

## Leveraging online news for language learning across diverse educational contexts

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### Abstract

Digitization has made the news accessible to many people worldwide. Since it contains large quantities of authentic language input, online news has riveted language learners, teachers, and educators. Despite the availability of multitudes of studies on online news, research is needed to explore its potential benefits and drawbacks to guide language education. To that end, this exploratory research presented the possible educational impacts of online news on language education, offered a practical guideline for language teachers, and suggested specific news websites to utilize. The examination of a systematic literature review revealed eight potential advantages (real-world context, vocabulary expansion, grammatical/syntactical practice, heightened cultural awareness, practice/improvement in four skills, authentic language input, and content diversity) and disadvantages (linguistic complexity, content bias and inaccuracy, limited interactivity, time consumption, accessibility, and technology dependency, information overload, digital distraction, and privacy concern). Accordingly, a five-step practical guideline for using online news for classroom teaching is suggested for language teachers. The research offers news websites beneficial to multilingual and multicultural learning and awareness. Finally, the research concludes with some limitations and recommendations for future studies.

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### Keywords

Computer-assisted language learning, Digital learning, Digital news, Online news, Web 2.0

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### Introduction

Language education is at a critical juncture in an era marked by an unprecedented surge in digital information and the ongoing development of information communication technologies. The widespread availability of the Internet and online news sources has completely altered language learning and teaching contexts besides the dissemination of information (Kern, 2014; Whelan et al., 2010). Language educators face a unique challenge and opportunity in today's digital world: leveraging the vast and ever-changing world of online news to improve language learning outcomes.

Traditionally confined to textbook use and classroom instruction, language education is increasingly supplemented and enhanced by exploiting authentic, real-world language resources, with the emergence of online news as a potent tool (Moglen, 2014; Warschauer & Meskill, 2013). In addition, the digitization of news has created a globalized space for language learners to obtain and interact with authentic content worldwide (Reese, 2016). Through this democratized information, learners are not only exposed to a wide variety of languages and dialects. Still, they are also immersed in the cultural environments in which these languages are spoken. In a globalized environment where intercultural communication is paramount, incorporating online news into linguistic education is a strategic necessity (Jackson, 2019).

The role of online news in the current information environment is essential, as it integrates seamlessly with ideas related to computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and other digital literacy competencies. As more and more people rely on the internet for their daily news (Caled & Silva, 2022), they unintentionally become part of continuous language education (Gu et al., 2014). Due to its dynamic nature, online news content exposes readers to a wide variety of vocabulary (Dang & Long, 2023), language structures (Taqiyyah & Aswir, 2022), and writing styles (Liunokas, 2016), which, in turn, contributes to language proficiency. In addition, online news platforms have interactive elements, such as comment sections and user-generated content, which encourage language learners to engage in discussions and voice their views, improving their language skills in real-life situations (Deffor, 2015). In addition, access to international news facilitates intercultural knowledge and introduces students to various accents and dialects (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2018; Lee & Drajadi, 2019). Online news is a practical tool for keeping oneself informed and aids in language learning, digital literacy, and intercultural competency, making it an essential element of modern language education.

Considering all these, this study aims to explore the impact of online news as a valuable digital resource on language education. It, therefore, intends to investigate the potential benefits and drawbacks of online news in language learning and teaching for teachers and educators to serve as a practical pedagogical guide. To this end, harnessing online news is initially grounded on a theoretical rationale. Previous work on using online news is then cited. The potential educational gains and pitfalls of online news are

next explained. A framework for employing online news in classroom teaching is later provided. Ultimately, the article is concluded with limitations to the present research and recommendations for further ones.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Background

Using online news as part of language learning can be based on diverse educational theories and concepts. The first is Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which posits that language learners benefit most from language input slightly above their current proficiency level. This type of input can be provided through the wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures in online news articles, facilitating language learning. A second relevant concept is the theory of task motivation (Locke, 1968), which postulates that motivational factors influence an individual's attitude toward a particular task. Online news articles can increase learner motivation by providing engaging and relevant assignments pertinent to learners' interests and requirements, thus increasing their intrinsic motivation to learn (Dörnyei, 2001).

