Svitlana Makhometa,

bachelor Student of the 4 th Year,

Faculty of Foreign Languages,

(Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University)

SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Integrating social media platforms into the English language classroom presents a unique opportunity to enhance students' learning experience.

B. E. Siddig's research emphasizes the importance of immersive environments in language acquisition, where the target language is used for instruction. This is where social media's accessibility comes into play, enhancing the effectiveness of this immersion approach. Social media platforms provide a real-world context for English practice, fostering a supportive, collaborative environment that aids language acquisition [7].

In his study, M. S. Yadav proposed a list of social media categories due to their educational value [8]:

1. Instant messengers that include WhatsApp. Facebook, Messenger, Skype, Google Meet, Zoom, IMO, and Tango.

2. Social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

3. Social news that includes Flipboard, Play Newsstand, BBC News, etc.

4. Media sharing includes YouTube, Instagram, Flicker, and Intranet.

5. Wikis with Wikipedia, Emojipedia, and online dictionaries.

6. Blogging like WordPress and Google Blogger.

7. Microblogging such as Twitter and Telegram.

8. Emailing for Gmail, Outlook, and Yahoo.

Furthermore, K. Delos Santos and R. Ilustre classified social media platforms into two:

a. Synchronous communication tools enable users to communicate and collaborate in real-time.

b. Asynchronous communication tools that allow users to collaborate over time [2, p. 2].

Among the mentioned platforms, S. Samuel and R. Pulizala defined *YouTube* as one of the most popular websites for teachers and a vast resource for educational content. Its educational materials can cater to different learning styles as visual and entertaining videos selected according to the lesson subject break up the lecture's monotony, bring some fun, and keep the students more engaged and interested [6].

In turn, R. N. Laili highlighted TikTok as the most popular student platform through its interactive nature and accessibility. However, for them to be truly effective, both user discipline and content quality control are crucial [4].

In the second place of use among students we found the Instagram application. N. Aloraini conducted a study on the use of Instagram as a tool for learning English. The research

found that vocabulary posts on the platform elicited more output from learners but did not significantly impact output accuracy or the amount of feedback received. This suggests that while Instagram can be a valuable platform for language practice, its effectiveness may vary depending on the specific language learning goals [1].

A. Lazebna highlighted the global community aspect of using social media in the English classroom. Often, they are characterized by language learning tips, grammar questions, vocabulary expansion, and cultural aspects of language use. Social media provide a platform for language learners to engage in authentic communication, receive peer feedback, and seek support from a global community of language learners. This active participation in language practice exercises and exchange activities not only facilitates real-world language use and intercultural communication but also broadens the horizons of educators and their students [5].

M. Z. Haque explored the potential of social media in language learning environments. The study also acknowledges potential drawbacks, highlighting advantages like collaborative learning, meaningful peer interaction, and access to diverse, authentic language materials [3].

One concern is the need for more control over content accuracy. Social media platforms can offer valuable resources alongside potentially unreliable information. Additionally, the distracting nature of social media, with its notifications and various functionalities, can hinder focus on language learning tasks for beginners and intermediate learners. Finally, the time limits required for effective social media integration can be substantial and take away from dedicated language learning time [3].

In conclusion, while social media offers promising benefits, it also presents challenges. Educators play a crucial role in navigating these challenges to maximize the effectiveness of social media for language acquisition. By adapting their teaching methods and strategies, they can ensure that social media integration is a valuable tool in the English language classroom.

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