

The Impact of Social Media on Language Learning: A Case Study of Students at the Faculty of Tourism

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of social media use on the foreign language learning process in the context of students at the Faculty of Tourism, Batman University. The research employs a qualitative research design and adopts a case study methodology. The study involves 40 students who are receiving education in different languages. Of the participants, 80% are female and 20% are male. Semi-structured interviews are used as the data collection tool. The interviews include eight questions regarding the students' level of social media use for foreign language learning purposes, its contributions, and the challenges they face. The data obtained is analysed through content analysis and categorized into themes and codes. The findings reveal that students predominantly use social media platforms to improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills. Furthermore, it is found that social media helps boost students' confidence and reduces their anxiety regarding the use of English. However, challenges such as accent differences, imbalances in language proficiency levels, and internet access issues may hinder the language learning process. In conclusion, while social media serves as a supportive tool for foreign language learning, it is recommended that pedagogical strategies be developed for its effective integration.

Keywords: Social media, foreign language learning, students of tourism faculty

Sosyal Medyanın Dil Öğrenimi Üzerindeki Etkisi: Turizm Fakültesi Öğrencileri Örneği

Öz: Bu çalışma, sosyal medya kullanımının yabancı dil öğrenme süreci üzerindeki etkilerini Batman Üniversitesi Turizm Fakültesi öğrencileri bağlamında incelemektedir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma deseni kullanılmış ve durum çalışması yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Çalışmaya, farklı dillerden eğitim alan 40 öğrenci katılmıştır. Katılımcıların %80'i kadın, %20'si erkektir. Veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerde, öğrencilerin sosyal medya platformlarını yabancı dil öğrenme amaçlı kullanım düzeyleri, sağladığı katkılar ve karşılaşılan zorluklar bağlamında sekiz soru sorulmuştur. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiş, temalar ve kodlara ayrılmıştır. Bulgular, öğrencilerin sosyal medya platformlarını en çok kelime bilgisi, telaffuz ve dinleme becerilerini geliştirmek için kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, sosyal medyanın öğrencilere özgüven kazandırdığı ve İngilizce kullanımına yönelik kaygılarını azalttığı belirlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, aksan farklılıkları, dil seviyeleri arasındaki dengesizlikler ve internet erişimi gibi bazı zorlukların dil öğrenme sürecini engelleyebileceği tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, sosyal medya yabancı dil öğrenimini destekleyici bir araç olsa da etkili entegrasyonu için pedagojik stratejilerin geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

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Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyal medya, yabancı dil öğrenimi, turizm fakültesi öğrencileri

Introduction

Information and communication technologies have become indispensable in all areas of life. In the contemporary world, a multitude of individuals utilise a variety of communication technologies, including computer-based learning tools, the Internet, and social media (SM) applications (Desta et al., 2021, p. 519). In recent years, the emergence of the evolving and extraordinary aspects of SM networks has represented a substantial milestone, playing a pivotal role in the lives of millions of individuals (Al Jahromi, 2020, p. 23). There are various types of SM such as Facebook, Instagram etc. and most students are familiar with these types of SM, as they are very easy to sign up (Yuniar and Purnamaningsih, 2022, p. 1211). According to Yang (2020), the use of SM applications has four main objectives: entertainment, socialisation, information and learning (p. 162). As a result, many of today's students use SM not only to have fun but also to learn and communicate (Yuniar and Purnamaningsih, 2022, p. 1211). Therefore, SM applications have become essential tools for students, serving purposes beyond entertainment by facilitating communication, learning and sharing information.

SM applications offer a number of potential educational benefits, and language learning is one of them. They can be used as a venue for language learning. SM can potentially be used for language learning as the SM applications can provide a virtual space, and individuals from different linguistic backgrounds are able to interact. As a universal language, English facilitates interaction between individuals with disparate linguistic backgrounds. Thus, the use of SM applications can offer students more opportunities to use English efficiently (Arfiandhani, 2019, p. 84). Millennial students are digital natives with considerable experience of SM (Yadav, 2021, p. 2039). SM integration in education facilitates students to access a wealth of information, fostering interaction and connection with their peers in digital spaces. Also, SM offers educational systems a conduit to seamlessly integrate students and academic institutions, thereby enhancing the learning experience (Ali, 2023, p. 25). It also helps with language learning by offering interactive platforms for practising English, accessing information and connecting with peers.

It has been demonstrated that, in general, learners tend to demonstrate substandard performance in English language learning, a phenomenon that is particularly evident in cases where English is not the primary language of the learner. The students learning English as a second language need further English language support to develop speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills (Yadav, 2021, p. 2038). Consequently, it is imperative to motivate language learners to cultivate communicative competence by leveraging a comprehensive array of language learning strategies, particularly in contexts where exposure to the target language is limited (Mansor, 2016, p. 141). Online interaction through web-based tools has afforded students the opportunity to develop new forms of meaning. Furthermore, it has enabled students from diverse racial, class, linguistic and cultural backgrounds to interact and share their ideas, beliefs and styles (Warschauer, 2010, p. 131). Learning English online is easy with self-paced programmes and it's incredibly easy to immerse students in an English communication environment (Yadav, 2021, p. 2038). Language activities are typically associated with communicative contexts as opposed to a series of linguistic principles. Consequently, the process of language acquisition should be oriented towards the utilisation of the language in authentic everyday contexts. This approach emphasises the development of oral communication skills by focusing on acquiring proficiency in speaking and learning how to employ the language for the purpose of effective communication (Arfiandhani,

2019, p. 83). It may be claimed that online platforms offer valuable opportunities for English language learners to improve their skills through interactive activities.

Students who want to learn English need vocabulary, grammar rules and language practice. They can gather and create the necessary information and knowledge through a variety of SM and also have the opportunity to use the language communicatively. Using all kinds of SM platforms such as networking sites, communities and instant messaging, learners can engage in communicative and active learning. Through SM applications, students are able to use English outside of the classroom and have access to a considerable amount of material to improve their writing, reading, speaking and listening skills. Since almost all university students have access to SM applications via their smartphones, they can practise the target language whenever and wherever they want. This flexibility motivates students to study and practise the language more often.

