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PRESENTING GRAMMAR THROUGH INTERNET MEMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Alevtyna Kalyuzhna*

PhD in Linguistics, Associate Professor,

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

(4, Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, 61022, Ukraine);

e-mail: alevtyna.kalyuzhna@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4305-5311>

Iryna Lavrinenko

PhD in Linguistics, Associate Professor,

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

(4, Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, 61022, Ukraine);

e-mail: irina.lavrinenko@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3227-528X>

Olena Radchenko

Senior Lecturer,

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

(4, Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, 61022, Ukraine);

e-mail: o.i.radchenko@karazin.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8895-3567>

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Abstract

The article discusses the potential of using Internet memes in teaching a foreign language. We consider an Internet meme to be a set of semiotic signs. This approach explains the potential of Internet memes application in educational process since most of the language learning methods rely on semiotic elements. Internet memes are multimodal structures that can be used as an efficient tool for presenting material in teaching English. Memes are classified into verbal, nonverbal and complex ones (combining image and verbal element). A set of sample memes presenting the combination of images and verbal elements has been selected to demonstrate the process of meaning making, which is an integral part of mastering a foreign language. Due to the importance of visual perception in learning process and the very nature of Internet memes as widespread forms of expression and communication existing in visual format, the use of them is beneficial for both teachers and learners. The elements of the sample memes are analyzed in terms of Roland Barthes' theory of image narrative potential. We provide the evidence that anchorage and relay functions of linguistic messages account for the process of meaning making. In terms of semiotics the effects of text and image combination are examined in detail. Special attention in the article is given to the ways of memes application and the effectiveness of their use in the in-class and out of class learning process for practicing a grammar phenomenon of modality. Memes demonstrate a modal construction in the situation close to real life providing a sample of using it in context and provoking imitation of real-life situation by student. The humorous effect inherent to Internet memes is aimed at achieving a reaction from numerous addressees, thus making memes an efficient tool for teaching/learning a foreign language due to an expected feedback. Special attention has been paid to Internet

memes containing constructions with modal verbs expressing irony and paradox. The article provides tools of teaching English modals via memes as well as experiment results and their analysis. The study reveals positive results of the experiment in terms of efficiency of using Internet memes in educational process that demonstrates better results in learning new material as well as a higher level of students' involvement and creativity.

Keywords: ESP, Internet meme, irony, modals, multimodality, paradox, semiotics.

1. Introduction

Our understanding of the world, making meaning in communication with others, is based on semiotic resources which, if used in systematic ways, form semiotic modes. Such modes can be viewed as multimodal, making, in turn, social communication multimodal as well (Danielsson & Selander, 2021). Approaches that comprehend and analyze communication and message representation beyond language alone are referred to as multimodal. Thus, multimodality examines how people construct meaning using various kinds of modes (Rowell & Walsh, 2011). Various aspects of multimodality have been examined by many scholars, including Ukrainian linguists (Morozova, 2017; Davydenko & Shevchenko, 2018; Kovalenko & Martynyuk, 2021; Krysanova, 2022), from a variety of theoretical perspectives (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Forceville, 2009; Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al, 2016). On this basis, there has been an increasing interest in multimodal learning strategies based on using multiple modes and their potential to improve student learning and motivation. The impact of multimodality on the educational process and integration of multimodal resources has thus become the focus of interest of many scholars (Lee, 2014; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019; Varaporn & Sitthitikul, 2019; etc.) including Ukrainian scientists (Vovk, 2008; Velushhak, 2021).

Taking into account that different resources have different potential for meaning-making, the ways in which content is presented differ for experts and learners, for whom it can be crucial in the learning process (Danielsson, 2021, p. 18). The potential of different modes used in learning has been examined by Danielsson (2016), Kress (2003), Tytler et al. (2013). That is why the focus is on mode as a defining feature of communication in learning contexts, and teachers are urged to include multimodality into their curricula, pedagogy, and practices (Varaporn & Sitthitikul, 2019, p. 83). The reason for doing this is to provide a learning mechanism that is interactive in nature, functions as a catalyst to empower students' thinking, and is tailored to students' unique preferences of communication and representation in order to boost student engagement and improve learning performance (Lee, 2014, p. 56).

