

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

Abstract. *The purpose of this study is to discover how students view social media as a writing tool in classroom settings. This study uses qualitative research methods, such as focus groups and interviews, to investigate students' perspectives and comprehension of writing on social media platforms with an emphasis on English language acquisition. The literature study emphasizes the growing significance of technology in education as well as the possible advantages and difficulties of integrating social media. Instagram's visual format and ability to encourage creativity make it a promising tool for learning English. This study intends to provide instructors with useful techniques for incorporating social media platforms into language learning curriculum and equipping students for success in the digital age by gaining a knowledge of students' attitudes about these platforms as writing tools.*

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 (Akhiar et al., 2017) 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 (Rosyida & Seftika, 2019).

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 know-how 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 (2010), 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 for the general public (Gafni & Deri, 2012) to engage in learning (Traxler, 2007). According to Barhoumi and Rossi (2013), 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 (Jimoyiannis et al., 2013; Stockwell, 2008). 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 (Aydin, 2014; Buga, Căpeneată, Chirasnel, & Popa, 2014; Greenhow & Gleason, 2012).

The positive aspects of social media in language learning have been discussed in these studies (Eren, 2012; Shih, 2011, 2013); Facebook's capacity to foster positive relationships between students and teachers (Aydin, 2014; Ekoc, 2014); the creation of knowledge on Facebook (Idris & Ghani, 2012); Facebook's capacity to promote incidental language skill acquisition (Adi Kasuma, 2017; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010); and the opportunities Facebook provides for language teachers (Mahadi & Ubaidullah, 2010).

The potential for students to learn incorrect language productions in an online environment (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010); additional tasks for teachers who must oversee the appropriateness of language and content (Gettman & Cortijo, 2015; Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011); 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 curricula (Kent & McNergney, 1999). Instagram is a smartphone software that lets users take and distribute photos and videos to their followers (Instagram, 2015). 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. (2016), is Instagram, which is followed by Facebook and Snapchat. Instagram is the eighth most popular social media platform globally, according to eBizMBA (2016), 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.

Instagram is mostly used by students aged between 19 and 25. 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 (2014) 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 (Harmer, 2007). However, according to Su (2007), 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 (Myles, 2002; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Harmer, 2007; Alsamadani, 2010; Adas & Bakir, 2013). For instance, when requested to participate in writing evaluations, a group of ESL students experienced writing difficulties that overwhelmed them (Fadda, 2012).

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 (Alsalem, 2013). 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 (Ekoc, 2014; Eren, 2012; R.-C. Shih, 2011). 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 (Lomicka and Lord, 2009).

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 – студенттердің әлеуметтік желіні сыныптағы жазу құралы ретінде қолдануға деген көзқарасын анықтау. Бұл зерттеу студенттердің көзқарастары мен әлеуметтік желі платформаларындағы жазуды түсінуін зерттеу үшін фокус-топтар және сұхбаттар сияқты сапалы зерттеу әдістерін пайдаланады. Әдебиеттерді зерттеу білім берудегі технологияның өсіп келе жатқан маңыздылығын, сондай-ақ әлеуметтік медианы біріктірудің артықшылықтары мен қиындықтарын атап көрсетеді. Instagram-ның визуалды пішімі және шығармашылықты ынталандыру қабілеті оны ағылшын тілін үйренудің тиімді құралына айналдырады. Бұл зерттеу оқытушыларға әлеуметтік желі платформаларын шет тілдерді оқытудың оқу бағдарламасына енгізудің пайдалы әдістерін ұсынуға және студенттердің осы платформаларға жазу құралы ретінде пікірі туралы білім алу арқылы цифрлық ғасырда жетістікке жетуге мүмкіндік береді.

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. Цель этого исследования — выяснить, как учащиеся рассматривают социальные сети как инструмент письма в классе. В этом исследовании используются качественные методы исследования, такие как фокус-группы и интервью, для изучения точек зрения студентов и понимания, написанного на платформах социальных сетей с упором на изучение английского языка. В исследовании литературы подчеркивается растущая значимость технологий в образовании, а также возможные преимущества и трудности интеграции социальных сетей. Визуальный формат Instagram и его способность поощрять творчество делают его многообещающим инструментом для изучения английского языка. Это исследование призвано предоставить преподавателям полезные методы для включения платформ социальных сетей в учебную программу по изучению языка и подготовить студентов к успеху в цифровую эпоху путем получения знаний об отношении студентов к этим платформам как инструментам письма.

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

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