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**THE USE OF MEMES TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION
IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

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Table of content

DEDICATION.....	4
EPIGRAPH.....	5
ABSTRACT.....	6
RESUMEN.....	7
CHAPTER I READING.....	11
1.1 Reading comprehension.....	11
1.2 Schema theory.....	12
1.2.1 Formal and content schema.....	15
1.3 Bottom-up, top-down and interactive reading.....	17
1.4 Micro and macro skills.....	19
1.5 Active readers.....	20
1.6 Intensive and extensive reading.....	24
CHAPTER II TECHNOLOGY AND THE USE OF MEMES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.....	26
2.1 Influence of technology in daily basics: background.....	26
2.2 Teachers and the use of technology in class.....	29
2.3 Social media.....	34
2.4 Examples of memes.....	36
2.5 Internet meme.....	40
2.5.1 Taxonomy of memes.....	42
2.5.1.1 Copy-fidelity.....	43
2.5.1.2 Longevity.....	44
2.5.1.3 Fecundity.....	45
2.5.1.4 Scope.....	46
2.6 Influence and impact on teenagers.....	47

CHAPTER III READING MEME PROJECT.....	49
3.1 The study.....	49
3.1.1 Context.....	50
3.2 Material	50
3.3 Procedure.....	51
CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	53
4.1 Meme project results	53
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS	67
References	69
ANNEX A EXAMPLE OF READING COMPREHENSION TEST.....	75
ANNEX B READING MEME PROJECT, SURVEY.....	78
ANNEX C MEMES CREATED BY STUDENTS.....	81
Student A.....	81
Student B.....	81
Student C.....	82
Student D.....	82
Student E.....	83
Student F.....	83
Student G.....	84
Student H.....	85
Student I.....	85
Student J.....	86
Student K.....	86
Student L.....	87

EPIGRAPH

I used to think great teachers inspire you. Now I think I had it wrong. Good teachers show you how to inspire yourself every day of your life. They don't show you their magic. They show you how to make the magic of your own.

-Alfred Doblin

ABSTRACT

This study was taken in a private institute located in an urban area which has English as a technical career. There was an exam applied before and after the development of the Meme project. Furthermore, a survey was handed in at the end of the test to observe the impact it provoked on students. In this context, Memes are immersed in their social life because the phrases and words seen can be easily recognized and identified in a text. For that reason, this study aims to analyze and evaluate the impact of the use of memes in reading comprehension skills.

This project collects the results of a qualitative study based on action research, applied to twelve students who are in A2 level according to the Common European Framework of References. In which, a meme project was developed in order to improve their reading ability and thus be able to accredit the final exam of reading competence. The results of this study indicate that there was a positive impact on the elaboration of memes, as well as an improvement in their reading skills and strategies.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo se llevó a cabo en un instituto privado, ubicado en una zona rural, el cual tiene el idioma inglés como carrera técnica. Se aplicó un examen y una encuesta al final a alumnos entre 15 y 20 años. Dentro de este contexto, el uso de los memes se encuentra inmerso en sus vidas sociales, ya que las expresiones y palabras en inglés que se localizan en ellas son más fáciles de identificar en un texto. Por lo que este estudio de caso tiene como objetivo analizar y evaluar el impacto que tiene el uso de memes para mejorar la comprensión lectora.

Este proyecto recoge los resultados de un estudio cualitativo en base a una investigación de acción, aplicada a doce alumnos que se encuentran cursando un nivel A2 de acuerdo al Marco Común de Referencia Europeo. En el cual, se desarrolló un proyecto de memes con el fin de mejorar su habilidad en la lectura y así poder acreditar el examen final de competencia lectora. Los resultados de este estudio indican que hubo un impacto positivo en la elaboración de memes, así como una mejora en sus habilidades y estrategias de lectura.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of learning English in today's world can create many opportunities in different fields, even though it is challenging and time-consuming. A language makes it easier to communicate with each other. In this modern society, English is the most common spoken by over 1,132 million people. (Klappenbach, 2021) There are many reasons why English plays a crucial role that cannot be ignored. Nishanthi (2018) expresses that it provides a wide range of opportunities to grow personally and professionally as it is used in every area of work, in education, in travel and business, access to entertainment etc. As a result, there are plenty of resources found in this language such as Internet memes.

Internet memes are spread through the Internet that has had a world-changing effect, not least on the world of education. Memes are created as a tool of communication between people. The internet plays an important role so that this communication using memes can be done, as well as, social media provides a new form of interaction between the creators and the receptors as they are being spread on different platforms. Internet memes can be both words and images, which carry meaning on them. Technology resources have been integrated into the education system to facilitate the learning process in many schools.

In addition, memes have been used in different contexts all over the world, with this in mind and considering that memes are trendy in young adults may create a link between themselves, their learning development and the teacher with a positive effect. Therefore, they can be found in a variety of languages. From those many languages spoken around the world we will focus on English, as it is the dominant language worldwide. As a result, knowing the impact it caused in students' learning can be considered to improve their abilities in the language.

For this reason, the following project implements the use of Internet memes in reading comprehension. This was carried out in a private language institute located

in an urban area. In this school they have two technical careers, computer systems and English as a foreign language. In the area of English, students study for two years. They take six courses across levels A1-B1+ based on the CEFR. In all levels the four language skills are developed, reading, listening, writing and speaking. Generally, the levels are divided into combos and each level lasts five months. The courses from A1, A2 combo A, A2 combo B to B1 combo A have a length of 20 weeks. And the last two courses which are B1 combo B and B1+ combo A last 15 weeks each.

Furthermore, in each level the assessment is continuous. Several exams are applied in each level. For instance, six units of the course book are covered per level except for A1 and B1+. The starter level, A1, covers twelve units and the intermediate level only five units. They also have four written exams and two spoken projects. They also do two competency tests, taken in the mid-course covering reading, listening, speaking and writing. The objective of the competency is to provide an accurate measure for learner's performance respective to the target language based on CEFR levels. Therefore, there is only one attempt and no feedback for the Competency.

In teaching English as a foreign language, I have found out that Internet memes in many cases have been part of students' conversations. Actually, those are highly common in their daily activities that even a word, a sound, a gesture or the template are associated with their previous or present tasks they are carrying out. As a result, I had noticed that on those memes some words in English are used for example, when, how, but, siblings, facts, and, you among others. Although these words are not challenging to recall, they are also mixed together in their mother tongue vocabulary, for example, "*When se te queman los frijoles*". In fact, those words are so familiar to them that they do not have any problems using nor identifying them in a text.

Through their progress in learning English, the students comment that reading is the hardest language skill, more difficult than listening, writing and speaking. When the

competency test was applied, their results in reading were low compared to writing and speaking. The passing grade of this test is over 60 in each skill, however, in reading they had failing scores. Indeed, the different reading tasks they had during their course presented noticeable advances, although those advances were not reflected in the end of the course test.

Generally, they could understand short tests, identify specific and main information even when they were doing their exercises, they were able to justify their answers. In fact, the highest lexicon presented in the reading was one of the issues they had on inferring the meaning according to the context along with locating and isolating the information required. Not passing this skill had a negative impact on their learning progress, in moving on to the next course and even their performance is affected in the next level.

Consequently, what I decided to do is investigate ***How does the use of memes as a strategy to develop reading comprehension affect students' level of comprehension?*** This made me think to find the answer to this question in the development of reading comprehension. In this research project I have identified as a main objective to ***analyze and evaluate the impact of the use of memes in reading comprehension skills***. For this reason and to make students be engaged in this skill extensive reading was incorporated and carried out as an extra project during their course.

CHAPTER I READING

In this chapter, the focal point is to support the theoretical framework of reading comprehension as a second language, along with some reading skills descriptions that are displayed into different tasks which are applied in order to understand certain types of texts.

Moreover, in this reading process, there is extensive and required reading. It is required to point out differences between these two aspects. As well as, to be familiar with the schema theory and to explain in what manner either formal or content schemata is enrolled and can be used by students in their reading activities.

1.1 Reading comprehension

Written expressions such as letters, words, phrases, sentences are present in our daily lives. We can appreciate them in many tangible and intangible things such as newspapers, books, articles, essays, advertisements, among others. Not only do we see the letters and pretend as if there is no content or meaning in it or only see those words printed on something or somewhere, but also as human beings we are capable of making connections between the written words by reading and understanding the meaning even though it has been written for a specific audience. (Brown, 2010)

It can vary in reading a book, a text, an essay, an article, and so on, that are written in a formal language and most people are able to understand more than reading as a hobby. Nevertheless, there are varieties of written discourses where the meaning has to be assimilated differently. In reading and taking the previously written examples where those are published, it could be noticed that some aspects differ with the environment and within a specific area, society or community. Reading cultural aspects where humor is expressed about a country sometimes it turns out to be difficult to catch the main idea or what it really wants to signify. It varies in a manner where not only should the meaning have to be comprehended, but cultural

expressions are illustrated and there is a semantic change or impact in the meaning of what the author really intends to express. Teachers could be enrolled in some similar contexts when they are teaching or simply expect learners to acquire some reading skills through their learning process. (Brown, 2010). How do we teach reading to Spanish learners? What shall they read? What do we have to teach considering students to be skillful with the written code?

Reading comprehension texts are not only to be understood by academic and professional progress, but also to the community in general. Through this process it is important for people to have the capacity to be independent in reading and to absorb information from a variety of texts. In a practice guide published in 2010 a group called the panel defines reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language”, they emphasized the author's intentions and the readers' competence to use their background knowledge. (Shanahan *et al.* 2010)

Therefore, people who are interested or into learning a foreign language are conscious or have knowledge about the culture and different cultural aspects between their own mother tongue, as well as, the variety of countries which speak the target language they want to achieve. But what happens with students that have English as an obligatory subject? Students might struggle with their learning process due to an unfamiliar language, which implies obtaining social, cultural, linguistic, academic competences and language skills development.

1.2 Schema theory

Schema theory plays a crucial role in the reading process. According to Nunan (1999), the term schema was first used by Sir Frederic C. Bartlett, who had an influential impact in psychology thoughts which were given to the Gestalt psychology and researchers in the field of speech processing and language comprehension. The term Gestalt is defined as shape and form. The ideas of Gestalt were primarily

applied in a visual perception as well as to undertake the ability to acquire and keep meaningful understanding. (Cherry, 2019)

“Gestalt psychology helped introduce the idea that human perception is not just about seeing what is actually present in the world around us much; it is heavily influenced by our motivations and expectations” (Cherry, 2019)

Bartlett's first experiments were focused on remembering taking into account that the mind is a unity. A brief research conducted in his book well-known as the American Indian Folktale The war of the ghosts, was based on readers' memories of stories and the impact that it has between the old and the new information presented to the subjects when they had to remember the details of the story. Although there is no specific information about the subjects. It is important to point out that the story was related to a different culture and environment by the subjects. Through this research, Bartlett found out that the information was similar to their prior knowledge and was easily recalled apart from the rest of the facts. In the end, the new information that did not present any similarities was omitted.

On the other hand, constructivism is a cognitive approach that has taken part in psychology and education. Psychological constructivism is merely about the learning mental process in individuals by organizing and reorganizing new information (Seifert *et al.* 2009). To a constructivist, according to William, Mercer, and Ryan (2015) is where “individuals are involved throughout their lives in ‘constructing’ their own personal understanding from their experience”, this is to say that each individual makes their learning of the world a unique way.

