

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS: A CASE STUDY OF KARAKALPAK STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to studying the role of social media in improving English language learning among students at Karakalpak State University. A quantitative descriptive research approach was employed, and data was collected from 70 students through an online questionnaire. It focused on students' use of social networking platforms, what platforms they use for language learning purposes and their opinion if social media can help learning. This study also tried to identify which of their skills improved due to social media and its influence on their motivation. Findings are eye-opening: while Telegram is commonly used for general purposes, YouTube is the platform where students mostly engage in English content. It also shows clear preferences for video material, especially short videos. As most students "sometimes" or "often" try to learn new English words or phrases on social networking sites and use them in real-world, the most improved English skills are listening and speaking. These results show that social media can serve as a valuable supplementary tool in language teaching or learning process by providing authentic language input.

KEYWORDS: social media, English, language acquisition, technology, motivation, content, engagement, language skills.

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, the English language solidified its status as a global language, playing an important role in most aspects of life, such as education, business, international communication. As a result, learning English has become a major ambition for many students all around the world, especially in non-English-speaking countries like Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, the widespread availability of the Internet and social media has created more opportunities in terms of getting information instantly. It has also changed the way students learn languages outside the classroom. Platforms such as YouTube, Telegram, Instagram can provide all necessary content, ranging from full-length videos, articles, shorts, to memes and other kinds of content. Students also spend majority of their time on social media, engaging in various activities such as chatting, watching videos, interacting. People can use the Internet and several networking sites everywhere and anytime. Technology impacts significantly both on personal and academic lives. Recent studies have also shown that these advancements and discoveries have had a substantial positive impact on the teaching and learning of foreign languages and education generally (Leung, C., & Valdés, G., 2019). Due to technology, teachers can now include various teaching techniques based on the needs of their students (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Moghavvemi et al., 2018). It is also believed that innovative technology fosters student interest and motivation, and enables them to access target languages, more input and interaction abilities (Choi, L., & Chung, S. 2021). However, these studies focus on global contexts, which means there might be a gap in understanding how students

in regional universities, Karakalpak State University, use social media in learning English. This study aims to explore how students at Karakalpak State University engage with social media, what types of platforms and content they prefer, how they reflect on the impact social media has on their language acquisition and improving their skills. By analyzing habits, experiences of students, this research tries to identify whether social media impact is beneficial for language learners or not.

