

# Cartoon Memes as Media for Language Skills Learning Based on Character Education

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**Abstract.** *Social media frees its users to upload any photo or image which is then accompanied by a caption. The rise of the use of social media then sparked the emergence of creativity in the form of memes, both memes made from photographs of people, certain places and events, or those visualized through forms and or characterizations of cartoons. The nature of the meme itself is footage from television shows, films, etc. or homemade images that are modified by adding words or writings for humorous and entertaining purposes. The massive use of Instagram social media and the distribution of cartoon memes in it can be used as learning media. Teachers can use cartoon memes on social media as learning media that are not only able to improve student skills according to learning indicators but also become a means of strengthening student character education. The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of cartoon memes as media for learning writing skills. The chosen meme is a cartoon meme that is culturally charged and has good politeness.*

**Keywords:** *Character education, Learning media, Social media, Cartoon meme*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important thing in human life (Rekha, et.al, 2020). According to Law Number 20, 2003 about National Education System in article 3, it is mentioned that national education aims to develop the ability and to shape character and dignified nation civilization in the context of educating the life of the nation. Based on this law, it can be concluded that the purpose of national education is not only to develop the cognitive aspect, but also to optimize the development of student's attitudes, soft skills, and hard skill.

Students as the education subject have a crucial relationship with teachers. Pidarta (2013:11) said that teaching is helping students to develop and expand their abilities consciously and their roles as individuals, part of the society, and God's people. Related to the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum, the optimization of student's development is undertaken in three dimensions, namely attitude, cognitive, and skills. In addition to learning material related to cognitive domains, junior and senior high school students who are still in the development phase from adolescents to adults need to know and be equipped with character values, both for themselves and for optimizing their roles as members of society and God's creatures.

Character education is a process of internalizing the main traits in society into learners so that they can grow and develop into adults by the cultural values of the local community (Mustakim, 2011:29). Based on the government instruction, there are eighteen character values in learning, namely; (a) religious, (b) tolerant, (c) discipline, (d) hard work, (e) creative, (f) independent, (g) democratic, (h) curious, (i) nationalistic, (j) patriotic, (k) appreciative, (l) communicative, (m) peaceful, (n) like to read, (o) environmental care, (p) social care, and (q) responsible.

Welcoming the 21st century the giving of character values becomes an important and urgent thing to do immediately. Students are not sufficiently equipped with hard skills, but soft skills are also an important part. The role of schools as moral educators (character values) becomes even more vital when at present students get little moral teaching from parents, houses of worship, and the community (Lickona, 2013: 25). Whereas moral education or inculcation of

character values will be effective if carried out comprehensively and sustainably between parents (family), school, and society (environment).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *2.1 Cartoon Meme*

Nowadays, people use social media in doing their social activities. Communication through social media is considered more effective and it reveals memes phenomenon. These memes spread by renewing some exist memes. In other words, memes continually replicate through a certain habit or idea so that it becomes a repetitive pattern and ultimately forms a cultural pattern on a large scale. However, the memes' characters are not only replicate, but they also undergo evolution process or change over time, and at the same time the memes also try to survive from the new memes.

Memes contain text or pictures (facial expressions, gestures, etc). The presence of memes is used by speakers as a means to express themselves through humor and accompanied by supporting images. Memes can be understood as photos or pictures that are written for a specific purpose and are mostly used as entertainment. The widespread use of memes in social media has led to many variations of these memes. The sentence uniqueness and the appropriate images make the memes able to entertain the reader. Memes on the internet appear in the form of images that are modified or replicated and accompanied by writing. Meme media is imitation (ideas, songs, feelings, etc.) that is showed through the media (pictures) aiming to clarify the meaning, creating a situation, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of learning (Grundlingh, 2017; Amri, 2018; Gumelar, et.all, 2018; Achsani, 2019).

### *2.2 Character Education*

Research on character education through literary and non-literary texts has been carried out by previous researchers. The ways to build individual character can be implemented in learning materials and learning models. One of them is using literary learning. Literary learning affects instructional that is the core competence and basic competence are achieved. The use of text as a medium of learning in schools has a secondary impact, namely the creation of an atmosphere created by teachers and students through the learning media in the form of internalization of character education values according to the contents of the text used. Those impacts, both instructional and escort impacts will be achieved through a good learning atmosphere (Kusmarwantini, 2012; Tahrur, 2017; Ernawati, 2018; Assidik, et.all, 2019).