An important constructivist was Jean Piaget (William *et al.* 2015) who was interested in how an infant develops his/her learning process through his/her different stages of life. Piaget defines learning as an interplay which is called assimilation and accommodation, known as two mental activities (Seifert & Sulton, 2009). This is to say, when children are exposed to the language, they are able to interpret the new

information, ideas of generalization into their existing knowledge. This process is called assimilation and then, it is modified into the pre-existing information, known as accommodation. Piaget explained that the two mental representation processes worked together to endeavor infant's thinking and develop a cognitive equilibrium (William *et al* 2015).

Moreover, each mental representation is called a schema. (Piaget 2001, cited in Seifert *et al* 2009). Seifert and Sutton (2009) mentioned schema as "an elaborated mixture of vocabulary, actions, and experience related to the concept", where children do not only acquire the language but also add relevant experience in order to construct a new schema. As to an extent to schema theory Nunan (1999), expresses that "it is based on the notion that past experiences lead to the creation of mental frameworks that help us make sense of new experiences".

Anderson and Pearson (1984) shared Bartlett's thoughts about schema theory in the reading process and with Gestalt psychology. This connection was related to the knowledge already stored in memory. Additionally, they expressed that when there is an interaction between the background knowledge and the new information it can be easily assimilated and be related to what they mean as comprehension. Considering schemata as general in nature and not as previous experience Anderson and Pearson (1984) argue to have an only form which can be notice for comprehension and that is to have an adequate structure of it with the following aspects:

- 1) Information about the relationships among the components
- 2) a major role for inference
- 3) acceptance that during language comprehension, people probably rely on knowledge of particular cases.

Nassaji (2002, cited in Brown, 2007), mentioned that people's knowledge about something is not always kept in their mind as he revealed to be 'pre-stored', however,

when it turns to be performed in a task where individuals have to carry out this might not be as what is expected from them and the context.

Then, a schema refers to the knowledge which is organized in different mental representations. These sections are related to objects, concepts, situations, events, therefore, these are related to other components such as actions, sequences, among others. Likewise, the theory has to do with different background knowledge representations and how it is used and elucidated. For example, if you think about your background information about animals specifically a 'CAT', the general knowledge pre-stored could be the details of general characteristics such as four legs, paws, tail, furry, teeth, whiskers, however, you also might have thought about specific details of cats like, the color, the breed, sizes, and that they are mammals. This information depends on the experiences of each individual and their schema of the world to come up with the concept of a cat.

Schema theory plays an important role in the development of the four language skills within this case it is based on reading comprehension. For instance, in reading, schema can be illustrated as the format and genres that are presented as well as the connection of individuals who have been exposed and have been integrated with information or have already pre-stored some of the knowledge related. Taking into account the schema of the CAT, in a reading context, students can predict the format in which it is written, the purpose, the characteristics, the content of the reading if it is formal or informal, and so on.

All in all, a research conducted by Brown (2007) mentioned formal and content schemata as two types of the schema theory; where in this view new knowledge and pre-stored depends on different contexts.

1.2.1 Formal and content schema

Formal schema is directed to the language structure by all means, the components of the language and the academic language learning, Brown (2007) mentioned that

“formal schemata consist of our knowledge about language and discourse structure”, in other words, this can be explained as the language skills students develop during formal English classes in school. For example, in a language class, it consists of the explanations of structure tenses, uses, vocabulary, word order, format, intonation, etc., that help students comprehend the components and structure of a sentence. In reading it is focused on the structure of the text, the language (as standard, formal or informal), formal content, a specific topic, the organization and the parts of a text.

On the contrary, content schema refers to the knowledge people acquire of the world through their experiences, the country they live in which contributes to their general information (Brown, 2007). This type of schema has been developed directly to the evidence a person possesses and enrolled by their environment. As An (2013) points out, that content schema is culture-specific to a certain extent, because of the knowledge a person has to acquire in order to link the ideas with the written discourse and the culture they are enrolled in. In reading this can be illustrated as the knowledge someone has already had of any kind of topic, context, development or that they are interested. In other words, this means that in a text the vocabulary is not completely unknown because it can be related with their previous background and consequently the reader moves through the text easily. Moreover, these similarities pre-stored are also related to the constructions of the different kinds of format and content in reading.

Despite the differences between these two types of schemes, where one is focused on formal learning and the other is related to personal experiences, it allows students to consider their progress and comprehension through varieties of text based on the format and content. According to An (2013) schema theory is known as an interactive process between the ideas of the text (written discourses) and the reader's background knowledge when there is a good comprehension.

1.3 Bottom-up, top-down and interactive reading

Reading and comprehending a text can be difficult while reading in our first language; people apply and develop several techniques in order to understand a variety of texts from any topics to genres. As a brief example, when we move through a text there can be written words where the meaning is new, but while reading we can infer the meaning of the words by context. In some other cases, those words do not affect the comprehension of the reading. Admas and Bruce (1980) mentioned that the new words can either be achieved in two manners: intensional and extensional. To illustrate this, extensional is referred to search the meaning of the words in dictionaries, while intensional the words are inferred within the context.

In addition, a reader as a first skill develops strategies such as bottom-up and top-down to master the language (Brown, 2007). Bottom-up strategies refer to understanding each of the components of the language; this means to identify grammatical words separately, letters and phrases. Brown (2007) also explained top-down as to use the knowledge already stored along with the experiences to overcome and understand a text. A definition given by the British Council (n.d) explains that bottom-up is used to develop an expectation about what it is going to be in the reading or listening, later on, while they read they have to confirm or reject that expectation. On the other hand, top-down occurs when they use their background information to predict the meaning or information about what they are going to read.

According to Lems, Miller and Soro (2010), the process of reading comprehension implies the use of strategies before, during and after reading. In addition, the two strategies mentioned, which are bottom-up and top-down, are focused on different outcomes of a task. However, it is important to take into account that both skills can be integrated into a reading activity. Brown (2007) explained this process as an interactive reading because there is a connection or combination between the skills. Further, in recent research, this process is a crucial aspect of teaching reading.

“In practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says.” (Nuttall 1996, cited in Brown, 2007)

Lems et al. (2010), mentioned that mental energy is an important process while students move through a text in order to have a better and efficient understanding. When readers learn to read in their first language, they apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies that involve learners' independence in the language. Hedge (2000), refers to cognitive strategies where students work in different manners with the variety of tasks presented to them. In this process, Hedge mentioned three strategies: analogy, memorization, and repetition. (Rubin,1987 and Pickett, 1978 cited in Hedge, 2000) Metacognitive strategies are carried out within students' perspective about their learning development over a period or lapse of time. Students handle different steps to check their improvement in the language such as a plan for learning, think about learning, self-monitoring, evaluation and check how effective it has been after working on the aspects to improve. (Hedge, 2000)

Lems *et al.* (2010), also pointed out that L1 learners' use strategies that help them understand, however, while they read in their L2 those strategies differ. This is to say that they don't use the same skills as their first language. Pritchard and O'Hara (2008) cited in Lems *et al.* (2010) expressed that unlike their L1, they tend to analyze sentence by sentence to enhance a better understanding. Where in most cases people translate the sentence to their mother tongue in order to obtain a better comprehension of it. However, it might not be the best option due to the many words, phrases, ideas among others, which are mentioned throughout the whole text.

“When we struggle with sentences in a new language, reading takes a great deal of cognitive energy. As a result, retaining the gist of the previous sentences in a paragraph or of previous paragraphs in working memory is hard to do as we move through a text”, (Lems *et al.*2010)

1.4 Micro and macro skills

Through this process of reading students not only develop top down and bottom up skills in order to comprehend any text, but also micro and macro skills are involved. Otherwise, the different skills they master are highly based on the objective of the task which depends on the purpose or on the outcome. Brown (2010), presented micro and macro skills as a spectrum for different possibilities to assess reading.

Moreover, these techniques are different upon the aim that is required for a task. They would help students who are learning English as a second language to become efficient readers. (Brown, 2007) Reading is a constructive process in which all class and type of information has to be understandable. There has to be a transition between the reader and the text that combined will define how well that individual would be at reading. (Goodman, 1982, cited in Klinger and Vadillo,1999)

The following table 1.1, provides a list of micro and macro skills given by Brown (2007) for assessing reading.

Microskills

1. - Discriminate among the distinctive graphemes (letters or letter combinations that produce a phoneme) and orthographic patterns of English.
2. - Retain chunks of Language of different lengths in short-term memory.
3. - Process writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
4. - Recognize a core of words and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
5. - Recognize grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), the system (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), pattern, rules, and elliptical forms.
6. - Recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.
7. - Recognize cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.

Macro skills

8. - Recognize the rhetorical conventions of written discourse and their significance for interpretation.
9. - Recognize the communicative functions of written texts, according to form and purpose.
10. - Infer context that is not explicit by activating schemata (using background knowledge).
11. - From described events, ideas, etc., infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as the main idea, supporting an idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
12. - Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
13. - Detect culturally specific references and interpret them in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.
14. - Develop and use a battery of reading strategies, such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts.

Table 1.1 Macro and micro-skills (Adapted from Brown, 2007)

1.5 Active readers

Comprehension has had an enormous impact on humans' life due to the effects it involves in individuals' daily activities, as Lems *et al.* (2010), Brown (2007) and Pichardo *et al.* (2008) cited in Lems (2010), have mentioned before about various strategies applied in order to be able to understand an idea in a written discourse. In school, pupils, teens and adults have to accomplish different activities which apply a well understanding within a task. The Open University (n.d) expressed that "simply reading and re-reading the material isn't an effective way to understand and learn",

As an illustration, some students can read a text with a good speed and pronunciation, although at the end of the reading activity or task, the comprehension would be average or not good at all. It is important to take into account that reading is part of communication. Active reading plays a crucial role in reading skills. Robinson (1970) said that the process of rereading in one sitting does not help comprehension accuracy very much.

Students' ability for reading differs from each other, some students may understand the idea by simply reading it once, however, others might read the text three, four, five times and some might even make notes about what they have read but it would turn out not to be efficient in comprehension. Robinson (1970) mentions effective study, and how some students look for strategies or methods which will help them in reading efficiently and do not spend too much time in a text.

As mentioned before, active readers use reading strategies to help them comprehend the written discourse as well as to construct connections. According to Küçükoglu (2013), readers are actively involved with the text and conscious of the process which helps them understand what they read. Teachers will guide and help them improve their reading through instruction of some reading strategies. In fact, the importance of this role is to make them aware of the name of each strategy and how it should be used.

The following list shows a few effective reading strategies and their description provided by Küçükoglu (2013, May);

1) Predicting: Good readers use their experience and knowledge to make predictions as they read. (Block and Israel, 2005, cited in Küçükoglu, 2013) This is to say that in reading activities students can predict the content by only reading the title, see the image, key words and even predict specific points through the text.

2) Visualizing: Readers build an image of what is read. This image is a representation of what readers interpret of the text. In addition, the National reading panel (2000), cited in Küçükoglu (2013) said that teachers help students construct the picture by engaging them to visualize the settings, the characters and actions. Later on, they draw the picture or write about the image that came to their mind.

3) Making connections: Readers can activate their prior knowledge and connect their ideas on a topic with their own experience. These strategies help them make connections: 1) Text-to-self. Asking students about any experience similar to the text, they can draw, make a chart or write. 2) Text-to-text. Connections can be based on the relation between stories and characters. 3) Text-to-world. This can be made by comparing characters in the story to today's figures or also content.