Incorporating online news also accords with the general trend of technology-enhanced language learning, acknowledging the advantages of digital resources to facilitate language learning and provide varied learning opportunities (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). Another theoretical ground that online news can be based on is content-based language teaching (Snow & Brinton, 1997), which combines language learning with other study areas. By using online news as a resource, learners can explore various topics, assisting them in learning languages from different genres. An additional conceptual framework to ground the subject of interest is the information processing theory, suggesting that learners are more likely to process and retain information thanks to meaning and relevance (Slate & Charlesworth, 1988). The content of online news articles, frequently related to real-world events and topics of interest to learners, can stimulate cognitive processes, thereby improving language retention and comprehension.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is another theoretical concept that might be grounded in harnessing online news in language education. TBLT aims to facilitate language acquisition through activities that learners may encounter in their everyday lives (Willis & Willis, 2007). Tasks such as analyzing news articles, summarizing key points, or discussion of news stories encourage the authentic use of language in practice. Another relevant theoretical concept, critical language awareness (Fairlough, 2014) concentrates on developing learners' cognitive abilities to think critically about the language use in different contexts, such as its utilization in the media and society. Learners can acquire the necessary skills through the analysis of online news to become more discerning consumers of information and gain an understanding of language usage in journalism.

Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes social interaction and cultural context in learning, might justify using online news for language learning and teaching. Online news articles often represent cultural, social, and political dimensions of the language, thus providing valuable resources for examining these dimensions in language education. Finally, Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist theories, which maintain that learners build their knowledge through experience and interaction (Ertmer & Newby, 1993), might underpin the framework for employing online news for language education. In sum, these theoretical frameworks all support online news as an excellent tool for language learning. They emphasize the value of authentic input, meaningful tasks, cultural content, and critical awareness inherent to online news as a language learning tool.

### **Research on Using (Online) News in Language Education**

An earlier study investigating the role of the news in language learning belongs to Brinton and Gaskill (1978). Their study on using news broadcasts reported enhanced learner comprehension, heightened learner interest, and better understanding of the target culture. Another leading study was Morrison's (1989), asserting that radio broadcasts might improve listening comprehension due to authenticity, interesting/motivating nature, currency, and flexibility. In her study incorporating intercultural correspondence and news stories, Marden (2007) revealed promising results for heightened learner interest in Italian language and culture. Park's (2011) study showed that the linguistic resources provided by news articles and

personal/cultural experiences helped learners build critical literacy. In a study, Marchand and Rowland (2013) designed a course that included web materials based on news, asked learners to reflect on the news stories weekly, and found that learners' self-expressive confidence and active engagement in virtual discussions improved. Supporting evidence was reported by Lee's (2014) study, which revealed that digital news stories helped enhance learners' self-confidence, self-expression, and multiliteracy skills. A heightened learner interest in performing speaking activities through news reports was concluded in Aboe's study (2016). Similarly, Walters (2017) reported improved critical literacy awareness of moral leadership thanks to weekly articles. Higher critical intercultural awareness levels of learners were reported by Gómez-Rodríguez's (2018) study, where learners were exposed to news stories including stereotyping and culturally conflicting content (e.g., injustice and gender inequality) and asked to reflect on them. Pranoto (2020) demonstrated that learners exhibited positive attitudes toward exploiting news voiceover activities in their pronunciation course. Chong (2021) examined the role of a dictation activity using news stories in practicing speaking and revealed that learners became more self-confident in verbal English practice. The same year, Rozak et al. (2021) indicated that employing similar news stories in narrow listening instead of extensive listening enabled student teachers to become familiar with similar grammatical structures and vocabulary of spoken texts from similar themes/subjects.

