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Metafunctions Analysis of Instagram Meme in @9Gag Post

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 20 December 2023	This study aims to analyze what language metafunctions appear in memes on the official 9GAG Instagram account and what representations appear in these language metafunctions. The research method used in this research is descriptive-analytical. Data processing is done by collecting data, analyzing the data, and then describing the data. The data sources are obtained via the Internet, and the last stage is to conclude the data. Based on the analysis results, the language metafunctions that appear in memes on the official 9GAG Instagram accounts include ideational, interpersonal, and textual components. The representations that emerge from the language metafunction are meme representations that refer to disseminating information, appreciation, and criticism to represent a certain character or event that is considered interesting, entertaining, and phenomenal. By using this mode, the reader will be able to understand the meaning and interpretation of the meme completely and thoroughly to absorb the information conveyed without any ambiguity.
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1. Introduction

Currently, Instagram is one of the most popular social media for the community as a place to express criticism (Caple, 2019; Farahsani et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2022), as well as to express texts that contain criticism about events that are trending or viral in society, which are called memes. A meme is a form of young people's creativity in expressing criticism, innuendo, and motivation as outlined in the form of a combination of images and text (Brown, 2020; Meuth et al., 2009; Truszkowski et al., 2020; Yus, 2018). The visuals of humor content presented in memes mean social opinion and criticism. The power of a meme lies in the creator's creativity in modifying text, images, videos, graphics, and various content so followers and readers can easily

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understand them. It has impacted the increasing use of memes in Instagram accounts in recent years, whether it is lightly charged memes or politically charged memes.

Meme is an art reality that is simple but eye-catching because it has become a phenomenal work and massively attracted people's attention from various social classes. Through memes, one can see the culture that is displayed, even the ideology that is highlighted (Al Amery, 2023; de Deus et al., 2022; DeCook, 2018; Kumari, 2021). Memes can also display the element of pleasure or disappointment that the author wants to convey to a phenomenon. At the beginning of its appearance, memes were made nationally, either through special meme sites, such as www.memecomicindo.com, www.1cak.com, www.na9a.com, as well as Facebook, Twitter, online media forums (e.g., Kaskus) and blogs—one of the media that acts as meme promoters widely is the 9GAG Instagram account. 9GAG has also been a promoter on social media whose role is to create and upload memes. The 9GAG Instagram account itself has been verified by the official Instagram so that the wider community can accept the memes uploaded by the 9GAG account. A meme is a combination of text and visuals to convey a message. So that the distribution of these expressions does not exceed the limits of reasonableness and does not cause unwanted negative effects such as offending elements of sara, racism, and others, proper understanding is needed.

Individual's interpretation of something is different. Suppose an individual or society does not know how to properly represent a meme's meaning. In that case, there will be misunderstanding or miscommunication, which will result in not conveying the message's contents. Therefore, to properly represent the meme, it is necessary to use a different method in the analysis process. Based on the background above, this research discusses the metafunction analysis of Instagram meme in @9GAG Post.

2. Literature Review

Some previous studies have discussed that there are three metafunctions found in their study, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Hebert Sundram, 2023; Sun et al., 2021; Zhang, 2017). This study also focuses on the semiotic approach. Some studies that discussed semiotic approach found both denotative and connotative meanings in each their research. Lestari et al. (2022) explained memes about skripsi have both denotative and connotative meanings, Yanti et al. (2023) stated the World Health Organization's Instagram posts about Covid-19 contain connotation and denotation meaning, Panjaitan & Pasaribu (2023) found FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 memes has unique signifiers and connotative meanings.

In analyzing the metalanguage using the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis from Halliday (2004), Ayomi, (2021a, 2021b, 2022) has discussed the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metalanguage used in social media. The Twitter posts of Presidents Trump and Jokowi show that the different metalanguages provide different styles and personalities presented by both Presidents (Ayomi, 2021a). Interpersonal metalanguage is also proven to take different forms in

social media posts, such as verbal language, pictures, emoticons, and typography (Ayomi, 2021b; 2022).