4) Summarizing: It is a strategy that requires readers to determine what is important and compress the information into their own words. This strategy even helps in long texts. Additionally, they will be able to identify the main ideas from the supporting ones. (Adler, 2001, cited in Küçükoglu, 2013)

5) Questioning: In this strategy readers ask questions to construct meaning, enhance understanding, answer and find information and solve problems (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000, cited in Küçükoglu, 2013) These questions are asked before, during and after the reading to improve reading comprehension.

6) Inferring: Readers need to use their prior knowledge with information gathered from the text to draw their own conclusions. (Serafini, 2004, cited in Küçükoglu, 2013)

The constant use of these effective reading strategies helps readers not just to read, but also to have a better comprehension of what they have read. In the same way

the SQ3R reading strategies (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) facilitate and provide efficiency in reading. Robinson (1970) presents a description for each of the steps that the students might follow in one of his projects for an effective study:

1) Survey: This stage helps organize the ideas as you read. The purpose is to get a general idea of what the text, article, chapter is about as well as the lexicon needed to understand. Students do not need to spend much time on this step.

2) Question: Formulating questions to be involved in the reading is helpful to increase curiosity and understanding. Likewise, students can recall information they already know to what they learned which will make it more understandable and efficient.

3) Read: During this step the reader should be active to look for the answers. In other words, it is more likely to remember the information.

4) Recite: Once the reader has read the first part of a text or section a great process is to recite the answers by memory. In this case readers should put away their notes and with their own words they can answer initial questions, catch the main idea, key terms or either summarize by jotting down cue phrases.

5) Review: On this last step reviewing is not to go back to the notes made previously and read it again and again. Instead of rereading the notes it is to do something different with the information gained, for example, do a mind map, do flash cards, teach someone else among others.

In fact, when this SQ3R method may be mastered it becomes easier for readers to move through any type of text whether it is an essay, novel, story, article, description, etc. Readers pick out the important points and stick them in memory efficiently.

1.6 Intensive and extensive reading

Reading in a foreign language as a source of information is a goal for each person and for individual areas in general. In past years, the Grammar – Translation method was used for teaching the target language. This was viewed as a useful method because people could have acquired certain abilities in the language via literature. Likewise, people could make the relation between their mother tongue and English due to the meaning gathered from each word, phrases, sentences among others.

Following the process of reading in class where students are commonly involved in their reading activities is known as intensive reading. According to the British council (n.d), intensive reading requires the reader to read in detail followed by specific objectives and tasks. In addition to this it is limited to short text and to have general understanding of the whole context. For example, in a reading task learners can read the text to get general or specific information as well as to answer true/false statements, etc.

In the approach of teaching reading skills there is a place for extensive reading with or without strategic interventions. Elley, Day and Bamford, and Krashen were researchers mentioned in Brown (2007) who have described it as a form for students to gain reading ability, linguistic competence, vocabulary spelling and writing. Brown (2007) has also highlighted that extensive reading has been generally followed to achieve a general understanding of longer texts such as books, articles, essays, etc. This kind of reading is usually presented outside the classroom.

The British Council (n.d), refers to extensive reading as reading texts for enjoyment, pleasure which is linked to developing general reading skills. Pleasure is seen as one of the objectives in extensive reading along with encouraging students to read in English and to be into reading. They have also emphasized that people can become good readers through reading where they should focus more on the meaning rather than the language. (BC, n.d)

Based on the alternative approach for extensive reading presented by the BC (n.d) where students choose any book they want to read outside the class with no purpose of discussion or work class it is just meant to engage students to read. For this extensive reading approach, they displayed the following list of characteristics:

- 1.- Reading material:** A large extent of books must be available for students and part of this selection is the use of graded books according to their level.
- 2.- Students choice:** Here each student makes a choice based on their interest.
- 3.- Reading for pleasure and information:** Students do not have to see reading as an obligatory task. In this case, teachers can ask at the beginning or at the end of the class or as a mini-presentation of the book.
- 4.- Extensive reading out of class:** Teachers can encourage students to borrow books and take them home or either search.
- 5.- Silent reading in class:** in this part teachers can have a fifteen-minute break of a silent reading inside the class as it is said to help structural awareness develop, build vocabulary and promote confidence in the language.
- 6.- Use of a dictionary:** Make students avoid the use of a dictionary during the reading or stop whenever they do not know a word, they can write it down in a note and look for it later.
- 7.- Record keeping:** Take an interest in students' record to encourage students and moreover make recommendations on books. Also, explain the benefits of an extensive reading programme.
- 8.- The teacher as a role model:** Teachers can inspire students by having a mini-lecture about the book they are reading or have read as a lead-in and persuade them to read.

Generally speaking, motivation takes a crucial part of this approach as an example, if the material is related to their interest, it is more likely to be keen on reading. Although it is important to recall that the reading is for enjoyment and not obligatory.

CHAPTER II TECHNOLOGY AND THE USE OF MEMES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

“Technology is nothing. What’s important is that you have faith in people, that they’re basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they’ll do wonderful things with them”.

-Steve Jobs

This chapter is to support the second part of the theoretical framework of this study. The first point is to check the background about the use of technology in the classroom and the different techniques teachers have implemented in class along with some tasks students have carried out. Moreover, the use of technology in class can create a positive or negative impact in the class. Additionally, the attitude that students and teachers show towards the use of electronic devices and applications needs to be taken into account.

Surfing on the Internet has been crucial in students’ lives, as a result, social media and applications are currently used in this century, this is the case of Internet memes. The term meme is explained along with a taxonomy to differentiate their characteristics. It will be considered memes as the central unit in which this case takes part, therefore, it is important to understand the term and the diversity that can be found.

2.1 Influence of technology in daily basics: background

As time passes by, new items appear or get modernized. This is the case of the Internet, which plays an important role because people create an interaction, move and do most of their activities with it these days. Teachers should be aware and take into consideration to update in order to be present in students' social significance contexts. Over the years’ teachers have had students of different ages, but their environment changes every day and as a matter of fact, teachers do not have the same students or work in the same levels according to their area.

Moreover, as Erdem (2019), has pointed out “the 21st century is a mark of transition from the industrial age to the knowledge age”. This is because through years there have been changes in modern education and workplaces where new skills are needed. Currently, living in this century has made the information easily accessible through the internet, which has made students live a different lifestyle as it used to be.

The advancement of technology has made life different in the working environment from one century to the other because it is in a process of shifting. (Dede,2009, cited in Erdem, 2019) To emphasize, nowadays children have knowledge in using technology such as using a smartphone, a tablet, surfing on the internet etc, and this is possible because they were born in this technological era. However, we should not take for granted that these young learners are expert users of this technology and the information can be handled accurately. Noss, 2012 (cited in Erdem, 2019) says “Learning in the 21st century is learning with digital technology”, this is a reason why education and the curriculum change to adapt to this century's needs.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the 21st century skills are not all related to technology, instead, technology is part of them and they have been in constant demand through generations. (Craig, 2012, cited in Erdem, 2019) Kennedy, Latham and Jacinto (2016, cited in Erdem,2019) present a category of this skills to have a better comprehension of them; first, ways of thinking, where creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making and learning is classified; second, ways of working, where communication and collaboration is involved: third, tools for working, in it there is information and communication technology ICT and information literacy and finally, skills for living, needed for citizenship, life and career and personal and social responsibility.

Nowadays, teachers implement 21st Century skills where critical thinking and problem-solving is taught in class. Students are promoted to use these skills and it is considered important to succeed in their learning process and move on to college,

the workplace and in their adult life. Communication is part of the 21st Century skills where currently students often communicate with technology via, something that stands out is the fact that these students are aware of using technology in their daily lives. (British Council, n.d)

On one hand, students use technology to search for their homework, surf on the Internet, watch series, and films, and have fun on their social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat among others. While doing these activities they spend more time surfing on the Internet than reading, writing or interacting with others, so as this occurs students have become experts on managing technology very well.

On the other hand, being in front of a device does not guarantee that students' use the activities mentioned before properly, for example, if pupils have to deliver research about any topic they might go through the Internet, copy the information and paste it on a document, print and deliver. In addition, while surfing many things appear on their computer screen that may distract their aim or the main purpose of the task that they have to achieve. (Chiverton, 2017)

Although teachers should be conscious of the many resources and materials, the Internet can contribute to their classes. As a tool, it can be useful for the session where the teachers can have more control of it during their English courses. Eventually, the cell phone is definitely a powerful electronic device, even though many teachers do not consider it as technology that can or should be used in the classroom because it can have a positive or negative effect. However, Chiverton (2017) quotes that the cell phones are being used for 4.3 billion people which means that those can be found in every corner and make them a global tool.

Irina (2011), cited in Chiverton (2017, p) mentioned that the use of cellphones "is more effective than computers in the new Web 2.0 context of creating and distributing knowledge", which can be scrutinized with the number of users. Isaacs (2012), cited in Chiverton (2017) expressed that the use of a cell phone is well used

in numerous areas of society and can have the potential for educational initiatives. Through Chiverton's research, he mentioned two learning pilots; the first one is the BridgeIT. This consisted of a given lesson to primary school level in order to increase academic achievements and educational levels within mathematics, science and life skills. The results of the study showed students significant gain in test scores from those who received the Bridge-IT lesson in comparison to those who did not go through it or were familiarized with the dynamics.

The second project was a study conducted by Zhang, Song, and Burston (2011), cited in Chiverton (2017), where the aim was the retention of vocabulary. That study was about giving one group of students five words on their mobiles and the other group received 130 words in a sheet. In this project, they concluded that short-term learning vocabulary was more effective than massive words.

“Many projects start out as pilots because they are explorative or experimental in their intent and design. Because mobile learning is a relatively new phenomenon, mobile learning projects are bound to take this form at the outset” (Isaacs (2012), cited in Chiverton,2017)

2.2 Teachers and the use of technology in class

Not all teachers are happy with using technology in their classes. First of all, some teachers do not allow the use of technology in class because these might cause students distraction. However, all kinds of information can be delivered through a variety of channels. In particular, since society has been evolving rapidly in technology there has also been a different communication system, where people can transmit and acquire new information. Talking about the technology we can mention devices such as cellphones, computers, laptops, and some applications like social network apps (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, TIKTok, Youtube, etc.), Microsoft (Word, Powerpoint, Excel), games, video games, and more.

LeveDuff (2011), cited in Santrock (2014), highlighted that in this contemporary society technology covers important features. Hammond (2005), cited in Santrock (2014) expressed three crucial points about the use of technology in curriculum planning:

1. Followed as a goal in learning in order to acquire technology competence.
2. Used as a tool in the planning. This refers to all the material available on the Internet.
3. Students are able to improve their skills through simulation, visualization, text analysis, and personal view.

Technology is a form of self-expression. Rivilla (1995), cited in Brown (2007), defines technology as “any equipment that requires electricity to operate”. Although he mentioned non-computer-based technology, such as those that are not necessary functioning with electricity as an example of this would be markers, chalkboards, flashcards or posters. Currently, some devices are still used in class such as audio tapes and CDs, videotapes and DVDs commercially and self-made and overhead projectors (Brown, 2007). The use of these technology items will depend on the area or the teaching environment.

The role of technology in education has gone through a slight change with a view which people handle it. This viewpoint has moved from ‘learning from technology’ to ‘learning with technology’ because of having active construction of knowledge, which provides students to make associations and interact with each other (Ching *et al.* 2011). Ching and collaborators (2011) refer to technology as an institutional tool used to implement a more exciting dynamic learning environment, despite that point, it changed to focus on learners' understanding and capabilities as well as their cognitive and metacognitive process.

