



A SWOT Analysis of Instagram English Teaching Pages

Farzaneh Rezaie Rajani

English Department, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran
farzane.rezaie173@gmail.com

Azizeh Chalak*

English Department, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran
azichalak@gmail.com

Abstract

In recent years social networking sites have affected almost all aspects of our lives. The *Instagram* social network has become popular among people, and there are lots of pages on this social media, which are explicitly presenting English materials to their followers. This non-experimental descriptive study aimed to determine the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of English teaching pages on *Instagram*. Twelve English teaching pages were observed due to their high number of followers to discover the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. To provide more fruitful points for the SWOT analysis, ten active *Instagram* users were interviewed. They were asked to fill out a SWOT analysis written interview about *Instagram* English teaching pages. The interpretative approach and frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data, owing to the nature of the gathered data in this research. Employing the results of this study, admins of English teaching pages can take a forward step to make their pages more beneficial and more effective in the process of English teaching. The findings can also help those scholars or teachers who want to use *Instagram* to present their services. Being aware of the effectiveness of English teaching pages helps language learners be more cautious about selecting them as a source of learning English.

Keywords: Instagram, Online Teaching, Second Language Learning, Social Media, SWOT Analysis

Received: 2021-07-31

Accepted: 2021-09-15

Available Online: 2021-09-15

DOI: 10.22034/efl.2021.297627.1111

* Corresponding Author

1. Introduction

Technology development resulted in the appearance of social media, and more specifically, social networking sites. The first aim of social media is to bring people closer to each other. As the attendance to social networks increases, people find it a great platform to benefit even more. Numerous pages with different ideas have been advantageous to their stakeholders, and EFL teachers and institutions are not exempt from this movement. They have opened a page on *Instagram* and presenting and teaching English in diverse styles. Some of these pages have thousands of followers, which makes them the most populated English class ever. Yet, not many studies have focused on the analysis or effectiveness of these pages in the process of teaching English.

This significant increase in using Instagram has created a new market for language teaching; however, many English learners and teachers are not familiar with the characteristics of the demands of this market; therefore, the current study aims to advance English learners and teachers' knowledge of the strengths and the weaknesses which are already present in these pages, so first, the present study will point out the strengths that support English Language Teaching (ELT) and then it will point out its weaknesses that affect ELT. The results will help their stakeholders to use and upgrade them appropriately based on the advantages and disadvantages that will be provided. Because of the effects that technology has had on our everyday lives, the question is no longer whether to use these pages or not, but is how to use them appropriately; therefore, this study will take a big step in raising their stakeholders' awareness. Furthermore, in the Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis pattern, besides the strengths and the weaknesses which are present and are the internal factors, the opportunities and threats which are external factors will also be examined. By pointing out the opportunities that these pages provide, and the threats that they pose, this analysis can give their stakeholders a view of the future to have better employment. Employing the opportunities and being aware of the threats, they can expand their strengths and improve their weaknesses, and as a result, all can have a better future.

The relationship between technology and EFL teaching is a significant area to do research studies because technology has always presented a notable role in teaching, and more particularly, in language teaching. "New technologies such as social network sites have created an effective new means irrespective of time, place, and pace which lead to self-study autonomous learning where language is always described as a self-study subject" (Heidari Tabrizi & Onvani, 2018, P. 3). These tools and many others can change traditional approaches in language teaching generally. *Instagram* is a social network that is popular among people especially, the young generation. By employing English teaching pages on this social networking site, people are improving their English competence and knowledge.



Due to the emergence of technology, change of the needs of learners, a strong tendency toward personalized learning and autonomous practices, ease of access to online materials, new markets are developing for language teaching and learning. As an international language, English has received more attention in introducing different websites, platforms, pages for the learners. Many studies have investigated the effects that social media, and more uniquely, social networking sites have on language learning. Still, a few of them have researched it in the context of *Instagram*. “*Instagram* as one of these famous platforms and social networks has received huge acceptance by most people, especially the young in Iran” (Chalak, 2021, P. 1). *Instagram*, as one of these opportunities, has also created a platform for teachers to offer the materials to the students and interested learners.

This study could be a very significant one in the absence of similar studies in terms of investigating the effectiveness of *Instagram* English teaching pages in the process of acquiring English. The stakeholders of this study are firstly the English learners who seek to adapt their learning style to the newest technologies and the learners who are following these pages currently. The results of this research can guide them on how to use these pages more effectively and make them aware of the threats which exist to increase their English knowledge and competence. Secondly, using the results of the present study, those who are running these pages, whether they are autonomous English teachers or language institutions, can benefit from the helpful information that helps them to expand the strength of their pages and improve their pitfalls. Owing to the results on opportunities and threats of the present study, they can also be aware of what factors they should consider for a better future. Lastly, A SWOT analysis can provide valuable and helpful data in any business, and beginners in any field can use the comprehensive information to build their business on a solid basis, therefore; being aware of the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities, and the threats can assist the starters to do the proper action from the beginning.