However, this study will use metalanguage integration in SFL with visual grammar, as proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) used Halliday's metafunction theory (Halliday & Matthiensen, M., I., 2014), which tries to apply modes that are not only verbally but also visually described. "Like other semiotic modalities, the visual must fulfill several representational and communicational characteristics to be a fully functional communication system. In order to do this, we have embraced Michael Halliday's theoretical concept of "metafunction." He suggests the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions as the three categories of metafunction. They apply to all semiotic modalities in the manner in which we have glossed them here; speech and writing are not excluded.

This study uses the SFL theoretical framework to examine how the meme's complete meanings are organized (Halliday & Matthiensen, 2014; Halliday & Hasan, 1992). A functional theory of linguistics known as SFL models and maps language according to the context in which it is used. Field, Tenor, and Mode are three elements that affect language simultaneously. Field deals with the content of the message, Tenor is about the nature of the relationship between participants in communication, and Mode concerns how the message is delivered. These three situational settings produce meaning (metafunctions), which the lexicogrammar realizes. The three metafunctions are, in order, ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function, which expresses experiences, primarily deals with the Transitivity system. The interpersonal functions discuss how the participants in communication should relate to one another. Furthermore, the textual metafunction controls the arrangement of the information.

3. Method

In this study, the meme used is meme jokes; meme jokes are the most popular meme among young people. This meme was chosen in this study because it contains a collection of funny and entertaining images. In addition to the pictures, the edits and writings made quirky are also very interesting, so it attracts the interest of many people to see the meme. These meme jokes are related to humor, where humor itself can be a medium for conveying ideas, even though the idea is an idea that is contrary to the existing culture. People can tolerate the idea because it is in the form of humor. In conducting this research, the first step is to use the meme downloaded from the official 9GAG Instagram account that has been highlighted. Here, the researcher identifies the language metafunctions used in the memes on the official 9GAG Instagram account and what representations appear in the language metafunctions. The research method used in this research is the descriptive-analytical research method. The purpose of using a descriptive-analytical approach is so that researchers can describe the empirical reality behind the phenomena that occur related to interpreting the meaning of memes. Descriptive is a description or explanation of words clearly and in detail. The analysis investigates an event, essay, or act to determine the real situation.

4. Results and Discussion

After exploring the objects, several images were categorized to be analyzed for the metafunctions contained in the memes one by one and will be discussed in the section below. The section below is a one-to-one analysis of the images found on 9gag, the world's largest meme site.

Data 1: Phone Meme

The ideational meaning results from the transitivity analysis. The results of the verbal analysis of Figure 1 are as follows:

“When you drop your phone, but the screen doesn't crack.”



Figure 1. Phone Meme

Based on the meme analysis above, there are two different texts or captions. Caption (1) is included in the process material category. The material process is realized using a verb. It means that the verb used in a clause is defined as “doing words” (express state of being or having) (Gerot, 1994). The results of caption analysis (1) are as follows:

- 1) The word “when” is included in the form of a conjunction.
- 2) The use of the word “you” is a participant: actor. It means that the actors in this meme are the viewers. However, this meme illustrates it by using a stuffed frog as the represented participant.
- 3) The word “drop,” which means dropping, indicates that the word is employed to express an entity that physically does something to another entity, namely, dropping a cell phone.
- 4) The use of the word “your phone” indicates participant: goal. It means that the goal of this clause is to “drop the phone (yours/viewers).

Then, caption (2) is included in the process category: relational attributive. According to Gerot, relational processes involve states of being (including having) (Gerot, 1994). The results of caption analysis (2) are as follows:

- 1) The word “but” is included in the form of a conjunction or conjunction.
- 2) The word “the screen” is a participant: carrier because it describes an entity that carries process: attributive and attribute (which is not damaged after the phone is dropped is the screen).
- 3) The word “does not” is a process: attributive because it defines a “quality.”
- 4) The word “crack,” which means damaged, is an attribute because it describes the quality determined by the process: attributive.

The interpersonal and the textual metalanguage are presented in components. The interpersonal is represented by attitude and emotion, and the arrangement of signs presents the text.

