

## SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF MEMES ON IMGUR APP

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### ABSTRACT

Meme is an idea, behaviour, or style that spreads through imitation from person to person within a culture. Memes are frequently based on a recognizable format that can be modified and personalized with different captions, images, or variations. This can lead to the creation of new meanings with multiple interpretations. They can be humorous, satirical, or thought-provoking. Memes are full of signs and symbols, such as the image itself, text captions, any visual elements, pop culture references, and so on, and semiotics can help understand how these individual signs and symbols interact to create a broader meaning. The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning through Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. This study focused on analyzing the verbal and nonverbal signs, denotative and connotative meaning. The data used in this analysis is meme pictures that have been collected from an app. The method used in this study is qualitative because there is no numerical value. The findings revealed that there are 58 different types of signs, including 36 verbal and 22 nonverbal signs. Additionally, there are 22 denotative and connotative meanings in the memes. According to the findings of this study, verbal signs are more dominant than nonverbal signs.

*Keywords: Memes, Semiotic, Roland Barthes*

### INTRODUCTION

A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that spreads through imitation within a culture, attributed to evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (1976). In the context of the internet, memes are humorous images, videos, text, or GIFs distributed online, particularly through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. These memes can be humorous, satirical, or thought-provoking, often incorporating current or pop culture references.

The popularity of memes on social media is not solely due to users

gathering information about popular memes. However, users who find themselves drawn to meme images and captions are likely to repost or re-upload them, leading to offensive memes that are not limited to social media users but are increasingly affecting the general public (Nugraha et al., 2015).

Semiotic analysis is a meme analysis method that studies signs and symbols, such as words, images, sounds, gestures, objects, and actions, to convey meaning. Saussure (1916) categorizes signs into signifiers (elements) and signifieds (concepts or ideas), examining their relationships and interpretations across different contexts and cultures.

There are several concepts of semiotic analysis through the lens of several key studies. Firstly, Sonya Ayu Kumala (2021) analyzed the material culture of Cina Benteng marriage traditions reflect historical, cultural, and identity memories through their meanings. The study uses qualitative approach, ethnography, archeology, and semiotics studies. This study also highlights the relevance of Cina Benteng culture to modern life and its ability to adapt to other cultures. Secondly, Muhammad Tsabit Fiddin (2022) analyzed using semiotic analysis to identify the signifiers and signified, also the denotative and connotative meaning of the memes in bitcoin memes. He used Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Thirdly, Fitria Arafah, Dohra Fitriasia, Siti Sarah Fitriani, & Fathimath Shaheema (2023) investigated the signs appearing on the names of Acehnese online newspaper using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs. Finally, Saleha & Mia Rahmawati Yuwita (2023) analyzed using semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce to determine the semiotic meaning of the traffic sign symbol Dead End based on the meaning of color, shape, and also the meaning represented by the word Dead End itself. These three studies provide a strong foundation for understanding how semiotic analysis can be used to reveal the complex interplay of signs, meaning, and power.

Semiotics is a tool used to study the signs and symbols that create memes, including images, text captions, visual elements, and pop culture references. It helps understand how these symbols interact to create meaning and considers

the cultural context in which the meme is interpreted.

Internet memes, according to Daniel Chandler (2007), are a collection of visual and verbal signs that carry cultural significance, conveying shared experiences or reference points for a specific online community. Semiotic analysis can reveal underlying myths and ideologies within these signs.

Since 2009, Imgur has been a popular app with 300 million monthly users and billions of views. It features funniest images, memes, GIFs, and visual stories. According to Gizmodo, as one of the "100 websites that shaped the internet as we know it," Imgur has significantly influenced online culture, communication, and entertainment. Its popularity stems from its role as a platform for sharing and discovering images and GIFs, which have become essential components of online communication.

From the explanation above, the researcher would like to analyze memes using semiotic theory of Roland Barthes. This study focused on analyzing signs, denotative and connotative meaning of the memes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Creswell (2012) distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research involves measuring phenomena and transforming it into numerical data for analysis, while qualitative research focuses on understanding the "why" behind phenomena through descriptions, observations, and interviews, capturing

rich, detailed data. Both methods aim to gather objective findings. This study employs a qualitative research method for data analysis. The data itself will consist of a combination of images and texts. In this study the researcher used a semiotic approach by Roland Barthes to uncover the meanings contained in this data.