2. Literature Review

The connection between social media and formal education may be considered innovative learning English as a second language (Al Mubarak, 2016). Vygotsky, during the late 1970s, formed the theory called Social Constructivism. This theory explains how communication with other plays a significant role in learning, emphasizes that language is more intrapersonal than interpersonal (Vygotsky, 1978). Palfreyman (2006) claimed that learning a language through online advances can develop the engagement, participation, and inspiration of English students. According to Black (2005), the interactive nature of the Internet plays a vital role in producing a highly communicative linguistic context or environment. According to Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, people learn the language through exposure to input or reading texts. Through these interactions and exposure, social media and especially social networks have made language

learning and acquisition more convenient by different connections and communication opportunities provided online (Cabrera, 2018).

The words social media and social networking are used interchangeably. Social networking is a subcategory of social media as social media refers to social software that can be in the form of websites, blogs, and social networks. There are more than 65 social networking sites, and the number is increasing as the technology is developing, new social networks have been introduced with different properties from time to time (e.g., *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *QQ*, *WeChat*, *YouTube*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, *Google+*, *Skype*, *Snapchat*, *Line*, *Pinterest*, *Telegram*, *LinkedIn*, etc.) one of them becoming the trend based on properties they have, advantages they provide or even the policy of a particular region. *Instagram*, with about one billion active users per month in 2020, is one of the most popular social networks, and its daily active users raised from 887,000 to 7.3 million in a single six-month period. Nowadays, many marketers are profiting by advertising their products on *Instagram*; meanwhile, teachers and learners, even academic institutions, are benefiting from this application. Many English teachers and institutions have opened a page on *Instagram* and are sharing different posts talking about a specific grammar point or a particular vocabulary and even advertising their formal or online classes every day. Still, the question is: are they as effective and fruitful as they claim to be? Zourou and Lamy (2013) pointed out that even though social media channels are very desirable to language teachers, learners, and language learning material producers, their application in language learning and teaching is controversial and questionable, and there isn't much evidence on whether and how they can improve language learning. This study tries to investigate *Instagram* English teaching pages utilizing SWOT analysis.

SWOT analysis is an analysis method for any field (e.g., marketing, public relations, advertising, etc.) that requires strategic planning (Gurel & Tat, 2017). SWOT stands for 'strengths,' 'weaknesses,' 'opportunities,' and 'threats,' and this method aims to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in an organization. Gurel and Tat (2017) defined strengths as characteristics that are more advantageous and more valuable when compared to something else. Thompson and Strickland (1989) described weaknesses as things an organization lacks or does poorly. Harrison and St. John (2004) defined opportunities as conditions that exist in the external environment; utilizing these opportunities, an organization can take advantage of organizational strengths, overcome organizational weaknesses or neutralize environmental threats. Environmental threats are disadvantageous situations that jeopardize the actualization of an activity (Gurel & Tat, 2017).

Several studies show the positive and profitable effects of online learning (Hill & Storey, 2000; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2012). Many of them have used social media as their medium (Al Mubarak, 2016; Bosch, 2009; Cabrera, 2018; Chen,



2013; Khansarian & Ameri, 2017; Ma'azi & Janfeshan, 2018; Mills, 2011; Xodabande, 2017).

Bosch (2009) conducted qualitative research that explored *Facebook* employment at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Bosch found that many ungraduated students who participated in this research have mentioned *Facebook* using the term 'addicted'. He pointed out that demystifying the divide between student and teacher, and answering the same questions, in bulk, for large numbers of participants using a technology with which they are already familiar are the main advantages. At the same time, lack of group management, network, bandwidth limitations, and distractive nature of it which causes the student to spend more unproductive time online, instead of focusing on their studies are some of its disadvantages.

Khansarian and Ameri (2017) conducted a quantitative study using *Line* (a social network) to scrutinize social networking effects on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. In this research, a quasi-experimental method was used, and the results of the posttest show the positive impact of online vocabulary learning. There was a significant difference between the experimental and control group. A similar study was conducted by Jafari and Chalak (2016) to investigate the role of *WhatsApp* in the vocabulary learning improvement of Iranian junior high school EFL students. The study showed that using *WhatsApp* had a significant role in the vocabulary learning of the students.

Xodabande (2017) examined the effectiveness of *Telegram* (social media network) in teaching English language pronunciation to Iranian EFL learners. His study revealed that the implementation of social media networks in teaching language features could be effective owing to the significant difference between the experimental and control group in the posttest.

