



Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
Bachelor in Global Communication /
Grado en Comunicación Internacional

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Memes, teams, and other themes:

A classification and analysis of online
memetic culture

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Madrid, mayo de 2021

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1. Introduction

The concept of memes, coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976, has only in recent years been used to refer to online cultures, in particular to reproduced pieces of content that are shared through the Internet (Gal, Shifman, & Kampf, 2015). Memes have existed as nursery rhymes, urban legends, social groups, and even the concept of God, for as long as humans have, through different languages, empires, borders. They are a universal concept, existing in every culture, through different languages that allow for different memes to be understood within a single community, both because of linguistic barriers but also because of the accessibility of the knowledge available in that set language.

It is only natural, then, that such cultural memes would refuse to exist only in one realm. Through books, videogames, music, sound, they have created communities who are ‘in’ on something that no one else understands. However, when dealing with cultural evolution, how must we proceed? What kinds of disciplinary approaches are needed or should be emphasized in offering explanations (Lewens, 2015)? What is adequate as a genuine explanation in one discipline will not pass in another, as biological factors try to overtake social ones. Contexts, models, interpretative issues, even the exclusion of social factors at all have all been suggested as the appropriate road to cultural evolution study (Love & Wimsatt, 2019), and yet none of current academia seem to have been able to create any comprehensive and dynamic sources of information on online memes (Cannizzaro, 2016). Such a job has been left to online sources and the general electronic ephemera, who are part of the communities who created these online memes in the first place.

Virtual public spaces have in recent years become significant sites for collective identity formation (Baoill, 2007; Boyd, 2008), through the evolution of the self in online spaces and the different communities we inhabit. Internet users understand that memetic knowledge and culture is highly related to the online spheres one inhabits, while being also highly aware of the multiplicity of online spheres created by other communities that one is not part of. This inherent knowledge of online spheres is why we believe that the road to understand the so called ‘memescape’ (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014) is to follow the steps of those who created it.

This work aims to expand on the concept of online memes, understanding where they were created and where they are now, briefly touching on their influence in socioeconomic circles and the current online generation who is fluent in ‘meme’ (Rauf, 2021; Roose, 2019). The creation of an online dialect that crosses language (as seen in annex I) is only one of the important changes that online memetic culture has enacted on social spheres, influencing both humor and the generations who have internalized the Internet as theirs (Wark & Wark, 2019)

in a complex process that is often branded as chaotic (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007) but which followed complicated community membership rules (Literat & van den Berg, 2019).

We aim to find a classification that seems to have avoided academia for too long, that honors both the process, the users' intent and the history of the memes that emerge from the memescape, searching through online spheres, the meaning of virality, our own circles and the memes that have created our own understanding of memetic culture in an online society that uses memes as weaponized and self-aware cultural capital (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017).

Through this classification we believe that we will be able to find a thread connecting all existing memes, even as our own research has proved that the link between internet meme knowledge and possible variables is not simple nor easily identified and depends highly on many personal, communal, and social factors, such as age, socioeconomic level, sex, social media and platform usage and community membership. A categorization that can fit every meme in every circumstance is essential for the future study of such phenomena, which has proven to evolve quickly and grow out of previous categorizations faster than researchers can create them (Shifman, 2014b).

Memes have become not only transmitters of online culture, but cultural mediums themselves, as many utilize the online framework in physical interactions, making online cultural capital social capital as well.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. What are online memes?

The word meme has been used both in academic and mainstream circles since its coining by Richard Dawkins in 1976. He defined memes as 'small cultural units of transmission, analogous to genes, that spread from person to person by copying or imitation' (Shifman, 2014b). This was an important creation as the term was invented to refer exclusively to items reproduced by imitation, ideas and culture, rather than genetically (Dawkins, 1978). This is important as it allowed for the inclusion of every part of cultural media and inexplicit social cues: melodies, catchphrases, fashion trends, images, advertisements... They are all different types of memes, engraved in the culture of those who created them.

The word 'meme' is interesting in how it describes itself. It expresses what a meme is while also possessing the quality that would make it a meme: its definition and meaning has been defined and shaped by its usage, and so now whoever uses such a word knows the implications behind it. 'Meme' is a meme.

There are classically two controversies regarding cultural memes: virality and ‘who’s the boss’ (Shifman, 2014b). The first one considers memes to be like a virus, transmitted through the cultural equivalent of sneezes (‘Hey! Look at this amazing skirt I found’), which act like a virus infecting innocent people’s minds without their consent. The second, ‘who’s the boss’ analogy that we have borrowed from Shifman’s 2014 book *Memes in internet culture* refers to human agency in consuming such memes, and whether humans act as *actors* or *vectors* in their transmission. These controversies have been long argued and are not the focus of this work, as the study of the morality and righteousness of the existence of memes in the online sphere is not the goal of our work.

Internet meme (a) A group of digital content units sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance. For instance—photos featuring funny cats with captions share a topic (cats), form (photo + caption), and stance (humor). (b) These units are created with awareness of each other—the person posting the “cat with caption” image builds on the previous cats in the series. (c) These units are circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users. Internet memes are multiparticipant creative expressions through which cultural and political identities are communicated and negotiated. (Shifman, 2014b, p. 188)

An Internet meme is, therefore, a piece of shared culture that is created, shared, changed or understood on the internet, by internet users, but which does not necessarily live exclusively on the internet. These memes can be created anywhere, shared online, and influence the culture of the users to a point where they might be used in their daily, non-internet lives. They might also be created online and never make the jump to the real world, instead living forever intertwined with other memes and parts of internet culture. There is no one defining line for what constitutes a meme, but their categorizations, understandings, forms, stances, and topics can be used to connect one to another (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014).

2.2. *The meme itself: history and evolution*

Memes can be considered keywords, or *keyforms*, for the expression and divulgence of ideas: they are all different yet they are all the same, in the way that while each individual might perform cultural information differently, the basic idea, the meme, constitutes a common element duplicated, shared and perceived by many minds through their own interpretations (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017). The landscape that houses the creation and sharing of memes is seemingly chaotic and decentralized, yet the work for their existence is intensely coordinative and it requires a pervasive mimicry (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Nissenbaum &

Shifman, 2017; Wiggins & Bowers, 2014) provided by the social network structure that creates a competition for user attention (Weng, Flammini, Vespignani, & Menczer, 2012). It is the mix of all of these factors which leads to the creation of memes, with broad diversity in virality, lifetime, and user activity.

Mememes do not exist in a vacuum: the inter-correspondence between different online communities, users' intercommunal existence and the shared value of the creation of a meme further expands the pool from which to choose from. No meme exists by itself, as the creation of it is necessarily tied to the previous existence of a piece of media or online post. This is an important distinction as not every viral post is created in social media, although the over 3 billion users of it certainly make the biggest impact on virality ("The 2021 Social Media Demographics Guide", 2021). Non-social media posts can be viralized in either their own environment or through social media, but the creation of memes is not unique to social media.

In fig. 1 we see a perfect example of this: understanding this tweet would be impossible without proper background knowledge, as we have mentioned before, but it is also important to not the meme convergence of such an image. *Da vinky* is a reference to a viral video that had been memed itself during the time this tweet was posted; the woman shown in the image is Alexa Demie, whose age has been a point of contempt and the memes and jokes about her seemingly nonaging appearance while being a lot older than it would suggest, and this supports the idea of an old Mona Lisa, while the man badly edited into the image is Robert Pattinson, whose appearance in the original image (annex II-1) has been constantly memed and re-edited into other viral content.



Fig. 1: Example of meme layering. Source: lily, 2020

The background knowledge of what this picture signifies is key to understanding the joke, but what is more important here is the symbiotic relationship between the memes that is shown: three memes coming together to create one bigger, grander meme. The gatekeeping

possibilities increase with every layer added, but the way content can be reused and reutilized in new memes is of note.

It is also important to note that the medium which creates these memes is extremely relevant not only to their virality, but also to their format and the way previous meme ideas are reused. Most sites allow for both text and some sort of media to be attached to each publication (4chan, Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit, Facebook), in some the media is considered to be the content itself (TikTok, Instagram, Vine), but the type of media attached is different (TikTok and Youtube are specifically for videos, as Vine was in its time, while Instagram is focused on pictures). Most of these sites created a two-way communication system, where the person who created the original post can see answers by other users, although Twitter has lately started allowing the original creator to control who can reply to their posts (Xie, 2020), and blocking functions affect them too in most social media. Instagram allows the creator to delete comments from their posts, as well as prohibiting any comments at all, a function that TikTok shares. Whether or not images and other media content can be shared directly on the site is not particularly relevant, as all of the allow links to external sites, although it is of note that Instagram does not allow clickable links in either original posts or comments.

One might think, then, that platforms where media content is the focus might be the prime breeding ground for new, different meme material, but the recycling that happens between all platforms is of note. Although Bauckhage (2011) found that the memes used on different online platforms have different characteristics, we believe that such analysis is no longer valid. Instagram in particular has thousands of so-called 'meme accounts', who post content that has become viral in other platforms (posting screenshots of tweets, for example, or reposting media content originally viralized in other social media) (trigoMEMEtry, n.d.; Funny Memes, n.d.; Barstool Sports, n.d.); but all platforms are guilty of this. The regurgitation of content in cross-media allows for the memes to expand beyond their original community, to reach potential user who would have never come across it had it not been shared. The 'insiders' who created it in the first place might even feel outraged at this co-opting of their meme (Douglas, 2014), and creators who are not credited as such certainly have a reason to be angry. However, posts that do not find virality or much success at all in their original social media can go viral in a matter of hours when reposted to another, perhaps finding the target audience who will enjoy them better than it could in their original medium, without caring about where the meme came from originally.

Different platforms may create grounds for different type of content, but those who will enjoy it exist cross-platform as well. Original popular platforms such as Desmotivaciones.es

(in Spain) or the now dead Vine create content that long outlasts them that is so integral to the meme culture of those who consume that even years after that content was created it is referenced in a daily way. ‘This has Vine energy’, for example, is a phrase very commonly seen across all social media, particularly TikTok, which has a similar format to the deceased Vine (Martinez, 2020), and it refers to the content that reminds users of what would have been posted in that old platform. Both users and creators may have moved on from the original platform (many popular Vine stars moved to YouTube or Instagram, and more recently to TikTok), but no one ever forgets where they came from.

The adaptability of memes out of their context is certainly not surprising, as we have already mentioned that there is something they all share, but it is still of note that such regurgitation can exist with no regard for the original creator to simply gain virality: a meme can only be popular if it has already appealed to many audiences (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013; Milner, 2016; Segev, Nissenbaum, Stolero, & Shifman, 2015). Users who have never used platforms like Reddit, for example, can still receive the cultural capital that comes from understanding a viral post or knowing a reference (Literat & van den Berg, 2019) because there are entire accounts on Instagram or Twitter dedicated to reposting viral content. This is why we can talk about the Internet as a whole instead of having to focus on a specific social media: if it exists on the Internet, it will have found its way everywhere.

2.3. Discussing virality

Most definitions of virality in academic circles consider a conscious decision of sharing online content as part of the necessity for virality. Hemsley and Mason (2012) define virality as ‘a word-of-mouth-like cascade diffusion process wherein a message is actively forwarded from one person to other, within and between multiple weakly linked personal networks, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of people who are exposed to the message’. The keyword in that definition is ‘actively’, as it would imply an active decision on the part of those who share the content to make it viral. Tellis, MacInnis, Tirunillai, and Zhang (2019), however, ‘define virality as [content] achieving a large number of views in a short time period due to sharing’. The time passed between the first and the second definition has seen a huge improvement in online platform algorithms, which make the second definition more accurate. Media no longer needs to be actively shared to become viral, as platforms such as YouTube or TikTok will reward creators with high interaction rates by recommending their content to more users. However, it is important to note that no definition will provide a concrete number at which content can be considered viral: the size of the community to which the content belongs

to will make the numbers fluctuate greatly. For example, a YouTube video about a book that has been read by 10 people that has 5 views can be considered viral, as a great number of people in the community will have watched it. Viral depends on the impact, though not necessarily in a limited time (as content can become retroactively viral, for example), in any community to whom the content might be relevant for. High impact content will be viral, as well as any content credited of starting a meme.

The words ‘meme’ and ‘viral’ have previously been used interchangeably, but we subscribe to the belief that they are not the same, as described by Shifman (2014b):

The main difference between Internet memes and virals thus relates to variability: whereas the viral comprises a single cultural unit (such as a video, photo, or joke) that propagates in many copies, an Internet meme is always a collection of texts. You can identify a single video and say “This is a viral video” without referring to any other text, but this would not make much sense when describing an Internet meme. A single video is not an Internet meme but part of a meme— one manifestation of a group of texts that together can be described as the meme. (p. 56)

Shifman herself also acknowledges that another difference between meme and viral is that a viral ‘spreads to the masses via digital word-of-mouth mechanisms without significant change’, while a meme is ‘a popular clip that lures extensive creative user engagement in the form of parody, pastiche, mash-ups or other derivative work’ (Shifman, 2014a, 2014b).

The intent of this work is not to study what does or does not make certain content viral, nor what the requirements for virality are, but it is important to note that viral content is not limited to the Internet. Online activity is no longer alienated from our everyday lives, and that which happens online will influence everything else, including language, common expressions and even worldview (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014). Memes and viral content jump out of screens and become cultural capital outside of their original communities, cited as often as one might reference a scene in a movie or a well-known quote by a celebrity or public person, closing the circle of translating virality online to real-life meme.

2.4. State of the matter: meme study and brief history

Cultural memes have existed for as long as cultures have, but the particular pattern that online memes follow is not necessarily exclusive to the Internet itself. There have been many attempts by different users to decide which was the first meme ever (Fulton, 2017; Gerken, 2018), considering everything from text-based emoticons to oversized phallic symbols, which Fulton (2017) described as the first meme. While penis jokes have certainly been around for

long enough to have outlived every other meme, Fulton’s requirements for something to be a meme do not align with that which we have discussed in this work.

Message: There needs to be a clearly definable, central message or reference that's understood, and relatable by commonly shared knowledge or experience. The medium of the message isn't relegated to an image and text; it can be either, or both. Or video, or solely audio.

Evolution: The meme cannot remain static. It must be adopted and remixed by a community of people that embrace it.

Malleability: It must aid in its own evolution by having defined characteristics that can be changed while maintaining and preserving some semblance of the original message.

Effect: It has to reach a certain level of popularity and understanding, or the message won't matter. Perhaps the most important part of the meme is its virality.