There are two main classifications of data types, primary data and secondary data. Primary data is directly collected by the researcher through methods like interviews, observations, questionnaires, and experiments, while secondary data is obtained from existing sources like books, journals, articles, reports, and websites, which are the two main classifications of data types (Sugiyono, 2017). This study used secondary data obtained from an app and consist of both images and texts.

The data of this study are memes which in the form of images and texts. The memes analyzed in this study were collected from Imgur, an app known for aggregating and showcasing user-created memes. By focusing on memes collected from this platform, the research captures a diverse range of perspectives and ensures the data reflects current online trends.

The technique data analysis, the first is collecting data from the app name Imgur. After that, the researcher identified the verbal and nonverbal signs. Next, the researcher analyzed the literal meaning (denotation) and implied associations (connotation) of each word using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Finally, the researcher concludes by

summarizing the findings and their significance.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the meaning of verbal and nonverbal signs along with denotative and connotative meaning, which found in memes.

### Data 1

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"Are you busy?"

- No

\*Incoming call\*



#### A. Verbal Sign:

1. "Are you busy?"
2. "No"
3. Incoming call

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A man with 2 different expressions, the left picture with a flat expression, the right picture with an annoyed expression.

#### C. Denotative:

The sentence "Are you busy?" is a question asking about someone's availability. The word "No" is a one-word negation indicating that the recipient is not busy. The last phrase \*Incoming call\* is literally indicating that there is an incoming phone call. The picture shows two different facial expressions of a man.

#### D. Connotative:

The picture reflects the attitude of the person shown in the picture. The first picture on the left when he is being asked whether he is busy or not and he

answered that he is not busy and he didn't show any facial expression, he is like answering the question with his "ordinary" expression. The second picture on the right after he answered that he is not busy and then there is an incoming phone call, his facial expression changed and showed that he feels bothered because of the incoming call. It implies that even though the man answered he is not busy, it does not mean that someone can bother him.

### Data 2



#### A. Verbal Sign:

1. "We will"
2. "No, I Will"
3. "You Mike"

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

Two boys with different expressions, the boy in a blue jacket shows a confident expression and the boy in a yellow flannel shows a thoughtful expression.

#### C. Denotative:

The first phrase "We will" could indicate a promise, a statement of intent, or a group decision, the second phrase "No, I Will" expresses disagreement followed by the statement of the second speaker, the third phrase "You Mike" identifies a person named Mike and might be directing a statement towards them. The

picture shows two boys are having a conversation.

#### D. Connotative:

This is a scene from the Netflix series "Stranger Things". The first boy who is wearing a blue jacket and the second boy who is wearing a yellow flannel shirt are having a conversation. The second boy shows disagreement with the first boy's statement and said "No, I Will" when the first boy said "We will", it is because the second boy who has the real name "Will" is thinking that the "We will" phrase indicate that they're both named "Will" so the boy who named Will correct the first boy and said "You Mike" because the first boy's name is Mike not Will.

### Data 3

\*Normal people separate their colours when doing washing\*

Me:



#### A. Verbal Sign:

1. \*Normal people separate their colors when doing washing\*
2. Me

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A girl throwing clothes into a washing machine.

#### C. Denotative:

The phrase \*Normal people separate their colors when doing laundry\* means the most of people sort their laundry by color before washing it. This is done to prevent colors from bleeding from one

clothe to another. The word “me” means the person referring to themselves and it indicates that “me” is the girl in a picture, the picture shows a girl is throwing clothes into a washing machine.

**D. Connotative:**

The phrase is based on the assumption that sorting laundry by color is common practice. This implies that not distinguishing colors is unusual or incorrect. This can come across as judgmental, as if those who don't separate their laundry are disorganized or unaware of proper laundry procedures. The picture reflects the person's habit when doing laundry. The girl in a picture throwing the clothes implying that she is lack of care or tidiness, and she throwing them also could express a desire to be done with them quickly.

