

Exploring Language Learning and Cultural Exchange through TikTok and Instagram Content: An In-depth Study

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ABSTRACT

Platforms like TikTok have become a dynamic point for cultural interaction and informal language learning. They enable people to engage with content, including languages and norms, packaged in short-form videos and capable of spreading simplified narratives about different cultures. With Uses and Gratification and Social Presence theories serving as framework, the study addressed the following: to determine the main focus of the language teachers on social media platforms like TikTok, ascertain how social media language learners respond to the content posted by these language teachers and assess if the content from these language teachers, contain cultural representations of the languages they speak. Quantitative analysis was used to assess the themes in the content of two English language speakers and the responses of the learners. The language trainers leveraged the features of the platform to cover varied aspects of the English language ranging from vocabulary to phrases, collocations, and grammar. A few of the language learners commented, possibly because they are not fluent in the language and are still learning; there were grammatical mistakes in some of the comments. There were also

discussions around differences in culture in response to the content in the comment sections of both language trainers, with a few learners surprised by the differences in culture with regards to eating and security especially. While social media language training platforms are focused on helping language learners, they provide a useful opportunity for cultural exchange.

Keywords: Social Media, Digital, Language, Culture, Uses and gratification, Content

INTRODUCTION

Digital media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have been very instrumental in fostering collaborative language learning to enable users to improve their 'proficiency' in foreign language (Khasawneh, 2024; Nasution, 2022). Apoko and Waluyo (2025) believe that the communication functions of social media platforms have become integrated with opportunities to engage and learn things like English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This is because the platforms allow learners work in teams, and this improves their speed of learning because they can bounce their ideas off of other language learners online, fostering collaboration and possibly deep conversations between the content creators on social media and the users who consume their content (Akhmedova, 2024, Ansari& Khan, 2020).

In fact, TikTok (2023) recognizes that their platform plays a significant role in how people learn language and discover other

cultures. In fact, the pidgin hashtag (#pidgin) on their platform had over 123million views as of 2023. All of this affirms John's (2025) perspective that the digital space has become fully integrated into everyday human life, redefining how humans think and live. More importantly, it proves to be a flexible and resourceful bridge builder and platform for learning and disseminating information virtually.

Akhmedova (2024) states that social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok bridge the geographical gap between people irrespective of where they reside in the world, enabling them to share their thoughts and values with others in real-time. Beyond sharing their language with others, digital media platforms have played an active role in the continuous changes to vocabulary across languages, the development of slangs within groups and communities and language styles that are focused on 'brevity and immediacy.'

This is probably one of the reasons that Aslan and Butabaeva (2025) posit that learning of languages is no longer restricted to the classrooms, especially with the range of digital tools and applications available to grant access to resources on a variety of languages (Ansari & Khan, 2020). They include online tutoring platforms, mobile game language apps like Duolingo, Babbel, LingoDeer, Busuu and Memrise, and AI powered applications like ELSA Speak and Promova. AI-integration into the platforms is one factor Zhang and Romero-Forteza (2024) identify for the improved benefit, attention and use these platforms have gotten over time.

It enables users to also provide feedback using the tools available on these platforms.

The number of people on social media platforms is also another factor driving the use of social media for language learning. According to Statista (2024) there are more than 5 billion of the world's population using social media platforms. The volume of social media users has inspired language teachers, and other subject teachers to explore the innovative teaching tools or methods available for use on social media platforms. This is corroborated by Nasution (2022) who posits that the unique technology associated with these platforms can better enable language teachers develop more tailored 'lesson plans' and give the students access to more resources outside of traditional textbooks (Nasution, 2022).

Explaining further, Aslan and Butabaeva (2025) mention that the platforms allow 'language teachers' to break hours' worth of content into smaller sized bytes of seconds and minutes that social media users can consume at their convenience and discretion. It also helps to manage the attention span of the audience as well. These bite-sized content are used to teach 'grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, slang and cultural norms and traditions' across languages. A number of the language teachers who are leveraging these platforms are using the opportunity to also build their subscriber base, and monetize the platforms as well (Carpenter et al., 2020). Aslan et al. believes that one of the major aspects language teachers focus on is the vocabulary, as it is essential for developing the proficiency needed to understand and communicate in that language.

Oyeleke et al. (2023) points out that TikTok, which allows users share short videos, is popular because it embraces a multiplicity of channels, using tools like infographics, simulations, podcasts, and videos to capture the essence of the content in such a way that the learner engages with all their senses. It also allows for real time interactions with the Duet feature where users can respond to posts in situ using a split screen. Learners can be co-creators with the language teachers and other learners as well, thus bridging the physical distance.

