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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

O PAPEL DAS MÍDIAS SOCIAIS NO ENSINO MODERNO DA LÍNGUA INGLESA: APRIMORANDO A ACESSIBILIDADE E O ENVOLVIMENTO

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore the role of social media in modern English language education, focusing on how it enhances accessibility and engagement among students. The research seeks to identify the ethical-behavioral aspects that influence students' cognitive interest in learning English through social networks.

Methods: The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining a literature review with an expert survey conducted between December 2023 and March 2024. The survey included 46 experts in English language education, who ranked the positive aspects of using social media to increase students' interest in learning English.

Results: The findings indicate that social media significantly enhances students' motivation and cognitive interest in learning English by providing a convenient, familiar, and interactive platform. Key benefits include improved accessibility, personalized learning approaches, and the ability to engage in collaborative learning activities. Popular social networks like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Telegram, and VKontakte offer various tools that can be effectively integrated into English language teaching.

Conclusions: The use of social media in English language education contributes to a more engaging and accessible learning environment. It fosters cognitive interest, supports independent learning, and encourages the development of communication skills. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding ethical behavior and maximizing the educational potential of social networks.

Keywords: Virtual discourse; Ethical-behavioral features; Social media; English language; Cognitive interest.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo tem como objetivo explorar o papel das mídias sociais na educação moderna da língua inglesa, com foco em como elas aprimoram a acessibilidade e o envolvimento dos alunos. A pesquisa busca identificar os aspectos ético-comportamentais que influenciam o interesse cognitivo dos alunos em aprender inglês por meio das redes sociais.

Métodos: O estudo utiliza uma abordagem de métodos mistos, combinando uma revisão de literatura com uma pesquisa entre especialistas realizada entre dezembro de 2023 e março de 2024. A pesquisa incluiu 46 especialistas em educação da língua inglesa, que classificaram os aspectos positivos do uso das mídias sociais para aumentar o interesse dos alunos em aprender inglês.

Resultados: Os resultados indicam que as mídias sociais aumentam significativamente a motivação e o interesse cognitivo dos alunos em aprender inglês, proporcionando uma plataforma conveniente, familiar e interativa. Os principais benefícios incluem a melhoria da acessibilidade, abordagens de aprendizagem personalizadas e a capacidade de se envolver em atividades de aprendizagem colaborativa. Redes sociais populares como Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Telegram e VKontakte oferecem diversas ferramentas que podem ser integradas de forma eficaz ao ensino da língua inglesa.

Conclusões: O uso de mídias sociais na educação da língua inglesa contribui para um ambiente de aprendizagem mais envolvente e acessível. Ele estimula o interesse cognitivo, apoia a aprendizagem independente e incentiva o desenvolvimento de habilidades de comunicação. Os professores desempenham um papel crucial na orientação do comportamento ético e na maximização do potencial educacional das redes sociais.

Palavras-chave: Discurso virtual; Características ético-comportamentais; Mídia social; Língua inglesa; Interesse cognitivo.

1 INTRODUCTION

Current socioeconomic processes and changes taking place in the conditions of expanding intercultural foreign-language communication in different spheres of students' and teachers' lives (Kartushina, 2022; Olshvang, 2022) determine the pressing need for constant improvement of the quality of education and specialist training. Foreign language proficiency is becoming a critical prerequisite for the effective resolution of this task (Baimurzina et al., 2019; Skripak et al., 2022). Pressing problems in higher education require advanced methods, techniques, and technologies (Borodina, 2021) allowing students to show their best qualities and self-realize in life and professional work (Stavruk et al., 2023). For future professional activity, it is important that during the period of study, the student develops the ability to do cognitive, independent, and creative work (Akhmetshin, 2023; Volkova, 2023) and learns to adapt to various problem situations that will allow them to realize themselves to the fullest (Ybyraimzhanov et al., 2019).

