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THE LANGUAGE OF MEMES: A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF *CLASSICAL ART MEMES*

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INTRODUCTION

The word *meme* was first introduced by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 and back then it was described as an entity which spreads among the people by people copying and mimicking one another (Shifman, 2014). Today, however, the term *meme* carries two meanings.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015) gives two definitions for the word *meme*:

1) an idea that is passed from one member of society to another, not in the genes but often by people copying it;
2) an image, a video, a piece of text, etc. that is passed very quickly from one Internet user to another, often with slight changes that make it humorous.

The first meaning of the word *meme* is exactly what Dawkins introduced in his book *The Selfish Gene*. Nowadays, however, *meme* is frequently used referring to its second definition; in fact, it is likely that the majority of people, especially teens, immediately think about the second meaning without even knowing or realising that the word has another meaning, too. Both meanings presented in the dictionary are rather close to one another on a certain level – they both define a unit that spreads among the people. While the first definition refers to a unit which moves from person to person in a more natural way (by imitating), the second definition refers to a unit which is transmitted in a digital manner (using the Internet).

When it comes to understanding the popularity of memes, some might be wondering why they are so trendy nowadays. Not only are people commenting and sharing the memes that are already out there on the Internet, but they also take time to design some on their own. Why do people feel the need to share their feelings with the world in the form of a meme? According to Shifman (2014), memes should be an area of interest for researchers because "the meme concept encapsulates some of the most fundamental aspects of contemporary digital culture" (p. 4). The current generation seem to have found a way to somehow convey their feelings and emotions through a digital source; more specifically, by creating and sharing memes.

Internet memes are a sensation in today's world. Since Dawkins's memes have already been

analysed by a number of researchers, the present Thesis is aimed to analyse and discuss the phenomenon of the Internet memes.

The Internet memes used for the Thesis research are gathered from *Facebook* page *Classical Art Memes*. Since the sheer volume of the memes available on the page is enormous, the Thesis will be aimed at analysing art-themed memes targeted at women. This particular topic is selected due to its frequent appearance in the art-themed memes, which was detected during the preliminary analysis.

Since every meme consists of two components – image and text – the research is aimed at a multimodal analysis. While the research mostly focuses on the textual component of the Internet meme, it also provides insights on the impact of the image.

The **subject** of the present Thesis is the Internet meme. The **aim** is to analyse the language of the Internet memes in terms of syntactic features.

To fulfil the aim of the Thesis, the following **objectives** have been set:

1) to establish the concept of the Internet meme by studying and presenting recent literature,
2) to carry out a syntactic analysis of the humorous textual component in the collected memes by applying the syntactic framework,
3) to establish the syntactic patterns most frequently used in the collected memes,
4) to apply communicative functions to the collected memes;
5) to determine how women are presented in the art-themed memes.

The research methods used for the analysis are as follows:

- Qualitative – for detecting certain features in the meme text;
- Quantitative – for calculating how many of the collected memes have certain features;
- Analytic – for analysing each meme separately in terms of the image and the text;
- Multimodal – for detecting the relation between the image and the text.

The Thesis consists of the following parts: Internet memes as discourse, methodology, empirical

part, conclusions, references, appendix, and summaries in English and Lithuanian.

The theoretical part “Internet Memes as a Discourse” provides an analysis of the major research works on aspects which will be used for meme analysis, such as a literature review on memes, discourse, and humour. This section presents how memes can be classified in regards to their communicative function and outlines the syntactic framework, which is used for analysis.

The methodology part presents the methods that are used in the present Thesis research and consists of two parts. The first part presents the methods that are used in the research and explains how the data has been collected, whereas the second part provides an explanation on how the preliminary analysis has been made and how the collected data is analysed.

The empirical part provides an analysis of the collected. The first part presents the syntactic patterns detected in the selected memes. The second part presents the communicative functions detected in the selected memes.

Conclusions summarise the findings and discuss the implications for further research.

References, appendix and summaries in English and Lithuanian conclude the Thesis.

I. INTERNET MEMES AS DISCOURSE

1.1. The history of the meme

While Internet memes can still be considered a rather new concept, there are already a number of researchers who have dedicated their time and resources to explain what the memes are and present their main features to the public. The literature on Internet memes focuses on defining what an Internet meme is, demonstrates how memes appeared and suggests reasons why memes have become such a fascinating phenomenon. Some researchers hypothesise on the future of Internet memes and how they will affect future generations. This section briefly explores the history and the origin of the meme before getting into further analysis.

The primary meaning of the word meme was introduced by Dawkins in 1976. According to Dawkins, memes are "small units of culture that spread from person to person by copying or imitation" (Shifman, 2014, p. 2). Dawkins's theory of memes states that there are three main characteristics of a successfully spread meme - *longevity*, *fecundity*, and *copy fidelity* (Shifman, 2014).

To fully understand what Dawkins proposed, first the three elements mentioned above need to be defined. The following definitions are taken from *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015):

- *Longevity* – the fact of lasting a long time.
- *Fecundity* – the ability to produce new and useful things, especially ideas.
- *Copy fidelity* – the quality of being accurate.

According to Dawkins's theory, these three elements are essential for a certain unit to be considered as a *meme* and successfully spread among the people.

Aunger develops Dawkins's ideas focusing on the aspect of the meme and presented his research and findings in *Electric Meme: A New Theory of How We Think*. Aunger (2002) seconds Dawkins's theory by suggesting that cultural evolution is "the result of a replicator called the meme" (p. 82). Both researchers, even though their research was done several decades apart, agree that the meme is a cultural phenomenon which has helped to develop societies throughout

the years. Similar to Dawkins's proposed three elements: *longevity*, *fecundity*, and *copy fidelity*. Aunger states, "an entity, called the meme, exists that fulfils all the criteria of a cultural replicator: causation, similarity, information transfer, and duplication" (2002, p. 83).

For a better understanding of Aunger's idea, below are given the definitions of the four mentioned elements (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2015):

- *Causation* – the process of one event causing or producing another event.
- *Similarity* – the state of being like somebody/something but not exactly the same; a feature that things or people have that makes them like each other.
- *Information transfer* – copying information, music, an idea, etc. from one method of recording or presenting it to another.
- *Duplication* – one of two or more things that are the same in every detail.

That is to say that Internet memes are, in a way, the same *memes* Dawkins and Aunger were referring to. The only difference between the meme they were referring to and the today's Internet meme is that the latter is spreading via a digital platform – using the Internet. The concept however is exactly the same – certain units spreading among the people by copying one another. Dawkins's and Aunger's theories about the cultural development present the meme as the primary unit through which people transmit their behavioural patterns.

The history of the primary meaning of the word meme shows that in the past the cultural units used to be passed by imitation. This changed only until a few decades ago – the Internet became a place for people to share their ideas, emotions, and thoughts. This has led to having the concept of meme moving to a digital platform and the cultural units being shared not only in real life but via the Internet as well.

1.2. The concept of the Internet meme

One of the main characteristics of the Internet meme is that it is created by combining two elements: the image and the text (Chandler, 2013). Further chapters explore both the image and the text, and analyse how these two essential components create the final Internet meme effect. The analysis is carried out using Raskin's humour theory and Jakobson's communicative

functions as well as further developed employing syntax method.

Since the Internet meme is a rather recent term, there is not much well-established extensive literature. However, more and more scholars are publishing scientific articles targeted at the Internet meme concept.

O'Keeffe (2011) analyses how the changes in media technology have affected media discourse. She suggests that the texts presented in the media are becoming more informal, there is less attention given to the grammar, punctuation, or spelling; therefore, it is more similar to the spoken language rather than written. The author points out how both spoken and written media can be studied and emphasises that because of all the changes that are happening, the study of media discourse is unpredictable.

Attallah in his article *Television Discourse and Situation Comedy* (2010) presents the peculiarities of the television and sitcom discourse. The author begins the article by stating that people tend to see television as a superficial phenomenon because of its light content; however, later on explains how difficult it actually is to create content that could be comprehendible to the audience with little to no effort.

Shifman has conducted a thorough analysis on Internet memes and published a book called *Memes in Digital Culture* (2014). According to Shifman, various elements that spread via the Internet can be called memes. In her book the author defines the term Internet meme and states, "the tag 'Internet meme' is commonly applied to describe the propagation of items such as jokes, rumours, videos, and websites from person to person via the Internet" (2014, p. 2). The author suggests that humour-targeted content can be presented in different forms and that all these pieces can be classified as memes. Shifman also (2014) discusses "meme-driven discourses" (p. 123), which makes basis for another important concept closely related to the Internet meme – discourse.

In *Memes in Digital Culture* (2014) Shifman explains that memes can be treated as pieces of information which are passed from person to person and this way memes are shaping societies. The author suggests that "although they [memes] spread on a micro basis, their impact is on the

macro level: memes shape the mindsets, forms of behaviour, and actions of social groups" (2014, p. 18).

