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## **DIGITAL TONGUES: EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN KIDS' LANGUAGE LEARNING**

***Annotation.** The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the ways children engage with language in their daily lives. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the impact of social media use on children's language development, highlighting both its potential benefits and associated risks. Studies reveal that social media can serve as an informal learning environment where children are exposed to diverse linguistic input, peer interaction, and multimodal communication that may support vocabulary expansion, pragmatic skills, and digital literacy. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and messaging apps offer children authentic language exposure, often encouraging creativity and real-time engagement. However, concerns persist regarding the quality and appropriateness of language encountered, potential delays in formal grammar acquisition, and reduced face-to-face communication. Moreover, the influence of screen time, parental mediation, and the socioeconomic digital divide are significant moderating factors that shape these outcomes. Despite a growing body of literature, research remains fragmented, particularly in terms of age-specific effects, longitudinal patterns, and culturally diverse contexts. This review underscores the need for a more nuanced and evidence-based understanding of how social media platforms influence children's*

*language learning processes and calls for interdisciplinary approaches to address emerging gaps.*

**Key words:** *social media, language, digital tongue, review, children.*

**Анотація.** Швидке поширення платформ соціальних медіа змінило спосіб спілкування дітей з мовою у повсякденному житті. У цьому огляді літератури узагальнено наявні дослідження впливу використання соціальних медіа на мовний розвиток дітей, підкреслюючи як його потенційні переваги, так і пов'язані з ним ризики. Дослідження показують, що соціальні медіа можуть служити неформальним навчальним середовищем, де діти отримують різноманітні лінгвістичні вказівки, взаємодію з однолітками та мультимодальне спілкування, що може сприяти розширенню словникового запасу, прагматичним навичкам і цифровій грамотності. Такі платформи, як YouTube, TikTok і програми для обміну повідомленнями, пропонують дітям автентичну мову, часто заохочуючи творчість і взаємодію в реальному часі. Тим не менш, залишаються занепокоєння щодо якості та відповідності мови, потенційних затримок у формальному засвоєнні граматики та зменшення особистого спілкування. Крім того, вплив часу, проведеного за екраном, батьківського посередництва та соціально-економічного цифрового розриву є значними сповільнювальними факторами, які формують ці результати. Незважаючи на зростаючу кількість літератури, дослідження залишаються фрагментованими, особливо з точки зору вікових ефектів, довгострокових моделей і культурного розмаїття контекстів. Цей огляд підкреслює потребу в більш детальному та науковому розумінні того, як платформи соціальних медіа впливають на процеси вивчення мови дітьми, і закликає до міждисциплінарних підходів для усунення прогалів, що виникають.

**Ключові слова:** *соціальні медіа, мова, цифрова мова, огляд, діти.*

**Introduction.** Today, with the increase in technological device ownership and the expansion of internet infrastructure due to developments in information and

communication technologies, many preschool children learn to use devices such as touch screen tablets and phones before they acquire basic skills [5]. With the increase in the frequency of use of these devices, they have also become a part of children's lives. In this century, when communication is experienced at the maximum level, social and human relations in the world have reached boundless dimensions. The technological developments have eliminated the possibility of an event happening anywhere in the world being limited to that place. Developing communication technologies have also eliminated boundaries in economic, political and social areas [3]. Preschool education, which is the first step of education, is the process from the day the child is born to the day he/she starts basic education. During this process, all areas of development of the child are largely completed. One of the most basic goals of preschool education is to ensure the child's language and social development and to create the necessary foundation for developing harmonious communication skills. Today, technology has a significant place in the lives of both adults and children with television, smart phones, and tablets, and takes up a significant portion of individuals' time.

**Aim of the study.** This research was created with a compilation model by investigating the effects of social media use on children's language development using a literature review method.