On the other hand, negative findings were also cited in the literature. In a study by Zulfikar et al. (2020), the following learner problems were reported when listening to news stories: uncommon topics and vocabulary, accentual diversity, rapid speech, unclear pronunciation, complex grammar, and lengthy texts. This finding suggests the significance of choosing news stories appropriate for learners' levels. However, Bahrani and Sim (2012) found contradicting results, reporting that the groups exposed to authentic input via cartoons and movies outperformed the ones who received input via news. In addition to being a context-dependent finding, this result might have stemmed from the low-proficiency learner levels and inappropriate choice of news material. Similarly, Setyowati and Sukmawan (2021) found no impact of news stories on learners' written performances. This might have been because of the delivery mode of the course (hybrid) during the pandemic when learners might have had other priorities.

## Methodology

### Research Design and Questions

Employing a systematic literature review (Feak & Swales, 2009) and being exploratory (Bernd, 2017), this study aims to examine the educational implications of online news on language education, evaluate its inherent advantages and disadvantages, devise a practical guide for educators to effectively integrate online news in their teaching methods, and identify particular news sources that are conducive to language learning. The following research questions were addressed in this regard:

RQ (1). What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of using online news in language education?

RQ (2). How can online news be effectively incorporated into language teachers' teaching methods?

RQ (3). What are the available news websites that are optimal for language pedagogy?

### Data Collection

Data were collected from databases such as ERIC, Google Scholar, Sage, ScienceDirect, and Taylor & Francis to address the research questions. These databases were searched for all the potential studies about using online news in language education. The search was not limited to time; however, queries were made using such keywords as “news,” “online news,” “language,” “language education,” “digital news,” “language learning,” and “language teaching.” Further criteria were adopted in the database search: (i) The language of the article must be English, (ii) The study must include the keywords in its title, and (iii) The study must be in language and education contexts. The initial screening revealed 423 research articles in five databases (ERIC =95, Google Scholar =70, Sage =147, ScienceDirect =62, and Taylor & Francis =49). Relevant theses and dissertations (e.g., Jeong, 2012) were also added to the search to eliminate publication bias. Following the close examination by three researchers and the excluded articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria, the total sum was finalized as 64.

## **Data Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis was utilized to analyze the raw data following the suggestions of previous research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000; Patton, 2002). In this context, the data were initially prepared. The coding units were then defined as the entire document, specifically referring to physical linguistic units (e.g., words such as online news, benefits, and drawbacks). Categories (e.g., real-world context and linguistic complexity) were identified next, followed by labeling them under coding schemes (i.e., advantages and disadvantages). A sample was coded to establish coding consistency between the three coders. Following a high inter-coder agreement, all the data set was coded. The entire coding was rechecked for consistency. Subsequently, conclusions were made from the coded data. Finally, the findings were ready for reporting.

The recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985) were followed for trustworthiness (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). To this end, peer debriefing was utilized for credibility. Also, the coders were all knowledgeable in the field of language education, contributing to the credibility. The findings are assumed to be transferrable to other contexts since the content was analyzed objectively and consistently. Raw data, memos, coding manuals, and process notes were used to maintain dependability and confirmability within the auditing context.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **The Potential Benefits and Drawbacks of Using Online News in Language Education**

Following a systematic literature review, the following benefits and drawbacks (Table 1) were cited as to the utilization of online news in language education:

**Table 1**

*The references to the potential pedagogical benefits and drawbacks of using online news in language education*

