, in particular, have attracted the attention of researcher due to their complexity and uniqueness. These memes often combine visual and verbal elements to communicate messages rich in meaning and cultural nuance.

In this context, Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) ideational visual grammar theory provides a useful framework for analyzing how meaning is created and communicated in the visual mode of memes. This theory considers elements such as processes, participants, circumscriptions and attributes in visual analysis. However, memes do not only consist of visual elements. They also include verbal modes, which can be analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) SFL transitivity theory. This theory allows researcher to understand how meaning is created and communicated through words and sentence structures in memes. Furthermore, to understand how visual and verbal

elements work together to create meaning in memes, this research also use Liu and O'Halloran's (2009) intersemiotic-comparative theory. This theory provides a framework for comparing and interpreting how meaning is created and communicated between different semiotic modes.

The term "meme" was first used by evolutionary scientist Richard Dawkins (1976) in studies about how certain genes might modify and spread biological codes in the human body. The phrase was later modified to apply to conceptualizations of ideology that have such a potent resonance with particular cultural groups that they are disseminated for public opinion via a variety of media, including the Internet (Zidjaly, 2017). According to Wiggins and Bowers (2014) memes may also be seen as a type of culture that is widely disseminated online. Images, text, videos, or even a combination of all these can all be found in memes. Also, they go into how meme structure, which includes visual, narrative, and intertextual elements, may affect online communication practices.

Barbara Dancygier and Lieven Vandelanotte (2017) also states that melodies, catchphrases, the practice of commemorating birthdays, and other occurrences were included in the meme notion, and language itself has occasionally been viewed as a meme (without the underlying claims of innateness, Merge, or universal grammar). These image/text combinations were given the label "memes" due to the speed with which they proliferated in internet communication. Mentioned from Zubaidah and Ardelia (2018) Internet memes may be utilized for a variety of things outside just amusement. Every meme has additional goals and meanings.

The analogy used by Dancygier and Vandelanotte (2017) and Zubaidah and Ardelia (2018) lead to the conclusion that the memes that are in use now are copies of earlier memes. Via a certain habit or notion, memes create a pattern that is repeatedly utilized until it eventually creates a new pattern that is widely used. When Soviet memes trended online in early 2018 on some platforms that serve memes, not a few meme creators used this opportunity to create memes about the Soviet Union that were currently popular. These memes not only succeeded in triggering reactions from netizens, but also received various entertaining comments. It has been said that memes are a way for digital popular culture to express humor and satire. Soviet Union memes are growing in popularity among Internet users, particularly among young people who are interested in history and politics, along with the rise of social media and the Internet.

Memes on the history, culture, and politics of the Soviet era are referred to as "Soviet Union memes," which can also refer to a group of memes or satire images. According to Harrison (2003) Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, red flags, hammers and sickles, and other well-known symbols of the Soviet Union are commonly used in these memes. Also, the situation or history of the Soviet Union is frequently criticized or made fun of using this meme.

According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) Multimodality is the process of constructing meaning in communication by combining several semiotic elements, such as words, gestures, pictures, and sounds. Jewitt (2009) defines multimodality as the process of communicating meaning across a variety of media, such as language, visual imagery, and nonverbal clues. Visual grammar can be used to analyze how visual

elements in Soviet Union memes are used to convey political or social messages. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006) Visual grammar is a concept used to describe how visual elements such as color, shape, and size can be used to convey messages or information. In the context of memes, visual grammar can be used to understand how visual elements are used to convey political or social messages.

Furthermore, in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), ideational meaning is actualized through grammatical structure by means of its transitivity system. The selection of grammatical structures to articulate experiences is influenced by the language user. Speakers encounter a spectrum of choices in representing activities or the social actors involved. When seeking to shift focus or entirely conceal an activity, processes can be veiled, and nominalization emerges as one method for process concealment. In SFL, nominalization involves the reification of processes, reducing them to 'things' (Hart, 2014: 33).

This research aims to analyze Soviet Union used three theories to analyze memes by using transitivity theory (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014); visual grammar (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006); intersemiotic-relation (Liu and O'Halloran, 2009). These three frameworks allow researcher to analyze the clauses of memes also can analyze what are the processes, participants, circumscriptions and attributes of a visual displayed meme to be analyzed. Thus, we can understand how the elements in a meme work together to create a certain meaning. This research is expected to provide new insights into how Soviet Union memes are used to express humor, irony, and other

sentiments. In addition, this research can also contribute to the development of better meme analysis methods.