Social Media in Education

SM have had an impact on all aspects of life - social, political, economic and educational. In the educational scenario, these media platforms have the capacity to enhance the learning opportunities available to students, whilst also facilitating continuous interaction between students and teachers (Meena, 2013: 858). Using SM applications in educational contexts is exhibiting a marked upward trend and is likely to affect educational practice and delivery, especially in terms of connecting with students or colleagues and accessing news (Mardiana, 2016, p. 2). Multimedia learning is an educational approach that aims to provide teachers with the ability to leverage both the visual and audial channels of students to augment their learning experience and facilitate better results. The integration of text and graphics in educational content has been shown to impact long-term memory retention and, consequently, the overall learning process (Kutbi and Alomar, 2017, p. 29). Thus, it is possible to assert that SM has transformed education by improving learning, communication, and supporting multimedia approaches that enhance memory and learning.

Higher education has recognised the great potential of SM to increase student engagement, the university experience and pedagogical practice, and is committed to innovation and change to stay relevant in a changing education market (Mao, 2014: 214). The integration of SM applications into educational practice is readily accepted by students (Aboudahr and Benlahcene, 2023, p. 192). The employment of SM affords each student the opportunity to demonstrate their autonomy in their learning (Simamora, 2020, p. 100). Social networking platforms in education help students connect with others at their institution and beyond. Academics like these tools as they encourage students to communicate, exchange content and collaborate (Zaidieh, 2012, p. 20).

In formal education, institutions, teachers and students are increasingly relying on SM, especially for sharing practices, disseminating educational materials and exchanging opinions and comments (Parusheva et al., 2018, p. 172). SM applications help learners to access, share and gather information, as collaboration is an invaluable part of the learning process. In addition, social networking sites encourage learners to build rewarding friendships with classmates, maximise student engagement and communication with their colleges and teachers, and work together to achieve common goals (Abdalgane, 2022, p. 71). These tools are typically accessible at no cost and can serve as a highly cost-effective medium of communication. Beyond facilitating student communication, they offer a valuable platform for promoting events, new courses and research advancements (Elias et al., 2022, p. 147), and they boost formal education by enabling

collaboration, communication and information sharing. It is also a cost-effective way to promote academic activities.

Social Media and Students' Achievements

The application of technology to support students' diverse learning preferences is not a recent development. The efficacy of SM tools lies in their capacity to provide a range of customisable features, enabling students to personalise their learning experience and boost their academic achievement (Raut and Patil, 2016, p. 282). The main function of SM platforms is to enable the establishment of virtual communities centred on shared interests or activities. Moreover, these platforms have the capacity to develop students' leadership skills, encompassing all levels of leadership competence, from basic planning and organisational skills to the capacity for social change behaviour and self-directed participation (Adithya and Ahmed, 2018, p. 178). In addition to this, SM has been a good source for students (Mohammad et al., 2023, p. 129).

The use of SM applications for educational objectives has been demonstrated to exert a favourable influence on students' academic performance (Durak, 2020, p. 337). Çalış Duman and Aksoğan (2018) observed that the usage of SM and SM tools for educational objectives has a beneficial effect on academic achievement by providing learning through fun in lessons and post-lesson studies, increasing communication skills, and providing versatile thinking skills. Sivakumar (2020) observed that most students were interested in using SM positively for their academic purposes, and he also pointed out that SM has an important impact on students' academic achievement. Aboudahr and Benlahcene (2023) revealed that the consistent utilisation of SM exhibited a crucial impact on the observed outcomes. They also emphasised that learners had positive attitudes towards using SM to learn a second language. Adelakun et al. (2023) have reported that the wise and appropriate use of SM can reshape and enrich students' academic accomplishments. Shafiq and Parveen (2023) found that when learners used the knowledge exchanging features of SM, their academic performance improved and the learning outcomes of students who used SM facilities were higher. In this regard, social media contributes to students' academic success by enhancing their communication abilities, promoting multidimensional thinking, and cultivating positive attitudes toward the learning process.

On the other hand, some experts have already made it clear that SM has a negative impact on learning. The findings of research conducted to date indicate that pupils of middle and secondary school age, in addition to those enrolled in higher education, who regularly consult their SM networks during periods of academic study are less successful in their achievements (Raut and Patil, 2016, p. 283). The prominence of SM and the speed at which data can be disseminated has led to a trend of carelessness about correct spelling and syntax. This has been demonstrated to have the effect of reducing a student's capacity to produce written work that is free of grammatical errors, without recourse to the spelling checker available on computer software (Jeyaraj and Jenifer, 2021, p. 269). In addition to this, Bedir (2016) found that the academic grade point averages of students who did not have SM accounts were significantly different from those who did, and that the academic performance of students without SM accounts was higher. Gür et al (2018), in their study on the effects of SM addiction on academic postponement behaviour of university undergraduates, found that students with high levels of SM addiction spend most of their time on their current addiction, which results in students not spending enough time on academic activities, which is their main responsibility. In another study conducted by Demir and Kutlu (2018) to support the results of these 2 studies, it was concluded that intensive internet use by adolescents

has a negative relationship with academic achievement and a positive relationship with academic procrastination behaviours. Borak and Beki (2021) undertook a survey to investigate the connection that exists between high school students' use of SM and their school-based procrastination behaviour, and found that high school students' use of SM generally had a negative influence on academic achievement. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) also reported that using Facebook platform has a detrimental influence on academic progress (p. 1244). While excessive reliance on social media is linked to poor academic performance, weak grammatical competence, and increased procrastination among university students, its mindful and purposeful use can foster academic success by enhancing communication skills, encouraging versatile thinking, and promoting positive learning attitudes.