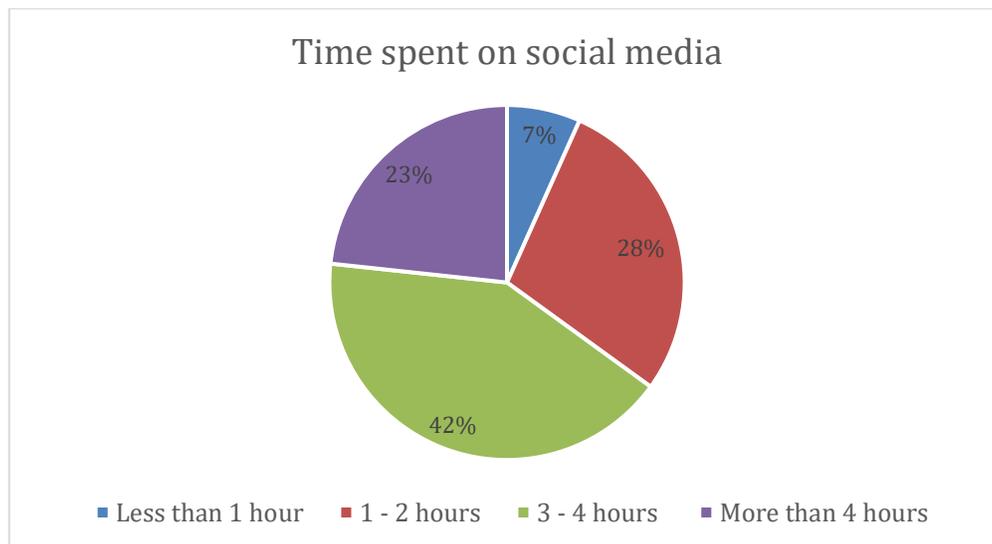
METHODS

This study employs quantitative descriptive research approach to investigate students' engagement with social media and its impact on their language development. A questionnaire was used to collect data from students from Karakalpak State University. The target population of the research involved 70 students from different years of study and specializations. The main instrument for collecting data was an online questionnaire. It was distributed digitally across different student groups. The questionnaire was also available in both Uzbek and English languages to ensure clarity which could enable participants to fully comprehend the questions. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section was dedicated to demographic information, including age, year of study. Second section focused on students' social media usage, identifying which platforms are widely used and which ones are specifically used to access to English content to learn language. This section also contained how much time they allocated to social media and their preferences. Third section was about students' beliefs about the role of social media, including its impact on their language skills, motivation, and real-life applications. Regarding data collection procedure, information was collected over a period of 7 days in April 2025. Students were allowed to participate anonymously, and brief information was provided as to the fact that all data collected would be used for only academic purposes.

RESULTS

Based on the data collected, we found out that students at Karakalpak State University are active users of social media, with majority of them spending more than 3 hours a day.

FIGURE 1



In general, Telegram and Instagram are commonly used by survey participants, with respective figures of 63.3% and 23.3%. By contrast, YouTube stands out as the leading platform for English language learning purposes, preferred by 46.7% of participants. Telegram, being the second largest popular choice, used by 28.3% of students. Other platforms such as Instagram and TikTok were selected as a means of language learning by a combined total of approximately 25% of respondents, indicating a relatively lower but still notable level of engagement.

FIGURE 2

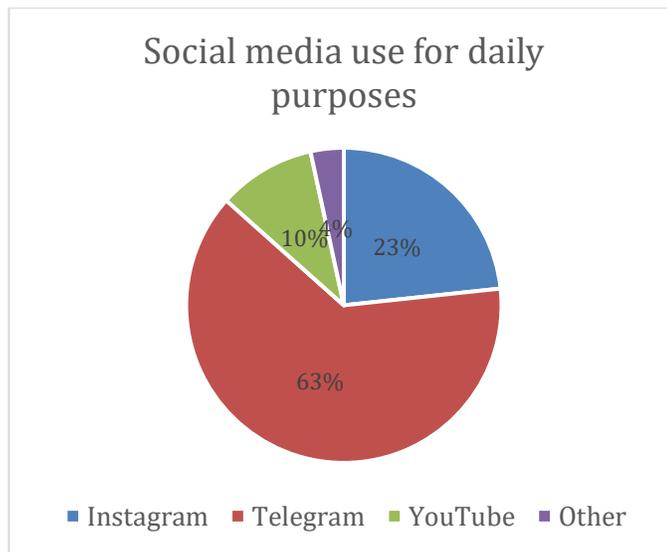
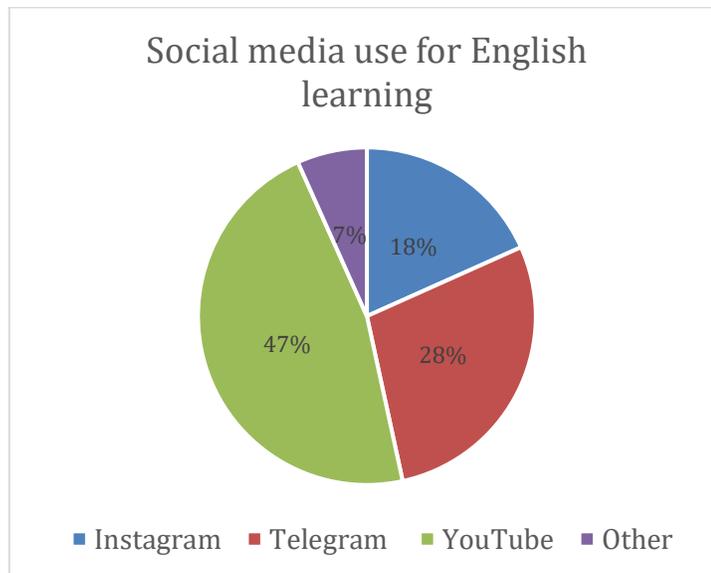
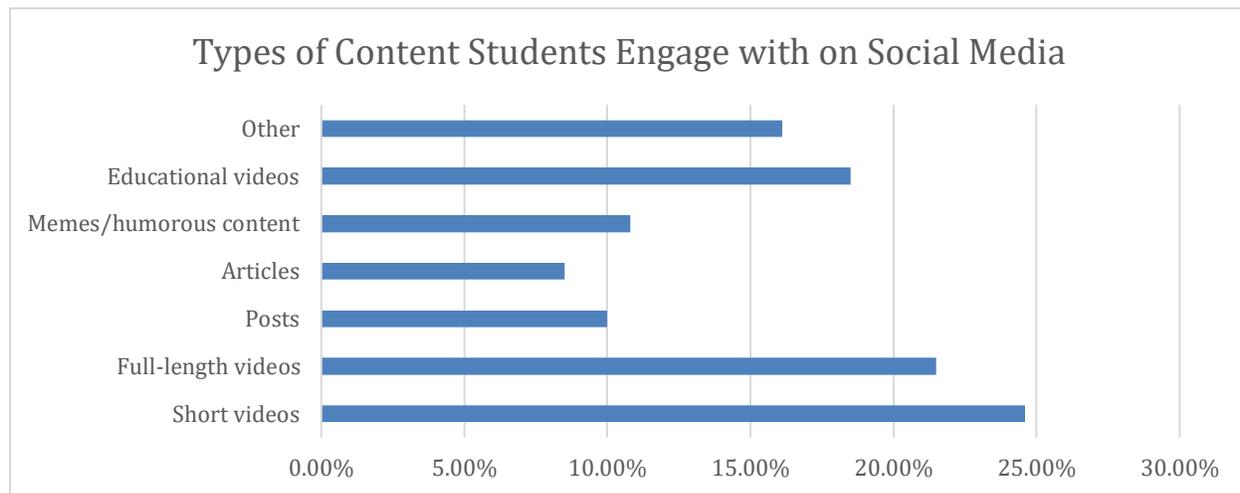