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Relevant References</b>
real-world context	Aayeshah, 2012; Abdurakhmanov, 2023; Oura, 2001
vocabulary expansion	Abeyweera, 2021; Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Chavangklang et al., 2019; Dang & Long, 2023; Katemba & Parilia, 2020; Munawarah et al., 2020; Rohmatillah, 2016; Shakibaei et al., 2019; Shamim et al., 2023; Singh, 2022; Sultana & Taghavi et al., 2012; Teng, 2015; Tran, 2023; Wijajanti, 2020; Zhang & Milton, 2022
grammatical /syntactical practice	Khodabandeh & Tharirian, 2020; Omar et al., 2018; Özkan, 2015; Taqiyyah & Aswir, 2022
heightened cultural awareness	Gómez-Rodríguez, 2018; Lee, 1999; Marden, 2007; Wang, 2018
practice/improvement in four skills	Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Barella & Linarsih, 2020; Chavangklang et al., 2019; Khorsheed & Rassoul, 2018; Lee, 2014; Liunokas, 2016; Morrison, 1989; Onoda, 1994; Rozak et al., 2021; Tasya, et al., 2018
improvement in critical literacy/thinking	Abduazizova et al., 2021; Al-Shaye, 2021; Bury, 2015; Jeong, 2012; Lestari & Mutia, 2023; Park, 2011; Sibanda, 2021; Walters, 2017
authentic language input	Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Bahrani et al., 2014
content diversity	Alexander & Cunningham, 2004; Minns, 2021
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
linguistic complexity	Berardo, 2006; Lesmy et al., 2019; Wiredu, 2012
content bias and inaccuracy	Kim & Grabe, 2022; McCracken, 2011; Shultziner & Stukalin, 2021
limited interactivity	Clifford, 1998; Seelig, 2008
time-consumption	Dincer, 2020; Ekstrand et al., 2020
accessibility and technology dependency	Lai et al., 2018; LeLoup & Ponterio, 2004
information overload	Feroz et al., 2022; Mrah & Tizaoui, 2018
digital distraction	Leithner, 2009; Nge et al., 2012
privacy concern	González-Bailón, & Xenos, 2023; McWhorter & Bennett, 2020; Swart, 2023

The present exploratory study found eight advantages and eight disadvantages of online news in language education. Online news provides students with real-time information reflecting real-world language usage, helping students to understand current events and conversational language (Aayeshah, 2012; Abdurakhmanov, 2023; Oura, 2001). For instance, the floods caused by Hurricane Daniel in the east of Libya in



September 2023 (Figure 1) are one of the recent news stories the international press covers. Learners might be informed about such current events through online news.

**Figure 1**

An example of real-world context (<https://www.euronews.com/embed/2368514>)



Online news was also found to improve vocabulary, as indicated in previous studies (Abeyweera, 2021; Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Chavangklang et al., 2019; Dang & Long, 2023; Katemba & Parilia, 2020; Munawarah et al., 2020; Rohmatillah, 2016; Shakibaei et al., 2019; Shamim et al., 2023; Singh, 2022; Sultana & Taghavi et al., 2012; Teng, 2015; Tran, 2023; Wijajanti, 2020; Zhang & Milton, 2022). News articles often contain a wide variety of vocabulary, which introduces learners to new terms and phrases, assisting them in building vocabulary, like specific vocabulary items or phrases in news headlines or articles (Figure 2), such as “gruta” in Spanish, meaning “grotto” in English. As Table 1 illustrates, the impact of (online) news on vocabulary learning was the most researched linguistic aspect.

**Figure 2**

*An example of specific vocabulary item in Spanish*

(<https://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2023/09/12/64ff9b29e4d4d862098b45b4.html>)

## **Rescatan al espeleólogo estadounidense atrapado a mil metros bajo tierra tras nueve días en una gruta**

Ha sido una de las operaciones de rescate subterráneo más amplias y complicadas jamás organizadas

Additionally, news articles provide examples of complex sentence structure and diverse grammar usage, enabling students to enhance their knowledge of syntax (Omar et al., 2018; Özkan, 2015; Khodabandeh & Tharirian, 2020; Taqiyyah & Aswir, 2022). For example, the relative pronoun “qui” (meaning who/that) in French (Figure 3) might be learned through online news stories.

**Figure 3**

*An example of a complex grammatical feature in French*

([https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2023/09/12/dans-les-landes-les-derniers-vestiges-de-l-extraction-du-petrole-en-france\\_6188946\\_3234.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2023/09/12/dans-les-landes-les-derniers-vestiges-de-l-extraction-du-petrole-en-france_6188946_3234.html))

## **Dans le « Texas landais », les derniers vestiges de l'extraction du pétrole en France**

On compterait environ 500 puits pétroliers en France, selon le ministère de la transition énergétique, qui permettent d'extraire l'équivalent de 0,9 % de la consommation nationale de pétrole annuelle.