The Role of Social Media in English Language Learning

SM has been identified as a novel and inventive approach to English language acquisition for non-native speakers (Derakhshan and Aliabbasi, 2015, p. 1092). The use of SM in the learning context offers some opportunities to improve students' English language skills. English is one of the most used languages in SM as it is known as the international language used to communicate with each other all over the world (Rintaningrum, 2016, p. 114). The efficacy of SM applications in facilitating the acquisition of English language skills is well-documented. These applications offer students a range of opportunities to develop these skills (Yadav, 2021, p. 2040). The vital function of SM in educational contexts is frequently associated with its utilisation for the enhancement of proficiency and the establishment of learning communities that facilitate guidance, direction and support for novices, in addition to the dissemination of information to promote student growth and development. At the level of delivery, SM has been shown to enrich educational practices by offering students access to mentorship, tutorial services, support systems and feedback (Ali, 2023, p. 22). Teachers, educators, university professors, etc. rely on SM applications in formal and informal education and share practices, information, educational materials, opinions and views through SM tools (Al-Shammari, 2020, p. 263). SM is an innovative tool for learning English since it offers non-native speakers support, feedback, and collaboration for educational resources.

Sociocultural learning theories have pointed out that students have different learning styles; however, it has been confirmed that interaction between students and teachers is one of the key elements required for learning both in the classroom and in the virtual learning environment (Sobaih et al., 2016, p. 296). The merits of incorporating SM into language teaching and learning have been acknowledged by numerous researchers. For example, Karim et al. (2022) conducted a study with the objective of evaluating the efficacy of SM in relation to the English language proficiency of learners in a number of colleges in India. The results showed that the use of SM had a favourable influence on the participants' English skills in all areas (p. 8). In fact, second language learners currently benefit from an exceptional degree of autonomy when exploring digital materials and documentation. These materials and documents serve as potent frameworks for a variety of aspects of second language acquisition, including the development of oral, written and reading skills (Pikhart and Botezat, 2021, p. 1626). Mitchell (2012) suggests that English language learners ought to employ SM to facilitate their adjustment to university life, cultivate friendships with native speakers, and engage in linguistic experimentation (p. 486). Vie (2007) further proposes that SM applications furnish a socialisation space wherein students are subjected to real-world language that can be employed for diverse social functions (p. 39).

SM reinforces the learning process by facilitating interaction and connection between students and educators in novel ways. SM applications, including Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Instagram and email create an environment conducive to dialogue, idea exchange, and collaborative discussion (Mansor, 2016, p. 141). The students are presented with a variety of English content, including articles, videos, podcasts and discussions on SM platforms (D'almeida and Ramachandran, 2023, p. 922). Learners can use SM resources such as WhatsApp, Facebook and other social networking study sites in both image and text form to improve their learning. The utilisation of SM applications within the domain of learning has been shown to have a significant impact on the enhancement of learning skills among learners (Desta et al., 2021, p. 520). Learners can easily connect with native English speakers to interact and improve their correct English accent and pronunciation (Yadav, 2021, p. 2040). Learners can find definitions of unfamiliar words, as well as materials on the structure and use of the English language on Facebook. Some of these pages and groups offer information that can improve the educational performance of learners (Ali, 2023, p. 291). Learners can also find a variety of English content on TikTok, including educational videos, language challenges and conversations between native and non-native English speakers. In addition, the app's algorithm can be adjusted to deliver more English content to users interested in learning the language (Ibrahim et al., 2023, p. 363). SM enables learners to facilitate, remember, understand and analyse, but more importantly to apply, evaluate and create. SM offers distinct benefits when compared with conventional instructional technology, thereby providing novel possibilities and outlets for creativity (Cao et al., 2013, p. 583). SM tools exert a beneficial influence on students' motivation to engage with English, while concurrently fostering a favourable attitude towards the incorporation of SM in language education, as highlighted by Wirentake (2023, p. 548). By offering access to diverse content, supporting skill development, and facilitating interaction with native speakers, these platforms contribute to increased learner motivation and enhanced creativity in the language acquisition process.

Social Media Adoption in Higher Education

The current generation of students has been raised in a technologically-driven environment, characterised by the pervasive presence of computers, video games and the Internet. They therefore share a common experience and culture, defined by the way they interact with other people (Siakas et al., 2017, p. 67). There has been a dramatic boost in SM usage in recent years, not only among casual users but also among academic users (Salloum et al., 2018: 83). Today, SM applications are employed by scholars in a variety of ways, including the creation and dissemination of blogs, the production of educational videos, the sharing of academic documents, and the provision of updates (Berger, 2017, p. 411). Communication develops collaborative learning and creative expression and contributes to educational performance in higher education institutions (Al Rahmi et al., 2013, p. 90). SM applications are used by college undergraduates extensively for learning purposes. They are an indispensable part of their lives (Cao et al., 2013, p. 582). Students' use of SM applications is more prevalent outside university, in their free time. Connected students gradually use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube to communicate.

Universities want to ascertain that all students are able to make academic advances. In order to achieve this advancement, educators are establishing a presence on SM and adopting a range of content dissemination tools for private, occupational and educational use (Siakas et al., 2017, p. 65). Teachers have a critical role in orchestrating and directing their students. SM can positively impact this learner-instructor interaction. It can improve the whole learning process. Teachers may wish to enhance their students' learning process via utilising online network assistance (Arshad

and Akram, 2018, p. 245). Cao et al., (2013) sought to identify the primary elements exerting influence on the educational outcomes of SM use. Their research yielded findings that factors such as perceived usefulness, external pressure, and task technology compatibility exert a positive effect on SM use. Moreover, the study revealed a negative correlation between perceived risk of SM use and the propensity of lecturers to utilise the technology to support teaching (p. 581). On the other hand, some studies show that educators haven't been able to effectively integrate SM applications into their teaching for various reasons. Manca and Ranieri (2016) examined the prospects and obstacles of integrating SM into higher education. Their findings revealed that SM utilisation in academic settings is restricted due to cultural resistance, pedagogical challenges and institutional constraints. However, SM is employed and perceived differently in each academic discipline. Sobiah et al. (2016) investigated the universal use of SM by students for academic goals. They found that SM was of great value for academic goals, particularly as a teaching and learning tool, but that the actual use of SM platforms by educators was minimal. Furthermore, Lambton-Howard et al. (2021) found that learners use SM features for language learning more often than teachers use them for language teaching (p. 1700). Despite the potential of SM to improve student-teacher interaction and enhance learning, its integration is hampered by challenges such as cultural resistance.