Problem Statement

Some studies have indicated that social media is very beneficial to those learning other languages, a few including assessment for YouTube and Snapchat alongside others discussed in this work. However, a lot is still unknown about how the users benefit from using these platforms to teach or learn languages. The use of social media in language learning plays a huge role in encouraging student engagement with the content and their satisfaction with what is learnt online. However, there have been few studies that directly assess how the learners of English as a second language respond to the teachings on online platforms directly on the platform and in response to the content being posted, how well it gratifies their needs and possible factors that could affect it.

With the consistent growth of social media platforms being used to teach languages like English, French, Portuguese, Pidgin and Yoruba, it is important to assess the strategies and tools used by the teachers on these

social media platforms, and how learners respond to their content. The study would address the following focusing on selected English language teachers:

RQ1. What was the main focus and teaching strategy of the selected language teachers on social media platforms like TikTok?

RQ2. How do social media language learners respond to the content posted by these language teachers?

RQ3. Do the content from the selected language teachers contain cultural representations of the languages they speak?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media and Language Learning

More recently, learning on social media platforms have gained traction due to its audio-visual components (Shafirova & Araújo e Sá, 2024), and access to diverse ways of presenting and consuming information or content. The content can be packaged using multiple forms for capturing content such as text, sound, video, pictures and even animation. Additionally, one content can be produced using multiple languages, and can also contain splices from different content to complete a message or piece of information. These features can make it easy for learners to easily pick up nuances that would have been more difficult with just audio or audio, pictures and text. This corroborates Wang et al. (2024) view that social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok can become useful tools for developing and understanding complicated concepts, sometimes difficult to learn in traditional classroom settings.

Social media platforms though, are not just about educational learning. They support ‘communicative and creative’ activities of the users (Wong et al., 2017), including language teaching and learning (Shafirova & Araújo e Sá, 2024). Social media users be it the teacher or learner are able to involve others in their creative process due to the features that the platforms offer. This provides multiple pathways for learning, more than what the teacher posts as their content. Huttayavilaiphan (2024) explains that social media applications like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok and others have become key to how individuals and communities engage and interact at a cultural level. As such, the uptake in the use of social media platforms, has captured the attention of teachers willing to leverage on the popularity of the platforms among young adults to get educational content to them. The teachers and even the learners who visit these apps and pages are also according to Ansari and Khan (2020) willing to make use of the applications because they allow for content personalization, cooperation and team work which allows users to benefit from not just the teachers but other co-learners as well. Studies like Nasution (2022) have shown that social media as a platform for learning other subject matters and languages increases the rate at which users interact with the content and others. This process improves learning uptake as practice is equally important in the learning process.

The mobile nature of these application is another major reason for the swift uptake of these apps and the content it avails users (Zhang & Romero-Forteza, 2024). People are able to create a unique identity for themselves on those platforms whether real or fictitious), upload their thoughts and

comments on different subjects including the language teachings they are exposed to on the social media platforms of their choice, and engage in the process of collaborative learning as mentioned by Ansari & Khan (2020). Smartphones make all of this possible as learners can 'learn' languages on the go as opposed to when they have access to their laptops or systems. As Hadoussa and Hafedh (2019) posits the mobile nature and lack of time restrictions to the use of social media for the language learning allows in their own context students who have limited time for real English communication to go online to upgrade their English language communicative skills.

One of the ways they can use these platforms especially TikTok to learn is the dubbing or lip-syncing feature of the platform. Learners are provided with the opportunity to record their voice and synchronize same with the content they are learning from, thereby enabling them to work on improving different aspects of fluency in their chosen language skill. Learners who used this approach in learning also recorded significant gains or improvement in the ability to speak fluently.

Zhang and Romero-Forteza identify other benefits of social media to language learning. They mention that learners can share their thoughts on their learning experiences in real-time with the boxes provided for comments as well as smiley icons which allow them indicate whether they like, love, dislike or hate the content. Not using any of those icons in itself could be a comment. This provides feedback to the language teacher who can then adjust or include other 'pedagogical' approaches in the next uploaded content. It is believed that when fellow language-learners share

the content of these language teachers on other social media platforms, as a form of feedback on the content, it inspires others' desire to learn these languages. Butabayeva and Mohammadi (2024) also mention that social media platforms are seen as instrumental for motivating students (language learners), speeding up their capacity to pick up new vocabulary and providing an opportunity for them to practice what they learn with others.

It can thus be inferred that motivation to learn new languages can come from being on the language learning journey with other social media users, based on an example shared by Shafirova and Araújo e Sá (2024). They shared the story of Miree, a Japanese and Korean popular culture fan who through fandubbing, unintentionally improved her proficiency to speak Japanese, Korean and English. Miree's participation in the activities of translating language videos, producing her own videos, checking for relevant information and engagement with her fans who loved and shared her journey, helped to improve her proficiency in the languages.