Importantly, contemporary communication society is developing in different directions (Baranova et al., 2022), which necessitates fundamentally new directions of scientific inquiry and research and calls for the development of cognitive interest in the study of all kinds of disciplines, including foreign languages (Ybyraimzhanov et al., 2022). Today's sciences are anthropocentric, which entails scientific interest in all that concerns the person's self-realization and the discovery of

their inner potential and communication abilities (Sinitsyna et al., 2023). Virtual discourse reveals the features of personality development, shapes the level of personal consciousness, and uncovers the type of moral behavior of modern society. Recent developments in technology and mass media and the degree to which they influence reality not only expand the consciousness of the community (Khlynin et al., 2023) but also provide fundamentally new areas of interest and motivation for students to learn a foreign language (Borodkin, 2023; Stepanova, 2023). Social networks have become the most revolutionary of mass communication media in today's world (Ramazanova et al., 2022).

In this context, foreign language teaching approaches are only effective if they are simple and understandable both to the teacher and to the student; if the amount and difficulty of educational material in the curriculum is growing; if learning involves regular repetition of the material and testing; if it uses modern learning tools and the approach to learning and teaching is flexible, all of which becomes a prerequisite for learning and higher education in the contemporary environment (Bredikhina, 2018; Shapauov et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2023).

Today, social networks are becoming increasingly popular and can be utilized to teach foreign languages (Chernova et al., 2022). Active experiments with the introduction of social network services into the educational processes began back in 2007-2008 in universities in Europe and the USA. As soon as 2-3 years later, the overwhelming majority of educational institutions had official pages on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Boyd & Elison, 2007). In addition, online communities of teachers and specialists in e-learning began to emerge (Karpati, 2009). Ultimately, it was established that social media contribute to the development of e-learning and education because they offer new technical and methodological solutions (Baideldinova et al., 2021; Bekhtereva et al., 2015).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a considerable body of scientific research into the various dimensions of ethical-behavioral aspects in the influence of social networks on the development of students' cognitive interest in foreign language learning. Some of these aspects include ethical directions in the use of social media in the educational environment (Cheung et al., 2011; Tsilenko et al., 2023; Zakharova et al., 2021); educational opportunities of social networks (Eflova et al., 2023; Prokhorova et al., 2023; Rodionova & Iaranskaia, 2017); and the use of social media in foreign language learning (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Kovaleva et al., 2019).

The central concepts in our study are virtual discourse and social network.

Researchers offer several perspectives on virtual discourse, considering it as a communicative event on a social network, a communicative position captured in hypertext (Gritsenko, 2011). a systemic process of correlation of symbolic speech communication between virtual communicants (Putina, 2022), and a method of representing virtual speech personalities in the unity of psychological, social, national, ethnic, and other characteristics (Kurbatov, 2013). Virtual discourse

combines the behavioral situation and moral and ethical processes (Lutovinova, 2006). Each member of the speech society contributes to the material substance of discourse with their linguistic experience, and each member of the speech society is a consumer of discourse (Bergelson, 2002). A person participates in discourse as a linguistic person. This notion finds full application in discourse linguistics because in correlation with the linguistic system, it coincides with the norms of behavior and ethics (Lutovinova, 2012).

Researchers propose that a social network is a structure formed from a group of nodes – social objects, which can be people or companies, as well as from their existing links (Rogaleva & Shkaiderova, 2015). It is a communication platform that allows organizing students' independent work for them to learn a foreign language outside of class time (Selezenev & Skripak, 2013). From a technological standpoint, a social network is an interactive website with a large number of users, the content of which is created by the participants themselves. This interactive site is an automated social environment that allows a group of users with a common interest to communicate with each other (Makova & Esina, 2019).

The current understanding of the essence of social media is unified by three models of discourse formation. Understanding involves the simultaneous operation of microstructural (intra-phrase) and macrostructural (inter-phrase) components, which are joined by the situational component responsible for the construction of the model of the situation (mental model), where textual information is combined with the respondent's knowledge about the world (Farris-Berg, 2005).

In the context of foreign language learning, social media are highly popular among student youth, presenting an environment that is familiar, comfortable, convenient, and positive for them (Gilpin, 2010). Furthermore, whereas distance learning websites are accessed by students only when needed, social media are browsed several times a day (Yunus, 2007). This circumstance demonstrates the expediency of employing social networks in teaching foreign languages.

The influence of various aspects of social media discourse on the development of youth cognitive interest, including in foreign language learning, has not been scientifically investigated.

This study aims to identify the ethical-behavioral aspects of the influence of social networks on the development of students' cognitive interest in foreign language learning.