- 1) Narrative: The meme above represents the participant as a stuffed frog. This meme depicts a stuffed frog holding his cellphone in the picture (a) on the left, showing the represented participant holding his cellphone, while in image (b) on the right, the represented participant hugging his cellphone with a cheerful facial expression. The caption in the meme reads: “When you drop your phone, it does not crack.”
- 2) Social Distance: The meme above was taken in a “close shot.” Based on the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a close shot makes a represented participant as if it has a close relationship with the viewer or reader. It means that the frog doll character is exploited to illustrate to viewers a personal issue or similar event/situation that has been experienced (dropped the cellphone, but the cellphone was not damaged).
- 3) Contact: The represented participant in the meme above does not make direct eye contact with the viewers but looks in another direction because the represented participant comes from creating a separate character by the producers, so contact is also natural. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the use of the word “you” indicates that this meme is “demand.” So, based on the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), memes or visual images like this are categorized as interactive participants, which means that producers or memes communicate with viewers through images even though viewers are not directly involved in the conversation. The represented participant “demands or asks” for attention from viewers so that it seems as if the viewers can feel and agree on events that are considered typical or have been experienced together.
- 4) Attitude: The size of the frame or the point of view of shooting is close up. It means showing the angle of taking pictures closely so that viewers can observe and engage indirectly in the illustrations displayed by memes. So that viewers can indirectly confirm or agree with the written caption. So that

participants can provide an understanding that viewers can feel personally (common knowledge).

- 5) Information Value: In the meme above, when viewed based on the composition of the layout, there is only one represented participant with its margin positioning in the middle. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.181) about reading images, in this position viewers or meme readers are used so that viewers' attention can focus and focus on only one point. Image (a) with caption (1) shows a surprised expression and gesture of a stuffed frog looking at his cell phone shortly after his cell phone fell. Picture (b) with caption (2) shows the expression and gesture of a stuffed frog hugging his cell phone because he knows it was not broken, even though he has dropped it. It indicates a message to be conveyed to viewers that the cellphone is represented as a valuable object owned.

If viewed the ideational analysis, this meme intends to tell viewers something of informative and representative value. In this meme, the stuffed frog is personified as acting or behaving like a human. The informative value that this meme wants to convey is that many people consider cell phones a valuable object. When the phone falls but is not damaged, the person who owns it will be happy and grateful. This common knowledge is what the represented participants try to represent to viewers.

Mobile phones are very popular communication tools because apart from their function that makes it easier for people to communicate, they are also considered capable of being used as entertainment media, so it is not surprising that many people are dependent on their cell phone use and feel like something is lacking if they are not around—his cell phone. Based on the meme that the cell phone belongs to is an iPhone. iPhone is one of the most expensive and prestigious mobile phone brands. That is why, in this meme, the phone is assumed to be valuable.

Then, if viewed from interpersonal analysis, this meme is taken in a “close shot.” The close shot makes the represented participant as if he has a close relationship or relationship with the viewer or reader. The represented participant in the meme above does not make direct eye contact with the viewers but looks in another direction because the represented participant comes from creating a separate character by the producers, so the contact is also natural. The word “you” indicates that this meme does not offer information but demands attention from viewers to seem involved because they have the same experience (once dropped a cellphone, but the cellphone was not damaged).

Data 2: Grumpy Cat Meme

Based on Figure 2, the results of the transitivity analysis will be displayed. Verbal and visual elements include the analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and textual components and verbal and visual representations. The results of the verbal analysis of data 2 are as follows:



Figure 2. Grumpy Cat Meme

Based on the analysis of the meme above, “I might be grumpy but I love you,” it can be seen that two different texts or captions exist in one image. Caption (1) is included in the process category: relational attributive. According to Gerot and Wignel (1994), relational processes involve states of being (including having). The results of caption analysis (1) are as follows:

- 1) The word “I” is included in participant: carrier because it describes an entity that processes relational attributes and attributes (the one with the fierce face is me).
- 2) The use of the word “might be” is a form of process: relational attributive because it defines a “quality” (maybe I do have a fierce face).
- 3) The word “grumpy” is an attribute because it describes the quality determined by the process: it is attributive (I have a fierce face).

