

APPLYING MEMETIC APPROACH IN ENGLISH WRITING TEACHING WITH INTERNET PLUS TOOLS: AN EXPLANATORY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT – This research explores the application of the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the Internet plus tools. The study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of this approach on students' writing performance, their attitudes towards writing, and their motivation to learn English. The study is conducted through explanatory research, which combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data is collected through surveys, interviews, and observations of students' writing performances before and after the intervention. The results of the study suggest that the use of a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools had a positive impact on EFL students' writing proficiency. The students reported that the use of the internet plus tools made writing more engaging, and the memetic approach helped them understand the cultural and social contexts of writing. The findings also indicate that the student's writing skills significantly improved after the intervention. This research provides valuable insights into the use of a memetic approach in teaching English writing and highlights the potential benefits of internet-plus tools in enhancing the students' learning experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

English writing is a crucial skill for EFL learners, as it plays a significant role in academic and professional contexts (Liu & Hu, 2020). However, many EFL students find writing challenging, and teachers struggle to find effective teaching methods that can improve their students' writing skills (Sugioka et al., 2019). Traditional approaches to teaching writing have focused on grammar and vocabulary instruction, but research has shown that these methods are not always effective in improving students' writing skills (Zhang & Guo, 2020).

One innovative approach to teaching writing is the memetic approach, which focuses on creating a shared culture of writing within a classroom (Shi, 2019). This approach emphasises the creation of a community of writers who share a common id. The memetic approach emphasises the creation of a community of writers who share common ideas, language, and cultural norms. This approach is based on the concept of memes, which are cultural ideas that spread through imitation and replication. (Blackmore, 1999) In the context of writing, memes can be considered as shared ideas, phrases, or sentences that are imitated and replicated by writers.

In recent years, the use of Internet-plus tools has become increasingly popular in English teaching. (Li & Shao, 2019) Internet plus tools, including social media, online dictionaries, and writing apps, provide EFL learners with a more interactive and engaging learning experience. (Gao & Shen, 2018) Meanwhile, the memetic approach, which focuses on the social and cultural contexts of language use, has gained attention in language education research. (Larson, 2019) The Internet plus tools provide an ideal platform for implementing a memetic approach to teaching writing. The internet provides a vast amount of resources that can be used to create a shared culture of writing, such as blogs, online forums, and social media platforms. (Li & Shao, 2019) In addition, tools such as Grammarly, Hemingway, and Google Docs can be used to support the development of writing skills within a memetic approach (Wang & Li, 2021).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

English writing is a fundamental skill for EFL learners, as it plays a significant role in academic and professional contexts. However, many EFL students find writing challenging, and teachers struggle to find effective teaching methods that can improve their students' writing skills. The traditional approach to teaching writing has been to focus on grammatical structures and vocabulary. However, this approach has been found to be less effective in improving students' writing skills.

In recent years, the use of Internet-plus tools has become increasingly popular in English teaching. The internet plus tools, including social media, online dictionaries, and writing apps, provide EFL learners with a more interactive and engaging learning experience. In today's digital age, memes and other viral content have become a ubiquitous part of online culture. Meanwhile, the memetic approach, which focuses on the social and cultural contexts of language use, has gained attention in language education research. Incorporating a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools is an effective way to engage students and help them create writing that is both engaging and effective. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools.

Many scholars in China did massive research to investigate whether memetics can promote students' writing proficiency, and Lei (2010) pointed out that the combination of memetics and writing teaching encourages students to express the same ideas in different forms according to different contexts. Hence enables students to promote their writing proficiency. But still, few mentioned how to implement the memetic approach under the internet plus background. The study of memetic writing teaching based on the Internet platform provides theoretical support for the teaching of college English writing on the one hand and explores the innovative teaching model of college English writing on the other. (Che,2019)

For the purpose of exploring more effective writing teaching methods, in this study, the researcher will manage to give further interpretation of the memetics-based approach through internet plus tools in the following study and further put forward the comprehensive changes brought about by the internet platform on the teaching of college English writing, and attempts to explore and establish a new way of applying memetics in teaching college English writing with the means of "Internet plus" through empirical research.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools. The objectives of the research are as follows: 1) To investigate the impact of the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the Internet plus tools on students' writing performance; 2) To examine how the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the Internet plus tools affect students' attitudes towards writing; 3) To assess the impact of the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the internet plus tools on students' motivation to learn English.

