A multimodal analysis of Ethiopian memes on the Facebook group

Ethiopian vs. Egyptian Meme War

Iman Mahfouz, PhD

College of Language and Communication (CLC)

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT)

Alexandria, Egypt

imahfouz@aast.edu

Abstract

Internet memes are an emerging genre currently prevalent in computer mediated discourse (CMD). Image macro memes which consist of a still image with added text are now widely used to portray political ideologies, ethnic stereotypes as well as gender representation. In the present study, a sample of memes was purposefully collected from the Facebook group *Ethiopian vs. Egyptian Meme War*, posted by Ethiopian users in 2020 and 2021 in relation to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), with special focus on memes portraying Egypt and Egyptians. Drawing on Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework for Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), the researcher analyzes the visual and textual elements of the selected memes with the aim of exploring the representation of Egypt and Egyptians on social media by Ethiopian meme makers against the backdrop of the GERD crisis. The findings reveal that selected memes may be distinguished as harmful memes since they depict Egypt and Egyptians in a derogatory and offensive way through both visual and verbal elements.

Keywords: Computer-mediated Discourse (CMD) – harmful memes - Internet memes -

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) - GERD crisis – Egyptian-Ethiopian

relationships

1. Introduction

With the proliferation of social media, a large portion of online communication is multimodal mixing both textual and visual content. A case in point is Internet memes which have been spreading on a large scale in Computer-mediated Discourse (CMD). The term *meme* was first introduced by Dawkins (1976) who argued that "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" (p. 192). He recognized the analogy between genes and internet memes due to their replication and quick proliferation through cultural transmission or imitation (Shifman, 2013). Yus (2018) also defines memes as "units of information, ideas or mental representations, cultural instructions that are not only self-replicating but also contagious" (p. 1).

Memes have come to constitute a type of participatory media where people shift from being culture consumers to being culture producers (Chen, 2012). Since they can easily be produced using available online tools, they have proliferated on various web communities and social media platforms including reddit, tumblr, facebook, twitter, etc. As a form of participatory media, they shape mindsets, behaviours of social groups and are used for framing online identity (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Milner (2012) argues that a discursive analysis of memes reveals a lot about public discourse. They are also thought to serve as social and political critique through parody and humor and may even trigger political and civic participation (Chen, 2012).

While the use of memes has had the positive impact of enabling users to share their ideas and express their opinions online, this has sometimes helped spread hate and hostility towards other individuals or social groups (Parmanick et al., 2021). The use of memes may, therefore, lead to misunderstandings, bullying and violence. Since they are characterized by anonymity and satirical humor, they can be used to share false ideas or to spread hate speech (Grundlingh, 2017).

2. Context of the Study

The conflict over the allocation of the waters of the Nile River is decades old, but the dispute has recently escalated especially among Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Dam (GERD) which Ethiopia started building on the Blue Nile back in 2011. The crisis has become more pronounced following Ethiopia's announcement that it has started filling the GERD reservoir in 2020 against Egyptian demands not to fill the reservoir without legal agreement over equitable water allocation which is considered a lifeline for millions of Egyptians (Mohyeldeen, 2021).

The highlands of Ethiopia contribute more than 85 percent of the water that flows into the Nile River and thus strongly holds its right to exploit its natural resources to improve the living of its people. Although it argues that the dam will not largely impact the water flow for Egypt, the latter believes the dam is a major threat to its water security, which has led it to resort to the UN Security Council to intervene in 2020 (Mohyeldeen, 2021).

The conflict has extended to the online world with virtual hostility building up between the peoples of the two countries with Egyptians and Ethiopians challenging each other on social media platforms. While Ethiopians are threatening to deprive Egypt from water, Egyptians boast of their military power. This online tension can obviously be seen on the Facebook group in question, particularly in the sample memes.

3. Previous Studies

Several scholars have explored memes from different perspectives using techniques of discourse analysis, critical and multimodal discourse analysis among other approaches.

