

Research on Meme Culture's Impact on Primary School Students' Writing and Guiding Strategies—An Empirical Study of 49 Primary School Students

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Abstract: With the spread of meme culture online, primary school students are increasingly exposed to and use memes. This study surveys 49 students in grades 1–6 to examine how meme culture affects their writing in terms of language norms, content expression, and logical structure. Findings show dual effects: memes enrich expression but may weaken formal writing standards. Accordingly, we propose targeted guidance strategies involving government, media platforms, and home-school cooperation to help students use memes appropriately in writing.

Keywords: Primary school students; Meme culture; Writing impact; Guiding strategies

1. Introduction

Internet popularization has extended meme culture from youth to basic education, infiltrating primary students' compositions. As a core literacy carrier, it brings dual effects. Based on Birmingham School theory, this questionnaire-based study explores impacts, proposes strategies, supplements empirical data, and facilitates a sound language education environment [1].

2. Concept Definition and Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of "Meme" and "Meme Culture"

"Meme" (梗) is a misuse of "喂" from crosstalk, referring to recurring jokes or references. In youth culture, memes are defined as "classic segments or allusions that can be repeatedly referenced or adapted" [2].

Meme culture refers to a set of online cultural symbols with specific meanings and entertainment value, including catchphrases, emojis, and jokes. It spreads virally online, akin to "meme transmission." Memes are cultural units that replicate and spread through imitation [3].

2.2 Types of Meme Culture

2.2.1 Text-based Memes

These affect vocabulary and grammar. Online text memes often use wordplay, mixing, or abbreviations, diverging from formal language rules [4].

2.2.2 Emoji/Image-based Memes

Visual symbols convey meaning when words are insufficient. These often come from media or public figures, combined with humorous text.

2.2.3 Short Video-based Memes

Platforms like Douyin and Bilibili popularize fragmented, entertaining video clips. Users recreate "iconic moments," embedding new meanings. Comments and bullet chats are key for spreading such memes [5]. Both emoji and video memes influence students' choice of content and expressive style.

2.3 Literature Review

Research on minors' online subculture is growing, but few studies focus on memes and primary students' writing. Existing gaps include: Limited age-specific studies and empirical data on writing impacts [6], with subcultural barriers hindering communication [7]. Most meme studies focus on dissemination or youth psychology, not detailed writing effects [8]. No empirical research examines meme culture's multi-dimensional impact on primary students' writing or home-school-community strategies. This study addresses these gaps.

2.4 Theoretical Basis

2.4.1 Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Students learn by observing and imitating others. Exposure to memes leads them to adopt meme language and logic in writing [9].

2.4.2 Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

Primary students (ages 7–12) are in the concrete operational stage. They have basic logic but struggle with abstract ideas and complex meanings, affecting how they use memes.

2.4.3 Youth Subculture Theory

Meme culture is a form of youth subculture, allowing self-expression and distinction from mainstream culture. This theory helps analyze meme spread among young students and balance subcultural inclusion with mainstream values [10].

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Subjects

The subjects of this study are students in grades 1–6 from a primary school in Quzhou. Ten students were randomly selected from each grade, with 60 questionnaires distributed and 49 valid responses collected. Covering grades 1–6 allows for comparison of the impact of meme culture on students at different writing proficiency levels.

3.2 Research Methods

This study employs a questionnaire survey and composition text analysis. Classroom compositions from 49 students of varying ages were systematically collected. SPSS was used for basic data analysis.

Drawing on existing analytical frameworks, a self-designed "Questionnaire on the Impact of Meme Culture on Primary School Students' Writing" was developed, structured around a four-level logical framework: "basic information – current exposure to memes – use of memes in writing –

analysis of writing impact," as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey Questionnaire Dimensions and Corresponding Item Tables.

