USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' GRAMMAR AND COMMUNICATIVE ACADEMIC WRITING COMPETENCE

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Abstract:
Writing is one of the most important language acquisition abilities, and unlike other talents, it takes a lot of practice to become proficient in producing written speech. This article aims to investigate some frequently used social media tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Wikis encouraging students to have more opportunities to write academically and practice more effectively than they did before.

Key words: writing ability, social media, grammar knowledge, Wikis, WhatsApp, technology

Improving one's academic writing ability is an essential requirement. Students who study English as a second or a foreign one find this skill to be challenging. Consequently, English is taught as a second or foreign language throughout the world. To enhance their writing abilities, teachers and students employ a variety of technology resources. Social media can be helpful to achieve this goal.

The majority of research on the technologies is focused on using social media to help students become better writers as it plays a crucial role in the twenty-first century. The impact social media has had on communication and raising awareness of knowledge in all spheres of human activities is of great interest in current days. Teachers, instructors, and educational practitioners have been drawn to many digital tools to integrate them into the teaching-learning process, particularly when it comes to writing discipline. Various social media platforms, including Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, Wikis, Twitter, YouTube, and Quizlet have been employed to support the writing process.

To be successful in academic writing one should possess some other language skills leading to an effective construction of academic texts. One of these language skills is grammar knowledge. Grammar knowledge can be acquired through a variety of learning processes, explicitly, implicitly, and based on implemented technology.

Grammar teaching can be defined as "Any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it meta linguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it" (Ellis, R., 2006). Dontcheva-Navratilova (2013) defines grammar as "the system of rules and principles underlying the form and meaning of words, word groups, clauses,

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and sentences," and highlights the significance of meaningful communication within language structure. The basic requirement for being a successful communicator is the knowledge of discourse, which goes beyond speech. By examining discourse grammar, researchers and educators can examine how meaning is expressed in context while also taking the communicators' intentions, motivations, and goals into account (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2013). Increased opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and the capacity to examine grammar within the framework of broader discourses enable many of the technological affordances for grammar education.

As a result, grammar education is now more firmly centered on assisting students in developing their communicative competence than it was in the past. This calls for assignments that enable students to notice and raise awareness of grammatical forms and their usage. As "the ability to communicate using available L2 technology tools…, the ability to make appropriate linguistic choices in face-to-face, remote, written, and oral modes, and the ability to choose appropriate technologies for communication and language learning," communicative competence can be expanded through employed technology (Chappelle, 2009). The current tendency in language education is to develop creative, completely integrated grammar assignments that make use of intelligent and interactive technologies, regardless of the particular technology employed to teach grammar.

There are many options for learning grammar in context and emphasizing meaning thanks to the development of communicative language teaching (CLT) and technological advancements. Teachers can select asynchronous (available in different time) technologies like discussion boards, e-mail, blogs, listservs, or synchronous (available in real-time) resources like chat, video conferencing, Twitter, or virtual learning environments (Bikowski, D., 2018).

To exemplify, the results of some conducted research show that social media used in teaching helps ESL/EFL students become better writers. According to Shuhaida S. et al. (2014), students who used social media sites performed higher writing competence, however, this learning process requires the teacher's participation and support to the students to use these platforms. Another study by Yeboah J. and Ewur G. (2014) on the use of WhatsApp Messenger and Facebook revealed that using this social media as a learning tool has made it easier for students to communicate more quickly and easily, demonstrating the important function that social media plays as a tool that facilitates learning.

These studies also show that integrating social media platforms into the teaching and learning process led to various degrees of improved student learning. Students can enhance their writing abilities, working group abilities, and critical thinking skills, for instance, by practicing brainstorming and cooperative learning techniques (Shuhaida S. et al., 2014), (Yunus M. and Salehi H., 2015). Studies conducted by (Fattah A., 2015), (Shih R., 2011), and (Yen Y.C. et al., 2015) have generally shown that students' use of social media can have a favorable impact on their learning process and lead to improved performance. The findings also demonstrated how social media use has a major impact on students' writing abilities around the globe in a variety of settings.

Wikis can be a valuable tool for educators to employ in this process in ESL/EFL classes. In addition to social media, some research examines how utilizing Wikis affects students' writing abilities making cooperative work more

effective. Furthermore, utilizing Wikis can aid students in developing their problem-solving skills. These studies demonstrate that students can overcome various obstacles in writing, improving grammar, and other language skills by using this platform. For instance, it is very beneficial in terms of improving word selection, writing style, and language mechanism, all of which contribute to a significant improvement in writing abilities. In addition, one of the most important aspects of learning is having access to information and resources. As a result, Wikis made it easier for students to access the data whenever they needed it and to offer comments on how it was used. Wikis provide students with the chance to develop their autonomy being an essential skill for 21st-century learners (Li X. et al., 2012), (Sun Y., 2010). Finally, by amending their writing comments and seeing the editing of their peers, students can obtain collaborative peer-editing experience using this tool. By experiencing shared knowledge and abilities, students may gain a lot from each other's reflective comments.

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