Knobel and Lankshear (2006) used discourse analysis techniques to categorize memes. They found that qualities of 'contagiousness' and 'susceptibility' associated with memes are facilitated by electronic networks of communication. Employing critical discourse analysis (CDA), Milner (2012), on the other hand, focused on three characteristics related to cultural participation, namely processes, identities, and politics. Milner (2013) also used CDA to empirically assess internet memes on 4chan and reddit focusing on irony and critique rather than core identities, race and gender, with a view to investigating content and tone in mediated public discourse. He then adopted a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) perspective to investigate public participation in Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement.

Miltner (2014) used focus groups in order to explore social and cultural forces contributing to the popularity of memes, whereas quantitative content analysis was adopted by Gal, Shifman, and Kamp (2016) to investigate the role of internet memes in the construction of collective identity. They found that participants tend to copy or modify textual elements from previous videos to various extents. Qualitative content analysis, on the other hand, was employed by Laineste and Voolaid (2017) who found that the intertextuality of internet memes enables them to travel across borders and become viral even in a different language.

Nissenbaum and Shifman (2017) then studied memes as contested cultural capital in web-based communities using grounded analysis. They pointed out that memes often pose a conflict between adhering to conventions and innovative content thus rendering their use controversial

when it comes to 'correctness'. MDA was also adopted by Ross and Rivers (2017) to examine the visual discursive elements of memes depicting candidates of the 2016 US presidential election. The study revealed that memes clearly displayed several strategies employed to de-legitimize the candidates by representing them negatively.

Recently, there have been efforts to explore 'the dark side of memes' or 'harmful memes' which are defined by Parmanick et al. (2021) as "multimodal units consisting of an image and a piece of text embedded that has the potential to cause harm to an individual, an organization, a community, or the society" (p. 2786). Although these are designed to look funny and humorous, their underlying message is intended to spread hatred and offense. The harm maybe in the form of defamation, compromising public image, emotional disturbance or abuse. For this purpose, Parmanick et al. (2021) proposed the first benchmark annotated dataset for harmful meme detection.

Since memes reveal significant insights about political ideologies, underlying attitudes and relationships between people and entities despite their seemingly entertaining nature, the present study thus seeks to examine the memes posted by Ethiopian Facebook users on the Facebook group *Ethiopian vs. Egyptian Meme War* in relation to the GERD crisis in 2020 and 2021. The study focuses on how both the visual and textual elements in the selected memes are used to portray Egypt and Egyptians using Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework for CMDA.

4. Methodology

This section presents the methodology used in the present study including data description and the theoretical framework employed.

4.1 Data

The memes were selected from a public Facebook group entitled *Ethiopian vs. Egyptian Meme War* المواجهة بين مصر وأثيوبيا (Figure 1). The group has above 8000 members and was created in June 2020. A quote in the *About* section of the group states that "No force can stop Ethiopia from building a dam. If there is need to go to war". The majority of the posts on the group are contributed by Ethiopian participants except for a few posts published by Egyptians. This is apparent from the user identities, as well as the frequent use of the Ethiopian Amharic script. The title of the group is very significant since it suggests that memes can be used to launch a virtual war.

Figure 1

Ethiopian vs. Egyptian Meme War Facebook group

A total of seven memes were selected from the group page as a manageable and purposefully selected sample, with special focus on memes depicting the relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia in relation to the GERD crisis. The chosen memes were posted in 2020 and 2021 by Ethiopian users. Only memes displaying English text were selected.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

Language, as text, is often enhanced by gestures, facial expressions, and tone, and sometimes other visuals such as pictures and signs are also involved. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), *multimodality* is an approach that links linguistic content whether spoken or written to other modes such as gestures and visuals. These semiotic modes thus encompass meaning in all its possible aspects, whether as speech, visual symbols, colors, or even gestures. The emphasis here is on the meaning-making process rather than on analyzing language use on its own. The rise of technology, especially computer-mediated communication (CMC) as means of delivering social messages has given way to multimodality as a useful trend in research.

