

From International to National, from Online to Offline: The Case Study of One Meme

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Abstract

The phenomenon of internet memes is familiar to most internet users. At the same time, there is an evident dominance of English production – those who want to see the latest memes must follow social networks in English. Nevertheless, does the Czech cultural environment adopt and adapt resources from transcultural discourse? What are the expectations of the Czech recipient/ audiences and from which discursive conventions, genres and patterns do they stem? I will try to demonstrate this with the case of the “Any doctor here?” meme, which came into Czech discourse first through simple translations and variations until a version was created that changed the overall point of the meme. The meme was not just another adaptation of the original media product but a separate pattern around which its own “field” of memes was created, in which other situations and people were linked, and even, according to the Czech representation of Dr Oetker company, there was a surge of interest in the molehill cake.

I am particularly interested in this double shift from the perspective of intermedial and multimodal studies. Firstly, from an international context through the combination of the picture meme and viral amateur video transposition into a national context, and secondly, the media shift from the picture meme to a range of media products, from a commonly used phraseme in verbal communication, when speakers wanted to express their pleasure or joy at the information conveyed, to guerrilla performances where customers wrote a quote from the meme on price tags in supermarkets, to the use of elements of the meme in the marketing communications of various companies.

Keywords

Meme, national context, offline, online

Bio

Mgr. et Mgr. Matěj Kos (*1997) is a doctoral student of Czech literature in the joint study program of Masaryk University Brno and the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences; his supervisor is the literary theorist doc. PhDr. Alice Jedličková, CSc. In his dissertation “A Living Classics? Significant Literary Works in an Intermedial Perspective”, Kos tries to map the transmediation of classical Czech literary works with the help of intermedial and multimodal studies. In September 2023, Kos completed a fellowship at the Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies, Linnaeus University, Växjö. In English, he published together with his supervisor the scholarly article “Ballads and Legends. Media Transformations of Canonical Narratives in Polish and Czech Culture” in *Poznanskie Studia Slawistyczne* in year 2022.

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