

IMPROVING ENGLISH BY USING SOCIAL PLATFORMS

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Annotation. This article examines how social platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok) can be used to improve English language skills. It reviews theoretical foundations (sociocultural theory, connectivism, task-based learning), summarizes empirical studies, and identifies effective pedagogical practices. Practical classroom applications, task designs, assessment approaches, digital literacy and ethical concerns are discussed. The article ends with recommendations for teachers, institutions and researchers.

Keywords: social platforms; language learning; mobile-assisted language learning; online communication; task-based learning; digital literacy; assessment; teacher roles; connectivism; sociocultural theory

Social platforms have transformed the ways people communicate, learn and create. For English language learners, these platforms offer rich, authentic opportunities for exposure, practice and interaction that traditional classrooms often cannot replicate. This article examines how social platforms can support English learning, outlines practical strategies for teachers and learners, discusses assessment approaches and addresses ethical and practical limitations. The goal is to provide a comprehensive, usable guide for educators who wish to integrate social technologies into teaching while preserving pedagogical quality and learner wellbeing.

Why social platforms matter for language learning?

Social platforms—such as messaging apps, microblogging services, video-sharing sites and community forums—combine several features that are valuable for language acquisition.

They provide multimodal input (text, audio, image, video), enable rapid and delayed interaction (real-time chat and asynchronous comments), and connect learners to diverse communities and authentic language use. For English learners, these affordances translate into increased exposure to different accents, registers and genres; frequent opportunities to produce meaningful output; and access to peer and expert feedback outside class time.

Beyond exposure, social platforms also change the nature of practice. Learners can publish written or spoken work to a real audience, receive immediate responses, and revise their output based on feedback. This process supports the development of communicative competence and learner autonomy. Platforms also tap into learners' social identity and motivation: posting content, gaining likes or comments, and participating in communities can increase engagement and perseverance—key elements in sustained language development.

Principles for pedagogical integration

To use social platforms effectively, teachers should follow a few guiding principles. First, align platform use with learning objectives. Technology should serve language goals rather than dictating them.

Second, design tasks that require meaningful communication—problem solving, storytelling, sharing opinions—so learners must express ideas, not just manipulate vocabulary.

Third, scaffold activities with clear instructions, models and language supports to help learners participate successfully and learn from the experience. Fourth, teach digital literacies explicitly: how to evaluate sources, respect copyright, protect privacy and interact politely online.

Finally, plan assessment methods that value both communicative effectiveness and language accuracy.

Practical classroom activities

A variety of classroom activities can leverage different social platforms while targeting receptive and productive skills: Micro-writing and summarizing: Using microblogging or caption features (e.g., short posts or captions), learners summarize a news item, story or lesson in one or two sentences. This cultivates concision, vocabulary selection and register awareness.

Comment-based response cycles: After watching a short video, learners write a comment and then respond to two classmates' comments. This encourages negotiation of meaning and scaffolded interaction—students must read others' language and provide relevant replies.

Collaborative multimedia projects: Small groups create short videos, slide shows or podcasts on a topical theme. Task stages include planning, scriptwriting, recording, editing and public sharing in a closed class group. Multimodal production develops speaking, writing and digital design skills.

Vocabulary crowdsourcing: Learners build collaborative word lists and example sentences on a shared document or a simple classroom blog. Activities can include adding images, collocations and short example dialogues.

Digital pen-pal exchanges: Partnering with learners from another institution or country encourages authentic communication and intercultural learning. Structured prompts ensure purposeful interaction and reduce anxiety.

Live Q&A or interviews: Arranging live chats or webinars with native speakers or subject experts provides natural listening practice and chances to ask questions in real time.

Each activity should include pre-task preparation (key vocabulary, models), clear success criteria, and post-task reflection to consolidate learning.

Assessment and feedback:

Assessment in social-platform tasks should combine formative and summative approaches. Formative assessment can use platform-generated data—draft versions, comments, revision history and view counts—to monitor participation and progress. Teachers may apply simple rubrics covering content, language accuracy, discourse coherence and multimodal design. Peer feedback protocols—such as “two strengths and one suggestion”—help learners develop critical awareness and editing skills.

For summative assessment, final products (a blog post, a podcast episode, a group video) can be evaluated with more detailed rubrics. Portfolios, where learners collect links to their published work and reflections, provide evidence of development over time. It is important to balance marks for communicative effectiveness and linguistic accuracy so that risk-taking and creativity are not discouraged.

Promoting learner autonomy and digital literacies:

Social platforms are powerful tools for fostering autonomy. Learners can select topics, schedule practice, seek feedback and monitor their own progress. However, autonomy requires guidance: teachers should introduce strategies for self-directed learning (setting goals, scheduling micro-practice, using analytics) and teach critical digital literacies—evaluating the reliability of sources, recognizing manipulative content, protecting personal data and practicing respectful online interaction.

Addressing motivation and identity:

Participation on social platforms can enhance motivation by connecting language practice to learners' social identities. Creating content allows students to present themselves, experiment with identity and receive recognition from peers. Tasks that invite personal storytelling or community involvement tend to boost engagement. Nonetheless, teachers must be sensitive to learners' comfort levels: not all students are eager to publish widely. Closed-class groups or anonymous options can mitigate anxiety while still providing social feedback.

There are several important challenges. First, quality control: content on social platforms varies widely in accuracy and register. Without teacher guidance, learners may internalize nonstandard forms. Second, distraction and reduced attention: platform design often encourages short, superficial interactions rather than deep processing. Third, equity and access: device availability, internet connectivity and digital skills differ across learners. Fourth, privacy and safeguarding: public platforms pose risks of exposure and harassment, particularly for minors. Finally, teacher workload: moderating online interactions and curating content take time.

To manage these issues, choose appropriate platforms (closed-class groups or institutional tools when necessary), set clear rules for behavior and privacy, provide curated content, and use platform features to limit public exposure. Institutions should support teachers with training and workload recognition.

Ethical and legal considerations

Using social platforms in education implies responsibilities. Always obtain informed consent for public posting—especially for minors—and be transparent about data usage. Teach copyright respect and fair use: model how to cite sources and use licensed material. Promote digital safety practices (strong passwords, privacy settings) and procedures for reporting inappropriate content or harassment. When possible, prefer platforms with strong privacy protections or use school-managed systems.

Implementation checklist for teachers

- Define learning outcomes linked to platform activities.
- Choose one or two platforms that match learners' needs and protect privacy.
- Prepare task templates and language supports.
- Teach digital literacies and netiquette before starting.
- Use rubrics for assessment and peer-feedback protocols.
- Monitor participation and give timely feedback.
- Provide alternative tasks for learners with limited access.

Conclusion

Social platforms offer a rich, flexible environment for improving English when used with clear pedagogical intent. They can augment classroom teaching by providing authentic input, opportunities for meaningful production, and social interaction that supports motivation and identity development. The educational benefits depend on careful task design, scaffolding, assessment and attention to ethical and equity issues. With appropriate guidance, social platforms can become a sustainable, effective component of modern language education, empowering learners to practice English in diverse and purposeful contexts.

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