Machin and Mayr (2012) state that language and grammatical features are key to creating meaning. Thus, they aim, on the one hand, to present a set of tools that use these linguistic features in the analysis of texts. However, they do not disregard the essential role that visual communication plays in creating meaning. This is because many linguists had overlooked the meaning communicated via visuals in their endeavors to understand language in the past. Machin and Mayr (2012) argue that this is problematic because half the meaning communicated is being missed. In their theoretical framework, Machin and Mayr (2012) examine how semiotic choices used by communicators are able to signify ideas, values and identities implicitly in a given discourse. Thus, the aim of their approach is to highlight aspects of meaning that are not normally obvious to the receiver of a given text through traditional methods of discourse analysis.

For the purpose of this study, the research focuses on the linguistic and visual semiotic choices used in the texts and images in the selected memes. The tools of analysis on the lexical level include word connotations, overlexicalization, suppression, structural oppositions as well as

lexical choices and genre of communication. On the visual semiotic level, the analysis makes use of iconography, attributes, settings and salience.

5. Data Analysis

In this section the selected memes are analyzed both verbally and visually according to Machin and Mayr's (2012) multimodal framework.

The first meme (Figure 2) shows a dog standing with its head raised and mouth opened below a tap from which water is dripping very scarcely. The dog is of a common breed resembling a street dog rather than a special fancy species. The posture of the dog implies that it is very thirty and trying hard to get a drop of water from the tap which is apparently not supplying any water. The flags on the objects in the image are used to assign identity to the participants, with the dog representing Egypt and the tap standing for Ethiopia. The outdoor setting shows muddy landscape in the foreground and some green bushes in the background. The barren land occupying most of the background suggests drought and lack of water. The dog and the tap are the most salient objects in the meme since they represent the two main parties of the conflict.

Figure 2
Meme 1: *Thirsty dog and tap*

The fact that Ethiopia is represented as a tap in the image indicates that it is the source of water which controls the life of the creature displayed, and the position of the tap above the dog implies superiority and dominance. The use of the dog metaphor is also indicative since in Egyptian culture, unlike the west, the word 'dog' is an offense that denotes degradation and lack of worth, rather than friendship or faithfulness.

The text on top of the image is a threat indicating that Egyptians must "*behave* and *respect* Ethiopia" in order not to suffer "the consequence" shown in the image. The use of the conditional structure suggests that Ethiopia is in control of the situation and that it has the upper hand. Moreover, the words 'behave' and 'respect' imply seniority and condescendence as in a parent-child or teacher-student relationship in which the more powerful party may punish the other.

The second meme (Figure 3) shows a man whose temperature is being measured by a supposedly digital thermometer, a scene that has lately become common when entering places due to COVID-19 outbreak. The text on the thermometer screen, however, displays the phrase 'no brain' instead of a temperature. The text written on the image, on the other hand, indicates that the guy is Egyptian and that he believes or is saying 'Nile is our'. The man is the only person shown in the picture and he is looking away in a posture implying submissiveness. Only the hand of the person who is taking the temperature appears rather than his face. This makes the supposedly 'Egyptian' guy the focus of attention while also placing emphasis on the written text, whereas the background is blurry and unclear.

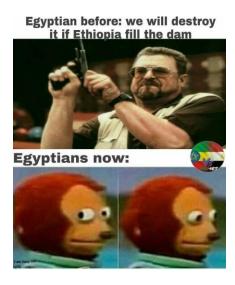Figure 3

Meme 2: *No brain*

The meme suggests that Egyptians think they own the Nile, and that this is not true. This is even portrayed as a sick, insane notion from the Ethiopian point of view. The definite article 'the' should have preceded the proper noun 'Nile and the possessive adjective 'our' is used instead of the possessive pronoun, rendering the sentence structure ungrammatical and indicating that it was written by a non-native speaker of English. Still, the main message is delivered suggesting that Egyptians are deluded since the Nile does not belong to them. The use of the possessive form 'our' highlights the conflict of possession.