Primary dimension	Secondary dimension	Tertiary Dimension	Corresponding item
basic information	Personal Basic	Grade Distribution	1
	Characteristics	Gender Characteristics	2
Cognition and Contact of Memes Culture	Exposure Frequency	Frequency of Exposure to Internet Memes	3
	Exposure Channels	Channels for Obtaining Information about Internet Meme Culture	4
	Usage Frequency	Frequency of Meme Usage in Compositions	5
	Usage Motivation	Core Driving Factors for Meme Usage	6
The Use of "Jie" in the Composition	Usage Types	Specific Categories of Commonly Used Memes in Compositions	7
		Impact on Normative Expression	8
		Impact on Content Richness	9
	Overall Impacts	Impact on Logical Coherence	10
		Impact on Comprehensive Expression	11
		Impact on Overall Quality	12

3.3 Research Framework

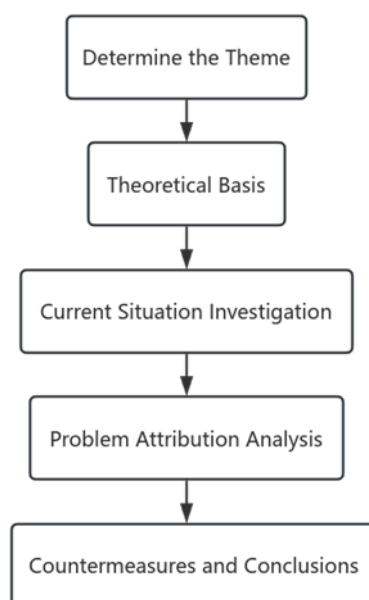


Figure 1: Research Framework for the Impact of Internet Memes on Pupils' Writing

4. Research Results and Analysis

A total of 60 copies of the "Questionnaire on the Influence of Meme Culture on Primary School Students' Writing" were distributed to students in grades 1–6, with 49 valid responses collected,

resulting in an effective response rate of 81.6%. Figure 2 illustrates the demographic composition of the respondents.

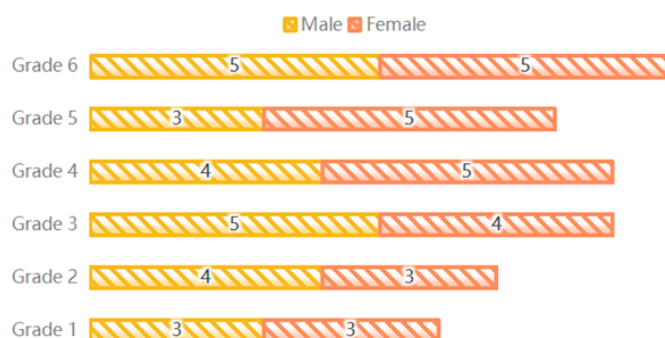


Figure 2: Demographic Profile of Questionnaire Respondents.

4.1 Main Channels of Primary School Students' Exposure to "Memes"

Analysis of Figure 3 shows that primary school students are mainly exposed to "memes" through chatting with classmates (75%) and short video apps (47%). Exposure via cartoons/children's programs, parents' phones, and other channels is relatively lower.

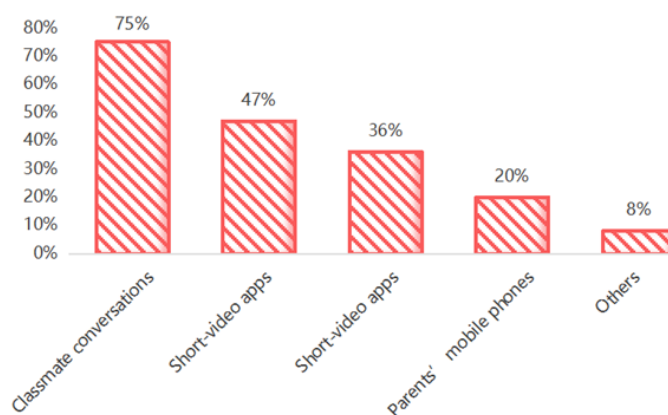


Figure 3: Main Channels of Exposure to Internet Memes.

4.2 Analysis of Meme Usage in Primary School Students' Writing

4.2.1 Analysis of Meme Usage in Compositions

As shown in Figure 4, primary school students' meme usage in compositions presents distinct distribution characteristics: "Occasional use" ranks the highest (44.9%), followed by "Frequent use" (28.6%), "Never use" (20.4%) and "Regular use" (6.1%). Over 70% of respondents have applied memes in writing, with usage frequency positively correlated with grade level—lower grades tend to avoid meme use, while upper grades show higher application rates.

