

MEMES AS AUTHENTIC MATERIAL IN TEACHING ESP

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Bringing authenticity is crucial for any ESP teacher that deals with designing a course or developing materials. This paper addresses the issue of exploiting memes in ESP teaching-learning process to gamify and make it more attractive for learners. *Meme* is considered in this paper as a unit of cultural and social information containing particular text and an image.

To accomplish pedagogical goals ESP teachers take job-related texts, audio/video but often do not take into account other aspects of real-life situations that students experience in digital world in particular. According to Corner, virtual communities formed around shared content are rich sources of authentic materials for language learners [1]. Memes are materials of such kind that go viral in the internet conveying a particular message characterised by humor or used for advertising purpose. In addition, ESP teachers can use their students as a resource of authentic materials due to the reason that they are into this internet environment.

It is a well-known fact that the language learners memorise vocabulary better if they are given an image associated with the term to be learned. It can work well with memes that are a part of a student life in the web. Appealing to learning style (visual and auditory learners prefer visual or/and verbal input) can result in motivation and learning outcomes enhance [1] that are especially important for mixed ability groups.

Using authentic materials such as memes in ESP classroom can be risky especially in mixed ability groups, if the teaching approach is not appropriate one. This may be due to the difficulties presented by the language of ESP. To satisfy the learners' needs the material have to be precisely selected, proofread and edited in order to be suitable and appropriate for ESP. There are some web resources that ESP teachers can use if they want to exploit ready-made memes or generate their own ones in the teaching-learning process: *ImgFlip*, *Meme Creator*. In addition, websites *BusyTeacher* and *FluentU* give some practical tips on using memes in teaching-learning process. Memes as authentic material in ESP classroom can be considered to be mostly for designing pedagogical tasks. However, there are some real-life fields dealing with memes, so for them the task of such kind is as a job-related context and subsequently an authentic task (e.g. digital marketing).

To review, we can claim that an ESP teacher should keep up with the trends in language especially if they are understood and used by the students in real life. Memes in teaching ESP can be the way of not only gamification process with the use of authentic material for designing pedagogical tasks but also the way to address changing needs in a job-related field.

References:

- 1) Conner M. S. Incorporating dynamic authentic materials in a multimedia gloss/ M. S. Conner, C. A. Chapelle, H. G. Jun, I. Katz (Eds.) [Electronic resource]. – Iowa State University. – 2009. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c298/dfbb73caff3035d3b84a001205fb1a19ccd5.pdf>.