Meming while learning: An innovation practice experience with pre-service teachers

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June 3-5, 2021

"Comunitats d’aprenentatge mitjançant el mòbil: competència plurilingüe i paisatge lingüístic"
Funding: Projecte d’Innovació i Millora de la Qualitat Docent (Ajuts a la Millora de la Qualitat Docent). 2020PID-UB/004
Theoretical framework

• Literacy pedagogy and (foreign) language learning → adaptation to multimodal environments.
• Wider range of genres (Warner & Dupuy, 2018)
• Use of informal images to increase students’ interest (Vasudevan et al., 2010) & enhance students’ digital literacy → memes
• Interaction between different classes using ICT tools in a FL and in an academic context (Belcher, 2017; Carretero et al., 2017)
Becoming literate is a matter of mastering processes valuable in particular societies, cultures and contexts.

Not just one literacy, but many, depending on context, purpose and medium.

How to read and write in a new medium (≠ computer literacy) → electronic literacy (including information literacy)
Electronic literacy

- Communication: interaction and collaboration
- Construction:
  - Essay
  - Words
  - Author
    - hypertext
    - Multimedia
    - Co-constructor
- Research: reading strategies to select the most appropriate info, not only texts but in multimodal format.
Aim: metalinguistic reflection on EFL grammar + multimodal creation
Methodology: Objectives

1. To observe the students’ engagement both on Moodle and on Instagram

2. To explore the students’ metalinguistic reflection and multimodal composing practice
Context & participants

• Three intact classes of freshman students (N=66; n₁=19, n₂=25, n₃=22)
• Three lecturers
• FL proficiency ranged from A1 to C1 but most of them were at the A2-B1 level (CEFR).
• EFL subject of the Early Years Education degree
• Online learning (COVID-19)
• JITT flipped classroom
Steps

Unit 1
- Present & past tenses
- Teachers analyze memes (grammar & multimodality)
- Posted on Instagram

Unit 2
- Comparisons
- Students reuse/adapt memes (grammar)
- Posted on a database and then on IG

Unit 3
- Modals of speculation & relative clauses
- Students create memes (grammar & multimodality)
- Posted on a database and then on IG
Use of ICT tools

Meme zone: Meming while learning

Chatting for meming November 10 2020, 7:30 PM (Duration of course)

Meme for learning what?!

Meme competition groups

Our Insta! #leplea2021

Meme competition - Round 1: Teachers' fight!

Let's compare memes (Round 2!) #wordplay #punintended

Memes round 2: Procedure

U2 memes: comparatives and superlatives (Steps 1 & 3)

Step 2 U2 memes: cast your vote for the best class meme on comparatives and superlatives!

Meme competition - Round 2 Comparatives: Classes' fight!

Memes Round 2: Results

The end is near... and many awards are coming up!
Use of ICT tools (Phase 1)

Meme zone: Meming while learning

Chatting for meming November 10, 2020, 7:30 PM (Duration of course)

Restricted Not available unless: You belong to a group in chatting for meming

Setting up the meme foundations

Meming for learning what?!

Meme competition groups

Our Insta! #leplea2021

Meme competition - Round 1: Teachers' fight!
Use of ICT tools

Best meme criteria

- Communicative efficiency
- Humorous intent
Admit it. Get over it. It's over.
#dramaqueen #moveon #leplea2021

Source:
https://images.app.goo.gl/vmft1qSTDi rgGcg7

Explanation: The first sentence reports a statement that was uttered in the present tense because it was true then: “I love you” -> You said you loved me. The answer “past tense” refers to the fact that that was true in the past, but now it’s over, it is not true any more. This is because the past tense can also be reported in the past: “I loved you” -> “You said you loved me”.
Use of ICT tools

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Meme competition - Round 1: Teachers' fight!
Exaggerated facial expressions. Exaggeration is a humor technique.

The caption appears where it is convenient in relation to blank / empty / irrelevant spaces.

The exclamation marks in the second half could've been omitted. They then would actually reflect a higher communicative impact (more eloquence, assertiveness, strength).

Use of exclamation marks to represent crying + shouting + annoyance

Displaying a pet, not a human being, also has a humorous intent. It shows how ridiculous the situation is.

More meme-like aesthetics.

