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Abstract

Presently it seems as though the creation and proliferation of slang on social media has crossed borders and become widespread, allowing users of any nationality to be granted access to this array of highly specific vocabulary in languages that differ from their mother tongues. This study aims to explore a specific case of the expansion of English social media slang into Spanish speakers' vocabularies. In order to do so, a survey was created and distributed that tested Spanish social network users' knowledge of these terms. Furthermore, a thorough analysis was then conducted to establish whether participants had indeed begun to recognise, understand and adopt the slang in question. The findings extracted demonstrated that subjects had varying degrees of knowledge that was proportional and dependant on their usage of different platforms, regards of this type of language as well as, curiously enough, their gender.

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1. Introduction

The coinage and use of slang in general seems to be an extremely controversial and opinion sparking matter. While many have previously held beliefs about it being a degeneration of the language, others see it as a highly creative and innovative way of enriching their vocabularies. These contrasting opinions have led to numerous dialogues concerning the notion of appropriateness of this type of language and in which contexts it should truly be used.

Fortunately, the aforementioned more favourable regard is defended by linguists such as Thorne (2014), who highlighted the many positive ways in which slang may be used such as “for ease of communication, for clarification, to show solidarity or – a reason sometimes overlooked by analysts – just for fun.” (p. I). Furthermore, the use of this colloquial and often playful language is linked to the idea of individuals developing their own personalities and identifying with a specific group of speakers as well as creating bonds between them (Eble, 1996).

Taking this idea into account, it comes as no surprise that internet users in general, and social media users in specific, appear to have created their own subcategory of slang in order to communicate effectively in their particular contexts. Through the use of slang, they are able to identify themselves as part of specific online communities, become easily recognisable as participants of such and, finally, be able to establish ties with other members. Moreover, the terms they choose to employ seem to only be fully understood by these users and coiners themselves, the true meanings and connotations being lost on outsiders, rendering these posts inaccessible for them.

A notion previously considered by Eble (2003) was how the internet would be a perfect way to distribute slang “giving it unprecedented opportunities for diffusion across boundaries of geography, age, gender, education, occupation and so forth.” (p. 147). Interestingly enough, with the passage of time and the growth in popularity

and usage of the internet and microblogs, these ideas held true. The slang found on these networking sites does not seem to be geographically constrained, rather, just as social media itself, appears to have been globalised and is now used internationally. In regards specifically to English slang on social media, this results in a growing amount of non-native speakers employing these terms in order to communicate on their preferred platforms. In other words, this highly distinctive slang is not only being created and spread through social networks but also adopted by L2 speakers, regardless of their nationalities or mother tongues.

One case of speakers that possibly follow this trend may be Spanish users of these networking sites such as Instagram or Twitter, who seem to have adopted different examples of English slang. Though this may come as a surprise to some, it seems as though this has become a new way of acquiring English vocabulary, albeit a highly specific and colloquial type.

In hopes of proving that this interesting development is indeed taking place, the general topic of this study will be a look into how young adult Spanish speakers use English slang on social media platforms. Through this hopefully observing how this highly specific and creative vocabulary is adopted by L2 speakers of the language and seemingly used and understood completely.

This topic was chosen as a result of a combination of interests and previous knowledge on the subject. From a personal point of view, as a user of social media and of the slang that is proliferated on it, coming across several interesting cases of L2 speakers using these expressions not only in online communication, but also in face to face interactions, has been captivating. Due to this, a further investigation into this occurrence is deemed necessary in order to discover if this slang is used in an arbitrary manner or if it is indeed understood. From an academic perspective previous endeavours into projects regarding slang and sociolinguistics have provided insights into its extreme creativity, as well as how these terms may be used and by whom.

To be able to develop the topic of this research, the present study will be divided into various sections. Firstly, in the subsequent second section a brief literature review is given to reference significant definitions, theories and previous studies surrounding the topic that have been greatly taken into account. The third and fourth sections are dedicated to the description of the research objectives and methodology used to conduct the study. Section five consists of the analysis and discussion of results extracted from the survey conducted, it is segmented into five further subsections that aim to explore all answers recollected and comply with the objectives set out. Finally, the last section concludes and summarises the study.

2. English slang and social media

In order to approach this study and analysis, theories and definitions surrounding the concepts of slang, social media and second language acquisition of this type of vocabulary must be taken into account so as to build a framework on which this research will be based.

As previously stated, slang seems to be quite a polemic subject and therefore has been defined from various diverging perspectives. However, for the purpose of this present study, slang will be understood according to authors such as Crystal (2003), Thorne (2014) or Eble (1996) who all relate slang to a type of informal or colloquial language used by speakers of all walks of life primarily to establish themselves as parts of distinct groups.

Further elaborating upon this definition, Eble (1996) highlights the importance of slang's particular characteristics that serve as indicators to truly recognise such terms. Taking into account criteria established by Dumas and Lighter (1978), the author summarises the outstanding features of slang including its ephemerality, innovative nature, informality, in addition to how it identifies a specific group of speakers and creates bonds between them. Finally, Eble also differentiates slang from other categories of vocabulary such as regionalisms, which are geographically

restricted; jargon, specific vocabulary regarding professions; cant and argot, language used by thieves, and profanity, though slang may overlap at times.

Delving deeper into slang cultivated on the internet, authors such as the previously mentioned Eble (2003) as well as Coleman (2012) affirm that the internet is indeed a perfect breeding ground for slang to be cultivated as “The internet builds connections between people, and these connections generate new networks of slang” in addition, if these terms become popular enough “Computer users who come across unfamiliar slang terms may start to use them both online and in speech” (p. 267) consolidating them into their vocabularies. In regards to the slang proliferated specifically on social media it has been defined previously by Zappavigna (2012) as “a subset of slang used on the internet” that many times “appropriates slang originally used within subcultures. The original meanings and identity patterns associated with this slang are recontextualised, realigning with the semiotic activity undertaken via channels such as microblogging” (p. 148) In other words, these slang terms many times seem to stem from words that are generally used in other spheres but converge and are consolidated into a new subcategory by many online users wishing to establish bonds.