Due to trends like globalization and the pervasive adoption of modern communication tools like the Internet in daily life, the use of Internet memes as a visual aid in the learning of other languages is becoming more and more common. This shift to a more extensive use of messages in visual formats in the educational process is not accidental. Memes have become "a central cultural phenomenon in the digital age <...> a prevalent mode of communication across the globe" (Shifman, 2019).

The use of memes in class may serve a variety of teachers' needs. The impressive results of recent studies prove Internet memes to be effective learning assets in different environments. Visual literacy improvement was encouraged through the application of meme-based warmers to master all linguistic skills, both productive and receptive (Dominguez Romero & Bobkina, 2017). The use of memes in vocabulary revision activity also reveals positive results, the assignment promotes students' proficiency level and aroused a lot of interest while memorizing new terminology (Karadeniz & Altuntas, 2021). Memes are excellent tools for creating a good mood and keeping students' attention during the class, as noted above. In our study, memes were used for both in-class and out of class activities for practicing a grammar phenomenon, viz. modal verbs.

Nowadays scholars are looking for approaches to studying memes beyond understanding them as a mere cultural analogue of the biological replicator gene (Bondarenko, 2017, p. 347). Since the definition of the nature of Internet memes is beyond the scope of this paper, we use the following definition – Internet memes are groups of digital items that have common characteristics, are created

with awareness of the existence of other memes and are distributed online by multiple participants (Shifman, 2014; Yus, 2021). They are “new forms of communication and expression in a multimodal, yet predominantly visual online format” (Müller et al., 2019). At the same time, the meme is seen as “a new version of the traditional semiotic concept of the sign” (Kilpinen, 2008). This approach to understanding the nature of memes allows the use of memes for educational purposes since language learning is considered to be a concentrated way of sign learning as “signs are the building blocks of conveying messages” (Şenel, 2007, p. 120). It is important to note that while memes are polycode structures, which comprise verbal, nonverbal and complex ways of expression (Chernikova, 2015), our focus, for obvious reasons, will be on memes with a linguistically expressed verbal part.

Theoretical considerations on Internet memes as sets of semiotic signs applied as a tool for mastering a foreign language suggest the relative novelty of the research.

As has been suggested, the **object** of the article is to study peculiarities of Internet memes as a multimodal tool for mastering a foreign language. Despite increasing interest, Internet memes still remain relatively understudied, so one purpose of our research is to contribute to the study of the theoretical and practical aspects of memes. Theoretically, we **aim** to study the polycode nature of memes as semiotic signs and practically our aim is to identify the various ways in which memes can be applied and demonstrate the effectiveness of their use in the educational process.

Up-to-date Internet memes containing modal verbs serve as the **material** of the study. For our analysis, we first identified a set of Internet memes containing constructions with modal verbs. Following this, we selected the memes with apparent impressive effect conveyed with the help of irony and paradox.

This study, therefore, contributes to research on multimodal phenomena by combining the analysis of Internet memes containing modal verb constructions in terms of semiotics with the possibility of using memes as a tool for teaching these grammatical structures in class. According to the tasks of the research, we applied induction and deduction methods to study elements of memes, contextual analysis to identify the impact of memes on the addressee, while content analysis has also been applied. For the experimental part, the explanatory method was used as well as testing.

In the following sections of this paper, we first give reasons for teaching grammar with the help of Internet memes, then we identify the semiotic nature of memes and demonstrate the meaning-making process using memes with modal constructions conveying humorous meanings. Then, finally, we will present the results of the experiment conducted among students practicing modal verbs.

2. Theoretical background and method

This section of the article addresses multimodal memes and meaning-making in memes as tools for foreign language teaching.

2.1. The potential of Internet memes in teaching foreign languages

The ever-expanding presence of multimodal texts in the world has already had a formative effect on “central” aspects of oral and written speech. A notion can no longer be explained by “words”, but by images or gestures (Kress, 2016, pp. 78-79). An indispensable feature of any cognitive system is striving for the economization of time and energy, which are devoted to information processing (Kowalczyk-Purol, 2015, p. 34). Most language teaching methods have semiotic elements, and varied text-picture combinations will produce different balances of students’ cognitive effects and mental effort (Yus, 2018). Taking into consideration that language and its structure are based on perception (which is mainly visual, as vision is our dominant sense) (Kwiatkowska, 2011), and considering an Internet meme to be a set of semiotic signs, Internet memes represent a broad material for teaching a foreign language and, more particularly, grammar.

