

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The scientific study of humour is progressing rapidly. Taken from its broad inclusive understanding in the 20th century, the development of theories and examples of humour continues to increase (Attardo, 2017). The universality of humour also helps scholars in the fields of psychology, anthropology and sociology to establish their goals and interests (Robert & Yan, 2007; Dynel, 2009). The first of these two roles is social management, such as enhancing current connections, resolving uncomfortable circumstances, and gaining attention. The second function is defunctionalization. Humor is presented using one of the tools used to spread messages in order to communicate with others called language (Kuswoyo, 2016; Afrianto et. al, 2014). People use language to build social life (Puspita and Pranoto, 2021).

Preceding the presentation of the definition, the objective of this study is to uncover and identify the constituent elements contributing to sarcastic humor. Based on Cambridge (2023) sarcasm is a form of verbal irony that involves saying something intentionally different or opposite to what is actually meant, often with a mocking or humorous tone. Sarcasm is often characterized by a sharp, biting wit and is employed to highlight absurdity, hypocrisy, or to provoke a reaction from the listener or reader. Research on sarcastic humor using MDA provides a comprehensive understanding of the multimodal aspects of sarcasm, the contextual nuances involved, the interactional dynamics, and the social and psychological effects. Until now, the theory and types of humor have been included in the digital

humor session. Internet users themselves consume the majority of the digital humor created online. They seek solace there or in this case can be called 'memes' (Dyner, 2020). Many themes are brought up in memes, especially what is going on now, viral. The meme maker could be anybody. They sacrifice themes, people, or organizations for their content and that may be funny to some, while the rest may be offended (Aggarwal et al, 2021). Memes, a picture, a video or a piece of text that is constantly used or distributed by people on the internet and sometimes with small changes that make it funny (Oxford, 2023). The same is true of memes' data that will be examined in this study by Steven He with his iconic "Emotional Damage". Generally, the video of Steven He saying "Emotional Damage" is used as a reaction video after watching someone's video that has been roasted so that the Indonesian slang says "kena mental". Either ironically or unironically. The term "emotional damage" is often used humorously to describe situations where someone may be emotionally affected or scarred by a particular event or experience. These memes can range from light-hearted and relatable to darker and more introspective. On September 21, 2021, Steven He uploaded a video entitled 'When "Asian" is a Difficulty Mode' on his YouTube channel. In that video, he looked like he was playing a game and his character was dead after getting a scathing comment from an enemy who was an 'aunt'. The 'aunt' said, "Steven, when you get so fat?" and then the character dies with "emotional damage" in the report. Frustrated, Steven took one of the slippers he was wearing and slammed it on the floor and then said "Emotional Damage".

Since then, a number of compilations with other meme video sources and an additional video of Steven saying "emotional damage" have been created.

Starting with one of the accounts that posted a video of Billie Eilish's interview report from knowyourmeme.com (2022). There, Billie gave a statement "If you give an ugly guy a chance, he thinks he rules the world," which was followed by a little boy who said she used autotune, then at the end, the clip of Steven said "emotional damage" went viral and watched over thirteen million in a month as a reaction after getting roasted.

Based on the data of memes with Steven's clip it is unique to the linguistic approach because the conversation in it is thought to contain sarcasm wrapped in a response from Steven at the end, making the video a meme humor. Moreover, the study of sarcasm humor with an approach to using the multimodal theory of analysis would be appropriate for application to the study. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is an analytical approach that focuses on studying modes of communication other than language, such as images, gestures, sounds, and spatial arrangements. It examines how different modes work together to convey meaning and shape our understanding of messages in different contexts. The content of humor presented has the entertaining function of the conversation in it that contains sarcasm. The discourse of sarcasm that is uttered in every conversation is either direct or indirect. It will, therefore, be linguistically interesting to examine in addition to using multimodal analysis approaches as a support theory to enhance the research later.

Linguistics research on humor has been done a lot. Research by Pranoto & Suprayogi (2021), Ilahiyati (2019) and Putri et al. (2021). When we look at the gaps in the research, it focuses only on the aspect of the humor that will be viewed by the impact on the target; like the audience and the students. Next, the value of the completed replication is the focus of the multimodal approach.

Although some have previously conducted a study with a combination of these theories, Putri (2022) has done an analysis using MDA based on Kress and Van Leeuwen. Hidayat et al., (2019) who also did an analysis using an MDA. Drawing from research employing multimodal analysis, it is evident that such studies often involve data in the form of advertisements, particularly those possessing intriguing semiotics warranting analysis. Despite these attempts, a comprehensive analysis of multimodal humor and sarcasm remains has not been found. Should such an investigation prove successful, it has the potential to establish a new benchmark in humor research and serve as a reference in the realm of multimodal analysis.

Based on research that has already been done, researchers are focusing on the objective they are looking for. Research in humor focuses only on humor (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2021), (Ilahiyati, 2019), meanwhile, Putri et al., (2021) who focus on sarcasm humor using the pragmatics approach for research that uses the MDA. Data retrieved include movies, Instagram postings and advertisements of a product (Putri, 2022) & (Hidayat et al., 2018).

In this study, the writer conducted research analysis using the MDA with the theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) *The Grammar of Visual Design* and combined with the theory of *The Language Metafunction* based on Halliday and Matthiesen (2014). The writer decided on a Multimodal analysis approach to finding the sense of sarcastic humor hidden behind selected visual and verbal language data that expose their meanings to the surface using this approach (Machin and Myer, 2012). Furthermore, the data the author finds are the results found on the Internet (Van Leeuwen, 2013). The study will see two aspects, both from language

as a major factor which will then use The Language Metafunction Theory and supporting aspects of image, atmosphere, color, and some points that will be explained by MDA Both theories are expected to fill the void in both the realm of humor and multimodal research.

## **1.2 Research Question**

1. How are sarcastic humor revealed in Steven He “Emotional Damage” video memes?
2. What factors are involved in Steven He’s “Emotional Damage” video memes?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to analyze Steven He's "Emotional Damage" video memes to understand how humor and sarcasm are revealed and identify the factors involved in the creation and dissemination of these memes.

The research objective is to conduct a thorough analysis of the video memes, uncovering the underlying humorous and sarcastic elements and examining the various factors that contribute to their success and appeal.

## **1.4 Uses of the Study**

This current study is expected to aim at several stakeholders as follows:

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Use**

In theory, it is hoped to help readers as a reference to the study of humor and multimodal analysis. Theoretically, it is hoped that this study will broaden its

horizons in language and linguistic studies. Further, it is hoped that it will be used as a reference material for research on humor and variations in multimodal analysis.

#### **1.4.2 Practical Use**

It is also expected that this research will presuppose that this is a view of how to use sarcastic humor in society and how it can be categorized as sarcasm. Practical benefits derived from this research could be for readers as well as researchers. To the reader, this study is expected as a means of shaping insights and references to multimodal research on humor and analysis, and to researchers as a subject to further library and reference, specialized in humor research and multimodal analysis.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Focusing on the study is to find the contributor to the sarcastic humor in the selected research video data. Seventeen videos have already been selected, and later the backup data of screenshots images will be included in the discussion. Here the writer will focus on the context and use The Language Metafunction theory (Halliday and Matthiesen, 2014), and supporting data of screenshot using the theory of The Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006).