Previous studies also showed that online news might promote cultural awareness (Lee, 1999; Marden, 2007; Gómez-Rodríguez, 2018; Wang, 2018). Reading different kinds of news from diverse places and cultures introduces learners to different ways of looking at things, giving them a better understanding of different cultures and helping them become more culturally aware and able to relate to people from different cultures. To illustrate, the news story displayed in Figure 4 might allow learners to be informed

about the Sámi people and their endeavors to uphold their traditions. Regular exposure to such news might increase intercultural awareness and cultural knowledge.

**Figure 4**

*An example of a news story for cultural understanding*

<https://www.euronews.com/embed/2361890>



It was also determined that online news might contribute to the enhancement of four language skills (Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Barella & Linarsih, 2020; Chavangklang et al., 2019; Khorsheed & Rassoul, 2018; Lee, 2014; Liunokas, 2016; Morrison, 1989; Onoda, 1994; Rozak et al., 2021; Tasya et al., 2018 ). Traditionally, online news involves textually rich content (i.e., authentic input) that might be utilized for reading and writing. Besides that, multimedia news platforms typically contain audio and video segments, allowing learners to hone their listening skills and improve their language skills. For instance, some news websites also include audio versions of the news articles, as seen in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

An example of a news article in audio format (<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/09/12/1197874002/umami-savory-taste-history>)



Critical literacy and thinking skills are the seventh potential benefit that online news might provide (Abduazizova et al., 2021; Al-Shaye, 2021; Bury, 2015; Jeong, 2012; Lestari & Mutia, 2023; Park, 2011; Sibanda, 2021; Walters, 2017). Analyzing news articles necessitates critical thinking, which assists students in developing analytical and evaluation abilities. Critical thinking involves the active and skillful formulation, application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of information derived from or produced by observations, experience, contemplation, thought, or communication as a basis for conviction and action (Elder & Paul, 2003). On the other hand, critical literacy is an intellectual skill that involves the exploration and investigation of concepts and necessitates the synthesis, analysis, interpretation, assessment, and response to texts read or listened to (Avila & Moore, 2012). The forums or opinion segments in online news websites might be a good platform for improving these skills. For example, food insecurity (Figure 6) as a global issue might be analyzed and evaluated in an in-class discussion, where learners must think critically to respond well to the possible arguments.

**Figure 6**

An example of a news story for promoting critical literacy/thinking skills


(<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/9/4/feeding-big-agribusiness-starving-africans>)

**OPINION**

## Feeding big agribusiness, starving Africans

Industrial agriculture has failed to eliminate food insecurity in Africa. It is time for a radically different approach.

🗨 Mutinta Nketani | Timothy Wise 4 Sep 2023



The systematic literature review also indicated that online news might offer rich, authentic language use (Bahrani & Sim, 2012; Bahrani et al., 2014). Professional journalists produce news articles and provide examples of authentic language use, which can enhance language skills. For instance, learners might practice some tense aspects in German, as they are used in the language (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

An example of authentic language use in German (<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/venedig-tourismus-gebuehrensysteem-100.html>)

In Venedig müssen Kurzbesucher künftig an bestimmten Tagen Eintritt zahlen. Der Gemeinderat der italienischen Lagunenstadt beschloss am Dienstag, eine Gebühr von fünf Euro von Touristen zu erheben, die nur für ein paar Stunden bleiben und nicht übernachten. Die Regelung soll im Frühjahr starten. 2024 soll sie zunächst an 30 Tagen gelten, an denen erfahrungsgemäß besonders viele Besucher kommen. Später soll sie ausgeweitet werden. Die genauen Termine sind noch offen.

Tagesausflüglern werde für den Eintritt in das historische Zentrum eine Gebühr von fünf Euro berechnet, erklärte die Stadtverwaltung. Ausgenommen von der Eintrittsgebühr seien laut einer Erklärung:

Ultimately, online news platforms might offer rich content diversity for language learners (Alexander & Cunningham, 2004; Minns, 2021). Most online news websites have sections such as politics, economy, culture, travel, and health, etc., which might cater to different learners' interests in terms of content.