Ghorbani and Ebadi (2020) used a mixed-method approach to explore learners' grammatical growth in mobile-assisted language learning using *Telegram* as their medium. The results indicated significant development in learners' grammatical accuracy in the experimental groups using chats in *Telegram*.

Despite all of the studies mentioned earlier that indicated the effectiveness of using a social network, Sim and Pop (2014) examined a study that showed contrastive results. In a *Facebook* case study, they examined the impact of social media on vocabulary learning. In this research, it was assumed that the experimental group would outperform the control group. Still, the results did not prove their hypothesis as there were no significant differences between the two experimental and control groups.

Cabrera (2018) conducted a qualitative study to explore the impact of social media on English language learning in the Philippines. Employing a case study

design, he utilized a SWOT analysis to indicate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of social media. He discovered some strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that social media possess through interviewing ten participants. He mentioned that social media help language learners to interact with experts across all fields of interest and get the desired information.

This study aimed to take a novel step to shed some light on the effectiveness of *Instagram* English teaching pages, utilizing a SWOT analysis approach. Employing a SWOT analysis, the Strengths and the weaknesses that *Instagram* English teaching pages possess are presented. The opportunities and the threats that they provide are discussed to examine their effectiveness. This study addressed the following research questions to achieve its objectives:

What are the strengths of *Instagram* English teaching pages that support English language teaching (ELT)?

1. What are the weaknesses of *Instagram* English teaching pages that affect ELT?
2. What are the opportunities that *Instagram* English teaching pages provide in ELT?
3. What are the threats that *Instagram* English teaching pages pose to ELT?

3. Methodology

This section deals with the methodology of research and firstly covers the design and context of the study and then focuses on the participants and instrumentation, and finally elaborates on the data collection and analysis procedures, respectively.

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

A non-experimental descriptive study was conducted to accomplish the objectives of the present study. This research was conducted in Iran using *Instagram* English teaching pages, and the data were gathered during the second semester of 2019-2020 (Iranian academic year). Many other well-known social networks have English teaching pages. Still, besides *Instagram's* popularity, due to the Internet access limitations in Iran, it is much easier for Iranians to access this social network. Twelve pages were selected, based on their popularity. The process of their selection will be explained briefly in the data collection procedure section.

All admins of the selected pages were asked for their authorization to bring their names in the present study, but only seven of them were authorized to have their names transcribed in the research. Here are their names: 'EnglishwithNab', 'Yenglishtube', 'Fahim.English', 'Ghahremani.Sarah', 'PronunciationwithEmaa',



'Cambridgeenglish', 'Extraenglishpractice'. Other admins either didn't respond or rejected.

3.2. Participants of the Study

The population were all the English teachers and learners who had an *Instagram* account and were following English teaching pages. Purposive sampling was used as the sampling procedure to provide the right kind of information on English language teaching. Ten Iranian English teachers and learners (4 teachers, 6 learners) were selected as the participants of the present study; they were male and female with different ages and various English proficiency. The participants' activities on *Instagram* were observed by the researcher before the final selections, and all of the participants were considered to be active users of *Instagram* English teaching pages as they regularly added meaningful comments on English teaching posts. The participants' ethical issues were observed. The characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Background of the Participants

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Number of Participants | 10 |
| Age | 18-40 |
| Gender | Male & Female |
| Level of Proficiency | Various |

3.3. Instruments

A combination of the online observation and written interview approaches was employed to provide an alternative data source to strengthen the overall findings. Both of these parts were done utilizing a SWOT matrix. A SWOT matrix is a matrix with four elements, each of these parts is designed to reach each purpose of the SWOT analysis, which are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In the figure below, you can see a raw form of a SWOT matrix.



Figure 1. A SWOT matrix

The required software was Instagram in this research. The *Instagram* network was used as the medium of this study, which allows folks around the world to keep in touch with friends and family, to visit different posts, and to share their interests. Both the observation and the interview were over the SWOT of English teaching pages on *Instagram*. The research was handed to two experts in the field to ensure its reliability and to confirm the validity of the tools used in this descriptive research.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The observation was done by the author on 12 *Instagram* English teaching pages. Among hundreds of English teaching pages on *Instagram*, either native or Iranian, by a purposive selection, 12 pages were selected owing to their high number of real followers. Because it is possible to buy fake followers on *Instagram*, a social media statistic website named *Social Blade* was used to ensure that all of their followers are real. On this website, you can look at recent followers of a specific account, and if they have added a large chunk in one day, they probably bought them as no one randomly adds 10,000 followers a day. The 12 selected pages have been followed by the author at least for six months; within this period, their contents and post have been checked and examined by the author to find out the strengths and the weaknesses that they possess and the opportunities and threats that they provide. The SWOT matrix has been filled out with as many answers as possible.