1.3. Communicative functions in the Internet memes

According to Shifman (2013), until the 21st century "researchers felt comfortable overlooking memes" (p. 363), especially in terms of communication. In her work Shifman employs the communicative functions developed by Jakobson.

Jakobson is a proponent of systemic functional linguistic analysis. In *Language in Literature* (1987) Jakobson outlines six most important communicative functions:

- Referential – oriented toward the context;
- Emotive – oriented toward emotions;
- Conative – expressed with vocatives and/or imperatives;
- Phatic – aimed at maintaining the conversation;
- Metalingual – used to establish mutual agreement on the code;
- Poetic – expressed in verbal structure.

As O'Keeffe (2011) has outlined, media discourse has features of the spoken language, which allows us to employ Jakobson's communicative functions in the analysis of the Internet memes.

Jakobson (1987) emphasises that, as a general rule, some or, in some cases, even all of the functions may be assigned to a text. Therefore, in the empirical part, each meme will be assigned one function that is the most significant and distinctive.

1.4. Humour theory

Internet memes cover a high variety of different topics. Mostly memes are created and shared by teens or young adults, which in result means that the most popular themes are education, friendships, relationships, and money – all memes that currently exist on the Internet could fall under one of these categories. However, regardless of the topic, all memes have one thing in common – humour.

Raskin was the first to introduce a thorough analysis of humour, as he claims in *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour* (1944), before this book "no formal theory of humour has ever been proposed (p. 1). Raskin (1944) speaks about how humour does not depend on such things as "age, sex, social or economic status, culture, or epoch" (p. 1) and names humour as "universal human trait" (p. 2).

Raskin proposes the theory of script opposition, which is presented and explained in *The Primer of Humour* (2008). The theory outlines two scenarios: the image and the text. According to Raskin (2008), humorous effect arises from the opposition between the two scenarios. Humour mechanism is based on the script – "a bunch of terms alternately used to denote a structured chunk of information" (p. 7). Raskin explains that humour derives when two different scripts overlap, thus creating the opposition. The humorous effect is detected in the trigger phrase – the phrase in which lies the punchline.

Attardo (2002) is another researcher who also came up with a list of criteria which have to be met in order to create a humorous effect. He specifies several parameters which also include script opposition, as presented by Raskin. Attardo identifies script opposition to be the most important parameter in humour analysis, because of its abstractedness and adaptability to any text.

Prodanovic-Stankic also analyses research which have already been conducted by other scholars. She quotes the work of Salvatore Attardo, who came up with a list of criteria which have to be met in order to create a humorous effect to any text. He specifies the following parameters (*Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, 2017, p. 32):

- *Script opposition (SO): the central requirement for humour production that accounts for the opposition between different and opposed scripts;*
- *Logical mechanism (LM): accounts for the resolution of the incongruity caused by SO; it can be of different kinds (e.g. figure-ground reversal, juxtaposition, parallelism, etc.);*
- *Situation (SI): includes characters, objects, places, etc. presented in the humorous text;*
- *Target (TA): the aim of the humour; a person, people, institutions ridiculed by a particular instance of humour;*
- *Narrative structure (NS): genre and/or text organisation;*

- *Language (LA): the verbalisation.*

The above mentioned criteria could serve as a guideline – it gives an idea of how humour is created and what is needed for a certain piece of text to be considered humorous.

Prodanovic-Stankic discusses cultural conceptualisations in humorous discourse and suggests that humour allows people to share their ideas, language, and culture (*Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, 2017). In other words, the use of humour shows the language skills, which are needed for the humour to be produced, as well as it reflects certain cultural aspects of a society or a community.

Jerry Palmer claims that humour has to be taken seriously (*Taking Humour Seriously*, 1994). In his book, Palmer raises several questions (1994, p. 5):

- *When do we find something funny?*
- *Why do we find something funny?*
- *What makes us find something funny?*
- *What prevents us from finding something funny?*

The questions which Palmer raised can be answered by the parameters which were introduced by Attardo. Attardo gives a considerably thorough explanation about what humour is and how to distinguish it.

Simpson (2003) also focuses on humour theory and discusses another genre of humour – satire; satires are targeted at issues within society and presented in a humorous manner. Simpson gives the following example on syntactic puns (2003, p. 22):

- *Man in shop: Can I try on that suit in the window?*
- *Salesperson: No, you'll have to use the changing room like everyone else.*

The above example shows how one unit can change the whole meaning of the sentence. In this case, the prepositional phrase *in the window* can serve either as a place adjunct or as a post modifier to *that suit*. These syntactic puns have the ability to make the sentence funny in a sarcastic way, which is also an essential feature of the Internet meme.

1.5. Inseparability of meme and humour

One of the most noticeable features of a meme is that it is supposed to make people laugh. In other words, memes are supposed to be humorous. Humour is said to be an essential part of culture (Palmer, 1994) and therefore it is natural that it is being incorporated in memes as well.

There is also another phenomenon which is closely related to memes, or, in other words, they coexist together. The mentioned phenomenon is sarcasm (Mapua, 2019). Sarcastic references in memes have become so common that in some cases it even becomes difficult to understand the meaning of the whole meme if one does not get sarcasm. Mapua (2019) points out that sarcasm has elements of ridicule and disrespect, which together create even a stronger humorous effect.

The art-themed Internet memes, which have been selected for the present research, consist of the two elements (image and text). The image in the memes is related to the classical art (sophisticated, elegant), whereas the text can be described as present-day contemporary teenage slang. Based on Raskin's script opposition theory, the humour derives from the clash of two completely different elements. The present research focuses on detecting the humour in the overlap between the two scenarios.

Certain observations can also be made by analysing the image alone. Visual representation helps forward the message to the audience (*The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*, 2015). The author outlines that it is important to learn to analyse the meaning of an image, because we encounter numerous visual illustrations daily. The image analysis is also essential for the Internet meme analysis because of its structure – the meme is constructed using both the text and the image.

Since the sheer volume of the memes that are currently present on the Internet is enormous, it is natural that there are plenty of memes which fail in being as humorous as a meme is expected to be.

1.6. Syntax as a tool for the Internet meme analysis

Every Internet meme contains text, which usually has features of colloquial language and needs to be analysed separately in order to fully understand the meaning of the memes. For the meme language analysis, it is most fitting to use the science of syntax. For Internet users, a meme is a unit which they see, read, understand, and laugh if it is relatable to them. For someone who has ever taken interest in linguistics, a meme is a unit which needs to be analysed, in other words, a researcher intends not only to understand the meaning of the meme, but also to discover specific features that distinguish the meme from any other concept.

Syntax can be used for the analysis of the Internet memes, as it helps determine the patterns of sentence structure, which is the focus of the present research. Syntactic patterns show how different sentence parts are used in a textual component.

The present Thesis focuses on the patterns that are followed in the selected memes; therefore, the analysis is carried out using the traditional syntactic framework. The framework rests upon the key concepts (*An Introduction to Syntactic Analysis and Theory*, 2013):

- *Phrase* – a well-formed sequence of words;
- *Adjunct* – a word/phrase used to modify other words in a sentence;
- *Modifier* – a word used to modify a head noun;
- *Subject* – the agent of the sentence;
- *Predicate* – the part of a sentence that contains a verb.

The preliminary analysis has shown that the humorous textual component in the collected memes sometimes consist of one-word comments; therefore, such memes are analysed by part of speech.

Huddleston and Pullum (2007) observe the following categories (p. 16):

1. Noun (e.g., *dog, Sue, we*)
2. Verb (e.g., *barked, is, have*)
3. Adjective (e.g., *old, empty, new*)
4. Determinative (e.g., *the, some, all*)
5. Adverb (e.g., *clearly, very, almost*)
6. Preposition (e.g., *in, to, of*)

7. Coordinator (e.g., *and, or, but*)
8. Subordinator (e.g., *that, whether, if*)
9. Interjections (e.g., *oh, hello, wow, ouch*)

The first six categories can also function as phrases: noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (AdjP), determinative phrase (DP), adverb phrase (AdvP), and preposition phrase (PP).

Syntactic patterns can be divided into five main categories, as presented in *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar* (2007). These categories are modelled according to their transitivity – "the dimension that relates to the number of objects in the clause" (2007, p. 78). Based on this model, syntactic patterns are divided into intransitive (having no objects), monotransitive (having one object), and ditransitive (having both direct and indirect objects). The sentence patterns are also categorised according to the presence (complex-transitive, complex-intransitive) and absence (ordinary) of the predicative complement.

