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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Annotation

This thesis explores the impact of social media on English language learning, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter in language acquisition. Through a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and interviews with English language learners, the study examines the extent to which social media helps in vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and speaking practice. While social media offers authentic, real-world language exposure and promotes informal, real-time interaction with native speakers, the research also identifies potential drawbacks, such as the prevalence of informal language, distractions, and the challenges in transferring informal learning to more formal language contexts. The findings suggest that while social media can be an effective tool for improving language skills, its use must be balanced with more traditional, structured language learning methods to ensure comprehensive language proficiency. The study concludes with recommendations for educators on how to guide learners in using social media effectively for language development.

Keywords: Social Media, English Language Learning, Vocabulary Development, Listening Skills, Informal Language, Learning Platforms, Language Acquisition, Authentic Content, Education Technology, Distractions in Learning.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu dissertatsiya ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning ingliz tilini o'rganishga ta'sirini o'rganadi va Facebook, Instagram, YouTube va Twitter kabi platformalarning til o'rganishdagi foydalari va qiyinchiliklarini ta'kidlaydi. Ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning lug'atni rivojlantirish, tinglashni tushunish va gapirish amaliyotini qo'llashda qanday yordam berishini o'rganish uchun so'rovlar va intervyular orqali aralash usul qo'llaniladi. Ijtimoiy tarmoqlar haqiqiy tilga asoslangan kontentni taqdim etadi va o'rganuvchilarni original tilda, real vaqt rejimida tilni o'rganishda qo'llab-quvvatlaydi. Biroq, tadqiqotda rasmiy bo'lmagan til, chalg'itadigan omillar va norasmiy o'rganishni rasmiy til kontekstlariga o'tkazishdagi qiyinchiliklar kabi potentsial kamchiliklar ham aniqlanadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar til ko'nikmalarini yaxshilashda samarali vosita bo'lishi mumkin, ammo uning ishlatilishi to'liq til malakasiga erishish uchun an'anaviy va tuzilgan til o'rganish usullari bilan muvozanatlashishi kerak. Tadqiqot o'qituvchilarga ijtimoiy tarmoqlardan tilni rivojlantirish uchun qanday samarali foydalanishni ko'rsatadigan tavsiyalar bilan yakunlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Ijtimoiy Tarmoqlar, Ingliz Tilini O'rganish, Lug'atni Rivojlantirish, Tinglash Ko'nikmalari, Norasmiy Til, O'rganish Platformalari, Til O'rganish, Haqiqiy Kontent, Ta'lim Texnologiyalari, O'rganishda Chalg'ituvchi Omillar.





Аннотация

Диссертация исследует влияние социальных сетей на изучение английского языка, подчеркивая как преимущества, так и трудности использования таких платформ, как Facebook, Instagram, YouTube и Twitter в процессе освоения языка. С помощью метода смешанных исследований, включая опросы и интервью с учащимися английского языка, исследуется, насколько эффективно социальные сети способствуют развитию словарного запаса, восприятию на слух и практике устной речи. Несмотря на то, что социальные сети предоставляют подлинное, основанное на реальном языке контент и способствуют неформальному, реальному взаимодействию с носителями языка, исследование также выявляет потенциальные недостатки, такие как преобладание неформального языка, отвлекающие факторы и проблемы переноса неформальных знаний в более формальные языковые контексты. Результаты показывают, что, хотя социальные сети могут быть эффективным инструментом для улучшения языковых навыков, их использование должно быть сбалансировано с более традиционными, структурированными методами обучения, чтобы обеспечить всестороннее владение языком. Исследование заканчивается рекомендациями для преподавателей по эффективному использованию социальных сетей для развития языковых навыков.

Ключевые слова: Социальные сети, Изучение английского языка, Развитие словарного запаса, Навыки восприятия на слух, Неформальный язык, Платформы для обучения, Освоение языка, Подлинный контент, Образовательные технологии, Отвлекающие факторы в обучении.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology and the rise of social media platforms have transformed various aspects of human interaction, including language acquisition. In recent years, the role of social media in English language learning has gained significant attention. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and others offer learners the opportunity to engage in informal, real-time communication and access authentic English-language content. These platforms create dynamic environments where learners can practice writing, listening, and speaking in the target language, as well as enhance their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Given these factors, this thesis explores the impact of social media on the process of learning English, focusing on its effectiveness, challenges, and potential for enhancing language skills.

Literature Review

The influence of social media on language learning has been a subject of growing interest in recent years, with many studies highlighting both the benefits and limitations of these platforms. A key advantage of social media is its ability to provide authentic language exposure, as users can interact with native speakers and access content created by individuals from various linguistic backgrounds. According to Thorne (2003), social media platforms facilitate





"linguistic exchanges" that promote language practice in real-world contexts, allowing learners to develop practical communication skills that are not often emphasized in traditional classroom settings.