While a good list that can coincidentally be shortened to M.E.M.E, there is a fault in that memes do not require a congruent message, as defined by Fulton. More and more lately we have seen new memes pop up where the message is just exaggeration to the point of humor. Social commentary, understandability or even relatability to any topic are not qualifications that memes need to follow anymore.



Fig. 2. Example of an unclear message in a meme. Source: jade, 2020

The message in this image is unclear, while being another reference commonly understood to a now famous Robert Pattinson picture (annex II-1) and the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* movie, the message that conveys is not understood because there is no message. It is just a reference image that numerous users have found funny and has thus become a meme by having the actor inserted into different scenes and situations where he obviously doesn't

belong. A similar format has been followed with the Bernie mittens meme (annex II-2). It is absurdity humor. Many memes do not even need a written message anymore, opening the discussion of how online humor has evolved.

Humor served as a central component of salient memes created between 2000 and 2005, according to Knobel and Lankshear (2007), and they were by them categorized as ‘quirky and situational’ and ‘biting social commentary’. This can still be considered two important parts of current meme culture and reasoning, but to assume that they have to be one or the other limits memes in a way that they do not limit themselves. Making a meme that is both quirky *and* social commentary allows for the transmission of news and world information through a medium that is more accessible, understandable and likeable by users online (Beskow, Kumar, & Carley, 2020).

But what *is* the first meme? Dancing baby (Uninvitedinno, 2006), originally created in 1996, a baby shuffling to Blue Swede’s “Hooked on a Feeling” as a trial for 3D animation, is often considered ‘the granddaddy of Internet memes’ (Gene Park, Adriana Usero, & Rukan, 2016). It was widely shared, changed, edited and turned into a .gif that is used to this day, as memes (Wark & Wark, 2019). “All your base are belong to us” (DEEKay004, 2008) is another strong contender, based on a poor translation of a 2001 Japanese video game, it has persisted as an Internet catchphrase, with its iconicity noted by the user who reuploaded it to YouTube. These are arguably the first viral memes to be created and shared on the internet, but memes have come a long way since.

In the early 2010s, Rage Comics and Memes drawn on Microsoft Paint (like Trollface (annex II-4) were popularized by the platform 4chan in particular, taking over many memes with new intent. They quickly became dank memes, where humor is overdone to the point that it may seem nonsensical. We also must include the now ‘normie’ meme format of ‘top text, bottom text’ (annex II-D) (Literat & van den Berg, 2019) that is particularly common nowadays in platforms like Facebook or ironically used on Reddit or Twitter.

The current state of the meme has created new genres of memes and the current memescape has everyone wondering what has happened not only to the memes themselves, but to the humor of those who both create and consume them. Understanding this will be a fundamental part of this work.

The part of memetic culture that academia has had trouble understanding, due to the necessity of classifying memes by separating them from each other, is that classifications cannot be either/or instead of umbrella terms (Shifman, 2012). A meme, as the aggregated group of content using a particular template, will inevitably create particular edits and versions

that do social commentary, while using a format that has been found funny by users. The further from the original format while maintaining its pattern and sending a new message, the funnier the meme will be, at least in the current scape. Now ancient memes following formats such as ‘top text, bottom text’ are either considered funny by those whose humor has not evolved with the latest memes, or funny by those who have an ironic, post-ironic, or even post-post-ironic understanding of it (Literat & van den Berg, 2019), the so-called “the logic of lulz” characterized by an ironic and distancing discursive mode (R. Milner, 2013; Milner, 2012).

2.5. The generational gap

It is no secret that the so-called ‘digital divide’ affects not only those with no internet access but also those elders who might simply not understand, not *want* to understand or refuse to learn the ways of the Internet, therefore coining the term ‘digital immigrants’, as opposed to the younger generations who have grown up with the Internet as part of their daily lives (Vidal, 2019); (Hilbert, 2011). However, the inability to utilize the Internet is not the only way in which age separates its users: the subcultural literacy required to understand every meme serves as gatekeeping for digital communities (Burgess, 2008; Milner, 2012; Miltner, 2014), as they constitute a form of cultural capital (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017). Young people are rearticulating what lifestyles should be desirable and achievable through internet memes (Szablewicz, 2014), a fantasy that older generations are being forced out of. It is also important to note that different aspects of culture are acquired sequentially throughout the life cycle, in a way that earlier acquisitions facilitate, inhibit, or transform the reception of later ones (Love & Wimsatt, 2019); so the possibility of closing the gap is harder than simply education. Growing up on the internet sets people up for life in a different matter to those who did not.

Users of different ages make use of different social media, for example, but even in the social media they share the content consumed is different ("The 2021 Social Media Demographics Guide", 2021). The tailoring of content towards a specific user’s personality, hobbies, and taste as well as their own age, gender, and sexuality allows for the intersectionality of content to decrease until the user experience is so different that they might as well be using a different platform.

Different content leads to different memes, which leads to different effects on the users themselves and gives a different type of background to memes and jokes. Furthermore, the recycling of content throughout different social media and the delay with which certain social media and therefore its users consume such content created an age gap so that the memes enjoyed by young adults are completely different to those of their parents. While this logic can

be applied to every demographic group, the age digital divide already existing within the Internet makes this a more prominent effect than in the gender, sex, orientation, or race divide. Other issues such as nationality, with the added complexity of language, also create a divide, though none as severe as the age divide.

2.6. The importance and significance of memes in the global scale

The relevance of online memes both in the online and real life spheres shows itself in the way that users communicate within online spaces, the way memes jump out of the online world and are used as an everyday form of communication (Shifman, 2014b) and even in the way that numerous companies have started to use them as a marketing tool (KFC, n.d.; Shadow and Bone, n.d.; MasterChef, n.d.; Among Us (2020)).

We have been using the word *dialect* to refer to memes throughout this work, as their influence in spoken and written language in the online sphere has proven to be worthy of such a term. Wolfram and Schilling (2015) define dialect in the following way:

[...] use the term “dialect” as a neutral label to refer to any variety of a language that is shared by a group of speakers. [...] dialect is simply how we refer to any language variety that typifies a group of speakers within a language. The particular social factors that correlate with dialect diversity may range from geographic location to complex notions of cultural identity. Furthermore, it is important to understand that socially favored, or “standard,” varieties constitute dialects every bit as much as those varieties spoken by socially disfavored groups whose language differences are socially stigmatized. The technical definition of dialect as a variety of a language typical of a given group of speakers is not rigorous or precise, but it is a sufficient starting point in discussing language variation. (Wolfram and Schilling, 2015: 2).

This definition is important so as to note the fact that dialect is a broad enough term to include memes. However, it is not the broad definition used in the field of linguistics what proves that online memes are in fact a dialect, but their influence in grammar, vocabulary, and intonation of written languages; which not a new concept, as the term ‘communities of practice’ has already been used to define language shaped by interactions amongst members, not assumed to have simply inherited them from previous speakers (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Mufwene, 2019). Memes add to the functioning linguistic construction frame while creating new linguistic constructions (Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2017), furthering the idea that meme knowledge should (and is already) be seen as a form of literacy (Rauf, 2021; Roose,

2019) because of the required direct knowledge of meme templates as well as a wider range of general knowledge of specific groups or communities (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007).

Online spheres have developed multiple ways to use existing grammar, vocabulary, and tone indicators to allow for the non-verbal communication issues that could potentially arise in written communication. The writing of word where every other letter is a capital letter (*sOmEtHiNg LiKe ThIs*) to denote sarcasm, the usage of capital letters at the beginning of certain words to emphasize, the usage of tone indicators at the end of statements (/s to signify sarcasm, /gen to signify genuine, etc.) and even the creation of new words from online memes and virality (like the expression *on fleek*, created by Peaches Monroe in 2015 (BETNetworks, 2018)). The creation of more effective ways of communication online is nothing new, as the pressure to communicate more information and in the most satisfying way is part of what originally triggered the expansion of the vocabulary and of linguistic structures (Mufwene, 2019). This will all be examined further in our field work analysis.

While other authors have denied the validity of memes as a medium (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014), we believe it to be a mistake. Memes themselves have turned into the delivery method and the main way in which many users receive daily news, through social media (Beskow et al., 2020). Users themselves have noticed that they are gathering new, important political information through memes created by other users (Baker-Whitelaw, 2020), as seen in (lady-azriel, 2020; 🗿 Unicode emoji [ghost], 2020; 🌫️ [Unicode emoji, fog] | ACAB, 2020). The format in which the news are received is just as important and carries equal weight in how the user perceives the content as the content itself (Wark & Wark, 2019).

It is also worth mentioning how companies have already realized the potential for economic gain that lies in the hands of online memes and viral content. Not only the direct monetization of said viral content (in platforms like YouTube or TikTok, which allow monetization through a pay-per-view advertisement revenue system), but the brand building, brand personality and virality stars association potential. As more and more brands use editable memes for their own advertisement, tailoring them for their own content, online memes become more mainstream and reach more people, and so the cycle continues.

3. Field work & methodology

Our field work includes eleven months (from June 1st, 2020 to April 30th, 2021) of Internet surfing where we have studied and analyzed meme trends, memes on the rise and those who have resurfaced to be able to study and analyze them in the context provided in this work.

This is not an analysis of *all* memes created in this period, nor a particularly thorough listing of them. Community memeing gatekeeping causes any sample to be highly biased, so this one is particularly biased to our own presence online. We do not claim that the examples of memes used are the only nor even the best representation of memes as a whole, but they do not need to be: as previously mentioned, all memes are different, yet they are all the same. We have chosen enough examples for the analysis to be broad and applicable to these memes in particular, but the nature of the meme itself will allow for exported applicability.

3.1. Examples and memes

The memes we have chosen from all of the results of our field work are what we believe to be the best representation of where memes originate, where they go, how they evolve and how they die, should they. They are in no way a thorough list of all or even the most viral memes during our chosen period of time, but they are the best examples of the exportable characteristic applicable to all meme genres.

The ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme is a variant of the 2009 image macro that was uploaded to the humor site Sad and Useless (Unknown, 2009) where fig. 3 appears for the first time. This image became viral after on November 28th, 2020 a twitter user posted the first known edited version of the image with ‘they don’t know’ as a header, and on later days the meme was replicated multiple times by different accounts on different social media, firstly expressing feelings of inadequacy and later on evolving to other formats like fig. 4, further expanded in annex III. This meme had a very similar evolution in recreation and concept as the ‘I’m literally’ meme (annex IV), the ‘yes honey’ meme (annex V) or the ‘son, are you winning’ meme (annex VI).



Fig. 3. Original ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme. Source: Sad and Useless, 2009.



Fig 4. Edited 'I wish I was at home/They don't know'. Source: anna!!!!, 2020

'*Sam va lentín*' is a Spanish meme format with a play on the words 'San Valentín' (Valentine's Day) and *Sam va lentín* (Sam walks slowly) over an image of the characters Sam and Frodo from the movie franchise *The Lord of the Rings* (fig. 5). The first usage of this phrase can be found on Twitter in 2011 (López, 2011), but the meme, whose image author is unknown, has become a staple every February 14th, with multiple variations being tweeted every year, including with other meme formats, mixed media, mixed fandom, and mixed memes, as shown in annex VII.



Fig. 5. Original '*Sam va lentín*' meme. Source unknown.

Similar to '*Sam va lentín*', as they are both reoccurring in a schedule, we have identified the 'Jason Derulo MET fall' meme, where every year since the original tweet, now deleted (Old Miami, 2015), the same picture of a man resembling Jason Darulo falling down a staircase at the Cannes Film Festival is tweeted during the MET Gala by different users, as well as some

edited versions of it (fig. 6). The ‘walking into the new year positive energy’ meme also follows this yearly recurrence, as found in annex VIII.



Fig. 6. Example of an edited ‘Jason Derulo MET fall’ meme. Source: New York Times bestselling AUTHOR JONNY SUN, 2020.

Loss, also known as CADbortion, Loss.jpg and | || | _ , is one of the most interesting memes to be found in the memescape (fig. 7). It originated from the 2008 video game-themed webcomic series Ctrl+Alt+Del (Buckley, 2008), in which the ending was unexpectedly (and according to readers unsuccessfully) dramatic, clashing with the tonal of the comic, and therefore causing it to be mocked online and even on TV shows such as Futurama (Fedlman, 2015). | || | _ refers to the structure of the panels, and this structure has been replicated constantly online in the 13 years since its first posting, including by the author himself, as shown in annex IX.

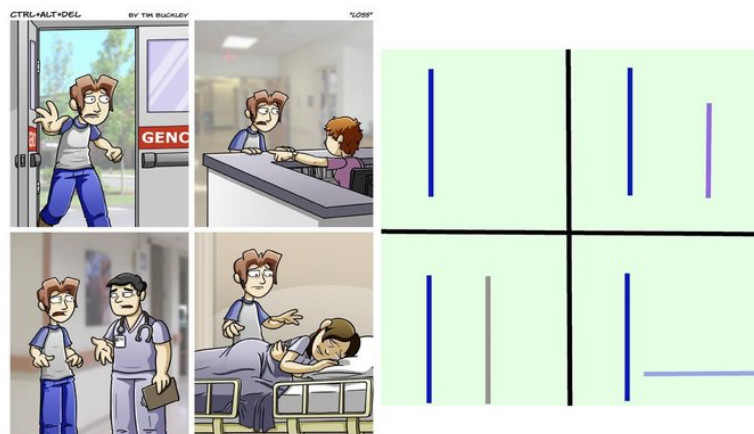


Fig 7. Original loss.jpg meme, as well as the structured replicated in posterior memes. Source: Buckley, 2008.

Furthermore, we have meme templates that were created from a screenshot of a TV show and then edited to fit any box that the users wished them to. The ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme where the *Glee* character says, ‘I’m going to create an environment that is so toxic’ (fig. 9) has received this treatment (annex X), as well as the ‘gopissgirl’ meme (fig. 8) (Wood, 2020) that became popular early 2020, by taking an image from the popular TV Show Gossip Girl and changing the letters of the title of the show to make it spell other things, as shown in annex XI.



Fig. 8. Original gopissgirl meme. Source: Wood, 2020.



Fig. 9. Original Sue Sylvester meme. Source: Falchuk et al., 2009.

3.2. Presentation of formulaire structure and answers

Due to limited time, funds and the even more limited research done in this area by academia, we have gathered results from a Google formulaire created December 17th, 2020 and open until April 25th, 2021. The results from this formulaire can be analyzed only insofar as taking into consideration the very limited response rate (375) and the inherent bias by distributing it in the circles close to the creator of it. While further sharing and number of responses has been encouraged, the sample is not accurate enough to draw any general

conclusions about its topic. The sample is, however, more than useful for a study of the represented memes and areas which the formulaire deals with.