The continuation of character education in higher education is necessary to preserve and strengthen the character that has been shaped in the previous levels of education (Novianti, 2017). In line with the research, Suryaman (2010) explained that one of the important aspects of appropriate literature learning is character education. Based on the results of several studies, some conclusions can be drawn. First, essential literature is a medium of mental and intellectual enlightenment, the most important aspect of character education. Second, there are a variety of literary works that need appreciating as they are important in character development. Third, literature learning is relevant to the character development that is the way enables learners to develop their awareness of reading and writing as important prerequisites for character development.

### *2.3 Learning Media*

The essence of teaching and learning activities is a process of communication between teachers and students (Assidik, 2018). The communication process is realized through the delivery and exchange of messages or information between teachers and students. The messages can be in the form of knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas, experience, and so on. To avoid errors in communication, we need a tool that helps the communication process. It called the media. Sadiman et.all (2011) stated that learning media is anything that can be used to distribute messages from the sender to the recipient so that it can stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, concerns, and interests so that the learning process occurs. Based on the explanation from the two experts, it can be concluded that the media is everything that can be used by teachers and students to achieve learning objectives. Something that is easy and leads to the achievement of goals. Besides, something can enrich the horizons and open the horizons of scientific knowledge of students. Thus,

it can be concluded that the film also meets the criteria as a learning medium.

### **3. METHODS**

This research method is a qualitative descriptive study. The data collection technique used by the researcher is using a free and involved method, that is, the researcher reads to the data without being involved in the data collection process (Mastoyo, 2007, pg.27). The data collection phase needs to be done to obtain research data. The data will be analyzed at a later stage, namely research data analysis. Furthermore, data analysis will be carried to describe the implementation of cartoon memes as a medium for learning writing skills. The method used the distributional method, the analysis of the determinant is in the language. The data sources were cartoon meme accounts on Instagram, including the @mrci.id account (Meme & Rage Comic Indonesia) and @memecomic.id. Data analysis was performed on memes in January-Juli 2020.

### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research process, the results of research and discussion are categorized into two things, namely (a) the implementation of cartoon memes as media for language skills learning, (b) discussion.

#### *4.1 Implementation of Cartoon Memes as Learning Media*

Based on the latest report of We Are Social, in 2020 it was stated that there were 175.4 million internet users in Indonesia. Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of 17% or 25 million internet users in this country. Based on Indonesia's total population of 272.1 million, this means that 64% half of Indonesia's population access to cyberspace. In this report, it is also known that currently there are 338.2 million Indonesian people use mobile phones. Moreover, there are 160 million active users of social media (Haryanto, 2020). The data become a reference that social media and all the contents in it are already familiar in the daily lives of Indonesia's young generation, especially for students.

Based on this fact, the teacher as a dynamic facilitator can utilize social media as a learning medium. Teachers must put themselves in the condition that social media does not always have negative impacts on students' cognitive development and skills, but it must be able to improve students' abilities and make learning more interesting. One of the things that can be used by teachers is the rise of cartoon memes on Instagram that is popular with students. The cartoon memes can be used as learning media for Indonesian or English language in writing and speaking skills.

Writing and speaking skills become a scourge for most students. Writing and speaking skills are necessary for students in this industrial revolution 4.0 era. In the 2013 curriculum, the role of habitual writing increasingly occupies a central position in modern life. If there is no habitual writing, the flow of communication and information will be stuck so that people will be trapped in backwardness and ignorance. It was caused by the interruption of the development of science and technology. The difficulty of students doing writing activities at school or the inaccuracy in choosing learning media to write is a factor that causes failure learning at school in making writing to be a student's habit. It is possible if learning to write becomes a boring activity for students. An alternative that can be used by teachers is by using interesting, interactive learning media and familiar in student's daily life. Therefore, one of them can be done by using cartoon memes on social media. The selection of the cartoon memes must be adjusted to the cognitive level of the students and must be ensured to have a positive politeness content and the value of character education.