Meanwhile, some active users of some of these selected pages were discovered. They were considered to be active users since they shared meaningful comments on the English teaching posts regularly. They were sent a direct message on *Instagram*. In the email, they were asked to participate in the research on the effectiveness of *Instagram* English teaching pages by filling out a written interview. A written interview in the form of a SWOT matrix was sent to their email addresses, and they were asked to feel free to write as many possible answers as they want in the SWOT matrix for each part and send the filled form back via email within ten days. They all sent back the filled-out form, and these forms were used alongside the matrix filled out by the observer for the data analysis section.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The data in the present research were collected through observation and interviews. Fortunately, applying the SWOT matrix format in both the observation and the interview made the data analysis process more accessible and more structured. Owing to the nature of the gathered data in this research study, the interpretative approach was implied to analyze the data. Going from the mass of data to meaningful insights, the collected data in the interviews were read and interpreted and are reported independently with the data collected in the observation section. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that were



mentioned by the participants were read carefully to interpret them and elicit how often some factors were repeated by all the participants. After analyzing the collected data in the interview, the repetition of each comment throughout the responses was checked.

4. Results

The results revealed in observation and interviews are presented, respectively. In each section, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of *Instagram* English teaching pages will be pointed out.

4.1. Results of the Observation

In the present study, a SWOT analysis was adopted in the online observation section to collect the relevant data on the effectiveness of *Instagram* English teaching pages. In the following paragraphs, observed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are presented. In figure 1 below, you can see the results of the observation in a SWOT format.

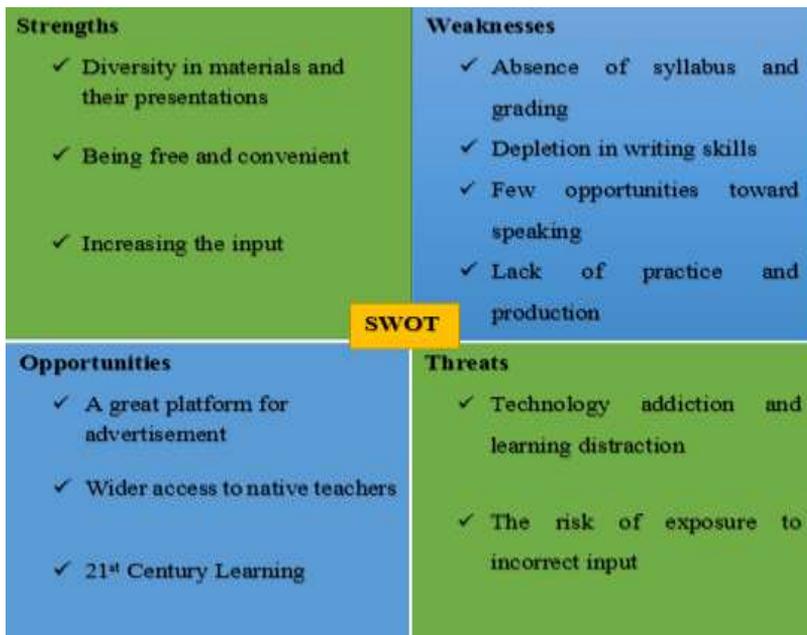


Figure 2. The SWOT matrix of the observation's results

In the online observation of these 12 pages on *Instagram*, strengths such as diversity in materials and their presentations, being Free and convenient, and increasing the input were observed. In the English teaching pages under our investigation, language lessons were presented in the forms of podcasts, stories, movies, music, short clips, animated clips, and interviews by which the learners

with different learning styles can benefit so instead of long, tedious classes, there are short, engaging posts that a learner will hardly get bored. Despite the variety in presentation, there is also diversity in the presented materials themselves. Grammar rules, pronunciation techniques, vocabulary, a lot of valuable tips that ease the English learning process, and introductions to different English learning apps and books and criticizing them are some of the many materials presented on these pages. You can even find materials that are not in English learning textbooks, helping us utilize the language more naturally and efficiently, like expressions, slang, acronyms, or swear words that are frequently used in spoken English. *Instagram* is a free application which means you only have to pay for the internet connection. After that, you can access tons of helpful posts presented by various teachers from all around the world to learn English.

Moreover, *Instagram* English teaching pages enable both students and teachers to economize time and give them possibilities to manage the shortcoming in different situations. There is also the capability of saving your favorite posts in your own *Instagram* account, where you can reach all your favorite materials with a single click. Learners don't need to worry about not taking notes because they can save and view the presentations as much as they want. Following English teaching pages on *Instagram* can increase exposure to the English language because they are excellent sources of up-to-date and relevant information. You can simply view new posts and stories of the pages that you are following whenever you open your *Instagram* account, and due to the power of hashtags on *Instagram*, you can observe plenty of other posts and stories of the pages that you are not following in the search part of your account. The algorithm of *Instagram* works in a way that it detects the hashtags of your following pages, and in the search section, it shows you the posts that have used the same hashtags. Therefore, if you are following some English teaching pages, you will observe English teaching posts and stories not only in the home part of your account but also, in the search section.