The formulaire consists of 18 questions, one of which is open ended for any further comments from the takers' part, another is a request for emails future non-anonymous interviews were they to have happened, six relate to the demographics and internet usage of the takers and ten relate to meme culture knowledge, both about specific memes, grammar memetic influences and the understanding of the meme life cycle. The exact questions, which were presented in both Spanish and English, numbers, and percentages of the formulaire can be found in annex I.

Question number 1 presents the age of the participants. Out of 275 respondents, 212 were 18 to 22 years old, 77 were 22 to 30 years old, 36 were 12 to 16 years old, 19 were over 45 years old, 17 were 30 to 45 years old, and 14 were 16 to 18 years old. The age brackets in this question were purposely vague so as to allow participants to group themselves with the age group they related to most. A 22-year-old would have been able to decide whether they considered themselves part of the 18 to 22 years old age group, or the 22 to 30 years old age group.

Question number 2 was related to the location of the participants. Because of the circle of the authors, with whom the formulaire was shared, an overwhelming number of participants, 336 out of 375, were Spanish. 31 participants were from Latin America, 3 were from a non-English-speaking European country and 1 was from an English-speaking country. This is important to note as the results of the formulaire will have to be carefully examined to be applicable to other locations.

Question number 3 related to the sex of the participants. 303 out of 375 participants were female, 61 were male, 4 were non-binary and 6 did not disclose their sex.

Question number 4 asked users about their social media usage in relation to memes, their consumption and sharing. This was the first question to allow for multiple answers. Most mainstream social media took the lead in usage, Instagram with 282 votes, Twitter with 275, Whatsapp and other instant messaging apps with 247, TikTok with 170, Facebook with 76, and Tumblr with 39. Amino, Google, Pinterest, Quora and Weheartit got 1 vote each. Reddit got four votes, YouTube got 3 votes, and a single person answered that they simply do not look up memes.

Question number 5 was the first of ten questions directly related to memes. It presented figure 10 with the question "Do you recognize the meme use with this man's face? Would you be able to create your own version based on the blueprint for it?". This picture is the blueprint

for a meme that has been used numerous times during the time period examined, as can be found in annex XII. 262 out of 375 participants did not recognize the meme, 84 recognized it but could not recreated the blueprint, and 29 could in fact recreate it.



Fig. 10. Cropped picture from the Chris Fleming ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme. Source: Fleming, 2014.

Question number 6 asked about the word “Tranquilovsky”. This word is a meme in Spanish relating to the 2018 Football World Cup in Russia, and a screenshot from a news article in Spanish telling the story has been resurfacing constantly since its publication. The question read “Do you recognize the word "Trankilovsky"? Do you know where it comes front?”, and 219 out of 375 participants answered negatively, 101 answered that they recognized it but couldn’t remember where from, and 55 could both recognize and identify its source.

Question 6 read “Do you recognize the phrase "Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena"? Would you be able to tell where it's from and how it's used?” in relation to a common recurring meme in Spanish Twitter (Odilas, 2015), whereas every Christmas Eve the same picture with the same original caption is tweeted by multiple users, although there have been variations of this meme, as shown on annex XIV. 210 participants could both recognize and identify the meme, 127 could do neither, and 38 were able to recognize but not identify its source.

Question 7 (fig. 11) asked about which is part of a larger meme, shown in annex XIII-3, that has been edited and shared numerous times in the past years, both on its own and mixed with different memes (annex XIII). 224 out of 375 respondents could recognize and identify its source, 119 were unable to do either, and 32 were able to recognize it but not properly identify its source.



Fig. 11. Cropped 'debimbofication' meme. Source: sortimid, 2017.

Question 8 read "When I say "I'm Jared, I'm 19 and I never fucking learned how to read", do you recognize it? Would you be able to tell where it's from?", in relation to a viral Vine video (Paperguy 19, 2017) that is referenced commonly today (honeyjm, 2020; AdamTheAlpha, 2019; sharon 'already more than a love interest' carter, 2021). 201 out of 375 participants could neither recognize nor identify its source, 127 respondents could do both, and 47 were able to recognize it but not identify its source.

Question 9 did not relate to any particular meme, but rather asked about their history in relation to the edited versions of these memes by taking them out of their original context: "Have you ever seen any of these memes but not in their original version?" 259 respondents answered yes, 77 answered no, and 39 had not known any of the previous memes.

Question 10 related to memetic grammar content, by asking "Do you understand a difference in meaning between "this is something important" vs. "this is Something Important"?", which is a new creation of online environment through which a tone of voice is inflicted through the usage of capital letters. 170 out of 375 respondents understood a difference, and 205 did not.

Question 11 asked about another grammatic usage of capital letters, this time by using them as every other letter in a sentence. This format was popularized through the 'mocking Spongebob' meme (fig. 12) and is meant to represent a sarcastic tone. This was a multiple-choice question, where 296 out of 375 respondents correctly identified this method as a sarcasm

transmitter, 41 did not identify any form of writing as sarcastic, and 74 chose another grammar marker as sarcastic.



Fig. 12. First known use of the mocking Spongebob meme with alternating capital letters. Source: lexy, 2017.

Question 12 asked about the participants involvement in editing memes: “Have you ever edited a meme (image, video or text) to better fit your life or something you're a fan of?”. 281 out of 375 respondents answered yes, and 94 no.

Question 13 asked about real-life quotation of online memes. 341 out of 375 participants answered that they had quoted a meme they learnt online in real life, to friends or family; and 34 had not done so.

Question 14, which was non-mandatory, asked for participants email should any more questions arise, which they did not. 77 respondents were willing to participate in further interviewing.

Question 15, as the last question, was quick thank you to the participants who took this survey voluntarily and anonymously and a last petition for them to drop their favorite meme. 49 respondents answered this question, which was not mandatory. Answers here ranged from good luck wishes, encouragement and advice regarding this work to answers with description of memes, usage of memes utilized in the survey (like the memetic grammar expression of sarcasm) and the occasional flirting attempt.

Further analysis of these responses will be presented in section 4.4.

4. Analysis

4.1. Own assessment

Previous academic work has focused on meme qualities, considering versatility, which in turn determines scalability, opportunities for expansion: as seen in the study of meme ‘fecundity’ by Knobel and Lankshear (2007), and ‘fungibility’ by Lewis (2012) and Milner (2016) who identified these qualities as necessary to successful memes. Some attempts at classifications enacted by other authors have historically been limited to a certain type or blueprint for memes (Beskow et al., 2020; Ross & Rivers, 2019), limited in their thematic scope (Beskow et al., 2020) or have simply become outdated (Shifman, 2014b). There have been previous studies of the life cycle of the content until it becomes meme (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014), but there is to this date no classification about the types of memes currently in existence that is broad enough to allow all memes to be categorized by it while still drawing similarities not only between memes of the same category but also the categories themselves. That is the goal of this work.

There are many genres of memes that our classification includes, but we are not defining genres, but categories. This is an important distinction as a meme is the broader, umbrella term for most reproduced online content, with only a limited connection to virality. Shitposts, defined by Abdul (2021) as ‘senseless messages to confuse, entertain, or anger’; reaction images, defined as meme images that signify a particular emotion or phrase used to react to other posts or events; icons, defined by Dahmen, Mielczarek, and Morrison (2019) as ‘select images have become part of our collective visual consciousness’; deep fried memes, defined by Matalon (2019) as ‘images that are ironically and intentionally overedited, often to the point of near incoherence and surrealism’; and a long list of other genre of memes are all categorized in our classification, regardless of genre. This allows for a broader, more applicable general classification that will hopefully outlast previous attempts.

Davison (2012) separates a meme into three components: manifestation, the observable part of the meme phenomenon; behavior, which creates the manifestation and is the action taken by an individual in service of the meme; and ideal, the concept or idea conveyed. We believe that any classification should take every meme dimension into consideration, and therefore believe that such classification should thus include four things:

- a) A long lasting, historically accurate range of memetic content. It will be applicable to all existing and future memes, meme genres, and templates in any platform for sharing, creating, or enjoy memetic content.

- b) Connection between all existing and future memes, meme genres, and templates in any platform for sharing, creating, or enjoy memetic content by recognizing similar patterns.
- c) Separation of the process, meaning, templates and formats for sharing, creating, and enjoying memetic content in any platform for such designed.
- d) An acknowledgement of memetic culture history and the human factor, as well as recognition of the different types of enjoyment available for different users, communities, and humors.

Why is such a classification necessary in the first place? Memes are often still considered to be wild and uncontrolled, without recognizing the inherent community value created by those seemingly random memes (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Shifman (2014b) defined a list of meme genres based on the idea that ‘different meme genres involve different levels of literacy: some can be understood (and created) by almost anyone, whereas others require detailed knowledge about a digital meme subculture’ (p. 101), thus organizing memes by the level of literacy they required; yet her classification of genres has already become outdated: flash mobs, for example, are a genre of meme that is no longer being expanded, at least at a rate significant enough to be a category of its own.

We believe that there is a need for a classification that will not be outdated yet will allow for the understanding of both a meme’s life cycle, the way it was created, the way it is consumed, and the intent behind its creation, sharing, and even consumption. We believe that who can understand a meme is not the main requirement that a classification must require, as that would inherently create flaws due to the extremely prominent online communities, as well as group together memes that we believe have followed a different path.

Memes that can only be enjoyed by a group of people in the knowing cannot be a category of its own, as every meme would fit in that category: it is impossible to create a meme that does not reference anything at all, or else it would not be cultural capital. It is less about the number of people it reaches and more about the reason for its creation. There is an audience for everything, as long as the meme can find it: the success social media cross-posting and the difference in virality across different platforms proves this.

4.2. Classification

As previously mentioned, there is a lack of a classification of memetypes that acknowledges their history and the intent behind them, and so our work has focused on creating

one. Many academic works have limited their analysis only to the ‘normie’, now classical meme format of ‘top text’ and ‘bottom text’ (Beskow et al., 2020; Ross & Rivers, 2019) (annex II-D), but our goal is to create a simple classification that will allow for the categorization of every meme and sub meme.

Before describing such classification, it is important to remember that a meme refers both to a single unit of content (one image, one video) and to the larger scheme that that image fits into: of memes, as cultural, information are relational entities to that which surrounds them (environment and communities, other memes, language, and language barriers, etc.), memes should be thought of as systems. And so we use the word meme to refer to the system, i.e. the combination of the idea and every single meme-unit, while using meme-unit to refer to a single instance in which the idea of the meme has been used, and grand meme to refer to the idea of the meme, the pattern, the blueprint, the concept on which the existence of the meme relies on (Cannizzaro, 2016). ‘Son are you winning’ is a grand meme encompassing every image that relies on the format, template, and knowledge of them to exist. This classification refers to both, as the characteristics they fulfill can be similar, but not necessarily the same. The difference between meme, grand meme and meme-unit is extremely relevant for this classification.

The classification described in this work is not exclusive: one meme, both grand and single-unit, can fit multiple categories. The historical aspect to this classification demands that categories are not exclusive amongst themselves, as development and the process of meme evolution is not lineal and can, should and must be intertwined with other concepts and processes.

The categories we have identified are, therefore, as follows:

- a) Historical. ‘Loss.jpg’, ‘Tranquilovsky’, and ‘*Sam va lentín*’ fit into this category, as well as the grand meme for ‘top text, bottom text’.
- b) Originals. The unedited image for ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’, ‘son, are you winning’, and ‘debimbofication’ fit here, along with any meme-units for ‘top text, bottom text’. There is one single meme-unit for every grand meme that can exist in this category.
- c) Edited. Any edited images for ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’, ‘son, are you winning’, and ‘debimbofication’ fit here. There can be multiple meme-units of a single grand meme existing in this category.
- d) Community-specific. The original ‘Sue Sylvester’ screenshot meme-unit fits into this category.

e) Crossover editions. The meme-unit found in fig. 2 fits this category.

Historical memes

‘Historical memes’ refers to existing grand memes and meme-units that have existed on the memescape for a period long enough to allow for a repopularizing. These memes have existed, altered or unaltered, for a period of time and have managed to somehow not die out, becoming as Literat and van den Berg (2019) would define, a ‘good inversion’. These memes are staples in the memescape, they are referenced on a regular basis and to create new forms of content. Memes that are popular at a particular time of the year (like ‘*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*’ or ‘*Sam va lentín*’) fit into this category, along with memes that have existed and relived. This is particularly important because when considering that a decrease in meme popularity is attributed to competition for a finite user attention (Weng et al., 2012), yet these memes have managed to remain not only popular but relevant through an exponential speed in meme creation.

This category is meant to define ‘classics’ that have managed to outlive their original format, being introduced into newly created meme templates. Memes based on the images of Kermit or Spongebob are known to be ‘stable’ memes, for example, as they manage to be continuously used throughout time (Literat & van den Berg, 2019).

Original memes

The term ‘original memes’ refers to the single meme-unit that further on becomes a template for a grand meme to allow for the creation of other meme-units. This original meme can be an image, a video, a particular voice intonation, etc.; so long as it is the original, first posted version of the content that has later on been memefied. Fig. 8 and fig. 9 fit into this category, as single meme-units.

This category is meant to separate the consumption of meme-units created under a bigger, already existing grand meme and meme-units that created the existing grand meme. ‘Loss.jpg’, in fig. 7, is the original meme-unit of the ‘Loss’ meme, which became so popular as a parody in 4chan that moderators began banning people who opened new threads about it.

Edited memes

‘Edited memes’ is a term referring to the meme or meme-units that utilize an existing meme or meme-unit as template for new content creation. These edited memes can be both meme-units, as the single content created from an existing meme or meme-unit, and memes

themselves, by making a meme only exist and evolve through new edits of the original meme-unit. These have been called meme instances by R. M. Milner (2013), who defines them as ‘a particular implementation of the meme template that follows its pattern but adds new details that extend its meaning’. Fig. 4 is an edited meme as a meme-unit, but the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme is also an edited meme, as its format required edits and alterations for its evolution, as multiple examples show on annex 3.

It is important to note that the term ‘edited’ does not necessarily refer exclusively to images or videos, but to any alterations made with the goal of making new content. The usage of an existing meme-unit, like ‘I’m Jared, I’m 19, and I never fucking learned how to read’, and altering it to ‘I wish I was Jared, 19’ fits the edited meme format, as it utilized and changes an original grand meme or meme-unit (in this case both are one and the same) to create new content.