On the other hand, online news websites impose some limitations on learners. Initially, previous research demonstrated that news articles might involve linguistically complex structures (Berardo, 2006; Lesmy et al., 2019; Wiredu, 2012). That means that news articles can be challenging to read due to their intricate language, slang, and

cultural associations, which can be intimidating for beginning-level readers. For instance, words such as “persecution, wade into, and meddle” in the following article (Figure 8) might be difficult for beginning, even intermediate-level learners. The word frequencies were cited as 3/5, 2/5, and 2/5 for these words in the Collins online dictionary (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>). That justifies why some learners might struggle to understand words with low frequency.

**Figure 8**

*An example of a news article with linguistic complexity*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/12/world/europe/putin-trump-musk.html>)

***Putin, Citing Trump ‘Persecution,’  
Wades Back Into U.S. Politics***

The Russian leader, whose government meddled in the American presidential election won by Donald J. Trump, also offered words of praise for Elon Musk.

Another drawback of online news is the potential source/content bias and inaccuracy (Kim & Grabe, 2022; McCracken, 2011; Shultziner & Stukalin, 2021). It, therefore, becomes critical to provide learners with the necessary media literacy skills to ensure that they are aware of the potential biases and inaccuracies in online news sources. To illustrate, Figure 9 shows how the same piece of news might be interpreted differently across diverse media platforms.



**Figure 9**

*An example of biased news headlines in different media outlets*

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2012/08/03/158068749/same-news-different-spins-check-these-headlines-about-the-jobs-report>

Our headline all day has been "163,000 Jobs Added In July; Unemployment Rate Rose To 8.3 Percent."

But as is often the case, some other news outlets like to add a little bit of interpretation to their headlines:

-- Fox News says "Wrong-Way Growth: Jobless Jumps In July as New Hiring Remains Slow."

-- NBC News writes "US economy's job engine revved up in July."

A third disadvantage of online news might be the limited interactivity compared to interactive learning activities (Clifford, 1998; Seelig, 2008). Therefore, passive reading of news articles might not be as engaging as interactive activities. However, some news websites have online comment sections wherein users interact with each other on a topic of discussion. Additionally, practicing news articles might be time-consuming for learners and teachers (Dincer, 2020; Ekstrand et al., 2020). In other words, analyzing and digesting news articles can take up a significant amount of time, which may interfere with other language-related activities. For teachers, on the other hand, preparing lessons using news articles might occupy a good amount of their time. As in any other online platform, reading or practicing with online news might be technology-dependent, meaning learners might experience access problems (Lai et al., 2018; LeLoup & Ponterio, 2004). Other potential setbacks for using online news were cited as information overload (Feroz et al., 2022; Mrah & Tizaoui, 2018), digital distraction (Leithner, 2009; Nge et al., 2012), and privacy concerns (González-Bailón, & Xenos, 2023; McWhorter & Bennett, 2020; Swart, 2023).

In sum, findings revealed that vocabulary expansion and improvement in four language skills were the two most researched areas among the advantages of online news. However, content diversity, authentic language input, and heightened cultural awareness were cited the least. The systematic literature review findings also indicated a general scantiness in researching the disadvantages of online news in language education. All these findings suggest that more research (of quantitative and qualitative

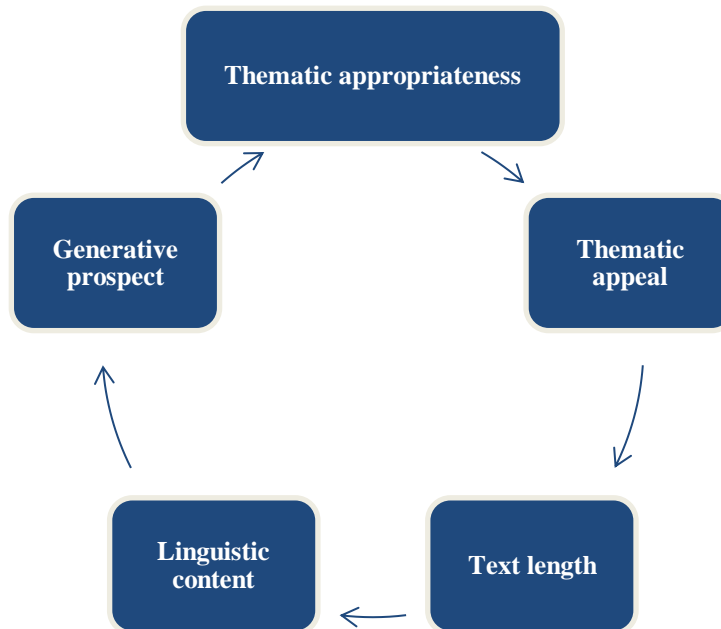
nature) is essential to reveal more about the potential of online news and deepen our understanding of the concept. Findings also indicated the areas where prospective studies should be conducted.