Then, Caption (2) is included in the process material category. According to Gerot and Wignel (1994), the material process is realized using a verb. This means that the verb used in a clause is defined as “doing words” (express state of being or having) process material. The results of caption analysis (2) are as follows:

- 1) The word “but” is included in the form of a conjunction or conjunction.
- 2) The word “I” is a participant: actor because it describes the represented participant in the meme.
- 3) The word “love,” which means to love, is a material process because it indicates that it expresses an entity that physically does something to another entity, namely love.
- 4) The use of the word “you” is participant: goal because it is considered as an entity that receives expressions from the actor (the one I love (represented participant/actor) is you (goal)).

The results of interpersonal and textual components are as follows:

- 1) Narrative: In the meme above, the participant is Grumpy Cat, a character who often appears in memes. Grumpy Cat always looks angry, and this

meme depicts Grumpy Cat with a fierce face. The caption in the meme reads, “I might be grumpy, but I love you.”

- 2) Social Distance: The meme above was taken in a “close shot.” Based on the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a close shot makes a represented participant as if it has a close relationship with the viewer or reader. It means that the Grumpy Cat character is used to illustrate to viewers a statement (but I love you) that is considered more compassionate than the reality or the sadistic characteristics of Saw.
- 3) Contact: The represented participant in the meme above does not make direct eye contact with the viewers but looks in another direction. The contact is also natural because the represented participant comes from a character created by the producers. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the use of the word “I/me” indicates that this meme is an “offer.” So, based on the theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), memes or visual images like this are categorized as interactive participants, which means that viewers are not directly involved in conversations or situations but are represented by participants communicating by “offering” information to viewers so that it seems as if the viewers can feel the feelings or situations experienced by the represented participants.
- 4) Attitude: The size of the frame or the point of view of shooting is close up. It means showing the angle of taking pictures closely so that viewers can observe and engage indirectly in the illustrations displayed by memes and provide an understanding that viewers can feel personally.
- 5) Information Value: In the meme above, only one participant is represented with its margin positioning in the middle when viewed based on the layout’s composition. According to Kress and van Leeuwen about reading images (2006), in this position viewers or meme readers are used so that viewers’ attention can focus and focus on only one point. So, it will not break the concentration or attention. It indicates a message to everyone about honesty or the feeling that even though the producer has a fierce face, the producer who uses the represented participant has the feeling of “I love you.”

Based on the analysis results described above, this meme intends to tell viewers something of informative and representative value. This meme wants to convey the informative value that the producers or those represented by the participant, namely Grumpy Cat, have a fierce face. At the same time, the representative value contained in this meme is to show personal feelings or issues. Although his face is fierce, he still has the feeling of “I love you.” Then, when viewed from interpersonal analysis, this meme was taken in a “close shot” but candid. The close shot makes the represented participant as if he has a close relationship or relationship with the viewer or reader.

Candid means that the participant does not make direct eye contact with the viewer but looks in another direction. So that participants can provide an understanding that can be felt personally by viewers through interactive participants (communicating through

pictures). The word “grumpy” here refers to the facial expression that the Grumpy Cat has. In this meme, the main sentence in the caption (1) is written, namely, “I might be grumpy,” explaining that Grumpy Cat has a fierce face. Then, the bound sentence is found in the caption (2), namely “but I love you,” explaining that even though there is someone who looks grim/gloomy/angry or always angry. However, it had nothing to do with the emotional feelings that were in him.

5. Conclusion

Grounded on the analysis results, it can be concluded that first, three language metafunctions appear in memes on the official 9GAG Instagram account. The language metafunction includes three components, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Second, the representation of memes appearing in the language metafunction can refer to a form of appreciation for a thing or achievement, criticism, or satire. Meme representation can represent a particular character, character, event, or event considered interesting, entertaining, or phenomenal. Memes are considered a medium that can convey and disseminate information widely because they can reach the public on a large scale universally, especially for those who have internet access.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

Author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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