3   METHODS

Given the features of the influence of social media on the development of students' cognitive interest in foreign language learning, we employed a quantitative-qualitative approach to research. Data for the study were collected in the period from December 25, 2023 to March 25, 2024 through an analysis of scientific literature on the research problem and an email-based survey of experts, followed by data processing and analysis of the survey results.

The first stage of the study involved the selection of the source base from among research articles published in journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science. Based on the analysis of the

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literary sources, the positive aspects of utilizing social networks in the framework of raising students' cognitive interest in learning the English language were identified.

In the second stage, experts for the expert survey were selected based on the criteria of no less than 10 years of experience teaching English in a university or at least three publications on the problem under study published in peer-reviewed journals. As a result of this sampling procedure, 55 experts were emailed invitations to participate in the study, of which 46 agreed.

In the third stage, the experts who agreed to take part in our research were sent emails asking them to rank the presented positive aspects of the use of social networks in improving students' cognitive interest in learning English by importance on an ordinal scale by assigning points. The experts were also invited to provide recommendations on the use of certain social media in the context of teaching English to university students. Once all the responses were received, the rank of each positive aspect of the use of social media was determined according to the points assigned by epy experts, and their weights were calculated, specifying the level of importance from the experts' point of view.

For greater objectivity in the analysis of expert survey data, the level of agreement of expert opinions was assessed using Kendall's coefficient of concordance.

All participants in the survey were informed about its purposes and our intent to publish its results in a summarized form.

4   RESULTS

In our analysis of scientific sources and the expert survey, we established the following positive aspects of the use of social networks to increase students' cognitive interest in learning English (Table 1).

Table 1. Positive aspects of the use of social media with regard to raising students' cognitive interest in learning English

Positive aspects	Rank	Weight
Convenience of the interface, means of communication, and the organization and forms of content presentation, which are clear and familiar to students	1	0.23
Availability of various forms of interaction and communication, providing a wide range of opportunities for integration into the educational process	2	0.17
Instant exchange of messages containing useful educational information	3	0.14
Relying on the student's profile, the teacher can find and select an individualized personal approach to the student and present educational material in a better way	4	0.12
The filter function in the settings allows finding the desired content easily based on relevant criteria	5	0.10
Allows for the involvement of experts, consultants, philologists, linguists, translators, and other specialists in teaching English in the educational process	6	0.09
Has extensive presentation capabilities, allowing any educational content to be shared with students	7	0.07
Enables collaborative work on the creation of educational content and its further discussion	8	0.05
Offers opportunities to conduct surveys, discussions, focus groups, conferences, roundtables, educational debates, webinars, workshops, and other online events in a format that is more familiar and interesting to students	9	0.03

Note: compiled based on the analysis of scientific literature and the expert survey; the concordance coefficient $W = 0.73$ ($p < 0.01$), suggesting a strong consistency of expert opinions

Given that our study focuses on the use of social networks as a means to develop students' cognitive interest in learning English, we also set ourselves the task of singling out today's most popular social media and describing the possibilities of their application in teaching English to university students to boost student motivation and cognitive interest (Table 2).

Table 2. Social networks and possibilities of their use in teaching the English language to students

Social network	Possibilities of use
Instagram	Presents opportunities to keep diary blogs with their subsequent discussion; record collaborative stories using Snapchat (e.g., recording stress from Tongue Twister); create video advertisements, information banners
Youtube	Students can be invited to discuss short lectures on TED talks and comment on them collectively or subscribe to English language learning channels
TikTok	Some expedient activities would be to discuss short videos and stories using leading questions for the students and to create and participate in challenges
Telegram	Allows for group learning in mini chat rooms (for example, students can be asked to describe pictures and compose sentences based on them using different parts of speech); file sharing; interactive group games, quizzes, contests, etc.
VKontakte	Holding educational debates, online seminars, workshops, webinars, and tenders; creating and posting GIFs on the topic of English language learning; creating and posting English-language rebuses and solving them collectively by commenting on the post; voting, etc.

Note: compiled based on an expert survey

5 DISCUSSION

In analyzing the positive aspects of utilizing social networks in the framework of enhancing students' cognitive interest in learning English (Table 1), we focused on the ethical-behavioral aspects of this influence. In this respect, we should highlight a study by O.V. Lutovinova (2012) where the categories of opinion and the categories of language are simultaneously combined and opposed in the study of the nature of language. This means that a person can say everything they want and in any way they want. From this follows quite a common unconscious belief that behavioral processes and language are two fundamentally different activities that are combined only for the pragmatic purposes of communication, but each has its domain and independent resources, and language provides behavior with the means for what is commonly referred to as an expression of opinion (Bergelson, 2002).