The third meme (Figure 4) includes two different images. The one on top is a meme known as *Am I the only one around here*, also known as *Angry Walter* which features a man drawing a gun ("Know your meme", 2019). This is a character named Walter Sobchak from the 1998 comedy film *The Big Lebowski*. In this scene of the movie, after expressing his frustration to his teammates, the character draws a hand gun and asks "*Am I the only one around here who gives a shit about the rules*?" The captions for this meme are often used to convey that someone is alone in holding an unpopular opinion ("Know your meme", 2019).

With his bodily features and gestures, the man looks very powerful and threatening, intent on destroying his opponents. His facial expression is that of revenge and determination.

Figure 4

Meme 3: *Angry Walter* and *Awkward Look Monkey Puppet*

The picture at the bottom, on the other hand, is the famous *Awkward Look Monkey Puppet* meme, a character from a Japanese children's television show. This in turn includes two images of the Monkey Puppet awkwardly looking towards the camera and then away. The side-eye glance was not found in the original scene but was created by Photoshop ("Know your meme", 2019). In this well-known meme, the puppet first looks towards the camera and then shifts its gaze away awkwardly, pointing to a significant change in reaction.

Sine it is divided into two parts, this meme obviously highlights the change in Egyptians' attitude towards the dam filling, which is emphasized by both the verbal and visual elements of the meme. On the verbal level, the text on the meme is supposed to juxtapose the two reactions before and after the dam filling from the Ethiopian point of view. In the top part of the meme,

Egyptians explicitly threaten to destroy the dam, whereas the only text in the bottom part reads '*Egyptians now*', although the reaction is conveyed by the visual elements of the image itself.

On the visual level, the mere discrepancy between the first image of the powerful determined man prepared to take revenge at his enemies and the second image of the puppet which helplessly looks away from the camera is very significant. This indicates a compelete change of attitude on the part of Egyptians before and after the dam filling; as soon as the dam reservoir is filled their initial threats of taking revenge completely disappear as they become as weak as a puppet incapable of confronting or taking action.

The fourth meme (Figure 5) has very little text; only the two words 'Egypt' and 'GERD' are used to point out the entities in the meme, with the former referring to a donkey pulling a heavily loaded cart to which the latter refers. This is further underlined by the use of the country flags on the image. The cart is apparently so heavy that the donkey has lost balance and turned head over heels in a weird looking position. Obviously, it cannot make any movement unless the cart is untied or the weight removed.

Figure 5

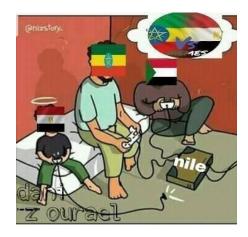Meme 4: *Upside down donkey pulling overloaded cart*

The visual elements in this meme are exclusively used to point out Egypt's helplessness in relation to the GERD issue. The dam represents a crippling crisis for the country which becomes totally cornered and paralyzed. Symbolically, the meme can also suggest that the dam will cause complete disorder turning the country 'upside down'. The fact that Egypt is represented as a donkey is also worth noting, since in Egyptian culture it is derogatorily used to denote dumbness and lack of intelligence and skill rather than resilience or hard labor.

Similar to the previous meme, as far as textual content is concerned, the fifth meme (Figure 6) only displays the word 'Nile' written on a video game device, surrounded by three players with country flags including *Egypt, Ethiopia* and *Sudan* from left to right with each player holding a game controller (joystick). This meme has been widely used online and is often referred to as '*When your mom says let him play too*' ("Know your meme", 2019).

Figure 6

Meme 5: *When your mom says let him play too*

It is noticed that the two players on the right, standing for Sudan and Ethiopia are the only players whose controllers are connected to the device, whereas the controller held by the third, standing for Egypt, is disconnected with the wire hanging loose. In other words, the two grownup

players on the right are tricking the younger one on the left into thinking that he is playing with them, while his controller is not connected. This is further emphasized by the fact that he already looks younger, in addition to the halo above his head implying naivety.