Social Media Use of Tourism Students

English plays an important role as a means of interaction in the tourism sector, so it is important for hospitality and tourism students to become familiar with the culture of English communication on SM. Various learning tools, including SM, are used as authentic materials through which students can familiarise themselves with different types and styles of language (Rerung, 2021: 3). These all greatly enhance learning of the target language.

The contribution of SM applications to the learning process has been studied extensively. Yekimov et al. (2021) in their study of tourism graduates, emphasise that the use of social networks in the process of foreign language teaching allows language teaching to be more flexible, efficient and appropriate, and increases students' motivation to learn a foreign language. Sobaih et al. (2022) analysed the effect of using SM applications for e-learning on the academic accomplishment of tourism students and found that there is a beneficial, substantial and immediate impact of using SM applications on students' academic achievement. Rerung (2021) investigated the influence of SM on the language learning of hospitality and tourism students. The results showed that most of the students agree on how SM influence their language learning in different ways. Thus, it is concluded that educators and teachers are encouraged to support their students in expressing their foreign language when using the SM applications. Jin (2023) investigated the effectiveness of using SM in developing intercultural competence among tourism students. The research findings emphasised the pivotal role of SM platforms in catalysing favourable transformations in individuals' affective orientation, sense of self-efficacy, behavioural performance and cross-cultural awareness. Ma and Au (2014) aimed to investigate SM and the enhancement of tourism students' learning, and found that students' attitudes towards the enhancement of their learning through SM were positive. Those current studies highlight the positive impact of SM on language learning and academic achievement, particularly for tourism students, by increasing motivation, flexibility, and intercultural competence.

As well as the benefits of SM usage in the learning process, some studies also mention the problems that can arise. Li (2016) reported the findings of a study on the impact of SM in the

education of Chinese students. The findings of the study indicated that SM applications offer a wealth of opportunities for constructive learning. SM also encouraged personal development and critical thinking. Fan and Cai (2016) conducted a study to investigate the use of SM in teaching and learning activities in the tourism management department in Haikou, and found that the tourism management department has high effort expectancy, performance expectancy, behavioural intention and social impact for the adoption of SM. Students and teachers mainly use SM platforms to read, listen and watch content. The study also shows that the lack of integration of SM with the learning management system is a strong barrier to the use of SM by tourism management faculty.

SM tools used by the students may also vary. Gökdemir and Uğur (2020) searched the impacts of SM use on the academic motivation behaviour of students studying tourism and found that students used Instagram the most and Twitter the least. The results of the study demonstrated that students' SM use had a crucial influence on their academic motivation, with boys tending to exhibit higher levels of academic motivation in comparison to girls. Gökdemir and Köşeler (2020) conducted a study to determine whether SM addiction affects the academic achievement of tourism students and found that the SM applications used most are Whatsapp and Instagram, while the application used least is Twitter. The researchers also found that students using SM tools consciously are more successful.

Method

Research Model

A qualitative research model has been employed to explore learners' perceptions on foreign language learning process at the faculty of Tourism. In order to come up with a thorough analysis of a particular context, this research has used a case study methodology, which includes a careful examination of the chosen example or cases (Yin, 2017). Besides, a case study's main goal is to have a thorough grasp of a certain problem or phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a qualitative approach, case study research holds a crucial role in providing deep understanding of intricate phenomena in authentic settings (Starman, 2013), and it is flexible for examining social, political, individual, and group phenomena since it uses a variety of evidence sources, such as document analysis, interviews, and direct observation (Sitorus, 2021).

Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of the current research is to examine the extent to which students at the Faculty of Tourism utilize SM platforms in foreign language learning and the impact of this utilization on their language development processes. The study also aims to identify the contributions of SM use to language learning and the challenges encountered.

Participants

The purposeful sampling method has been employed to define the participants of the current study. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is a non-probability strategy that is used to choose examples that are rich in information about a particular phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants of the current research are the students studying at the faculty of Tourism at Batman University in Türkiye; their perceptions and process about language learning may provide profound data for language learning process; thus, each of the participants declared consents before taking roles in the study. The data about the participants are given in the table 1 below, and when table 1 is analysed, it is indicated that the participants consisted of a total of 40 people, 32 of whom

were female (80%) and 8 of whom were male (20%). Furthermore, they hold various foreign language instructions such as German and French.

Table 1.

Demographic Data of the Participants

Variable	Feature	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	32	80.0
	Female	8	20.0
Foreign Language Use	English	28	70.0
	German	6	15.0
	French	2	5.0
	Other	4	10.0

Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interviews as a part of qualitative research holds flexibility to enable in-depth investigation about participants' thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a variety of domains, including the social sciences (Diefenbach, 2009). According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), conducting semi-structured interviews entails a number of various steps, such as establishing a specific purpose, choosing convenient research groups, coming up with ethical considerations, and creating a structured interview guide enabling conversations flow naturally. Thus, the current study has employed a semi-structured interview holding eight items adopted studies conducted by Nanquil (2020). The adopted items were translated into Turkish and approved analysed by two different experts in the field. The items utilized in the semi-structures interviews are as the follows:

1. *What specific information in English do you get by using social media applications?*
2. *How can social media applications as online tools help you learn English language?*
3. *Do you think social media applications increase your confidence in the use of the English language?*
4. *What problems do you encounter in learning English using social media applications?*
5. *What suggestions do you have for making English language learning (using social media applications) more meaningful?*
6. *Do you think social media applications helps you to grasp/create good Ideas in the English language?*
7. *Do you think social media applications help learners to minimize their level of anxiety in using the English language?*
8. *Do you think social media applications positively affects the students of the Faculty of Tourism in their English language learning?*

Data Analysis

The obtained data were analysed via content analysis which is a popular approach for methodically researching human communication in a variety of media, such as audio, video, and written texts (Baxter, 2009). Hence, the current study utilized the procedures outlined by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021), which include data coding, theme identification, code and theme organization,

and interpretation of the findings. Specifically, the collected data via the semi-structured interviews were thoroughly examined, separated into parts being relevant among each other, and then further subdivided into groups that were conceptually stated. This led to the determination of each section's thematic name, or code. It was necessary to combine and link the data from several areas interrelated to each other. Following the coding procedure, themes pertaining to the subject that might group the codes into particular categories were discovered, as well as similarities between the codes. To guarantee both internal and external consistency, examples of the participants' statements were provided in addition to thematic coding. These were verbatim interpreted and incorporated into the study's findings.