Image – text → anchorage relation

Displaying a pet, not a human being, also has a humorous intent. It shows how ridiculous the situation is.
Imperative verb + pronoun.
Repeated structure.
Repetition of ‘over’.

The contents in the hashtags are probably familiar to you (drama queen, move on)

Grammatical explanation for this project purposes.

No capitals used in the hashtags. They are simple, familiar.
Use of ICT tools: Phase 2

Best meme criteria

• visual impact of the image
• caption (text below the image)
• hashtags accompanying the image
• grammatical explanation

Let's compare memes (Round 2!) #wordplay #punintended

- Memes round 2: Procedure
- U2 memes: comparatives and superlatives (Steps 1 & 3)
- Step 2 U2 memes: cast your vote for the best class meme on comparatives and superlatives!
- Meme competition - Round 2 Comparatives: Classes' fight!
- Memes Round 2: Results

The end is near... and many awards are coming up!
Database entry (Phase 2)

Meme image:

WHAT IS THE COMPARATIVE OF GOOD?

Meme source url: https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/745275438325506670/
Caption: Is it true? Of course.
Hashtags: #gooder #well #comparativeandsuperlative

Try and make them funny / witty next time.

Grammatical explanation:

- Batman asks about the comparative form of good. And Robin wonders if it is gooder. When Batman listen it, hits Robin because it's a drivel what he has said. The comparative form of good is well.

- Batman asks about the comparative form of 'good', and Robin wonders if it is 'gooder'. When Batman hears it, he hits Robin because what he has said is wrong. The comparative form of 'good' is 'better.'
Use of ICT tools: Phase 3

Best meme criteria

- best image & text, caption and hashtags
- best, most accurate and complete grammatical explanation
Use of ICT tools: Phase 3

Meme Image

**LET’S EAT SNOOPY! / LET’S EAT, SNOOPY!**

ALL DEPENDS ON THE COMMA

**OH GOD**

**OH FUCK**

Grammatical: This image is related to Relative Clause. The first sentence consists of a defining relative clause and the second one in a non-defining. The first sentence, if the comma is omitted, means that the dog will be eaten. The second one, using the comma, refines that dog’s food explanation is prepared and he is ready to eat it. Here it is shown the importance of the comma.
Methodology:
Instruments

- Exploratory study: students’ productions shared on Moodle and on Instagram
- Questionnaire at the end of the term
Results: students’ productions and reactions

Grammar & multimodal practice

• Most students were familiar with the genre, yet none of them had ever analyzed memes in multimodal terms
• It was easier for students with higher proficiency to produce memes
• Students had difficulty in creating humorous hashtags
• Captions tended to be longish
• The winning memes tended to be the simplest both in terms of multimodality and of humorous intent

Interaction

• while most students participated in the activities provided in the Moodle space, only a few ‘liked’ the posts on Instagram, none of them reacted to any story celebrating the winners’ achievements and none of them posted any comment.
• The comments on other students’ memes provided in the databases were rather shallow
• Only the students with higher proficiency level elaborated on their comments
Results: questionnaire

- How much did you know about these aspects in English before carrying out this project?

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<th>nothing</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>excellent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing captions</td>
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<td>Writing hashtags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applying grammar knowledge to the &quot;creation&quot; of memes</td>
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<td>Applying grammar knowledge to the &quot;comprehension&quot; of memes</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the aims of this project was working grammar in a fun(ny) way and in groups. What's your opinion on this? Has it been useful/less, (un)original, a waste of time, practical, illuminating...?
Results: Questionnaire

• What did you like the most about this project?

<table>
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<th>Weight</th>
<th>Word</th>
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<tr>
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<td>seeing my classmates' work</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>fun, enjoy myself</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>interacting with the teacher and with my classmates</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>learning grammar</td>
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<tr>
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<td>not working with books</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>original</td>
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Discussion & Conclusion

Mismatch between students’ perception of learning and actual learning → low proficiency?

Multimodal analysis vs production

No interaction in public spaces / social networks

Cooperative work + seeing each other’s work

Fun(ny) experience
Further remarks

It was a carefully designed project though a bit slow

The gamification element was also entertaining and added extramotivation

Better with higher proficiency students?


Thank you!
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