FIGURE 3



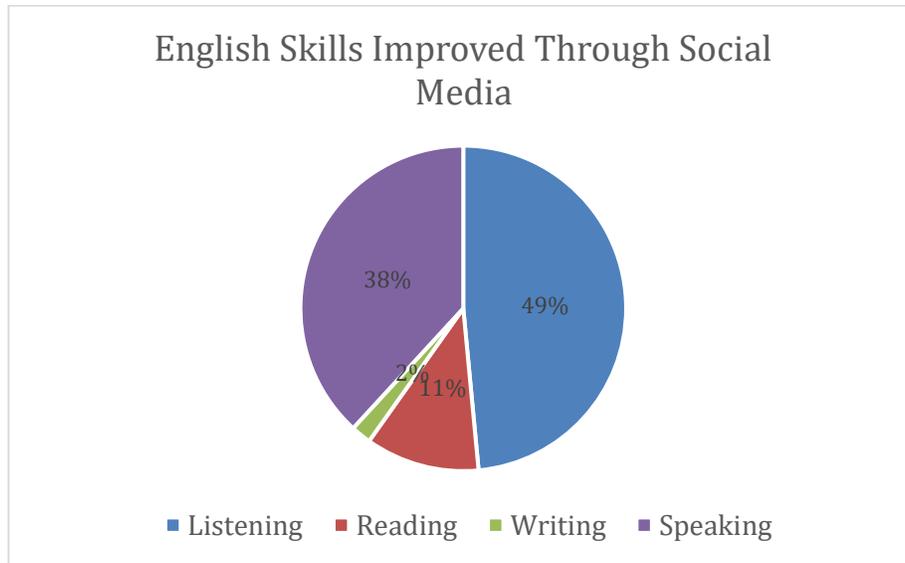
As for the types of English content they mostly engage in on social media, the followings are found out. According to the survey, short videos, Reels, YouTube Shorts, TikToks, are the most frequently engaged type of English content on social media, with 24.6% of respondents selecting this option. Full-length videos follow closely at 21.5%, suggesting that audiovisual formats, though being long and time-consuming, are highly favorite for language experiences. Educational videos also show strong engagement, selected by 18.5% of participants. Meanwhile, the figure for other types of engagement, including chats, comments, memes, humorous contexts, posts, written materials, constituted more or less 40%.