The learning environment refers to the location, areas such as schools, classrooms, or libraries where the process of learning takes place. In the 21st Century, these aspects and tools of devices should be used as an inspiration for students to obtain

knowledge and develop skills, which can be used in different ways: virtual, remote or online. Chapelle (2005) cited in Brown (2007) associates CALL in the second language class as “the broad range of activities associated with technology and language learning.” The acronym CALL stands for computer-assisted language learning. Computer technology may have endless resources applied in a language classroom. The following list is adapted from Brown (2007), providing a list of CALL applied effectively in class:

1. **Collaborative projects:** Research projects can be achieved by using data available on the Internet.
2. **Peer-editing of compositions:** Students exchanged their compositions, via computer networks, web-based bulletin boards, giving them the opportunity to edit their drafts, receiving feedback through this technology
3. **E-mail:** Give the possibility for students to communicate with individuals around the world.
4. **Blogs:** These are quickly used to write a thought, interact with others. Get feedback, post photos and more.
5. **Web-based bulletin board communication:** Used in writing by setting discussion sites.
6. **Web page design:** Doing research on a topic, composing, designing and collaborating with other students.
7. **Videoconferencing:** Use of hardware to carry out conferences over video.
8. **Reinforcement of classroom material:** Additional material used to reinforce learning, for example, some English books come along with a CD file with practice exercises.
9. **Podcasting:** It is another technological resource used as a method of distributing multimedia files over the Internet. Authentic listening for English students is also distributing.

- 10. Games and simulations:** Well-planned teachers can use games and simulations which allow students to learn by interactive tasks and become active learners.
- 11. Computer-adaptive testing:** The tests are applied through computer systems where answers are analyzed in order to have a wide range of possible items.
- 12. Speech recognition software:** An accuracy software designed to process humans' speech production with simple exercises in pronunciation showing learners control of phonemic and prosodic elements.
- 13. Concordancing:** Referred to search for words in context and collocation where students look for the possible contexts of words easily.
- 14. Multimedia presentations:** The use of media presentation to animate a presentation with graphics, photos, audio, etc.

The Internet has changed the process of learning and how the information is shared. Ching *et al.* (2011) explained that with only a few clicks users can collect all sorts of data of any topic, in other words, people can search a subject and get familiarized with it and be up-to-the-minute. Santrock (2014) referred to the Internet as a system of computer networks that is conducted worldwide. Poteete (2011), cited in Santrock (2014), mentions in his work where he states that the Internet plays a crucial role in this revolutionary technology within schools, used as a communicational center through computers.

In addition, Teeler and Gray (2006), emphasize that there is no correct tool for each activity or student group you want to carry out using the internet, in fact teachers should experiment and do not leave aside the lesson plan or activities to be seen. However, the activities applied can be based on communication and task-based learning. Teachers' roles will defer in this technological environment, they will be facilitators and an internet guide.

Quintanilla (1992), cited in Sevillano (1998), expresses that it is unusual to believe that formal education is the only channel of acculturation because nowadays in society most teenagers can spend more time in front of a TV or cell phone screen than being in school. Even though some authors have maintained a posture where student's learning will have a big impact by the use of technology due to the facility accessible at home. The Magisterio sobre Internet y la Educación, cited in Sevillano (1998), presented a tendency view on the influence of technological tools in the future education:

TENDENCIAS DE FUTURO
El proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje es el eje para la utilización de las tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación de la escuela.
Este proceso se realizará en el aula normal de aprendizaje, o bien en infotecas accesibles a todos, profesores y alumnos.
El proceso será guiado por el profesor ordinario en coordinación con el equipo docente.
El software y las aplicaciones informáticas en un sistema tal, se dirigirán a establecer funciones tales como el acceso y gestión de la información, la elaboración y construcción de conocimientos significativos por el alumnado, la generación de recursos didácticos y la evaluación global del centro.
La informatización>> de los centros escolares supondrá la recomposición de la organización hacia dentro y hacia afuera.
La influencia del centro escolar en su entorno y en el medio crecerá, si se cumplen los presupuestos enunciados más arriba.
EL resultado final esperable, será el de un entorno de aprendizaje que abarque la escuela, con todas sus dependencias, la familia, las instituciones ligadas al centro junto con otros centros que trabajen de la misma forma, todo ello soportado por una

instalación tecnológica con una arquitectura escalable, donde las redes de comunicaciones y los multimedios sean el fundamento.

Table 2.1. Future tendencies (from Sevillano, 1998)

Generally speaking, the table above presented a wide explanation of future characteristics that would be carried out in class with the use of technology. Some of the technological resources are implemented at school in order to reinforce the process of learning. These tools work together to access and facilitate students learning in an environment where they are familiar and have grown in.

2.3 Social media

Learners' learning process may differ throughout the years and in a modern society, it might seem to be led on different tools, which contribute to the knowledge gained and how they process it. Social media plays an important role in today's environment. Hudson (2018) defines social media as "websites and applications that are designed to allow people to connect quickly, efficiently and in real-time". Issacs (2012), cited in Chiverton (2017), refers to social media as which "have given expression to a variety of community voices and have influenced public opinions in official spaces as events unfolded".

Subsequently, social media is important as well as technology due to the similar process of having more people communicate through it. Social media as mentioned are apps where people express and share their experiences making their voices heard. (Issac, 2012, cited in Chiverton, 2017) These apps have passed from generation to generation and there have been major updates for more uses.

Currently, there are sites where people worldwide can find about most activities such as shopping sites, traveling, planning, booking, sharing experiences, reviews among others. Staff, (2009), Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking and people interaction in three forms:

- 1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
- 2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection.
- 3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) and Staff (2009) provide the following list, which shows the media apps that were used and that are being used nowadays which have had a crucial impact on the online community. As a reminder of the importance of social media in today's world, the majority of cellular phone service companies include unlimited cellular data to provide the use of social media as a result it attracts new users. Below are some of the common Internet apps.

- USENETS
- BBSS (Bulletin Board System)
- Online services
- IRC, ICQ, and Instant services
- Dating sites
- FORUMS
- Six degrees
- Asian Avenue, Migente, Black planet
- Live journal
- World of Warcraft/ MMORPGs
- Friendster
- Hi5
- LinkedIn
- Myspace
- Facebook
- Ning
- Photobucket
- Flickr
- YouTube
- Revver
- Del.icio.us
- Digg
- Reddit
- Twitter
- Posterous
- Tumblr
- Instagram

Some applications from the previous list may be unknown due to the changes there have been on social networking sites over the years. However, it is important to be mentioned because they were a key factor for the development of other apps used now in our daily lives. As Staff (2009), Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking interaction in constructing a public or semi-public profile these can be seen in applications such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Dating sites, My spaces

among others where setting a profile is required. Additionally, and from my experience, young learners are fluent users of those apps to communicate.

Therefore, they share interest via these apps where they create a virtual connection and this is to say they have a social interaction among them. On the other side, applications like Usenet, Forums, Del.icio.us, online services, live journal, six degrees etc, are used more for research, to work in teams when developing a project, share life stories and learn and share information. A profile is also involved or provided but it does not have the same purpose as the ones mentioned before. They have a different view and users can manipulate according to their needs.

2.4 Examples of memes



Taken from Google

Richard Dawkins first mentioned the term meme in 1976 in his book *The selfish gene*. According to Dawkins, this concept was brought out by describing evolution as a cultural phenomenon above all; he explains that this development has to do in the same way as genetic features are transmitted by gene replication (Muñoz, 2014). Dawkins (1976), cited in Pérez (2017), carried out a study where he scrutinized the song of the birds and noticed that it follows a sequence of patterns constantly repeated.

However, within this pattern, a variation was introduced into the sequences which later on had an effect on the sequence and previously it was repeated by the birds until it became part of the song. Pérez (2017) also expressed that with this variation introduced and enhanced into the song, this relationship was about different cultural communication that was developed in humans' social groups.

“Memes, like genes, are susceptible to variation or distortion -the analog to mutation. Various mutations of a meme will have to compete with one another, as well as with other memes, for attention, that is, for brain resources in terms of both space and time devoted to that meme.” (Hofstadter, 1983, cited in Wiggins & Bowers, 2014)

Apart from this investigation about gene replication, researchers took the idea of replication seen by Dawkins and they used it in order to help define and measure the evolution of the social phenomena nowadays known as Internet memes. For instance, this process of replication of a unit is called a meme. Meme derives from the Greek word “mimeme” (μίμος) which means to imitate. The Real Academia Española (n.d), RAE, has recently included this term into the dictionary and defines meme as cultural features or behavior, which are transmitted from generations to generations through imitation.

Blackmore (1999) refers to the meme as an imitation in an Internet cultural space. Pérez (2017) defines meme as any cultural unit that can be replicated currently spread on the Internet. Bauckhage (2011), through his study explains that memes are gradually spread on the internet and came up to the conclusion that apart from meme replication it involves different content that is rapidly spread on the Internet as part of communication in society, additionally the popularity is gained through that process.

“Some examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes, fashion ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a

process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.” (Dawkins (1976), cited in, Castaño, 2013)

As previously mentioned, a meme is a replicable unit. However, there are opposing views expressing that it is impossible to specify or to state the unit of a meme. Dennett (1995), cited in Blackmore (1999), defines this unit as “the smallest elements that replicate themselves with reliability and fecundity”. For instance, this topic has had a wide range of theorizations. Dawkins remarked about the differences between replicators and vehicles. He explains a replicator is anything which can be copied such as memes. And vehicles are the entity that interacts with the environment. (Blackmore, 1999)

Furthermore, Blackmore (1999), points out that taking a meme’s view is the foundation of memetics. Demir (2012) defines memetic as “the discipline that seeks to define a unit of a meme, to find the existence of memes and explains the mechanism of memes interactions.” Even so, both authors highlighted that this discipline is still in progress and has to be seen as a cultural field. Blackmore (1999) talks about Sir Frederic study, which is mentioned in Chapter 1, and the memetic selection expressing that some memes can grab attention and be remembered by the individual. On the other hand, some of them fail to attract people’s attention while others pass on because they cannot be copied at all.

Pérez (2017) through his research about the use of memes within Facebook and Twitter users, he explained that it involves a process of identity that emerges in a collective dimension. In addition to his empiric project, he discloses two postures - mentalist and instrumentalist - which are used to identify the unit of the meme and can have a wide explanation of it. Mentalist posture is focused on the intangible dimension whether instrumentalist posture is based on the observable meme. Blackmore (1999), gives the example of the Happy Birthday song in order to help explain both postures, she emphasizes that if she starts to hum the song people might identify the melody and start to sing or hum along with her due to the number of replication that many people around the world know (mentalist posture). However,

the same song can be an observable meme because of the reproduction and different recording systems it has gone through.

In addition, there are different classes to enhance a better precise grasp of a meme such as Memeplexes, Metamemes and Holomemes. (Perez, 2017) Generally, Memeplex refers to a meme that is integrated by other memes in order to create a new one and it can also be seen as a sequence. These can be constructed by different mechanisms which generate a way of understanding. For example, the same template of a meme can be combined with one item of another meme that carries out meaning, both are understood because they have a strong meaning from the viewers.