Community-specific memes

The term ‘community-specific memes’ refers to the grand memes or meme-units that are created from and by online communities. These memes can be edited and either remain within their community or become mainstream and create more meme-units outside of the speck of population that utilized the original.

This is a particularly interesting category because most existing memes are eventually edited to fit the narratives of different online communities. However, community-specific grand memes or meme-units are specifically created by communities and their virality or cross-community sharing allows them to make the jump to a bigger public. The ‘Sue Sylvester’ original meme-unit fits this category, as it was originally utilized by fans of the TV Show *Glee*, where the screenshot is originally from, and it was then co-opted by other publics, including other online communities themselves, as shown on annex X-2.

Crossover editions

‘Crossover editions’ refers to meme-units that mix meme formats or multiple grand memes. We can think of this category as a crossover between multiple existing memes, where knowledge of all memes references is necessary for the understanding of the newly created meme-unit. Although there can be an infinite number of crossover edition meme-units, they can never become a grand meme. Fig. 13 shows a user creating a crossover edition by utilizing the historical grand meme ‘*Sam va lentín*’ with the template from an existing community

meme, this time using a screenshot from the Marvel movie *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*.



Fig. 13. Example of the usage of an existing meme-unit as a template for a grand-meme, that is coincidentally a historical meme as well. Source: El Geek furioso de la Literatura, 2021.

4.3. Categorization of examples

The memes mentioned in this work are many and varied, as we have seen, yet there is a similar concept sewed into all of them. All of the memes here presented, that we believe are a good representation of the general memescape, have followed a similar path of content creation, content editing, and viralization, not necessarily in that order, that we have tried to honor in our classification. The annexes to this job separate memes, grand memes and meme-units in a way that allows us to easily exemplify all of our classifications, but we will further expand their different characteristics to allow for a better representation of each category.

In historical memes, mentioned in this work we find 'Trollface' (annex II-C), 'top text, bottom text' (annex II-D), 'dat boi' (annex II-E), '*Sam va lentín*' (annex VII), 'Jason Derulo MET fall' (fig. 6), 'Loss.jpg' (annex IX), 'Tranquilovsky', '*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*' (annex XIV), 'debimbofication' (annex XIII), Spongebob memes (fig. 12), and Kermit memes (annex II-E-2). Some on this list make a yearly ('*Sam va lentín*', 'Jason Derulo MET fall', '*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*'), or timed ('Tranquilovsky') return, while some are historical because have existed in the memescape for over ten years ('Loss.jpg', 'top text, bottom text',

‘dat boi’, ‘debimbofication’). They have sprouted multiple spin-offs, and can be considered a ‘granddaddy of memes’ (Fedlman, 2015). Yearly returning grand memes are considered historical memes not only because of their age, but because they are meme history that has remained in the minds of internet users not only long enough to make a return, but are a prominent enough memory to be repeatedly used after long periods of not spurring new meme-units. The original meme-units for all of these memes can also be considered historical.

The original memes mentioned in this work are all of the original meme-units for the historical memes previously mentioned (except in the case of Kermit, which has no original meme-unit beyond the character, and the Spongebob memes, which can only have the Spongebob TV show as an original meme-unit), as well as the original video for the ‘I’m Jared, I’m 19’ meme, the original TikTok video for the ‘*da vinky*’ meme, the now unfindable original meme-unit using the ‘top text, bottom text’ format, the original ‘Bernie Mittens’ picture (annex II-B-1), the original Robert Pattinson photograph that sprouted his editing in different locations meme (annex II-A-1), figure 3, the original ‘debimbofication’ meme (annex XIII-3), the original meme-unit for the ‘I’m literally’ meme (unknown), the original meme-unit for the ‘son, are you winning’ meme (unknown), the picture used alongside the ‘Jason Derulo MET fall’ meme (Zimbio, 2011), the original ‘gopissgirl’ meme in fig. 8, Chris Fleming’ video from which the screenshot for the ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme was taken, the original ‘Tranquilovsky’ article (Marca, 2018), fig. 12, and the original tweet for ‘*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*’ (annex XIV-1).

Every meme mentioned in this work is also an edited meme, as edition and alteration is essential for a meme to be one (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014). However, it is important to differentiate whether a meme is edited as a meme-unit, or whether the nature of the grand meme requires alteration for its existence. For example, the ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme was originally used without alterations, as shown in fig. 9, but later meme-units under the grand ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme were indeed edited. However, for the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme, it was originally memeified and viralized with edits (fig. 4), which means that the mere nature of the grand meme required editing or alteration to exist. While every meme is edited, not all require it to exist.

Community memes mentioned in this work include the ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme, the ‘gopissgirl’ meme, ‘*Sam va lentin*’ and *Spongebob* memes. These were all media characters, TV shows or movies that were later on memeified, either parts of them or them as a whole (like with *Spongebob* memes).

The crossover editions found in this work are fig. 1, fig. 13, and those mentioned and classified in annex II-E-2, annex III-3, and annex VIII-4.

Any other meme that requires classification can be fit into either of these five categories, probably in more than one. Further analysis of more existing memes should take memes, grand memes, and meme-units into consideration before fitting each of them into their corresponding categories.

4.4. Google formulaire results

When we decided to create a Google formulaire to study meme awareness in our environment, we were aware of three things. Firstly, that this would in no case ever be a valid study because of the inherent limitations to our sample size and the inability to limit bias in the formulaire itself. Secondly, that while our sampling would never be usable as a pattern finder, we could still derive useful information from. And thirdly, that knowledge of the workings of online communities would allow us to segregate memetic knowledge from ourselves and extrapolate it to a group of people who surrounded us.

This work never aimed to find a pattern or thread that follows all memetic knowledge. The resources necessary for that, should it be possible, are greater than our abilities, but we believed that finding such a pattern would prove impossible even to the mightiest of researchers, as the complexities of the online memescape are too complicated, in our opinion, to be defined by a formula. The intersection between online communities and individual users means that each user follows their own memetic thread with their own memetic knowledge and that, while it is possible to define the probability of someone acquiring particular meme knowledge based on their online communities, doing the opposite would prove impossible. Our work with this formulaire is only the first steps in proving that there indeed is not a single parameter that can be blamed for a user's memetic knowledge, or lack thereof.

None of the memes found in the formulaire are what one might call 'normie' meme, none follow the 'top text, bottom text' format that is particularly popular on sites such as Facebook, generally inhabited by older individuals. However, 77% of the responders to the test were under 30 years old, with the 22 to 30 range representing over half (56,5%) of responders. And yet none of the numbers on the answers to the formulaire followed a pattern that might lead us to believe that age is a signifying that would guarantee that the memes presented are better known. In fact, out of 5 questions relating directly to memes, 3 had half the respondents unaware of the existence of the meme, while only 2 presented a significant percentage of meme knowledge and, even in those cases, it did not reach 70%. Age is not a factor in meme

knowledge, even within our community, who is more likely to have the same meme culture that we do.

Whether or not location is a factor is also proven by the fact that 90% of respondents were from Spain, yet there was no number of respondents high enough in any of the questions that would possibly signify that location can be a factor on extracting memetic knowledge, though it is notable that question 9, which includes the only meme in Spanish we included in the formulaire, was the most known by all participants, although it did not reach 70% of knowledge either. Location is not a defining factor on memetic knowledge.

The same logic applies to sex, as 81% of respondents were female, yet none of the questions seem to agree with such a percentage. Sex alone is not a determinant.

All of the participants selected at least one of the following social media for the sharing, creating, or searching of memes: Twitter, Tumblr, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Whatsapp, Telegram or other apps of instant messaging. Over 75% of respondents chose Twitter and Instagram as apps they used for these purposes and, considering what we know about Instagram and its re-posting, memetic cultural knowledge in users who utilized both apps should be larger. However, the percentage in the memetic knowledge in any of the questions was not increased, as none reached even the percentage of the users for both of these platforms, once the memetic knowledge acquired from other sources is taken into consideration. While increasing the probably of increased memetic culture knowledge, the use of a particular or multitude of social media does not correlate with who will know the memes we presented, even amongst our circles.

What does this mean, then? That, as we have defended, memetic knowledge cannot be defined by one personal factor, expected because of an online or in person community, nor does it exclusively have to deal with the particular use of social media executed by the respondents. Age, which is the area of memetic culture that has been studied the most, cannot alone explain why memetic knowledge differs so highly amongst users. The difference in usage of social media and other platforms cannot relate to the percentage of people aware of particular Internet memes, and the belief that young people will know this, while older people will not, is unfounded and untrue.

Online communities are much more complex than we have been led to believe. It is not one's belonging to one community which creates the scenario through which that individual will have a particular memetic knowledge, but the interaction between all of the individual's communities, their involvement in them, their age, social media used, location, and a number of other factors related to both the individual and their usage of the Internet. Trying to find one

cause that will open the door towards memetic knowledge is not only foolish, but insulting to the rich online environment that users have created and from which memes are bred.

We encourage future studies to further study this phenomena, as memetic knowledge seems to not be consistent even within communities. This formulaire, responded to by those in our community and those they interact with, is proof that one individual's online memetic culture will never perfectly align with those they surround themselves with, not matter how similar.

5. Discussion

5.1. Traceability and credit

The main issue we have run into with this work is the problem of credit. Much like with artists and their work, memes are created and spread with little thought to the original creator. While studying the morality of potential earnings made by meme pages or uncredited content sharing is out of the realm of our work, it is a potential problem that many internet users have faced, and it makes our job infinitely more difficult, as the original usage of a meme is potentially lost forever through uncredited usage.

When you laugh at a dumb meme and your partner, who is not an internet person, asks whats so funny but it's like a tier 3 meme and you've gotta explain about 7 years of internet for them to understand the nuances



Fig. 14. Example of both Internet users' self-awareness regarding meme layering and the impossibility of user credit through a reposted meme with no credit. Source: unknown.

However, while Internet memes typically lack attribution (Davison, 2012), this is as much by choice as it is chance, as some users go to extreme lengths such as removing user data from the original meme or purposely using anonymous sites (like 4chan, which not only allows for anonymity but forces it by not allowing the creation of user accounts or even usernames

(Literat & van den Berg, 2019)). Once these memes make the jump to other types of media, through the already discussed cross-platforming, crediting the original is almost impossible, as noted by a Twitter user, as shown in fig. 14. Finding the original source of this tweet is impossible, however, as the reposted version that we came across does not credit them and the original Tweet seems to have been deleted.

This is where the website Know Your Meme is relevant. Founded in 2008 and published by Literally Media, Ltd, Know your meme is a database researching memes and Internet phenomena, where content is often submitted by users but is then reviewed by research staff who credit authors when possible, considered a reputable source and used often in academic research (Matalon, 2019; Shifman, 2012). As far as we are aware, this is the only place online where meme creators are credited, and memes thoroughly explained. This website is valuable not only in its quest to proper citations, but also its ability to explain memes to those who may be unaware or ‘out of the loop’, contributing to closing the memetic culture age gap and hampering gatekeeping.

When content makes the jump from creation to meme, it is important to consider where author credit is due and where the meme has become its own. Memes like the ‘Jason Derulo MET fall’, ‘Loss’ or ‘*Sam va lentin*’ inherently lack credit because their status as recurrent means that those who consume them are aware that the person sharing them is not the creator. Regularly seeing such memes is the reason they are funny. However, the usage of memes like ‘son, are you winning, ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ or the ‘yes, honey’ implies that the creator is using an existing template created by someone else to express their own ideas, it’s their own take. These takes can be very similar (sometimes even the same, as shown in annex VI) but such a genre of memeing implies ownership of the idea and the message of the meme, if not of the template. If memes are considered signs, then meme systems are sign systems, and so ‘copying’ a meme format is no longer copying, as it is merely a growth of memetic culture. The creation of new memes is therefore translating the original intent into a new meme adapted to a new audience and the known community it addresses, not copying (Cannizzaro, 2016).

The difference between implied credit and implied ownership is an important one, and Internet users take it seriously. Stolen content, like tweets, tends to be recognized and called out on the tweets themselves (Patkar, 2015), while the usage of an existing meme template will be understood as implicit credit to the original, with implicit ownership of the particular meme-unit to the user who originally shared it.

5.2. Effects on humor

The online memescape has fundamentally change how its native citizens perceive and consume humor, to a point where people now often worry about the young generations and they might find funny (Bruenig, 2017). Absurdist humor is ‘generally considered as a specific type of humor where the incongruity between two or more data-sets remains unresolved, at least on the level of the literary text itself’ (Couder, 2017, p. 496), and is very prevalent in the current memescape, as seen in previous figures and the annexes. However, even ‘digital memetic nonsense’ with no referential meaning serves an important function of marking community membership (Katz & Shifman, 2017): it is understood and shared as funny, because being funny is its main goal, and the more absurd it is, the funnier it is. If it is found funny, but not in the original way that the creator intended, and a meme find ironic success, or post-ironic success, it’s even funnier (Literat & van den Berg, 2019). Ironic enjoyment, defined as enjoyment ‘despite or because of it being evaluated as bad’ (Giner-Sorolla & van der Tol, 2020), has become a huge part of online memetic culture.

Dat boi was and is an essential classic. It was revolutionary precisely because it was nonsensical. It instantly filtered out the normie. It left normies scratching their heads. Where’s the joke? There isn’t one. It’s just dat boi. O shit. Don’t you see the genius??? It’s a meme that feels like it’s referencing something - that has a background. Who is dat boi? Why is he coming? What is the significance of his presence? What are the prerequisites for his arrival? (Literat & van den Berg, 2019)

The reasons why this absurdist humor has become so prevalent in internet memes is highly debated, but Parashar and Tewari (2021) suggested that through its inclusion of something completely novel and absurd, the rationale behind the humor could exist within a framework of comedy. As Toa (2012) described, humor has seven components: incongruity, surprise, repetition, inversion, establishment of superiority, exaggeration, and slapstick violence; and the online memes presented fulfill every category. It can be argued that incongruity, surprise, repetition, inversion, and exaggeration are the pillars on which memetic culture exists, allowing for the usage of the rest of the elements in specific memes, to fulfill the surprise factor.