Findings

In this part of the research, the perceptions of the participants who participated in the survey were included and the qualitative findings obtained from the participants were coded and organised in accordance with themes, categories and subcategories. The themes created based on the findings obtained in line with the aim of the research are as follows:

- Specific information accessed in English using social media,
- Contributions of using social media applications to learning English,
- Self-confidence when speaking English through social media,
- Difficulties encountered while using social media in English language learning,
- Suggestions for learning English through social media,
- Cognitive and intellectual dimensions of learning English through social media,
- The effect of using English through social media on an individual's anxiety level,
- The benefits of learning English through social media for students of the Faculty of Tourism,

Considering the given themes above, categories, and sub-categories were determined to systematically organise and interpret the qualitative data collected throughout the study. This structured categorisation not only ensures a clearer presentation of the participants' responses but also allows for identifying patterns, similarities, and differences across the data. The results support a logical basis for further language learning and interpretation, which is reflected in the tables provided below:

The answers given by the participants to the first question '*What information do you access in English using social media applications?*' are analysed and given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Obtaining Information in English through Social Media

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Obtaining information in English	Type of Information	Daily	13	32.5
	Obtained in English	Mould Expressions	4	10.0
		Accent Learning	3	7.5

through Social Media	Grammar	4	10.0
	Pronunciation	8	20.0
	New Vocabulary	6	15.0
	Folklore	2	5.0

When the data in Table 2 are analysed, it is seen that the participants stated that in English Language Learning through social media, they learnt the words they use in daily life, field-specific words, expressions they had not encountered before, culture-specific words, and they had the opportunity to gain information in terms of pronunciation and accent. In addition, they emphasised that such learning experiences made the language more relatable and engaging for real-life communication.

Some of the participants' answers to the first question of the questionnaire are given below:

P1. *"I can easily access words used in daily life"* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media frequently).

P4. *"It usually helps in speaking"* (Female, 21 years old; uses social media rarely).

P8. *"I expand my knowledge of English in areas that interest me and those in which I feel lacking"* (Male, 26 years old; uses social media very often).

P18. *"I have the opportunity to get to know the lifestyles, cultures, traditions and customs of my friends abroad"* (Male, 22 years old; uses social media frequently).

These responses indicate that social media supports both linguistic and cultural development by providing learners with access to practical vocabulary, speaking opportunities, and exposure to diverse cultural contexts. The variation in usage frequency among participants also suggests that even limited engagement with social media can yield meaningful learning outcomes. Thus, learners actively integrate their personal interests and perceived gaps into their language learning process, making the experience more personalised and motivating.

Table 3.

Contribution of the Use of Social Media Applications to English Language Learning

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Social Media and English Learning	Applications and Online Tools	Vocabulary	14	38.7
		Pronunciation	7	18.9
		Listening	5	13.5
		Practicality	2	5.4
		Speaking Skills	8	21.6

An analysis of participants' responses to the interview question, *'How can social media applications as online tools help you learn English?'* revealed categories of applications and online tools under the overarching theme of *Social Media and English Language Learning*. Subcategories

were then identified within these categories. The theme, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies are presented in Table 3 below.

An analysis of Table 3 indicates that, within the theme of *Social Media and English Language Learning*, students provided responses categorized under *Applications and Online Tools*.

There are five sub-categories in the category of applications and online tools, and the numerical data on these categories and coding frequencies are as follows:

Fourteen times vocabulary, seven times pronunciation, five times listening, two times practicality, eight times speaking skills were coded by the participants.

When the opinions of the participants about the contributions of social media in the context of teaching are examined, it is shown that it contributes to the development of language skills in subjects such as vocabulary, pronunciation and listening by creating learning curiosity in individuals with various applications and online tools in English language learning.

The views of the participants on the contribution of using social media applications to English language learning are as follows:

P4. “I improve my foreign language skills by making friends with online tools” (Female, 22 years old; uses social media rarely).

P4. “Visuals on social media improve my vocabulary and make it permanent” (Female, 21 years old; uses social media frequently).

P7. “My vocabulary acquisition enhances my listening comprehension” (Female, 22 years old; uses social media very often).

An analysis of participants’ responses to the third question, ‘Do you think that social media applications increase your confidence in using the English language?’, reveals their perspectives on the relationship between social media and English language self-confidence, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

The Relationship Between English Language Use on Social Media and Self-Confidence

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Learning English via Social Media	Self-Confidence as an Emotional State	Yes	32	80.0
		No	8	20.0

In the table above, within the theme of *English Language Learning via Social Media*, *Self-Confidence as an Emotional State* was identified as a category. Based on participants’ responses, two subcategories were established. The subcategories and their coding frequencies are presented as follows: Thirty-two of the participants stated that using English via social media increased their self-confidence and motivation to learn English language.

The views of the participants regarding the use of social media applications on English and confidence are as follows:

P12. “When I use the application, my proficiency in vocabulary and pronunciation reaches a high level, which enhances my appreciation for English and boosts my motivation” (Female, 24 years old; uses social media very often).

P18. “By using these apps I feel more confident and braver in using the target language” (Male, 22 years old; uses social media very often).

P23. “Yes, I do, because it also helps me to pass on what I know to others, thus increasing my self-confidence.” (Female, 23 years old; uses social media frequently).

In order to identify the difficulties encountered by the participants in learning English through social media, the themes, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies derived from the responses to the fourth question, ‘What challenges do you face while learning English using social media applications?’, are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5.