While Metameme alludes to the dramatism and their own nature provided. In other words, these kind of memes are seen as a narrator who intends to speak directly to the audience with a sense of humor. Furthermore, Holomeme is based on the variations of the cultural collection shared from a same group of people. As an illustration, there has to be an explanation to comprehend the meaning of the meme to others who do not have the same linguistic sign. This is to say that the people who know the meaning behind the meme will know it because they share the same code (Pérez, 2017)

Blackmore (1999) called the smallest part of a meme as the sense which might help give a solution to understand the unit of the meme. Moreover, Pérez (2017) connects the cultural perception of the meme into a linguistic field pointing out the unit as a sign. This is because some memes cannot be adjusted to the linguistic sign. For instance, this linguistic feature is linked to the semiotic field, which is the study of the variable of signs. In linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1991) referred to a sign as a linguistic unit composed of two aspects: a signifier and a signified. A signifier is the word the expression of the item and the signified is the concept to which it refers to sharing an arbitrary relationship. In other words, an individual can associate an idea

with an image to bring this connection because it is necessary to share the same code.

2.5 Internet meme

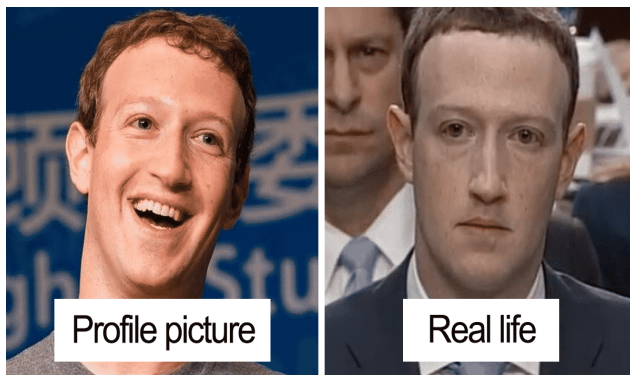
A meme or better known as an Internet meme expresses a cultural phenomenon that is created by a social group. A study conducted by Davison (Ed), cited in Mandiberg (2012) brought up a new definition mentioning that “an Internet meme is a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online influences”. Davison pointed out that the Internet plays a crucial role in the massive spread of them due to the facility that most people have with online devices and the Internet, mostly with young learners.

Moreover, Pérez (2017) mentioned humor as a typical feature in a meme and can be considered an important factor in which those are created and are spread every day on the Internet. However, there are many memes created and some of them are not used or related as a humor item (feeling), but other characteristics can be involved such as sexual diversity, religious thoughts/ diversity, environment, social protest, politics among others. (Perez, 2017 & Bauckhage, 2011).

An Internet meme can appear in different forms and shapes also; those can be found in different platforms and social networks. Kostadinovska & Shalevska (2018) mentioned a communicational system created as a unique way of transmission developed by the networker’s user. However, they pointed out that this might be seen as incomprehensible for certain people above a certain age and people with no Internet. Memes have a cultural background or context because of the variety of references given and these references follow a certain country, field, specific region, profession or even the language the meme has been created. (Kostadinovska & Shalevska, 2018)

“Memes use vernacular English, phrases from specific English dialects, puns, and punning riddles, jargon, slangs, shortenings, and neologisms as well as patterned way of incorrect spelling and multiple, intentional or unintentional grammar and syntax mistakes.” (Kostadinovska & Shalevska, 2018)

The Internet is well-known for being the major communication channel and for the rapid spread of memes along with the creations rather than other media. Kostadinovska & Shalevska (2018) highlighted that there have been many studies conducted to explain this meme phenomenon, however, these two authors mention a high impact of them in a specific age group. Kostadinovska & Shalevska (2018), presented some characteristics of a meme used in day-to-day communication: deliver as little words as possible, abbreviations, double meaning, fixed phrases which are used in different scenarios and the visual representation of the feelings and reactions. The following images show an example of these features.



Source: Screenshots taken from Facebook

The first meme presents the characteristic of little words, which are profile picture and real life. Just by having these four words creates an impact to the reader because of the meaningful connotation it implies and which it is also shared by the viewers on the internet. The meaning would be that most people when they upload a pic on social media, they seem to be perfect, beautiful, stunning etc., however in real life they are totally different from their profile pictures.

On the other hand, we have the picture of Captain America and Tony stark from the movie avengers. The feature that is presented would be abbreviation words. Theses abbreviations are seen and used by most teenagers and young adults when they chat, write and when they talk to friends. Some of these codes may be understood by a specific community, but in theses they might not be shared with elder generations.

2.5.1 Taxonomy of memes

Memes, previously defined as a replicator and has become part of a community shared via the Internet. According to Pérez (2017), Muñoz (2014) and The RAE (n.d) explain that there are other features that break it down in order to have a better comprehension of them. These properties that compose an Internet meme are essential to have success in a social group. Dawkins (1976) cited in Pérez (2017), stated three features: longevity, fecundity, and copy-fidelity.

The following table explains the three features given by Dawkins and one more provided by Cunha (2007), which became the fourth characteristic into Dawkins' taxonomy. (Pérez, 2017)





<p>1.- Copy-fidelity</p> <p>- </p> <p>Metamorphic High rates of mutation and recombination</p> <p>Replicators They present a reduced variation and a high fidelity with the original one</p>
<p>2.- Longevity</p> <p>- </p> <p>Volatile They have a short period of spread</p> <p>Persistent They are replicate by a considerable period of time</p>
<p>3.- Fecundity</p> <p>- </p> <p>Fecundity Slow spread</p> <p>Epidemics They spread so widely and fast</p>
<p>4.- Scope</p> <p>- </p> <p>Locals Limited geographic areas</p> <p>Global Used in varies contexts and spaces</p>

Table 2.1 Memes taxonomy according to Dawkins and Cunha (taken from Pérez,2017)

2.5.1.1 Copy-fidelity

Dawkins mentions fidelity as a modification a meme goes through. Pérez (2017). As it has been explained that the process of spread of any kind and type of meme is a main social process. In sociolinguistics, the use of the language is vital to transmitting social messages (Wolfram, n.d). According to Wolfram (n.d) "Language use symbolically represents fundamental dimensions of social behavior and human interaction" this is to say that the relation between language and society affects a wide range of encounters.

In that manner, a meme and its modifications or alterations goes through social acts and its users. Also, there are cultural factors that intervned in the fidelity of a meme. One of the cultural features is the environment, the context in which it takes place.

Also, there can be adaptations of the meme when a meme is translated from the original language to another. (Pérez, 2017)

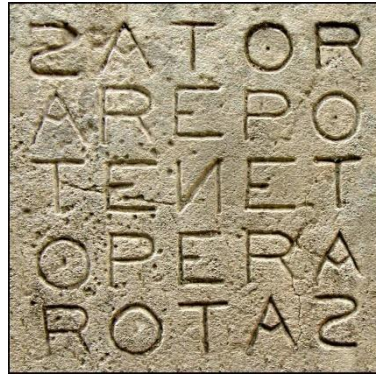


Examples taken from Pérez (2017)

As in Pérez's (2017) research, he gives the previous image as an example of copy-fidelity because the original image passed through a modification or alteration which is shown in the second image. The context is an important factor in order to understand the meaning. In the first image, it is a logo of a well-known ice cream shop in Mexico. In the second where the meme takes place it is interpreted as 1) La Michoacana can be defined as Michoacán which is a state of Mexico. 2) It is important to know about the social environment in that state. 3) In Michoacán there has been a high rate of crime and women dressed as warriors can be related to the self- defense forces in the state.

2.5.1.2 Longevity

This type is referred to as a permanent meme in a social group. This is to say that the meme is still persisting these days or has been used for a certain time. Through Pérez's (2017) research, he mentions as an example the Sator Square, which has a singular unit in the design.



Taken from Gabriel Pérez (2017) "El Cuadrado de Sator"

The previous image is referred to the Padre Nuestro in Latin and has had a large amount of replication since it came out. These Replications are used on the image which means the people can find them in many things such as cups, papers, crosses, shirts among others. It can be expressed that the persistence of the unit in a community group is notorious. As the following examples:



Taken from Google

2.5.1.3 Fecundity

The third dimension used to understand a meme is fecundity. According to Dawkins (1976), cited in Pérez (2017) has expressed that a meme is due to fecundity when it is replicated faster than others. That is to say that the amount of replicas that have been involved along with the speed which it has been spread has to do with the popularity it gains, that make it important for this feature. In fact, it is the time that

takes a meme to be trendy or recognized in a social group. To demonstrate this, the following meme is a clear example of fecundity:



Taken from Google “Cardi’s B meme”

The singer, Cardi B posted a picture of her as a child with a description expressing that someone has to play with her. The meme caused a hilarious sensation on the internet that later on it went viral not just in the USA, where she originally lives. Right before it provoked a worldwide sensation, the template has been used not just to call out people to play around, but also it has suffered some variation and adaptation for people around the world. Nowadays, it is a well-known meme.

2.5.1.4 Scope

Following the list of features provided by Dawkins (1976), Da Cunha (2007), cited in Pérez (2012), she has added another characteristic to memes known as Scope. As aforementioned, fecundity is because of the amount of people and places it reaches. However, scope involves the geographical area. Aside from the impact a meme causes on a certain community, it also involves cultural aspects such as the language.

For example, the following meme is obtained by a video that went viral within Spanish speakers. The lady was being interviewed and through the questions asked

and the answer she gave was amusing to the interviewer. When it was posted the audience found it entertaining and as a result people grabbed the template (shown in the meme) and turned it into a meme. The meme has Spanish words and it is understood for most Spanish communities.

**Cuando apenas tienes un mes en la empresa
y en la posada
te ganas la pantalla de 50 pulgadas**



Cuando me dicen "Nunca dejes de
sonreír, porque no sabes quien se
puede enamorar de tu sonrisa".

Yo:



2.6 Influence and impact on teenagers

Even though there is not much research on the influence and impact of memes on teenagers. Despite this, teenagers spend most of their time on social media because it is flooded with memes. The influence and impact is important. Millennials along with Generation Z are engaged in this Meme culture where creating a meme is easy to do and to share it on different social platforms.

Using memes can either be used for good intentions or malicious. According to Thompson (2016) the creation of memes are not often clear, this means that it depends on who created it and its objective. Teenagers who see a meme every now and then may consider it either funny or racist. Thompson (2016) mentions a crucial point towards the perspective of memes, highlighting the importance of making teens conscious of the impact they could cause and what they really want to express.

Although, memes do not necessarily have to be negative to be known. Around social media memes are spread by people who are creative and where their intention is to make them hilarious. So, the meaning behind the meme is highly important whether it would have a positive or negative impression.

Aforementioned, memes may introduce teenagers on topics that they have not been interested in before. To illustrate this Taylor (2020) expresses that there would be some hope in the dark and depressing situations, where a simple meme is due to indulge further to have the general idea of what it has implied and the effect it has been given in society. In her research paper, Taylor (2020) provides several examples of how teens and young adults are influenced to participate in social issues, for example take part in politics. As a result of this they can give their opinion to the elder audience without being judged about it.

In conclusion, a meme may influence teenagers' ideology. Nowadays, they are seen on the Internet and most people have access to an electronic device where they interact every so often. Generally, memes are capable of making positive or negative impacts on teens and young adults towards a situation they understand or not and how the meaning of a meme is deduced.

CHAPTER III READING MEME PROJECT

3.1 The study

This paper describes an action research using the creation of memes as a strategy to develop reading comprehension. Action research is a process where the teacher is both involved in it and works as the researcher. (Burns, 2010). It follows basic steps such as 1) identify a problem and come up with new ideas to bring improvements 2) intervene in the process where a period of time is agreed 3) observe systematically and document most things like the context, action and opinions 4) collect and evaluate the effect it had from the data collected. (Burns, 2010).

Action research is actually being critical towards our teaching problem. The problem identified is considered worth-looking into more deeply to solve a specific teaching-learning problem. (Burns, 2010). AR is a qualitative research method which aims at finding answers with questions related to how it is applied in the classroom, what effect students have had towards any tasks, how they feel and how it can be done better.