Rather than trying to restore meaning and sense where they’ve gone missing, the style aims to play with the moods and emotions of an illegible world. In a way, it’s a digital update to the surreal and absurd genres of art and literature that characterized the tumultuous early 20th century. (Bruenig, 2017)

Because of this culture of incongruity created around memes, online spaces have felt the need to evolve to better communicate their intentions. While absurdist humor may be prevalent now, the illiteracy of not being ‘in’ on the joke is not a fun experience. This once again comes into play with the generational gap, which is only further increased by memetic culture’s influence on humor. Parents cannot understand why their younger children find deep fried memes funny, and the fluidity in Internet memes sets another gatekeeping barrier. This explains the creation of tonal variants, as shown in sections 2.4. and 3.1., with the usage of capital letters and tone indicators. Tone indicators are addendums to the actual written message of a user that indicate the tone of the message (/g stands for *genuine*, /srs stands for *serious*, /s stands for *sarcasm*, etc.). This is an important feature originally created to help neurodivergent people, particularly autistic people (Marcus, 2020), who have a harder time understanding such tones even with the help of an actual voice tone. These further expand the idea of emojis and, while not its original intent, can be helpful in helping navigate ‘weird millennial humor’.

5.3. Group thinking, echo chambers and the importance of community

The existence of cross-posting must not limit our view of what memeing entails. Memes are created and evaluated within the communities that birthed them, and it is their virality which allows them to make the jump necessary to become viral outside of their original sphere of influence. The user who creates content in the form of memes does not post them randomly, but addresses a specific, familiar crowd (Burgess, 2008; Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017), who is ‘in’ on the knowledge necessary to understand the meme, as proven by fig. 2. Memes only become popular once a wide scale of users share them, meaning that high-influence users cannot make a meme popular themselves (He, Zheng, & Zeng, 2016), as our culturally induced group structures interact, mediating knowledge and collective action that one single user cannot achieve themselves (Love & Wimsatt, 2019).

However, community creation and sharing allows for memes to become a weapon of magnifying echo chambers, often becoming political tools to attack minority groups (L., Peirson, & Tolunay, 2018), utilizing the social power provided by emotions within memetic culture (Szablewicz, 2014). The feedback from community meme posting creates a bias by the content creators, who believe in turn that the ideas represented in the memes are more common than they truly are in the public sphere, as online community meme-posting allows for a kind of discourse that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness (Warner, 2002). This is not a new concept, it is the mere definition of echo chambers, after all; but meme culture *relies* on the inclusion/exclusion of individuals in a

community to define not only their social positioning, but also construct the collective itself (Gal et al., 2015). The otherness provided by making sure that other users cannot understand the content helps strengthen and even create the community itself. There is an existing paradox of creating memes from and to a particular community, yet needing those external to the community to see and not understand them to provide validation. The control that platforms for meme-sharing have over content is also an important factor on who, why, and when sees this new content, as 'the means to produce data is decentralized to the users, but the means to collect and process that data is recentralized to the proprietors of the platform-based services we use' (Helmond, 2015). Most online platforms allow for the easy, quick sharing of all content, made even easier by memes, which allow for quick discussions around topics that would remain relevant for longer in any other form, but that memes have made accessible, while shallow (Basulto, 2013).

Memes are not only relevant to identity and community because of their sharing but because of the specificities of certain memes that relate directly to identity creation and sharing. The usage of memes is not merely an expression of existing social cultural online norms, it serves a social tool for negotiating them (Gal et al., 2015), as convey complicated social identity messages in a deceptively simple format, but manage to create some social identity expressions that further perpetuate harmful and/or oppressive social identity prototypes (Eschler & Menking, 2018). It's not only that memes are created and shared to be understood by a certain community, but that some are specifically created to categorize groups or people, such as the 'starter pack' meme format (Eschler & Menking, 2018). What one shares depends highly on what they have lived and experienced, and therefore what they create is embedded with a piece of who the user is: it reflects a specific attitude of the meme creator while contributing to the ongoing negotiation over norms and belonging (Gal et al., 2015).

Meme versatility also leads to the ability to be used ironically. Older memes who have outlived their popularity peak can see a resurgence if used ironically, (Literat & van den Berg, 2019) and that allows for new genres of memes to be born, as well as media to have a renaissance period whereas it is once again enjoyed by the public, who might have not enjoyed it otherwise- This is the case for *Twilight*, the movie saga, which saw ample criticism (is also ample success) when first released, yet has received high praise in recent years. Often what starts as ironic enjoyment, whether for a media franchise, a meme, a particular saying; ends up becoming a staple in the cultural capital of the consumer. The ironic enjoyment turned regular usage has become a meme itself, as many Internet users have noted (theWeetabixdude, 2019; ditch pony, 2018; kurtwagnermorelikekurtwagnerd, 2018).

As a final note, it is important to remember, however, that no social community owns memes. There is not set limitation or specification that can help us understand who will be part of a certain meme culture, who will possess enough meme capital to be able to exist in online spheres without falling to otherness. As discussed in section 4.4., who will know certain meme is not defined by age, social media used, social media usage, or any other classical social science research category. And, as much as meme culture is based on communities, it is important to remember that not every member of the same community will also have the same meme knowledge. Meme circles are deeply complex and, although they do follow an order that may seem invisible, the complexity of the intertwining of every community a user may be part of makes it impossible to determine who will know what meme, meme-unit or grand meme.

6. Conclusion and proposals for future research

Even the concept of meme and their existence has been in disputed in the academic realm, with sides questioning both the biological and social approach that previous research has taken. In this work we have focused on a historical, social analysis of the memescape to understand community creation, gatekeeping, and the life cycle of what we now understand as cultural capital.

We have proven a need to expand our view of what online memes are beyond the unorganized, chaotic sphere that the memescape has been understood as for so long, and focus on finding linking threads that will allow for more specific research. Research like the ones carried by Burgess (2008), Literat and van den Berg (2019), Shifman (2014a), Nissenbaum and Shifman (2017), Gal et al. (2015), Szablewicz (2014), or Miltner (2014), have done essential work in categorizing, analyzing and understanding either a particular meme, community, or genre, but research that can be inclusive of the bigger picture is the next logical step, as memes evolve into more and more sophisticated forms of communication.

As memes become the number one information device online, carrying news as important as Putin's rumored resignation (Baker-Whitelaw, 2020), understanding them and their effects on communities becomes of the utmost need for not only research and information purposes, but potentially for national security. The community creation role that memes perform, particularly in echo chamber environments, has the potential to further alienate minorities that are already the target of many of the most harmful of memes (Gal et al., 2015).

The controversies regarding cultural transmission notwithstanding, the virality of memes in multiple online communities and spheres allows for an increased accessibility that has already made the jump to the real-life world. The sharing of layered ideas that memes make

so accessible allows for a sort of ‘cloud’ that is created in the minds of users, automatically assigning every term multiple associations that have been received in the form of memes through multiple online platforms (not necessarily exclusive to social media), connecting one to another. Note that the term ‘ideas’ is used, because memes have moved past a realm where an actual message needs to be transmitted: ideas are a wilder breed, and one that is harder to categorize. In a world where virality no longer required active human participation beyond consumption, the spread of these ideas as memes is easier than ever.

Online memes have already changed the world of economics and marketing, as well as every single online sharing platform, and have had significant effects on the humor of those who can be considered ‘fluent’ in the dialect of memes, which has left a big portion of the population out through gatekeeping practices, either because of an age gap or because of non-belonging to online communities who have created their own identities with *otherness* definition. Not speaking ‘meme’ (with all its variations through alteration of grammar, tone indicators or vocabulary) fluently now means only potential exclusion from online conversations, and even economic circles through company meme marketing (KFC, n.d.).

Through our field work we proved not only that such ideas are true, but that meme sharing, and creation is a coordinated community effort, where ideas are shared, even in repetition, amongst online communities. Our formulaire, while lacking in many aspects, proved that there is no one factor that could be used to understand online memetic culture awareness and knowledge, but that it must be a thorough individual and historically aware analysis of meme culture as cultural capital.

Our classification includes five categories that allow us to take into consideration not only the process through which memes, grand memes, and meme-units are created, but also the communities and interactions that they include. Defining meme as the compilation of both ideas and singular meme usage, grand memes as the general concept and idea carried by a group of meme instances, and meme-units as the singular use of a meme idea to create one unit of content; we established historical, original, edited, community and crossover editions as the categories through which every meme can be classified. Non-exclusivity amongst categories allows for a broader classification that both connects and separates memes, and that will hopefully outlast previous attempts.

Through issues of content crediting and digital divide, memes have become the one thread that connects every community, minority, and user on the online sphere, as sharing of information now becomes easier and more accessible than ever. Understanding new phenomena is the work that research is meant for, and the challenges presented by the velocity

of meme creation, sharing, and expansion will only make for more interesting social research in the future.

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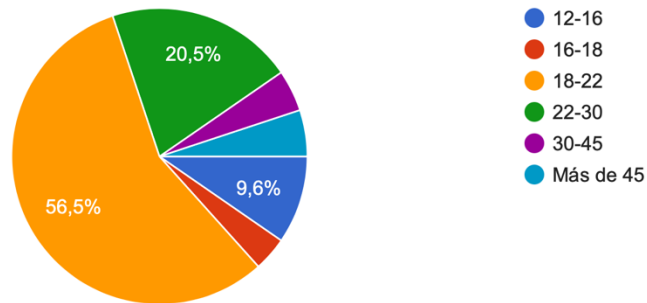
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ANNEX I.

In this annex we present the results of our Google formulaire, with graphs and a full numeric breakdown.

Question 1

Edad // Age
375 respuestas

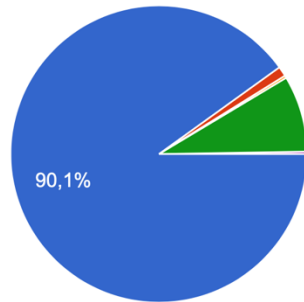


<input checked="" type="radio"/> 18-22 212 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 22-30 77 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 12-16 36 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Más de 45 19 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 30-45 17 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 16-18 14 respuestas

Question 2

¿De dónde eres? // Where are you from?

373 respuestas



- España // Spain
- Otro país europeo de habla no inglesa // Other Non-English speaking European country
- País de habla inglesa // English-speaking country
- Latinoamérica // South America
- Otro // Other

España // Spain

336 respuestas

Latinoamérica // South America

31 respuestas

Otro país europeo de habla no inglesa // Other Non-English speaking European country

4 respuestas

Pregunta sin responder

2 respuestas

País de habla inglesa // English-speaking country

1 respuesta

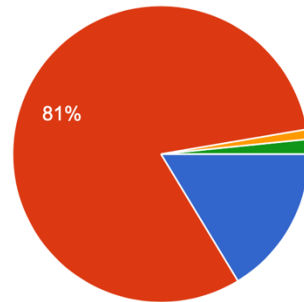
Otro // Other

1 respuesta

Question 3

Sexo // Sex

374 respuestas



- Hombre // Male
- Mujer // Female
- No binario // Non binary
- Prefiero no decirlo // Prefer not to answer

Mujer // Female

303 respuestas

Hombre // Male

61 respuestas

Prefiero no decirlo // Prefer not to answer

6 respuestas

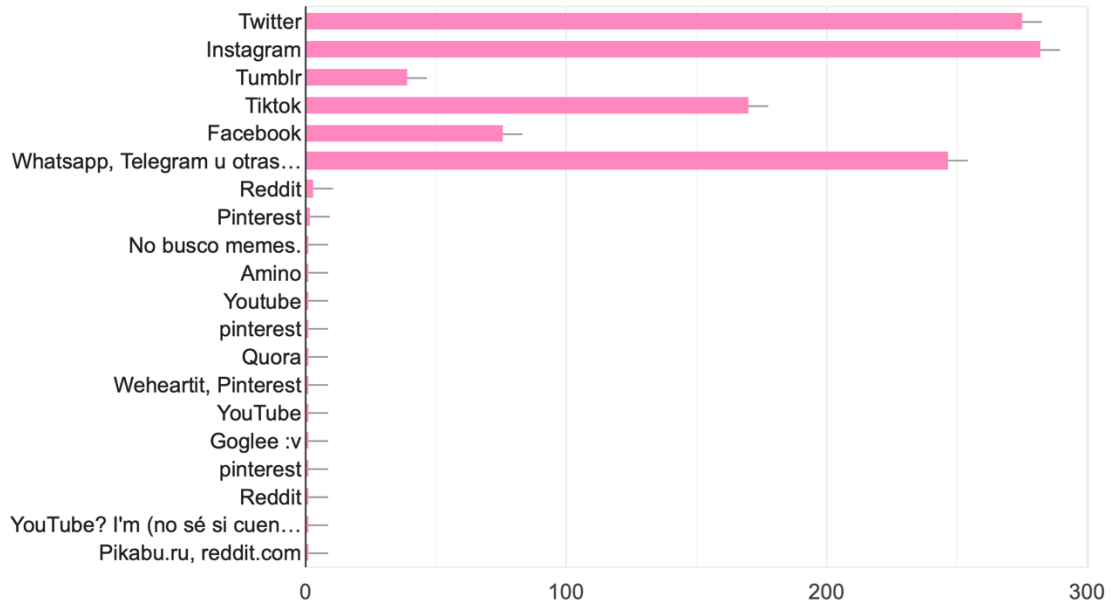
No binario // Non binary

4 respuestas

Question 4

¿Qué redes sociales utilizas? (en términos de ver, compartir o buscar memes) // What social media do you use? (to share, see or look for memes)

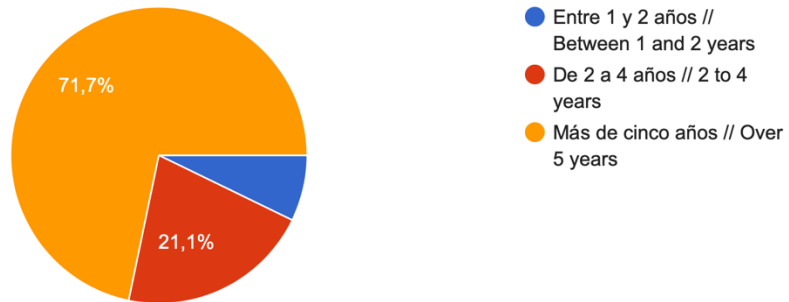
375 respuestas



Question 5

¿Cuántos años llevas usando las redes sociales para estos fines? // How long (in years) have you been using social media to look, share or search for memes?

375 respuestas



Más de cinco años // Over 5 years

269 respuestas

De 2 a 4 años // 2 to 4 years

79 respuestas

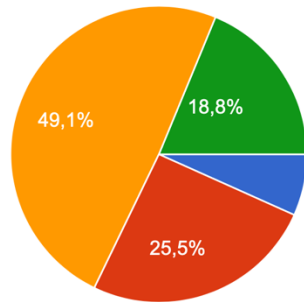
Entre 1 y 2 años // Between 1 and 2 years

27 respuestas

Question 6

¿Cuántas horas diarias pasas en esas redes sociales? // How many hours a day do you spend on those social media platforms?