Although this meme displays almost no text, it is highly suggestive where the present topic is concerned. It implies that both Ethiopia and Sudan are in control of the Nile, whereas Egypt, on the other hand, is excluded without even noticing. It is also significant that Ethiopia is positioned in the middle and that both countries are represented as older people with larger bodies, while Egypt is represented as a little naïve child who is fooled into thinking that he is participating with other countries while in fact he is left out.

The sixth meme (Figure 7) is the famous '*woman yelling at cat*' meme. It is vertically divided into two images of which the left-hand one features two actresses in a scene from the American TV series *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* in which actress Taylor Armstrong cries during an argument, while the other actress Kyle Richards tries to calm her down ('Know your meme', 2019). The image on the right-hand side, on the other hand, shows a confused-looking cat sitting behind a dinner plate. Similar to previous memes, the country flags are used to assign entities in the meme, with Egypt represented as the yelling woman and Ethiopia represented as the cat.

Figure 7

Meme 6: *Woman yelling at cat*

On the visual level, the postures and facial expressions of the characters in this meme are very indicative. Egypt is represented as a woman who is crying, yelling and pointing fingers rather childishly accusing Ethiopia of taking the River Nile while the other lady attempts to pacify her. Ethiopia, on the other hand, is represented as a cat sitting in a relaxed indifferent manner before a dinner plate.

On the verbal level, the text on this meme is also quite significant. While Egypt accuses Ethiopia of taking the River Nile, Ethiopia replies in an offensive threatening way. In addition to referring to Egypt using the obscene word '*bitch*', Ethiopia also threatens to '*take*' or occupy Egypt itself '*soon*'. The meme noticeably reveals hostility and escalation. Not only is Ethiopia threatening to control the Nile, but also to conquer Egypt itself.

The seventh and last meme in the sample (Figure 8) is also a well-known one that was created using a meme generator. It features *Dr. Evil*, the main antagonist of the *Austin Powers* film series portrayed by Mike Myers. This fictional character is most famous for his 'pinky-finger-to-the-mouth pose' that was performed during one of his evil monologues while making schemes to take over the world ('Know your meme', 2019). The name of the character *Dr. Evil* is itself

significant as it implies wickedness and visciousness, which are also underlined by the posture and gaze in the image.

Figure 8

Meme 7: *Dr. Evil pinky*

The text in this meme is divided into two parts, which is typical of the image macromeme format, with the fist part preceding the image and the second following it. The sentence structure is split accordingly. In this meme, Ethiopians are suggesting that they have managed to put Egypt in a difficult situation by filling the dam early since this will make Egypt obligated to face a confrontation with Sudan. The implication is that in order for Egypt to be able to take military action against Ethiopia, it will have to deploy its forces on Sudanese territory, which is a political fact (Sakr, 2021), thus making it face two enemies instead of one.

6. Findings and Discussion

The present study has examined seven memes posted by Ethiopian users on the Facebook group *Ethiopian Vs. Egyptian Meme War* in 2020 and 2021. The memes were purposefully

selected with special focus on those portraying Egypt and Egyptians in relation to the GERD crisis. The analysis employed Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework for CMDA to investigate both the visual and verbal elements of the selected memes with view to exploring how Egypt and Egyptians are represented by Ethiopians in the memes against the backdrop of the GERD crisis.

Four out of the seven selected memes (3, 5, 6 and 7) are widely known already and were thus probably created by editing the text typed on the template via a meme generator. This was also confirmed by uploading the memes to Google Image search and "know your meme" database which supplied the name of the meme. The three remaining memes (1, 2 and 4) are not well-known memes, but were rather created using images from the Internet and adding text to them. To confirm this, the images were not found on the meme database website "know your meme".