Concerning how slang has sparked an interest for L2 speakers and may become a way to learn new vocabulary in a second language, Lieb (2009) remarked on how it seems to be neglected in ESL and EFL teaching and made compelling arguments for slang to be included in curricular activities. However, in the general absence of slang in the classroom, except for in particular cases, L2 speakers seem to take it upon themselves to learn this vocabulary either directly or indirectly through other methods. Few studies in general have been conducted on this matter but some worth highlighting are Charkova (2007) and Namvar (2014) who analysed L2 speakers’ acquisition of English slang in Bulgaria and Malaysia respectively. The results of which will be taken into consideration and contrasted with the conclusions of this study.

Lastly, in relation to gender differences in the usage of slang, slang has typically been considered a primarily male domain that has been evened over time (DeKlerk, 1990; Labov, 1992). In studies of slang used by L2 speakers Kim (2004) found that males have a more positive regard and increased usage, though others including the aforementioned Charkova (2007) once again found no clear marked difference.

These will be the main sources taken into account from a theoretical perspective in this research. This study in particular will defer from the previously mentioned looks into slang used by non-native English speakers as it will depict the usage of an extremely specific subset of slang by Spanish speakers, as well as a look into possible gender bias.

3. Objectives

Turning to the objectives of this study, the general overarching purpose will be to explore the knowledge and usage of English social media slang by young adult Spanish users. Stemming from this main goal, three specific ideas surrounding this topic will also be carefully analysed;

The first specific aim will be to ensure that a selection of these slang terms that are spread through social media, are not only widely recognised by the described users with ease, but also are admittedly used when posting messages on their platforms of choice. This aim will hopefully serve as a confirmation of how Spanish users do indeed come across these terms regularly and choose to adopt them.

The second aim will be to take a further look into how these terms are used once they have been identified. The goal will be to check if the expressions taken into consideration are actually understood by Spanish users or if they are simply used in an arbitrary manner, perhaps following patterns, but not truly comprehending the meaning of these terms or how to use them in contexts correctly. Through this goal the notion of social media being an unlikely place to learn the colloquial side to a foreign language may also be commented upon.

Finally, a variable that will be taken into account will be the differences that may arise due to gender. The hypothesis that this study will aim to confirm or disprove, formed based on introspection, consists on how females may understand with more ease, and consequently use these slang terms with more frequency, than males. Through this, perhaps demonstrating that female participants may be more inclined to use slang in a foreign language and at the same time be learning a second language.

4. Methodology

In order to comply with these objectives, the methodological process of this research involves a quantitative study divided into various stages to be able to recollect the data needed. The first being an initial stage of design in which relevant slang terms were selected and a questionnaire was created. The second stage includes this survey being handed out and completed by the intended demographic. The third and final stage consist of the analysis of results gathered.

In relation to the selection of slang that would be included in the questionnaire, many terms were initially collected through observation of the language used on networking platforms. Once what was considered to be an acceptable collection was compiled, each word was then searched for in contemporary slang dictionaries such as Thorne's *Dictionary of contemporary slang* and Dalzell's *The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English*, in order to establish if they had been previously recorded, truly regarded as slang terms and in which spheres they existed. Though some terms were verified this way, due to the spontaneous and ever-changing nature of slang many did not appear in these publications. As a result, some words were then searched for instead on *Urban Dictionary*, an online crowdsourced dictionary that is mostly used to compile current slang terms. Definitions of the terms are usually followed by examples, indications as to in which contexts they may be used and a record of the popularity of the word. Once each slang term was verified, a definitive list was compiled of twenty slang terms used

frequently on social networks nowadays. All these terms range in difficulty and transparency when it comes to their true meanings and connotations, however, in all cases seem to be employed profusely on these platforms. The final list of terms included an array of nouns, verbs, adjectives and expressions as can be observed in the following table (For definitions see Appendix A).

Table 1. Slang terms included.

| Nouns | Verbs | Adjectives | Expressions |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| <i>Bop</i> | <i>Roast</i> | <i>Goals</i> | <i>I can't even</i> |
| <i>Kween</i> | <i>Ship</i> | <i>Lit</i> | <i>Same</i> |
| <i>Legend</i> | <i>Spill the tea</i> | <i>Salty</i> | <i>We been knew</i> |
| <i>Mood</i> | <i>Stan</i> | <i>Shady</i> | <i>Wig snatched</i> |
| <i>Savage</i> | <i>Wheeze</i> | <i>Shook</i> | |
| | | <i>Woke</i> | |

Once these terms were selected, the full questionnaire was then created (See Appendix B). It was to be formed by three major parts each designed in order to collect as much relevant data to analyse as possible. The first part consisted of a sociodemographic section in which participants were asked to give information about themselves in order to establish if those who answered were indeed the intended demographic i.e. Spanish speakers, aged between 18 and 25 who use social media. In this section some preliminary questions were asked such as how frequently they use social media as well as how they use it, whether only to read posts or if they also produce content, these questions would later be taken into account to see if the amount or type of usage would affect their knowledge of the slang.

The second part of this survey included three different activities in order to test the subjects' knowledge on the slang terms chosen in addition to see if they truly understand them. The first being an activity in which subjects would have to choose the correct synonym for the words, another in which they would have to select the correct definition and, finally, an activity in which they had to choose the correct

words or expressions that fit into certain contexts, would serve as correct reactions to situations or would fill in the blank in a sentence adequately.