373 respuestas



- Menos de 1 // Under 1 hour
- Entre 1 y 2 // Between 1 and 2
- De 2 a 4 // 2 to 4 hours
- Más de cinco // Over 5 hours

De 2 a 4 // 2 to 4 hours

183 respuestas

Entre 1 y 2 // Between 1 and 2

95 respuestas

Más de cinco // Over 5 hours

70 respuestas

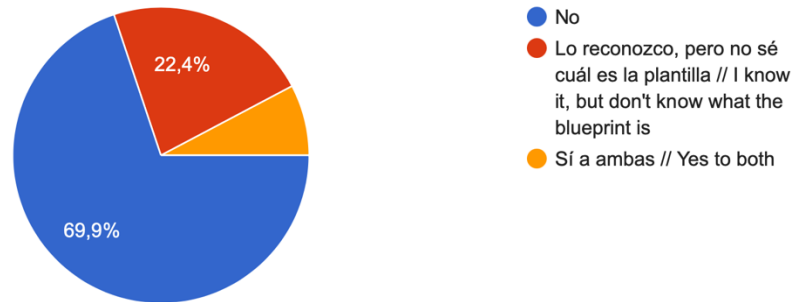
Menos de 1 // Under 1 hour

25 respuestas

Question 7

1. ¿Reconoces el meme que lleva la cara de este hombre? ¿Sabrías crear tu propia versión basado en la plantilla de este? // Do you recognize the me...ate your own version based on the blueprint for it?

375 respuestas



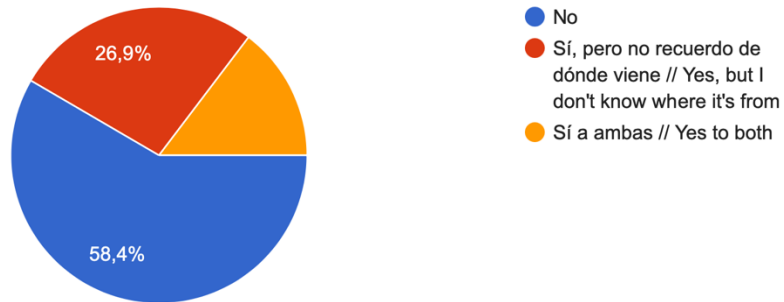
The image referenced in this question can be found in fig. 10 of the main body of work.

<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
262 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Lo reconozco, pero no sé cuál es la plantilla // I know it, but don't know what the blueprint is
84 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sí a ambas // Yes to both
29 respuestas

Question 8

2. ¿Reconoces la palabra "Trankilovsky"? ¿Sabrías decir de dónde viene? // Do you recognize the word "Trankilovsky"? Do you know where it comes from?

375 respuestas



No

219 respuestas

Sí, pero no recuerdo de dónde viene // Yes, but I don't know where it's from

101 respuestas

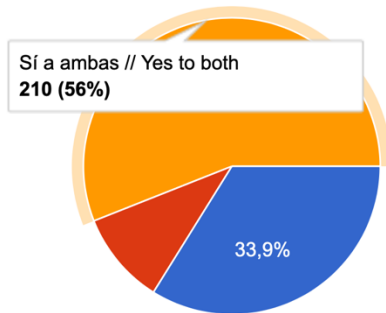
Sí a ambas // Yes to both

55 respuestas

Question 9

3. ¿Reconoces la frase "Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena"? ¿Sabrías decir de dónde viene y cómo se usa? // Do you recognize the phrase "Nos acabam...be able to tell where it's from and how it's used?

375 respuestas



- No
- Sí, pero no sabría decirlo / Yes, but I wouldn't be able to tell
- Sí a ambas // Yes to both

Sí a ambas // Yes to both

210 respuestas

No

127 respuestas

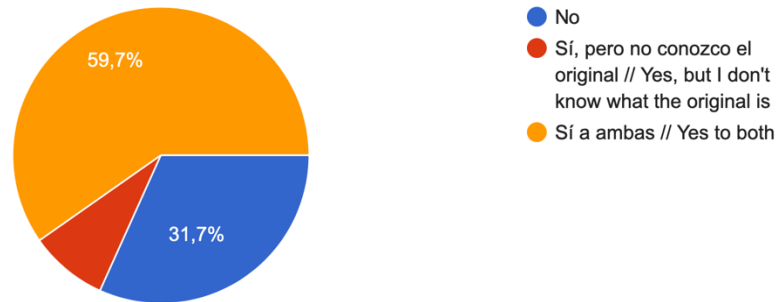
Sí, pero no sabría decirlo // Yes, but I wouldn't be able to tell

38 respuestas

Question 10

4. ¿Reconoces este dibujo? ¿Sabrías decir cuál es el original? // Do you recognize this drawing? Do you know what the original version is?

375 respuestas



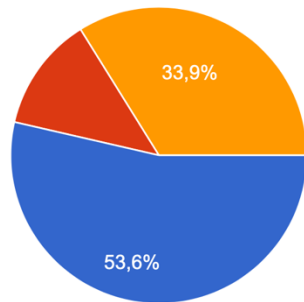
The image referenced in this question can be found in fig. 11 of the main body of work.

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sí a ambas // Yes to both 224 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> No 119 respuestas
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sí, pero no conozco el original // Yes, but I don't know what the original is 32 respuestas

Question 11

5. Si digo "I'm Jared, I'm 19 and I never fucking learned how to read", ¿reconoces la frase? ¿Sabrías decir de dónde viene? // When I say "I'm Jared, I'm ...nize it? Would you be able to tell where it's from?

375 respuestas



- No
- Sí, pero no sabría decirlo /
/ Yes, but I wouldn't be
able to tell
- Sí a ambas // Yes to both

No

201 respuestas

Sí a ambas // Yes to both

127 respuestas

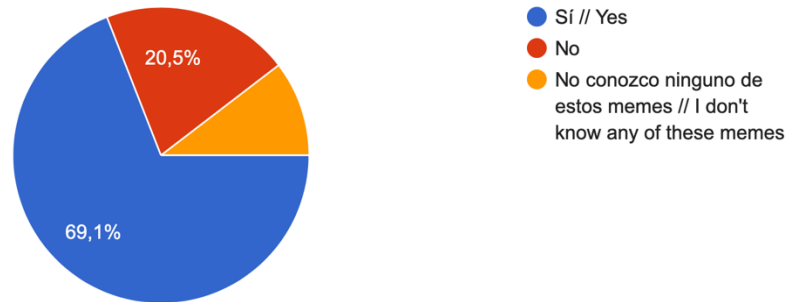
Sí, pero no sabría decirlo // Yes, but I wouldn't be able to tell

47 respuestas

Question 12

¿Has visto alguna vez cualquier de estos memes sin ser su versión original? // Have you ever seen any of these memes but not in their original version?

375 respuestas



Sí // Yes

259 respuestas

No

77 respuestas

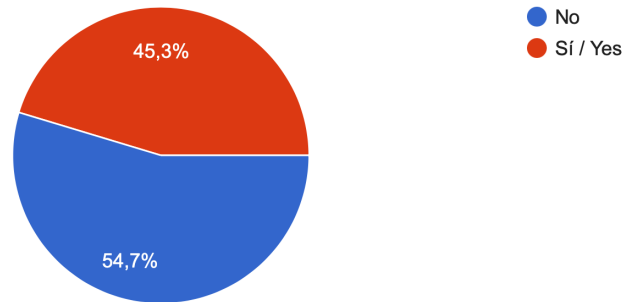
No conozco ninguno de estos memes // I don't know any of these memes

39 respuestas

Question 13

¿Entiendes una diferencia de significado entre estas dos oraciones: "esto es algo importante" vs. "esto es Algo Importante"? // Do you understand a ...hing important" vs. "this is Something Important"?

375 respuestas



No

205 respuestas

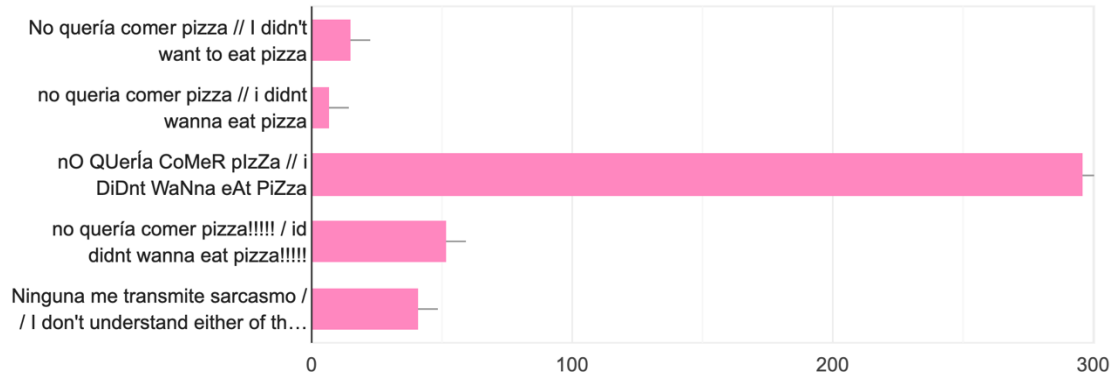
Sí / Yes

170 respuestas

Question 14

Selecciona cuál o cuáles de las siguientes oraciones te transmiten sarcasmo // Select the sentence or sentences that you understand as sarcastic.

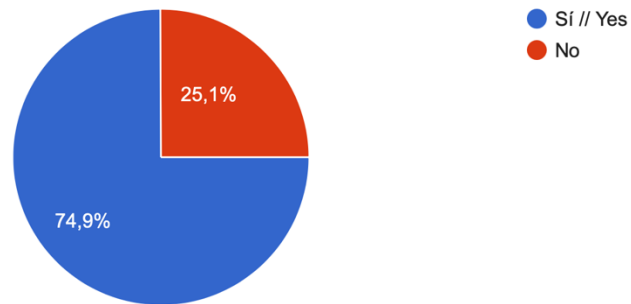
375 respuestas



Question 15

¿Has editado alguna vez un meme (en imagen, vídeo o texto) para que encaje en tu vida o algo de lo que seas fan? // Have you ever edited a meme (im... better fit your life or something you're a fan of?

375 respuestas



Sí // Yes

281 respuestas

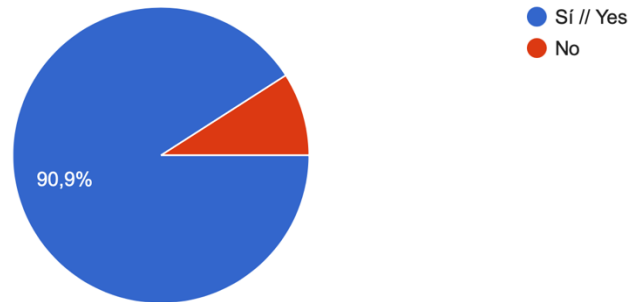
No

94 respuestas

Question 16

¿Has citado alguna vez un meme que conociste por internet en la vida real con amigos o familia? //
Have you ever quoted a meme you learnt online in real life, to friends or family?

375 respuestas



Sí // Yes

341 respuestas

No

34 respuestas

Question 17

Si no te importaría responder alguna duda (corta) por correo electrónico, puedes dejármelo aquí abajo // If you wouldn't mind answering some (short) questions by email, you can leave yours down below

298 respuestas

The responses to this question are obviously personal emails, so we have chosen not to include them for privacy reasons.

Question 18

Gracias por participar :) Si quieres dejarme alguna nota o compartir tu meme favorito, este es tu sitio // Thanks for answering! If you want to tell me something or share you favorite meme, this is your place :)

326 respuestas

In the following pages one can find the answers to this question with their translation to English when necessary.

Me gusta el de una foto de stock que va de la mano de una y mira a la otra 🤩🤩🤩
🤩 y Los que parece que están hechos en el 2000 amamos

1 respuesta

vivo a base de referencias a vines así que cualquiera de Los Conocidos

1 respuesta

¿Sabes lo que es la intinsibilidad?

1 respuesta

espero que te vaya bien !!!

1 respuesta

Ánimo con ese tfg c:

1 respuesta

two best friends... they might kiss👄👄👄👄

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. I like the one with a stock photo where someone is holding a girl's hand and looking at another girl [devil emoji, devil emoji, devil emoji] and the ones that look like they were made in 200 we love [them]
2. I live on vine references so any of the Known Ones¹.
3. Do you know what 'intinsibilidad' is?
4. I hope you do well !!!!
5. Good luck with your tfg [dissertation] c: [happy face]
6. No translation needed.

¹ This answer uses capital letters in the manner referenced in question 13 and section 2.6. of the main body of work.

solo se me viene a la cabeza la cuenta de ig de bisbaldoingthings

1 respuesta

Cock destroyers

1 respuesta

Monkey o SPaIN sin la a

1 respuesta

El pingüino Gunter con el cartel de que no te pegaba con una silla por respeto a la silla

1 respuesta

Mi meme favorito es el de una escena hiper realista de fantasía con un monstruo muy grande y una persona pequeñita. No sé cómo se llama pero me río siempre con ese formato

1 respuesta

En la petición del correo, ese importaría esta mal

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. the only thing that comes to mind is the ig (Instagram) account bisbaldoingthings
2. no translation needed
3. monkey or Spain without the S
4. Gunter the penguin with the sign that says “I wouldn’t hit you with a chair out of respect for the chair”
5. My favorite meme is the hyper realist fantasy scene with a huge monster and a small person. I don’t know what it’s called but I always laugh at that format.
6. In the question about email, importaría [one of the words in the Spanish version] is wrong².

² It was not.

Mucho ánimo con el tfg 💜

1 respuesta

Mucho animo con el estudio.

1 respuesta

[https://www.picclickimg.com/00/s/OTAwWDE2MDA=/z/WXEAAOSwMmBVkm4R/\\$/Rare-Dreamworks-Shark-Tale-Animated-Movie-Oscar-Fish-1.jpg](https://www.picclickimg.com/00/s/OTAwWDE2MDA=/z/WXEAAOSwMmBVkm4R/$/Rare-Dreamworks-Shark-Tale-Animated-Movie-Oscar-Fish-1.jpg)

1 respuesta

el vine de that's what good pussy sounds like o el de look at all those chickens

1 respuesta

Mi fav es Twitter fisica cuando se comió a la personalidad. Mucha suerte con el TFG! :)

1 respuesta

qué lindas trencitas! son chorizos

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. Good luck with the tfg [dissertation] [purple heart]
2. Good luck with the study.
3. The image below as an example of a favorite meme.