Huttayavilaiphan (2024) for instance identifies TikTok as one of the major platforms for creativity and expression when it comes to cultural exchange, particularly through its use of short but creative video content. This makes cultural content which includes language to be easily dispersed across platforms and particularly useful for language teachers who can use personal and cultural stories and content to aid their teaching of language. They can also contrast their cultural stories with that of their followers (the language learners).

TikTok is a blend of the best of X's (formerly twitter) real time communication and Instagram's use of visual storytelling and engaging features of audio, basically offering the best of all social media worlds. Results from the study of Meirbekov et al. (2024) showed that the participants liked the use of Instagram and TikTok as video teaching tools in learning English because it motivated them to learn the language even in the classroom. Tan et al. (2022) identifies the features which make the platform useful for language learning - the shared audio, which allow users to use the audio to listen and mimic voices, and the earlier mentioned duet feature, where a user can join their video with someone else in order to create new content that appears like two individuals in real-time engaging.

On the other hand, Aslan and Butabaeva (2025) state that a platform like Instagram provides filters and visual effects that allow users to personalize or adjust for brightness and contrast; they can also upload images with text such as memes, emojis and short videos edited on their 'stories' and 'reels.' The use of hashtags, a 'semiotic' feature also enables learners to identify content aligned with the language they want to learn.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and Gratification Theory, Social Presence Theory and Social Media for Language Learning

Language learners and users are on social media platforms to achieve their personal objectives. This is at the heart of the uses and gratification theory, which explores the psycho-socio factors at the core of people use of media platforms, be it traditional or social

media. It examines the needs of the user of those platforms, and subsequently their expectations of what they hope to get from using these platforms, and how it determines their use of the patterns and satisfaction they possibly derive from it (Gao, 2023). While the theory has been applied to mobile applications, not much attention has been devoted to the type of gratification users possibly derive from using social media or mobile applications for their personal needs, whether as content producers or as content consumers.

The Uses and Gratification theory has some assumptions, which are that social media users are active; they are goal-oriented and have expected outcomes from their use of those platforms (Falgoust et al., 2022). They are intentional about the value they intend to derive from the platforms or media they use whether as content creators or content consumers. The outcomes from the use of those platforms determine whether or not they return to those platforms (Bhatiasevi, 2024; Gao, 2023). These assumptions play out in the use of social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram by both teachers and learners – they are actively engaged, because it takes effort to consistently create and upload content and on the part of the user, a deliberate effort to search out the language teaching profiles using features like hashtags.

Both parties have objectives they intend to achieve by being at the same spot – the content creators (language teacher) are there to teach or spread knowledge of the language that they love– possibly showcase their professionalism and skills and also share their knowledge

with others. The learners on their part are there to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge of their language of interest, especially through real-time engagement with other learners and even the language teachers. These needs (objectives) are not just about the content they consume but also about how it makes them feel. Gao believes that the uses and gratification theory addresses not just the need but also the personal and social aspects of it.

For teachers of language intent on using social media platforms like TikTok, the need to disseminate knowledge and push for learning of other languages beyond the classroom setting may be their major objective. Other reasons for use would include the need to share their social and cultural contexts with people from various climes so they can experience it through their eyes. As they share their world using language, learners are able to contextualize the key concepts and ideas shared in this second or possibly third and fourth language that they are learning. Sun et al. (2025) describing educators who use social media platforms to teach as edu-influencers, states that they provide benefits to their followers who are able to meet other like-minded individuals, whom they can learn and work with through the chats or comments section.

The needs that drive the use of social media platforms are not just intellectual, or cognitive. Montag et al. (2021) explain that the need for entertainment and emotional satisfaction is a major factor causing users to flood platforms like TikTok. This need is fuelled by social media users' consumption and creation of content, and particularly their interaction with others. Other factors that spurred the use of the TikTok platform was

the need to ‘expand the social network’ of people by acquiring more followers and having more interactions with other social media users, to become popular and have a voice and recognizable identity on the platform. This creates an avenue for the platform users to become socially and culturally accepted by people from diverse locations or background based on a shared and connected interest. Some social media users also use TikTok as a form of escape from the mundane routine of their everyday lives.

Rrustemi et al. (2021) says that how well the need is addressed plays a major role in how the language learners feel about the content and what their subsequent behaviour would be – to revisit the trainers page or never to return. The feedback from the learners who visit the content creators page would more importantly show the trainer (content creator) areas to adjust in their content and packaging of the content based on feedback from the learners. It also shows the content creator whether or not their main purpose for creating their page, whether to showcase their skills or share knowledge or even get popularity or fame has been achieved or gratified. How well these platforms address the needs of the users especially language learners then become a function of ‘who’ is using the platform as their peculiarities or unique characteristics would determine how effective the platforms are at meeting their needs (Montag et al., 2021), as well as a few other reasons.

