CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Different presidential elections systems exist in Asia were typically separated into two categories, namely direct and indirect election system. In each case, the winner is the candidate who receives the greatest number of votes or percentage, regardless of the exact figure. The two-round system moves on to the next round if no one has met the qualifications. The pair with the highest number of votes is the elected president (*Kompas.id*).

Currently, president election in Indonesia separated into two indirect methods: the first is the election of the president and vice president by members of parliament. Before direct presidential and vice presidential elections were introduced in Indonesia in 2004, this system was put into place through the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Second, the Electoral College system: the US adopted this system. Each electoral unit's votes are counted. The winning party in each state then receives all of the electoral votes in the relevant electoral district *(Kompas.id)*. In Indonesia 2024 recently, there were 3 presidential candidates and their vice presidential candidates, the first were H. Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Ph.D. and Dr. (H.C) H. A. Muhaimin Iskandar. The second were H. Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. The third were H. Ganjar Pranowo, S.H., M.I.P and Prof. Dr. H. M. Mahfud MD.

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Just like elections in various other countries, Indonesia also has presidential and vice presidential debates which can be watched by the Indonesian people via television, YouTube and social media. Starting from the presidential and vice presidential debate, Indonesian people have a way to make formal and competitive debates and attacks on each other into jokes that are made into memes by Indonesian people. In the midst of increasingly heated political competition at the elite level, citizens (netizens) are creatively "reducing political tension" by providing funny and intriguing political memes. For many netizens, especially young ones, elite political competition does not have to be taken too seriously.

Before the elections are held in Indonesia on February 14, 2024, the presidential candidates and their deputies have their winning teams and their parallelism supporting parties. Their winning teams and the people who have the choice to choose one of them will usually promote their presidential candidate through social media. On social media, such as Twitter (X) and Instagram, a lot of memes are popping up. For example in twitter account *@partaimedsos45*, this account makes a lot of memes about presidential and vice presidential candidates. Therefore, not only promoting through this, memes on social media were also created by Indonesian people after they watched a presidential candidates debate, for example *@rdavid_99* account in twitter make a meme of vice presidential candidate number 02 Gibran whose his face was edited and added into the Shiva character, Shiva is a kid character who doesn't like being called a kid by adults. This meme was related to Gibran because he had an argument with vice presidential candidate number 03 Prof. Dr. H. M. Mahfud MD in president

debates. This makes memes are new, fresh at the same time humorous regarding serious politics. Information and communication technology has been developing at a very fast pace lately. Indonesian people create memes and they uploaded it in Twitter (X) and Instagram.

As happened in several previous presidential elections, politically charged memes also appeared in the 2024 presidential election. As soon as the presidential and vice presidential debate ended, various memes responding to the issues in the debate spread across social media. These anonymous memes are generally funny, intriguing, but also bitter. Young people's political expressions on social media are becoming more varied. The emersion of memes like this gives another color to the face of politics which is considered serious and thus unattractive to some young people. This create two opposing perspective and Gen Z who has always felt that politics is something dirty, serious, power and something heavy. However, the existence of memes created by netizens makes politics and the 2024 Indonesian elections funnier and less serious. Now, young people's political expressions on social media have become more varied. The transition from one form of humor to another indicates a change in the orientation of young people in expressing and explaining politics (*Kompas.id*).

The term "meme" was first coined by the British biologist Dawkins (2007). Its origin comes from the Greek: mimeme, which means "to imitate". Examples of memes include melodies, ideas, slogans, styles of clothing, and making pots or building domes. Memes have similar properties to genes (*Dawkins, 2007*). These repeated ideas can influence people's behavior and

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culture. Memes in the visual context of the Internet can be successful (as measured by the number of people sharing or talking about them), but they don't last long because other memes can appear. Meme refers to the popular items that younger people utilize the most at the moment. A meme, according to *collinsdictionary* is an online communication tool that many people use to share videos, images, or phrases with one another. Memes typically feature amusing content that has gone viral and gained popularity online, although they can feature anything viral. A meme, for instance, is an image with a caption that appears to be giving someone a massage. Jokes, sarcasm, statements with image, amusing quotes, and a lot more can be made.