4. The vine that says *'that's what good pussy sounds like'* or the one that goes *'look at all those chickens'*
5. My favorite is Twitter física when it absorbed the personality. Good luck with the tfg [dissertation]! :) [happy face]
6. Such pretty braids! they're chorizos³

³ This is in reference to a popular Spanish online meme.

Mi meme favorito es todo Vine en general :)

1 respuesta

Nop

1 respuesta

two bro00o0os chillin in a hot tub fivefeetapartcausetheyrenotgay

1 respuesta

Si soy

1 respuesta

Estoy en la oficina trabajando y me has hecho reír en alto, ya te vale

1 respuesta

Tenía una cuenta de memes anónima de mi carrera en Instagram que se popularizó un en mi Facultad, eran todo meses de las asignaturas (Periodismo y Comunicación Audiovisual) por si yo que sé, te sirve hablar de los memes de nichos específicos

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. My favorite meme is all of vine
2. Nope
3. No translation needed⁴
4. I am⁵
5. I am in my office working and you made me laugh out loud, you're the worst
6. I had an anonymous meme account about my college major on Instagram that became popular in my school, they were all memes [misspelled] about the subjects (Journalism and AudiovisualMedia) in case, I don't know, you can talk about specific niche memes

⁴ This is in reference to a viral vine by Anthony Padilla.

⁵ This is in reference to a language pattern translated directly to Spanish from English that has recently become popular on online spheres.

mucha suerte y mucho ánimo!!!!

1 respuesta

No uso twitter por los memes, pero si me aparecen son bienvenidos.

1 respuesta

MuY iNtErEsAnTe eL tRaBaJo

1 respuesta

Suerte con el tfg 💕💕

1 respuesta

Le faltó un poquito de redacción, a veces no entendí lo que preguntaste.

1 respuesta

uno de mis memes favoritos es el de "donde está que yo lo vea", lo uso incluso en la vida real porque 100% relatable. el de "eres tonta? te gusta ser tonta??" también icónico. :) suerte con el tfg!

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. Good luck and good spirits!!!!
2. I don't use Twitter because of memes, but if they show up they're welcome.
3. VeRy InTeReStInG WoRk⁶
4. Good luck with the tfg [dissertation] [two heart emoji]
5. Good explanations were missing, sometimes I didn't understand what you asked.⁷
6. One of my favorite memes is the "where is it so I can see", I use it even in real life because it is 100% relatable, the one that goes "are you dumb??" is iconic as well. :) good luck with the tfg [dissertation]!

⁶ This is in reference to question 14, with a pattern discussed in section 2.6. of the main body of work.

⁷ This is the only complaint presented about the questions, with 374 people who understood them perfectly.

classic and rare vines to watch when you lose your will to live en youtube

1 respuesta

Optimozaria el cuestionario incluyendo la definición de meme. También siento que se va a medir en base a memes objetivos mas o menos actuales y no basado en un general que puede cambiar de un día a otro o incluso por zonas dentro de un mismo país. Mucha suerte

1 respuesta

No

1 respuesta

mis favoritos son los memes que no tienen contexto como el del pez en el asiento de tren o la pizza en la cama

1 respuesta

el meme plantilla de gossip girl

1 respuesta

Los memes de Belén Esteban

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. No translation needed
2. I'd optimize the questionnaire including the definition of meme. I also feel like it will be measured based on objective memes not necessarily actual and not based on a general that can change day to day or even depending on zones within a country. Good luck⁸
3. No translation needed
4. My favorite are the memes that have no context like the one with the fish on the train seat or the pizza on the bed⁹
5. The meme template from gossip girl¹⁰
6. Memes about Belén Esteban [a Spanish celebrity].

⁸ No opinions nor criticisms were asked in the question, nor were the respondents offered any explanation regarding what the form was evaluating.

⁹ Here we find two examples of absurdist meme humor.

¹⁰ This has been referred to in this work as 'gopissgirl' meme.

Este es el mejor tfg del mundo /// estoy literalmente robándote la vida y el tiempo

1 respuesta

espero que saques una notaza !!!!

1 respuesta

te quiero un besito 😘

1 respuesta

gRaCiAs pOr PaRtlclpAr

1 respuesta

Un tema súper interesante para el tfg ojalá te salga súper buen porque es algo que yo investigaría también ❤️

1 respuesta

No te conozco de nada pero buena suerte con el TFG!!

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. This is the best TFG [dissertation] in the world /// I am literally stealing your life and time¹¹
2. I hope you get a great grade !!!!
3. I love you have a kiss [kiss emoji]
4. ThAnKs FoR pArTiCiPaTiNg¹²
5. Really interesting topic for your tfg [dissertation] I hope it'll turn out well because it's something I'd research as well [heart emoji]
6. I don't know you at all but good luck with the TFG [dissertation]!!

¹¹ This is in reference to the 'I'm literally' meme, mentioned in section 3.1. of the main body of work and found in [ANEXO].

¹² This is once again in reference to question 14, with a pattern discussed in section 2.6. of the main body of work.

Ta weno

1 respuesta

Cualquiera de Ru Paul's Drag Race. "Choices"

1 respuesta

Me ha encantado el cuestionario!!!!

1 respuesta

684005390 🤔

1 respuesta

Los memes de Pingu son los mejores sorry not sorry

1 respuesta

Cualquiera de Cody Ko

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. 's god
2. Any from Ru Paul's Drag Race. 'Choices'
3. I loved the formulaire!!!
4. A phone number [suggestive emoji]
5. Pingu memes are the best sorry not sorry
6. Any by Cody Ko

los memes de gatos llorando pico de la comedia

1 respuesta

One can find these questions, in order, translated to English below:

1. The memes with crying cats comedy peak¹³

¹³ This is another reference to a bad translation from English to Spanish, from 'peak' to 'pico'. An English translation loses the original reference.

ANNEX II.

Part A.

This part will include any relevant images relating to the Robert Pattinson meme, based on fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Original Robert Pattison picture, inspiration for fig. 1 in main body of work. Source: Ainsworth, 2020.

Part B.

This part will include any relevant images relating to the ‘Bernie mittens’ meme, as mentioned in section 2.4. of the main body of work.



Fig. 2. Original ‘Bernie Mittens’ picture, inspiration for later edited memes.

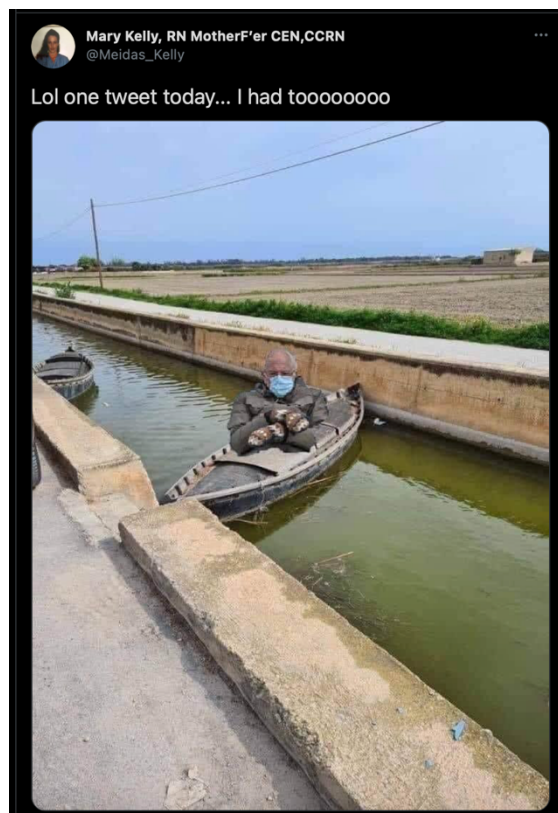


Fig. 3. Example of usage of the ‘Bernie mittens’ meme format. Source: Mary Kelly, RN MotherF’er CEN,CCRN, 2021

Part C.

This part will include references to 'Trollface', as mentioned in section 2.4. of our main body of work.



Fig 4. Original 'Trollface' illustration. Source: Whyne, 2008.

Part D.

This part will include references to ‘top text, bottom text’ as mentioned in section 2.4. of our main body of work.

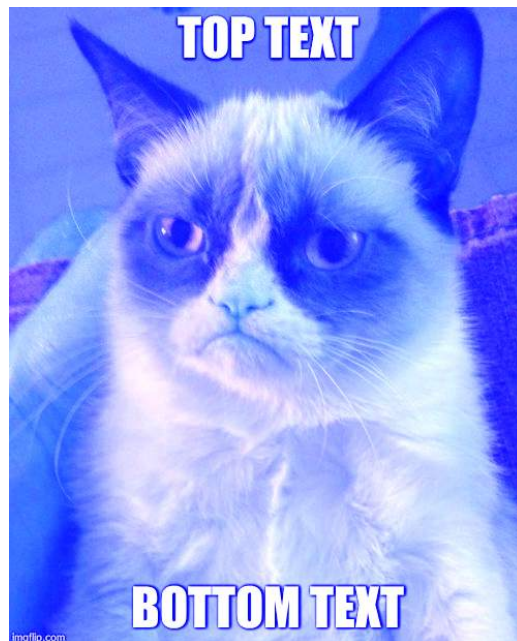


Fig 5. Example of ‘top text, bottom text’. Source unknown.

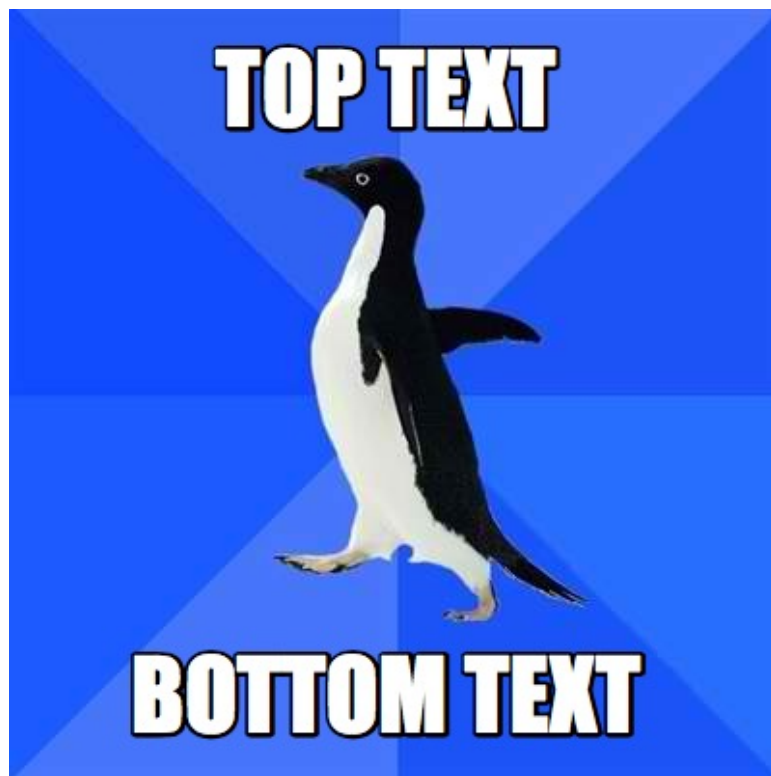


Fig. 6. Example of ‘top text, bottom text’. Source unknown.



Fig. 7. Example of 'top text, bottom text'. Source unknown.



Fig. 8. Example of 'top text, bottom text'. Source unknown.

Part E.

This part will include references to 'dat boi' as mentioned in section 4.3 of our main body of work.

here come dat boi!!!!!!

o shit waddup!



Fig. 1. Original 'dat boi' meme. Source: Fresh Memes About the Mojave Desert and Other Delectable Cuisines, 2016 (deleted)



Fig. 2. Dat boi boi meme in a crossover edition with a Kermit meme. Source: unknown.

ANNEX III.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig 1. Example of the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme. Source: bex celia, 2020

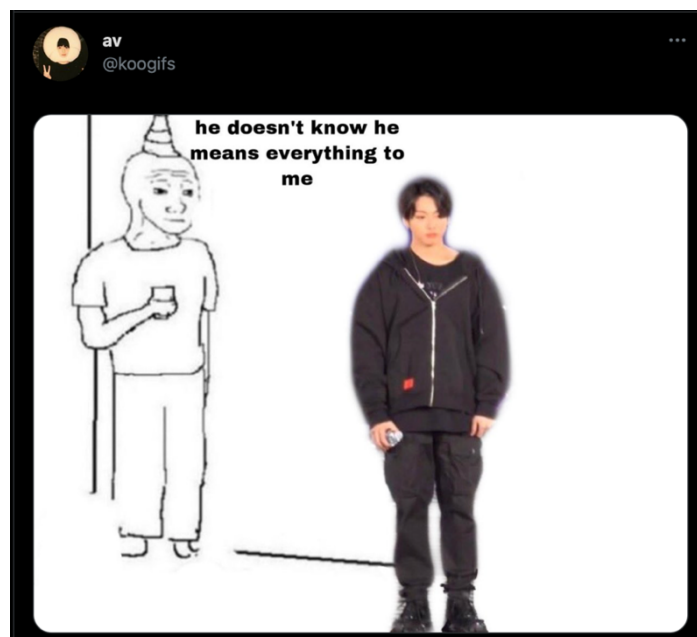


Fig. 2. Example of the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme, edited to fit a particular online community, in this case k-pop and fans of the k-pop group BTS. Source: av, 2020



Fig. 3. Example of the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme as a crossover edition, edited with a popular image to represent Plato’s cavern metaphor. Source: Alex, 2020



Fig. 4. Example of the ‘I wish I was at home/They don’t know’ meme, edited to fit a particular online community, in this case fans of the TV Show *The Good Place*. Source: liz, 2020

