

SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖ У ЗАНЯТТЯ З АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Social media integration in English language classes has emerged as a relevant topic, driven by the increasing prevalence of online platforms and their potential impact on education. This study investigates the problem of incorporating social media into English language teaching and learning practices among Ukrainian students.

The contemporary educational field is witnessing a transformation, driven by the advent of digital technologies and the evolving needs of learners. Social media, characterized by its interactive nature and wide-reaching capabilities, has attracted attention as a promising tool for enhancing language learning experiences. Against this background, this study aims to explore the extent to which social media is integrated into the daily routines of Ukrainian students and its implications for English language education.

The research methodology includes a survey questionnaire administered to first-year students at the Department of Applied Linguistics. Answering a series of nine questions, participants provide information on their familiarity with various social media platforms, frequency of usage, perceived effectiveness for language skill improvement, motivation levels, collaboration with peers, interaction with educators, and examples of social media influence on their English studies.

Analysis of the survey data reveals a diverse pattern of social media platform usage among participants. Instagram emerges as the most popular platform, followed by YouTube and Facebook, which highlights their significant role in language learning activities. Students express varying degrees of motivation and engagement with social media for language improvement with a notable emphasis on reading and listening comprehension skills.

The findings point to the potential of social media to serve as a motivating factor for students, fostering collaborative learning environments and facilitating communication with peers. While some participants express reservations about its efficacy in interacting with educators, the overall attitude leans towards a positive outlook on social media role in English language education.

Key words: social media, students, English language classes, language skills, motivation.

Впровадження соціальних мереж на заняттях з англійської мови є актуальною темою, зумовленою зростанням популярності

онлайн-платформ та їхнім потенційним впливом на освіту. У цьому дослідженні розглядається проблема інтеграції соціальних мереж у практику викладання та вивчення англійської мови українськими студентами. Сучасна сфера освіти зазнає трансформації, зумовленої появою цифрових технологій та зміною потреб здобувачів освіти. Соціальні медіа, що вирізняються своєю інтерактивною спрямованістю та широкими можливостями, привертають увагу як перспективний ресурс для покращення процесу вивчення іноземних мов. З огляду на це, це дослідження має на меті з'ясувати, наскільки соціальні медіа інтегровані в щоденну діяльність українських студентів та який вплив вони мають на вивчення англійської мови.

Методологія дослідження включає анкетування студентів першого курсу кафедри прикладної лінгвістики. Відповідаючи на дев'ять запитань, учасники надали інформацію про обізнаність з різними платформами соціальних мереж, частоту їх використання, ефективність для покращення мовних навичок, рівень мотивації, співпрацю з одногрупниками, взаємодію з викладачами та приклади впливу соціальних мереж на їхнє вивчення англійської мови.

Аналіз даних опитування показує, що респонденти використовують різні соціальні медіа-платформи. Найпопулярнішою платформою виявився Instagram, за яким слідують YouTube і Facebook, що підкреслює їхню вагомую роль у вивченні мови. Студенти виявляють різний ступінь мотивації та зацікавленості у використанні соціальних мереж для вдосконалення мови, при цьому особлива увага приділяється навичкам читання та аудіювання.

Отримані результати вказують на те, що соціальні медіа можуть слугувати мотивуючим фактором для студентів, сприяти створенню середовища для спільного навчання та полегшувати спілкування з однолітками. Хоча деякі респонденти висловлюють застереження щодо їхньої ефективності у взаємодії з викладачами, загальне ставлення тяжіє до позитивного бачення ролі соціальних мереж у навчанні англійської мови.

Ключові слова: соціальні медіа, студенти, заняття з англійської мови, мовні навички, мотивація.

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Problem statement. Social media encompasses a range of online platforms and tools intended for users to generate, share, and swap user-created content within virtual communities and networks. These platforms function as interactive arenas where people can link up, communicate, and cooperate with one another through the exchange of text, images, videos, and hyperlinks. The increasing prevalence of social media usage among the population in Ukraine has raised questions about how best to integrate it into English language teaching and learning, considering the significance of information and communications technology in education within the country. Given the

essential roles that both ICT and English proficiency play in Ukraine's engagement with the globalized world, researchers have prioritized the incorporation of social media into English language education.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. In the contemporary digital era, there has been a notable shift in how learners engage with education, giving rise to new categories of learners such as "digital natives" [8], the "net generation" [7], or "generation Z" [3]. Recent research indicates that this digital-native generation approaches learning differently from previous generations, relying extensively on the Internet for gathering information and communication

[2]. Scholars suggest that social media have played a significant role in the emergence of these new learner types, new learning methods, and novel models of higher education.