Related to this issue, representation is the process of constructing thoughts about a subject through certain communication channels. The development of any communication about elements of reality, such as people, locations, objects, events, cultural identities, and other abstract concepts, in any medium is called representation. This can be conveyed orally or in writing, through animation or photos. Representations of social groups help shape the subject's identity. Apart from that, the process of creating social group identities through media is known as representation (*Burton, 2010*).

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between social media memes and the representation of public perception. This study concentrates on a case of social criticism expressed through memes about the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election situation in 2024. It provides a dynamic communication perspective by conveying messages to a wide audience. The Saussure theory

(1857–1913) is use to examine the viral presidential and vice presidential candidates 2024 meme. This research examines semiotic ideas, beginning with the signifier, signified, and meaning of the presidential candidates of Indonesia's 2024 election memes.

Based on the background above, the researcher choose the viral memes of presidential candidates 2024 because this is something that happens frequently in this era due to the development of social networks and no one has researched memes about presidential and vice presidential candidates especially using semiotic theory by Ferdinand (1857–1913) in the previous journal article. This research explores the semiotic theory in the 2024 presidential candidate memes, focusing on how visual and textual elements function as signifiers and are associated with signified. It also examines how elements like humor, irony, and sarcasm are used to create political narratives and how memes shape public perceptions of presidential candidates. The research highlights how memes have become modern propaganda tools, utilizing semiotic principles differently. Memes can also be used from a semiotic perspective, which also means that memes can be very versatile and different for young people of this age. From the meme data of presidential and vice presidential candidates, this is what makes this research crucial with the title Representations of Public Perceptions on Indonesia's 2024 Election Presidential Candidates: A Case Study of Memes on Social Media.

1.2 Problems of The Study

The following problems with this research are related to the background mentioned above:

1. How are semiotic meanings of the symbols represented in memes of presidential candidates of Indonesia's 2024 election?

2. How are public perceptions represented in memes of presidential candidates of Indonesia's 2024 election?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Considering the aforementioned problems, the following are the objectives of this research:

1. To represent the semiotic meanings of the symbol found in memes of presidential candidates of Indonesia's 2024 election

2. To find out the public perceptions represented in memes of presidential candidates of Indonesia's 2024 election

1.4 Significance of The Study

According to the goals of the study, there are various advantages to this research:

1. The findings of this research can theoretically be helpful in furthering linguistic studies, namely semiotics in presidential candidate memes for Indonesia's 2024 election.

2. Practically, there are several benefits for researcher, such as this research helps in learning English further in understanding the concept of semiotics in presidential candidate memes for Indonesia's 2024 election. It is also hoped that in the end it can become a reference for further research by semiotics concept. Furthermore, it is hope that this research

can improve student critical thinking in review presidential candidates meme for Indonesia's 2024 election.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The goal of this study is to better understand the semiotic ideas. Specifically, it describes the signifier and signified in the viral memes of the 2024 presidential and vice presidential contenders and elucidates their significance in social media, such as Instagram and Twitter (X). Viral content is defined as content that has been shared by users of social media on a regular basis and has spread throughout the networks of social media users *(Deza and Parikh, 2015)*. Viral content has a higher score than other content, which can be determined by the number of views it receives, the number of social media users who like it (up vote) compared to other content, the number of users who down vote it, and its share value, or the number of users who share it more frequently than other content *(Deza and Parikh, 2015)*. Considering the foregoing explanation, the researcher limits the range of likes from the lowest to the highest on social media Instagram 1000 likes to 200.000 likes. Meanwhile, on social media Twitter or X, researcher limits it to a range of 300 views to 3.000.000 views. There are prominent differences in these two social media, on Instagram there is no number of views meanwhile on Twitter (X) there is a number of views. Therefore, the researcher takes it from "likes" on Instagram social media and "views" from Twitter or X.