However, the gratification both the language teachers and the language learners derive from use of the social media platforms is enhanced by the depth of social presence that the learners feel while interacting with the content such as English language learning on the platform (Wang, 2022). First propounded by Short, Williams and Christie in 1976, social presence theory was(is) defined as “the salience of the interactants and their interpersonal relationship during a mediated conversation.”

Social media platforms mediate the pattern of engagement between the language teacher and language learner and the experience that learners get, with different platforms engendering varying levels of social presence. It determines how lonely or connected students feel in online learning platforms, with increased social presence adjudged to ‘reduce students feelings of social isolation’ especially online as they are not in the same physical space. The higher the social presence, the more real the presence of the teacher in this instance feels to the online learners (Kreijns et al., 2024).

Short et al. (1976) measured ‘salience’ as ‘physical realness’ of the person on the other end of the mediating device; for example, when using a specific communication medium like a telephone: the “degree to which a person on the other end of the phone will be seen or felt as ‘real’ will vary or depend on the feelings of the person on the receiving end. At the time, Short et al. had mentioned that with technological advancements and the capacity to electronically create or replicate a ‘virtual three-dimensional representation of an individual who is hundreds of miles distant’, social

presence would improve in virtual spaces. That prediction is a reality today.

Wang (2022) acknowledges that there are diverse views of what constitutes social presence, citing a diverse view from Walther (1992) who critiqued the ‘technology-driven’ definition of social presence and instead stated that social presence is the degree to which users’ feel that ‘other people are interacting with them while they are using the media’. Based on this understanding, Rogers and Lea (2005) explained social presence as the feelings of warmth, social contact, familiarity, and intimacy’ an individual derives while engaged with others in a community conversation. Taking this definition to the virtual space, social presence is the users’ overall learning experience based off of their reactions to the engagement with other learners and the teaching instructor on the virtual or social media platforms. Gao et al. (2024) support this view stating that social presence can foster a high level of ‘connectedness and belonging’ which determines how effective the social media learners learning experience is. It makes for a more conducive learning environment.

Zheng et al. (2025, citing Li et al., 2024) corroborate the view of Rogers and Lea (2005), stating that when the social media user has ‘stronger emotional connection and social interaction’ or level of engagement with others – like the language trainer on the virtual platforms, it signifies a higher level of social presence, which can influence the next steps of the language learner – to continue following the language teacher, to switch to another language teacher or to give up entirely.

Zheng et al., state that there are dimensions of social presence, and they vary according to the researcher's focus. Although these dimensions have been implicitly stated in some of the definitions discussed, Zheng et al., in their work highlight a few dimensions from the perspectives of researchers Biocca et al. (2003) who see co-presence (perception of physical space), psychological involvement (cognitive processing), and behavioural engagement (feedback) as key dimensions of social presence; Kathy et al.'s dimensions of social presence, that covers consciousness, emotion, and cognition (Shen & Khalifa, 2008).

Despite these diversity of perspectives Kim et al. (2016, cited in Zheng et al. (2025) posits that co-presence, and psychological involvement are the main aspects of social presence that matter in technology driven learning spaces. Co-presence signifies how well the learner feels like they are in a learning environment even though it's a virtual space while psychological involvement refers to how well the language teacher is able to capture and retain the attention of the language learners in the virtual space (social media), also syncing with Montag et al. 's (2021) view that users' have intellectual and emotional needs. The level of social presence at that dimension of psychological engagement thus determines the level of gratification the language learners would get from the interactions on the language learning platform. The third behavioural engagement describes how willing or easily the learners can give feedback on the content from the language trainers and get a response from the language teacher.

There are challenges with creating social presence in online learning platforms according to Aldosari et al., (2022), who identifies

technological efficacy as one of the major ones both from the angle of the language teacher and learner. How well attuned the trainers are to the platforms and how to deploy them to catch their learner's attention is critical to the dimensions of social presence manifesting in the teaching interaction.

The value derived based on social presence would be integral to the gratification both language learners and teachers get from their engagements. Uses and Gratification theory has been used to explain the use of social media platforms for 'value co-creation behaviour'. The Duet function on Tik Tok would tie into this as well as social presence (sense of physical presence and reduction of distance) – as learners can be part of the trainers' video especially when it is live, or they can incorporate it into their own content creation for practice learning purposes.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, quantitative descriptive data was collected using a mixed method – an analysis of the content of 2 English language teachers on TikTok and Instagram, and the responses of the language learners (audiences) to the content posted on both platforms. The sampled English language teachers were purposively selected. First a simple search parameter for English language teachers was entered on google and a list of language teachers generated.