Challenges of Learning English through Social Media

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Challenges of Learning English through Social Media	Individual Factors	Hearing Problems	3	7.5
		Level Differences	7	17.5
	External Factors	Accent Differences	5	12.5
		Paid Apps	2	5.0
		No Feedback	3	7.5
		Internet Problem	10	10.0

An analysis of Table 5 reveals that the difficulties encountered in learning English through social media can be categorized into two main groups: individual factors and external factors. The subcategories and coding frequencies related to these categories are as follows:

- Individual factors: Three participants reported experiencing hearing difficulties, seven mentioned level discrepancies, and five highlighted challenges related to accent differences.
- External factors: Two participants encountered difficulties with paid applications, ten faced internet-related issues, and three reported challenges in receiving feedback.

The participants’ perspectives on the difficulties associated with learning English through social media applications are detailed below:

P1. “I have difficulties in speaking because I cannot hear well” (Female, 22 years old; uses social media very often).

P3: “I do not encounter any particular difficulties; however, I struggle with comprehension due to variations in accents.” (Female, 21 years old; uses social media frequently)

P8: “I experience difficulties due to a lack of internet access or poor connectivity.” (Male, 26 years old; uses social media very frequently)

In order to explore participants' perspectives on learning English through social media, the themes, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies derived from their responses to the fifth question, '*What suggestions do you have to make learning English (through social media applications) more meaningful?*', are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6.

Suggestions on English Language Learning through Social Media

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Learning English through Social Media	Suggestions and Approaches	Content Provisioning	8	23.2
		Listening	4	11.6
		Subtitled Videos	12	33.7
		Chat Environments	7	20.3
		Common Sentences	2	5.8
		Special Apps	1	2.9

In the context of learning English through social media, one theme, one category, and six subcategories were identified. The numerical data related to the participants' responses are presented below:

- Eight participants stated that learning could be facilitated with appropriate content.
- Four participants emphasized the importance of listening activities.
- Twelve participants highlighted the effectiveness of subtitled videos.
- Seven participants suggested interactive conversation environments.
- Seven participants pointed out the benefits of learning daily expressions.
- Five participants indicated that specialized applications could support the learning process.

An examination of the data in Table 6 reveals participants' insights and recommendations regarding the role of social media in enhancing language knowledge and skills. The suggestions and perspectives of participants on using social media applications for learning English are as follows:

P7. "I think more language teaching videos should be watched on social media, and there should be sites that can help with listening and speaking. It will provide important contributions especially in communication." (Female, 21 years old; uses social media frequently).

P21. "Special applications that improve language should be used" (Female, 21 years old; uses social media frequently).

P23. "Building friendships with foreign individuals in conversational settings can be beneficial for improving speaking skills." (Female, 21 years old; uses social media frequently).

In order to examine participants' perspectives on the impact of social media use on language skill development, the themes, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies derived from their responses to the question, '*Do you think social media applications help you understand English and generate creative ideas?*', are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7.

Cognitive Dimension of Learning English through Social Media

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Techno Applications	Language Learning	Yes	27	67.5
		No	6	15.0
		Sometimes	7	17.5

Regarding the cognitive contributions of learning English through social media, one theme, one category, and six subcategories were identified. Based on participants' responses, the theme, category, subcategories, and coding frequencies are as follows:

- 27 participants stated that social media facilitates English learning.
- Six participants indicated that social media does not contribute to their English development.
- Six participants reported that social media sometimes provides benefits.

The participants' perspectives on the cognitive aspects of learning English through social media applications are as follows:

P12: "Yes, I believe it contributes to learning. Animated videos help me retain information more effectively." (Female, 24 years old; uses social media very frequently)

P18: "Yes, I think there are valuable ideas. It can make my language skills more meaningful and structured." (Male, 22 years old; uses social media frequently)

P23: "It can sometimes be helpful." (Female, 22 years old; uses social media rarely)

In order to examine the relationship between using English through social media and an individual's anxiety levels, the themes, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies derived from participants' responses to the seventh question, '*Do you think social media applications help students minimize their anxiety levels while using the English language?*', are presented in Table 8 below:

Table 8.

Use of English through Social Media and Anxiety Level of the Individual

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
	Psychological Effects	Reduces Anxiety Level	28	71.6
		Increases Anxiety Level	2	5.1

Social Media and Language Learning	Does Not Affect Anxiety Level	9	23.04
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A theme, one category, and three subcategories were identified regarding the impact of learning English through social media on anxiety levels. The numerical data from the participants' responses are as follows:

- Twenty-eight participants reported that using English through social media positively contributed to reducing their anxiety levels and that they did not experience high anxiety.
- Eleven participants indicated that speaking English through social media did not affect their anxiety levels.

The participants' perspectives on the impact of using English through social media on anxiety levels are as follows:

P3: *"Sometimes."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media frequently)

P20: *"Since we learn speaking better on social media, it reduces my anxiety level and shortens the learning process."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media frequently)

P23: *"It doesn't help me; on the contrary, I feel more anxious when speaking with someone else because I don't feel confident."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media very frequently)

In order to explore participants' perspectives on the use of English through social media applications and their impact on the learning experiences of Tourism Faculty students, the themes, categories, subcategories, and coding frequencies derived from their responses to the final question, *'Do social media applications positively affect the English learning of Tourism Faculty students?'*, are presented in Table 9 below:

Table 9.

Social Media Applications and Their Effects on English for the Field

Theme	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency of Coding	%
Learning English with Social Media Applications	Field Knowledge and Skills	Increases Knowledge Level	32	80.0
		Does not Affect the Level of Knowledge	8	20.0

A theme, one category, and two subcategories were identified regarding the impact of learning English through social media on the knowledge and skills of Tourism Faculty students. The numerical data from the participants' responses are as follows:

- Thirty participants stated that learning English through social media applications positively contributed to the learning of Tourism Faculty students.
- Eight participants indicated that learning English through social media applications did not affect the learning levels of Tourism Faculty students.