**Research Results. Internet and children.** World technology has developed to great levels in many areas in the past century. Internet technology, which is an important branch of this development, has become an indispensable tool not only for entertainment purposes but also in business life [11]. In recent years, the Internet, especially considering its positive and negative effects on children, has also expanded the areas of responsibility of parents. In order for children not to be exposed to internet-related dangers, parents need to follow their children's internet habits. However, a problem arises here: Due to the knowledge and skill gap between the generation born into the digital age and the generation that joined the digital world later, parents do not know how to treat their children regarding the use of digital

technologies [15]. Today, it has been examined how communication tools in general and social media in particular, which encompass every aspect of life, affect children's lives and what attitudes parents exhibit in this case. Today, children are born into a world where technology is used to the fullest. Children now start using communication tools before they can walk. Our children start using communication tools before they reach the age determined by experts for the use of communication tools. This also causes some problems. Communication tools have now taken over our children. We are not their only owners. With the spread, ease of use and cheapness of communication tools, our children have a say in the internet world and especially in every medium of social media [12]. With the rapid inclusion of communication technologies in our lives, our habits of communicating with other people, learning, working and spending free time have also changed considerably. Innovations in communication technology continue to grow the position of social media in human life every day. Today, children are especially interested in media environments such as the internet, social media, computer games, etc. For parents, their children's relationship with media and the Internet is an important situation that needs to be managed [15].

**Media in preschool period.** The period when the child leaves infancy and enters the process of perceiving his/her own existence, his/her mother and father, the outside world, becomes aware of his/her own feelings and develops his/her abilities is called preschool period. Preschool is an important period that will affect the individual's future life. The right education received in preschool and the positive qualities imparted to the child will ensure that he/she becomes a happy, healthy and successful individual in terms of psychology and mentality throughout his/her life. In order to impart these positive qualities to the preschool child, it is necessary to know, understand and act accordingly. Therefore, parents need to implement conscious and positive approaches to their children by taking their developmental stages into consideration. It is up to the parent to protect them from negative stimuli and reinforce positive stimuli. It is known that tablets, smart phones, computers and the

internet, which children start using in preschool period and widely use during adolescence, can also have harmful effects on the physical and mental development of developing and growing children. The biggest branch of the media that affects children is social media. Social media has now become a common meeting point and topic of conversation in children's daily lives. Social media is constantly renewing itself and is advancing day by day with developing technology. It is a subject that many researchers frequently focus on. It is focused on the updating and sharing features of social media and summarized it as follows: Social media shows itself as one of the most ideal channels in terms of being constantly updated, being open to multiple uses, allowing virtual sharing, etc. [1].

**The effect of social media on language development.** The effects of media on children vary according to the characteristics of the child, the type of media, the way it is used and the duration. If media tools are used consciously, correctly and for their intended purpose; they have many positive features such as developing creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, increasing the level of knowledge and teaching how to look at social events from different perspectives. Children's learning skills with digital media tools are largely dependent on age. Since children under the age of two, who are especially in the sensory-motor development period, can only understand the information given on two-dimensional screens, media should be used interactively by parents and the information to be provided should be repeated with the child. In addition to the benefits of media, it has many negative effects. When digital media tools are used excessively, they weaken children's thinking power, separate them from social life and passively affect the right brain, which controls practical thinking, artistic activities, imagination and sociality [14]. Although media tools provide children with the opportunity to see the world from where they sit, they usually only have stimulation for the sense of sight and hearing, so the stimulation of other senses is insufficient. This situation affects many developmental areas as well as the language development that is the subject of our research. Since the child cannot communicate in the face of one-sided stimuli, he/she also remains deficient in terms

of linguistic communication. Keeping children away from the media in the preschool period is important for them to establish relationships with people and especially for language development. Children begin to gain the ability to speak, express themselves and solve problems in the preschool period from the age of two to the age of five. Although it is not possible to provide media literacy education to this age group, they should be encouraged to express what they see, hear and feel in the media [7]. Excessive exposure to digital media tools negatively affects children's development in many ways. In the study it was determined that the development scores in the 2-3 age group who spend a long time in front of the screen are lower in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and social relations. In addition, language development in children is also negatively affected. In the study by it was reported that in children aged 3-5 who use digital screens for a long time, the development of white matter in the brain that supports language and literacy skills is delayed, and therefore these children have poor naming of objects quickly and weak literacy skills [16]. In this time when the age of social media use is decreasing, there are things that parents need to do to keep their children away from potentially harmful media [12]. Social media tools (phones, tablets, etc.) limit children's mental skills such as thinking, analyzing, evaluating and making inferences. These tools, in a way, save people from this trouble by thinking and dreaming instead of them or show them signs about how they should think and dream [10]. Thanks to social media, children acquire new information and new thought forms. Thus, children who are freed from being limited to a narrow circle have broadened their horizons. «Since children spend most of the day watching videos on social media, they have started to take 'media' as a model as the language learning area. Today, in the face of the language learned by hearing, children give up questioning the language of the media with one-way communication and accept it as the «form of daily speech». Children can more easily place the words they learn from social media in their minds because the videos on the screen appeal to both the eye and the ear. Thus, the child enriches their vocabulary with the words they learn