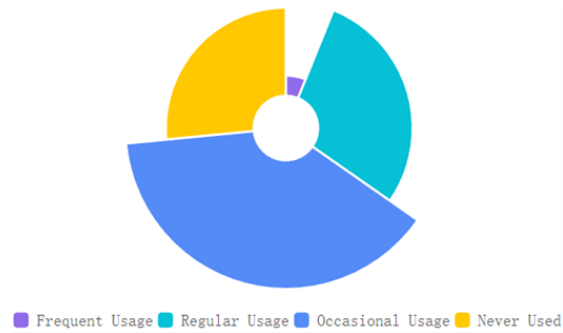


Figure 4: Frequency of Meme Usage.

In Figure 5, A = interest/vividness, B = convenience for expression, C = peer conformity/group integration, D = content enrichment. For this multiple-choice question (49 fixed respondents), option proportion = (selections÷total respondents)×100%, with proportions possibly exceeding 100%.

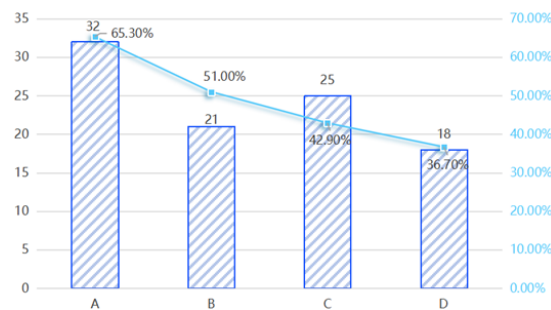


Figure 5: Motivations for Using Memes.

Statistics (Figures 5 and 6) and studies show primary students' meme-using traits: "fun/vividness" (32 students) is top motivation, followed by "peer conformity" (25). "Online buzzwords" (71.4%) are most used, then "homophonic puns" (57.1%).

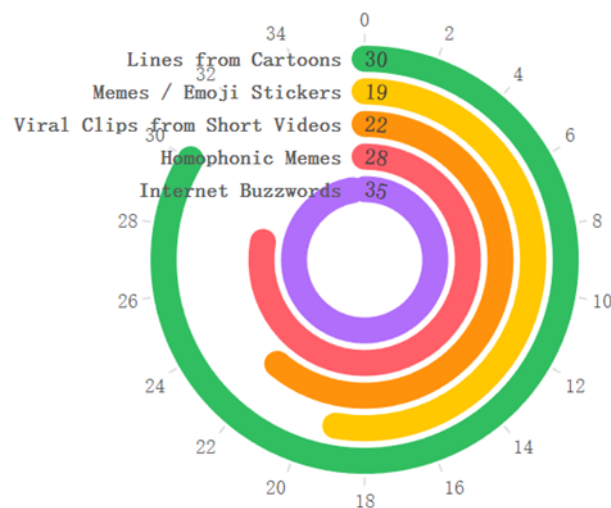


Figure 6: Types of Memes Used.

4.2.2 Attribution of Meme Usage in Compositions

The distribution characteristics of meme usage in primary school students' compositions stem

from the interplay of three factors: psychological development stage, school social environment, and writing requirements [11]. Lower graders passively use memes; upper graders use them actively. Online hot memes precisely target the emotional concerns of adolescents [12]. Meme penetration as social symbols: Internet-driven tools for peer interaction and group belonging.

4.3 Meme Culture's Impact on Pupils' Writing

4.3.1 Analysis of Writing Impact

Questions 1–2 examine meme impacts on content richness and logical coherence (Figure 7). In Question 1, 40.8% see "a little impact", 30.6% "moderate impact"; over 80% believe memes positively boost composition richness. In Question 2, 53.1% report "no impact", followed by 36.7% "a little impact". Over half see no logical issues; few face severe disruptions.