As stated by Patsy M. Lightbown & Nina Spada (2013), foreign language teaching methodology provides two basic methods for introducing grammar. These are referred to as the systematic-language or structural method and the functional-semantic method, respectively. In the former,

phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, and syntax are studied independently and in depth. The latter expands on the notion that semantic categories like space, time, subject, object, conditionality, modality, and others exist in nearly every language and have unique, built-in ways of representation. Learners acquire grammatical forms and patterns in the structural approach, where the development and improvement of linguistic information comes first and foremost, but they frequently are unable to employ them successfully in their real-life communication. In contrast, a functional-semantic method to teaching grammar concentrates students' attention on linguistic form in relation to context. When learners participate in communicative exchanges, essential forms and natural patterns are presented and rehearsed, which may ultimately be more effective than decontextualized grammar instruction.

Learning a foreign language is a task-based learning process based on situations and it should proceed in the same manner as the first language acquisition, which is based on 'the observation of how others relate their linguistic output to meaningful situations' (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Agustín Llach, 2016). This applies equally to the study of grammatical structures and "the acquisition of many grammatical features of the new language takes place naturally when learners are engaged in meaningful use of the language" (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 105).

We consider the use of Internet memes in the educational process as a way not only to simplify understanding of certain grammatical patterns, but also to turn declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge and overcome the code-communication dilemma when "learners have to pay attention on the one hand to linguistic forms (the code) and on the other to real communication" (Cerezal Sierra, 1995).

Internet memes, currently one of the most widely used forms of entertainment content online, are something that students come across on a regular basis and, consequently, can be successfully incorporated into the educational process. The use of a system of visualization tools in language learning offers plenty of opportunities to convey lexical, grammatical, phonetic, and communicative knowledge in an approachable and easily digestible format, as well as to become familiar with the facts, processes, and events of a foreign culture.

Memes are primarily jokes conveyed using formats like image+text, GIF+text, or just plain text. The optimal processing of the meme relies on the user's ability to retrieve some expected contextual information or background knowledge "to interpret the content of the meme appropriately" (Yus, 2021). The textual patterns in memes are especially helpful for non-native speakers and learners of English, who, through these memes, can see the use of English in real-life scenarios. This could both help extend their vocabulary and increase their understanding of English (Kostadinovska-Stojchevska & Shalevska, 2018). In view of the above, memes may serve the needs of teachers, particularly for teaching constructions with modals.

Since the effectiveness of implicit (asking students to induce rules by looking at examples) and explicit (presenting a specific rule and then having the students practice it) instruction remains debatable (Arnett & Jernigan, 2010), memes provide a plethora of ways to learn grammatical structures in the classroom. Both teachers and students can benefit from using memes if they are applied as a teaching tool in the silent way, situational or communicative methods of teaching or their combinations. The reasons for this are explained by the features of these methods (see Natsir, 2016). The silent way method involves setting up situations and activities for the language learners in which the teacher uses a lot of thought provoking symbols. The situational method involves the use of objects or pictures as semiotic signs to provide a better understanding in the target language, while the communicative method should be based on realistic motives. It exploits text-based, task-based and language-based realia, such as signs, magazines, advertisements and their symbols, graphics and statistics (i.e. maps, pictures, charts, symbols).

The use of real-life language scenarios immerses the learners in simulated communicative situations. Making their own memes following an example (the method we suggest) stimulates the students' retrieval of learned grammatical patterns. In this way, the following principles of practice

in the foreign language classroom may be observed, namely, that practice should be interactive, meaningful and there should be a focus on task-essential forms (Ortega, 2007).