The final part consisted in a group of questions posed to the participants in order to see if they had opinions on the topic: if they recognised and used these terms, what they think of them, frequency of use, and if they truly believed that they used them correctly. Though these questions may generate subjective answers, it may be interesting to see if their final thoughts match their overall results and the information gathered on their type of usage of social media.

Once this initial stage of design was finalised the questionnaire was then sent out to the intended demographic, after a brief period in which the answers were gathered, thirty subjects participated. All participants formed a homogeneous group, remain anonymous and were formed by an even number of both males and females so as to be able to look into the aforementioned gender hypothesis. Through this enough data was recollected to be able to try to fulfil all of the aims of this project.

5. Result analysis

The information gathered from the quantitative research was varied and must be commented upon from various perspectives in order to achieve the aims of this study. Firstly, some brief comments on the participants involved and their answers to the first sociodemographic and initial questions must be addressed so as to point out how this could possibly effect the results of the rest of the survey. Next, in order to determine whether any of the chosen slang terms were indeed recognised and understood, an overall analysis of the section on activities included in the survey will be carried out. These activities will be divided into two major groups depending on the nature of the exercises so as to allow for contrasts and comparisons to be drawn. After this, the participants' final thoughts and qualitative data will be commented upon to see if their regards match the results found. Finally, gender as a variable of

the answers given will be looked into in order to prove or disprove the previously explained hypothesis.

5.1. Participants' usage of social media.

As stated in the previous section of this study, the participants involved were all Spanish young adults, half were males and the other half were females. In terms of how they use social media just under 57% admitted to using networking sites for more than three hours a day, another 17% deemed their usage to be between two to three hours a day, 23% said they logged on between one or two hours a day, whereas only one participant said that they very rarely used social media at all. In terms of which sites or applications the participants had a preference for, Instagram ranked in at number one with a total of 90% of participants selecting the application, Twitter was also marked by almost half of the subjects. Finally, regarding how they use social media, over 76% reported to be using it to both read posts as well as create their own posts. When asked in which language or languages they tended to use social media in, 60% said to use it in both their mother tongue as well as second languages including English, the other 40% admitted to posting only in their native language. This data will be of great importance when analysing the answers to the activities in the following points as depending on which sites, for how long and how social media is used in general, participants will be expected to identify the slang terms with ease or not. Considering the general results outlined in these last few lines, the majority of participants will indeed be expected to recognise, understand and complete the activities in a satisfactory manner if the hypotheses of this study hold true. This should be kept in mind throughout the subsequent analysis.

5.2. Major results from the activities.

In regards to the answers obtained from the first group of exercises entailing isolated slang terms which participants had to choose the correct definition or synonym for, results were fairly mixed. As can be seen in figure 1 below, a number of

terms had quite a positive response indicating that subjects did indeed not only recognise them but also know exactly what they meant. This is the case especially of the expressions *to roast, a legend* and *I can't even* which received overwhelmingly correct answers. However, *to be lit* places on the other end of the scale as a completely misunderstood term, in this case just under half of the participants chose incorrect answers towards it demonstrating that though they may have recognised it, they did not understand its true meaning. Finally, in terms of expressions which were mostly unrecognised *wheeze* was unknown to over fifty percent of those who answered. From this first set of exercises, in general, a positive conclusion can be drawn. As can be observed in the total tally of correct answers, incorrect ones and completely unrecognised terms, correct answers are slightly more abounding than both incorrect and unknown terms combined, though just by a little.

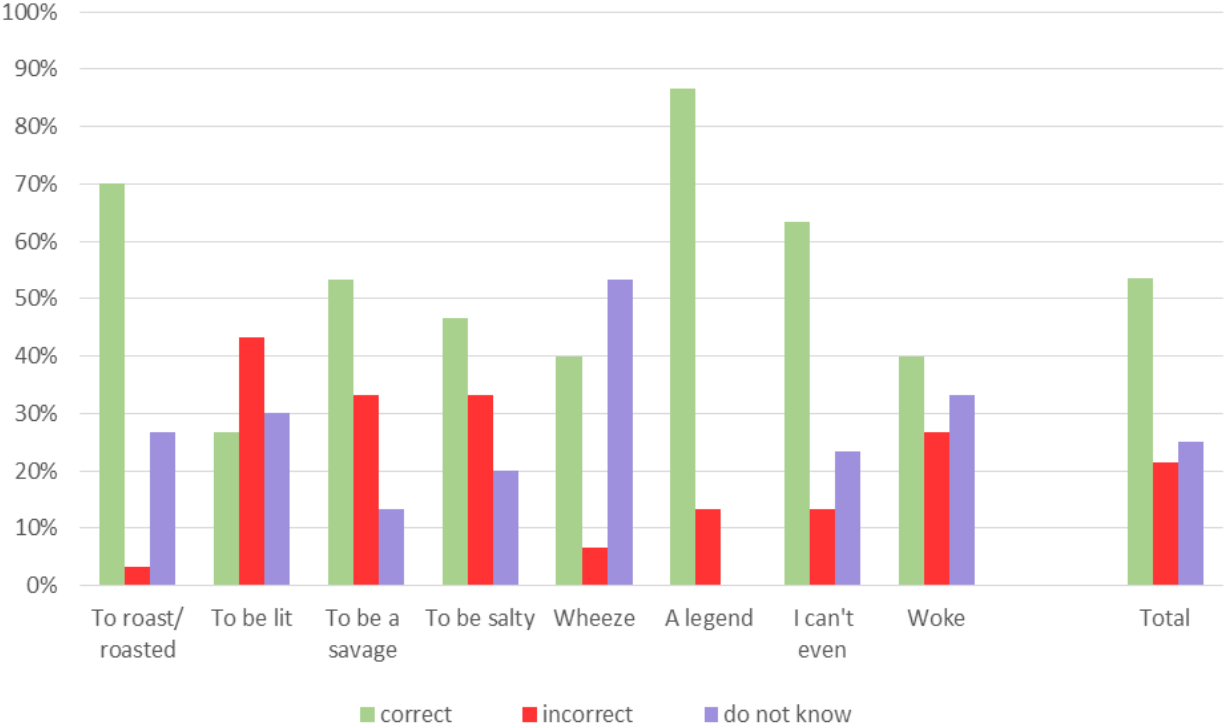


Figure 1. Answers to first group of questions: definitions and synonyms.