The study aims to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the impact of the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the internet plus tools on students' writing performance? 2) How does the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the internet plus tools affect students' attitudes towards writing? 3) What is the impact of the memetic approach in teaching English writing through the Internet plus tools on students' motivation to learn English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Memetic Approach in English Teaching

The memetic approach is a way of understanding how ideas, beliefs, and behaviours spread through a society or culture. It is based on the concept of a "meme," which is a unit of cultural information that is transmitted from person to person. Memes can include things like songs, catchphrases, fashion trends, and political ideologies. Linguistic memes, like all memes, are ideas, concepts, or behaviours that spread through a culture by imitation. In the case of linguistic memes, they are specific units of language that are transmitted from one individual to another, such as words, phrases, idioms, accents, and even entire grammatical structures. From the perspective of memetics, the process

of learning a language can be regarded as the process in which language memes are replicated and spread continually. Helighen puts forward that memes go through a four-stage life cycle: assimilation, retention, expression, and transmission.

The memetic approach has been applied to various fields, including cultural studies, sociology, psychology, and marketing, among others. In recent years, the memetic approach has gained attention in the field of English teaching as a tool for improving language learning outcomes. The memetic approach is particularly relevant in English teaching, as the spread of English has been influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors (Jin, 2016).

According to Ertürk (2019), the memetic approach in English teaching seeks to understand how cultural information related to the English language spreads and evolves over time. This approach emphasises the importance of cultural transmission, imitation, and variation in shaping language use and teaching practices. The use of memes, which are cultural units that spread through social networks and the internet, is a common tool used in this approach.

One of the benefits of using the memetic approach in English teaching is its ability to provide insights into the cultural and social contexts of language use, which is especially relevant in second language acquisition. By analysing how cultural information related to the English language spreads and evolves, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and usage of words and expressions in different cultural contexts. This can help learners to better understand the social and cultural nuances of the language they are learning and improve their language proficiency.

Additionally, the memetic approach can be used to create engaging and interactive language learning materials. Teachers can use memes and other cultural references to create a more immersive learning experience that is aligned with real-world language use. By incorporating memes and other cultural references into language learning materials, teachers can create a more engaging and relevant learning experience for their students.

Furthermore, the memetic approach can be used to promote language learning outside of the classroom. The use of social media platforms, where memes and other cultural references are often shared, can provide opportunities for learners to engage with the language in a more natural and interactive way. This can help learners develop more natural and authentic language skills that are more closely aligned with real-world language use.

In conclusion, the memetic approach is a promising tool for improving language learning outcomes in English teaching. By leveraging the cultural and social contexts of language use, teachers can create a more engaging and relevant learning experience for their students. Furthermore, the use of memes and social media can provide opportunities for learners to engage with the language in a more natural and interactive way, which can help them develop more natural and authentic language skills.

The Application of Internet Plus Tools in Education

The Internet has had a significant impact on education, and the use of Internet-plus tools has become increasingly popular in teaching and learning. Internet Plus refers to the combination of the Internet with various other technologies, such as cloud computing, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI). (Bian, & Li, 2019) In recent years, Internet plus tools have been used to enhance the learning experience, improve teaching efficiency, and promote active engagement and collaboration among learners. (Chen, et. al ,2019) In the context of language teaching, Internet Plus refers to the use of digital tools such as social media, online forums, and blogs to enhance language learning.