FIGURE 4



This survey revealed that 48% of respondents believed social media contributed to the enhancement of their listening skills. In contrast, 38% attributed improvements in their speaking abilities to social media usage. The perceived impact on reading skills was significantly lower, with only 11% of students recognizing any enhancement, while a mere 2% reported improvements in their writing skills.

FIGURE 5



The survey results also reveal key insights into the influence of social media on English language learning. A majority of respondents (45%) reported that they sometimes learn new English words or phrases from social media, while 33% indicated they do so often, and 15% never. Only a small portion (7%) claimed they always learn vocabulary through such platforms. When it comes to real-life applications, nearly half of respondents (42%) sometimes try to apply what they learned from social media. The figures for those reported "often" and "never" accounted for 28% and 22% respectively.

FIGURE 6

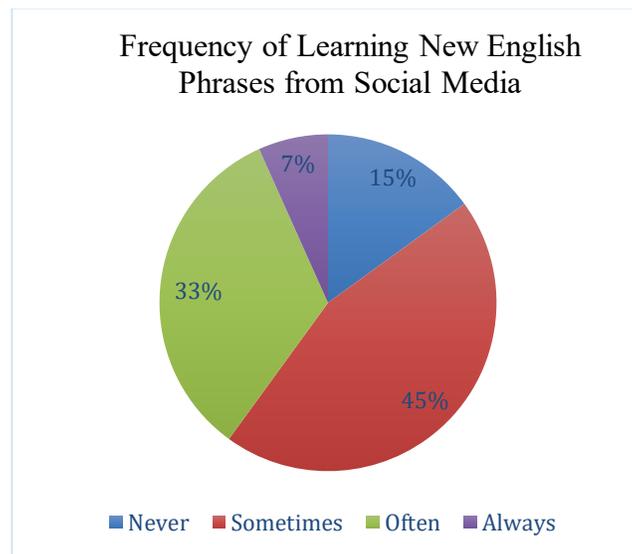
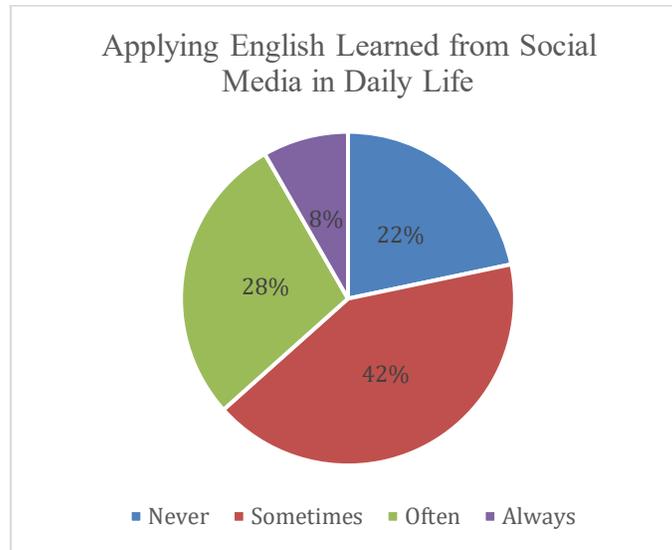
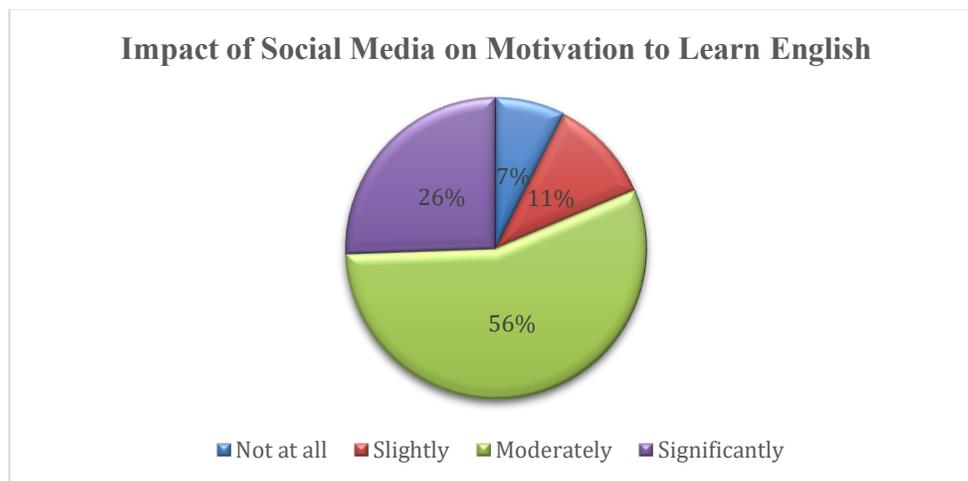