Next, the first five of the suggested names were visited, and two language teachers shortlisted based on consistency of posts and an initial assessment

of engagement from followers. The names of the teachers have been captured as initials – MK also known as Miss English Teacher has 3.2 million followers on Instagram and 1.1million followers on one of her TikTok page and 405, 000 followers on the second TikTok. The latter TikTok page with 405, 000 followers were used because she has more engagement on her posts. Her posts on TikTok have more follower engagement than her Instagram page. She teaches English using everyday scenarios to make the lessons more practical to the learners.

CH uses her full name on her profile and indicates that she is an English Teacher. She has 783, 000 followers on Instagram and on TikTok, where her handle is Learning English with C*****, she has 252, 300 followers. Her posts have more engagement on TikTok than on Instagram as well. C's engagement on TikTok was low in comparison to that of Miss English Teacher.

The most recent posts of the language teachers, which included both pictures and short 30” to 60” videos across both platforms, were considered for shortlisting. The level of and type of engagement of the posts was used as the exclusion criteria to determine which posts would be assessed. A scan of the engagement on each led to the exclusion of posts with a high number of responses not related to the posts. For Instagram posts with 20 -50 responses for both language teachers were considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Main focus and Content Strategy of the Language teachers on Instagram and TikTok

The two English language teachers used existing pedagogical strategies combined with the features of the two platforms to make their teaching process engaging and memorable. They also personalised their teaching approaches. While Ms English Teacher did not give any indication of a family, she incorporated her lifestyle and holidays into her teaching approach. CH has a family and incorporates their everyday situations into teaching of the English language.

Their teaching strategies were similar – use of demonstrations to showcase nouns, explain verbs, and situations the users could get into in real life, use of quizzes to test the knowledge of their learners by asking them to post the answers in the comment section, real life scenarios/role plays to explain phrases and other concepts they were focused on.

These strategies by the two virtual English as a second language teachers demonstrate that they deployed technical and cognitive processing skills in order to capture and retain the attention of the learners on their platform. They even used aspects of their personal lives to try to reduce the physical distance and build a psychological bridge (emotional) with their learners. This has taken care of what Aldosari et al. (2022) identified as a possible barrier to social presence - lack of technical skills to create

a conducive learning environment close to what could obtain physically.

The content strategy was not structured in terms of the subjects covered. However, there were similarities across the platforms of the two language trainers– they covered verbs, phrases, everyday use of the words, although their scenarios were different due to their situations – one was married and the other was not, their interests also differed – one travelled more, the other was not.

Table 1

Description of teaching approach of the language trainers

S/ N	Teacher	Platform	Teaching Strategy/Tool	Content
1	Miss English miss.english.teach Miss English Teacher <u>2023-9-17</u>	TikTok	Demonstration [show and say] Quiz Scenario/Plays Scenario/ Plays	How to eat spaghetti Use of Prepositions Giving Directions in Traffic How to ask for Food
2	Miss English	Insta	Demonstration Scenario/Role Play	Phrasal verbs Handling the tab

	miss_engl -ish teacher		Demonstration Role Play	Common collocations with take Oh no! Explanations
3	CH	Insta	Scenario/Real life situations Scenario/Real life situations Demonstration Scenario/ Real life situations	Everyday words Practical phrases Vocabulary (living room) Phrasal verbs
4	CH Learn English with camille	TikTok	Scenario/Real life situations Scenario/Real life situations Scenario/Real life situations Scenario/Real life situations	Everyday words: Ordering coffee Simple phrases Phrases: in use with personal trainer Descriptions of places

Source: (Author's Computation, 2025).

SM Language learners Responses to the content of the language teachers

While their situations differed, they had some positive responses to the content and comments on how relevant the content was to some of their followers. Majorly, viewers simply gave a thumbs up to indicate their approval of the content, which outranked the number of people who left comments. Sometimes the language teachers responded, sometimes they missed the comments.

Ms English Teacher

From Ms English Teachers shortlisted posts on Instagram (left image), the highest number of likes was 13, 139 likes, while for TikTok (right image), the highest number of likes was 213, 900, compared to 816 comments.

