Review article

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THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA (INSTAGRAM) AS A WRITING TOOL IN EFL CLASSROOM

Abstract. The purpose of this study is to explore and understand how students perceive social media as a writing tool within classroom settings, with a particular focus on English language acquisition. In today's digital age, social media platforms have become ubiquitous, influencing not only personal communication but also educational practices. Special emphasis is placed on how these digital tools can aid in the development of English language skills. The literature review underscores the increasing integration of technology in education and delves into the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating social media into traditional learning environments. Among the various platforms, Instagram stands out due to its visual format and capacity to foster creativity and engagement, making it a promising tool for enhancing English language learning. This research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the advantages and limitations of using social media as a pedagogical tool, particularly in relation to student engagement and language skill development. By gaining insights into students' attitudes and approaches to using social media as a writing tool, this study aims to equip educators with practical strategies for effectively integrating these platforms into language learning curricula. The ultimate goal is to enhance the educational experience, making it more relevant to students' everyday lives while preparing them for success in an increasingly digital world.

Keywords: Social Media, writing skills, students' perception, Instagram.

Introduction. In modern educational settings, the addition of technology is prolific and is steadily reshaping the teaching methods and supplementing them with new and innovative ways of learning and interaction. Among the many other technologies, the social media platforms had come to be known as efficient tools for interaction, joint work, and sharing of information, which have indeed reached every corner of the students' life. Social networks fragmented the daily routine of billions of people and play the role of communication tools, conduits to provide information and topics of one's interest. With Social Media everywhere, educators were forced to ponder how can the already trending platforms be used to make offline learning practices more efficient and engaging, especially addressing the problem of writing instruction. Nevertheless, while the interest in social media's integration of educational environments is growing, there is a lack of discernment in terms of how students think the use of these networks as tools for writing should be implemented.

In recent years, there have been many papers investigating this topic and most scholars agree that SM for writing has been positively perceived by learners. The study [3] on university students' perceptions and

attitudes towards using Instagram in English language writing showed that students had high positive perceptions and views towards using Instagram to improve their writing skills. Additionally, the study emphasized that most students favored using Instagram in writing classes and were willing to use it, despite potential limitations in facilities and internet access. This approach is also a good way to create fun classroom situations and help students be more creative, communicative, and collaborative with their peers when engaging in writing activities on the platform [29].

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation, focusing on students' understanding of the role of social media as writing tools in learning processes. The data will be used to carry out qualitative research, which combines interactive interviews of semi-structured character and focus group discussions, the students' viewpoints, understanding and lived experiences of writing on social media platforms. For this particular case, we will be looking at social media for writing activities for developing English language comprehension; these include increased engagement, collaboration and accuracy to the negative side of using social media while in the university.

In addition, we will look at the students' attitudes towards social media as a writing tool for EFL and at what makes social networking more or less attractive to different students, namely their prior experiences with social media, personal liking, and the perceived applicability of given social platforms. The study of the intricate interconnection between the world-view of students, technological affordances, and teaching practices having as goal to provide decision-makers with the expertise that is required for the enhancement of the

use of social media platforms is the purpose of this research.

Literature review. *Social Media-Based Mobile Learning.* According to El-Hussein and Cronje [12], mobile learning occurs in settings and venues that consider the mobility of learners, technology, and learning. It is wireless, in which students employ technology and digital gadgets made the general [15] to engage in learning [33]. According to Barhoumi and Rossi [8], mobile learning is seen as a novel idea that encompasses a range of applications, learning processes, and learning methodologies. As mobile technology for education is now widely used in international universities for online instruction, it is clear that students depended on mobile devices (such as smartphones and tablets) and applications (like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) for both social and educational events [21]. Given the current state of technology advancement, social media platforms are crucial for mobile learning across a variety of professions. The usefulness of Facebook and Twitter for language acquisition has been the subject of numerous research, to the point where the word "Twitteracy" was created to illustrate how Twitter affects literacy [7,9,17].

The positive aspects of social media in language learning have been discussed in these studies [13,30,31]; Facebook's capacity to foster positive relationships between students and teachers [7,11]; the creation of knowledge on Facebook [19]; Facebook's capacity to promote incidental language skill acquisition [2,23]; and the opportunities Facebook provides for language teachers [27].