A.2 Problem of the Research

1. How is ideational meaning of images in Soviet Union memes seen from visual grammar?
2. How is the textual meaning of Soviet Union memes from SFL transitivity?
3. How do intersemiotic-relation between verbal and visual signs convey of stereotype Soviet Union government?

A.3 Objective of the Research

1. Describing the images of Soviet Union memes from ideational meaning of visual grammar.
2. Describing the text of Soviet Union memes from transitivity.
3. Explaining the significance of Soviet Union memes and their relevance to make a stereotyping of the Soviet Union government by using intersemiotic-relation.

A.4 Significance of the Research

The significance of the research from the mentioned earlier perspectives is that researcher can offer or gain new insights about how Soviet Union stereotype raised in the context of memes can become a form of representation that can influence public opinion, and it can offer new insights about how this Soviet Union meme can become a form of discourse mapping of the influence of media and culture in influencing public perceptions of Soviet Union.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

The aim of this research is analyzing Soviet Union memes that represent the stereotype. In a while, there may be language and cultural limitations in some memes, which may make it harder to generalize study findings between contexts and languages.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

A.6.1 Meme

According to Blackmore (1999), a meme is anything cultural that can be reproduced, imitated, and transmitted, and that will change over time because of natural selection in culture, just like a genetic that changes with time in biological evolution. Memes are also described by Milner and Phillips (2017) as a communication tool that enables individuals to take part in larger cultural discourses. Understanding memes as a communication genre is critical for examining their function and effect in social media and popular culture. Memes may also give rise to strong social and political dynamics.

A.6.2 Soviet Union

Following the Bolshevik Revolution, the socialist state of Soviet Union was established in 1922. The nation's political and economic structure is built on Marxist-Leninist ideas, whereby community ownership of the means of production is preferred to private ownership. The Soviet Union had a lengthy and complicated past that included its height of dominance during the Cold War era as well as years of economic

and political turmoil near the end of its rule that led to its fall in 1991 (www.britannica.com).

A.6.3 Multimodality

The term "multimodality" describes the process of conveying meaning using a variety of semiotic mediums, including words, pictures, sounds, gestures, etc. This idea is connected to the idea that messages may be delivered through a variety of additional semiotic modalities that can complement or reinforce the intended message in addition to spoken or written language (Norris & Jones, 2005). When used, multimodality entails a more thorough examination of communication, taking into account a variety of factors including cultural, social, and psychological settings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

A.6.4 Visual Grammar

Visual grammar is a useful tool for analyzing visual images, including memes. By applying the framework of representational, interactive, and compositional meanings to Soviet Union memes, we can comprehend a deeper understanding of how images convey meaning. O'Halloran (2012) state there is a system of conventions in visual grammar that allows audiences to interpret visual representations more efficiently. Visual grammar also helps audiences to organize and structure visual information, and helps audiences to understand the message contained in an object. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) reveal that images, like language, have three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

A.6.5 Transitivity

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), posits that ideational meaning is realized through grammatical structure, specifically via its transitivity system. The selection of grammatical structures to express experiences is influenced by the language user. Speakers encounter various choices in representing activities or the involved social actors. When aiming to shift focus or entirely conceal an activity, the process can be veiled, and one method for achieving process concealment is through nominalization. In SFL, nominalization entails the reification of processes, reducing them to 'things' (Hart, 2014: 33).

A.6.6 Intersemiotic

O'Halloran (2005: 159) introduces the term 'intersemiosis' to describe 'the meaning arising across semiotic choices.' Intersemiosis has also been noted by Royce (2006) as 'intersemiotic-relation,' where 'visual and verbal modes semantically complement each other to produce a single textual phenomenon' (Royce, 1998: 26).

A.7 Organization of the Research Report

This research is divided into 5 chapters

Research Background, Problem of the Research, Objectives of the Research, Limitation of the Research, Significance of the Research, Definition of Key Terms and Organization of the Research Report are discussed in Chapter I of this research. The literature review, which includes a theoretical framework and linked research studies

that explain relevant research studies, are discussed in Chapter II of this research. Research Method, which consists of Research Design, Data and Source of the Data, Method of Collecting Data, and Method of Analyzing Data is covered in Chapter III of this research. Data Analysis which consists of Data Description, Data Analysis, and Discussion is covered in Chapter IV of this research. Explanations from the conclusion and Suggestions of the research are provided in Chapter V of this research.

