Multimodal viral communication: a social-semiotic analysis of the popular Spanish “Ola ke ase” meme

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Multimodality – the interdependence of semiotic resources in text – is an existential element of today’s media. The term multimodality attends systematically to the social interpretation of a wide range of communicational forms used in meaning making. A primary focus of social-semiotic multimodal analysis is on mapping how modal resources are used by people in a given social context. In November 2012 the “Ola ke ase” catchphrase, which is a play on “Hola ¿qué hace?”, appeared for the first time in Spain and immediately has been adopted as a Twitter hashtag and an image macro series. Its viral spread on social networks has been tremendous, being a trending topic in various Spanish-speaking countries. The objective of analysis is how language and image work together in the “Ola ke ase” meme. The interplay between text and image in one of the original memes and some of its variations is quantitatively analysed applying a social-semiotic approach. Results demonstrate how the “Ola ke ase” meme functions through its multimodal character and the non-standard orthography. The spread of uncountable variations of the meme shows the social process that goes on in the meaning making of the semiotic elements.

References