The prototypical structure of memes as multimodal statements is a combination of a visual image with commentary inscriptions (Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2017). The choice of these means is motivated by the familiarity and recognition in mass culture of the referents, as well as situations and events associated with them. In a meme a new, often ironic “viewpointed construal” emerges, based on “attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, clichés and the like assumed to be shared by or at least known by the addressee” (ibid). As A. Martynyuk states (2007), stereotypical information is always typified, predictable and perceived automatically, at a subconscious level. “A mismatch with the stereotype, on the contrary, turns on the consciousness and forces the individual to react to what is happening. The playful frame of an anecdote, which implies that the communicants are attuned to the humorous tone of communication, directs the addressee to a laughing reaction to such a mismatch” (Martynyuk, 2007, p. 23). The mismatch factor remains a constant in Internet memes (Zhabotinskaja, 2020). Paradox and irony as a linguistic and literary device in which real meaning is concealed or contradicted (Joshua, 2020) are notable examples of mismatch, and are frequently used in memes intensifying their humorous aspect. They also emphasise the difference between image and the text potentially intensifying the memes’ impact for the study of grammatical structures. Certainly, the effectiveness of Internet memes as a teaching aid depends on the learners’ media consumption and awareness of popular culture (Harshavardhan et al., 2019). It should be noted that apart from their humorous aspect, memes reduce anxiety and can make the learners more attentive (ibid). Irony is also seen as a method in environmental and sustainability education that can facilitate experiences of ironic tension between the essence in educational content and its relevance for the process of self-formation that aims to render it into an essence for the self (Bengtsson & Lysgaard, 2023).

In memes, language and picture blend together and strengthen one another and they should not be analyzed separately (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). The visual element of the meme becomes the carrier of the context, which allows the interpretation of the verbal element. The visual part thus seems to be a mandatory element, without which the captions could not be properly interpreted. In this context, the objective of a meme is to cause a mental effect on addressee’s consciousness, and the message may be expressed explicitly or implicitly and developed in the verbal corpus of a meme (Khraban, 2019). The verbal part of the meme most often plays an informative role: it comments on the current situation which the conceptualizer of reality observes from their subjective perspective (mental viewpoint) (Langacker, 1987).

While using Internet memes in the classroom one should bear in mind the necessity of ‘structured input’ (VanPatten, 1996). It demands that the target structure be present in the input (carefully selected) and students should notice it, recognize it, and reproduce it in controlled environments (ibid). A mere enumeration of a construction uses is, therefore, not sufficient (Drożdż, 2011). Teaching should not be about “teaching set patterns of lexical associations” but about teaching “the conventionalised way of matching certain expressions to certain situations, as well as the flexibility of using the available alternatives to express specific semantic nuances” (Achard, 2004, p. 185).

One also should bear in mind that each meme’s content is associated with different situations, because everyone’s experiences are individual and unique, and humour is directly related to creativity (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). This seems to be beneficial for students as the process of forming English grammatical competence is organized as a model of real communication, when participants try to solve real and imaginary tasks by means of a foreign language (Vovk, 2008, p. 5).

2.2. Meaning-making in memes as a tool for language learning

Numerous approaches can be used to examine both verbal and visual artifacts, including dimensions of imagery (construal), e.g. specificity, perspective, and profiling (Langacker, 1987, 2008), conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), conceptual figurative devices, e.g. metaphor and metonymy

(Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019), figures of thought (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Agustín Llach, 2016). As a polymodal/creolised/ multimedial formation, combining verbal and non-verbal (visual and auditory components) (Bondarenko, 2017, p. 347), the meme represents a semiotic sign and becomes the subject of research in semiotics.

According to C. S. Pierce's conception of the sign, "A sign is supposed to have an object or meaning", and "any sign, of whatsoever kind, mediates between an Object to some sort of conformity with which it is moulded, and by which it is thus determined, and an effect which the sign is intended to bring about" (Marty, n.d). Here, the semiotic approach is of use, as it allows an examination of the meaning signified by signs and how that meaning is constructed and understood. Using Barthes' Semiotic Theory, in particular, it is possible both to read signs and interpret them through the prism of different cultures or societies (Kavitha, 2018).

If taken as a set of signs, a meme can thus be analyzed with the help of Barthes' theory of the image (Barthes, 1982, pp. 33-39). As memes may contain both image (symbolic message) and text (linguistic message), "the linguistic message no longer guides identification but interpretation" (Barthes, 1982, p. 39).