Putting the strengths of these pages aside, weaknesses such as the absence of syllabus and grading, depletion in writing skills, few opportunities toward speaking, and lack of practice and production were also observed. It was observed that materials presented on *Instagram* English teaching pages don't obey any logical syllabuses. Despite the coursebooks in which you know where you are standing and where you are going to go, the observed English teaching pages don't give you this view. Furthermore, these pages can't tell you what your proficiency level is, and they don't even say for which level their materials are suitable. The presented materials on the pages under our study on *Instagram* were barely about the written format of English, neither basic writing techniques nor advanced academic writings. Therefore, these pages may help their followers learning new vocabulary or grammatical rules, but they can't be advantageous for a learner who attempts to improve their writing skills.



Moreover, the rise of social media also brought abbreviated writings, text messaging, memes, and web jargon (Cabrerera, 2018). Therefore, this modern system of writing can have negative effects on students' academic writing skills. Having the chance to speak the language that you are learning is essential in learning speaking skills. On *Instagram* English teaching pages under our study, there were presentations on how to improve one's speaking skills, but owing to the nature of social media and *Instagram*, there is no platform on which a learner can speak, and they can only type their responses under posts. Moreover, Personal aspects of language like body language, gestures, facial expressions, emotions, and other non-verbal cues are essential in an effective communication process. The interaction process in social media lacks the face-to-face, personal aspect of communication. In the PPP teaching style, there should be practice and production after each presentation. On *Instagram* English teaching pages, while there is loads of presentation, there are practically no practice and production, which are essential in the process of acquiring a new language. After each presentation, followers are asked one or two questions. Users can write their answers in the comment section, and later, the admin will check their answers, which usually limits to responding to a few of them; these practices cannot be enough in the process of learning. Furthermore, no production was observed on these pages.

In addition to strengths and weaknesses, *Instagram* English teaching pages are found to be a platform that provides different opportunities not only for English learners but also for other stakeholders. Being an excellent platform for advertisement, having wider access to native teachers, and benefiting from 21st-century learning are the opportunities discovered by the observer. English tutors and Institutions can easily and freely use *Instagram* as a platform to show the learners who are seeking new ways to acquire English, that in what ways they are outstanding and different from others. This can be beneficial for English learners, as well, because they can firstly watch different teachers presenting English on *Instagram* posts and then choose their favorite teacher and method and continue learning whether online or in physical classes. For learners in a society in which English is taught as a foreign language, it is hard if not impossible to take a physical class with a native teacher. Using the *Instagram* platform, you can easily access not even plenty of native teachers, but also, a lot of qualified educators from all around the world. *Instagram* English teaching pages can give its users the opportunity of improving their communication skills, among other skills like collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Social media can significantly encourage their followers to interact, share knowledge, collaborate, practice creativity, and communicate with other people and, communication or interaction in social media is recognized to be a more intuitive way of acquiring the English language (Cabrerera, 2018).

Considering the last component of the SWOT matrix, threats such as technology addiction, and learning distraction and the risk of exposure to

incorrect input were observed. Opening the *Instagram* application and watching some posts, you may find yourself spending hours on your account with a few if not non acquired valuable materials. These distractions caused by social media are significant threats to the learning, focus, and health of their users. In the *Instagram* context, because it is the learner who chooses his or her lessons and what to observe, there is the possibility of knowledge overlapping and unfocused learning, which can lead to reducing one's motivation. Exposure to correct input is an essential factor in the process of learning a new language. Although *Instagram* English teaching pages provide before-mentioned exposures; however, some errors were observed in admins' pronunciations and grammar while presenting materials. Learners cannot easily recognize these imperfections, and they may consider these forms or even pronunciations as correct constructions to acquire.

4.2. Analysis of the Interviews

In the present study, a SWOT analysis was adopted in the interviews section to collect the appropriate data on the effectiveness of *Instagram* English teaching pages. In the following paragraphs, the results of the interviews are reported. In the figure below, you can see the results of the interviews in SWOTs.