**Data 4**



**A. Verbal Sign:**

1. "2024 is gonna be my year"
2. Me in June

**B. Nonverbal Sign:**

A boy lying on the bed with his phone

**C. Denotative:**

The first phrase "2024 is gonna be my year" is a statement expressing a hope or belief that the year of 2024 will be a

positive one for the person. The second phrase "Me in June" means the person referring to themselves and indicates that "me" is the boy in a picture. The picture shows a boy lying on the bed with his phone.

**D. Connotative:**

This reflects the person's year in 2024 who said "2024 is gonna be my year" while the picture shown there is a boy being lazy on the bed while playing his phone in June. It implies the person's life during the 2024, from the early year until in the middle of the year which there is no any good results from the moment he said "2024 is gonna be my year," because when he said that it means he hopes something good will happen to him, but the fact there is nothing happened. He supposed to be doing something else, like homework or chores, lying on the bed with his phone suggests he is putting things off. It could also indicate that he is overly reliant on his phone and struggles to disengage.

**Data 5**

me after eating a family sized bag of cheese puffs



**A. Verbal Sign:**

Me after eating a family sized bag of cheese puffs

**B. Nonverbal Sign:**

A cat with 4 different moves

C. Denotative:

The phrase “me after eating a family sized bag of cheese puffs” describes an action of the person after consuming an entire large bag of snack. The picture shows a cat licking its paw.

D. Connotative:

The picture shows the cat licking his paw, this could be interpreted as cats are very clean animal. They will lick their fingers after eating and it is a natural way to groom themselves, which can be interpreted as a sign of relaxation and enjoyment. The cat reflects the person after eating snack. He did exactly the same thing as the cat did, he licking his fingers that full of remaining snack crumbs instead of washing his hand.

**Data 6**

What I want... What I can...



A. Verbal Sign:

1. What I want
2. What I can

B. Nonverbal Sign:

Two women staring at different thing in a different place

C. Denotative:

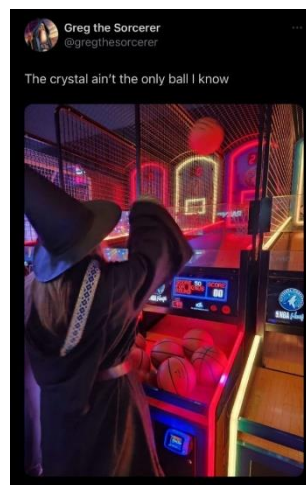
The first phrase “What I want” expresses a person’s desire or goal and the second phrase “What I can” expresses a person’s ability or capacity. The picture shows two

women in a different place and they are also staring a different thing on their left.

D. Connotative:

The first picture on the left is the woman who is looking at the view of Eiffel Tower in Paris, France through the airplane window, it means the woman is in holiday. The second picture on the right is the woman who is looking at the laundry machine at the laundry room in her house, it means she is doing house chores. The picture reflects the “I” life, the phrase above the first picture indicates that the “I” have a desire or ambition to go to holiday, while the phrase above the second picture indicates the reality of “I” who is only able to do house chores which is laundry instead of go to holiday.

**Data 7**



A. Verbal Sign:

The crystal ain’t the only ball I know

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A girl throwing a basketball

C. Denotative:

The sentence “The crystal ain’t the only ball I know” is a statement by someone who not only knows about crystal ball but also knows about other balls. The

picture shows a girl in a black cloak and black hat throwing a basketball.

D. Connotative:

The picture implies the girl is disguised as a sorcerer while playing basketball. She said "the crystal ain't the only ball I know" means as a sorcerer she also knows other ball besides crystal ball.

#### Data 8

Single moms be like:  
"Happy Father's Day  
to me"



A. Verbal Sign:

Single moms be like: "Happy Father's Day to me"

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A woman with a man's face

C. Denotative:

The phrase "Single moms be like: "Happy Father's Day to me"" means a single mother is acknowledging she fulfilled both parental roles and celebrate Father's Day for herself. The picture shows a woman in a man face with her one hand on her chest.

D. Connotative:

In line with the stereotypes discussed in BWSS's article 'The Single Mother Battle on Stereotypes,' single moms are often stereotyped as facing exhaustion, financial hardship, and having low self-esteem. The picture implies to all single

mothers on Father's Day. The hand on the chest suggests a bittersweet sentiment or burden. The phrase "Happy Father's Day to me" that she said to herself, which can be interpreted as her pride carrying out the dual responsibilities while also being strong and capable parent for their children's lives.