The participants' perspectives on the contributions of learning English through social media applications to Tourism Faculty students are as follows:

P1: *"Videos related to my profession positively contribute to my learning."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media frequently)

P18: *"Yes, it positively affects my speaking, grammar, and pronunciation skills."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media frequently)

P23: *"No, it does not have an impact."* (Female, 22 years old; uses social media very frequently)

Conclusion and Discussion

The current study explores the role of SM in the foreign language learning process within the students studying at the Faculty of Tourism at Batman University. Participants students' perspectives were collected via eight items situated in a semi-structured interviews, and each of the participants voluntarily and freely attempted to pinpoint their views on the integration of SM into language learning process. The findings of the research come up with various outcomes as it is indicated that while SM use contributes to students' foreign language learning process in various ways, it may also trigger certain limitations.

One of the crucial findings about the current study is that participants often use SM applications to boost their vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills, which is also highlighted by Arfiandhani (2019) and Yadav (2021) as they claim that learners can easily connect with native English speakers to interact and improve their correct English accent and pronunciation. It is also stated that instant messaging applications, video content, and SM groups let Foreign Language Learners access authentic language input easily (Ali, 2023; Ibrahim, Shafie & Rahim, 2023). These applications also promote collaboration with other students pursuing similar objectives (Namaziandost et al., 2025; Talayhan & Babayiğit, 2024). The findings also stressed that SM let learners come up with a vast of materials to enhance their language skills, and this is also supported that SM tools supplies individuals with opportunities or applications to develop language skills as listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Faizi et al., 2014). This finding also aligns with previous conducted studies as social media's accessibility is rather efficient in boosting students' language learning processes (Karim et al., 2022; Pikhart & Botezat, 2021). Thus, the integration of SM may yield rather beneficial results for current language teaching methodologies.

Besides, a great deal of students (80%) indicated that that employing SM enhanced their confidence in using a foreign language, and this is reflected earlier that the communicative environment provided by SM platforms is rather effective in diminishing students' anxiety during language learning process (Babayiğit, 2022; Kasap, 2019; Kasap, 2023; Sobaih et al., 2016). Mitchell (2012) similarly claimed that SM application act as profitable alternative in boosting motivation of the learners in the classroom context. Thus, it is possible to claim that some SM applications such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram are popular to make learners active and write in the target language during this process. Wang and Huang (2025) posit that SM has a positive impact on learning interest, motivation and learning outcomes in older adults. SM applications offers a convenient means of accessing learning resources. In this context, SM platforms acts a crucial role in developing the communication skills and confidence needed for tourism students (Jin, 2023), which might be significant to develop communicative skills for their future careers.

On the other hand, the study also highlights some challenge, firstly, participants claimed that they hold some difficulties related to different accents, variations in language proficiency levels, and internet connectivity issues, which may impede the language learning process. Besides, problems such as SM addiction and decreased attention span emerged as the other important impediments to effective language learning (Raut & Patil, 2016). Some studies about the educational use of SM pinpoints similar concerns, pinpointing that unregulated SM use possibly negatively impact academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Furthermore, the findings indicate that SM use contributes to the professional development of tourism students. Most of (80%) the participants reported that they learn specific English terminology and cultural content through SM, and this is compatible that SM platforms not only enhance general language skills but also boost field-specific language learning (Rerung, 2021). Singer (2025) asserts that SM applications offer students a multifaceted array of cultural perspectives, thereby facilitating a more profound comprehension of language and its contextual subtleties.

Further studies should explore how SM platforms is systematically integrated into language education, and developing pedagogical strategies to enhance student motivation may be essential to maximize the potential of SM in language learning. Educators should conduct studies on the conscious use of SM, ensuring that it serves as an effective tool for both language learning and academic success.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya kullanımının yabancı dil öğrenme süreci üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özellikle, Batman Üniversitesi Turizm Fakültesi öğrencileri bağlamında sosyal medya platformlarının dil öğreniminde nasıl kullanıldığını ve öğrencilerin karşılaştığı zorlukları ele almaktadır. Sosyal medya, günümüzde dil öğrenme süreçlerinde yaygın olarak kullanılan araçlardan biri haline gelmiş olup, özellikle genç kuşak arasında popülerliği hızla artmaktadır. Sosyal medya platformlarının yabancı dil öğrenme süreçlerine etkisi konusunda yapılan önceki araştırmalar, bu araçların dil becerilerini geliştirmede büyük bir potansiyel

sunduğunu ancak aynı zamanda bazı engellerin de bulunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Sosyal medya, web araçları aracılığıyla çevrimiçi etkileşim, öğrencilere yeni anlam biçimleri geliştirme fırsatı sunar. Ayrıca, farklı ırk, sınıf, dil ve kültürlerden gelen öğrencilerin etkileşime girmesine ve fikirlerini, inançlarını ve tarzlarını paylaşmasına olanak tanır (Warschauer, 2010, s. 131). Ayrıca sosyal medya, kendi kendine ilerleyen programlarla çevrimiçi İngilizce öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırır ve öğrencileri İngilizce iletişim ortamına girmesinde oldukça önemli roller üstlenir. (Yadav, 2021, s. 2038). Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın temel amacı, sosyal medya kullanımının Turizm Fakültesi öğrencilerinin dil öğrenme sürecine etkilerini ve karşılaştıkları zorlukları belirlemektir.