Visually, Egypt was represented in the sample memes in various ways. The Egyptian identity was either assigned using the country flag and/or simply by adding the text 'Egypt' or 'Egyptian' on to the meme. In two memes, Egypt was depicted in the form of an animal, namely dog and donkey. This is very significant since, unlike other cultures where these two animals are associated with positive traits, they are derogatorily regarded in Egyptian culture and even used as common offenses to indicate inferiority and lack of worth. In other memes, Egypt was depicted as a naive child, a puppet and an angry lady, implying naivety, helplessness and impulsiveness respectively. In the only meme where Egypt was associated with an adult male, he was described as having 'no brain'.

The visual elements in the selected memes also contribute to the overall representation of the GERD crisis, particularly Egypt's situation. On the semiotic level, the gaze, posture and salience of the objects in the images were employed to highlight Egypt's difficult situation and

associate it with elements including thirst, drought, helplessness, exclusion and loss of control. Ethiopia, on the other hand, was depicted as powerful, dominant, cunning and in control of the situation. The only instance where Egypt was associated with power is in the first part of meme number 3. However, in the very same meme a complete change of attitude takes place with Egypt shifting from power to total surrender in the second part highlighting the change of attitude following the dam filling.

Some of the memes in the sample did not include any signifiant text. However, when present the verbal elements also contributed to the above representation. Several lexical and syntactic choices in the verbal content highlight the element of power, especially menace, with Ethiopia threatening to punish Egyptians, make them suffer 'the consequences', go through 'war', or even occupy their entire country 'soon' enough. In addition to the use of the derogatory animal metaphors explained above, offensive language was also employed as in the use of the lexcial items 'no brain' and even 'bitch'.

The selected memes may therefore be classified as harmful memes according to Parmanick et al. (2021) characterization. Although they may look humorous, their underlying message is intended to spread hatred and offense. In fact, as stated earlier, the title of the Facebook group "*Meme War*" is very indicative of the hostile content it displays; the memes are used to launch a virtual war against Egypt and Egyptians. This is in line with Kolman's (2018) notion that memes "are considered an active political war zone" (p. 11).

7. Conclusion

Due to the obviously multimodal nature of memes as the genre of the data selected for the present study, Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework for CMDA has proved helpful in examining the visual and verbal elements of the sample memes.

The findings point out that the GERD conflict has extended from the real world to the virtual one with Ethiopian memers and social media users generating and posting memes to depict Egypt and Egyptians in a derogatory inferior manner. They use the memes they post on the Facebook group to show off their power and control over the River Nile, and threaten to make Egypt suffer thirst or even worse. This is underlined by their use of both the verbal and visual elements of the memes in question.

Therefore, although memes may be primarily used for humor, and despite their seemingly simple constitution, they are not to be taken lightly as they reveal very significant insights about political ideologies, underlying attitudes, as well as relationships between people and entities. According to Akhther (2017):

> The culture of mass consumption of entertainment in the age of internet is enabling the development of virtual public sphere, where people come mostly to seek entertainment and end up sharing and talking about social-political issues. In that case memes are playing a great role as cultural discourse. (p. 21)

Given the ease of their creation as well as their viral nature, memes may be contributing to the formulation of a new cultural discourse that can be disseminated everywhere regardless of geographical or cultural boundaries through the interplay of signs. According to Akhther (2017) "by creating and remixing characters/entities and texts, meme users convey their emotions,

standpoints and opinions on national, political, social and their current reality" (p. 21). With the rapidly growing popularity of social media platforms such as Facebook, memes are increasingly proliferating with more and more users creating, sharing and reacting to this form of participatory engagement. Memes are thus worth attention not only from Internet users, but also from linguists, sociologists and politicians.

Although numerous scholars have already brought into context the implications of Internet memes for building identity, forming public discourse, and encouraging civic participatory engagement, they still constitute a fertile area of scholarly endeavor. Further research is recommended to explore memes as an emerging genre of CMD, with view to finding how they contribute to shaping the representation of various social and political entities and relationships in the online world. Future studies can target larger meme samples, with special focus on topics of particular interest, from various perspectives and using other theoretical frameworks, taking into consideration other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, reddit, etc.