Through this study, the language skill to be treated is reading comprehension. Extensive voluntary reading will be carried on through this process. The purpose of this study is to enhance reading comprehension through the use of memes. This idea was developed due to the popularity in students' social life not only in English but also in educational areas along with entertainment. Each student had been in contact with different memes as previously discussed in chapter two. They use different platforms where they can read an internet meme that includes the different forms it can be created either as an image or video.

Consequently, in this project students will read a book based on their current English level including any kind of topic that has to do with their personal interest. Moreover, students will highlight their favorite part of the story. Later on, they will present a mini

project in class using memes in order to analyze the comprehension of the reading and how that meme created explains the chapter they selected it for. Finally, a survey is handed in order to scrutinize how students felt through this activity and if the meme project had a positive outcome and whether they made any improvements.

3.1.1 Context

The action research project was carried out in an urban private school located which offers courses in English to students starting at age 7, and computer systems courses to students 15 years and older. There are around 500 students total in the various courses. The English courses cover two and a half years of study, divided into different periods that vary between four and six months, the time needed to cover the course book material depending on the level of the course. The course book is published by Cambridge University Press.

The participants in this project were 12 students who have been studying English for a year. There were five men and seven women., who are on average 20 years old. The English level they are studying in is A2 according to the European Framework (CEFR). In this institution there are six English courses and so far they are taking the second course. The students chosen belong to the same group, which means that they have been in the same environmental teaching process. The classes in the institution are focused on helping students' development and improvement within their four language skills, which are reading, listening, speaking and writing, along with grammar.

3.2 Material

The candidates were free to choose a story/book from a list provided by the teacher because it was according to their English level. Afterwards, they notified the book they read. There was no length specified. The books given were as followed:

- Tales of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe
- Chemical Secret by Tim Vicary

- Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift
- Island of The Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell (2)
- Dead Man's Island by John Escott (2)
- The Railway Children by Edith Nesbit
- The Monkey's Paw by W.W. Jacobs
- Goodbye Mr. Hollywood by John Escott (2)
- New York Café by Michael Dean

3.3 Procedure

To determine the students' level of reading comprehension, an initial diagnostic test was applied. The exam was taken from similar tasks they did in their previous course and it was applied before the competency test. This exam was according to the level they are in, which is similar to the final exam they have to present to assess a final score and determine students' level. In other terms, it is used to verify if students have achieved the skills for A2 level. The reading exam was divided into four different exercises. The diagnosis is shown in annexes 1.1.

The books are from graded readers taken from the Longman, Oxford, and Penguin publishing company. Each level of the graded readers was from elementary to pre-intermediate according to the CEFR. The stages of the books were two, three and four. After students had chosen the book they had to read, a time limit of two weeks was given to deliver the final meme project.

For the meme project, students' first task was focused on reading the whole book. Next, at the end of each chapter, they had to underline the best part of it and this will help them explain the main idea of the chapter. They had to continue along with each of the chapters. In the end, they had to represent each idea they highlighted through the reading by creating memes. The meme could have been originally created by them or have been taken from a template (image) and edit it. The following chapter

presents some of the memes designed by the students, with a brief explanation of what it refers to, and how it represents the student's understanding of the book.

As previously mentioned the first part of this project was to measure student's comprehension of reading. The diagnostic is an example of what students have to solve in their term to accomplish the final exam which is related to a CFER level. The following graphics (3.3) measure students' development and score gained in the reading diagnosis.

Scores	Classification	Frequency
22 - 18	Very Good	0
17 - 14	Good	0
13 - 10	Fair	10
9 - 6	Poor	1
5 - 2	Very Poor	1
		TOTAL 12

Chart 3.3 Student's scores

The following chart shows the results students had gained from the pretest. In the chart there are five classifications from very good to very poor. Based on the results ten students out of the twelve candidates got between 10 and 13 responses correct. Then, one candidate got between six to nine answers. Finally, another candidate had two to five answers correct.

The results of the pretest were conducted to determine the average score of students' reading skills. There were two reading tasks from different topics; the first was an email and the reply of it as well. Two activities were followed. The first was a matching exercise and the second a true/false task. The second reading was a biography of a rock singer. As well, two exercises were given. The first one was a multiple choice and finally the second one was a filling gap exercise.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Meme project results

The results of the diagnosis conducted us to know what students' scores were before they were guided through extensive reading and the development of their meme project. The diagnosis was applied to 12 students in the same class. Those results showed a varied classification based on the chart in which the majority of them are still in fair classification with 10 to 13 correct answers. As shown in chart 3.3.

Those results that the students obtained were not sufficient to obtain an acceptable grade in their last reading exam which is the competency test. The process of treatment in this project were as followed:

- 1.- The distribution or selection of the book. Each according to the level A2. They were encouraged to read the books by having spare time in class to share what they have read so far.

- 2.- In their first week they noticed their own lack of vocabulary. At that moment they made their own list of lexicon about the book they were reading. Also, considering that the topics of their lesson were being covered every day according to the program established by the institute. Additionally, they had spare time during class to talk to their partners about the chapter they were reading. As well, they use some of those words gathered from the book in their explanation and they were noticeable in class.

- 3.- The use of a dictionary was not prohibited; therefore, they would feel more comfortable using one while reading. However, in chapter I it was mentioned before the list of characteristics of extensive reading provided by the British Council (n.d) this is for the alternative approach for extensive reading and as pointed out in number six, they suggested to avoid using a dictionary to translate every word, instead they could infer the meaning through the

context. Although they used it at the beginning of the project, at the end of the reading they did not use it at all.

While this project was being carried on, not only extensive reading was applied in class but also outside of it. On some occasions intensive reading was incorporated. This is to say that as they were encouraged to improve their reading skill and comprehend the majority of the text when they felt struggling in any part of the text they translated a piece of it and therefore their speed was affected. (Mughtar, 2020)

The moment to hand in the meme project was different for each student. Not as the teacher established, but as how they felt comfortable to do. Five students handed each meme chapter by chapter and they explained it as well when they had an opportunity to show their final product in class. Two students delivered their memes gathering the information or the highlighted ideas of two chapters. The rest of the students presented their project at the end or when they concluded the reading.

The candidates designed the following memes as the final task of this meme project. However, it is important to mention that they do not originally create the templates, instead, they grab and use some that have been already created. Each of those templates have had a cultural value towards students' election. Each of those were chosen as they found it properly to express their idea they highlighted in their book. In addition, it helped their classmates to infer the meaning by seeing the picture as they shared the same cultural feature.

Below are examples of a meme of each student and the complete product is shown in the Annexes B:

Student A - Dead man's island by Jhon Escolt



Student B;



Student C,



Student D;

when you want to ask your best friend about your ex.



But remember that it is better not to ask.

Student E;

You seal Madeleine when she leaves the coffin



Student F;



Student G;

I writing a beautiful and romantic letter
My brother in law reading it whit everyone



Student H;

when Everyone looks at me curiously in India



Student I;

Your face when without speaking, she knows what you are thinking.



Student J;

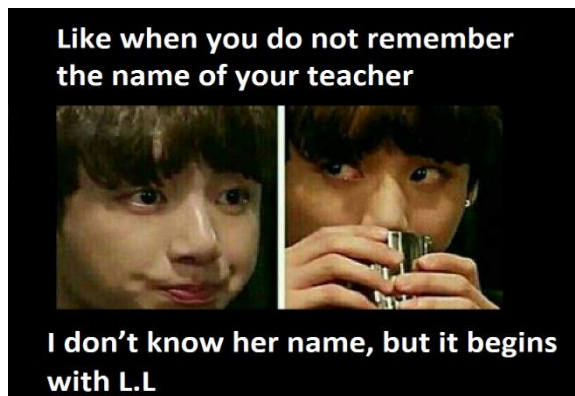
When you discover that your neighbor is pregnant but not her husband.



Student K;



Student L;



After the students had handed the memes the treatment test was applied again in order to assess their progress they had through the meme project. According to their first test they got into the classification scale with 10 to 13 responses correct, the results of the second attempt were as followed:

Scores	Classification	Frequency
22 – 18	Very Good	2
17 – 14	Good	3
13 – 10	Fair	6
9 – 6	Poor	1
5 – 2	Very Poor	0
		TOTAL 12

Chart 1.1 Student's final scores

Based on the results of the chart, students' reading skills increased compared with their first application of that same test. In the first chart, one student scored from two to five, in the second attempt no students got into the Very poor classification. In the Poor classification and on both tests applied there has been a student, however, it might not be the same candidate as in the first attempt.

In fact, most students got into the Fair classification again with 13 to 10 answers. However, there are less candidates in Fair classification than the first attempt results. It can be noticed that they moved to the other two classifications in Good and Very good. It can be seen that there are three candidates in the Good classification who obtained between 17 and 14 correct answers. On the other hand, there are two candidates in the very good classification with 22 to 18 correct responses. Generally, there was a slightly small increase in their test result. It is important to take into account the progress they had made in developing their reading skills shown in the process of the project.

After the last test was applied and compiled the result, there was also a survey handed to the candidates to check their personal perspective towards the project. In the survey they answered 18 multiple choice questions and an open question. The survey was divided into three phases, the first part was related to the frequency time

spent on social media and how often memes are seen on those platforms. The second part was about their experience with the meme project by also ticking what were their strategies and what have changed. And the third part was about their experience after the meme project. See annex C.

The first question was: How often do you read English at school, work and home? From this question there were four options, which were never, sometimes, once a week and every day, the twelve candidates did not mark every day in any of those options. The time which students spent reading at school the most was sometimes, which eight students marked that option and four students marked once a week. The time students spent reading at work was different. Four of the students marked once a week and eight students marked the option never. Lastly, the 12 students said that they sometimes read at home.

This seems to be that reading is not taken as a habit for them or that they are not really engaged in reading. Reading at school is more probable to be done due to the activities given in class. Therefore, reading at work is the least because those eight students do not have a job currently.

The second question was related to the kind of text students have worked at school. The options given were; narratives, description, biography, articles, story and essay. This option depended on the course and level they were in and also their previous English classes. In this question 12 students have worked with narratives, descriptions, biographies along with stories. And none of them have ever worked with articles or essays.

This can be interpreted to the English level because in A1 and in their current level A2 (starter) do not have those reading formats. Although, three students mentioned that the most difficult texts were narratives and stories because there were more than four grammatical tenses in the text.

The third question was related to the strategies they applied usually while they were reading. They were given eight options (highlight key words, look for unknown words, recall information, retain a chunk of language, recognize grammatical word classes, identify words as nouns, verbs, etc., recognize the communication function and infer context). However, they could tick as many as they applied for them. As one of their primary strategies was to highlight key words, all students had selected that one.

Followed by looking for unknown words with 11 students. Nine students also said they infer the context because they gain a general idea or have read a similar text. Six students marked to retain chunks of language as a strategy. Also, five students ticked that while they are reading they identify words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc., this could be due to the unknown of words so they search the meaning of them. Then, four students tick that they recall information, this is to say that they go back through their background knowledge. Finally, four students ticked that they recognize the communication function.

The fourth question was about the kind of task students have handed in as an assignment. The options provided were summary, opinion text, description, articles, essay and email. From these genres of text none of the candidates selected summary and an opinion text as assignments in schools. On the other hand, articles were the text they have worked the most with 12 votes by the candidates followed by description with eight ticks. Moreover, six students have worked with emails and finally four of the candidates have handed in essays.