The authors of *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar* (2007) present the following syntactic patterns (p.78):

1. Ordinary transitive – S-P (e.g., *We hesitated.*)
2. Complex-intransitive – S-P-PC (e.g., *We felt happy.*)
3. Ordinary monotransitive – S-P-O^d (e.g., *We sold our house.*)
4. Complex-transitive – S-P-O^d-PC (e.g., *We made them happy.*)
5. Ditransitive – S-P-O^i-O^d (e.g., *We gave them some food.*)

Kuzmina (2013) presents seven main syntactic patterns (p. 103-106):

1. Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun (e.g., *These are cats.*)
2. Subject + Verb (e.g., *They were flying slowly.*)
3. Subject + Verb + Direct Object – monotransitive (e.g., *She bruised her knee.*)
4. Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object – ditransitive (e.g., *She gave him a book.*)
5. Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) (e.g., *The book is on the table.*)
6. Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) (e.g., *He went there.*)

7. Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction) (e.g., *He put the book on the table.*)

Classifications from the two presented grammars do not differ in essential aspects, however different terminology and labelling applies. For example, based on Huddleston and Pullum's theory, Kuzmina's third sentence pattern (Subject + Verb + Direct Object) can be described as monotransitive and the fourth pattern (Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object) as ditransitive.

The present research is carried out using Kuzmina's syntactic framework, which includes a few additional sentence patterns and can be used for most common situation types.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Description of the empirical part and methods applied

This Thesis is aimed at analysing memes in terms of their syntactic features: the structure of the meme text, the ambiguity of words and/or phrases, paradoxical statements, the relation between the image and the text.

To analyse the memes, the following research methods are used:

- *Qualitative approach.* This method is used when looking for the specific features in the meme text, based on which the further analysis will be made.
- *Quantitative approach.* This method helps to calculate how many of the collected memes have certain features.
- *Analytic approach.* This method is used to analyse each meme separately as well as to explain the main features of the discovered patters.
- *Multimodal approach.* This method is used to discover the relation between two scripts: the image and the text.

Since the sheer volume of the memes that currently exist on the Internet is enormous, the present Thesis will focus on one particular *Facebook* meme page called *Classical Art Memes*.

Nowadays, *Classical Art Memes* is a very popular *Facebook* page, which has over 5 million followers. The page was created in 2014 and it has been dedicated to the memes related to the classical art ever since. *Classical Art Memes* is a rich source for a profound analysis because of the authenticity of the memes that are being posted there.

In addition to that, memes are being shared on a daily basis and any time during the day; therefore, the page provides a high variety of different memes, which is especially useful when making a thorough research.

In order to conduct a thorough analysis, the following selection criteria have been applied:

- All memes which were posted in *Facebook* page *Classical Art Memes* throughout the year 2018 have been collected. In total, there were exactly 1000 memes posted;
- The preliminary stage of the research revealed that one of the main topics in the collected memes is *women*, hence this topic has been chosen for the present research;
- In total, 190 memes about women have been collected, 90 memes have been eliminated for ethical considerations and/or for not containing any text;
- The remaining 100 memes have been selected for the research.

The selected 100 memes are analysed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Syntactic pattern:
    - Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun
    - Subject + Verb
    - Subject + Verb + Object
    - Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object
    - Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location)
    - Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction)
    - Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb (Direction)

In instances where the memes contain only one-word comments or short phrases, where a syntactic pattern cannot be applied, analysis is made by part of speech: noun/noun phrase (NP), verb/verb phrase (VP), adjective/adjective phrase (AdjP), determinative/determinative phrase (DP), adverb/adverb phrase (AdvP), preposition/preposition phrase (PP), coordinator, and subordinator.

The preliminary analysis has shown that there are several memes where the humorous textual component is in the interrogative form. In these instances, the interrogative form is changed to the declarative form in order to correctly apply the syntactic patterns.

2. Communicative function:

- Referential (oriented toward the context);
- Emotive (oriented toward emotions);
- Conative (expressed with vocatives and/or imperatives);
- Phatic (aimed at maintaining the conversation);
- Metalingual (used to establish mutual agreement on the code);
- Poetic (expressed in verbal structure).

The preliminary analysis has shown that most of the collected memes convey several communicative functions. To have a more concise and specific analysis, only one – most distinguishable function – is selected for every meme.

2.2. Characteristics of the empirical data

Every meme is analysed following this approach: first both the image and the accompanying text are examined as each is regarded as an independent script. Then the scripts are assessed as to whether they overlap or oppose each other and the source of humour / the specific aspect causing humorous perception is established – this is the trigger. On the basis of the components – literal interpretation of scripts (e.g., when they are viewed independently), and then the two scripts used together – the communicative function of the meme is established. The sentence bearing humour is classified as falling into one of the syntactic patterns.

During the analysis of the selected memes, all seven syntactic patterns have been detected; therefore, the memes are identified and grouped according to their syntactic patterns. The preliminary analysis has shown that the text in the selected memes often consists of dialogues and/or short phrases. For this reason, the syntactic pattern is developed only to the trigger phrase which contains the humorous component. The empirical data shows how many of the selected memes are identified to have a particular syntactic structure. Each group of the syntactic patterns is presented with some examples.

The second part of the analysis is targeted at communicative functions. The data shows how many of the collected memes have a particular communicative function and provides some examples for every function.

III. EMPIRICAL PART

The analysis of the collected memes is conducted as presented in the example 1 below. The first step is to determine which sentence/phrase contains the humorous component and thus create the humorous effect. The humorous effect in the below example arises when the daughter answers to her mother by confirming that she is indeed a bad mother for not knowing her daughter's name. The mother's question "Am I a bad mother Jane?" is answered by "My name is Sarah". The trigger phrase is this example is "My name is Sarah". The trigger phrase is then examined according to its syntactic structure as well as the communicative function.

1

	***"My name is Sarah"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

The empirical part is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the syntactic part of the research and shows how the collected Internet memes are analysed in terms of syntactic patterns. The second part discusses the communicative functions located in the collected memes and explains how the memes convey a certain communicative function.

The full analysis of each collected meme is presented in Appendix, tables 1-8.

3.1. Syntactic patterns of humorous components in the collected memes

The analysis shows that all seven syntactic patterns, which were presented by Kuzmina, have been detected in the collected memes. The numbers of the memes assigned to

every syntactic pattern are presented in the table below.

The frequency of the syntactic patterns detected in the collected memes		
	Syntactic pattern	**Instances**
1.	Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun	27
2.	Subject + Verb	12
3.	Subject + Verb + Object	39
4.	Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object	1
5.	Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location)	3
6.	Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction)	5
7.	Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb (Direction)	3

Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun

Examples 2, 3, and 4 present the first sentence pattern - Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun, which, based on the present research, is second to most frequently detected sentence patterns in the collected memes.

2

	***"Your order has been shipped"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

Example 2 is an illustration of Raskin's humour theory: two different scripts clashing. In this meme the first scenario is the image, which depicts a woman sitting and waiting for something. The surroundings and the way the woman is dressed show that the image illustrates older times.

The second scenario is the textual component, which is phrased as “Your order has been shipped”. This is an obvious reference to the nowadays world. In this meme the humorous effect arises then the two scenarios from different times appearing in one context. In this example the trigger phrase is “Your order has been shipped” and it is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun.

3

	***“Your boat looked bigger in your profile picture”*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

Example 3 is similar to example 2 in terms of the two scenarios: the image represents old times, while the woman’s phrase refers to the social networking sites, which is a reference to the nowadays world. The trigger phrase “Your boat looked bigger in your profile picture” is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun.

Both examples 2 and 3 present how the humorous effect arises from the overlap between the visual representation and the textual component. As both examples contain single sentences, these sentences are observed as trigger phrases and analysed further using syntactic framework. Such examples show how humour can derive from the opposition between the two scenarios: the image and the text.

4

	***"You're late"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive

Example 4 contains a dialogue, which immediately makes the image less impactful as in the previous memes. The humorous effect in this meme arises when the woman gives an unexpected answer "You're late". Generally, death is considered as a negative concept; therefore, such answer gives a completely different twist in this short dialogue. The trigger phrase "You're late" is attributed to the first syntactic pattern (Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun).

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 1.

Subject + Verb

The below examples 5 and 6 present pattern Subject + Verb. Both memes consist of dialogues with rather unexpected answers, which are considered the humorous components of the selected memes.

5

	***"Promise?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb *([you] promise*) Communicative function: referential

Example 5 presents a different type of a trigger phrase, as it is given in the interrogative form "Promise?". In order to apply a syntactic pattern, the interrogative form is changed to the declarative form "[you] promise" and then further analysed using syntactic framework. Example 5 is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb, where verb is omitted, but implied as "you", given the context.

6

	***"We've only just met"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: phatic

Example 6 contains the dialogue between a woman and a man. In previously presented memes, mostly the trigger phrase is said by a woman; however, in example 6 the trigger phrase is the man's answer to the woman's thoughts. The humorous effect here arises from the opposition of how differently women and men express their emotions and their understanding of what

constitutes a relationship: the woman imagines that they are already together and is digging deep into their relationship, whereas the man is more realistic and just states the fact that they have just met. The trigger phrase in example 6 is “We’ve only just met” and is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb.

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 2.

Subject + Verb + Object

Syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Object, research shows, is the most common in the collected memes. This sentence construction is used in 39 out of 100 memes, which makes a solid basis for further analysis of the Internet memes. Examples 7, 8, and 9 all illustrate dialogues between the two genders – men and women. In these examples the trigger phrases are said by women, where men use only dialogue openers.

