Lie Like a Dog: Humorous Memes and Grammar Mistakes

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Levels  Intermediate to advanced

Contexts  University, young adult

Aims  Learn/review grammar points, vocabulary, writing concepts, and/or spelling through the use of humorous Internet memes

Class Time  10–15 minutes

Preparation Time  10–15 minutes

Resources  Internet to access

Memes have been described as “the product of every teenager’s desire for self-expression, sarcasm, and humor, combined with the pervasiveness of technology and this generation’s unique, slightly quirky culture, stemming from the fact that geeks are becoming slightly more mainstream” (Bruder, 2013, p. 1). Capitalizing on students’ interest in “all things Internet,” using memes is a natural way to spark students’ attention. As memes are created for their humorous perspective, many either unintentionally have grammatical errors or make fun of grammatical errors. Internet-savvy students who are digital natives have already been exposed to popular and current memes. Holwerda (2012) emphasizes the importance of using the Internet in class: “To better prepare our students for their digital citizenship, access to and understanding of internet culture is imperative” (para. 1). Allowing students to combine their own originality with grammar and memes, teachers can expand beyond the textbook.

PROCEDURE

1. Explain what a meme is: Internet memes are images that are spread online that often have a humorous or creative message.

2. Show students a meme that showcases a particular grammar point, vocabulary word, writing concept, or spelling issue. Most memes actually have misuses of these.
3. Examples of memes can be found at many sites, such as www.someecards.com, www.pinterest.com, and www.memes.com. Once at the website, type “grammar memes” into the search box.

4. Ask students what misuse is being highlighted or unintentionally used.

5. Ask students why they think the meme is supposed to be funny.

6. Introduce correct use of terms or grammar.

**CAVEATS AND OPTIONS**

1. Have students bring memes they have found to class to share and explain.

2. Have students work with a partner to create their own memes.

3. Screen memes for classroom appropriateness.

4. Use memes to show class rules.

5. Many websites and apps exist for creating original memes. (We have used http://memegenerator.net/create/instance and the app mematic.)

**REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**


**APPENDIX A: Sample Created Meme**

*Created using mematic.*