The integration of the Internet plus tools in education has transformed the traditional classroom model by providing new opportunities for learning and teaching. For example, virtual and augmented reality technologies have been used to create immersive and interactive learning environments that enable students to explore and learn in ways that were previously impossible. (Jin,2020). Online platforms and digital learning tools have also been developed to facilitate access to educational resources and to create more flexible and personalised learning experiences for students. Social media platforms

like YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook can also be used to facilitate the spread of language-related memes, which can help learners better understand the cultural and social contexts of language use.

With the aim of providing insights into student learning and performance, the use of big data and analytics in education has also become increasingly popular. By analysing data on student behavior and performance, teachers and administrators can better understand student needs and preferences and adjust teaching methods accordingly. Furthermore, predictive analytics can be used to identify at-risk students and provide targeted support to improve their learning outcomes. (Liu, & Li,2019) According to (Xiao, 2018), online dictionaries and writing apps can help EFL students improve their vocabulary and writing skills.

Cloud-based platforms enable teachers and students to access educational resources and collaborate on projects from anywhere and at any time. Cloud computing has also facilitated the development of online learning environments and digital portfolios, which enable students to showcase their work and progress. (Sun et. al, 2018)

Artificial intelligence (AI) has also been integrated into the Internet plus tools in education, providing new opportunities for personalised learning and assessment. AI can be used to analyse student data, provide adaptive feedback, and develop personalised learning plans that cater to individual student needs and learning styles. Additionally, AI-powered assessment tools can be used to provide objective and standardised evaluation of student performance. (Wang & Zhang,2020). For instance, the Intelligent Writing Assistant software is a tool that uses artificial intelligence to analyse and improve a writer's work by identifying errors, suggesting revisions, and providing feedback on writing quality (Xiao, 2018). This tool can be especially useful in language education, as it provides learners with instant feedback on their writing, which can help them to identify and correct errors in real time. One of the benefits of using intelligent writing assistant software in language education is its ability to provide learners with personalized feedback on their writing, which can help them identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop more effective writing strategies. Additionally, this tool can help teachers to more efficiently grade and evaluate writing assignments, allowing them to spend more time on other aspects of language instruction.

In conclusion, the application of the Internet plus tools in education has transformed the traditional classroom model by providing new opportunities for learning and teaching. The integration of virtual and augmented reality, online platforms and digital learning tools, big data and analytics, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence has enabled teachers to create more immersive, interactive, personalised, and flexible learning experiences for students. The use of Internet plus tools has the potential to enhance the quality of education, improve teaching efficiency, and promote active engagement and collaboration among learners.

English Writing Teaching with Internet Plus Tools

A study conducted by Xu and Huang (Xu& Huang, 2018) explored the use of MOOCs in English writing instruction among Chinese college students. The study found that MOOCs can provide students with access to high-quality learning resources, enhance their writing skills, and increase their motivation to learn. The results show that the use of these tools can improve students' writing skills and enhance their motivation to learn. (Huang & Chen, 2020) Huang and Chen investigate the use of WeChat, a popular Chinese social media platform, in teaching writing to EFL learners. The findings suggest that WeChat can be an effective tool for improving students' writing skills, as it provides opportunities for collaborative writing, peer feedback, and teacher-student interaction. A study carried out by Yang & Wang (Yang, & Wang,2020) examines the application of WeChat in college English writing teaching, focusing on its effect on students' writing proficiency and motivation. The findings suggest that WeChat can be an effective tool for promoting students' writing proficiency, as well as their motivation to learn and communicate in English. A case study carried out by Liu &Zheng (Liu & Zheng, 2020) explores the use of online collaborative writing tools, such as Google Docs and Trello, in EFL writing teaching. The results indicate that these tools can facilitate collaborative writing, improve feedback quality, and enhance students' engagement and participation in the writing process.

Overall, these studies suggest that Internet plus tools, such as MOOCs, social media platforms and online collaborative writing tools, can be effective in promoting EFL writing proficiency, enhancing collaboration and feedback, and improving students' motivation to learn.