#### Data 9

When you tell your parents a joke and  
it turns into a lecture



A. Verbal Sign:

When you tell your parents a joke and it turns into a lecture

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A little boy with his hand on his head

C. Denotative:

The phrase "When you tell your parents a joke and it turns into a lecture" describes a situation in which someone attempts to tell their parents a humorous joke, but the parents respond with a lengthy explanation or reprimand. The picture shows a little boy leaning back with his one hand on his head.

D. Connotative:

The phrase "a joke turns into a lecture" means the joke is not accepted or considered as jokes by the parents, however parents think the joke is not funny at all. According to the article

“Researchers find older folks don’t get the joke” by WashU, there is a noticeable generation gap in humor. This is often why parents don’t fully understand their children’s jokes, as cultural references, slang, and emerging trends can bridge the generation gap. The picture reflects to the person who experienced it. The little boy in the picture shows guiltiness because he is getting a lecture by his parents after telling the joke. Young generations usually tell a joke to their friends that maybe very mean, but they found it funny even though it’s negative. So, it is why parents give lecture to their children to not tell an offensive or negative jokes anymore.

#### Data 10

When you’re watching a movie with your siblings and an ugly character appears



#### A. Verbal Sign:

1. When you’re watching a movie with your siblings and an ugly character appears
2. That’s you

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A man pointing at something in front of him

#### C. Denotative:

The first phrase “When you’re watching a movie with your siblings and an ugly character appears” describes a situation while watching a movie with siblings when a character with an unpleasant

appearance appears on screen. The second phrase “That’s you” means you are the person being referred to. The picture shows a man pointing at something in front of him.

#### D. Connotative:

The picture reflects to every sibling who experienced it. Sometimes every sibling likes to teasing at each other mostly using characters in a movie as a playful jab, even though the character is not look alike but as long as they think the person is ugly or has a bad appearance, they will immediately point their finger at the character on the screen and say “that’s you” to their sibling just want to teasing them. Teasing siblings is a common and often enjoyable experience for those who have them. As explored in the Newsweek article ‘Child Development: How Brothers and Sisters Shape Our Sense of Humor,’ sibling interactions can play an important role in developing a sense of humor. Sibling bonds can be formed through playful jokes and teasing, which can be amusing, especially when one observes the other’s reactions.

#### Data 11

sometimes I’m late because I sit like this for a long time.



#### A. Verbal Sign:

sometimes I’m late because I sit like this for a long time

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A cartoon character sitting on the bed.

C. Denotative:

The sentence "sometimes I'm late because I sit like this for a long time" means that the person is occasionally late because they spend a significant amount of time sitting in one position. The picture shows a cartoon character sitting on the bed.

D. Connotative:

The picture depicts Bart Simpson, a character from the animated TV series The Simpsons. The sentence "sometimes I'm late because I sit like this for a long time." conveys a sense of procrastination and waste of time. This picture reflects people's habits every morning after waking up from sleep. Sitting like Bart, zoned out and lost in thought, can lead to lateness or missed deadlines.

**Data 12**

When you hear your own voice in a recording



A. Verbal Sign:

When you hear your own voice in a recording

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A man throwing up.

C. Denotative:

The phrase "When you hear your own voice in a recording" describes the act of a person hearing and perceiving their own voice after it has been captured and played back through a recording device. The picture shows a man throwing up.

D. Connotative:

The picture depicts a common experience. There is must be a time for some people to hear their own voice in a recording, and the time they hear it, it feels a bit strange and cringe to the ears. This can be a confusing experience because they might be thinking they sound weird or have a bad voice until they want to throw up because they do not like their own voice.

**Data 13**



A. Verbal Sign:

1. "I can't wait for my day off"
2. Me on my day off

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A skull lying on its stomach on the sofa.

C. Denotative:

The first phrase "I can't wait for my day off" is the person's statement indicating that they will not be working and are looking forward to it eagerly. The second phrase "Me on my day off" means the person referring to themselves and indicates that "me" is the skull in a picture. The picture shows a skull lying on its stomach on the sofa.