Turning now to the second set of activities, these included choosing the correct slang terms or expressions that fit into certain contexts or served as correct reactions to a prompt. In this case the overall results were extremely more definitive and

reflect what seems to be a much deeper understanding of this group of slang terms and expressions. As can be observed in figure 2, the majority of the words received a profuse amount of correct responses, some stand out terms that were answered correctly by almost all participants include *goals*, *to ship*, *shook* and *mood*, followed by *yas kween*, *spill the tea*, *same* and *we been knew*, which were correctly identified by at least sixty percent of participants in all cases. In stark contrast, from this group of exercises there were absolutely no overwhelming incorrect answers to any slang terms, in fact, in various cases there were none to very little incorrect answers at all. Regarding unknown terms, both *wig snatched* and *shady* seem to have very much divided results, while many identified them correctly almost the same amount of subjects recognised that they did not know of these terms. On average for this second group of exercises there was certainly more of a positive result that outweighs the incorrect or unknown answers by almost half, it seems as though these exercises which provided a context in which to place the words aided the participants in recognising the slang terms with ease.

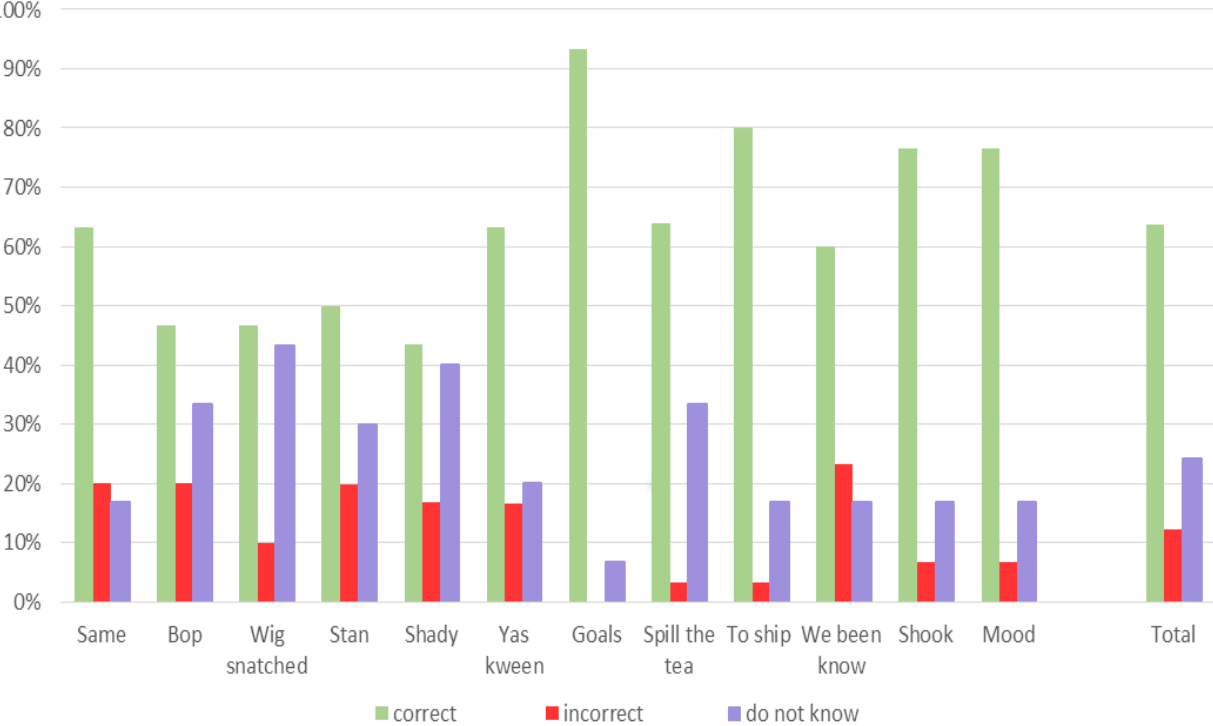


Figure 2. Answers to second group of questions: fill in the blank and reactions.

Comparing the results from these two groups of activities some interesting information can be gathered. It seems that the activities that include a context yield a much more positive result as well as help the participants to identify the correct slang words. Though it seems to be harder for Spanish social media users to give precise definitions or synonyms of slang, in most cases they do know how to employ these words and in which contexts they are supposed to be used. This can be observed especially in the last seven slang words in figure 2, from *yas kween* to *mood*, these slang terms were the correct reactions to certain stimuli or situations. In all seven cases a great majority of participants were able to answer correctly. These positive results are understandable as many times on social media slang terms are indeed employed in this manner, as reactions to posts and situations or surrounded by specific contexts.

From this look into the answers gathered from the activities in the questionnaire it may be concluded that, though it is not the case of every single slang term or expression chosen, there are indeed some highly specific English social media slang words that are recognised by Spanish speakers. A small portion of the slang terms looked into in these activities are indeed unrecognised or incorrectly interpreted and proved to be too obscure or difficult for the participants, demonstrating that not all English social media slang is being adopted. However, in general, most of the slang terms, especially those which received almost no incorrect answers such as *to roast*, *a legend*, *goals*, *to ship*, *shook* and *mood*, seem to have gained great popularity with Spanish social media users, have become widespread and almost unanimously recognised and understood. In summary, these terms have been demonstrated by subjects to be recognised and understood. Therefore, if used, they will not be employed in an arbitrary manner but in a purposeful one, though many times seemingly relying on contextual information to fully comprehend or convey what is being said.