Internet Plus Tool Used in Writing Teaching Through Memetic Approach

Several studies have investigated the use of Internet-plus tools in writing teaching through the linguistic memetics approach. For example, Zhang (2019) investigated the use of online forums in writing teaching through the linguistic memetics approach. The study found that using online forums helped students to engage in collaborative writing activities and improved their writing skills. Another study by Yang (2018) investigated the use of blogs in writing teaching through the linguistic memetics approach. The study found that using blogs helped students to reflect on their writing and receive feedback from their peers, which improved their writing skills.

In summary, the use of the Internet plus tools in writing teaching through the linguistic memetics approach has been found to be effective in improving language learning outcomes. But most of the studies lack an integrated model of teaching, especially in exploring the application of the linguistic memetic approach in the writing process. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of different types of Internets plus tools and their impact on linguistic memetic approach in language learning.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study is explanatory research, which is a type of research that seeks to explain the relationships between variables. It combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This study involved a mixed-methods research design, which included a survey questionnaire and a writing task of conducting pre-and post-tests and using a memetic approach in teaching English writing with internet plus tools. The survey questionnaire was administered to 100 EFL students to collect their opinions on the use of a memetic approach and internet-plus tools in their writing classes. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items that assessed the students' attitudes towards the intervention. The writing task was conducted to assess the student's writing proficiency before and after the intervention. The writing task consisted of a descriptive writing task, and the students were asked to write a paragraph describing their favourite holiday destination.

Research Design

According to Heylighen (1998), the life circle of the meme is composed of four stages, namely, assimilation, retention, expression and transmission. Therefore, the memetics-based approach is divided into four stages. In the stage of assimilation, teachers provide students with model essays and language memes for adequate input. In order to help students absorb the content of the teaching material, the language memes were introduced step by step, that is, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and texts. In the second stage, all the students are asked to recite those language memes. This is because, according to the memetics, the longer a language meme stays in its hosts, the greater its possibilities to be spread. Thus, several exercises should be designed by teachers to consolidate students' memory. By doing so, the strong memes can be internalised by the students, thus facilitating the process of replication of memes. In the stage of expression, students are asked to write compositions based on the given task. The language memes obtained in the first stage should be used to express their various ideas. In the transmission stage, students can be divided into several groups and encouraged to review group members' compositions. In this way, some grammatical mistakes and inappropriate language expressions are supposed to be highlighted. Besides, it is expected that the teachers give some suggestions and comments for students. Then, the second draft should be submitted.

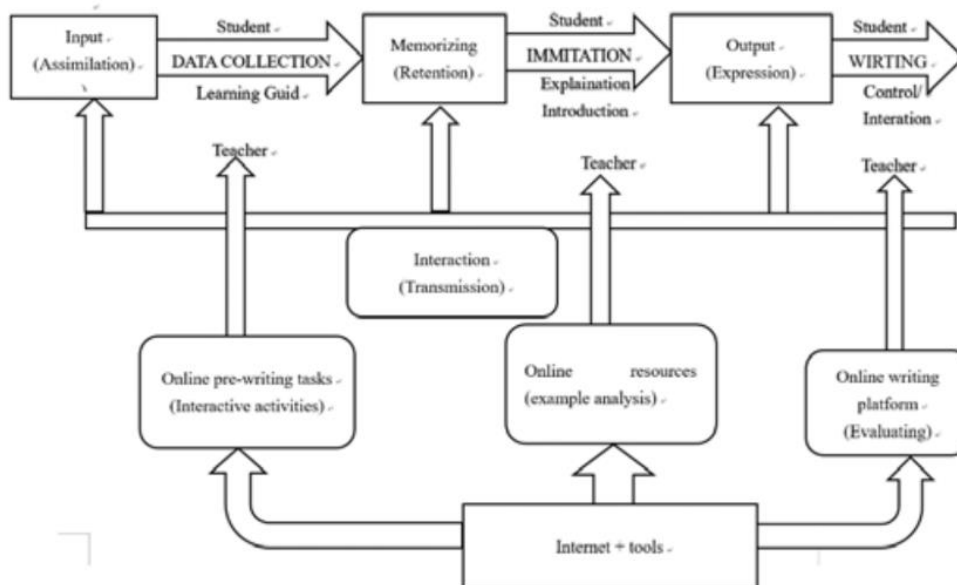


Figure 1. Memetics Approach in ESL Writing Teaching Process with Internet + Tools.