This indicates that students' lack of strategies interferes in the process of reading comprehension. In fact, highlighting words is a strategy they apply in Spanish reading activities as well. It also seems that students must work in applying these strategies so they get accustomed and in further levels reading would be easier.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that reading is on a daily basis apart from reading at school in their course book, they also read in social networking sites. The fifth question was: How often do you read on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and

Snapchat? The options provided were daily, weekly, monthly and not every month. Instagram was the highest app selected as daily read by the 12 students. On the other side, Snapchat was also marked by all the students, but was not read every month. Students mentioned that it is common to listen to English speakers rather than reading phrases or texts on Snapchat. Ten students selected Facebook as the app they read daily and two only weekly. Only seven also selected twitter as a reading app and five candidates selected it as not read every month.

This seems to indicate that students do read outside school on social networking sites both Instagram and Snapchat are frequented by all of the students, which is congruent with the habits of most young-adults in Mexico. It is interesting that the students indicated an interest in listening over reading.

In addition to the previous question, it is also interesting to know about what kind of reading they do on those apps. Therefore, the sixth question asked; What you have read on the social networks previously mentioned, the options they had were words, phrases, sentences, jokes, news and life-description. All candidates selected phrases to be read, followed by words, which were demonstratives, questions words and linking devices. The option jokes were selected for three students, however, they highlighted that it was difficult to understand them as they had tried to make a connection into Spanish language. Finally, one student marked life- description as something he/she was fond of doing in her/his spare time.

Humor is very culturally specific so it is understandable that the students would not understand jokes in English very well as they try to translate them directly into Spanish. In addition, the type of reading students do on social media is very limited mostly just words or phrases but not complete texts. This may be why reading longer text in the class was so difficult for them.

The next question on the survey is related to the aim of this project which asked if students have ever seen an Internet Meme before, in which all students ticked yes. The eighth question was related to memes and in which social network apps have

they seen them. As well as question five the apps given were Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. All students said they have seen memes on Facebook and Instagram and seven of them have seen them on Twitter. However, five students marked they have not seen memes on Twitter and this is because they actually do not have an account. As previously mentioned, Snapchat is an app where they do not commonly read. So, all students selected it as not seen.

This indicates that students are surrounded with memes, in most of their social applications used daily. Whenever they enter the app, a meme would pop out and they will either react to it, share it or just pass it. This is to say, reading memes is more highly to be present and that young learners interact with them.

For the next question it was asked what kind of memes representation you have read or seen. The options provided were an Image, Gif, Emoticon and Video. All the candidates had selected Image and Video as seen previously and only six ticked they had seen a GIF representation. The option Emoticon was not selected for any of the candidates, this could be because students do not consider emoticons as memes. According to Pérez (2017), a meme is also considered a meme based on representable types by computer systems, for example, :), XD.

The following questions are related to the meme project students handed. The next question was about their feelings towards the project. There were four options given: very successful, it was difficult but satisfying, it was difficult and not satisfying and it was frustrating. Six students selected the second option, difficult but satisfying. Five candidates said it was very satisfying and one said it was difficult and not satisfying. Following this question, it was asked if students have ever done a meme project before, surprisingly all students answered no.

In addition, the next question is sort of related to the seventh one, which asks candidates how often they read memes. Answers did not vary much; two students said they sometimes read memes and ten read them every day. Furthermore, as students had created the memes it is important to know how challenging they were.

For the following question the options provided were: Topic, Words, Meaning, Accurate template, Context and Humor. All candidates selected Meaning and Context as the most challenging while doing the Meme. This is because they made a connection between the reading, the key words and what they want to transmit. And eight of them said humor was hard because they had to select the words carefully. The other options were not considered difficult at all.

From questions 14 to 18 covered their final experience with the meme project. Question 14 is related to what students have gained after the reading. The options given were to increase vocabulary, increase understanding of complex sentences, connect between previous knowledge and experiences, expand their understanding of the reading, rephrase information orally or in writing, create a visual interpretation and write down different quotations from the text. All candidates answered that increasing vocabulary and paraphrasing information was notorious as their ability in reading. Seven students also said that writing down quotations from the text was rapidly done by them. Also, six of the students expressed that while reading and writing their ideas they had also created a visual scene in their minds. Understanding complex sentences was selected by four students as they gained after reading and four connected the reading with previous knowledge.

Through the meme project it was also necessary to have the candidate evaluate it in terms of difficulty, comprehension and vocabulary increase. None of the students marked the project as difficult. On the other hand, all of them mentioned that it improved their comprehension of the reading and eight said they improved their vocabulary. Similar to the previous question it was asked to students how they found the project. In which they all said it was creative, six of them expressed it was motivating because they had to do the memes and they wanted to show them to their classmates and three said it was useful.

Question seventeenth was focused on their level and how the candidates consider their English level after the meme project. None of the students said their English

level had increased considerably. Although, eight students mentioned there was a slight improvement according to their perspective. And only four of them stated that they had not noticed any change in the level.

The final section of the survey was related to the final product, which are the Memes creations, as well as what they considered they had developed and how they found this meme project. The following comments were written by the students:

“The meme project was a good experience because I could understand another context in the language while I read the book and then I did memes with new words and vocabulary that I was learning. The project was useful for learning new things in English and use it to do different activities like memes.”
(Student A)

“I beleve (sic) that proyect (sic) was entertaining. I gained vocabulary. At the beginning it was boring. Next I have to read for my score in English class, I didn't understand all the words and I have to search some words.” (Student B)

“Pienso que es una buena idea este proyecto ya que es una manera diferente de aprender algunas palabras, oraciones o frases de una forma divertida. Esto hace que recordemos las frases por más tiempo.” (Student C)

“Este proyecto para mí fue muy agradable ya que aprendí un poco más de vocabulario mientras me divertía, siento que esta es una manera buena de enseñar ya que hoy en día la mayoría de las personas estamos acostumbradas a ver memes, no solo los adolescentes sino también la gente adulta, y como estamos acostumbrados a ver esto, se nos hace más fácil aprender vocabulario en inglés.” (Student D)

“In my opinion I like doing memes because it was (sic) fun and I think it is good (sic) than partners. The pictures in the memes are funny.” (Student E)

“I think this activity was excellent because I love create (sic) memes and share (sic) with my classmates. Also I think that i learn a lot of words and read more English” (Student F)

“I love memes and I think the assignments is entertaining (sic). I learn in a fun way. I also learn (sic) to explain my meme with my classmates. At th end (sic) of the book I can understand the book and many words too.” (Student G)

“I like to read in Spanish and in this project I read in English and I think it is fun. The memes are so funny and my classmates love it (sic) too. I like share (sic) my memes and speak and I learn a lot of vocabulary.” (Student H)

“I think do memes (sic) was great beacuse (sic) I do memes for fun in my phone and with an app. I also like the book I read it was interesting. The book is simple I also see (sic) the movie and I try to use the vocabulary in class to practise (sic) and don't (sic) forget.” (Student I)

“When the teacher tell we (sic) read a book I think it was going to boring (sic) but then I really like it. I think it was fun because I love memes and I never did a project like that. And I think I learn a lot of words in English.” (Student J)

“I consider the activity was excellent and attractive. I enjoy reading the book and of course the memes I create to show my classmates. when they saw the memes they know (sic) a little about what I was going to say. I aslo (sic) learn to read without translating the words and it was easy to do. I learn vocabulary and I practice in class when I participate saying (sic) the words so that I can't forget. ” (Student K)

“The project was new for me and for my classmates. I think it's a fun way to read and learn many words in English. For me recognise (sic) words where no (sic) difficult because some words are similar in Spanish but other (sic)

aren't because the mean changes. Finally, I think it is an entertaining (sic) activity not like the common I did before." (Student L)

From students' responses about the meme project, it seems that all students have really enjoyed the task. In fact, I have to say that in the beginning when I explained that they were going to do a project in reading their faces and attitude was dull. But they were surprised when I told them that a meme was going to be handled instead of a description or a brief summary.

Additionally, most of the comments were positive because they enjoy reading outside the classroom, however, some students commented that at the beginning it was boring because of their lack of reading. There was a change even in class because when they shared the memes some students were really engaged and that makes me think that in some way, they motivated their classmates to carry on with the project.

Moreover, half of the students express that reading helps them gain new words and phrases. Beside learning new vocabulary, they had also recognized some grammatical structures in the text while reading and they even mentioned it was easy to infer what was going on. Apart from grammar and words, two students mentioned they gained good comprehension of the book and that they did not have to use a dictionary to translate all the words because some words were similar in Spanish and they could infer the meaning with the context as well.

Finally, students' reaction towards the meme project was positive at the end of delivery (The memes), their comments were surprising in how they felt while doing this project most of them said it was new because they have never done something similar before. It was amusing; therefore, students have created memes as in their free time and finding a meme that fit the description of the book made them feel motivated and at the same time, they said it was entertaining. Briefly, during the course and after it the candidates had delivered the meme project the vocabulary they learned was noticeable in their participation in class.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this research project, memes were used as a strategy to improve A2 level young adult learners reading comprehension skills. Through creating their own memes, and using others that were available already. Students were able to highlight keywords that helped them summarize chapters of the stories they were reading. They found the experience helpful not only for learning vocabulary but also for using that vocabulary actively.

The use of Internet memes as a strategy was found to enhance reading comprehension in students in a meaningful manner. It is crucial to reflect on how the use of modern resources, especially those that are related to ICTs and social media, and are used by students around the world as a communicative form, may have a positive impact on their learning process.

In addition to the impact on vocabulary and reading comprehension, the project gave the students an opportunity to enrich their cultural perspective with reference to the humor of native English speakers, because even though at first they were unable to grasp the gist of a meme, after working with the project they were able to understand most of them. Going from direct translation into Spanish jokes, which did not help in understanding it, they progressed to identifying the central theme and finding a way that it might be expressed in Spanish. This gave them insight into the cultural references and expectations of English speakers.

The results collected from the test showed that they had a slight improvement on their final test, even though it was not a huge difference from the first one, however it was notable. This could possibly be due to the fact that they only did a single project related to reading. Teaching and learning a foreign language are a challenge, and making students understand a topic or delivering a lesson requires much more than simply going through the activities of a lesson in a course book. If a teacher depends solely on using traditional methods and strategies, such as focusing on

grammar and translation exercises, which are still found in basic levels of education, students will not be engaged in the learning process. From that prior experience, they learned to focus on a word-by-word translation rather than really trying to understand the true meaning of a text. Through the meme project, they came to understand that learning a second language is much more than a simple transfer of meaning from each word, and that there are different ways of expressing an idea in their mother tongue.

Education in today's society requires updating the use of resources and strategies to accomplish the process of acquiring the language in this era of technology. It is crucial to consider using these technological resources in favor of teaching along with other applications that are trending nowadays. In conclusion, at the end of the survey students commented that they could redesign the memes' templates on their phones or computers. This had a positive effect during and after the project. We might infer that this type of intervention could be done several times and in the different language skills because there was an improvement in their reading comprehension. Using the tools which students are familiar with, creates an intrinsic motivation for their process of learning English.

Future research into the use of memes in teaching English is necessary to determine the usefulness as a technique for enhancing vocabulary learning and reading comprehension skills. This study was limited in the number of times that memes were created and also the number of students involved in the project. Using the strategy with students of different ages and language levels might produce different results. One thing that is evident is that students are very engaged using social media content such as memes, which they are very familiar with in their first language when studying a second language.

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ANNEX

ANNEX A EXAMPLE OF READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Extension reading activities

Level A2

Name: _____ Score: _____

Part one

Instructions: Read the two emails. Match the two parts of the sentences.

