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ABOUT THE ROLE OF MEMES IN INTERNET LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

This article examines the various types and functions of memes within contemporary internet discourse, focusing on both specific memes and their broader categories. It includes an attempt to classify memes based on their form and function. The article discusses different perspectives on the origin, nature, and characteristics of memes in current discursive research, as well as their impact on modern internet communication.

The Internet and advancements in data transfer capabilities have gradually introduced non-textual methods of communication that convey emotional states and reactions to interactions. These methods, while outside traditional graphic signs, are often integrated into written communication. They coexist with written speech, enhancing its meaning.

One prominent example of this is the Internet meme. Originally an English-language phenomenon, the term "Internet meme" has become multilingual. Defining memes broadly is challenging due to their diverse formats and purposes.

The concept of memes was introduced by biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976, initially describing various bits of information, from letters to textual styles. However, the modern understanding of the "Internet" meme is more specialized.

T. Kolokoltseva defines a meme as any idea, symbol, or behavior transmitted from one person to another through various forms, such as speech, writing, video, rituals, and gestures. (1, 96-104) Another definition suggests that memes are phenomena reproduced in communication acts, familiar to members of a cultural and linguistic community. (2, 97)

Memes date back to the early stages of digital communication, such as e-mails and SMS messages. Abbreviations and contractions emerged in these contexts to save time and add a stylistic element, giving rise to the first "memes" in information technology due to their informal and humorous nature.

There are various types of memes based on the inclusion of non-linguistic communication methods. The most popular forms include:

1. Text Meme: This is the simplest and most accessible form, containing only text. It can be a viral catchphrase, a phrase or word with intentional misspellings, or other text-based content. These are considered some of the oldest memes in internet history.

2. Text Meme with Image: This meme includes both text and a graphic element. The image can be a scene from a popular movie, cartoon, TV show, a picture of a celebrity, a specially

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created drawing, or a humorous photograph. The accompanying text, which often adds an absurd or metaphorical twist, creates a comic effect. In this case, memes have two channels of communication, visual and textual, representing creolizeed form of communication. (3, 54)

3. Image-Only Meme: In this form, the meme's message is conveyed through an image alone, without any text. The meaning is clear without words, making these memes popular and widely recognized beyond verbal communication.

4. Animated Meme (GIF): These memes use short animations or videos (GIFs) to enhance the humor, adding a dynamic element to the content.

The high degree of recognition of internet memes in modern communication can be attributed to:

1. Their global use.

2. The incorporation of familiar elements from contemporary mass culture.

A key factor in the "recognizability" of these memes is the experience of communication within the internet discourse. Memes are a product of Internet users, being an unprofessional type of work. (4, 125-126) Analyzing the types, functions, and information channels of memes is crucial for understanding their impact. While some memes have lost their relevance and are no longer widely recognized, others have persisted and remain a significant part of internet culture.

The functions of memes in communication can vary, but they generally serve several key purposes in internet interactions:

1. Message Conveyance: Memes can be used to answer questions during conversations. They provide a quick way to illustrate a specific point in the dialogue, saving the speaker from typing out long explanations and clarifying their position.

2. Commentary: Memes, with their emotional undertones, can express the speaker's social or personal stance on an event, statement, or viewpoint. This function is particularly evident in public discussions on forums and social networks.

3. Reaction: Memes can convey emotions such as shock, surprise, delight, rejection, or indignation more vividly and succinctly than text alone. However, frequent use of memes can lead to communication becoming patterned and less unique.

4. Entertainment: Many memes are shared purely for fun without any specific communicative purpose. This is especially common on social networks that function like personal blogs, such as Instagram.

Internet memes are a form of communication online, but they are not the only means to convey emotions and viewpoints. For expressing personal emotions and experiences, other methods can be used without relying on non-textual elements. Additionally, using memes requires a certain level of understanding of their meanings and access to them, which may not always be available. Linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and regional factors can influence meme effectiveness, sometimes making them ineffective or meaningless in certain online communications.

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