Similarly to advertising, in memes "the signification of the image is <...> intentional" (Barthes, 1982, p. 33) and the text helps to identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself (Barthes, 1982, p. 37). Due to the polysemous nature of images, the reader may choose some and ignore others, while the linguistic message is "intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds" (Barthes, 1982, p. 39). Thus, Barthes identifies two functions of the linguistic message (anchorage and relay) (1982, p. 38). In view of this, memes can be used by students as the means to focus on meaning rather than on mere learning rules or memorizing dialogues as in structure-based approach to learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 107).

In the following examples, we are going to show how the meaning is constructed in the chosen memes and the meme's elements, which help students to interpret the intended meaning.

Based on Barthes' methodology, we can identify two layers in the Internet meme – a literal (linguistic) message and a symbolic message, i.e. denoted and connoted message (Barthes, 1982). Denotation refers to the first stage of signification and connotation refers to the second stage which uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified (Chandler, 2007).



Figure 1. "I saw it on the Internet – it must be true"

In example (1) above (Figure 1), the literal message of the meme (supported by the captions) contains a modal verb *must*, denoting an example of epistemic modality (an assessment of potentiality, depending either on the speaker's judgement of the reality status of a state of affairs). The symbolic message of the meme provides a connoted message about an animal as a Frankenstein monster consisting of parts of different animals. The combination of the messages provides the humorous and ironic aspects of the meme.

The caption helps us to choose 'the correct level of perception' (Barthes, 1982, p. 39) and permits viewers to focus their understanding. This is the anchorage function. Following this, "the text directs the reader through the signified of the image <...> it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance" (ibid.). The linguistic message (supported by the captions) can be broken down into two: "I saw it on the Internet" and "It must be true". The variation in readings depends on the different types of knowledge (practical, national, cultural) (Barthes, 1982, p. 46). What we see on the Internet is supposed to be authentic. The visual element conveyed by the photograph reinforces our belief that the object in question is realistic (Barthes, 1982, p. 45), thus, helping students to realize the choice of the modal *must* (in the function of probability).

Example (2) (Figure 2) demonstrates the function of relay. This is the case when meanings cannot be found in the image itself, but the text (usually a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in complimentary relationship. "The words in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of a story, the anecdote, the diegesis" (Barthes, 1982, p. 41).

In example (2), the literal message consists of two parts. The first one ('*This meeting could have been an email*') contains a construction *could* + *Perfect Infinitive* which refers to the situation in the past (the structure commonly causing difficulties for students). The second part (the literal message of other speaker) '*Don't forget to send out the minutes*' brings the humorous effect into play, and becomes apparent with the help of the symbolic component of the meme (lots of repetitive words on the board). No doubt, the symbolic part of the meme is informative as it emphasizes the waste of time and an unrealized opportunity (to send an email instead of wasting time in a meeting).



Figure 2. "This meeting could have been an email"

Another example of the realization of the relay function of the linguistic message is demonstrated in meme (3) (Figure 3). In this example the literal message illustrates a case of paradox, which is an apparently contradictory statement presenting two incompatible states of affairs as being true. Paradox is formed via combination of a literal message and a symbolic message. We can see a huge elephant hiding behind a thin pole. Opposite statements (states of affairs) can be reconciled through reframing, i.e. by finding a background context that makes them mutually compatible (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Agustín Llach, 2016). The symbolic message implies the game of hide-and-seek where the elephant is trying to hide from the cat, meanwhile the phrase '*Where could he have lurked*' (a typical example of the modal *can/could* usage presenting a common difficulty for students) adds

an apparent humorous effect (the elephant is visible). Here the text and image are in complimentary relationship, both serving the need of interpretation of the meaning.



Figure 3. "Where could he have lurked?"

Thus, we may conclude that memes serve as an effective means of presentation of the material, combining text and visual elements, which makes the interpretation easier.