The results of the study found that the following cartoon and comic memes can be used as alternative media for learning Indonesian or English language in writing and speaking aspects.

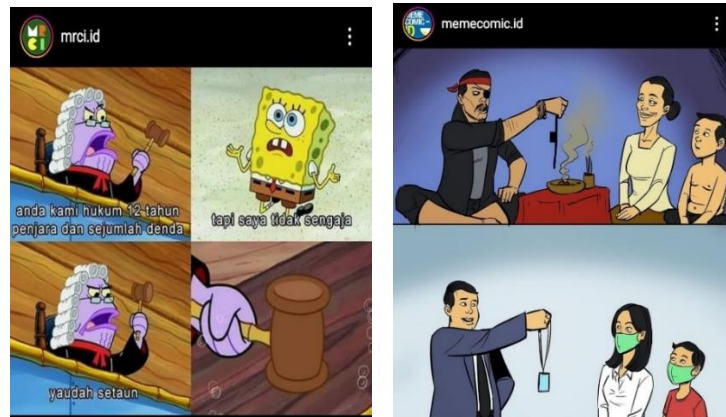


Figure 1. Memes in @mrcl.id and @memecomic.id

Figure 1 is an alternative meme that can be used as a learning media. The selection of memes used as learning media must contain four elements of good learning media, namely (a) content, (b) communication, (c) cognition, and (d) culture. In filling the content element, memes must represent the contents of a text that is contextual and related to the learning material. Besides, the content of meme is also sought to internalize the value of character education. Furthermore, the element of communication is related to the level of readability for students. The meme is not only has a lingual element, but also a picture element and the level of readability. The level of readability concerns how students can grasp the implicature and implied intent of the meme.

The third element is the level of student cognition. A meme in Figure 1 is certainly not suitable when used as a learning media for elementary school students. It is caused by the implicit and lingual intentions in the meme that are related to the political situation and national news that is happening right now. The memes can be interpreted differently by students depending on the level of cognition and their prior knowledge. This is an interesting situation because one picture of the same meme will be differently defined or written by students. The final element in the selection of instructional media that must be considered is about culture. Every meme that is used as a learning medium is pursued by Indonesian culture as a means to internalize cultural values and strengthen the national vibes. On the other hand, it is feared that the selection of memes that are not suitable for the cultural background of the student will lead to misunderstanding or failure to represent the intent of the meme.

The meme from the @ mrcl.id account contains satire of the legal process that is happening in Indonesia. The issue talks about the legal process for the case of Baswedan Novel. The public prosecutor handed down a one-year prison sentence for two defendants who were members of the National Police. The petition was due to the Prosecutor, the perpetrator did not intentionally commit the act. The ruling suddenly caused various responses and perceptions of the Indonesian people. This event became an inspiration for the @ mrcl.id to create memes with a similar theme. The memes contain four elements of good learning media selection, namely the content, communication, cognition, and culture element. In terms of content, the meme is appropriate with the news contextually. The content does not diverge politeness in communication. The memes that represent the news also ignite the students' high-level critical thinking in understanding and responding to the paradigm of governance and law in Indonesia. From the aspect of communication, the language used can be easily understood by students. The readability will certainly be captured differently by each student depending on the prior knowledge that has been previously owned by the student. At the level of cognition and culture level, the meme from the @ mrcl.id has fulfilled the appropriate level of cognition for high school and cultural students in Indonesia. High school students are believed to have understood the implied context of the meme.

The next picture is a meme from the @ memecomic.id. The meme account uploads an empty meme without any sentence. The goal, of course, is the people/ followers can interpret with a variety of things as well as bait the creativity of them to fill the meme image by their understanding. The content of the meme correlates with the news that is familiar and raises the pros and cons of the community. The Ministry of Agriculture through the Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (Balitbangtan) recently made a necklace product made from

eucalyptus which is claimed to dispel the COVID-19 virus. However, the necklace has not been tested preclinically and clinically to kill the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which causes Covid-19. It becomes the spotlight that the project of developing the eucalyptus necklace product can exterminate Covid-19. In the meme's picture, the communication aspect depends on the student's view. It is because the meme's picture is empty without any lingual factor.

