

THE LIFE OF COVID-19 MASK MEMES: A DIACHRONIC STUDY OF THE PANDEMIC MEMESCAPE

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INTRODUCTION



Meme,

cultural unit, a piece of cultural knowledge, which is introduced into individual minds through copying or imitation. It spreads among individuals and societies through replication.



Covid-19,

has generated a great deal of humorous content, which has been used as an escape valve from the complexity of the situation experienced.

OBJECTS AND METHODS

This study focuses on COVID-19 mask memes, a prominent and socially relevant topic during the COVID-19 pandemic (in addition to quarantine and confinement), disseminated between January 2020 and January 2021.

Python script to collect random diachronic data from Google Images

N=1008
January 2020 to
January 2021

10 mutually exclusive categories of memes

CONCLUSIONS



Whether they represent autotelic forms of humour or do not contain any humour at all, memes and memetic constructs are inspired by and thus reflect socio-political situations, including the very need to wear a mask.



As expected, users' memetic activity seems to be induced by the socio-political context, with confinement as a crucial factor in promoting memetic productivity.



The memes about COVID-19 became so notorious that they were shared and appreciated by users who are not used to engaging in memetic practices on social networks.

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