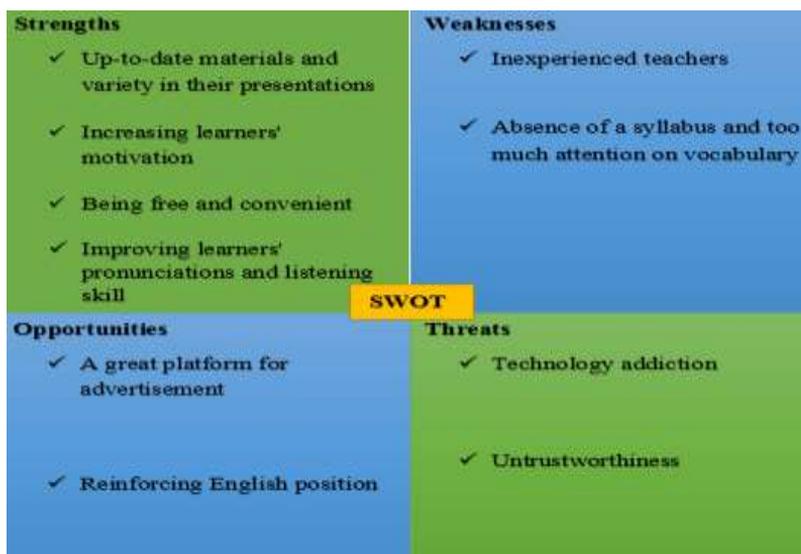


Figure 3. The SWOT format of the interviews' results

Interviewing the selected participants of our study, some strengths were pointed out. Up-to-date materials and variety in their presentations, increasing learners' motivation, being free and convenient, and improving learners' pronunciations and listening skills are the strengths mentioned by interviewees. The diversity in the presentation of materials was an exciting factor in the eye of the participants. They pointed out admins of *Instagram* English teaching pages



try to compete with each other using the most recent materials to achieve a high number of followers. Learning is more enjoyable through entertainment. The participant believed that multimedia materials are more appealing to learners, and because of the colorful and creative posts, learners enjoy their time acquiring English. Participants consider this factor together with the point that learners feel free to make mistakes, which can increase one's motivation. *Instagram* convenience and its being free were other strengths that were mentioned by most of the participants. Moreover, *Instagram's* convenience and its being free were other strengths that were mentioned by most of the participants. Although some participants believed that English teaching pages are good aids to develop all four skills of English, some others discussed it could be more beneficial for the advancement of the listening comprehension skill and the pronunciations that can be learned through native teachers accurately. Some of the participants' views are listed here:

"As far as I know, social media is a competitive space, and there's always a new competitor in the market. So continuous innovation is needed to engage users and keep them to follow you."

"They expose the learners to multimedia materials which are more appealing to the ears and eyes."

"It increases learners' motivation through colorful photos and videos. Moreover, they feel no stress when they make mistakes."

"Instagram is a handy app, and it's free to use."

"There are many pages with different approaches and purposes focusing on different skills; however, they help listening skills grow faster than the other three skills."

In addition to strengths, some weaknesses were distinguished by the participants. Inexperienced teachers, absence of a syllabus, and too much attention on vocabulary were the identified weaknesses. The participants pointed out that some admins presenting materials are just fluent in English, and they are not experienced ELT teachers. They also noted that they had observed some mispronunciations. Moreover, some participants mentioned that *Instagram* English teaching pages do not have a clear lesson plan and are not following any particular syllabuses. They also pointed out that English teaching pages have massive concentration over teaching vocabulary, and the other skills are not getting enough attention. Some of the participants left this part empty by claiming that these pages do not possess any weaknesses. Regarding weaknesses, some of the participants' views are listed here:

"Sometimes, they are teaching with incorrect pronunciations or admins of these pages are the one who wasn't TEFL students, they have learned

English in institutes, and just because of their fluencies, they think they are good teachers."

"Most pages provide unorganized lessons without any pre-planned syllabus."

"They have a what-I-call-it "vocabulary-pecking approach" which, in practice, doesn't help the learners to speak fluently and effectively."

Moreover, being a great platform for advertisement and reinforcing English position were pointed out as the opportunities these pages provide. Acting wisely, social media can give you a wide range of opportunities for the promotion of your service or product. Almost all of the participants pointed out how *Instagram* can be beneficial. English has already occupied its position as an international language, and its state has been reinforced by the development of technology and the rise of social media. A few of our participants have mentioned that *Instagram's* English teaching pages can be advantageous in promoting English, and it can help English to strengthen its status as an international language. Regarding opportunities, here are their views:

"If you're lucky enough, the followers will change into customers and enroll in your classes. This is the ultimate goal for the majority of language teaching pages."

"They help English to thrive and develop at a high pace while keeping its position as the international language."

"They can make the English language more widespread and universal in the world."

Some threats were recognized by the participants on *Instagram* English teaching pages; one of the main concerns of the participants about social media was the risk of getting addicted to it. Social media itself and the materials provided are engaging, and there is always the risk of getting distracted or even addicted to it. Moreover, some others have claimed that how *Instagram's* English teaching pages cannot be trustworthy. They believe you cannot 100 percent trust the posted materials because there is no control over the produced materials. In addition, the admins of these pages are in no way committed to their followers, and maybe one day they decide to quit their pages and leave their followers. Regarding the threats, some of the participants' views are listed here:

"Like any other social networking site, it could be addictive, and it will consume learners' valuable time."