Studies investigating the incorporation of social media into English language classes have identified several positive outcomes. Elverici discovers that it has the potential to enrich students' social presence [4], while Ariantini et al. emphasize its ability to enhance language skills, motivation, and critical thinking [1]. Similarly, Zainal and Rahmat support these findings by highlighting social media's capacity to stimulate interest in language learning [12]. Additionally, Lailiyah and Putra point to the advantages of social media for facilitating group collaboration in English for Specific Purposes classes [5]. These studies indicate that integrating social media can serve as a valuable tool for improving various aspects of English language learning.

Higher education has acknowledged the potential benefits offered by Web 2.0 technologies in enhancing student engagement, academic performance, the college experience, and pedagogical methods. Consequently, there has been a push for innovations and adjustments to keep pace with the changing educational sphere [11]. Social media platforms present opportunities for significant transformation, allowing teaching and learning practices to become more social, inclusive, and collaborative. Specifically, tools within social networking facilitate the process of knowledge creation by encouraging connections, networks, and social interactions. Additionally, social media has the capacity to support students in their learning endeavors [10]. The necessity of integrating social media into teaching and learning methodologies in higher education to enhance student engagement and pedagogy has become a significant focus for educators. Selwyn notes that many higher education institutions and educators are now feeling pressure to adapt to the prevalence of social media applications and users [9, p. 1]. In addition, scholars suggest that universities are well-suited to use social media practices to facilitate collaborative knowledge creation among students and the broader community. Several universities are actively exploring ways to support these emerging forms of learning through social media [6, p. 550].

Research relevance. Despite the growing number of social media users in Ukraine, there has been limited research exploring its potential in English language teaching and learning in Ukrainian educational institutions. Therefore, there is an urgent need for researchers to conduct studies to address this gap.

The **aim** of this study was to assess the viability of employing social media as a resource to support English language teaching and learning among Ukrainian students. The researcher sought to gain a

comprehensive understanding of the degree to which social media was integrated into the daily routines of students. This involved examining their familiarity with various social media platforms, the frequency of usage, and the study purposes for which they used them.

The research question was as follows: What are the perceptions of Ukrainian students regarding the potential of social media in the realm of English language teaching and learning?

Methodology and participants. The research methodology employed in this study involved the administration of a survey questionnaire to gather data from Ukrainian students regarding their perceptions and usage patterns of social media in the context of English language teaching and learning. It consisted of nine questions designed to elicit information on the types of social media platforms used for studying English, frequency of usage, perceived effectiveness for language skill improvement, motivation levels, collaboration with peers, interaction with educators, and examples of how social media has influenced their English studies. The questionnaire comprised multiple-choice questions, such as selecting social media platforms for English study and indicating targeted language skills, while Likert scales measured the frequency of social media use and agreement with statements. Additionally, open-ended questions solicited examples of social media motivational impact on English studies and opinions on integrating social media into English education at educational institutions. The research tool is available through the Google Form hyperlink: <https://forms.gle/PFDvc9TtTTYUk2dD9>.

The participants in this study comprised 22 first-year students enrolled at Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding of Ukraine, specifically the Department of Applied Linguistics. The survey instrument was distributed electronically to participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

Discussion and interpretation of the results.

The results demonstrate a varied pattern of social media platform usage among the surveyed students for studying English. Instagram emerged as the most popular platform, with 20 out of 22 students indicating its usage. YouTube was also frequently employed, with 16 students reporting its usage. Facebook and Telegram were selected by 14 and 15 students respectively, indicating their significant role in language learning. Twitter, Quora, and TikTok were chosen by 10, 9, and 6 students respectively, while Skype, Discord, and Tandem were utilized by smaller numbers of students, with 4, 3, and 4 students respectively. Additionally, Reddit, LinkedIn, and HelloTalk were the least used platforms.

Figure 2 demonstrates the frequency of using social media for English studies. The outcomes to the 2nd question reveal varied patterns of social