The potential for students to learn incorrect language productions in an online environment [23]; additional tasks for teachers who must oversee the appropriateness of language and content [16,32]; and privacy concerns are some of

the drawbacks of social media in language learning. It is intended that these mobile learning resources would increase student motivation and effectiveness in the classroom. Since digital gadgets have given students a great deal of power, it is hoped that students would use Instagram and other SM more actively and more involved in language learning. Teachers must contextualize their use of social media in the classroom to fit the requirements and learning styles of their students as well as the predetermined [24]. Instagram is a smartphone software that lets users take and distribute photos and videos to their followers [20]. It is the app with the fastest growth currently, and people love using it for one-minute films and creative photos with captions. The most popular SNS, according to Knight-McCord et al. [25], is Instagram, which is followed by Facebook and Snapchat. Instagram is the eighth most popular social media platform globally, according to eBizMBA [10], and it keeps becoming better by adding new features. Live video broadcasting on Instagram Stories has been available since May 2016 and is viewable for a full day. Both internet companies and teens find it popular. Another feature is Momentary Messages, which, after viewed by the recipients, removes any sent photos or videos.

Students aged between 19 and 25 mostly use Instagram. Through text-assisted images and videos, they can share their ideas and emotions in a private setting on the SNS. Most Instagram users visit the platform every day. While there is not as much scholarly research on Instagram as there is on Facebook, Al-Ali [4] discovered that the social media platform was utilized for two writing exercises and a vacation project in ESL lessons. The findings demonstrated that, despite their initial lack of enthusiasm, the students eventually came around to the notion when they were urged to use their creativity to complete the writing assignments.

English Language Learning and Mobile Learning. The current study looks at how students utilize Instagram for writing in the English language. A strong grasp of English is essential for progressing in school and in the workplace. The four language abilities that are typically centralized are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Writing and speaking, on the other hand, demand that students produce language and are frequently difficult. Reading and listening are seen as receptive skills where students absorb information [19]. However, according to Junco et. al. [22], these abilities are incorporated into language and are dependent on one another. Digital literacy and online communication are two more skill sets that need to be addressed in language classrooms due to the advancement of technology. Writing is far more difficult, complex, and challenging to master than speaking for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners because it requires them to create and organize ideas into understandable texts in addition to using proper handwriting, spelling, flow, and punctuation [1,6,18,28]. For instance, when requested to participate in writing evaluations, a group of ESL students experienced writing difficulties that overwhelmed them [14].

Essays can be broadly classified into four categories: explanatory, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative. In order to properly communicate their ideas and convey their intentions, students must be able to appropriately articulate their feelings and thoughts in writing. Essay writing demands the author's imagination to use the right adjectives to describe people, places, and things in an engaging way. Having a tool to make the process easier could lessen the difficulty of writing in a foreign language [5]. Instagram was

selected as the writing medium for this study in order to take use of its advantages. Prior research has shown that the use of technology in language classes, particularly in higher education institutions, has a good effect [11,13,30]. Instagram is expected to encourage students to write in English both formally and informally as it fosters descriptive language as well as cultural knowledge and competency [26].

Conclusion. In conclusion, research into social media-based language learning shows a changing environment where technology and education converge to provide innovative learning possibilities. The literature highlights the potential of these tools in improving language acquisition and communication skills, from the fundamental knowledge of mobile learning to the complex nuances on the role of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. While there are clear benefits to using social media for language learning, such as more student engagement and unintentional skill development, it's important to be aware of the drawbacks as well, as the possibility of incorrect language productions and privacy issues. Nonetheless, these platforms can be useful tools for encouraging students' language and cultural competency when properly contextualized and guided by teachers.

In particular, Instagram shows promise as an aid for learning English since it provides a visually stimulating environment that encourages creativity and descriptive language. Teachers can design dynamic learning experiences that empower students to effectively express themselves in English, both formally and informally, by utilizing Instagram's characteristics.