SM, sosyal, politik, ekonomik ve eğitsel olmak üzere hayatın tüm yönleri üzerinde etkili olmuştur. Eğitim senaryosunda, bu medya platformları öğrenciler için öğrenme fırsatlarını zenginleştirmenin yanı sıra öğrenciler ve öğretmenler arasında 7/24 etkileşim için daha geniş bir kapsam sunmaktadır (Meena, 2013, s. 858). Öğrenme sürecinde SM kullanımı önemli ölçüde artmaya başlamıştır ve özellikle öğrencilerle veya meslektaşlarla bağlantı kurma ve haberlere erişim açısından eğitim uygulamalarını ve sunumunu etkilemesi muhtemeldir (Mardiana, 2016, s. 2). Ayrıca, öğrencilerin farklı öğrenme stillerine uyum sağlamak için teknoloji kullanımı yeni bir şey değildir. SM uygulamalarının gücü, öğrencilerin bireysel öğrenme stillerine en iyi şekilde uyacak ve akademik performanslarını artıracak şekilde karıştırıp eşleştirebilecekleri çeşitli araçlar sunmasıdır (Raut ve Patil, 2016, s. 282). Sosyal ağ siteleri temel olarak ortak ilgi alanları veya faaliyetler etrafında çevrimiçi topluluklar oluşturmaya odaklanır. Ayrıca, SM'nin İngilizceyi ikinci dil olarak öğrenmenin yenilikçi ve yaratıcı bir yolu olduğu belirtilmiştir (Derakhshan ve Aliabbasi, 2015, s. 1092). Öğrenme bağlamında SM kullanımı, öğrencilerin İngilizce dil becerilerini geliştirmek için bazı fırsatlar sunar. İngilizce, tüm dünyada birbirleriyle iletişim kurmak için kullanılan uluslararası bir dil olarak bilindiği için SM'de en çok kullanılan dillerden biridir (Rintaningrum, 2016, s. 114). Dolayısıyla, son zamanlarda öğrenciler teknoloji, bilgisayar, video oyunları ve internet ile büyümüşlerdir. Bu nedenle, diğer insanlarla etkileşim biçimleriyle tanımlanan ortak bir deneyim ve kültürü paylaşmaktadırlar (Siakas vd., 2017, s. 67). Son yıllarda sadece sıradan kullanıcılar arasında değil, akademik kullanıcılar arasında da SM kullanımında dramatik bir artış olmuştur (Salloum vd., 2018, s. 83). Günümüzde SM platformları akademik topluluk tarafından bloglar, eğitim videoları, güncellemeler ve akademik belgelerin paylaşımı gibi çeşitli şekillerde etkin olarak kullanılmaktadır (Berger, 2017, s. 411). Ayrıca, öğrencilerin kullandıkları sosyal medya uygulamaları da çeşitlilik gösterebilmektedir. Gökdemir ve Uğur (2020), turizm eğitimi alan üniversite öğrencilerinin SM kullanımının akademik motivasyon davranışları üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmış ve öğrencilerin en çok Instagram'ı, en az ise Twitter'ı kullandıklarını tespit etmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, öğrencilerin SM kullanımının akademik motivasyonları üzerinde etkili olduğu ve erkek öğrencilerin genellikle kız öğrencilerden daha yüksek akademik motivasyona sahip oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır.

Yöntem

Araştırma, nitel araştırma deseni ile gerçekleştirilmiş ve betimleyici analizlere yer vermiştir. Çalışmaya, farklı dillerde eğitim gören 40 öğrenci katılmıştır. Katılımcıların %80'i kadın, %20'si erkek olup, veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerde, öğrencilerin sosyal medya platformlarını yabancı dil öğrenme amaçlı kullanım düzeyleri, sağladığı katkılar ve karşılaşılan zorluklar bağlamında sekiz soru sorulmuştur. Bu sorular, öğrencilerin sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıklarını ve bu alışkanlıkların dil öğrenme üzerindeki etkilerini detaylı şekilde incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Elde edilen veriler, içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiş ve temalar ile kodlara ayrılmıştır.

Bulgular

Araştırmanın bulguları, öğrencilerin sosyal medya platformlarını en çok kelime bilgisi, telaffuz ve dinleme becerilerini geliştirmek amacıyla kullandıklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, sosyal medya kullanımının öğrencilere özgüven kazandırdığı ve dil öğrenmeye yönelik kaygılarını azalttığı belirlenmiştir. Öğrenciler, sosyal medya sayesinde dil becerilerini geliştirme sürecinde daha rahat bir ortamda çalıştıklarını ve dil bariyerlerini aşmada daha az kaygı duyduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, aksan farklılıkları, dil seviyeleri arasındaki dengesizlikler ve internet erişimi gibi bazı zorlukların dil öğrenme sürecini engellediği görülmüştür. Katılımcılar, internetin sürekli erişilebilir olmasına rağmen bazı bölgelerde düşük hızda bağlantılar nedeniyle öğrenme süreçlerinin olumsuz etkilendiğini belirtmişlerdir. Bu durum, sosyal medya kullanımının dil öğrenme sürecine etkisini sınırlayabilmektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma sosyal medyanın yabancı dil öğrenimi sürecinde büyük bir potansiyele sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğrenciler, sosyal medya üzerinden dil becerilerini geliştirme konusunda çeşitli avantajlar elde ederken, özgüven kazandıkları ve İngilizce kullanımına yönelik kaygılarının azaldığı görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, sosyal medyanın öğrenciler için önemli bir öğrenme aracı olduğunu doğrulamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, aksan farklılıkları ve dil seviyeleri arasındaki dengesizlikler gibi engeller, öğrenme sürecini olumsuz etkileyebilmektedir. Öğrenciler, sosyal medyanın yalnızca belirli dil becerilerini geliştirme konusunda yardımcı olduğunu, ancak bazı temel dil becerilerinde (özellikle yazılı anlatımda) sınırlı kaldığını ifade etmişlerdir.

Sosyal medya kullanımının dil öğreniminde daha etkili hale gelmesi için pedagojik stratejilerin geliştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu stratejiler, sosyal medya platformlarının dil öğrenmeye daha entegre edilmesini sağlayabilir. Öğretim yöntemlerinin, sosyal medya araçlarıyla daha uyumlu hale getirilmesi, öğrencilerin dil öğrenme süreçlerini daha verimli kılacaktır. Ayrıca, sosyal medya kullanımının engellerini aşmak için internet erişiminin iyileştirilmesi ve dil seviyeleri arasındaki farkların giderilmesi gereklidir. Öğrencilerin dil öğreniminde daha başarılı olabilmesi için eğitimde dijital araçların kullanımı konusunda daha fazla bilinçlenme sağlanmalıdır.