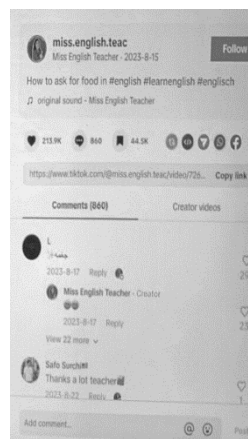
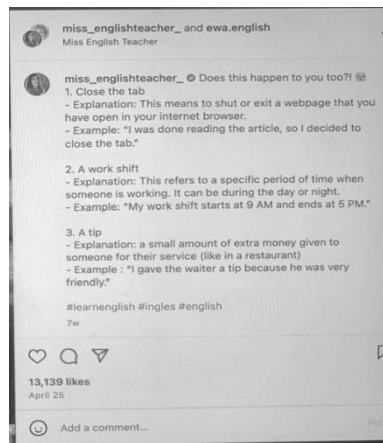





Figure 1: Snapshots from Instagram and TikTok pages of Miss English Teacher

Table 2

More specific responses on the relevance of the content for Ms English teacher

Content Consumers	Responses to Posts/Comments
<u>@jlpauldaniel04</u>	Mam teaches us wherever she goes... She sacrifices her time in enjoying and sparing them to teach us... 11w2 likesReply
<u>@istanbulrealtygayrimenkul</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a picture or Take a photo? (Instagram)
<u>@dreamershakiba</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In our our country, Iran, today is teacher's day. <p>So happy your day. 😊🥰👉You are one of the best teachers I have ever seen on Instagram💕</p>

<p><u>@garret_hutchens</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 😊 oh you skipped my favourite I use when I get in an argument! 😊😊. 6w1 likeReply ○ <u>miss_englishteacher @garret_hutchens</u> hahahah which one 😊6w1 likeReply ○ <u>@garret_hutchens@miss_englishteacher</u> “Shut Up”😊6w1 likeReply ○ <u>miss_englishteacher @garret_hutchens</u> hqhqhqhahaha 😊😊 [Instagram] ○ @thefitfrench This is so helpful! The closing tab issue can definitely be confusing, but you’ve explained it so clearly. Thanks a lot for breaking it down for us! PS: please leave a tip! 😊. 7w15likesReply ○ miss_englishteacher @thefitfrench glad to hear that 😊6w1 likeReply [Instagram]
<p>pamuyun</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thank you for teaching me in English through my phone here. please don’t stop, keep continuing on your work 🙏💎. I love English ❤️. 5-19Reply0

<p>Habib RA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am learning English language. Your videos help me a lot to learn more.....!!! 2023-9-17Reply  127 • Miss English Teacher _Creator Glad to hear that 😊 2023-9-17Reply [TikTok]
<p>user8139636261953</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good teachers!!! 2023-9-18Reply  • Miss English Teacher _Creator Teacher. 😊 1 and thanks 😊. 2023-9-19 [TikTok]
<p>Ch Asim Thabal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross the street or CROSS the Rode?[sic]. 2024-2-2Reply1 • Miss English Teacher _Creator Either 2024-2-3Reply 0 • Ch Asim ThabalThank you very much for your Reply.....Always be happy ...2024-2-3Reply [Tik Tok]
<p>CarfDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm learning more every day because of you thank you very much ❤️❤️ 2023-9-17 Reply  16

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss English Teacher _Creator Great to hear - keep it up 🙏 2023-9-17 [TikTok]
SADNESS_L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finally found you on TikTok I'm big fan of you 😊 2023-9-20Reply 🧑 13 • Miss English Teacher _Creator Happy to hear 😊 2023-9-20Reply6
schlemmer77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you very much for your teaching videos! I like your funny person roles 😊 . 2023-8-16Reply 🧑 1 • Miss English Teacher _Creator Thanks 😊 😊 😊 🙏 2023-8-17Reply 0 [TikTok]

CH, English Teacher

Of the four shortlisted posts on Instagram (left image), CH had 4,570 likes despite having less than 100 comments in the shortlisted posts; on TikTok (right image) she had about 11, 100 likes on one of the shortlisted content, but with only 86 people commenting.

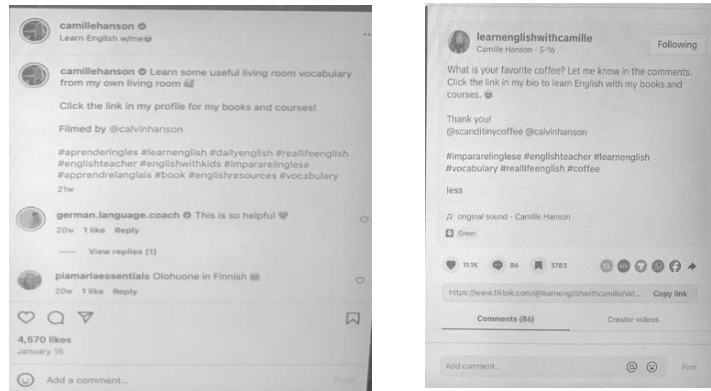


Figure 2: Snapshots from Instagram and TikTok pages of CH, English Teacher

For CH (English teacher) responses to the shortlisted posts included:

Table 3

More specific responses on the relevance of the content for CH (English teacher)