References

Akhther, N. (2017). Internet meme as a form of cultural discourse: A rhetorical analysis on Facebook [Conference presentation]. *International Conference on Visual South Asia: Anthropological Exploration of Media and Culture*, Dhaka, Bangladesh. 10.31234/osf.io/sx6t7

Chen, C. (2012). The creation and meaning of internet memes in 4chan: popular internet culture in the age of online digital reproduction. *Institutions Habitus Spring*, 6–19. Retrieved from https://www.yale.edu/habitus/habitus_design_6.625_(3).pdf.

Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene*, Oxford University Press.

Ethiopian Vs. Egyptian Meme War (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook group]. Facebook. Retrieved May 12, 2022 from https://www.facebook.com/groups/253849522729349

Gal, N., Shifman, L., & Kampf, Z. (2016). "It Gets Better": Internet memes and the construction of collective identity. *New Media & Society*, 18(8), 1698-1714. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814568784

Grundlingh, L. (2017). Memes as speech acts. *Social Semiotics*, 28(2), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1303020

Kolman, M. (2018). *I have no mouth and I must meme: Internet memes, networked neoliberalism, and the image of the Economic*. [Master's Thesis, William's College, Massachusetts]. https://rb.gy/zlu1qj

Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2006). Memes and affinities: Cultural replication and literacy education. *Annual NRC Miami*. https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/30956354/10.1.1.89.5549.pdf

Know your meme. (2019, August 21). https://knowyourmeme.com/

Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Arnold Publishers.

Laineste, L. & Voolaid, P. (2017). Laughing across borders: Intertextuality of internet memes. *European Journal of Humour Research,* 4:(4), 26-49. 10.7592/EJHR2016.4.4.laineste

Machin, D. & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis*. Sage.

Milner, R. M. (2012). *The world made meme: Discourse and identity in participatory media*. University of Kansas. http://hdl.handle.net/1808/10256

Milner, R. M. (2013). Hacking the social: Internet memes, identity antagonism, and the logic of Lulz. *The Fibreculture Journal*, 22(22), 62–92. http://fibreculturejournal.org/wp-content/pdfs/FCJ-156Ryan Milner.pdf

Miltner, K. M. (2014). "There's no place for lulz on LOLCats": The role of genre, gender, and group identity in the interpretation and enjoyment of an Internet meme, *First Monday*, 19(8). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v19i8

Mohyeldeen, S. (2021, February 12). The dam that broke open an Ethiopia-Egypt conflict. *Carnegie Middle East Center*. https://carnegie-mec.org/2021/02/12/dam-that-broke-open-ethiopia-egypt-dispute-pub-83867

Nissenbaum, A., & Shifman, L. (2017). Internet memes as contested cultural capital: The case of 4chan's /b/ board. *New Media & Society*, 19(4), 483– 501. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815609313

Pramanick, S., Dimitrov, D., Mukherjee, R., Sharma, S., Akhtar, S., Nakov, P. & Chakraborty, T. (2021). Detecting harmful memes and their targets. *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: ACL-IJCNLP 2021*, 2783–2796. 10.18653/v1/2021.findings-acl.246

Ross, A. S., & Rivers, D. J. (2017). Digital cultures of political participation: Internet memes and the discursive delegitimization of the 2016 U.S Presidential candidates. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 16, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.01.001

Sakr, T. (2021, Sept. 17). Why is Egypt postponing the war against Ethiopia? *Egypt Daily News*. https://dailynewsegypt.com/2021/09/17/opinion-why-is-egypt-postponing-the-war-against-ethiopia/.

Shifman, L. (2013). Memes in a digital world: Reconciling with a conceptual troublemaker. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 18(3), 362– 377. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12013

Yus, F. (2019). Multimodality in memes: A cyberpragmatic approach. In: P. Bou-Franch, P., Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (eds) *Analyzing Digital Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92663-6_4