

LA REPRESENTACIÓN AUDIOVISUAL DE LA CIENCIA EN EL ENTORNO DIGITAL

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coordinadores

Aida María de Vicente Domínguez

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MEME CULTURE: THE NEW COMMUNICATION THROUGH IMAGES. USES AND INTERACTION WITH THE ONLINE COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a quantitative work based on the questionnaire tool, the aim of which is to test how memes are used as a means of communication. Memes are images, closely related to a specific context, that communicate one or more ideas and are used in social networks. To this end, a 15-item survey has been developed, questioning about 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 addressing questions such as the context in which certain memes are used or whether participants recognise viral memes. In total, 375 responses were obtained, which will allow us to draw some pilot conclusions. 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, no matter how similar.

KEYWORDS

Meme; survey; online communities; media; images.

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 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).

1.1. 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:

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. (Shifman, 2014b, 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, 2014, 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.

1.2. 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, p. 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 do not agree. 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; ♡, 2020; ·· | 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.

2. METHODOLOGY

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 (University students). 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 16 questions, 12 are multiple-choice questions and 4 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.

- Questions related to the profile of the participants: questions number 1 and 2 focus presents the age and the location of participants, question number 3 is related to the sex, and question 15 asks for their emails address just in case we needed to contact to clear some point.
- Question related to participants and media relation: question number 4 asked users about their social media usage in relation to memes, their consumption and sharing.
- Questions number 5 to 14 are questions directly related to memes (question 14 is non-mandatory).
- Question 16 (non-mandatory) 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.

2.1. QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age
2. Where are you from?
3. Sex
4. What social media do you use? (to share, see or look for memes)
5. Do you recognize this meme? Could you create your own version based on the blueprint for it?



6. Do you recognize the word "Trankilovsky"? Do you know where it comes from?



7. Do you recognize the phrase "nos acabamos de quedar sin cena"? Could you be able to tell where it is from and how it is used?
8. Do you recognize this drawing? Do you know what the original version is?



9. If I say "I'm Jared, I'm 19 and I never fucking learned how to read", could you recognize this sentence? Would you be able to tell where it is from?

10. Have you ever seen any of these memes but not in their original version?



11. Do you think it is a difference between “this is something important” and “This is Something Important”?

12. Select the sentence or the sentences you understand they are sarcastic

Participants were asked a multiple-choice question 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. 8) and is meant to represent a sarcastic tone.

13. Have you ever edited a meme (image, video or texto) so it better fit your life or something you are a fan of?

14. Have you ever quoted a meme you learnt online in real life, to friends or family?

15. Your email address

16. Further comments

3. RESULTS

Questions related to the profile of the participants (1-3)

Question number 1 presents the age of the participants. Out of 275 respondents, 56% were 18 to 22 years old, 21% were 22 to 30 years old, 10% were 12 to 16 years old, 5% were over 45 years old, 4% were 30 to 45 years old, and 4% were 16 to 18 years old.



Fig. 1. Age of participants. Source: Own elaboration.

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 related to participants and media relation (4)

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 4 votes, YouTube got 3 votes, and a single person answered that they simply do not look up memes.

■ Instagram ■ Twitter ■ Whatsapp ■ Tik Tok ■ Facebook ■ Tumblr ■ Amino
 ■ Google ■ Pinterest ■ Quora ■ Weheartit ■ Reddit ■ Youtube

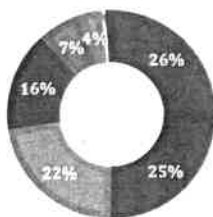


Fig. 2. Social media usage. Source: Own elaboration.

Questions directly related to memes (5-14)

Question number 5 was the first of ten questions directly related to memes. It presented figure 3 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. 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. 3. Cropped picture from the Chris Fleming ‘okay was anybody going to tell me that’ meme. Source: Fleming, 2014.



Fig. 4. Question 5. 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? Source: Own elaboration.

Question number 6 asked about the word “Trankilovsky”. 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 from?”, 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 7 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. 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 8 (fig. 5) asked about which is part of a larger meme that has been edited and shared numerous times in the past years, both on its own and mixed with different memes. 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. 5. Cropped 'debimbofication' meme. Source: sortimid, 2017.

Question 9 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 10 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.

■ Yes ■ No ■ Not known any of the previous



Fig. 6. Question 10. Have you ever seen any of these memes but not in their original version? Source: Own elaboration

Question 11 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.

■ Yes ■ No



Fig. 7. Question 11. "this is something important" vs. "this is Something Important". Source: Own elaboration.

Question 12 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.



Bf: "I don't even know her like that"
 Me: "I doNt EveN KnOw heR liKe thAt"

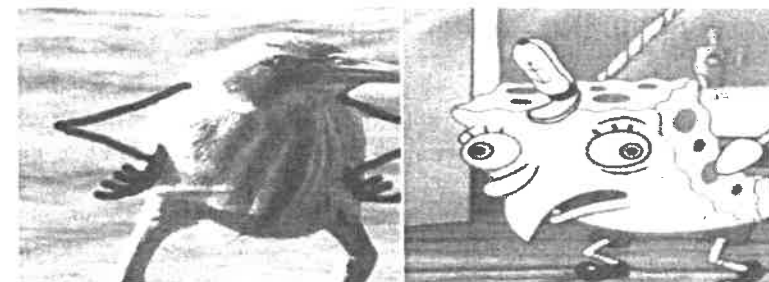


Fig. 8. First known use of the mocking Spongebob meme with alternating capital letters. Source: lexy, 2017.

Question 13 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 14 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.



Fig. 9. Question 14. Real-life quotation of online memes. Source: Own elaboration.

Question 15, 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 16, 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).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

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. 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 (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 other 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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

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