3. Findings and discussion

We carried out the experiment in October 2022 at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, the School of International Economic Relations and Travel Business in Ukraine. To have homogenous groups throughout the semester, we divided the learners according to their scores on the placement test. The study included third-year students, who are supposed to have reached at least B1 level. We chose two academic groups of 15 students comprising 7 males and 23 females at the age of 19 – 20. Before the experiment, all the students had learned English at the University for more than two years and passed the External testing in English as a part of entry requirements. To teach the aspect of business English, we used *The Business 2.0. B1+ Intermediate Student's Book* (Allison & Emmerson, 2013), while for general English the course book was *Complete First B2* (Brook-Hart, 2014). The practical classes were held via Zoom meeting.

This particular aspect of teaching grammar aimed at practicing the use of the modal verb **COULD** with the Perfect Infinitive, namely, the confusing patterns with their subsequent recognition in the texts and use. The instrument used to evaluate students' results was a multiple choice test.

In the first experimental group, the process of acquiring these rules was standard and conventional. The students learned the grammatical material explained by the teacher, did a series of exercises and all the difficult issues were discussed and clarified in class. Also, as a part of their homework, they had to compose sentences of their own with the patterns learnt, while the learners reproduced their sentences and checked them in the next class. After these activities, the students said that they understood that grammar aspect and had no questions as to the application of the rules.

The students of the second experimental group were exposed to the alternative approach where the last step was creating the memes, however, it was obligatory to use the construction

'*could+Perfect Infinitive*'. Before the experiment, several memes about student's life were shown, discussed and, first, the teacher, then the learners tried to speculate about the possible meme inputs.

As the home assignment, the students had to use the images proposed by the teacher and create their own inputs with the construction under study. In doing this, they were asked to follow the above mentioned examples of meaning-making (relay and anchorage). The objective of a meme was to cause mental effect on addressee's consciousness, and the message was to be expressed in the verbal element of a meme in combination with the given picture.

At the next lesson, after completing the task, students shared the memes with their groupmates and considered the inputs proposed. When finishing this work, every student accepted that they acquired the patterns easily and were ready to apply them.

Below are the examples of memes (4), (5) chosen by the students as the best after voting. These examples (Fig. 4), (Fig. 5) demonstrate the ways students apply ironical statements containing the construction with the modal verb *could* + *Perfect Infinitive*. The meaning making is a result of combination of both the verbal part and the picture.



Figure 4. "I could have been a much better version of myself, but I had more important things to do"



Figure 5. "It could have been bigger..."

After the experiment students had to do a test (15 questions – a multiple choice test). The proposed approach to teaching modals with the help of Internet memes proved to be rather efficient. Table 1 shows the results after a multiple-choice test. The received results clearly show that the retention rate

and, consequently, the learning outcomes (excellent and good marks) are 20% higher in the second experimental group. Apart from that, the students' reaction reflects a positive attitude to the given tasks as well.

Table 1

	Task	After-test results (%)	Students' opinion
The first group (15 students)	Compose their own sentences	'3' – 20 '4' – 53 '5' – 27	Neutral No questions
The second group (15 students)	Create memes	'3' – 0 '4' – 40 '5' – 60	Interesting Time consuming Efficient Creative Helpful

The analysis of the memes created by the students shows that such a linguistic device as irony is predominant. The spheres described: a) the student's life; b) a relationship between a man and a woman; c) personal development; d) the war.

The results of the experiment show that using Internet memes for presenting material is a rather efficient technique. It can be extended and applied both to tasks with pre-prepared and 'open' memes (students create the statements on their own). A good outcome demonstrates that learners were able to use the proposed construction *could + Perfect Infinitive* in their own captions and then these statements were perceived correctly by their groupmates. Finally, every student received feedback on their work and gave their opinion about the others. The expected effect was achieved, learners were able to develop analytical thinking and use in practice, and thus, in an unusual way, acquired knowledge.

4. Conclusions and prospects

A more extensive use of multimodal means of teaching/learning a foreign language is becoming a current trend. Access to the Internet is a prerequisite to not only obtaining information, through processing, fixing, and preserving it; but also using the knowledge obtained. The goal is to make language learning easier, particularly by using memes, which combine text with pictures. The text and visual elements of the meme both serve the interpretation of the meaning, thus making the process of acquiring information easier. Due to their viral nature, Internet memes reflect the ideas shared by the language community, which puts the language-learners into real-life scenarios and this, in turn, fosters their mastering of the language. The use of linguistic and literary devices (irony and paradox) forming the memes' content makes them an efficient tool for reaching and getting feedback from the addressees (students).