Content Consumers	Responses to Posts/Comments
@anonymous	♥♥♥ Hi teacher♥ nice👉👉 [Instagram] 25w1 likeReply
elhamdehghani5555	😄😄😄😄😄 [Instagram]. 25wReply

learnenglishwithf arah	Excellent work 🙌 [Instagram]25wReply
@loremiller54	You are the best teacher! ✅✅✅. 25w2 likesReply
parsa_paaknaaad 8	Intriguing lesson ❤️25w2 likesReply camillehanson@parsa_paaknaaad8 ♡♡ 25w2 likesReply parsa_paaknaaad8 @camillehanson good luck dear teacher♡ 25wReply
jayakumar.v.p	👏👏👏👏👏👏👏👏👏. 25w1 likeReply
@farasha18	Very helpful because I don't understand these words like out, along, pretty when they're combined with other words [Instagram]25w1 likeReply
<u>su3mdna</u>	More video like this! awsome ❤️ [Instagram]25w3 likesReply
<u>hadis_khawari</u>	❤️❤️❤️. [Instagram]25wReply
<u>english.with.maze</u>	Perfect 👏👏👏 [Instagram] 24wReply


<u>erenkaykisiz87</u>	Thanks C*****for all the lessons that you share with us... [Instagram]
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Some of the responses from the language learners correspond to findings by previous researchers like Zhang and Romero-Forteza (2024) on how the proliferation of technological devices is one of the major reasons for the quick uptake of the social media applications and how people are able to access resources that meet their needs. Another major factor that drives the language learners to follow these social media trainers can be traced to the comments of the language learners who beyond using the love emoji's and likes indicated that the social media language learners were their opportunity to learn the English language. This agrees with Chartrand's view (2012, cited in Hadoussa & Hafedh, 2019) that the lack of time restrictions to being on social media allows them gain access and learn at their own convenience. From the comments, the language learners are from different countries and possibly time-zones.

But it was not just the language learners who benefitted, as Muslim et al. (2022) points out these language trainers also want to share their knowledge and be sure that these learners are getting the knowledge they desire. The feedback from the learners and the responses by the language trainers show their needs were gratified

as well, indicating that for language learning in virtual spaces, the needs to be met are a two-way street.

Butabayeva and Mohammadi's (2024) comment on the probability of there being inaccuracies in the language being taught via social media had some salience to it. It was not only language learners that followed the trainers, but also other language trainers as well. These other language in some instances would comment on their post or even respond to a learner's comment or question. In some instances, these other trainers would step in with corrections for the learners especially. They also complemented the language trainers when they felt they had done a good job.

- **Abi Dosen Muda**All right! It's good for who are eager to learn English especially for speaking English.2023-9-30Reply0
 - **Learn Fluent English**Here's the corrected sentence: "All right! It's good for those who are eager to learn English, especially for speaking." Hope that helps [**TikTok**].
25wReply
 - **learnenglishwithfarrah**Excellent work 
[Instagram]

Apart from those who loved the language trainers' content and stated how it helped them, there were a few others who asked for some adjustments based on their own needs. For instance, on Miss English Teachers TikTok handle, one language learner asked that she slow down the speed of the videos so it could be followed as they were not that fluent. Miss English Teacher promised to consider that in her next

video. This and the positive responses to the two language teachers also support the view of Rrustemi et al. (2021) that the feelings of these language learners as expressed in their comments would determine whether they continued to visit as some of them did say they would return, while a few were of the opposite view. These feelings as expressed by the learners would also let the language trainers know areas to adjust the content they were putting out and which types they should continue to make.

Presence of Cultural Representations in Language Content

Yes, a few of the content contained cultural representations that the learners found surprising or different from what obtains in their countries. Some of the language learners asked questions to clarify some of the statements in the content, while some others simply commented on the differences.

Ms English Teacher

Eating Spaghetti

- **nicolay leonardo You can eat spaghetti with a fork and the spoon help you rolling the spaghetti. That was the way my grandmother from Italy taught me. 😊 1w5 likes Reply**
 - miss englishteacher @nicolay leonardo I also learned that then my Italian friend told me that I shouldn't do that .. then I was confused 😊 1w1 like Reply

- tophatter79@miss_englishteacher I am Italian.. it depends how you are used..MAINLY people from the south use it while USUALLY people from the North don't.. 😊 but for sure i can tell you an universal rule: *NEVER CUT THE SPAGHETTI!!* 😏 😏.

