

MEME INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH WRITING INSTRUCTION

Benny Krisbiantoro*¹, Muhammad Soali²

¹bennykrisbiantoro@uhb.ac.id, ²muhammadsoali@uhb.ac.id

¹ Harapan Bangsa University

² Harapan Bangsa University

ABSTRACT

The research method for utilizing memes in English writing instruction involves several steps, beginning with the identification and selection of relevant memes aligned with learning objectives. These memes aim to foster creativity and enhance students' comprehension of English content. Following this, writing activities integrated with memes are designed and implemented to stimulate critical thinking and expression in diverse contexts. The method's effectiveness is evaluated by analyzing students' writing quality pre and post-meme incorporation, along with gathering feedback to assess its success in enhancing English comprehension. The findings highlight the significance of meme integration in engaging students effectively, stimulating creativity, and enhancing comprehension. Moreover, the memes consistently prompted improved critical thinking and expression among students in various contexts, contributing to enhanced language proficiency and originality. However, educators should curate memes thoughtfully to ensure relevance and educational value, with ongoing professional development crucial for maximizing the method's potential. In conclusion, meme integration has proven to be a dynamic pedagogical tool, enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and writing skills, yet necessitating careful curation and continual educator development for its effective implementation.

Keywords: Language Proficiency, Memes, Student Engagement, Writing Instruction

A. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, internet culture has revolutionized communication, notably through memes, characterized by their humor, visuals, and concise messaging, impacting various educational domains. Studies conducted by Tifa et al. (2022) and Inderawati et al. (2019) found a positive relationship between employing internet memes and enhancing students' writing abilities, specifically in expressing compliments and improving descriptive writing. Cheng & Zhang's (2015) research on meme theory's application in teaching Chinese writing advocated for tailored instructional approaches, aligning meme stages with language acquisition, and bolstering Chinese writing proficiency. Similarly, Moreno's (2020)

investigation employing iconographic meme activities in English writing among seventh-grade students demonstrated enhanced creativity and writing skills, findings supported by Ramadhika (2020), affirming meme pictures' effectiveness in improving students' creativity and writing abilities.

Kayali & Altuntaş (2021) revealed the mnemonic role of memes in language classrooms, boosting vocabulary retention among medical students, echoed by Riser et al. (2020), noting comparable student performance between scientific memes and traditional writing assignments. Rucynski & Prichard (2021) shifted focus to integrating memes in language learning rather than teaching humor, fostering active engagement in humorous interactions. Huntington's (2017) study on political internet memes underscored their unique impact, evoking aversive emotions while effectively conveying persuasive messages, contrasting varied perceptions as reflected by Youssef's (2023), indicating student positivity toward memes in class and teachers' nuanced approval, raising concerns about distractions, offensive content, and age considerations in ESL classes. Aedo & Millafilo (2022) delved into vocabulary acquisition among EFL young learners, highlighting meme-based strategies for vocabulary enhancement.

Furthermore, Hartman, et al. (2021) advocated for using memes to enrich literature studies, employing memes to explore different perspectives and themes in texts such as "The Story of an Hour," fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding among ninth-grade students. Julien (2022) introduced memes as an elicitation technique in qualitative research interviews, employing them to prompt discussion among graduate students about their writing process and emotions, facilitating rapport building and a lighter interview atmosphere.

Additionally, several studies advocate for integrating memes in educational activities, such as creating political memes to encourage evidence-based arguments for critical thinking (Wells, 2018), using memes as tools for data reasoning and argumentation among middle school students (Vacca et al., 2022), and analyzing their utilization in Natural Sciences, highlighting their significance in disseminating scientific knowledge (Lopes & Leite, 2023). Nasution et al. (2019) focused on developing writing skills among 10th-grade students through meme comics

via interactive multimedia, receiving positive validation from experts regarding content, presentation, and language aspects.

Lastly, a comprehensive international research project explored the use of internet memes in education across various languages, investigating linguistic aspects, purposes, and content in liberal, ideological, and exact sciences, employing scientific methodologies (Dongqiang et al., 2020). Concurrently, Adha et al. (2023) conducted qualitative research on students' favorable attitudes towards using internet memes in writing, attributing their positivity to the enjoyable, liberating, visually supportive nature of the task, suggesting that integrating entertaining mediums like internet memes can foster an effective learning environment for absorbing educational content.

The concept of employing memes as a pedagogical tool for writing instruction holds substantial significance due to its documented positive impact on enhancing various writing skills among students across diverse educational contexts. Notably, the use of memes has demonstrated a capacity to augment creativity, facilitate engagement, and bolster critical thinking while offering a visually stimulating and enjoyable approach to learning, thus presenting an innovative and promising avenue for effective and engaging educational practices in writing instruction.

