

THE EFFICIENCY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN ACQUIRING ENGLISH**Sagitova Diana**sagitovadianab96@gmail.com1st year master student in “Foreign Languages: Two Foreign Languages”

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In the contemporary world social networks are not only a platform for communication and diverse kinds of communications but also perform as educational platforms. As a matter of fact scholars point up that Web 2.0 technologies which comprises social networks provide ample opportunities for the intensification and individualization of the educational process, including teaching foreign languages [1]. The active implementation of modern information- communicational technologies contributes to the formation of the optimal individual educational trajectory of students in the process of learning a foreign language and the disclosure of their personal potential [2]. It is worth mentioning that the individual educational trajectory can be erected even within a separate discipline which allows one to make the process of acquiring foreign languages personally oriented and take into consideration the educational needs of students [1]. Social networks in this very case do have undeniable advantages. T.L. Gerasimenko and others attribute social networks to smart technologies and highlight a number of advantages in their use in teaching foreign languages: the creation of an interactive educational environment, the authenticity and modernity of educational content and free access to educational resources [2].

Regarding the methodological principles of the implementation of foreign language teaching through social networks it should not be omitted that research in this subject is actively conducted but generally focuses on considering the advantages and drawbacks of using social networks when teaching foreign languages. T.L. Gerasimenko and others speculate upon plausible options for using Internet technologies in teaching foreign languages, dwelling in detail on webinars, blogs and social networks [3]. As a salient instance of social networks, the authors cite the social network V Kontakte. Sakharova shares observations about the positive experience of using social networks in teaching foreign languages specifically elaborating on the advantages of such an approach [4]. The author emphasizes the plausibility of forming a real language environment in the process of learning in social networks. The study of social networks in general is devoted to the work of foreign researchers, with an emphasis on the benefits of using social networks in educational practice. The work of F.Tiryakioglu and F. Erzurum traces the history of the use of social networks provides statistics of the most popular social networks in the world. In the context of learning, the authors consider the social network “Facebook” in detailed manner [5]. R. Blair and T.M. Serafini [6] also dwell on the advantages of using separate social networks in education to increase student interest. Researchers describe blogs, social networks Twitter and Instagram, the Pinterest system and some other popular sites.

The study concerning teaching foreign languages on Twitter is distinguished by its fragmentation and focus of research interest in the application of the data and communication resource in teaching certain types of foreign language speech activity. The investigation conducted by O.V. Pustovalova [7] focuses on the identification and justification of methodological conditions for the development of writing skills on the basis of the social network Twitter. The author provides a methodological system for the development of writing skills using Twitter for students of a non-linguistic major. The research outcomes are verified experimentally. The study regarding learning through the social network Instagram is presented irrespective of learning foreign languages. N.B. Shubina concludes that the functions of Instagram as a social network are quite limited, since the entire service offers only video and photo sharing. The author highlights the fact that this service should be used for independent work of students if it is necessary for visualizing information.

Thus, the abovementioned works to some extent embrace the issue of implementing social networks in educational practice but do not fully correspond to the request of teachers of foreign languages, advisers of linguistic projects and leaders of language schools, with regard to the methodological and didactic principles of organizing the teaching of foreign languages in such social

networks as Twitter and Instagram. The article reveals a study aimed at identifying the educational potential of social networks namely Twitter and Instagram due to the fact that the educational potential of these certain social networks in teaching a foreign language demand further reflection in a methodological way. It is crucial to be highlighted that the choice of social networks Twitter and Instagram is not random as these social platforms are common all over the world which provides myriad opportunities for a comparative analysis of approaches to the organization of instructing foreign languages in social networks practiced by representatives of various language communities. The outcomes will allow developing guidelines for the organization and maintenance of Twitter and Instagram pages in the context of teaching foreign languages.

With a perspective of making a comparative analysis Twitter and Instagram pages specializing in teaching foreign languages were thoroughly selected. The following selection criteria for Twitter and Instagram pages were identified for further analysis:

- The number of followers (how popular the page is);
- The activity of pages (determined by the frequency of publications).

Based on these criteria, 10 popular English-language Twitter pages were selected: MyEnglishTeacher.eu (@myenglishteach), Real Life English (@reallifeeng), Espresso English (@espressoenglish), Aaron @PhraseMix (@phrasemix), Englishfeed (@englishfeed), Grammar YUNiversity (@the_yuniversity), Cambridge Dictionary (@cambridgewords), Marcelo Mendes (@engforpleasure), Mignon Fogarty (@grammargirl), BBC Learning English (@bbcle) [8]. When it comes to Instagram, we have also selected 10 prominent pages which are primarily concerned with teaching English: @lazy_english, @business_english_yappi, @learn_repeat_check, @englishfan_org, @english_training_camp, @englishwithmusic, @english.govori.project, @soeasy_english, @snap_english, @mind_the_difference [9].

In order to study the educational potential of Twitter and Instagram in the context of learning foreign languages, the following stages of comparative analysis were identified:

- The specifics of the organization of pages;
- Specific content of the pages;
- The specifics of feedback provided by users.