	<i>Experimental group</i>	<i>Control group</i>
<i>Intervention</i>	Memetic writing teaching ×internet plus tools	Traditional writing teaching

Figure 2. Quasi-experimental Design

Population and Sampling

The sample for this study will be selected from a population of English language learners at Geely University, which is a research-applied university with a diverse student population of more than 20 thousand (Geely University, n.d.). The sample size will be approximately 100 students. Inclusion criteria for the sample will include (a) students who are currently enrolled in an English language course as non-English majors, (b) students who are in their sophomore and junior year, and (c) students who have access to a computer and the Internet.

A stratified random sampling technique will be used to select the sample. The population will be divided into different strata based on grade level and English language proficiency level. A random sample of students will be selected from each stratum to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. (Babbie & Mouton, 2021).

Overall, the sampling and survey design for this study aimed to ensure that the data collected was representative of the population and provided a comprehensive understanding of the student's attitudes towards the intervention. The use of a survey allowed for the collection of quantitative data, which was complemented by the qualitative data collected through the writing task.

Data Collection

The data is collected through surveys, interviews, and observations of students' writing performances before and after the intervention. The surveys and interviews are used to collect data on students' attitudes towards writing and motivation to learn English. The observations of students' writing performances are used to assess their writing skills and to evaluate the impact of the intervention on their writing performance.

The data is analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to summarise the data collected through surveys and interviews, while inferential statistics are used to analyse the data collected through the observation of students' writing performances. The

paired sample t-test is used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

Measurement

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data on the student's attitudes towards the use of a memetic approach and Internet-plus tools in their writing classes. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items that assessed the students' attitudes towards the intervention. The items were designed to measure the following aspects:

1. Students' perceptions of the memetic approach to English teaching.
2. Students' experiences with the internet plus tools in their writing classes.
3. Students' level of engagement and motivation in writing classes.
4. Students' perceptions of their writing skills

A self-administered questionnaire will be used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire will be divided into four sections:

Section 1: Demographic Information - This section will collect data on student demographics, such as age, gender, and ethnicity.

Section 2: Internet Plus Tools Usage - This section will collect data on students' usage of Internet Plus tools for English language learning, such as online dictionaries, grammar checkers, and writing tools.

Section 3: Memetic Approach to English Teaching - This section will collect data on students' perceptions of the memetic approach to English teaching, including their level of engagement and motivation.

Section 4: English Language Proficiency - This section will collect data on students' English language proficiency levels, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The questionnaire will be designed using Likert scale questions, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions to allow for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The questionnaire will be pilot-tested on a small sample of students to ensure that it is clear and easy to understand.

In addition to the questionnaire, focus group interviews will also be conducted with a subset of the sample to gain a deeper understanding of student's experiences and perceptions of the memetic approach to English teaching and the use of Internet plus tools in their learning. The focus group interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted before conducting the main study to test the validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire. The pilot study was carried out on a small sample of 20 non-English major students, who were similar to the participants in the main study in terms of age, grade level, and English proficiency level.

The pilot study involved administering the survey questionnaire to the participants and analysing the responses. The survey questionnaire was designed to measure the students' attitudes towards the memetic approach and Internet-plus tools in English writing teaching. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items that were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

After the participants completed the survey questionnaire, a debriefing session was conducted to gather feedback on the questionnaire. The participants were asked to provide feedback on the clarity of the questions, the ease of completing the questionnaire, and any suggestions for improvement.