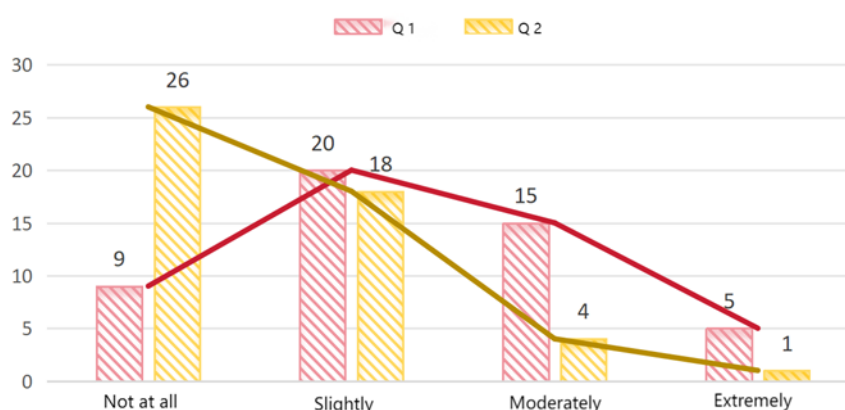


Figure 7: Specific Impacts of Memes on Writing

Figure 8 shows over 50% of students report "no impact" from memes on writing/expression; 36.7% note "slight impact." Few see significant effects. Influence is limited overall, with mild impact slightly increasing by grade. Informal, fragmented memes contrast with writing norms.

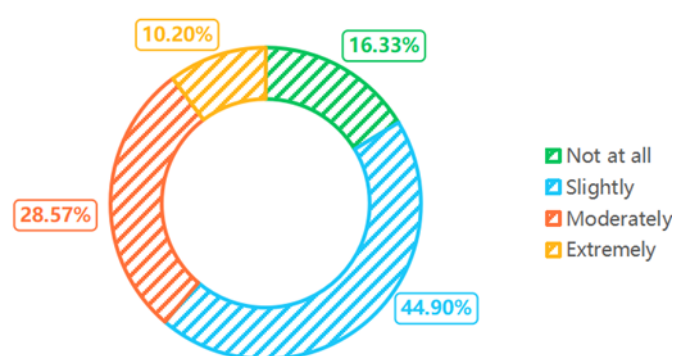


Figure 8: Types of Memes Used.

In Figure 9, A=No impact, B=Predominantly positive impact, C=Predominantly negative impact, D=Both positive and negative impacts. It shows that regarding the perceived overall impact on composition quality, 22.4% of students believe memes have "no impact," 36.7% perceive "mainly positive impact," and about 30% note dual effects. This distribution reflects a dual characteristic: positive perception predominates, with both positive and negative impacts coexisting.

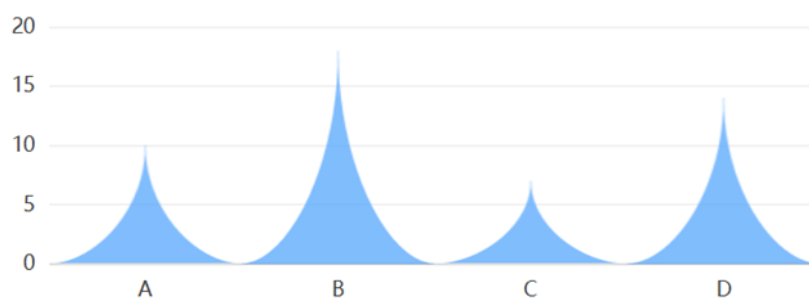


Figure 9: Impact of Internet Memes on the Overall Quality of Writing.

4.3.2 Attribution of Writing Impact

First, mismatched memes impair content quality; poor screening and vulgar ones erode standards, undermining composition quality [13]. Second, inappropriate meme use disrupts writing logic with semantic breaks and chaotic expression. Third, overreliance dulls sensitivity, fostering inertia and writing regression. Fourth, harmful memes skew values, marginalize discourse, and weaken value identification [14], reducing composition depth.

5. Conclusions

Enriching writing materials: Meme culture provides contemporary vocabulary and vivid scenarios, offering fresh and relatable content for students' writing. Supporting personalized expression: Positive memes can serve as supplementary tools for conveying themes.

Undermining formal language norms: Overuse of informal or abbreviated memes weakens students' grasp of rigorous and standardized written expression. Reducing content quality: Excessive use of memes limits writing to fragmented online content, resulting in superficial and hollow compositions. Disrupting logical structure: The fragmented and disjointed nature of memes conflicts with the coherent "beginning-development-ending" structure required in writing.

To mitigate memes' negative impacts on primary students' writing, a multi-stakeholder collaborative system is needed. Integrate meme culture into writing classes properly; home-schools guide positive selection. Platforms optimize youth content and block inappropriate ones; governments regulate, compile resources and strengthen supervision.

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