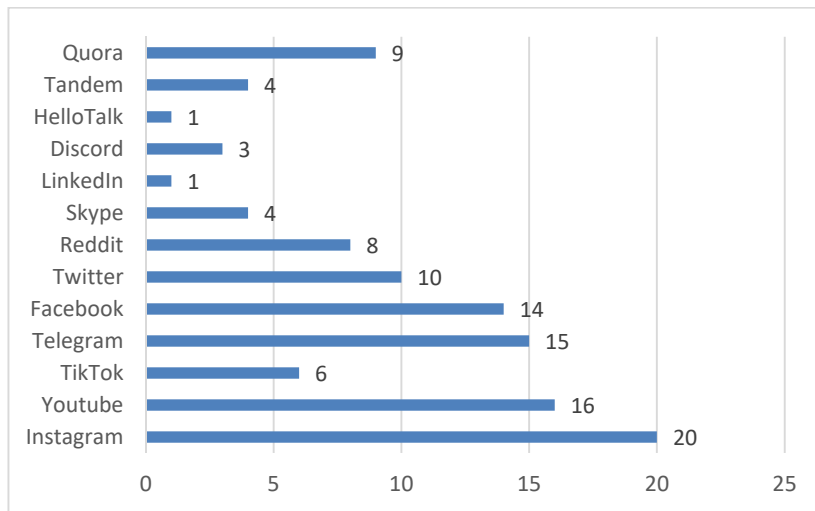


Fig. 1. Social media platforms used for studying English

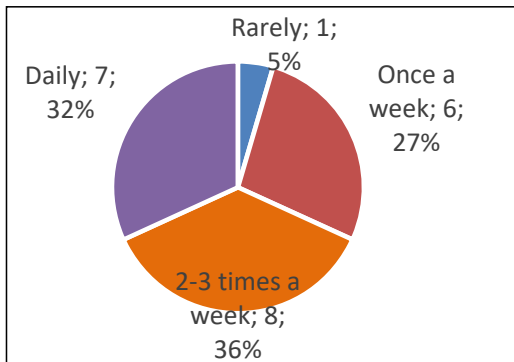


Fig. 2. Frequency of using social media for English studies

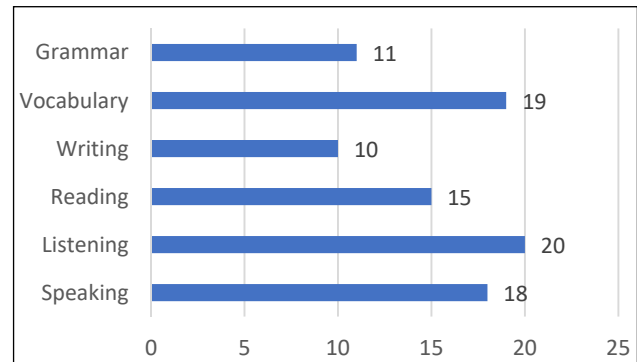


Fig. 3. Using social media for improving language skills

media usage for English studies among the surveyed students. The majority, comprising 8 students (36%), reported using social media for their English studies 2–3 times a week. A significant portion of students, 7 out of 22 (32%), reported using social media daily for English studies. 6 students (27%) indicated using social media once a week for their English studies, while only 1 student (5%) reported rarely using social media for this purpose.

The research findings to the statement on using social media for improving language skills are presented in Figure 3. They reveal that social media serves as a prevalent tool for enhancing various aspects of English language skills among the surveyed students.

A vast majority of students, encompassing all 22 participants use social media for reading owing to the widespread usage for accessing written English content. A substantial proportion of students, 20 out of 22, employ social media for listening practice, which suggests their role in consuming audiovisual English materials. 18 students make use of social media for speaking practice engaging in conversational exchanges. 19 students state that they use social

media for vocabulary enhancement. However, the usage for grammar and writing practice appears to be comparatively lower, with only 11 and 10 out of 22 students respectively indicating their use of social media for these purposes.

The results for the Likert-Scale statements are given in Figures 4–7.

The data of Figure 4 indicate that a significant portion of the surveyed students find engaging with social media for studying to be a source of motivation. Specifically, 11 out of 22 students (50%) agreed that social media serves as a motivating factor in their study endeavors, while an additional 3 students (14%) strongly agreed with this statement. On the other hand, only 1 student (4%) strongly disagreed, and 3 students disagreed (14%) with the notion that social media is motivating for their studies. Additionally, 3 students (14%) expressed uncertainty regarding this aspect. Thus, the findings suggest that for the majority of students, social media serves as a source of motivation.

Reacting to the statement about the progression of their English skills through the use of social media platforms (Figure 5), the majority of respondents,

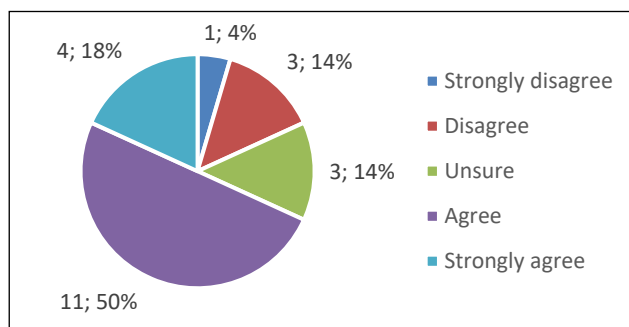


Fig. 4. Engaging with social media for studying is a source of motivation for me

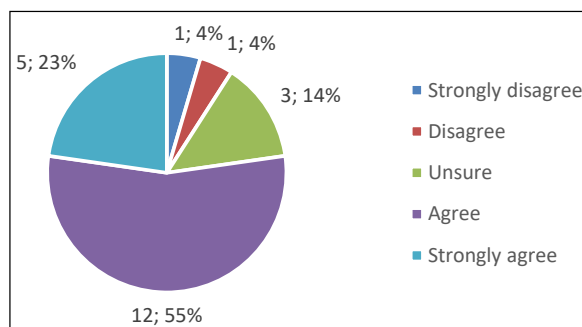


Fig. 5. My English skills have progressed through the use of social media platforms