7

	***“I don’t need a transplant”*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

In example 7 the man refers to his personality and by saying “I have a good heart” he is telling the woman that he is caring and compassionate, whereas the woman answers by referring to the *heart* as the organ – “I don’t need a transplant”. The trigger phrase here is “I don’t need a transplant”, as this is where the humorous effect arises. The trigger phrase belongs to syntactic

pattern Subject + Verb + Direct Object, where the "transplant" is the direct object and also the most humorous component of the whole phrase.

8

	***"I'm just having an allergic reaction to existence"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: emotive

Example 8 shows a different clash of two scenarios: the image presents a rich, sophisticated life, whereas the dialogue displays the emotional difficulties that rich people experience. Further analysis of the collected memes confirms the hypothesis that the art-themed memes tend to present the clash between two scenarios: a rich, upper class life versus emotional problems. The richness is presented in the visual representation, while the negative emotions are expressed with the textual components. In example 8 the trigger phrase is the woman's answer "I'm just having an allergic reaction to existence", which is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Direct Object.

9

	***"I'm just not wearing make-up today"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

Example 9 presents another dialogue, which is happening between a woman and *death*. The humorous effect arises from the woman's answer, which represents the nowadays world, where women are rather sensitive about their looks. The woman's answer "I'm just not wearing make-up today" is the trigger phrase of the dialogue and belongs to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Direct Object.

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 3.

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

This syntactic pattern has been detected in only one of the collected memes. Whereas there are a high number of memes where the sentence has a direct object, there is only one having both direct and indirect objects.

10

	***"you get your boys involved to try and decipher the hidden formula"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

Example 10 has a relatively long trigger phrase, which contains both indirect (*your boys*) and direct compliments (*to try and decipher the hidden formula*). In this example the humorous effect arises from the opposition between two script: the men are presented as if they are carrying out a scientific work, whereas the text is related to their daily lives – relationships with women. The trigger phrase is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object.

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 4.

Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location)

There were 3 instances of syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location). Examples 11, 12, and 13 all contain trigger phrases ending in location adverbs: *at home, there, to Walmart*.

11

	***"let's go to Walmart"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: conative

In the example 11 the humorous effect arises from the ambiguity of the word *aisle* – the different understanding of this word makes the dialogue unexpected. The unpredictability of the answers in the dialogues can also be detected in more memes, as the analysis shows. The trigger phrase here is the man's answer "Let's go to Walmart", which is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location).

12

	***"I'd just rather be at home"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: referential

Example 12 is another meme where the humorous effect arises from the dialogue rather than from the text and image relationship. In this meme the woman refers to going home as having actual plans, when in reality it is a polite way to end the conversation. The woman's answer "I'd just rather be at home" is the trigger phrase and belongs to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location).

13

	***"I don't go there anymore"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: referential

In example 13 the humour again arises from the woman being indifferent and trying to end the conversation. In this meme the trigger phrase is "I don't go there anymore", which is an unexpected answer to the man's question, as it is usually used to start a conversation. The trigger phrase belongs to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location).

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 5.

Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction)

This pattern has been observed in 5 of the collected memes.

14

	***"Travel a week into the future"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential

Example 14 is another representation of the opposition between two scenarios: sophisticated, wealthy life reflected in the image and the negative, even depressed, thoughts in the textual component of the meme. The above meme shows a conflict between an idealistic life on the outside and the pessimistic thinking in the inside. In such memes, the humorous effect arises more from the opposition between the image and the text rather than from the dialogue alone. In this example the trigger phrase is woman's answer "Travel a week into the future", which is attributed to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction).

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 6.

Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb (Direction)

The last of the syntactic patterns Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb (Direction) has been observed in 3 memes.

15

	***"you meet your soul mate before the age of 25"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential

Example 15 shows how the humorous effect arises from the clash between the image and the text. The visual representation is artistic, expressing older times, whereas the text refers to the articles that are published nowadays. The opposition between the two different worlds is what creates a humorous effect. In this example the trigger phrase is "You meet your soul mate before the age of 25" and it belongs to syntactic pattern Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb (Direction).

Full examples of the collected memes attributed to this pattern are presented in Appendix, TABLE 7.

As discussed in the methodology, there is also a number of memes, which consisted of one-word comments or short phrases that cannot be assigned to any syntactic pattern. These memes are examined by part of speech as presented in the table below.

The frequency of parts of speech detected in the collected memes		
	Part of speech	**Instances**
1.	Noun Phrase	5
2.	Verb Phrase	1

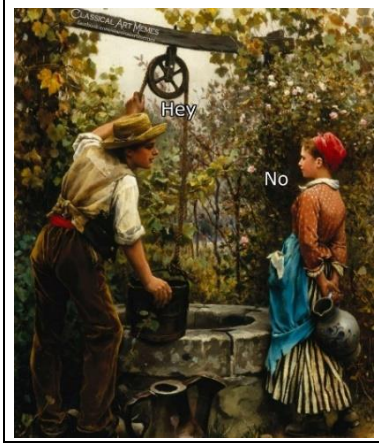
3.	Adverb Phrase	1
4.	Preposition Phrase	1
5.	Interjection	2

Examples 16 and 17 contain dialogues where the humorous effect arises from one-word answers: "*Dinner*" and "*No*". In example 16 the expected answer could have been related to a long-term plan (education, relationships, goals) and not a one-word answer about food. Example 17 shows how the dialogue is terminated immediately after the greeting. These answers are the trigger phrases which consist of one word and therefore are analysed by part of speech. In example 16 trigger phrase "Dinner" is attributed to Noun Phrase, whereas in example 17 trigger phrase "No" is an interjection.

16

	***"Dinner"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: phatic

17

	***"No"*** Syntactic pattern: Interjection Communicative function: phatic

Full examples of the collected memes analysed by part of speech are presented in Appendix, TABLE 8.

3.2. Communicative functions detected in the collected memes

The second part of the analysis focuses on Jakobson's communicative functions and their applicability to the Internet meme text. The research results are presented in the table below.

The frequency of the communicative functions detected in the collected memes		
	Communicative function	**Instances**
1.	Referential	60
2.	Emotive	18
3.	Conative	7
4.	Phatic	13
5.	Metalingual	0
6.	Poetic	2

The empirical analysis has confirmed the hypothesis that there can be several communicative functions applicable to the text. Since the syntactic analysis is the main focus of the Thesis, the analysis of the communicative functions is more limited. Every of the collected memes is given the function which appears to be the most outstanding in the textual representation of the meme.

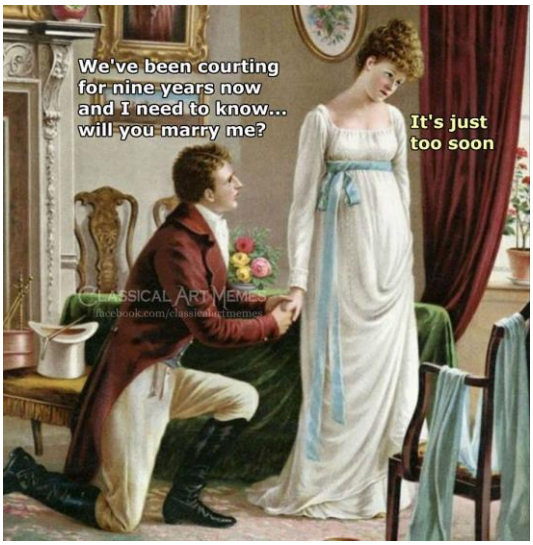
The **referential function** is the most common in the collected memes due to the nature of the art-themed memes – they are mostly targeted at the opposition between the fancy visual representation and the colloquial, even contemporary, speech. For this reason, the meme text usually refers to the overall situation and the general context of both the image and the text.

18



Example 18 shows the clash between the two scripts: the woman represented in the picture is in a rather old-fashioned environment, whereas the textual component “Your order has been shipped” refers to the nowadays world, where ordering packages is considered casual. The opposition between the two worlds create the humorous effect. In this meme the most noticeable is the referential function, as the text refers to the context and the overall situation presented is both the image and the text.

19



Example 19 shows another case of the clash between different understanding of what constitutes a relationship, in this particular situation, a long-term relationship. The humour appears when the woman answers unexpectedly that “It’s just too soon”. The above meme has a strong emotive function; however, the referential function is the most distinctive, as the main focus is given to

the understanding of the situation and the context of the conversation.

20



Example 20 shows a different type of Internet memes, where the image contains two contrasting visual representations. In this particular example, the meme has two scripts clash in the image: the nowadays world and the old times. The above picture represents today's world, whereas the below image present women dressed in an old-fashioned and sophisticated way. The meme displays the referential function as it is targeted at the difference between the two contrasting images, hence the context.