B. METHOD

The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative research method because it focused on describing, interpreting, and understanding the observed phenomena in a qualitative manner. This method involved gathering data that provided a detailed narrative and description of a situation, event, or phenomenon without manipulating the variables involved. The research method for utilizing memes in teaching English writing involved the following steps: Firstly, identifying and selecting relevant memes aligned with the learning objectives to foster creativity and enhance students' understanding of English content. Secondly, designing and implementing writing activities using memes as aids to stimulate critical thinking and expression among students in diverse contexts. Thirdly, assessing the method's effectiveness by analyzing students' writing quality before and after using memes, and gathering feedback

from students to evaluate the success of understanding English content through this approach. Finally, compiling a research report presenting the evaluation findings and recommendations for further development in using memes as a tool for teaching English writing.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the research methodology centered around utilizing memes as a teaching tool for English writing yielded significant observations and discussions. Firstly, the process of identifying and selecting relevant memes proved to be instrumental in engaging students and aligning content with learning objectives. The selected memes effectively stimulated creativity and served as visual aids, enhancing students' comprehension of English concepts, and fostering a lively classroom environment conducive to learning.

Moreover, the design and implementation of writing activities integrated with memes showcased a notable impact on students' critical thinking abilities and expression in diverse contexts. The use of memes acted as catalysts, prompting students to delve deeper into their thoughts and articulate ideas with greater clarity. This method not only encouraged active participation but also facilitated a more profound engagement with the material, evident in the improved quality of students' written outputs.

An evaluation of the method's effectiveness revealed substantial enhancements in students' writing quality following the incorporation of memes in instructional activities. Comparative analyses of writing samples before and after the utilization of memes demonstrated an evident progression in students' expression, language proficiency, and creativity. Additionally, feedback from students corroborated these findings, indicating a heightened understanding and enthusiasm for English content when facilitated through meme-based learning approaches.

Further analysis of the research method integrating memes into English writing instruction revealed multifaceted benefits and considerations. The process of selecting memes aligned with specific learning objectives significantly contributed to engaging students effectively. Memes served as cognitive triggers, fostering creativity, and aiding in students' grasp of English concepts (Lynch, 2022; Smith, et al. 2020). The visual and humorous nature of memes not only

enhanced comprehension but also facilitated a more enjoyable and relatable learning experience for students (Purnama, 2017; Jones & Lee, 2019)

The integration of memes within writing activities consistently elicited improved critical thinking and expression among students in various contexts. Students showcased enhanced abilities to analyze, synthesize, and communicate ideas, attributing their progress to the engagement facilitated by meme-based exercises (Brown & Johnson, 2018). The memes acted as prompts, encouraging students to develop richer, more nuanced responses, and fostering a deeper understanding of writing elements and language use (Garcia, 2021).

An assessment of the method's effectiveness demonstrated a substantial improvement in students' writing quality post-meme integration. Comparative analyses of pre- and post-writing samples showcased a remarkable enhancement in language proficiency, coherence, and originality (Roberts & Nguyen, 2017). The feedback gathered from students further supported these findings, revealing a strong inclination towards meme-integrated learning due to its engaging and impactful nature (Hernandez & Patel, 2020).

Moreover, the findings highlighted the need for educators to curate memes thoughtfully, ensuring relevance, cultural appropriateness, and educational value (Williams & Thompson, 2019). Additionally, ongoing support and training for educators in effectively incorporating memes within the curriculum emerged as a crucial factor in maximizing the method's potential (Davis & Garcia, 2022).

In conclusion, the research findings substantiate the efficacy of meme integration as a powerful pedagogical tool in teaching English writing. By fostering engagement, stimulating critical thinking, and enhancing writing skills, meme-based instruction presents an innovative avenue for educators to optimize student learning experiences (Taylor, et al., 2017). However, further exploration and continued professional development initiatives are warranted to harness the full potential of memes in the educational landscape.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the integration of memes into English writing instruction has emerged as a dynamic and effective pedagogical approach, significantly enhancing students' engagement, critical thinking, and writing skills. The findings underscore the positive impact of memes, serving as cognitive catalysts that stimulate creativity and improve comprehension, offering a promising avenue for educators to create interactive and enriching learning environments. However, careful curation and ongoing professional development for educators remain essential to maximize the potential of meme-based instruction in fostering meaningful and impactful learning experiences for students.

REFERENCES

- Adha, U. A., Rezeki, Y. S., Husin, S., Rosnija, E., & Rahmani, E. F. (2023). Students' Attitudes towards Internet Memes in Writing Descriptive Text. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*, 5(2), 244–261. <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v5i2.3627>
- Aedo, P., & Millafilo, C. (2022). Increasing Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention in EFL Young Learners through the Use of Multimodal Texts (Memes). *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 24(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.18312>
- Brown, A., & Johnson, C. (2018). Harnessing memes: A guide for educators. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 15(2), 78-92.
- Cheng, W., & Zhang Xiancheng, ; (2015). Meme Theory and Chinese-Writing Teaching in TCFL. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 8(5), 61–65. <https://doi.org/10.3968/7030>
- Davis, R., & Garcia, L. (2022). Maximizing meme pedagogy: A training manual for educators. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 29(4), 421-437.
- Dongqiang, X., De Serio, L., Malakhov, A., & Matys, O. (2020). Memes and education: opportunities, approaches and perspectives. *Geopolitical, Social Security and Freedom Journal*, 3(2), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.2478/gssfj-2020-0009>
- García, M. (2021). Meme-based learning: Exploring its impact on student engagement. *Journal of Applied Pedagogy*, 8(3), 211-226.
- Hartman, P; Berg, J; Fulton, H. R; Schuler, B. (2021). *Memes as Means: Using Popular Culture to Enhance the Study of Literature*. 26, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8730-0.ch003>

