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ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Abstract. This research paper is dedicated to the analysis of the role of social media in improving English language learning and what methods or teaching approaches can be applied during English classes while using social media. It also sheds some light on how social media is effectively used by teachers. Research findings show that YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram can help most students to improve their English language acquisition. This can be supported by modern pedagogical methods, including Flipped Learning, Task-Based Learning, Collaborative Projects and Gamification. When used thoughtfully, social media can offer numerous benefits, such as boosting student motivation and participation, real-life language exposure, digital literacy and peer learning.

Key words: social media, YouTube, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, student motivation, modern methods, language acquisition, language exposure.

In recent years, social media has become an indispensable part of students' lives, changing their attitudes towards learning and studying. With the rapid developments in technology, they also have instant and easy access to various types of content on social media. From watching videos and reading articles to joining online communities, students spend a significant amount of time enjoying with digital platforms. Based on the previous case study conducted at Karakalpak State University, it is also clear that students spend majority of their time on various social media platforms, and they find social media an effective tool in their language learning process. Numerous studies have explored the impact of social media on English language learning. These studies have indicated that social media-based learning is markedly more effective than traditional methods that do not incorporate social media [2; 45-51] . Social media has emerged as a valuable avenue for both teaching and learning the English language. As English is seen as an international language that people use to connect with one another throughout the globe, it is one of the languages that is frequently used in social media [1; 8-17] . Learners can acquire English language proficiency through social media as language functions as a communication means. Additionally, as English is an international language, social media provides numerous unique and enjoyable ways to learn it if used properly. Despite high student engagement with social media and its positive impact on learning, its integration into language teaching in educational institutions is still limited, with traditional methods of teaching being prioritized. Considering this, this research paper aims to analyze how teachers can integrate social

media into language learning classrooms and identify effective methods as well as platforms for improving English language learning. Significance of this research paper lies in its contribution to the field of English language instruction for EFL students by identifying which teaching methods or approaches can be utilized and which platforms are effective tools inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, this research tries to identify the main benefits of social media in education. The findings of the research may provide insights into the best practices and strategies for using social media in teaching foreign languages, which could be of help to EFL teachers and learners. In the long run, this study has the potential to improve English language instruction for EFL learners and make language learning more effective and efficient. Numerous social media platforms can be used in teaching English as a foreign language, but the most common and effective ones include YouTube, Telegram, Instagram, and Facebook. It is important to note that the use of social media platforms in EFL teaching should be accompanied by appropriate guidance and support from teachers. This can include providing clear guidelines on inappropriate behavior, online safety, and privacy concerns [1; 8-17]. Depending on the needs of learners and learning objectives, choice of platforms can be different. For example, YouTube, being the most commonly used platform to access to English content, can be a useful tool for improving listening, pronunciation, grammar, with the help of diverse range of videos, tutorials. To do this, appropriate content can be selected by a teacher, and students may learn pronunciation features, shadow, or just retell what they have understood from the video. Al-Zahrani suggests that YouTube can be used in EFL teaching to provide students with access to a wide range of language input, such as videos and podcasts [3; 1-18]. Instagram can also be another supplementary tool to enhance not only students' language skills, but also boost motivation and improve other soft skills such as creativity, imagination, and critical thinking. This can be done by organizing hashtag challenges or group projects aimed at improving students' language acquisition. Learners can create their own language learning accounts where they can post about whatever they learn in English or their own opinion on various matters. Due to its creative format, learners can record themselves using English in a fun and relaxed setting. For instance, students can act out short dialogues explaining the meaning of a word, idiom, or share a 1-2 minute presentation on a particular topic (i.e. "My school", "My hometown", "Nature and we" and etc.). This not only enhances speaking skills, but also builds confidence in using the language publicly. Facebook is also another useful tool when it comes to collaborative learning and educational groups [8; 216 - 230]. Teachers can create specialized groups in which students post writing tasks, comment on each other's work, and participate in discussions on different topics. Other findings show that social media can be useful tool for enhancing students' English. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram can help kids' linguistic abilities in meanwhile [6; 91-111].

Integrating social media into English language classes is most effective when supported by suitable pedagogical methods. Among these, Flipped Learning, Task-Based Learning, Collaborative Projects and Gamification are effective when used with digital tools. Flipped learning involves reversing the traditional classroom structure [4; 334-345]. Instead of introducing new topic in class, students first explore lessons through videos or online materials at home. Social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram are ideal for this model. Teachers can assign videos that explain grammar rules, pronunciation tips, or vocabulary themes for students to watch before class. Class time is then used for interactive activities that reinforce and apply the concepts, such as discussions, roleplays, or group exercises. Task-Based Learning (TBL) emphasizes meaningful language use through real-world tasks. On platforms like Instagram or TikTok, students can be assigned projects such as creating a post about their daily routine, recording a short video introducing their hometown, or designing a story about a recent trip [7; 41-56]. These tasks give students a reason to use English in a practical and engaging context. The focus is on communication rather than accuracy, encouraging fluency and self-expression. Collaborative Projects can be enhanced through social media by assigning group tasks that require cooperation outside the classroom. For example, students can create a shared Facebook

page or Telegram group to post weekly English language tips, produce short video lessons, or conduct mini research projects in English. These projects build teamwork skills while allowing students to learn from each other. They also encourage peer feedback and shared responsibility. Gamification introduces game-like elements into the learning process, increasing motivation and participation. Teachers can organize challenges such as “most creative Instagram story in English” or “best vocabulary TikTok of the week.” Badges, points, and leaderboards can be used to reward engagement and improvement. By integrating social media into English classes, teachers can boost students' motivation and engagement [5; 59-68]. Furthermore, as social media offer a wide range of authentic language materials, it can be of help for students in terms of exposure to real-life language, which helps students better understanding of the language.

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THE ARAL SEA AND ITS SHRINKAGE

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Annotation: Once the fourth-largest inland lake in the world, the Aral Sea has suffered dramatic shrinkage since the mid-20th century. This article delves into the causes and consequences of the sea's decline, focusing on water mismanagement during the Soviet era and ongoing environmental impacts. It also explores current and proposed efforts to mitigate the disaster and restore the regional ecosystem.

Keywords: Aral Sea, shrinkage, environmental crisis, water management, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, ecosystem restoration

The Aral Sea, located between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, was once a vast and thriving body of water, covering about 68,000 km². By the 1960s, it was the fourth-largest lake in the world. However, over the decades, its surface area and volume have drastically diminished.