The elements of cognition and culture are certainly relevant to the conditions of Indonesian society. Students are invited to think critically to correlate the picture of two people (mother and child) who are dealing with a shaman. The picture is easily guessed by students because it is relevant to the cultural understanding of the student's background. In Indonesia, people often visited shamans who were believed to be able to treat various diseases through spells and amulets. The picture is then juxtaposed with a similar picture, namely two people (mother and child) with a more modern appearance and wearing a mask facing a man who wears a suit and offers a necklace. Noting the uploading time of the meme, of course, the second picture represents a government representative who offered a eucalyptus necklace to people who were infected with the Covid-19 virus. This condition is represented by the figure of the mother and child wearing a mask. Because the four elements of learning media selection have been fulfilled, the meme can be used as a learning medium

#### 4.2 Discussion

Cartoon memes as learning media can be implemented in language learning of speaking and writing skills. Many factors affect students' ability to speak, one of them is self-confidence. The lack of confidence in students is usually seen from their ability to respond and express all the stimulation they receive from the teacher and the learning environment. The response is generally in the form of students lacking confidence in speaking or expressing their opinions verbally in public. Lack of confidence in students in expressing their opinions can be caused by learning patterns that only emphasize the material or conceptual, without considering students' capability. In addition, the lack of teachers' creativity in providing stimulation that leads to the verbal activity of students. Thus, the solution, in this case, is that the teacher further optimizes student activities by motivating and providing positive stimuli that allow students to express their opinions confidently. Also, it is necessary to provide reinforcement, especially in psychological aspects. This reinforcement is needed to appreciate the student's effort.

Teachers can improve learning techniques or choose the most effective learning techniques in the class. Also, some stimuli such as giving questions, asking questions or opinions are applied to make students speak bravely. Moreover, the phenomenon that appears is students tend to speak in a low voice. The phenomenon of students speaking in a very low voice is due to a lack of confidence, shame, and fear in speaking. The lack of students' chance in speaking affects how they deliver the speech. The fact is students speak in a very low voice. This phenomenon can be overcome by giving adequate practices to students. Students will get used to speaking. Thus, their vocals can be well managed and dare to speak. In increasing their level of speech, it can be done by applying learning techniques that are appropriate to existing learning topics and accompanied by cartoon memes as learning media.

The idea of using cartoon memes as media for learning to speak is supported by Sukidi (2016) research. His result (2016) explained an increase in the ability to tell stories using pictures as learning media. The study concluded that the use of picture learning media can improve the learning process and the ability to tell stories for students. Visual media in the learning process can develop visual abilities, develop children's imagination, help children's mastery of abstract things or events that might not be presented to the classroom, and develop student personalities. This is very possible because by observing, looking at images as visual media, it can activate a variety of student senses. Especially the sense of sight, then the power of thought and reason that will develop to the sense of taste, listen, touch, and others.

The effectiveness of cartoon memes as learning media is also supported by Sari's research (2018). The meme picture that is currently being used in social media can be the right choice for learning writing. The 2013 Curriculum is oriented text-based learning. Memes are illustrative images as a tool to express culture in the political, educational, social, and others. Caricature and meme are visual media and they have some similarities. A caricature is an image in the form of satire, criticism whose scope is only in the political world, while the meme has a broader scope, namely about things that

happen in society.

In applying learning which uses cartoon memes as the media, the students can share their own experiences with their friends. Students can tell a series of events based on certain pictures. They have the ability in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and storytelling. The speaking skills that can be improved is not only the ability to tell the story but also the speech or other speaking skills based on core competencies and basic competencies in the curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion it can be concluded that cartoon memes can be an alternative medium for learning writing and speaking skills in schools. The choice of cartoon memes used must contain the elements of (a) content, (b) communication, (c) cognition, and (d) culture. The use of cartoon memes as a learning medium needs to be supported by the selection of appropriate learning strategies. Besides, to improve speaking and writing skills, the use of cartoon memes as a learning medium is also an alternative to internalizing character values and as a stimulus for students' critical thinking abilities.

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