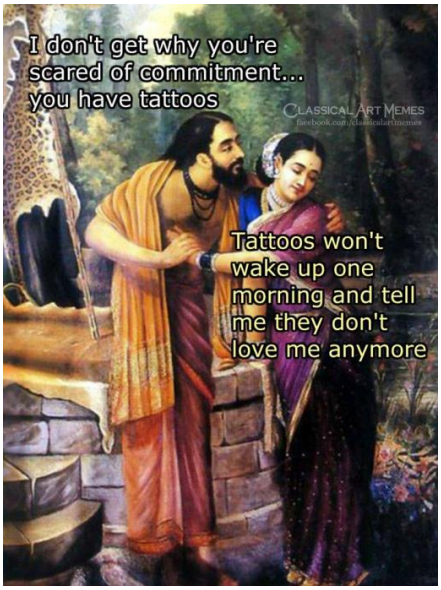
The **emotive function** is also frequent because of the recurrent contradiction of the optimistic image and the negative dialogues. Such memes are targeted more at emotions and thought rather than the general context. Some examples are presented below.

21



Example 21 introduces another type of memes, where there is a caption of the meme as well as a monologue/dialogue. Here the caption "When you stop being shy around new people but start getting annoying" create a rather depressive mood, atmosphere. The woman's words to herself "Why are you like this" create an even more depressing illustration of the situation, and hence the emotive function here is noticeable the most.

22



Example 22 presents a conversation between a man and a woman, which again shows how men and women comprehend relationships in a different manner. The man is talking about commitment and is using the woman's tattoos as an example, which already create a humorous

effect on the basis that love is compared to tattoos. By saying “Tattoos won’t wake up one morning and tell me they don’t love me anymore”, the woman is referring to the love that is received by men. In this meme the humour is created by associating relationship with having tattoos. This meme carries the emotive function, because of the emphasis given to the feelings.

The **conative function** is detected in the memes which contain vocatives and/or imperatives: “*Go away*”, “*You can’t hang out with us*”, “*Let’s lose hope together*”. The examples are presented below.

23



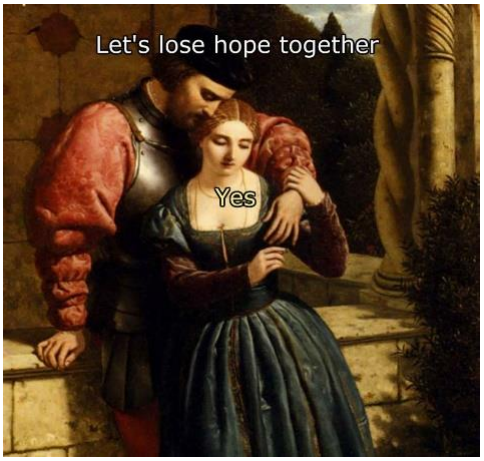
Example 23 shows how the woman cuts of the conversation by saying “Go away”; therefore, the meme carries the conative function. The humorous effect arises from the woman first being upset for nobody wanting to date her; however, when she gets an actual offer, she refuses to accept it. This meme represents how women can be indecisive and change their opinion because of the certain standards they have.

24



In example 24 the meme's trigger phrase "You can't hang out with us" is a common phrase used nowadays in the colloquial language. The clash between the fancy appearing women in the picture and the teenage slang in the textual component create the humorous effect. The meme has a conative function, as the textual component carries the meaning that the woman in the right is not allowed to hang out with the women in the left.

25



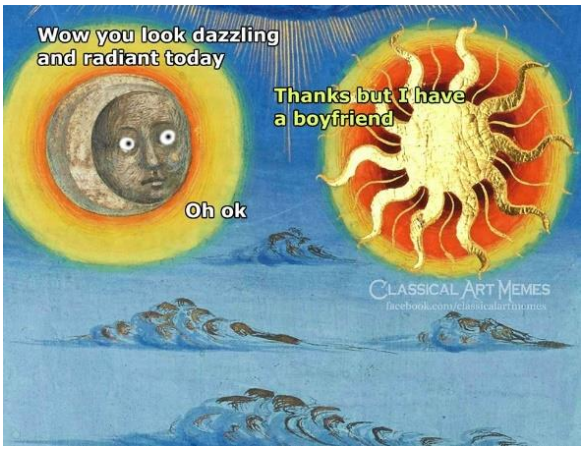
The **phatic function** occurs when the textual components are used to maintain the conversation or to stop it. For example: "*Which ones?*", "*I have a boyfriend*". The examples are presented below.

26



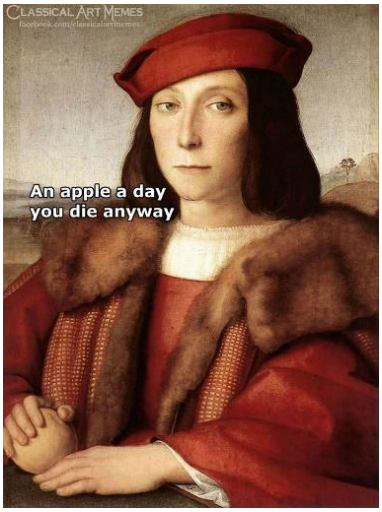
Example 26 contains a dialogue between two women about their issues. The humorous effect arises when the girl in the right ask which problems the girl in the left is referring to, giving the impression that there is more than one. The meme carries the phatic function, as there are clarifying question being asked in order to maintain the conversation.

27



The **poetic function** is detected in two of the collected memes, where the textual components are related to well-known saying and a song.

28



Example 28 contains text which is a reference to a well-known saying “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”. In the meme the text is changed to “An apple a day you die anyway” in order to create the negative yet humorous meaning.

29



Example 29 refers to a popular song “All the single ladies”. The humour here arises from the popular song being presented together with a woman who is dressed in an old-fashioned way. The script opposition – two different worlds – create the humorous effect.

The analysis of the communicative functions and how they can be applied to memes shows that

the meme text can be studied as any other text. The text of the Internet memes is usually short and carries meaning only when presented with the image; however, the meme text is a type of discourse because of its text features.

Analysis shows that communicative functions usually develop from the text and image relationship. Since memes are constructed using both the image and the text, the meaning is naturally conveyed through the entirety of the whole meme. Therefore, both elements are essential for a meme to transmit a meaning and/or information.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Throughout the years the Internet memes have become a sensational phenomenon, which has made the primarily second meaning of the word *meme* more known and popular than the first one. The existing theory on the Internet memes explains that the Internet memes have a certain structure which needs to be followed in order for a certain unit to be classified as a meme. The Internet meme has to consist of two things: the text and the image. The correlation between the text and the image is what makes the meme a full developed unit. Recently the Internet memes have become a field of interest for researches, who have dedicated their time to study the evolution of the memes and provide their scientific discoveries which relate to the phenomenon of the Internet memes. The Internet memes are especially investigated by linguists, who are trying to explain how memes are being created and what makes them special. More and more researchers are studying the Internet memes, which means that the field is still considerably new and there is plenty of research to be made in order to have a full analysis and understanding of the Internet memes.

2. The collected Internet memes have been analysed in terms of their syntactic features as well as taking into consideration the relation between the text and the image. The examples show how each meme can be classified based on its structure and the relation between what is presented in the text and in the image of the meme. The preliminary part of the research gives a number of examples of how a meme can be structuralised; it presents the importance of the image chosen for the meme, and shows how small changes in the text or the image can create a completely unexpected meaning of the meme. Since the memes have been collected from an art-themed *Facebook* page, the humorous effect typically arises from the opposition between the two scenarios: the image and the text.

3. The empirical part presents the syntactic patterns that have been detected in the collected 100 memes. The syntactic patterns have been applied to the trigger phrase – the phrase which contains the humorous textual component. The most frequent syntactic patterns observed during the research are as follows: Subject + Verb + Object, Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun, and Subject + Verb. The focus of the Thesis – the Internet meme – is a sensation in today's world and therefore there is already a substantial number of researchers

who have chosen to analyse the Internet memes and provide their findings and theories to the public. Even though the Internet memes have been a field of discussion for a while, it remains the field which needs further analysis. The pace of the creation and sharing of the Internet memes is increasing and therefore there are a lot of different angles that can be studied and analysed further. The syntactic analysis presented in the Thesis gives a better understanding of how the memes are created and what is needed in order for a certain unit to be classified of the meme. The research shows the relation between the Internet memes and syntax and could serve as a foundation for the future analysis of the Internet memes. The research of the Thesis presents the main sentence models that are used when creating the Internet memes and show different angles of the structuralisation of the Internet memes, which could be used as evidence for further analysis.

4. The Internet memes can be analysed as any other type of discourse. The Thesis examines how memes convey the meaning by applying one of Jakobson's communicative functions. The application of these functions prove that the text of the meme is to be regarded as any textual component, because of its ability to not only carry a certain meaning, but also to create a conflict of only short phrases. The most common communicative functions in the art-themed memes are the referential, conative, and phatic. These functions relate to the context, imperative speech, and maintaining a conversation respectively. Memes can certainly carry several communication functions; however, the present Thesis focuses on distinguishing the most noticeable function in a meme.