5.3. The model slang user.

In regards to how the information provided by participants on their usage of social media commented upon at the start of this point can be related to the results and findings, depending on how and how much they claim to use social media the results of the activities they completed are proportional. After comparing individual results, it was found that those who recognised and understood the majority if not all of the slang, were those who had previously claimed to spend at least two hours or more a day on social media and almost all used their platforms to both post and read content in their mother tongues in addition to other languages such as English. Conversely, the participants that struggled the most to recognise slang terms or frequently answered incorrectly claimed to use social media for less than two hours a day and mostly only used social networks in their mother tongues. Another interesting factor to take into consideration was that those who stated that they used Twitter then gave more correct results than those who only used Instagram or other applications. This is quite logical as Instagram tends to be used generally to post photographs and videos, whereas Twitter is primarily used to create text posts and therefore those who use it may come into contact or use slang terms more frequently.

Through this data it may be stated that depending on the amount and type of usage of social media there will be a negative or positive effect on users' knowledge of slang that is found on these sites. This may lead to the conclusion that the English slang words included in this study are indeed being employed and encountered by those who use social media on a frequent basis.

5.4. Participants' final thoughts.

In order to demonstrate, provide more weight to or dismiss the previous findings, some of the qualitative data recollected from the final questions incorporated into the survey must be commented upon. These questions were posed so as to gain a supposedly honest insight into the opinions of the participants on the

slang that they had encountered throughout the questionnaire. Though these answers may be tinged with slight subjectivity, a relation between these final thoughts of the participants and the previously described results may be established. It may be of interest to see if the opinions parallel the overall conclusions reached from the analysis of the activities.

In regards to whether the participants felt that they had recognised and understood the slang terms with ease, the majority were ambivalent, forty percent believed that they had and the remaining thirteen percent disagreed by stating that they had not. The positive regard from these opinions echoes the previously concluded statement regarding how, in general, most slang was indeed recognised and understood, barring some exceptions.

When asked whether the participants admittedly employed these terms when using social networks, results were varied. After tallying them up, just over forty-five percent disagreed and stated that they did not employ these terms whereas forty percent stated that they did. This divided regard complicates the aims of this project, though it may be established that these words are come across, it seems that they are not always admittedly employed. However, when looked into further detail, those who declined using these terms in general seemed to be those who claimed to use the platforms mainly in their native language. From this it may be gathered that, though most participants have become accustomed to seeing these words, only some choose to take a step further and adopt them into the language they use on social media. Furthermore, most participants when asked also believed that when employing these terms, if at all, they were doing so correctly. Through this it can be seen that the subjects seemed to be confident in their knowledge of the English slang used on social media.

Finally, related to the notion of social media being an unlikely place to learn vocabulary in a second language, participants were asked if through the usage and observation of these slang terms on social media they learn new vocabulary. As can

be seen in figure 3, almost all participants either agreed or agreed strongly with this statement. This result is interesting as it shows that, though not all subjects proved to be recognising or using English slang on social media, the majority still found that just by seeing these terms being employed on the internet it may aid them in learning new vocabulary in a second language nonetheless.

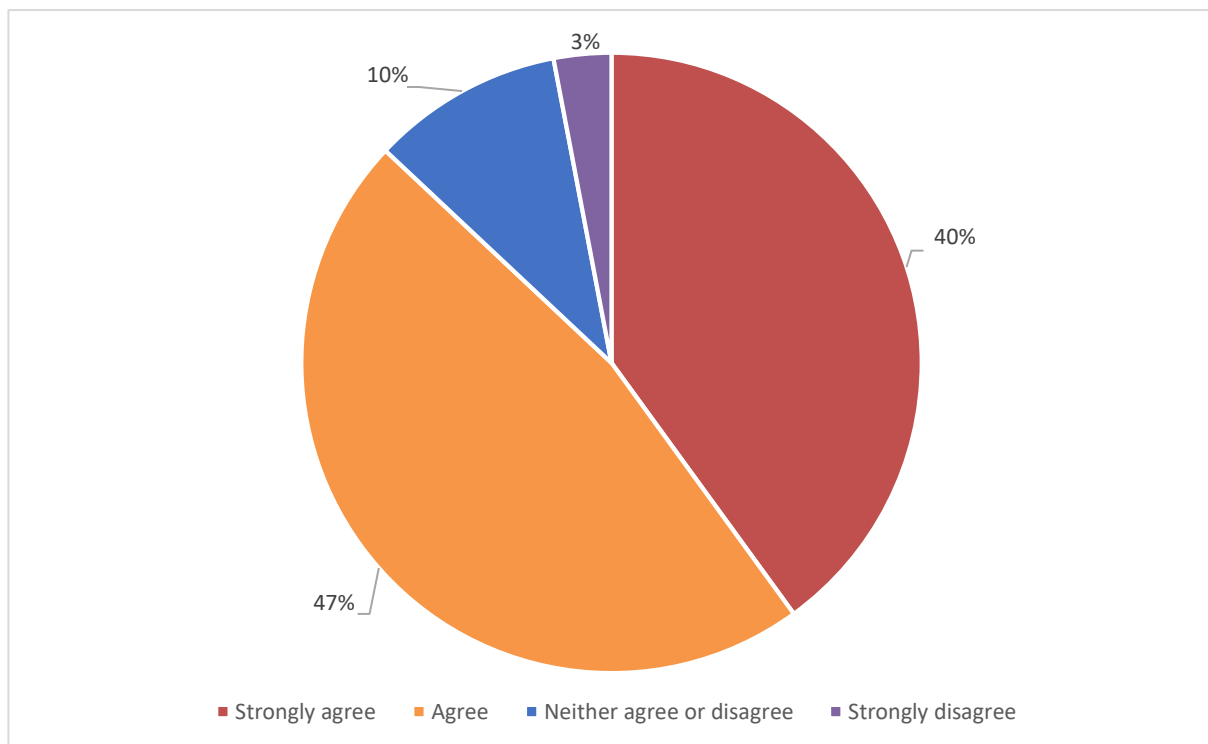


Figure 3. Participants' regards as to whether using or observing these slang terms on social media aid them in learning new English vocabulary.