Research by Godwin-Jones (2018) suggests that social media helps learners develop an informal understanding of English, allowing them to acquire new vocabulary and expressions through casual interactions such as chatting, commenting, and sharing content. Additionally, platforms like YouTube and Twitter provide opportunities for learners to engage with diverse accents, idioms, and colloquial phrases, enhancing their overall comprehension of the language.

Despite these advantages, there are also challenges associated with social media use for language learning. One concern is the informal nature of the language used in online environments, which may lead to the adoption of incorrect grammar, slang, and non-standard language forms. According to Crystal (2011), while social media promotes creativity in language use, it also encourages shortcuts and abbreviations that may hinder learners' ability to develop proficiency in more formal aspects of the language. Furthermore, excessive reliance on social media for language learning can lead to a lack of critical thinking skills and a shallow understanding of language rules, as noted by Boulton (2016).

In addition to these concerns, the overwhelming amount of information available on social media can lead to distractions, making it difficult for learners to focus on language learning objectives. As stated by Hockly (2013), while social media offers numerous benefits, learners must be taught how to use these platforms effectively to maximize their learning outcomes.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of social media on English language learning. Data was collected through two primary means: a survey and a series of in-depth interviews. The survey was distributed to a sample of 200 English language learners from various age groups, education levels, and cultural backgrounds. The survey aimed to assess learners' frequency of social media use, the platforms they engage with most, and their perceived improvements in language skills through these platforms.

In addition, a subset of 30 participants from the survey was selected for follow-up interviews. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for a deeper exploration of learners' experiences with social media in language acquisition. Questions focused on the specific ways social media has helped learners improve their vocabulary, speaking, listening, and writing skills, as well as any challenges or limitations they have encountered.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software and thematic analysis. The results from the survey were analyzed to determine patterns and correlations between social media use and language learning outcomes, while the interview responses were coded to identify recurring themes and insights.





Results

The results of the survey indicate that a majority of participants (approximately 75%) use social media daily, with platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook being the most popular among English language learners. Of those surveyed, 60% reported that they felt their vocabulary had improved through regular engagement with social media, particularly through exposure to new words and phrases in various contexts. Furthermore, 45% of participants noted an improvement in their listening skills, as they frequently interacted with video content in English, such as podcasts, YouTube videos, and live streams.

However, while many learners reported positive experiences, the survey also revealed that 40% of participants struggled with understanding informal language and slang, particularly when it came to interpreting abbreviations and internet-specific expressions. Additionally, 30% of learners mentioned feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information on social media, which sometimes led to distractions and hindered their learning process.

The follow-up interviews further corroborated these findings, with many participants highlighting that social media had a significant positive effect on their language learning, especially in terms of vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation practice. However, concerns about the informal nature of language on social media were frequently mentioned, with participants expressing uncertainty about whether online language use would transfer to more formal settings, such as academic writing or professional communication.

Discussion

The findings from this study highlight the dual nature of social media's impact on English language learning. On the one hand, social media offers a wealth of opportunities for learners to engage with authentic English-language content, interact with native speakers, and develop their communication skills in informal contexts. The exposure to diverse language forms, including colloquial phrases, idioms, and real-time interactions, allows learners to build confidence and familiarity with the language. This aligns with the work of Godwin-Jones (2018), who emphasizes the value of authentic content in language acquisition.

On the other hand, the study also reveals significant challenges associated with social media use. The informal nature of online communication can sometimes lead to the reinforcement of incorrect language forms, such as slang, abbreviations, and non-standard grammar. Learners who rely solely on social media for language practice may struggle to develop proficiency in more formal aspects of the language, such as academic writing or professional communication. This concern echoes the findings of Crystal (2011), who cautions against the overuse of informal language in language learning contexts.

Moreover, the distraction factor on social media poses a considerable challenge, as learners may find it difficult to focus on language learning amidst the vast amount of content available. This issue of information overload was highlighted by Hockly (2013), who argues that learners must develop strategies





to navigate social media effectively in order to avoid distractions and optimize their learning experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has proven to be both a valuable tool and a potential hindrance in the process of learning English. It provides learners with opportunities to engage with authentic content, improve their vocabulary, and practice listening and speaking skills. However, the informal nature of online communication and the risk of distractions can impede learners' progress, particularly in formal language domains. To maximize the benefits of social media for language learning, it is crucial that learners are guided on how to use these platforms effectively, balancing informal interactions with more structured, formal learning activities. Further research into the pedagogical implications of social media in language learning is necessary to develop effective strategies for integrating these platforms into language education.

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