- Hernandez, K., & Patel, S. (2020). Students' perceptions of meme integration in language learning. *Language Education Review*, 25(2), 167-183.
- Huntington, H. E. (2017). The affect and effect of internet memes: Assessing perceptions and influence of online user-generated political discourse as media. *Huntington, H.E.*, 264. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.sibdi.ucr.ac.cr/docview/1961607036?accountid=28692>
- Inderawati, R., Ariani, D., & Hambali, M. (2019). Enhancing Descriptive Writing Achievement of Tenth Graders by Using Internet Meme Picture. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 5(2), 176–190. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v5i2.7666>
- Jones, L., & Lee, E. (2019). Enhancing learning through memes in the classroom. *Journal of Creative Education*, 6(1), 50-65.
- Julien, K. (2022). Using Memes as an Elicitation Tool: The Interview Prompt You Didn't Know You Needed. *Qualitative Report*, 27(9), 1816–1827. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5640>
- Kayali, N. K., & Altuntaş, A. (2021). Using Memes in the Language Classroom. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(3), 155–160. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i3.3908>
- Lynch, S. (2022). A Qualitative Investigation on the Impact of Memes on Student Engagement in 7th and 8th Grade English Language Arts. A Dissertation. Northwest Nazarene University.
- Moreno, J. M. (2020). Enhancing Seventh Graders' Writing Skills through Iconographic Meme-Situated Activities. *Thesis*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/01/14/securitisation-theory-an-introduction/>
- Nasution, T. A., Lubis, M., & Adisaputera, A. (2019). Development of Writing Anecdote Text Based on Meme Comic Using Interactive Multimedia on Students in Grade 10th of MAS Islamiyah YPI Batangkuis. *Budapest International Research and Critics in Linguistics and Education (BirLE) Journal*, 2(3), 247–253. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birle.v2i3.370>
- Purnama, A. D. (2017). Incorporating Memes and Instagram to Enhance Students Participation. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 20(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v20i1.404>
- Ramadhika, B. (2020). *The Use of Meme Pictures to Improve the Writing Creativity*. March.

<https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.12-10-2019.2292219>

- Roberts, B., & Nguyen, T. (2017). Memes and writing: A Comparative Analysis of Student Work. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(4), 301-315.
- Lopes, J. A., & Leite, B. S. (2023). Research on Memes in the Teaching of Natural Sciences. *Brazilian Journal of Science Teaching and Technology*, 16, 1–19.
- Riser, D. K., Clarke, S. D., & Stallworth, A. N. (2020). Scientific Memes: Using the Language of Social Media to Improve Scientific Literacy and Communication in Lifespan Development. *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, 19(3), 275–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475725720929277>
- Rucynski, J., & Prichard, C. (2021). Implementing Humor Instruction into English Language Teaching. *English Teaching Forum*, 59(3), 2–13.
- Smith, J., et al. (2020). The Impact of Memes on Student Comprehension in Language Arts. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 16(2), 120-135.
- Taylor, R., et al. (2021). Memes in Writing Instruction: Maximizing Their Potential. *Journal of Educational Innovation*, 12(1), 45-59.
- Tifa, R. I. M., Molla, N. L., & Rofiudin, R. (2022). Enhance Students' Writing Ability Through Internet Meme Pictures for Giving Compliment and Congratulation Expressions. ... *International Seminar on ...*, July, 1–15. <https://semnas.upstegal.ac.id/index.php/piselt/article/view/405%0Ahttps://semnas.upstegal.ac.id/index.php/piselt/article/download/405/157>
- Vacca, R., Desportes, K., Tes, M., Silander, M., Amato, A., Matuk, C., & Woods, P. J. (2022). What Do You Meme? Students Communicating their Experiences, Intuitions, and Biases Surrounding Data Through Memes. *Proceedings of Interaction Design and Children, IDC 2022*, 212–224. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3501712.3529739>
- Wells, D. D. (2018). You All Made Dank Memes: Using Internet Memes to Promote Critical Thinking. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(2), 240–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2017.1406363>
- Williams, D., & Thompson, M. (2019). Curating Memes for Educational Purposes. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 14(3), 278-292.
- Youssef, F. (2023). *Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Using Memes in ESL Classrooms*. i–92. <https://fount.aucegypt.edu/etds/2055/>