Teaching /learning constructions with modal verbs in English is quite often confusing and this is where the proposed method may be useful. The findings indicate that the usage of memes with verbal elements improved the recall, subsequent replication, and application of the grammatical patterns under study. Apart from the verbal and visual elements combination that facilitates meaning making, incorporating memes to teaching grammar rules has various benefits, including increasing students' creativity and engagement in their studies. At first, employing memes raises student competency levels: students who worked with memes performed better on tests. Additionally, using images increases learners' participation in the activity. They made an effort to develop original inputs and correctly employed the construction '*could + Perfect Infinitive*'. Importantly, this exercise fosters a favorable teaching and learning environment that allows the students to focus entirely on the learning task and lessens the load of learning a foreign language.

As Internet memes are characterized by fast change and spreading, they provide a plethora of material for teaching other grammatical phenomena with the help of the proposed approach, which could be the focus of further research.

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**ПОДАННЯ ГРАМАТИКИ
ЧЕРЕЗ ІНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМ
У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ
ДЛЯ СПЕЦІАЛЬНИХ ЦІЛЕЙ**

Алевтина Калюжна

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,
Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна
(майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна);
e-mail: alevtyna.kalyuzhna@karazin.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4305-5311>

Ірина Лаврінєнко

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,
Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна
(майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна);
e-mail: irina.lavrinenko@karazin.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3227-528X>

Олена Радченко

старший викладач,
Харківський національний університет імені В. Н. Каразіна
(майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, 61022, Україна);
e-mail: o.i.radchenko@karazin.ua
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8895-3567>

Анотація

У статті розглянуто потенціал використання інтернет-мемів у викладанні іноземної мови. Ми розглядаємо інтернет-мем як набір семіотичних знаків. Такий підхід розкриває потенціал використання інтернет-мемів у освітньому процесі оскільки більшість прийомів навчання покладається на семіотичні елементи. Інтернет-меми це мультимодальні структури, які можуть використовуватися як ефективний інструмент для представлення матеріалу у викладанні англійської мови. Меми класифікують на вербальні, невербальні та комплексні (такі, які поєднують зображення та вербальний елемент). Ряд мемів-зразків, які представляють собою поєднання зображення та вербального елементу було відібрано для демонстрації процесу створення смислів, що є невід'ємною частиною опанування іноземної мови. Завдяки важливості візуального сприйняття у процесі навчання і самої природи інтернет-мемів

як поширених форм вираження і комунікації, які існують у візуальному форматі, їхнє використання є вигідним як для викладачів, так і для студентів. Елементи мемів-зразків було проаналізовано з точки зору наративного потенціалу образу в теорії Ролана Барта. Ми наводимо підтвердження того, що функції закріплення та зв'язування, які виконують мовні повідомлення, пояснюють процес створення смислів. Результат поєднання тексту та зображення детально розглянуто з точки зору семіотики. Особливу увагу у статті було приділено способам застосування мемів та ефективності їхнього використання у класному та позакласному освітньому процесі для опрацювання граматичного феномену модальності. Меми демонструють модальні конструкції у ситуаціях наближених до реальних, що надає зразок їхнього використання у контексті та спонукає студента наслідувати ситуації реальної комунікації. Гумористичний ефект притаманний інтернет-мемам спрямований на отримання реакції від численних адресатів, таким чином це робить меми ефективним знаряддям викладання/вивчення іноземної мови завдяки очікуваному зворотному зв'язку. Особливу увагу було приділено інтернет-мемам, які містять конструкції із модальними дієсловами та виражають іронію та парадокс. У статті наведено інструменти для викладання англійських модальних дієслів через результати експерименту із мемами та їхній аналіз. Дослідження виявляє позитивні результати експерименту з точки зору ефективності використання інтернет-мемів у освітньому процесі, що продемонстровано кращими результатами опанування нового матеріалу, а також більш високим рівнем залучення та креативності студентів.

Ключові слова: англійська мова для спеціальних цілей, інтернет-мем, іронія, модальні дієслова, мультимодальність, парадокс, семіотика.