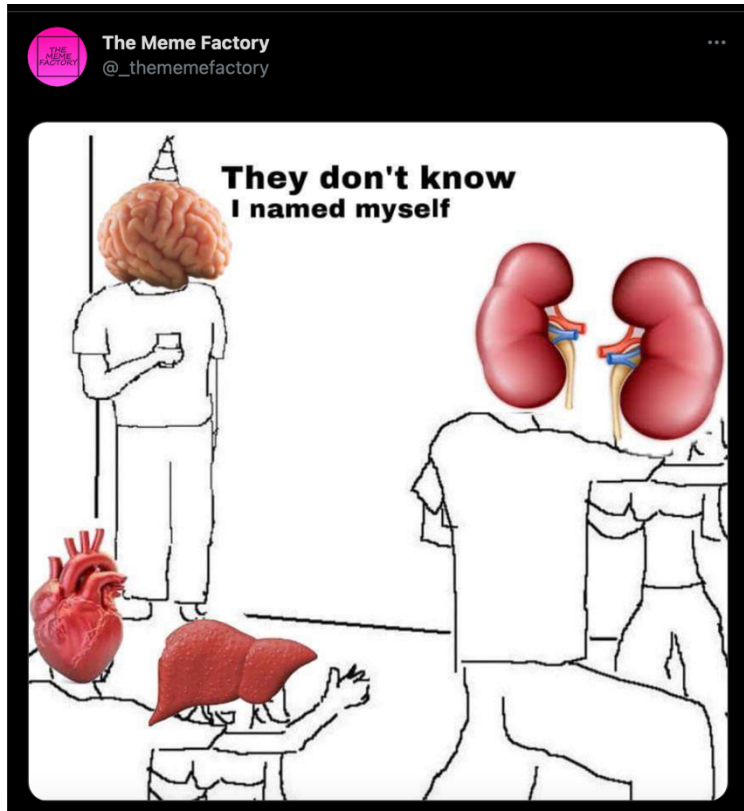


Fig 5. Example of the 'I wish I was at home/They don't know' meme. Source: The Meme Factory, 2021



Fig 6. Example of the 'I wish I was at home/They don't know' meme with political commentary. Source: Alexis Isabel, 2020 (deleted account)

ANNEX IV.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘I’m literally’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig 1. Example of the ‘I’m literally’ meme, as represented by a reference to Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s old tweet. Source: ana, 2020



Fig 2. Example of the ‘I’m literally’ meme- Source: Celia Bancos, 2020x

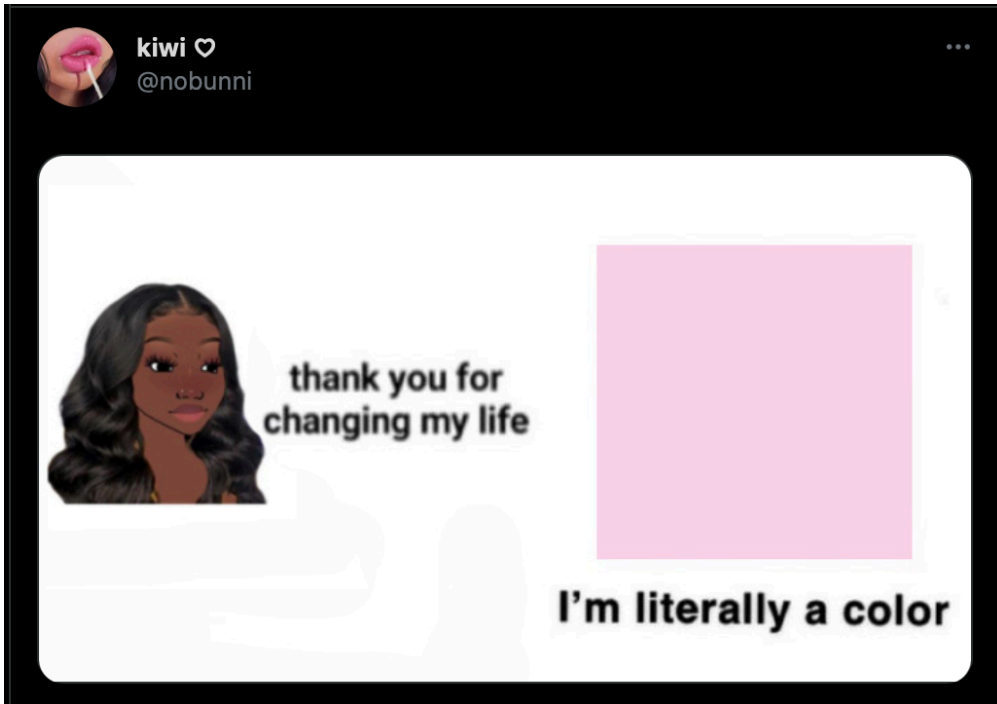


Fig 3. Exmaple of the 'I'm literally' meme. Source: kiwi, 2021



Fig 4. Example of the 'I'm literally' meme, edited with a reference to the 2003 movie School of Rock.
Source: sunflower, 2020

ANNEX V.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘yes honey’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Example of the ‘yes honey’ meme, edited to fit the online community of Taylor Swift fans, ‘swifties’. Source: dianna agron shady facts, 2020



Fig 2. Example of the ‘yes honey’ meme. Source: ángel, 2020

ANNEX VI.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘son are you winning’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig 1. Example of the ‘son are you winning’ meme. Source: Lumberzack, 2020



Fig 2. Original meme-unit for fig. 1, both examples of the ‘son are you winning’ meme. Source: adam, 2020



Fig. 3. Example of the 'son are you winning meme'. Source: [Unicode emoji, half moon], 2020



Fig. 4. Example of the 'son are you winning' meme, with the same message as fig. 3, although this one seems like a coincidental copy instead of a blatant one, unlike figures 1 and 2. Source: R x O (taylor's version), 2020

ANNEX VII.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘*Sam va lentín*’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Example of the ‘*Sam va lentín*’ meme, edited to reference a popular video by Darío Eme Hache. Source: Sir Xexu, 2021



Fig. 2. Example of the ‘*Sam va lentín*’ meme, referencing the current ongoing pandemic. Source: Sam, 2021

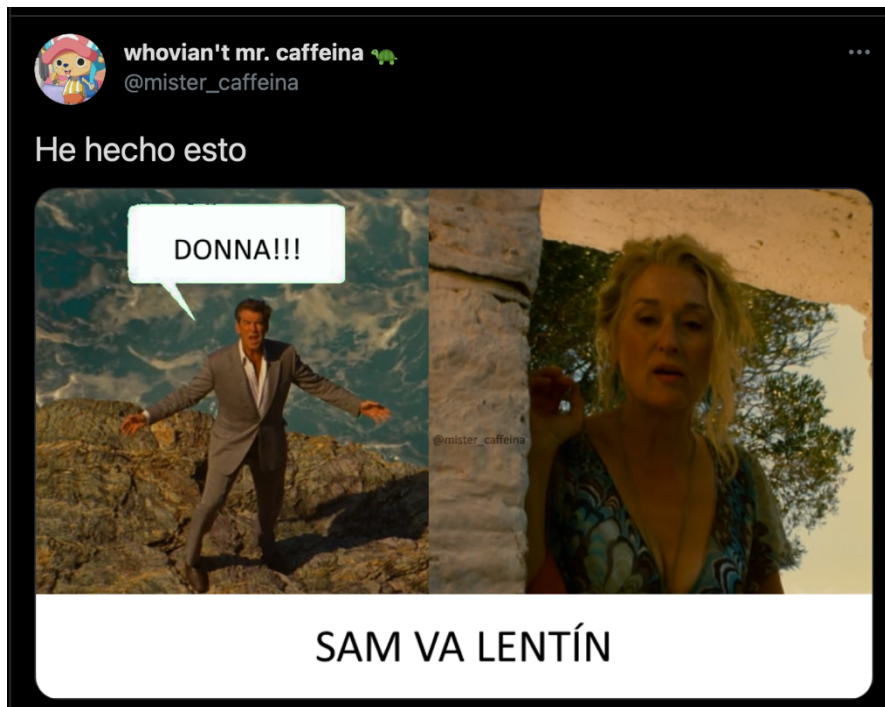


Fig 3, Example of the ‘*Sam va lentín*’ meme, edited to reference the 2008 *Mamma Mia* movie and the character in it named Sam. Source: whovian’t mr. caffeine [turtle emoji], 2021



Fig. 4. Example of the ‘*Sam va lentín*’ meme as a crossover edition, mixing a template for online classification with different types of ‘*Sam va lentín*’ memes. Source: Xènia, 2021

ANNEX VIII.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘walking into the new year positive energy’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Example of the the ‘walking into the new year positive energy’ meme. Source: unknown.



Fig. 2. Example of the the ‘walking into the new year positive energy’ meme. Source: unknown.



Fig. 3. Example of the 'walking into the new year positive energy' meme. Source: unknown.



Fig. 4. Example of the the 'walking into the new year positive energy' meme. Source: unknown.

ANNEX IX.

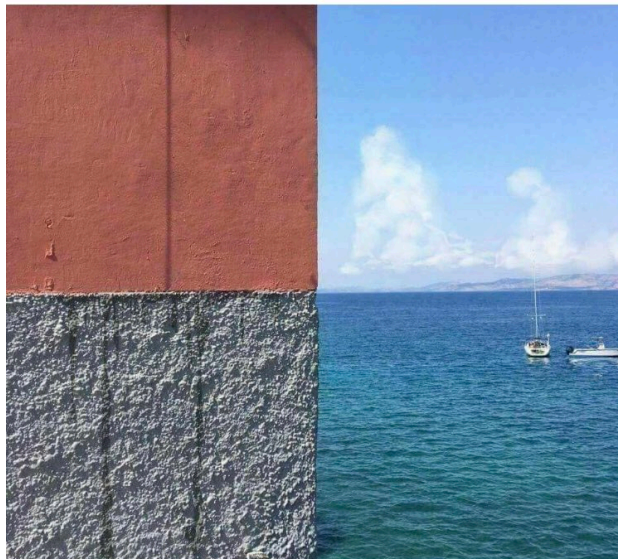
This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘loss’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Repost of the original ‘Loss.jpg’ meme, as posted by the author for the 10-year anniversary. Spource: Buckley, 2018

 ranma-official

Hey, everyone



guess what

Fig. 2. Example of the ‘Loss’ pattern pointed out by a Tumblr user. Source: ranma-official, n.d. (deleted)



Fig 3. Example of a 'Loss' pattern found in another internet meme, Rick Astley's "Never gonna give you up" music video. Source: unknown



Fig. 4. Example of 'Loss' found by an internet user. Source: Classical Studies Memes for Hellenistic Teens, 2021

ANNEX X.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme not included in the main body of work.

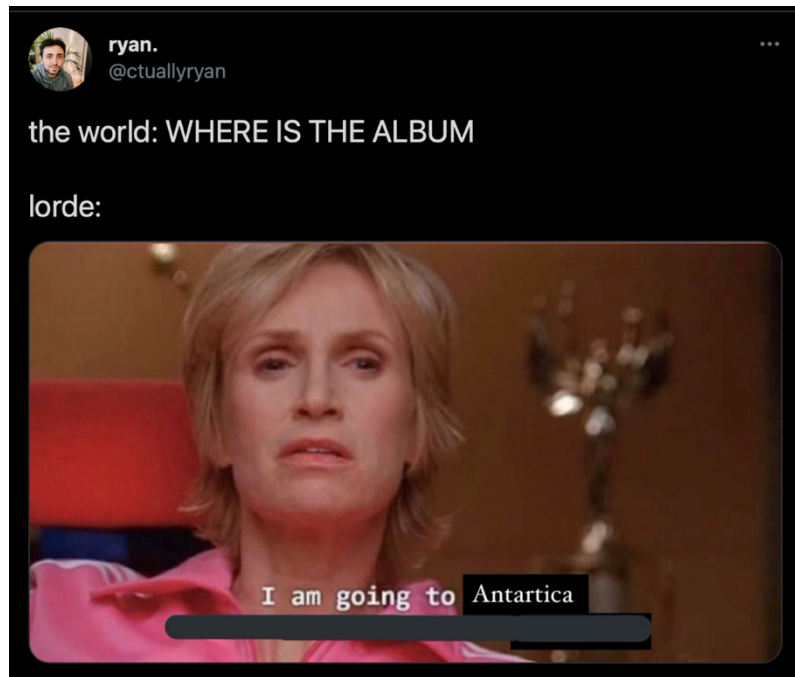


Fig. 1. Example of an edited version of the ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme, adapted to the online community of Lorde fans. Source: ryan., 2020



Fig. 2. Example of an edited ‘Sue Sylvester’ meme, edited to fit the release of Taylor Swift’s second quarantine album. Source: bobby., 2020



Fig. 3. Example of the 'Sue Sylvester' meme. Source: Tom, 2020



Fig. 4. Example of the 'Sue Sylvester' meme. Source: nick [shark emoji], 2020

ANNEX XI.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘gopissgirl’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Example of an edited ‘gopissgirl’ meme. Source: moved to @dnfroy, 2020



Fig. 2. Example of an edited ‘gopissgirl’ meme. Source: moved to @dnfroy, 2020



Fig. 3. Example of an edited 'gopissgirl' meme. Source: moved to @dnfroy, 2020



Fig. 4. Example of an edited 'gopissgirl' meme. Source: moved to @dnfroy, 2020

ANNEX XII.

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘Chris Fleming ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Example of the Chris Fleming ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme. Source: unknown.



Fig. 2. Example of the Chris Fleming ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme. Source: unknown.

ANNEX XIII

This annex will include all examples relate to the ‘debimbofication’ meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Edited ‘debimbofication’ meme, referencing plato’s cavern with a common imagery. Source: siu, [battery emoji], 2020

16 17 18 19 20



Fig. 2. Edited ‘debimbofication’ meme. Source: zhongli PLEASE ✨ 유타 너무 예뻐¹²⁷ 🌸💎 [flower emoji, diamond emoji], 2020

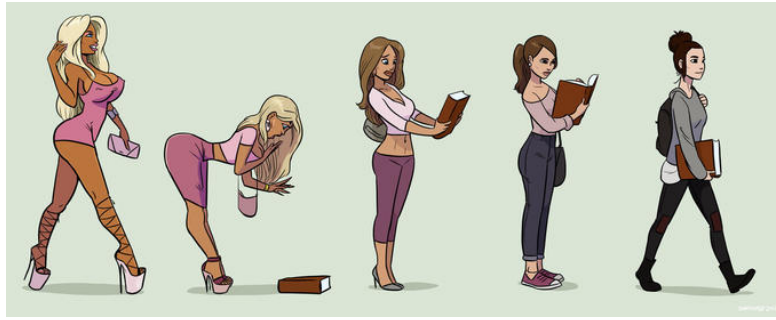


Fig. 3. Original 'debimbofication' picture. Source: sortimid, 2017

ANNEX XIV

This annex will include all examples relate to the '*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*' meme not included in the main body of work.



Fig. 1. Original '*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*' meme. Source: Odilas, 2015



Fig. 2. Example of a replication of the original '*Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena*' meme. Source: Haga clic para insertar título, 2021



Fig. 3. Example of an edited 'Nos acabamos de quedar sin cena' meme. Source: Laura, 2020