Moreover, through an open-ended question which asked the participants to supply their opinions on learning new English vocabulary on social media some interesting comments were included. In general, participants believed social media to be a perfect breeding ground for slang as it is favourable for the use of more colloquial language. In addition, they deemed networking platforms as good places to effectively learn these terms and how to employ them in their correct contexts. Moreover, some recognised that in many cases social networks are the only place that they would effectively have access to this different and colourful vocabulary that enrich their use of the language albeit in an informal manner. These final comments

further solidify the notion that these terms are recognised, used only at times by a select few and in general found interesting. It seems as though social media may be a place to learn colloquial vocabulary from an L2.

5.5. Gender differences.

Lastly, the hypothesised gender difference must be analysed in order to either prove or disprove whether females may understand English slang used on social media with more ease and employ it with greater frequency than males. In order to do so, the overall percentage of correct answers, incorrect ones and those marked as unknown were calculated according to gender and the following graph was produced.

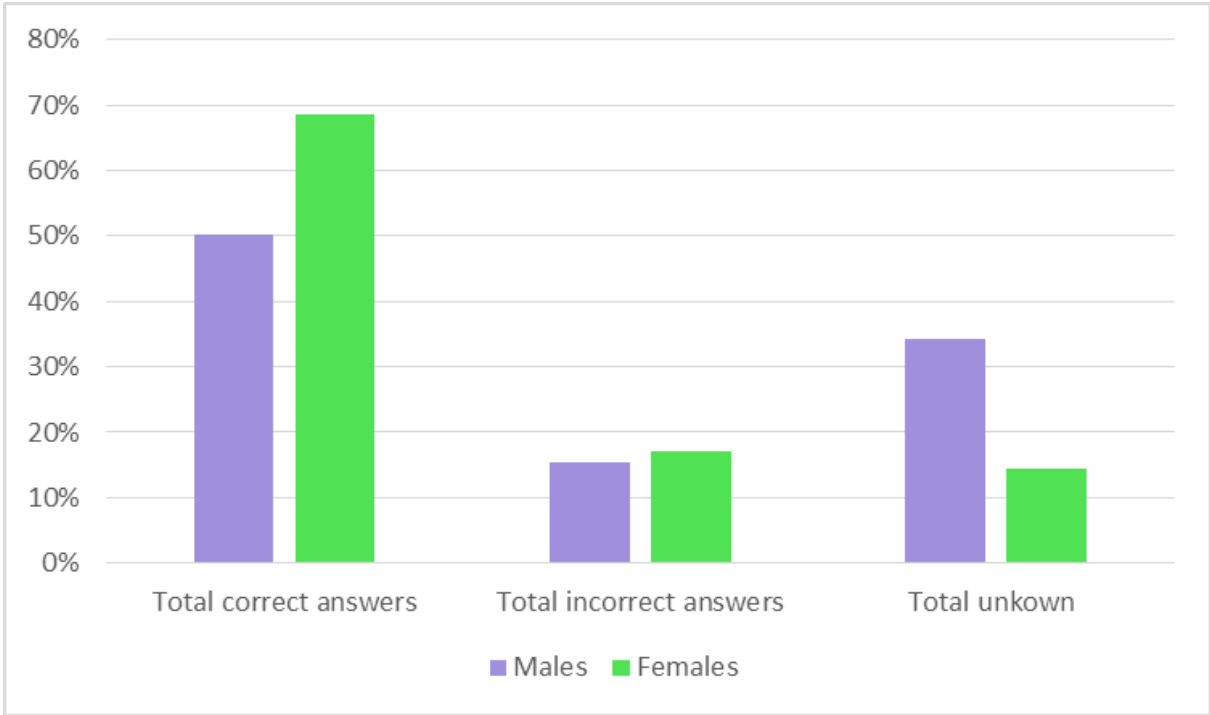


Figure 3. Percentages of correct, incorrect and unknown answers according to gender.

As can be observed in figure three, females did indeed correctly identify the slang terms in question on a more frequent basis than males. Notwithstanding, both groups had a similar percentage of incorrect answers. However, this is made up for through a marked difference in the capacity of recognising the slang at all, males admitted to not being familiar with the terms in over thirty percent of the cases,

whereas females seemed to be much more acquainted with them. When looked in to the cause of this, it seems to be highly linked to the participants' usage of social media. Females admitted to using social media on a much more frequent basis than males who predominantly stated they only used it on occasions, as a result of this females seem to become more familiar with the language used on networking sites. Proportionally, the more they seem to come into contact with this language the more they begin to take an interest and start to understand it. Moreover, when looking further into their regards and self-assessment in usage of English slang on social media, males overwhelmingly stated they used networking sites in their mother tongues in contrast to females who mostly revealed that they used them in both their first languages as well as English. Finally, following this trend, females generally all felt like they learnt new English vocabulary through the use of social media whereas males were more doubtful of this.

To sum up, as hypothesised in the objectives of this study, it does seem that females, due to their amount and type of usage of networking sites, tend to come across English slang terms much more frequently than males. Once familiarised with them, females then tend to begin to recognise them to the point of gathering a wider understanding and finally choosing to adopt them, in this manner they seem to be learning new terms in a second language through the use of social networks. As stated, though males do seem to also come across these terms they do not seem to take such an interest in them and do not regard social media as a place to learn new English vocabulary. Therefore, males do not begin to employ the slang encountered in the same manner as their female counterparts. These facts are overall trends that have been observed by analysing the subjects' answers. It is also relevant to state that in both groups there are standout cases of males that have a perfect knowledge of English slang used on social media which they use profusely, and conversely, females who were not familiar with the slang and did not seem to spend much time

on networking sites at all. Once again, Spanish speakers' knowledge of English slang on social media is directly related to how they use these websites in the first place.