This thesis combines the ethical and behavioral aspects of the influence of social networks on the development of students' cognitive interest in learning a foreign language. This sphere involves speech awareness, which is interpreted not only as a linguocultural phenomenon but also as a psycholinguistic category. The progress of thought is more closely connected with people's abilities, moral, ethical, and behavioral norms, the general conditions of cultural development, and the structure of society rather than with the features of language. The ability to think is inseparable from language ability, for speech is a structure that carries meaning, and the thought process is inseparable from ethical and behavioral aspects (Bergelson, 2002). Human speech is a manifestation of the inner world of the person and their morality, expressing their psychological state.

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All this accentuates the most important side of human behavioral functioning, underscoring the importance of internal states of consciousness of the individual when using a foreign language.

The ethical-behavioral features of speech on social networks that are utilized to develop students' cognitive interest in learning English (Table 2) include computer terms or their inflected calques; online slang; "padonkaffsky jargon" (words or phrases spelled incorrectly, usually with ironic or satirical content).

There is a danger in this, however, because students may use this jargon as ordinary words, which adversely affects the ethical-behavioral aspect. Young people quickly absorb profanity on social networks, and it is sometimes difficult to explain why one should not use such language. One example of this is emoticons, which serve the function of expressing emotions in written language. They are depicted using symbols to form different facial expressions. It is often enough to send the right emoticon to perfectly convey the sender's attitude to the received information. Although emoticons are great for expressing emotions, they significantly impoverish the vocabulary of today's youth. Social media indeed carry risks, yet they also offer a wealth of opportunities. The mission of teachers is to cultivate a moral culture of communication in social networks, show positive opportunities, and inform students about the dangers and difficulties during their studies and in personal communication in a timely and thorough manner. Other important factors are the personal example of ethical behavior on the part of teachers, supervision of students' activities, cultivation of general ethical culture in modern youth, development of their creative abilities and cognitive interest in the study of disciplines, and organization of their leisure time. The question of how the real Self correlates with the virtual personality is the key issue that arises in the exploration of these problems (Kovaleva et al., 2019).

Concentrating on the use of social media as a means of teaching English, we should point out that in this way students improve their abilities and form skills in writing, speaking, listening, creative thinking, the ability to work in a team on a project in English, to collaboratively create learning content in English, to plan activities, etc. (Blattner & Fiori, 2009).

In addition, social networks provide a variety of demonstration formats supported by a wide range of applications: images, music, lectures, video experiments, reports, etc. (Blattner & Fiori, 2009). These options encourage students of non-linguistic universities to learn a foreign language and diversify their learning process, give it vibrancy and vitality, make it more energetic, relevant, and modern, as well as allow the teacher to learn more about the student's personality and interests, and the students to learn more about each other and explore their own personalities.

The use of social media makes it possible to turn the process of foreign language learning into a fascinating activity. Undoubtedly, textbooks and lessons with teachers are of great importance, but self-study and communication in the target language can bring substantial positive results.

Furthermore, social networks serve not only as a tool for learning English – they also boost motivation for learning in general and open up new possibilities for students' independent work. That is, social networks can be employed more or less regularly as an alternative to traditional English

6 CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the conducted research, we can conclude that the communicative community today is developing in different directions, demanding new directions of scientific inquiry and research and calling for the development of students' cognitive interest in learning a foreign language. The ongoing development of technologies not only expands students' consciousness but also provides new realms for students' interest and motivation to learn a foreign language, particularly with the help of social networks, which constitute communication platforms that allow organizing students' independent work both within and outside the classroom.

The ethical-behavioral features of speech on social networks can be employed to develop students' cognitive interest in learning a foreign language. The teacher is called upon to foster a moral culture of communication on social media, show positive opportunities, and inform students about the dangers and difficulties arising in the course of learning and communication on social media in a timely and thorough manner.

Given the extreme relevance of the problem under study, further research will deal with the methods and techniques of practical and morally sound application of social networking resources for English language learning.

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