5. The Thesis focuses on art-themed memes targeted at women: their image, daily life, emotions, relationships. Because of the recurring conflict between the rich appearing life and the negative dialogues/monologues, the women are presented as depressed and discontent with their lives, even though they appear to be living sophisticated and wealthy lives on the outside. In most of the collected memes, the visual representation is rather positive comparing to the negative thoughts, which usually appear in the textual components of the memes. This shows that women are often portrayed as strong on the outside, but weak and vulnerable in the inside.

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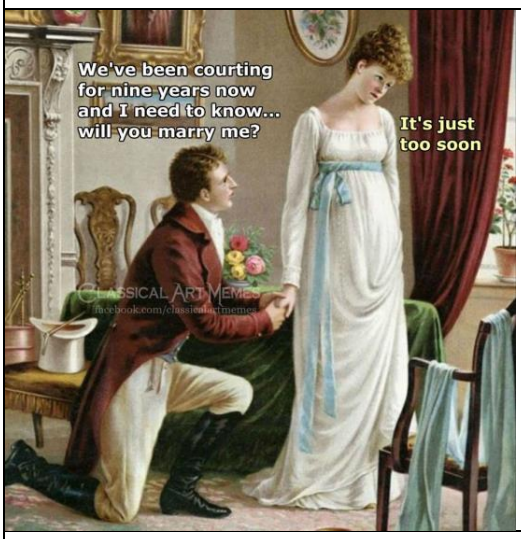
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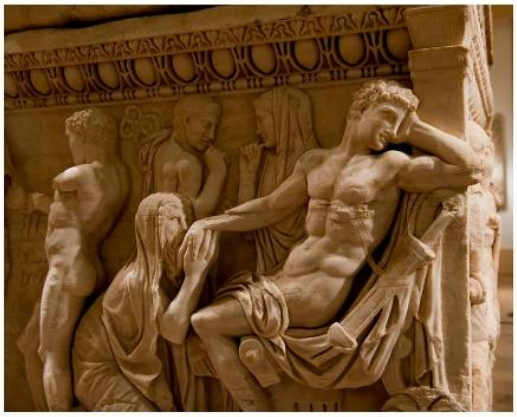
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APPENDIX

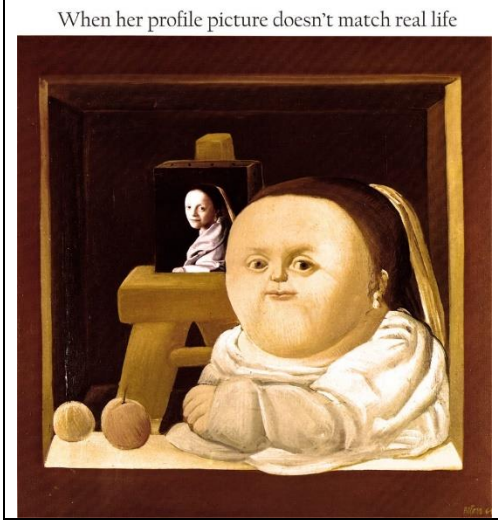
TABLE 1

Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun	
	***"It's just too soon"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"You felt emotionally vulnerable for weeks"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive
When you overhear your name so you instinctively turn around only to realise that they weren't talking to you. You are alone. 	***"You are alone"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive

	***"Who's the lucky guy?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun (*the lucky guys is…*) Communicative function: emotive
When you're a hopeless romantic and he seems different to the others 	***"he seems different to the others"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
How you expect to look when you run into your ex vs how you actually look  	***"how you actually look"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

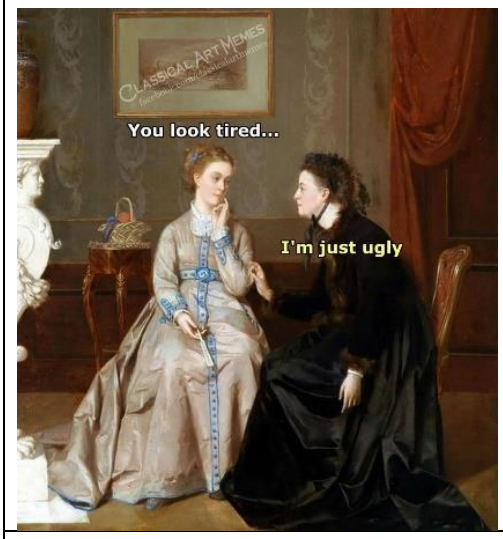
When someone offers you a snack but you're on a diet 	***"you're on a diet"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
When ya break up with ya bf but he starts begging for you back and you know you're gonna get back with him because you're addicted to the drama 	***"you're addicted to the drama"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"My name is Sarah"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

	***"Why are you like this"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun (*you are like this*) Communicative function: emotive
	***"Your order has been shipped"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"there's always tomorrow"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

	***"Your boat looked bigger in your profile picture"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"Since when is this more attractive than this"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun (*this is more attractive than this since…*) Communicative function: referential
	***"When her profile picture doesn't match real life"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

	***"you're cheap"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"You're late"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"your relationships are just one mess after the other"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

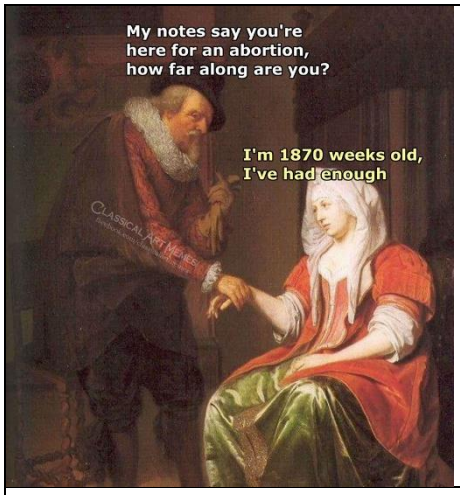
Netflix: Are you still there? Me: 	***"Are you still here?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) (*you are still here*) Communicative function: referential
When you're tipsy and your bad side starts to come out 	***"your bad side starts to come out"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
Me: 2018 is gonna be my year. I'm having a more positive outlook on life, be more productive & socialize more Me rn: 	***"2018 is gonna be my year"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive

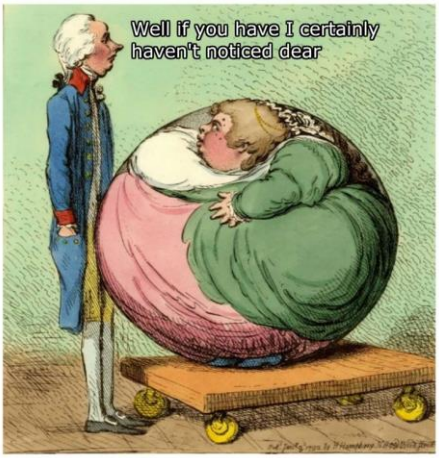
	***"it's just a phase"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive
	***"I'm just ugly"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential
	***"everyone else is asleep"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: referential

	***"Only when I'm awake"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive
	***"I'm not religious"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: phatic
	***"that's a big word for you"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adjective/Noun Communicative function: emotive

TABLE 2

Subject + Verb	
	***"you'll have to ask Grandma"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: referential
When your outfit is on point but your date cancels on you at the last minute 	***„your date cancels on you at the last minute"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: referential
	***"me too!"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: emotive

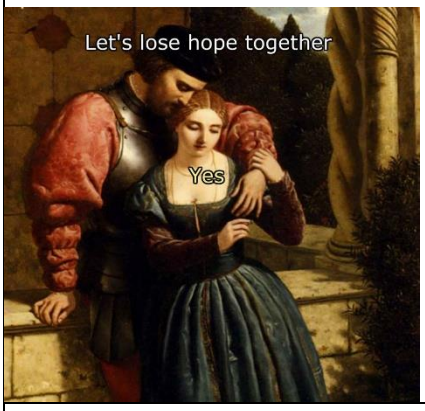
	***"I've had enough"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: emotive
	***"it is"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: phatic
	***"We've only just met"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: phatic

Mirror mirror on the wall, who cares, nothing matters at all 	***"nothing matters at all"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: emotive
	***"You wouldn't understand"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: phatic
When your wife asks if she's put on weight 	***"I certainly haven't noticed dear"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: referential

	***"you'll push through"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: referential
	***"she literally died"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb Communicative function: referential
	***"Promise?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb *([you] promise*) Communicative function: referential