"They may quit their page and leave the followers high and dry right in the middle of nowhere!"



"Sometimes, some yellow pages with the lowest competence in teaching English, yet with substantial financial support may prevent the learners from finding the right way to enhance their English."

Table 2
Frequency of Each Mentioned Comment

| | SWOT comments | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|--|-----------|------------|
| Strengths | Up-to-date Materials and Variety in their Presentations | 6 | 60 |
| | Increasing Learners' Motivation | 4 | 40 |
| | Being Free and Convenient | 8 | 80 |
| | Improving Learners' Pronunciations and Listening Skill | 2 | 20 |
| Weaknesses | Inexperienced Teachers | 4 | 40 |
| | Absence of a Syllabus & Too Much Attention on Vocabulary | 3 | 30 |
| Opportunities | A Great Platform for Advertisement | 8 | 80 |
| | Reinforcing English Position | 3 | 30 |
| Threats | Technology Addiction | 7 | 70 |
| | Untrustworthiness | 4 | 40 |

The interview results demonstrated that *'being free and convenient'* was the most frequent strength, and *'improving pronunciations and listening skills'* was the least frequent comment mentioned by the participants. Moreover, concerning the weaknesses of these pages, some of the participants said that they don't observe any shortcomings of these pages; however, *'inexperienced teachers'* was the most frequent one. Eighty percent of the participants noted how *Instagram* could bring great opportunities for advertisement, and 70 percent of them believed it could be a threat to its users because it may cause technology addiction.

5. Discussion

Some of the strengths discovered are in line with [Cabrera's \(2018\)](#) research on the impact of social media on English teaching. According to [Krashen's \(1985\)](#) Input Hypothesis, people learn the language through their exposure to input or reading texts. As it was discovered in this study, *Instagram* English teaching pages can provide a large amount of input in that sense. A variety of materials and diversity of their presentation can lead to increasing learners' motivation, and these factors are in line with [Palfreyman's \(2006\)](#) research which claimed that teaching language by online advances could develop engagement, participation, and inspiration of English students. Some of the weaknesses identified in this study

are in line with [Cabrera's \(2018\)](#) research on the impact of social media on English teaching. These weaknesses support the idea of [Zourou and Lamy's \(2013\)](#) research. They pointed out that even though social media channels are very attractive to language teachers, learners, and language learning materials producers, their application in language learning and teaching is controversial and questionable. There isn't much evidence on whether and how they can improve language learning.

The mentioned opportunities can be profitable in the process of language teaching. Some of the opportunities discovered are in line with [Cabrera's \(2018\)](#) research on the impact of social media on English learning. It was found that *Instagram* English teaching pages could be good chances for 21st-Century Learning, and it is in line with [Black's \(2005\)](#) research that claimed the interactive nature of the Internet plays a vital role in producing a highly communicative linguistic context or environment. It is also in line with [McLoughlin and Lee's \(2008\)](#) research on Facebook that reported Facebook has various tasks of communications, material sharing, modification, and collaborative construction. The mentioned threats can be dangerous in the process of language teaching. Some of the threats discovered are in line with [Cabrera's \(2018\)](#) research on the impact of social media on English learning. Cabrera pointed out spending an extended amount of time on social networks can lead to learning distraction and time wastage. The findings are also in line with [Bosch's \(2009\)](#) research on Facebook; many ungraduated students who participated in his study have mentioned Facebook using the term 'addicted'.

6. Conclusion

Instagram English teaching pages enable both students and teachers to economize time and give them possibilities to manage the shortcoming in different situations. They can provide the opportunity of having a class with native teachers, and they can also increase learners' motivation through their diverse presentation of materials. Despite their benefits to teachers, learners, and the educational environment, they have some drawbacks that may affect learning English, such as depletion in writing skills and the risk of being exposed to incorrect input, getting distracted, or even addicted to the Internet. Therefore, considering these pitfalls, employing them to learn English could be beneficial.

The results of this study can be beneficial for admins of English teaching pages to understand what are the internal factors that their pages possess and to consider the external factors that may come into play. Implying the results, admins can take a forward step to make their pages more beneficial and more effective in English learning. The findings of this study can also help those scholars or teachers who want to use *Instagram* as their medium to present their services. Assuming the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities, and the threats, they can build up their English teaching pages on a more reliable basis from the beginning. The other implication of this study deals with language



learners who seek to learn English, following English teaching pages on *Instagram*. Being aware of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of *Instagram*'s English teaching pages helps them be more cautious about selecting them as a source of learning English. All the above applications not only can be beneficial for *Instagram* users but also can be fruitful for users of other social networks like YouTube and Facebook. Applying the findings can also be advantageous for English scholars, learners, and teachers who seek to use other social networks in language learning and teaching.