6. Conclusions

Through the previous in depth analysis and look into the results gathered from the questionnaire distributed some interesting conclusions to this study may be reached. Each of these conclusions are highly connected to the objectives proposed at the start of this project and will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, it may be stated that, in general, young adult Spanish social media users do seem to be widely recognising a selection of English slang with relative ease. Furthermore, not only do they seem to be recognising these words, but also have demonstrated that they understand the vast majority of the slang presented to them, with standout specific cases in this study such as *a legend*, *shook* or *mood* that were proven to be understood by almost all participants. It is important to highlight that in relation to this, this knowledge of the terms is overwhelmingly effected by the participants' usage and regard towards social media. A profuse use of networking sites in both native language as well as English seems to positively affect the users' understanding of the slang.

Moreover, it may also be generally concluded that, as far as the subjects that participated in this study are concerned, over half are admittedly employing these terms when using social media and believing to do so correctly. This further solidifies the previous conclusion in addition to demonstrating that these terms are most probably being used in a meaningful manner, not simply in arbitrary constructions.

It may also be concluded that through the use of this English slang on social media, Spanish users seem to be learning new vocabulary in a second language. This can be seen by their aforementioned positive results to the activities as well as their extraordinarily positive response and feedback towards the notion of learning slang

through social networking sites, with over 80% of participants believing that they do indeed learn new vocabulary in this manner.

Finally, some conclusions have also been reached in regards to the gender hypothesis set out in the objectives of this study. This hypothesis stated that females were thought to understand with more ease and consequently employ with more frequency social media slang. Through the comparative study of both male and female participants, it may be stated that the hypothesis has been confirmed. In terms of this study, it does seem that there is a difference in knowledge of slang related to gender. Females seem to recognise, understand and admittedly employ English slang on social media more than males. This knowledge once again is highly related to females more frequent usage of the platforms as well as them tending to use more English to communicate over the internet.

Overall, it may be stated that the overarching objective proposed in this research, a general exploration of the knowledge of young adult Spanish social media users' knowledge and usage of English slang used on social media, has been met.

In relation to previous studies, these conclusions echo findings by authors such as Charkova (2007) and Namvar (2014) that have previously found English slang to have seeped into the vocabularies of other non-native speakers. Notwithstanding, in contrast to Kim (2004) or Charkova (2007), there seems to be more of a marked gender difference observably in this study.

However, due to time and formal constraints it must be recognised that this small scale study is certainly limited. It could be vastly improved through further investigations with a much larger number of participants, further variables, and a bigger sample of slang. Furthermore, it could be expanded upon using control groups or from the point of view of queer linguistics as much of this slang originates and is used by this group.

In summary, it seems that a benefit of social media may be its capacity to spread highly specific vocabulary to non-native English speakers and aid them in learning and interacting in a natural environment, albeit in an informal manner. In this way, users seem to be adopting vocabulary that, while not tending to be explained to them in educational contexts, may benefit them in sparking an interest in the language as well as may motivate them to experiment when communicating in a second language online.

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8. Appendices.

8.1. Appendix A: slang definitions

Bop*: Used to reference a good song.

Goals*: Targets you want to reach in relationships, life, ect.

I can't even*: An expression that denotes so many emotional responses that the user can't even comprehend what has been said or seen.

Kween*: A sassy, different way to spell "queen", often used by gay men and teenage girls.

Legend: A person of note and or outstanding qualities (Thorne, 2014)

Lit: Exciting, thriving (Dalzell, 2018)

Mood*: Used to express that something is relatable.

Roast*: To humorously mock or humiliate someone with a well-timed joke, diss or comeback.

Salty*: The act of being upset, angry, or bitter as result of being made fun of or embarrassed [sic]. Also a characteristic of a person who feels out of place or is feeling attacked.

Same*: Basically when you can relate to anything sad, demeaning, embarrassing or just completely weird yet still relatable.

Savage*: Someone who is roasting people nonstop someone who doesn't care what people say.

Shady*: To be very sneaky, suspect, or to have an all around [sic] backstabbing personality.

Ship*: To endorse a romantic relationship.

Shook*: Shocked or surprised.

Spill the tea*: When one tells an especially juicy bit of gossip.

Stan*: A crazed and or obsessed fan. The term comes from the song Stan by eminem. The term Stan is used to describe a fan who goes to great lengths to obsess over a celebrity.

We been knew*: A way to say you already knew something; to point out that the thing someone just said was obvious to a majority of people.

Wheeze*: When you laugh so hard that you just make breath noises. No laugh comes out, just air.

Wig snatched*: Being surprised or caught off guard.

Woke: Informed; up-to-date (Dalzell, 2018)

All definitions marked with * were retrieved from urbandictionary.com, last accessed on the 23rd May 2019.

8.2. Appendix B: questionnaire

Cuestionario

Este cuestionario trata sobre el conocimiento, aprendizaje y uso de argot o slang inglés en redes sociales.

***Required**

Preguntas sociodemográficas

1. Sexo *

Mark only one oval.

Mujer

Hombre

Otro

2. Edad *

Mark only one oval.

15 o menos

16 - 20

21 - 25

26 o más

3. ¿Con qué frecuencia utilizas las redes sociales? *

Mark only one oval.

