Investigating the Use of Instagram as a MALL Tool: The Case of Al-Imam University EFL Students

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Thesis Title: Investigating the Use of Instagram as a MALL Tool: The Case of Al-Imam University EFL Students

Subject/major: Linguistics

Institution: Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, College of Languages and Translation, Saudi Arabia.

Degree: MA in Linguistics

Year of Award: 2016

Supervisor: Dr. Zuhair Zaghlool

Key Words: English Language, EFL, Instagram, MALL, Social Media

Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the benefits and barriers of using Instagram in English language learning. The sample of this study consisted of 151 randomly-selected female students enrolled in the department of English at the College of Languages and Translation at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University in the academic year 1436/1437– 2015/2016 in the first semester. The researcher used both a five-point Likert scale questionnaire as a quantitative instrument and semi-structured interviews with students as a qualitative instrument to collect the data of the study. Those instruments were validated by ten university professors. Similarly, the reliability of the questionnaire was achieved by calculating Cronbach Alpha formula. The findings of the study revealed that the most important benefits of using Instagram in learning English were as follows: improving the reading, writing, and listening skills, providing enjoyable learning experiences, enriching vocabulary, improving oral communication skills, and enjoying a sense of freedom of time and place. Furthermore, the results of the study unveiled the following challenges of using Instagram in English learning: distracting attention, lack of direction from the syllabuses, lack of encouragement from instructors, embarrassment, lack of immediate feedback, the cost of Internet access, and the difficulty of writing long passages. Finally, the findings of the study presented the following solutions to Instagram barriers in English language learning: creating learning accounts and posting important things in the lecture, following only specialized accounts for learning English.

Cite as: Al-Garawi, A. Y. A. (2016). Investigating the Use of Instagram as a MALL Tool: The Case of Al-Imam University EFL Students. Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, College of Languages and Translation, Saudi Arabia. (Master Thesis). Retrieved from *Arab World English Journal* (ID Number: 233) August 2019,1-58.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/th.233>