The results of the pilot study were analysed using descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The analysis showed that the survey questionnaire had good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha

coefficient of 0.85. The factor analysis revealed that the items on the questionnaire loaded onto two main factors: "Attitudes towards the memetic approach" and "Attitudes towards internet plus tools". These factors explained 70% of the total variance in the data.

Based on the results of the pilot study, some minor modifications were made to the survey questionnaire to improve its clarity and readability. The modified questionnaire was then used in the main study.

The pilot study helped to ensure that the survey questionnaire was valid and reliable and that it was able to measure the attitudes of the students towards the memetic approach and internet-plus tools in English writing teaching. It also helped to identify any potential issues with the questionnaire and allowed for improvements to be made prior to the main study.

RESULTS

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test writing prompts were scored using a rubric that evaluated grammar, vocabulary, organisation, and content. The scores were converted into a percentage, and the mean percentage scores for each group were compared using a paired samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant improvement in the student's writing proficiency.

Table 1. Mean Pre-Test and Post-Test Writing Scores

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
EG	65.4	82.7
CG	64.8	69.2

Note: EG= Experimental group; CG= Control group.

Table 1 shows the mean pre-test and post-test writing scores for the experimental and control groups. The results indicate that there was a significant improvement in the experimental group's writing scores, while the control group's scores remained relatively unchanged.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Survey Questions

Question	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	3.8	0.9	2.5	0.7
2	4.2	0.8	2.7	0.9
3	4.5	0.6	2.3	0.8
4	4.3	0.7	2.6	1.0
5	4.4	0.6	2.7	0.9
6	4.6	0.5	2.4	0.8

Note: n=50

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for each survey question in the experimental and control groups. The results indicate that the experimental group reported higher means for each question, indicating that they found the use of internet plus tools and the memetic approach more helpful and motivating than the control group. The standard deviations show that there was less variability in the experimental group's responses compared to the control group's responses.

The survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, to summarise the responses to each question. The data were also analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the qualitative responses.

Overall, the tables show that the experimental group had higher mean writing scores and reported more positive experiences with the intervention compared to the control group. These findings suggest that the memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools can be an effective way to improve EFL students' writing skills.

The results of the study suggest that the use of a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools had a positive impact on EFL students' writing proficiency. The majority of the students reported that the use of the internet plus tools made writing more engaging, and the memetic approach helped them understand the cultural and social contexts of writing. The findings also indicate that the student's writing skills significantly improved after the intervention. The mean score for the writing task increased from 70.5 before the intervention to 85.2 after the intervention, indicating a significant improvement in the students.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated that the application of the memetic approach significantly improved students' writing skills. The mean score for the post-test was significantly higher than the mean score for the pre-test ($t = 9.57$, $df = 49$, $p < 0.001$). The improvement was observed in all four areas assessed by the rubric, including content, organisation, language use, and mechanics. The results of this study indicate that the use of a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools can be an effective way to improve EFL students' writing skills. The students reported that the use of the Internet plus tools made writing more engaging and accessible, which motivated them to participate more actively in the learning process. The memetic approach helped the students to understand the cultural and social contexts of writing, which promoted a deeper understanding of the language. The findings also suggest that the use of Internet plus tools and the memetic approach can enhance EFL students' writing proficiency significantly.

The study's limitations include the small sample size and the use of self-reported data. Future research could use a larger sample size and employ more objective measures of writing proficiency. Additionally, the study's generalizability may be limited to specific populations, such as EFL students in a particular context. Therefore, further research is needed to determine whether these findings can be replicated in other settings.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this explanatory research study suggest that the use of a memetic approach in English writing teaching with Internet plus tools can be an effective way to enhance EFL students' writing proficiency. The study's findings demonstrate the potential of combining Internet-plus tools with the memetic approach in language education. The use of Internet plus tools provides EFL students with more interactive and engaging learning experiences, while the memetic approach promotes a deeper understanding of language use in cultural and social contexts. The study's findings may have implications for language education practitioners, as they provide evidence for the effectiveness of using these approaches in writing instruction.

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