Hi Maggie

How are you? Sorry I haven't written for a long time. I have been a bit busy because I need to plan a holiday, but I have a bit of a problem.

The problem is that it's my sister's 25th birthday next month and I want to do something special for her. I would really like to go on holiday abroad with her, but she often travels abroad for her work. So now she's bored with traveling and doesn't like staying in a hotel. I don't want her to stay at home for her important birthday, but I don't know what kind of holiday to plan. Do you have any ideas?

Write soon and tell me all your news.

Lucy

Reply:

Hi Lucy

Good to hear from you! Your problem with your sister's birthday made me think for a long time. Here's my idea – see what you think of it.

I think you should change your plans about what to do. You don't need to book a hotel to have a holiday. You just need to pack your sister's bag and find a list of her friends who live abroad. Then you make plans to visit all the people who have time to see you and that's it!

You shouldn't ask her if she wants to go – you should just do it! Your sister has probably forgotten that holidays aren't like work trips at all. When she has remembered how much fun it is to visit her friends, she will never want to come back home again

Write back soon and tell me what you think!

Maggie

Part 1.1

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Lucy is busy because hotel. | a) she shouldn't book a |
| 2. Lucy asks Maggie | b) should stay with friends. |
| 3. Maggie tells Lucy that | c) she is planning a holiday |
| 4. Maggie thinks Lucy and her sister | d) what she can plan for her sister. |

Part 1.2 Instructions: Read the emails again and say if the sentences are true (T) or false (F).

1. It's Lucy birthday next month.	
2. Lucy's sister wants to go on holiday and travel abroad.	
3. Lucy's wants to celebrate her sister's birthday abroad.	
4. Maggie says that Lucy's sister should stay at home if that's what she wants.	
5. Maggie says that Lucy should plan a different kind of holiday.	
6. Maggie would like to know what Lucy thinks of her idea.	

Part two

Instructions: Read the text. Underline the correct words to complete the sentences.

Most influential rock singer: Pea Leon

I Twenty years ago. Pea Leon was one of the most famous rock singers in the world. Everyone wanted to hear her amazing voice, and she sang for kings, queens and presidents. So why has the world forgotten her now?

II Well, the most reason is that in 1995, she suddenly stopped singing and went to live alone on a farm in Texas. 'I don't know what happened,' said Bill Worth, who played the drums in her band. 'I think she just decided it was time to do something different, but she didn't discuss it with us. I've only seen her once since then, and she wouldn't talk about it.'

III Worth has played with several other band since that time, and the two guitar players have also had lots of work. 'We're not angry with her,' Worth says, 'but we still miss her, and we'd like to know what happened.'

IV Rock music fan Rick Jones has written a book about Leon. 'She was great,' he says, 'But how many people under the age of 40 have heard her sing? Even her albums are difficult to find now. 'Jones has tried to talk to Leon, and has even been to her farm in Texas, but she won't agree to talk to him. 'I think she just wants to forget about that life,' he says. 'She has her farm, and she has bought lots of horses – they are more important to her now. She doesn't want to be a rock star anymore.'

Part 2.1

- 1.- Pia Leon _____ in a rock band.
a) Sings b) has sung
- 2.- the other people in her band _____ why she stopped singing.
a) know b) don't know
- 3.- When Rick Jones wrote his book, he _____ to her.
a) spoke b) didn't speak
- 4.- Leon _____ a lot of horses on her farm.
a) has b) doesn't have
- 5.- She _____ to be a rock star again.
a) wants b) doesn't want

Part 2.2 Instructions: Read the text again. Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences.

Be	Buy	Decide	Know	Live	Remember	Sing
----	-----	--------	------	------	----------	------

- 1.- Pia Leon _____ a very famous singer.
- 2.- Not many people _____ her now.
- 3.- She _____ for lots of important people.
- 4.- In 1995, she _____ to leave her band.
- 5.- She has _____ on a farm since then.
- 6.- The other band members still don't _____ why Leon left.
- 7.- He says she has _____ lots of horses.

ANNEX B READING MEME PROJECT, SURVEY

Reading Meme Project Survey

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Instructions: Read the following questions and tick () the best option which correspond to your perspective within the Meme project.

1.- How often do you read in English at:

	Never	Sometimes	Once a week	Every day
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.- What kind of text have you worked with at school:

Narratives	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Description	<input type="checkbox"/>		Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biography	<input type="checkbox"/>		Story	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Essay	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.- While reading do you do the following strategies: (Tick as many as apply)

Highlight key words	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look for unknown words	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recall information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retain chunk of language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize grammatical word classes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify words as nouns, verbs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the communication function	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infer context	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.- What kind of task do you hand in as an assignment:

Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Opinion text	<input type="checkbox"/>	Articles		<input type="checkbox"/>
Description	<input type="checkbox"/>	Essay		<input type="checkbox"/>
		Email		<input type="checkbox"/>

5.- How often do you read in the following social networks:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Not every month
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snapchat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.- What have you read in English on the social networks:

Words	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jokes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>	News	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>	Life-description	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.- Have you ever seen an Internet Meme?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

8.- Have you seen a meme on the following social networks:

	Yes	No
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snapchat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9.- What kind of meme have you read/seen:

Image	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emoticon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gif	<input type="checkbox"/>	Video	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.- How did you feel with the meme project:

Very successful	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was difficult but satisfying	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was difficult and not satisfying	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was frustrating	<input type="checkbox"/>

11.- Have you ever done a meme project in another class?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

12.- How often do you read memes?

Never Sometimes Once a week Every day

13.- Creating a meme is challenging for:

The topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accurate template	<input type="checkbox"/>
Words	<input type="checkbox"/>	Context	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humor	<input type="checkbox"/>

14.- After the reading have you:

Increased your vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased you understand of complex sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connect between previous knowledge and experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand their understanding of the reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rephrase information orally or in writing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a visual interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write down different quotations from the text	<input type="checkbox"/>

15.- How would you grade the meme project in terms of:

Difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary gained	<input type="checkbox"/>

16.- Did you find the meme project:

Motivating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>
Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertaining	<input type="checkbox"/>		

17- After participating in the meme project I think my English has:

Improved a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved some	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed the same	<input type="checkbox"/>
I haven't seen any effect in my English	<input type="checkbox"/>

18.- Please use the space below to describe your experience in the meme project.

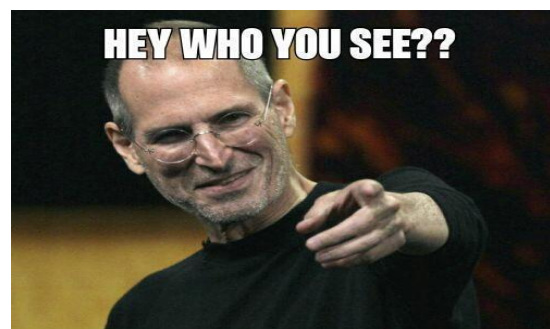
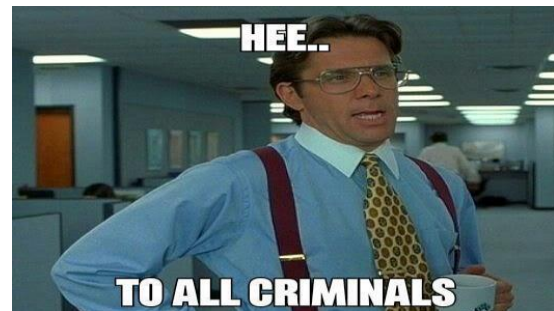
Favor de describir en el espacio de abajo tu experiencia con el proyecto de memes que se llevó a cabo en la clase de inglés.

ANNEX C MEMES CREATED BY STUDENTS

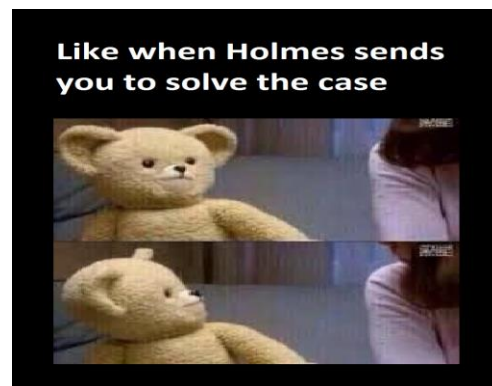
Student A



Student B



Student C

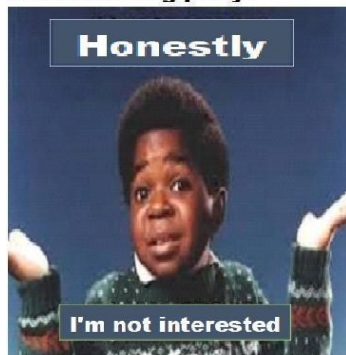


Student D

When you imagine the nice and safe place everyone talks about / But when you see it, you realize that the only nice and sure thing is that they lied to you.



when they invite you to the most amazing party.



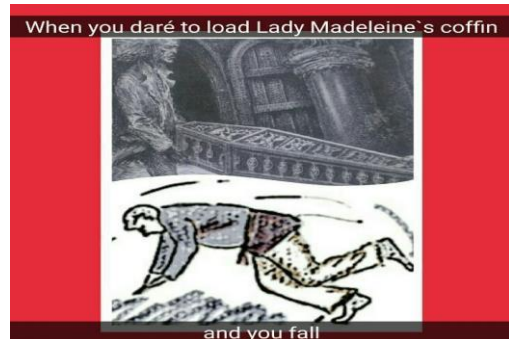
when you want to ask your best friend about your ex.



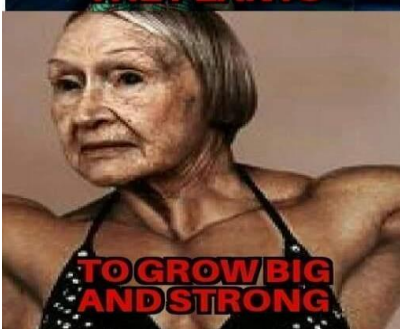
But remember that it is better not to ask.



Student E



Student F



Student G

I writing a beautiful and romantic letter
My brother in law reading it whit everyone



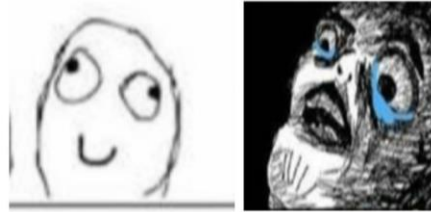
sister: you never want doing anything in this house
you:



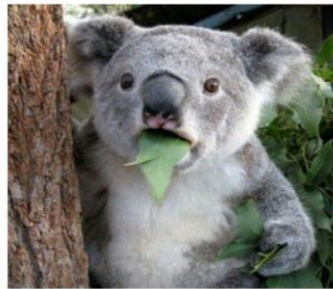
when you want eating a lot but only gave you
the worst pieces of the meat



when you are quietly looking out at fue dark Night
and hear your name with a horrible voice



when your sister tell you if you dont eat,
the man who ate boy's heart is going to come



Student H



Student I



Student J

When you discover that your neighbor is pregnant but not her husband.

- What am I going to do I am pregnant..
- Perhaps it was not what you wanted..



You when they discover you in lies.



Student K

Like when your friends do not want to accompany you to your house



"I can find my way"

Like when you do not remember the name of your teacher



I don't know her name, but it begins with L.L

Like when you're Sherlock and you can wake up at the time you want



Like when someone weird at a party asks about you



What right have you to ask me about my private?

Student L