D. Connotative:

Day off is a day when every people waiting, because they can do whatever they want, they can spend their time

doing something they like or maybe the same as in the picture. The picture reflects to every person who always waiting for their day off of school or work. Sometimes people waiting for their day off is just want to being lazy at home and do nothing, because it is one of the ways of recharging their energy from a full week of doing tiring activities.

#### Data 14

##### After losing a cat\*



#### A. Verbal Sign:

1. After losing a cat
2. Cat owner
3. That lost cat

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A man crying and a cat raising its two front legs.

#### C. Denotative:

The first phrase "After losing a cat" means that the cat is no longer in the possession or care of the previous owner. The second phrase "Cat owner" means someone who owns a cat. The third phrase "That lost cat" means a cat that is currently missing. The left picture shows a man crying and the right picture shows a cat in a room of crowd people standing and the cat raising its two front legs.

#### D. Connotative:

The picture implies that the cat is happy to be free of its owner, can be seen in a picture on the right the cat is in a room with a lot of people and a disco ball in the ceiling so it suggests that the cat is dancing, while the owner is sad about losing their pet, can be seen in a picture on the left the man crying. This highlights the stereotype that cats are aloof and independent creatures, it may also represent that cats want their freedom, while humans form strong emotional bonds with their pets.

#### Data 15



#### A. Verbal Sign:

Bambo

#### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A cartoon deer with a man's body

#### C. Denotative:

The word "Bambo" could be a name or nickname of something in a specific context. The picture shows a deer in a man body holding a rocket launcher.

#### D. Connotative:

The word "Bambo" is an abbreviation of "Bambi" and "Rambo". Bambi is a cartoon deer from Disney movie and Rambo is a movie character played by Sylvester

Stallone who is well-known for his action and military expertise. The picture indicates Bambi and Rambo in one body as the head is a deer and the body is human, so it became “Bambo”.

#### Data 16

The potato  
my mom  
peeled

The potato  
I peeled



A. Verbal Sign:

1. The potato my mom peeled
2. The potato I peeled

B. Nonverbal Sign:

Two buildings with different shapes

C. Denotative:

The first phrase “The potato my mom peeled” means the action of someone which is a mom who is removed the outer skin of the potato. The second phrase “The potato I peeled” means the action of the person referring to themselves removed the potato skin. The picture shows there are two buildings with different shapes. The left building is The Gherkin, a famous skyscraper in London, while the right building is Allianz Tower, located in Istanbul, Turkey.

D. Connotative:

The two phrases express a comparison of actions and the picture refers to the results of the actions. The first phrase and the left picture refer to a mom who peeled a potato nicely. The left picture shows a skyscraper name The Gherkin,

known for its cucumber shape, it refers to a potato being peeled by a mom, because typically a mom peels a potato in a symmetrical way, like removing the skin evenly. The second phrase and the right picture shows a building name Allianz Tower, it refers to a person who tried to peel a potato skin but leave it with jagged edges or uneven shape.

#### Data 17



Genuine apple watch

A. Verbal Sign:

Genuine apple watch

B. Nonverbal Sign:

An apple watch

C. Denotative:

The phrase “Genuine apple watch” means the watch is real and not a fake. The picture shows an apple watch on someone’s wrist.

D. Connotative:

The picture shows an apple fruit shaped into a watch. It implies the real apple watch that is from the real apple fruit, not the one that under the Apple brand. This DIY creation is a much more affordable alternative to the overpriced Apple Watch, which can cost upwards of \$400 to \$1,000. It’s more environmentally friendly and definitely more unique option.

**Data 18**

How I dress up  
my video game  
character

Me dressing  
myself



**A. Verbal Sign:**

1. How I dress up my video game character
2. Me dressing myself

**B. Nonverbal Sign:**

A cartoon cat with a different appearance

**C. Denotative:**

The first phrase "How I dress up my video game character" means the action of the person referring to themselves when playing a video game and dressing up the character in a video game. The second phrase "Me dressing myself" means the action of the person when dressing themselves. The picture shows a cartoon cat with a different appearance.

**D. Connotative:**

The phrases and the pictures express a comparison of someone dressing up the character in a video game and themselves in real life. The left picture shows the cartoon cat wearing a butler uniform and it looks great, while the right picture shows the cartoon cat wearing torn clothes. The picture reflects to everyone who always making their character in a video game look cool, great, and wealthy, while they rarely dressing up themselves same as they did to the character. There is a lot of reasons but usually it is because they do not have

much of looking-good clothes or they lazy to dress up well.