totaling 17 students (78%), either agreed (12 students) or strongly agreed (5 students), proving a positive correlation between their social media usage and language skill enhancement. Conversely, only a small number of students, comprising 3 who were unsure and 2 who disagreed, expressed uncertainty or disagreement with this notion.

Figure 6 reflects the students' attitudes to the statement concerning the efficiency of collaborating with peers for group assignments through social media, the majority of respondents, totaling 19 students (73%), expressed agreement (14 students) or strong agreement (5 students).

This suggests that most students perceive social media as an effective platform for facilitating collaborative group work. Only a small number of students, 1 who disagreed and 2 who were unsure, expressed reservations or uncertainty regarding the efficiency of social media for group collaboration.

The data on the capability of social media platforms to facilitate communication with educators, given in Figure 7, demonstrates a mixed perspective among the surveyed students.

7 respondents (32%) expressed uncertainty about this aspect. Moreover, 7 students disagreed with the notion, indicating some skepticism regarding the effectiveness of social media for communication with educators. A combined total of 8 students (totaling 37%), comprising 5 who agreed and 3 who strongly agreed, perceived social media as an effective means

of communication with their educators. This suggests a relatively positive outlook on the potential of social media platforms for facilitating interactions between students and educators, despite some reservations expressed by a subset of respondents.

The last two questions elicited the information on how social media has motivated English studies and how educational institutions should integrate and promote social media in English teaching and studying.

The examples of how social media has motivated English studies, in the students' words, include accessing language learning apps for vocabulary practice, watching English-speaking YouTubers for listening comprehension, participating in online quizzes for vocabulary and grammar use, joining English language discussion groups on social media platforms, and following English language learning accounts for tips and resources.

The responses regarding how educational institutions should integrate and promote social media in English teaching and studying vary including incorporating social media-based assignments to encourage active engagement, organizing virtual language exchange programs with native speakers via social media platforms, providing access to educational content through institutional social media accounts, integrating more social media into classroom activities for collaborative learning, and providing professional development workshops

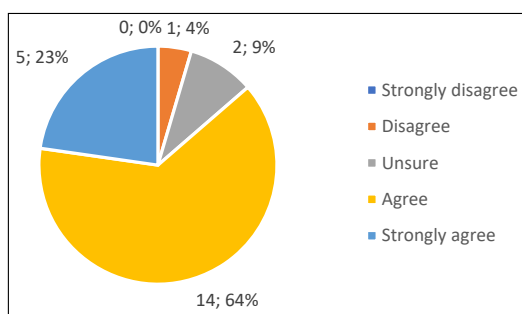


Fig. 6. Collaborating with my peers for group assignments is made quicker and more efficient through social media

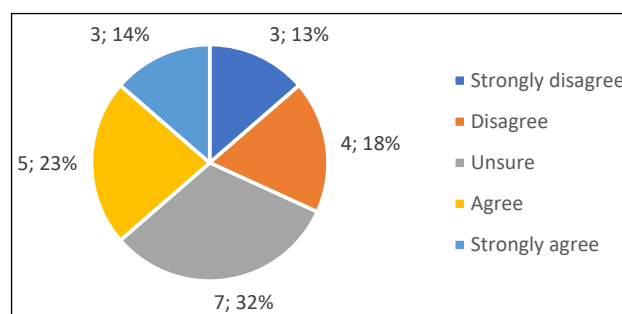


Fig. 7. Social media platforms enable me to communicate with my educators

for teachers on using social media for language education organized by the university administration.

Conclusions. This study provides the information on the integration of social media into English language teaching and learning practices among Ukrainian students. The findings reveal diverse usage patterns of various social media platforms for language study purposes, with Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook as the most commonly used platforms. Moreover, social media appears to be a motivating factor for many students and contributes to the improvement of various language skills, particularly reading and listening comprehension. Despite some uncertainties and reservations, students generally view social media as an effective tool for collaborative learning and communication with peers, albeit with varying degrees of confidence in its potential use to interact with their teachers. The responses also offer useful suggestions for educational institutions that aim at enhancing the integration and promotion of social media in English language education. The findings highlight the importance of employing social media to improve student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in English language education.

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