5d2 likesReply

- nicolay leonardo@tophatter79 it that makes sense because my grandparents were from Palermo and Napoli. But at the end I think everybody used or not used depending if you feeling comfortable to do it. It's not a rule

....**4d2 likesReply**

- miss_englishteacher @tophatter79 hahahah absolutely or break it in 2 before boiling it**3d2 likesReply**

- miss_englishteacher @nicolay leonardo likely 😏 **3d1**

likeReply

CH

Fences between houses

- **yakbond**I'm very surprised about the fine for fences, you can't do what you want on your property 😏 😏 **5-31Reply1**

- **CH:Creator**There is a fine if you don't mow your grass. Because they want everyone to take care of their property

😏😏😏 [TikTok]

Dogs on the street

- **Freedom of Speech**you are right about dogs in Peru. I hate that, and I envy you for living in such a quiet and clean place.5-30Reply
 - **dariocastro5678**In Argentina, they walk the streets like cows walk in India.2d agoReply0
- **Solomon**you are providing an excellent and Amazing [service]. you were [have] familiarized me about American small town. what makes and happy in my hometown every were loss dogs in the road.6-1Reply

Safety

- **Yasir**The most surprising thing is that the houses are open and still safe unlike most parts of the world.5-30Reply
- **Daniel en**the most surprising thing is houses without fences.5-31Reply

Scanning the shortlisted posts and the few comments posted above, both language teachers had viewers or learners who commented on the differences in the way certain actions or activities are carried out in their home country; there were also a few comments on how certain words were interpreted in their own languages. CH had more of such cultural comments based on the fact that majority of her posts were based on real-life situations, compared to Miss English teacher who used more of demonstrations in-house to showcase her subject matter.

While both teachers were not focused on disseminating cultural concepts or situations, they used their natural environment to teach, and the comments reflected that these were norms or ways of living completely different from those of some of the language learners following their pages. Huttayavilaiphan (2024) had mentioned that TikTok is a key platform for expressions around culture including language. While it may not have been intentional in some instances, the trainers were simply trying to use their environment to teach, it allowed them to present some of the norms or ways of living while expressing the language. There were also comments around a specific type of food and how it was eaten based on taught tradition. These were personal stories or situations of the trainers being used to share knowledge. It also aligned with Muslim et al's (2022) view that the use of cultural references or situations in teaching language can add value in aiding the language learners to gain context on what they are learning.

CONCLUSION

Social media language training meets the diverse needs of learners who have an inadequate grasp of the language and are interested in improving same. As such, the language trainers provide a service, which in some cases may be hit or miss depending on the gravity of the needs of the learners. In the case of the selected language trainers, it was mostly positive reviews on their posts, with some of the language learners indicating that they would keep returning for more content because it was what they had been searching for. These platforms offer the trainers what

Sun et al. (2025) describe as influence that comes with other long term benefits such as the ability to offer paid services. They are able to build brands and market their services beyond the platform.

The study highlighted that language is a socio-cultural exchange. It provides an opportunity for language trainers to share the positive aspects of their culture while providing an opportunity for the learners to understand how these activities varied from how it is done in their own country. It promotes cultural respect when learners can engage with the culture of others politely and make clarifications without fear of judgement. But beyond that it helps to provide context for the concepts in the language that is being learnt. Learners are able to put names, faces, descriptions to words as the teachers or edu-influencers engage the multimodal features of platforms like Instagram and Tik Tok to show or demonstrate what the words or phrases that they are using truly mean. This makes the ideas and concepts memorable as learners are able to connect them to something tangible.

There are opportunities for collaboration and real time engagement between the official trainer and other trainers and learners who follow the platform. The study showcased instances where other language trainers as indicated by their names answered comments or queries from the learners, highlighting the importance of technological skills to enhance social presence – where the learners especially can feel psychologically connected to the trainers and their content. The trainers are able to leverage technological skills to create avenues to bond with their trainees, thus

ensuring their return to the platform and page. This is also bound to spark curiosity in the minds of the learners, possibly making them visit this individual who also seems to have more than a basic knowledge of the language being learned and appears to see each learner, their questions and needs and attends to it, like it would occur in a physical classroom.

As these platforms on social media do more than language training, it indicates how sensitive the language trainers have to be to ensure that they promote their norms and traditions with respect and also how it functions in the culture of others. This particular exchange especially with the language trainers using personal situations to teach seemed to foster some of the conditions for warmth and intimacy that Wang (2022) identified as important aspects of social presence.

Limitations of the study

This study is however limited in its generalization. Only selected posts of two English language trainers were studied and purposively selected based on the number of followers. Additionally, the findings cannot be generalized to trainers of other languages.

Future Scope

The social media platforms of more English language trainers can be assessed and also extended to trainers for other languages such as French, Portuguese, Chinese to mention a few.

Ethical Considerations:

The policies of the two platforms used were considered in the acquisition of data. They stated that some form of scraping is allowed as long as it is

for non-commercial purposes. Additionally, the names of the research focus were kept out and initials and their professional name used instead.

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