The specificity of the organization of the selected pages is represented by general information about the pages and contains: the name of the page, the date of establishment, the total number of subscribers, the total number of publications, the frequency of publications, the country of creation and the language of the page.

An important aspect of the study is the analysis of the main image on Twitter and Instagram pages, analysis of the background image of Twitter pages, as well as analysis provided by the authors of the descriptions on Twitter and Instagram. This allows one to assess the interest of users in a particular Twitter or Instagram page.

The specifics of the content selected for a comparative analysis of Twitter and Instagram pages are represented by their publications. When analyzing publications, the most pivotal is the question of what information the author specializes in the process of learning a foreign language, what type of speech activity is more interesting for him or her to develop. Determining the specifics of user-provided feedback on selected Twitter and Instagram pages includes an analysis of user comments on these pages, their likes, and reposts in the case of Twitter.

It should be pointed out here that despite the fact that so-called “likes” are a significant indicator of audience interest, they cannot reflect only interest in the material. Too large or too small number of likes may also indicate the features of the image for publication (for example, whether it is familiar or pleasant to the recipient), the choice of font and the presence of highlighting certain words, the author's request to put a like and so on. In this regard, the quality of the material used for teaching a foreign language should be assessed through comments on publications. Thus, for each selected Twitter and Instagram-page, the most attention is drawn to the analysis of the most popular publications and comments. The least popular publications by the number of likes and comments were also analyzed, as this gives grounds to assume what kind of information is not desirable for publication on Twitter and Instagram pages.

Therefore, based on the theoretical analysis and our own accumulated pedagogical experience on the implementation of social networks in teaching foreign languages to students, we concluded that the use of social networks creates an excellent platform for expanding the boundaries of learning a foreign language within the classroom and extracurricular time. Social networking platforms play a crucial role in improving and developing education at the student level as well as at the faculty level.

In order to increase the motivation of students the teacher must clearly approach the choice of tasks. Assignments generated on the basis of social networks must meet basic requirements. These include the following:

1. Diversity. Social networks involve the use of various types of tasks (online conversation, online discussion, authentic materials, reading adapted and unspecialized literature), a variety of organizational forms of educational activities (tasks can be performed in small and large groups, individually or collaboratively).

2. Problematic character. Problems make students think, speculate and contemplate upon the ways to solve them. In modern approaches of teaching foreign languages there is a wide range of communication tasks and design work focused on problem solving. Problem approach can be used at various stages of learning. It helps to master the necessary vocabulary and grammar of the target language, to develop the skills of speaking, listening, etc.

It is important to recognize that the use of social networks in teaching a foreign language, we can distinguish the following characteristics:

1. Flexibility. This feature enhances the choices of what, when and where to teach. Flexibility is also anticipation of new educational opportunities, readiness for the ever-changing demands of modern society. The use of social networks in the teaching of a foreign language allows the learner to determine the prospects for self-development and self-learning.

2. Communication skills. With the help of social networks, you can create a learning-friendly environment for communication in English. Students do not need to go to the country of the language being studied, they simply connect to the Internet and communicate with native English speakers. Social networking sites encourage students to interact with each other, express and share their thoughts, and be creative.

3. Convenience and availability. Social networks provide easy access to educational materials (anytime and anywhere), make it convenient to view, update and edit. In addition, they allow you to choose educational materials that are necessary for training, facilitate their distribution.

4. Efficiency. Teaching English through social networks can make lessons not only more effective, but also effective. Many social networking sites offer users a variety of applications which can be useful in learning English. Social networks overcome the limitations of space and time in the educational process. Social networking helps reduce stress and increase student satisfaction. They can learn at their own pace. In addition, they can discuss emerging issues at any time.

Depicting the primary advantages of social networks in learning a foreign language, one can identify some negative factors. Students are forced to use various technical tools that make the social network accessible. It distracts their attention and shows the lack of social interactivity in real life. Computers and phones have become an integral part of our daily life but at the same time their frequent and uncontrolled use can affect the psychological and physical health of students. Learning through social networks should not take the full time of classroom studies, but be only a part of it.

This way of conducting learning process should serve only as a measure to encourage students.

The use of social networks in teaching a foreign language leads to a decrease in interest in performing traditional tasks for reading, translating text, and setting forth its content. Getting used to work in social networks, where the presented material may contain sound and other visual effects, one must constantly return to the usual methods and forms of work in classroom activities.

As a conclusion, we are to note that the abovementioned comparative analysis of Twitter and Instagram pages in the context of teaching foreign languages will permit studying a large number of various indicators related to the organization and selection of training material for these pag-

es. Such aspects as the organization of the pages, the specificity of the content of the pages, as well as the specificity of feedback provided by users, remain in the focus of research attention. The results of the analysis will provide a basis for creating guidelines on the organization and maintenance of foreign language-teaching pages on Twitter and Instagram, on the selection of relevant educational content for these pages, as well as on the organization of interaction between teacher and students on the educational platforms.

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