It is essential for educators to modify their teaching strategies in order to successfully integrate these digital tools as technology advances. Teachers can enable students to successfully negotiate the challenges of language acquisition in the digital age and prepare them for success in both the academic and professional domains by embracing social media-based learning.

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ОҚУШЫЛАРДЫҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ЖЕЛІЛЕРДІ (INSTAGRAM) АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ САБАҒЫНДА ЖАЗУ ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ ПАЙДАЛАНУҒА КӨЗҚАРАСЫ

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты-оқушылардың ағылшын тілін меңгеруге ерекше назар аудара отырып, әлеуметтік желілерді сынып жағдайында жазу құралы ретінде қалай қабылдайтынын зерттеу және түсіну. Қазіргі цифрлық дәуірде әлеуметтік медиа платформалары кең таралып, жеке қарым-қатынасқа ғана емес, сонымен қатар білім беру тәжірибесіне де әсер етті. Бұл цифрлық құралдардың ағылшын тілін меңгеру дағдыларын дамытуға қалай көмектесетініне ерекше назар аударылады. Әдебиеттерге шолу технологияның білім берудегі интеграциясының артып келе жатқанын көрсетеді және әлеуметтік медианы дәстүрлі оқу орталарына енгізудің ықтимал артықшылықтары мен қиындықтарын зерттейді. Әр түрлі платформалардың Ішінде Instagram өзінің визуалды форматымен және шығармашылық пен белсенділікті дамытуға қабілеттілігімен ерекшеленеді, бұл оны ағылшын тілін үйренуді жетілдірудің перспективалы құралына айналдырады. Бұл зерттеу әлеуметтік медианы педагогикалық құрал ретінде пайдаланудың артықшылықтары мен шектеулері туралы, әсіресе оқушылардың белсенділігі мен тілдік дағдыларын дамытуға қатысты егжей-тегжейлі түсінік беруге бағытталған. Оқушылардың әлеуметтік медианы жазу құралы ретінде пайдаланудағы көзқарастары мен тәсілдері туралы түсінік ала отырып, бұл зерттеу оқытушыларды осы платформаларды тіл үйрену бағдарламаларына тиімді біріктірудің практикалық стратегияларымен жабдықтауға бағытталған. Түпкі мақсат-білім беру тәжірибесін арттыру, оны студенттердің күнделікті өміріне сәйкес ету, сонымен бірге оларды барған сайын цифрлық әлемде табысқа жетуге дайындау.

Тірек сөздер: Әлеуметтік желі, жазу дағдылары, студенттердің қабылдауы, Instagram.

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ВОСПРИЯТИЕ СТУДЕНТАМИ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕЙ (INSTAGRAM) В КАЧЕСТВЕ ИНСТРУМЕНТА ПИСЬМА В КЛАССЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация. Целью данного исследования является изучение и понимание того, как студенты воспринимают социальные сети как инструмент письма в условиях класса, уделяя особое внимание изучению английского языка. В сегодняшнюю цифровую эпоху платформы социальных сетей стали повсеместными, влияя не только на личное общение, но и на образовательную практику. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как эти цифровые инструменты могут помочь в развитии навыков английского языка. Обзор литературы подчеркивает растущую интеграцию технологий в образование и углубляется в потенциальные преимущества и проблемы, связанные с включением социальных сетей в традиционную учебную среду. Среди различных платформ Instagram выделяется благодаря своему визуальному формату и способности стимулировать творчество и вовлеченность, что делает его многообещающим инструментом для улучшения изучения английского языка. Данное исследование стремится обеспечить детальное понимание преимуществ и ограничений использования социальных сетей в качестве педагогического инструмента, особенно в отношении вовлеченности студентов и развития языковых навыков. Получая представление об отношении и подходах студентов к использованию социальных сетей в качестве инструмента письма, это исследование направлено на то, чтобы вооружить преподавателей практическими стратегиями для эффективной интеграции этих платформ в учебные программы по изучению языка. Конечная цель — улучшить образовательный опыт, сделав его более релевантным для повседневной жизни студентов, одновременно готовя их к успеху во все более цифровом мире.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, навыки письма, восприятие студентов, Instagram.