Muy frecuentemente (3 horas o más al día)

Frecuentemente (de 2 a 3 horas al día)

Ocasionalmente (de 1 a 2 horas al día)

Raramente (1 hora o menos al día)

Nunca

4. ¿Cuáles de estas redes sociales utilizas con más frecuencia? (puedes marcar varias opciones) *

Tick all that apply.

Instagram

Twitter

Facebook

Snapchat

Tumblr

Ninguno

Other:

5. ¿Para qué sueles utilizar las redes sociales? *

Mark only one oval.

- Para leer publicaciones
- Para publicar contenido
- Ambas cosas
- Para otras cosas
- No utilizo redes sociales

6. ¿En qué lengua/s te expresas en las redes sociales que utilizas? *

Mark only one oval.

- Lengua materna (Castellano, Valenciano...)
- Lengua no materna (Inglés, Francés, Alemán...)
- Una combinación de ambas
- No utilizo redes sociales

7. ¿Cómo evaluarías tu nivel de inglés? *

Mark only one oval.

- Alto
- Intermedio alto
- Intermedio
- Intermedio bajo
- Bajo

8. ¿Tienes alguna acreditación oficial de inglés? *

Tick all that apply.

- KET
- PET
- FCE
- CAE
- IELTS
- TOEFL
- No tengo
- Other:

9. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas estudiando inglés? *

Mark only one oval.

- 1 - 5 años
- 6 - 10 años
- 11 años o más

10. ¿Qué actividades haces para practicar o mejorar tu inglés? *

Tick all that apply.

Ver series o películas
Utilizar apps de aprendizaje
Escuchar música
Hablar con amigos
Estudiar por mi cuenta
Utilizar redes sociales
Nada

Actividades

Elige los sinónimos correctos de estas palabras y expresiones

1. To roast / roasted *

Mark only one oval.

To sing
To criticise
To shout
To praise
No lo sé

2. To be lit *

Mark only one oval.

To be on fire
To be illuminated
To be light
To be exciting
No lo sé

3. To be a savage *

Mark only one oval.

To be stupid
To be clever
To be fierce
To be rude
No lo sé

4. To be salty *

Mark only one oval.

To be resentful
To be funny
To be happy
To be sad
No lo sé

Elige la definición / traducción correcta de estas palabras y expresiones

1. Wheeze *

Mark only one oval.

- Sonido de una palmada mientras te ríes
- Jadeo mientras te ríes
- Lagrimas producidas por la risa
- No lo sé

2. A legend *

Mark only one oval.

- Personaje famoso de fábulas
- Persona poco respetable
- Persona importante y/o célebre
- No lo sé

3. I can't even *

Mark only one oval.

- Usado para expresar cualquier tipo de sentimiento
- Usado para expresar alegría solamente
- Usado para expresar tristeza únicamente
- No lo sé

4. Woke *

Mark only one oval.

- Ser ignorante de situaciones políticas
- Estar al tanto de acontecimientos actuales
- Estar despierto
- No lo sé

Completa estas oraciones con las palabras o expresiones adecuadas

1. A: I feel tired and sick. B: _____ *

Mark only one oval.

- Shady
- Same
- Legend
- Bop
- No lo sé

2. Ed Sheeran's new song is a _____ *

Mark only one oval.

Kween
Legend
Savage
Bop
No lo sé

3. A: Did you see their selfie! B: Yes, _____ *

Mark only one oval.

Wig snatched
Wheeze
Woke
We been knew
No lo sé

4. I _____ Beyoncé so much, I love her music! *

Mark only one oval.

Bop
Ship
Wheeze
Stan
No lo sé

5. A: They were insulting you behind your back B: Oh, that's _____ *

Mark only one oval.

Salty
A mood
Shady
Shook
No lo sé

Elige las palabras o expresiones que servirían como reacciones correctas a estas situaciones

1. Tu cantante favorito hace una actuación increíble *

Mark only one oval.

I'm salty
I ship them
Yas kween
Spill the tea
No lo sé

2. Tu amigo/a sube una foto con su pareja *

Mark only one oval.

We been knew
Rosted
Goals
Wheeze
No lo sé

3. Un amigo/a quiere contarte un cotilleo o información que desconoces *

Mark only one oval.

We been knew
Spill the tea
I ship them
Woke
No lo sé

4. Tus dos personajes favoritos de una serie empiezan una relación *

Mark only one oval.

I'm salty
I ship them
Spill the tea
Woke
No lo sé

5. Tu compañero te cuenta algo que no te sorprende / ya sabias *

Mark only one oval.

We been knew
I'm salty
Shook
I can't even
No lo sé

6. Tu compañero te cuenta algo muy interesante / que te sorprende *

Mark only one oval.

We been knew
I'm salty
Shook
A bop
No lo sé

7. Alguien te dice: no puedo esperar a que nos den las vacaciones *

Mark only one oval.

Shook
Goals
Woke
Mood
No lo sé

Preguntas finales

Valora las siguientes afirmaciones en relación con las palabras y expresiones que han aparecido en las actividades anteriores:

1. He reconocido y entendido estas palabras con facilidad. *

Mark only one oval.

Totalmente de acuerdo
De acuerdo
Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
En desacuerdo
Totalmente en desacuerdo

2. Empleo estas palabras con frecuencia cuando me comunico a través de las redes sociales. *

Mark only one oval.

Totalmente de acuerdo
De acuerdo
Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
En desacuerdo
Totalmente en desacuerdo

3. Empleo estas palabras de forma correcta/en los contextos adecuados. *

Mark only one oval.

Totalmente de acuerdo
De acuerdo
Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
En desacuerdo
Totalmente en desacuerdo

4. Mediante el uso/ la observación de estas palabras en las redes sociales aprendo vocabulario nuevo en inglés. *

Mark only one oval.

Totalmente de acuerdo
De acuerdo
Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
En desacuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

5. Comenta tu opinión sobre el aprendizaje del slang en inglés a través de las redes sociales. (Pregunta opcional).