No research study can be conducted under ideal circumstances, and every research study has its own sets of problems and barriers. Although the interviews were performed in written format to accommodate enough amount of time for the participant to provide as many answers as they can on each factor of the SWOT analysis, being involved and busy with different aspects of their life, some participants didn't put enough amount of time to write down logical answers for each question. Another factor that reduces the number of our participants was their unwillingness to participate in this study. Twenty-five active users of *Instagram* English teaching pages were asked to participate in the research, but only ten people agreed. Discovering ways to increase participants' motivation for further research will be an excellent consideration. This research study was managed with a limited number of participants; therefore, other studies can be conducted by a well-established organization at a more extensive scope involving more participants. Some delimitations were considered before conducting this investigation; controlling each of these constituents can provide beneficial information for further research. The participants in this research study were male and female. It is recommended to examine the project with gender differences to obtain a better result in this sense. The variable of age was not also controlled, and owing to the difference in the attitude of people of various ages, managing the age factor can provide valuable data. Considering the variable of English proficiency can also be used for future studies. For the setting of the study, only 12 pages were considered due to their high number of followers and popularity, consisting of pages running by Persian and native admins and pages running by particular organizations like Cambridge English. An increase in the number of pages being studied or separation among these types of pages in other studies can be a valuable point. Considering English teaching pages of diverse nationalities can be profitable too.

References

- Al Mubarak, A. A. (2016). Learning English as a second language through social media: Saudi Arabian tertiary context. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 8(6), 112-127.

- Black, R. W. (2005). Access and affiliation: The literacy and composition practices of English-language learners in an online fanfiction community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 49(20), 118-128.
- Bosch, T. E. (2009). Using online social networking for teaching and learning: Facebook use at the university of Cape Town. *South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 35(2), 185-200.
- Cabrera, L. S. (2018). Impact of Social Media in English Language Learning: Utilizing S.W.O.T Analysis: Department of Education Mimaropa Region. Republic of the Philippines.
- Chalak, A. (2021). Pragmatics of self-praise and self-presentation by Iranian EFL learners on Instagram. *TESL-EJ*, 25(1), 1-16.
- Chen, H. (2013). Identity practices of multilingual writers in social networking spaces. *Language Learning & Technology*, 17(2), 143-170.
- Ghorbani, N., & Ebadi, S. (2020). Exploring learners' grammatical development in mobile assisted language learning *Cogent Education*, 7(1),1-14.
- Gurel, E., & Tat, M. (2017). SWOT analysis: A theoretical review. *The Journal of International Social Research*. 10(51). 994-1006.
- Harrison, J. S., & St. John, C. H. (2004). *Foundations in Strategic Management*, USA: South Western.
- Heidari Tabrizi, H. & Onvani, N. (2018). The impact of employing telegram app on Iranian EFL beginners' vocabulary teaching and learning. *Applied Research on English Language*, 7(1), 1-17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22108/are.2017.103310.1087>
- Hill, M. M., & Storey, A.M. (2000). *Speak easy*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Jafari, S. & Chalak, A. (2016). The role of WhatsApp in teaching vocabulary to Iranian EFL learners at junior high school. *English Language Teaching*, 9(8), 85-92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n8p85>
- Khansarian, F.D., & Ameri, A.G. (2017). Effects of Social Networking on Iranian EFL 111.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
- Ma'azi, H., & Janfeshan, K. (2018). The effect of Edmodo social learning network on Iranian EFL learners writing skill. *Cogent Education*, 5(1), 1-17.
- McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. (2008). Mapping the digital terrain: new media and software as catalysts for pedagogical change. *Hello! Where are you in the landscape of educational technology?* Geelong, Vic: Deakin University



-
- Mills, N. (2011). Situated learning through social networking communities: The development of joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and a shared repertoire. *Calico Journal*, 28(2), 345-368.
- Palfreyman, D. (2006). Social context and resources for language learning. *System*, 34(3), 352–370.
- Sim M. A., & Pop A. M. (2014). The impact of social media on vocabulary learning. *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, 1(2), 120-130.
- Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén L. K. (2012). *Digital games in language learning and teaching*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thompson, A. A., & Strickland, A. J. (1989). *Strategy formulation and implementation*. USA: Inc.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Xodabande, I. (2017). The effectiveness of social media network telegram in teaching English language pronunciation to Iranian EFL learners. *CogentEducation*, 4(1), 1–14.
- Zourou, K., & Lamy, M. N. (2013). *Social networking for language education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This Page is Intentionally Left Blank.