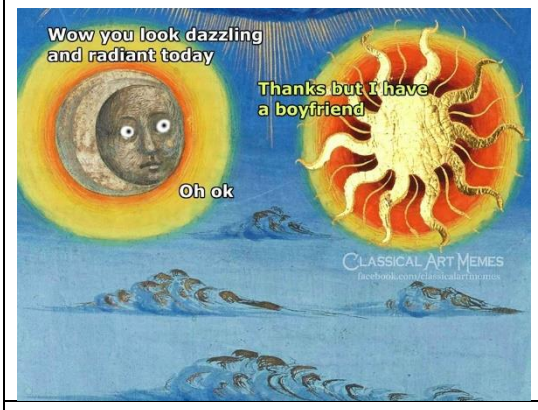
TABLE 3

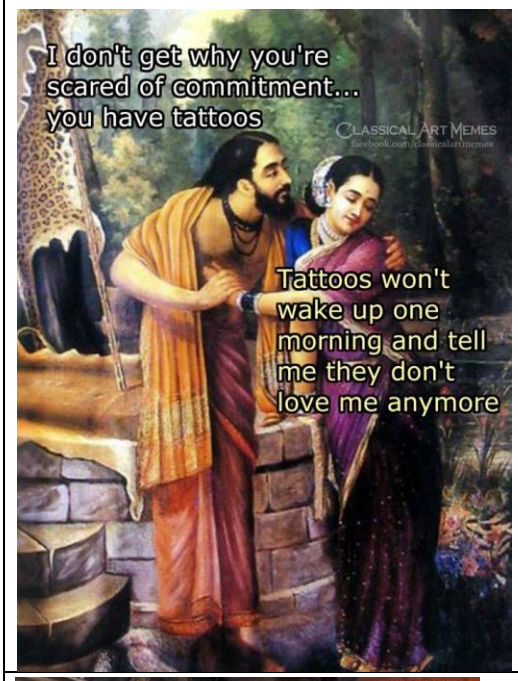
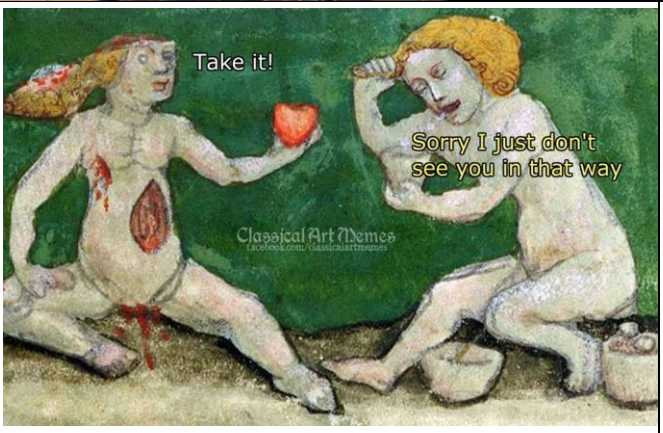
Subject + Verb + Direct Object	
	***"You can't hang out with us"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: conative
	***"it doesn't mean I care"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object (*it doesn't mean [that]*) Direct Object pattern: Subject + Verb (*I care*) Communicative function: emotive
	*"you have undiagnosed asthma"* Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

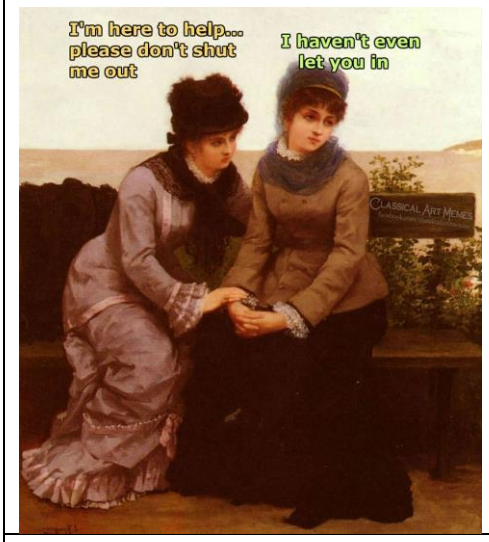
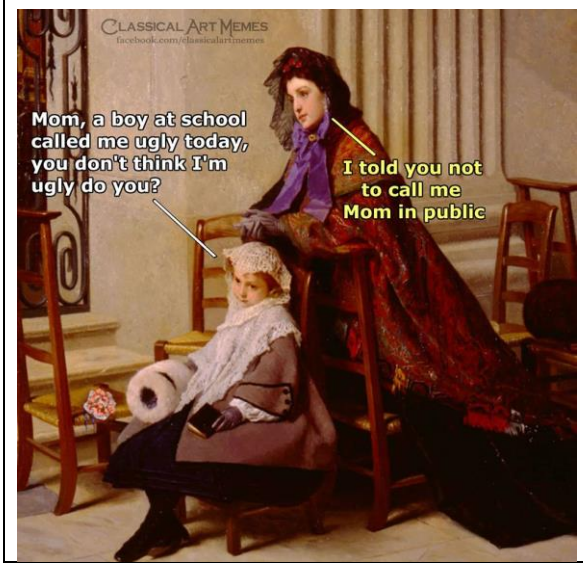
	***"I meant your genetic makeup"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"Let's lose hope together"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: conative
	***"let's watch the Champions League tonight PSG vs Real Madrid"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: conative

	***"trying to impress her"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"I have a boyfriend"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: phatic
	***"I'd like to talk to the manager"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: conative

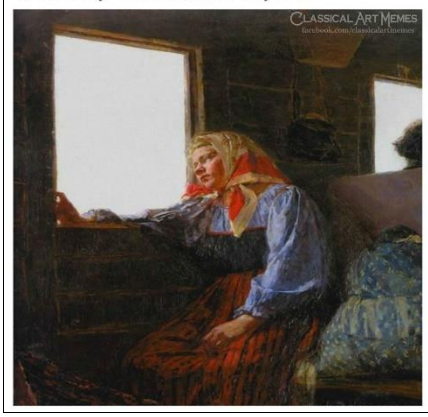
	***"When you find the perfect person to run away from your problems forever with"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"When you finally find your perfect man who just so happens to be an old millionaire with a heart condition"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"he doesn't follow up with any more questions"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

	***"guys who have accents"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"I have a boyfriend"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: phatic
	***"What's your name again?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Object (*your name is [that]*) Communicative function: referential

	***"they don't love me anymore"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: emotive
	***"how much longer do I have to?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object (*I have to [live] for…*) Communicative function: referential
	***"I just don't see you in that way"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

	***"I haven't even let you in"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: phatic
	***"When you read your Facebook posts from 2009"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"I told you not to call me Mom in public"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object (*I told you [that]*) Subject + Verb + Direct Object (*call me Mom*) Communicative function: referential

Her: "Does this dress make me look fat" Him: "Don't blame the dress" 	***"Don't blame the dress"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: conative
Since it's impossible to know which period of my life is the middle, I've decided to have an ongoing crisis. 	***"I've decided to have an ongoing crisis"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"That makes one of us"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

Death: Come on now, off we pop, you've had a good run Me: I'm 35, I'm just not wearing make-up today 	***"I'm just not wearing make-up today"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"Don't bring my financial status into this"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
Anna had tactically placed her bag on the seat next to her, hoping she wouldn't have to socially interact with anyone 	***"she wouldn't have to socially interact with anyone"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

	***"you should smile more"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: emotive
	***"you actually have to go out"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"Me going back for more"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

	***"can't find a good outfit to wear"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"Can you do it twice?"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object (*you can do it twice*) Communicative function: referential
	***"I don't need a transplant"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

	***"you don't know how to react"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"When you get the kids, dog and house in the divorce settlement"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"I'm just having an allergic reaction to existence"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: emotive

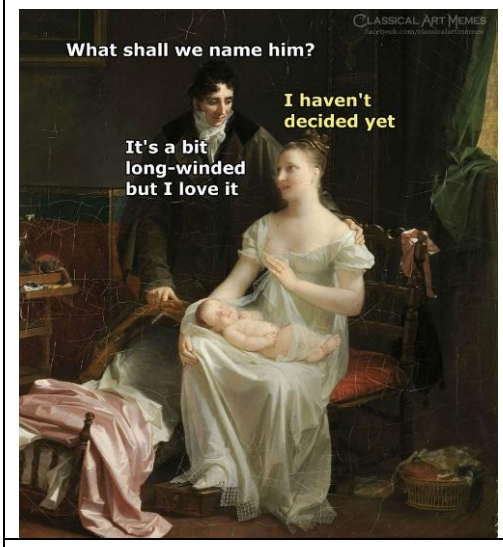
	***"You say that every day"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: emotive
	***"I love it"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential
	***"I just don't want to scare him off"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

TABLE 4

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object	
When she texts you "fine" so you get your boys involved to try and decipher the hidden formula 	***"you get your boys involved to try and decipher the hidden formula"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object Communicative function: referential

TABLE 5

Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location)	
	***"I'd just rather be at home"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: referential
	***"I don't go there anymore"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: referential
	***"let's go to Walmart"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb (link) + Adverb (Location) Communicative function: conative