**Data 19**

Me trying to remember something  
important which I was about to say  
10 seconds ago



**A. Verbal Sign:**

Me trying to remember something important which I was about to say 10 seconds ago

**B. Nonverbal Sign:**

A man with two different moves and the man frowning his face

**C. Denotative:**

The sentence describes a situation in which someone is struggling to remember something important that they were about to say. The picture shows a man with 2 different moves, the left picture the man is about to fist his hand and the right picture the man is already fist his hand in front of his mouth, and his frowning his face.

**D. Connotative:**

There is a time when people trying to say something, but in the sudden they forget what they were about to say, and they are forcing themselves to remember it. Forgetting something important is very annoying. The picture reflects every people who always experiencing the situation, the man frowning his face and fist his hand implies the madness and annoyance because of the situation.

### Data 20

When I'm starving and they tell me  
"wait let's take a picture"



A. Verbal Sign:

When I'm starving and they tell me "wait let's take a picture"

B. Nonverbal Sign:

An old man holding a cutlery

C. Denotative:

The phrase describes a situation in which someone who is referring to themselves is extremely hungry and wishes to eat, but someone else interrupt them to delay eating in order to take a picture first. The picture shows an old man holding a cutlery.

D. Connotative:

The phrase implies of someone being inconvenienced for a seemingly unimportant reason when their basic needs are not being met. The old man looks frowning his face and not smiling, when someone said "wait let's take a picture first" it implies that he is annoyed because someone interrupt him when he is very hungry and about to eat.

### Data 21



A. Verbal Sign:

I wish I was a cat, no school, no work, just meow meow

B. Nonverbal Sign:

A cat lying down

C. Denotative:

The phrase expresses someone's desire to be a cat because there are no absences or obligations, such as school and work. The picture shows a cat lying down and close its eyes.

D. Connotative:

Cats are frequently stereotyped as carefree and independent animals who spend their days napping, playing, and grooming themselves. The phrase "no school, no work, just meow meow" implies that cats' life is leisurely and easy. As explained by PetMD in their article 'Why Do Cats Sleep So Much?' Cats' sleep habits have their roots in their evolutionary past and enable them to preserve energy. The picture is likely to be associated with those who are feeling stressed or overwhelmed by responsibility. It implies that a simple life, free of the stress of school and work, might be better.

## Data 22

Them: So what do you do for fun?

Me:



### A. Verbal Sign:

1. Them: So what do you do for fun?
2. Me:

### B. Nonverbal Sign:

A man cartoon sitting on the sofa while crossing his leg and holding a cup

### C. Denotative:

The sentence "Them: So what do you do for fun?" is a question asking about someone's activities or hobbies they usually do in their free time. The word "me" means the person referring to themselves. The picture shows a man cartoon sitting on the sofa, crossing his leg and holding a cup.

### D. Connotative:

The picture shows a man sitting on the sofa in a living room and he might be watching TV, because there is a TV remote on the table. It reflects every people who always being asked about what they usually do for fun, but actually is they do nothing, in terms of activities that drain their energy. Sitting on the sofa and watching TV can be considered as a fun activity.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter will be concluded and concisely present the data analysis and the result that have been obtained in the previous chapter. The purpose of this study to identifying the verbal and nonverbal sign of memes, and the denotative and connotative meaning as well.

The researcher analyzed the verbal and nonverbal signs of 22 meme pictures, revealing that memes represent hidden messages. The researcher found 58 signs, including words, phrases, and sentences, which convey humor to the reader. Verbal signs are used to convey messages in the form of words to the public. Nonverbal signs included images, expressions, and backgrounds. The denotative meanings are basic and lack emotions, while the connotative meanings aim to dismantle hidden meanings. The study suggests that memes play a crucial role in conveying hidden messages.

Memes can serve as a coping mechanism in everyday lives, providing humor and a sense of community when dealing with problems. They can also be used to express complex emotions, such as frustration or anxiety, in an understandable and concise. Memes can also spark conversations about important issues, turning a laugh into a starting point for more in-depth discussions.

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