### How to Effectively Incorporate Online News in Teaching

Considering the possible advantages/disadvantages and abundant news websites, it might be daunting for language learners and teachers to select appropriate news articles. Therefore, the following framework (adapted from various resources, such as Farmer, 2008) for choosing news articles might be utilized.

Figure 10

*A guideline for news article selection in language education*



The first criterion in this guideline refers to the extent of suitability of topics in news articles. For instance, a teacher might ask, “Could this article be offensive to some students?” or “Is it appropriate for learners’ age?” Related to the first one, the second criterion concerns how an article appeals to learners. In this regard, a teacher might ask, “Is this topic interesting for my students?” Text length is the third criterion to use when selecting articles. Teachers should avoid using long articles, which may contain complex language structures and take time to do in classrooms. In this sense, a teacher might ask, “Is the text too long?” or “Can I complete the activities of this text in a given time period?” Another essential criterion to consider is how much helpful information (e.g., practical vocabulary and grammar items) is contained in news articles. Before



choosing a news article, a teacher should ask, “Are there good language structures that my learners can benefit from?” or “Are there too many unfamiliar words in the text?” Ultimately, the generative potential of news articles is the final criterion. It refers to how much a specific news article allows follow-up activities, such as discussions and role-plays. In this regard, a teacher might ask, “Does this article offer generative prospect?”. Using this cyclic guideline, language learners and teachers might benefit from news articles for various purposes in language education.

### **Available News Websites Optimal for Language Learning**

Following the provision of the guideline, it would be essential to recommend some online news sources for diverse linguistic needs. Several digital news sites already offer learning sections, some of which are BBC Learning English (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish>), The New York Times Learning Network (<https://www.nytimes.com/section/learning>), Voice of America (VOA) Learning English (<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/>), Learning English with CBC (<https://www.cbc.ca/learning-english>), Al Jazeera Learning Arabic (<https://learning.aljazeera.net/ar>), Deutsche Well (DW) Learn German ([www.dw.com/en/learn-german/s-2469](http://www.dw.com/en/learn-german/s-2469)), and BBC Languages (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/index.shtml>) for about 40 languages. Additionally, the News in Levels (<https://www.newsinlevels.com/>) website sequel offers international news in three levels and five languages, including Spanish in Levels (<https://spanishinlevels.com/>), French in Levels (<https://frenchinlevels.com/>), German in Levels (<https://germaninlevels.com/>), Chinese in Levels (<https://chineseinlevels.com/>), and Indonesian in Levels (<https://www.beritabahasainggris.id/>).

In addition to these websites, others can be cited here for various purposes. First, the “news in slow” series offers world news in three levels and four languages, including News in Slow Spanish (<https://www.newsinslowspanish.com/>), News in Slow French (<https://www.newsinslowfrench.com/>), News in Slow German (<https://www.newsinslowgerman.com/>), and News in Slow Italian (<https://www.newsinslowitalian.com/>). Harboring great potential for listening and pronunciation practice, these websites also contain grammar/expressions and series