TABLE 6

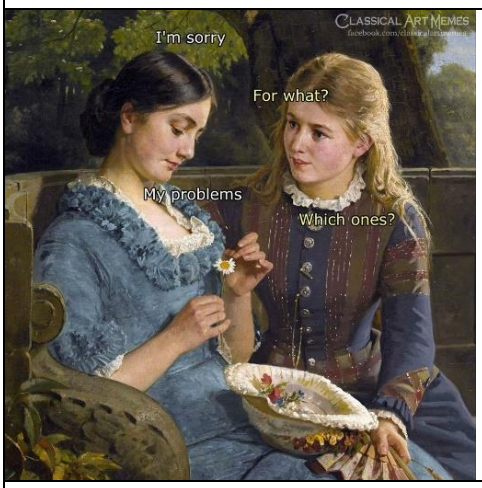
Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction)	
	***"the argument was a month ago"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential
	***"Travel a week into the future"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential
	***"you die anyway"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: poetic

	***"Go away"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: conative
	***"I can't sink that low"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential

TABLE 7

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction)	
	***"I made this one specially for you"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential
	***"You did that yesterday"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential
"Studies show you meet your soul mate before the age of 25" Me: 	***"you meet your soul mate before the age of 25"*** Syntactic pattern: Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Adverb (Direction) Communicative function: referential

TABLE 8

PARTS OF SPEECH	
Noun Phrase	
	***"Which ones?"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: phatic
	***"Me"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: emotive
	***"Dinner"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: phatic

	***"All the single ladies"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: poetic
	***"Nine…"*** Syntactic pattern: Noun Phrase Communicative function: referential
Verb Phrase	



"Seen"

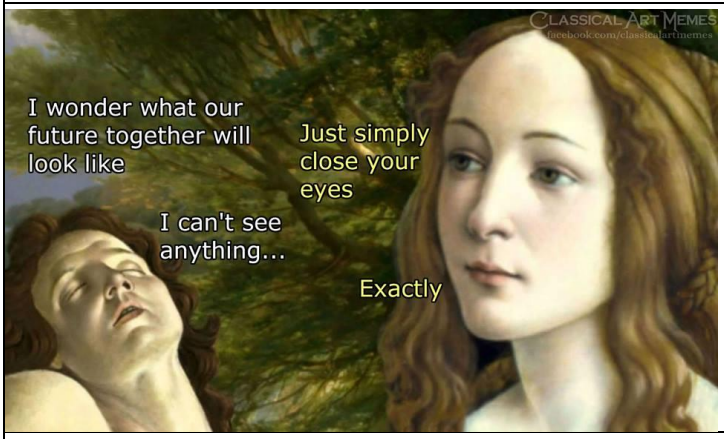
Syntactic pattern:

Verb Phrase

Communicative function:

phatic

Adverb Phrase



"Exactly"

Syntactic pattern:

Adverb Phrase

Communicative function:

phatic

Preposition Phrase



"For two days?"

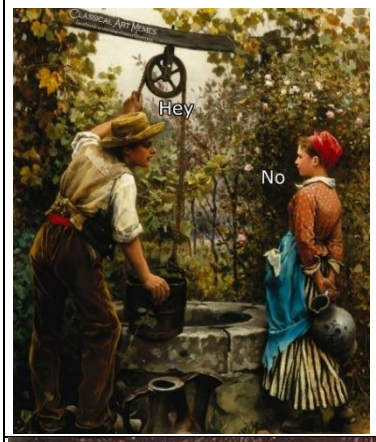
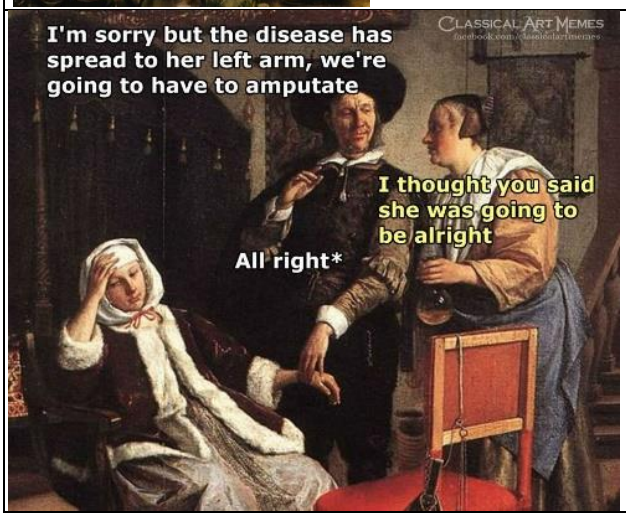
Syntactic pattern:

Prepositional Phrase

Communicative function:

phatic

Interjection

	***"No"*** Syntactic pattern: Interjection Communicative function: phatic
	***"All right"*** Syntactic pattern: Interjection Communicative function: referential

SUMMARY

Internet memes is a fascinating phenomenon, which has spread all over the world in a rather short period of time and has received a lot of attention in the past few decades. The amount of topics that memes cover is enormous – they are aimed to discuss the most important things in life, such as friendships, relationships, life goals, struggles, money, and education. Even though memes are mostly created and shared by teenagers or young adults, everyone is taking interest in them – people are joining groups and following Internet pages where memes of a certain topic are being shared with everyone. The mentioned meme pages and groups are especially popular in social networking sites where people of different age and culture have the opportunity to become a part of a certain group. A number of researchers have dedicated their time to study memes and provide explanation to most frequent questions which arise when analysing the evolution of memes. Thesis "The Language of Memes: A Syntactic Analysis of *Classical Art Memes*" focuses on the history and the evolution of memes, provides criteria which are needed for a certain unit to be qualified as a meme, and analyses memes which have been shared in one of the currently most popular meme pages called *Classical Art Memes*. The aim of the Thesis is to analyse the language of the Internet memes in terms of syntactic features. In order to provide a thorough analysis, the following objectives have been set: to establish the concept of the Internet meme by studying and presenting recent literature, to carry out a syntactic analysis of the humorous textual component in the collected memes applying the syntactic framework, to establish the syntactic patterns most frequently used in the collected memes, to apply communicative functions to the collected memes, and to determine how women are presented in the art-themed memes. The Thesis presents the syntactic patterns which are most frequently found in the meme text and discussed the mentioned patterns in a greater detail. The research shows the importance of syntax when it comes to analysing the Internet memes and gives an explanation of how syntax can be used as a tool for analysing the Internet memes. The Thesis can be considered as a foundation for further and deeper analysis of the Internet memes.

SANTRAUKA

Interneto memai – tai įspūdingas fenomenas, per trumpą laiką išplitęs visame pasaulyje ir paskutiniais dešimtmečiais prikaustęs daugelio internautų dėmesį. Temų, kurias aprėpia memai, įvairovė yra itin plati, o sukurtų ir šiuo metu egzistuojančių memų kiekiai internete – neapčiuopiami. Memai kuriami siekiant pavaizduoti svarbiausius gyvenimo aspektus, tokius kaip draugystė, santykiai, gyvenimo tikslai, sunkumai, pinigai ir išsilavinimas. Nors memus daugiausiai kuria ir jais dalinasi paaugliai ir jauni suaugusieji, vyresniesiems jie taip pat įdomūs – įvairaus amžiaus žmonės buriasi į grupes, seka memų internetinius puslapius. Minėtieji memų puslapiai ypač populiarūs socialinių tinklų svetainėse, ypač internautų dažnai lankojome *Facebook* svetainėje. Tokiose svetainėse skirtingo amžiaus, kultūrų ir pažiūrų žmonės turi galimybę tapti tam tikros grupės dalimi ir domėtis tik tam tikros tematikos memais. Yra nemažai tyrėjų, kurie nusprendė savo laiką paskirti studijuoti memus ir pateikti atsakymus į dažniausiai kylančius klausimus apie tai, kaip memai atsirado, kaip jie tapo tokie populiarūs, ir paspėlioti, kokia ateitis memų laukia. „Memų kalba. *Classical Art Memes* sintaksinė analizė“ pateikia teorinės medžiagos apie memus santrauką, paaiškina, kas yra laikoma memu, ir analizuoja memus, pateiktus viename populiariausių šių dienų memų puslapyje *Classical Art Memes,* kuriame dalinamasi memais, vaizduojančiais klasikinio meno kūrinius. Bakalauro darbo tikslas – išanalizuoti interneto memų kalbą pagal jų sintaksinius, kalbinius ir vaizdinius bruožus bei atskleisti, kaip memuose vaizduojamos moterys. Tikslui pasiekti iškelti šie uždaviniai: apibrėžti, kas yra internetinis memas, atlikti išsamią surinktų duomenų analizę pagal sintaksines savybes, nustatyti sukurtose memose aptinkamus modelius ir padaryti išvadas remiantis tyrimų rezultatais. Taip pat memams pritaikomos komunikacijos funkcijos, leidžiančios pasigilinti į memų kalbą ir reikšmę. Bakalauro darbas pateikia dažniausiai memose aptinkamus sakinių modelius ir pateikia gilesnę minėtųjų modelių analizę. Bakalauro darbo analizė parodo sintaksės mokslo reikšmę atliekant interneto memų analizę ir paaiškina, kuo sintaksė yra naudinga giliau studijuojant interneto memus. Bakalauro darbas pateikia pamatus, padėsiančius tolimesniam internetinių memų tyrinėjimui.