FIGURE 7



Regarding motivation, over half of the participants (56%) stated that social media has moderately increased their motivation to learn English, with 26% reporting a significant increase. These findings suggest that social media serves not only as a frequent source of new vocabulary but also as a moderate to strong motivational tool in the process of English language acquisition.

FIGURE 8



DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that social media is not only widely used among students at Karakalpak State University but also plays a meaningful role in their English language learning. The results are consistent with previous research which suggests that social media provides a flexible and engaging environment for language exposure and acquisition (Wang & Vásquez,

2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2016). One of the key insights from the research is the difference between students use for general day-to-day life purposes and those used for English-language learning purposes. While Telegram and Instagram are widely used for general purposes, YouTube is seen as the primary platform for accessing English content. This might be because YouTube offers an array of educational, authentic English-speaking videos, tutorials, which can help learners to expose themselves to real English. According to Shaul (2014), exposure to language in a meaningful way is necessary for a learner to absorb its structure through actual use (Leedom Shaul, 2014). Another crucial finding is about what kind of content are preferred. Students mostly prefer to consume audiovisual contents, especially short-form videos, like shorts, reels, TikTok's. This supports the idea that in English classes using such audiovisual materials can be effective. Social media has the potential to embed language acquisition in real-world social contexts and play a crucial role in the communicative and creative activities that young people engage in (Cabrera, 2018). The skill development patterns reported by the respondents reveal the strengths and limitations of learning English through social media. Listening and speaking skills were perceived to benefit the most, which is understandable given the audiovisual nature of platforms like YouTube and TikTok. These platforms offer authentic input, varied accents, and informal speech patterns that are often absent in formal educational settings. Also, social media has been extensively used for educational purposes by its communicative aspect (Lantz-Andersson, 2018). In contrast, reading and especially writing received much less attention. This suggests that while social media is effective in enhancing receptive and oral skills, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for written output or structured grammar development. A notable point is students' self-reported application of what they learn in real-life contexts. There is a gap between active and passive use of language among students. To illustrate, only a small percentage of students claim that they use what they learn from social media in real-life situations. This suggests that although social media can provide a wealth of knowledge, it may not always help learning if not supported by classroom instructions. Similarly, majority of students believe social media can moderately increase their motivation, whilst only a few of them feel significant motivation, which suggests that social media itself not be a sole motivational tool.

These results raise important implications for educators. Social media can serve as a complementary tool in classrooms, especially for listening, vocabulary learning, pronunciation instruction. Teachers can encourage students to follow certain educational accounts, reflect on what they learn from them. As well as students can also be inspired to create their own accounts where they can share opinions, what they learn and all that comes to their mind, which can, in turn, improve their confidence, critical thinking, imagination and creativity, skills that are highly valued in today's job market. Though, educators should also consider the limitations of social media, particularly in reading and writing.

CONCLUSION

Social media can be a game-changer in the realm of language teaching. As study shows, social media have a positive impact on improving language skills. Although it may not usually help enhancing writing and reading, it plays a pivotal role in improving listening and speaking skills, as it offers valuable opportunities for authentic exposure. However, social media should be seen as a classroom supplement. This is because students learn new phrases, vocabulary and grammar, but not always activate or apply them in real-world situations. Social media serves as a useful supplementary tool for English language learning by enhancing input, increasing

motivation, and providing opportunities for informal learning. Future research may further investigate how structured use of social media can be integrated into language education to maximize its benefits.

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