sections as additional language resources. Similarly, the metro website (<https://www.readmetro.com/en/>) allows users to access digital news in six languages, including Portuguese, English, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and French, across 13 countries. This website might be an excellent opportunity to access daily news from different countries and learn about current events and local cultures. With its unique and vivid website, Le Monde Diplomatique (<https://mondediplo.com/>) might offer a lot for reading, vocabulary, and listening skills in English and French. The Times in Plain English (<https://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/>) can be a good opportunity for learners with lower proficiency levels since the news reports are explained in simple English. Learners interested in the American lifestyle might visit This American Life's website (<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>) and access great articles about American life in text and audio formats. The following websites can be a great source of listening, pronunciation, and speaking practice for English language learners: National Public Radio (NPR) (<https://www.npr.org/>), The Guardian Long Read (<https://soundcloud.com/theguardianlongread>), The New York Times Times Minute (<https://www.nytimes.com/video/the-new-york-times-minute>), and BBC Global News Podcast (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nq0gn/episodes/downloads>).

All in all, this section summarized the research-based advantages and disadvantages of online news in language education. A framework for news article selection was provided for language learners and teachers who struggle to find appropriate news reports. Ultimately, a list of news websites was presented, those with already learning sections and those with other good features for language learning.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This exploratory research reviewed the relevant literature on the impacts of online news on language learning and teaching. The systematic literature review revealed eight categories as advantages (real-world context, vocabulary expansion, grammatical/syntactical practice, heightened cultural awareness, practice/improvement in four skills, authentic language input, and content diversity) and disadvantages (linguistic complexity, content bias, and inaccuracy, limited interactivity, time consumption, accessibility, and technology dependency, information overload, digital

distraction, and privacy concern). Most studies focused on the impact of online news on vocabulary expansion and practice/improvement in four skills. However, pronunciation, speaking, and writing were the most minor studied language areas under the four skills. This means that further research might tackle the effect of online news on these linguistic aspects. The potential pitfalls of online news cited in this study were generally understudied in the literature. The studies revealing the advantages of online news outnumbered those indicating the disadvantages. However, this should not be misinterpreted. Online news articles and websites should be approached attentively. Therefore, the present study offered a practical guideline comprising five steps (thematic appropriateness, thematic appeal, text length, linguistic content, and generative prospect). In conjunction with this, numerous news websites were recommended for language learners and teachers of various languages. These websites might be handy for several language skills, such as reading, vocabulary, listening, pronunciation, etc. Also, some (e.g., News in Levels and News in Slow series) offer global news in three language levels across diverse languages. Additionally, all the suggested websites, some in particular (e.g., This American Life and Le Monde Diplomatique), can be used to raise learners' intercultural awareness and cultural knowledge. Referring to content diversity as one of the benefits of online news websites, the numerous sections (e.g., politics, sport, travel, work life, technology, and culture) available on these websites might rivet learners with diverse interests.

On the other hand, this study recognizes several limitations, the first being methodological. Exploratory research does not yield conclusive results, yet it is essential because it is challenging to conduct. The findings of this study should not, therefore, be interpreted conclusively. However, the strengths and weaknesses of online news presented in this study were cited from previous research in the relevant field. They, therefore, are research-based findings that should be approached attentively. Another limitation might be focusing on specific languages, including English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, and Indonesian. The recommended websites were not distributed equally between these languages but centered mainly around English. This limitation might be ignored because the present study did not primarily focus on the abovementioned languages. It can also be

overlooked because the availability of websites that are primarily in English can be understood, considering the global dominance of English.

In considering these, several recommendations can be made for prospective research. First, future studies might review specific news websites to discover their language-learning potential. Second, qualitative studies can be conducted to explore the views of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds on using news websites. A third might be a quasi-experimental or mixed-method study aiming to examine the impact of certain websites or news articles on improving specific language skills, particularly pronunciation, writing, and speaking. A fourth recommendation might be conducting case studies with learners from diverse linguistic/cultural backgrounds across different contexts. In addition, more studies might be undertaken to explore the influence of online news on increasing intercultural awareness and acquiring cultural knowledge. This study concludes that online news articles/websites can be a valuable source of multilingual/multicultural learning and practice.

#### **Ethics Committee Permission Information**

Ethical approval is not applicable because this article does not contain any studies with human or animal subjects.

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