permanently. The child places the newly learned words into the spoken language and uses them throughout their lives [10]. Research shows that children learn many mental skills thanks to devices such as television, telephone, tablet, etc. It is observed that children who watch programs and videos especially prepared for preschool period have more adjective, verb, noun knowledge and vocabulary, while children who watch excessively on phones, tablets and television are prevented from other activities, become inactive and have difficulty in communicating with other children [2].

**The role of the family against internet and social media use.** As in every community, there is a hierarchical order in the family. The first education is given to the child by the mother and father, who are the smallest unit of the society, the family [4]. In this respect, parents have duties and responsibilities towards the child. It is of great importance for individual development that the family provides enlightening information to the child, especially regarding the internet, and guides the child in a positive way. Karan (2006) lists the points that parents should pay attention to in order to protect their children from the harmful effects of the internet as follows:

Parents should instill self-confidence in children and share with children in order to prevent behaviors that will create negativity. A continuous dialogue should be established with children and what they do on the internet should be learned. The importance of personal information should be explained to the child and it should be explained that this information should not be shared with anyone. Parents should sometimes sit down with their children on the internet and explain the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual world to them. Children should be taught to behave on the internet as they do in the real world and it should be emphasized that they should not neglect the element of respect. Children should be instilled that ethical and moral rules should be followed on the internet. Children should be told the importance of copyrights in a way that they can understand and they should be advised to be careful about what they share. Protective and monitoring programs should be used and they should be informed about the child's activities. Children should be informed that there

may be false information on the internet. Children should be directed to real friendships, not virtual friendships, and the importance of friendship should be emphasized [9]. Mothers and fathers can directly affect children's futures and destinies. In this respect, it is important for the child's development that parents act in harmony with each other [13]. The attitudes of a child who grows up in a family with a high level of knowledge and culture and a child who is prepared for life in the opposite environment towards events and facts are very different. Therefore, first of all, it is expected that the family has the necessary level of knowledge in the field of the internet. Families' lack of sufficient knowledge about the internet causes children to approach this medium differently. In order to convey the internet to children in detail, to convey the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual environment and to guide them correctly, first of all, mothers and fathers having information about the internet will form the basis for raising healthier individuals [9].

**Research model.** Document analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyze the content of written documents meticulously and systematically. The research was created by scanning the literature with the document analysis method.

**Conclusions.** Studies indicate that social media has both positive and negative effects on children's language development. While social media use contributes to children's vocabulary by learning new words, it shows that it is insufficient in using existing and acquired words. It is observed that children who use social media frequently are deficient in terms of linguistic communication, have weak human relations, and have language and speech disorders. In related studies, in addition to the views that the internet has positive effects on children's language development, there are also views that suggest that it has negative effects. In a study, when the views of the participants who participated in the study were examined, it was seen that children rarely use positive examples of the behaviors of the characters they see on social media, such as songs and tongue twisters, and negative examples such as violence and slang words in daily life, and that it has an effect on their language development. When the relevant literature is examined, it is suggested that

technological content negatively affects the language, speech and social development of children in the preschool period. It is possible that the child who is in one-way communication with the internet will be prevented from interacting with their surroundings in a mutual and multi-directional way. Therefore, it will decrease in the need to use language and the time to establish eye contact, and as a result, speech development will be negatively affected [5].

**Recommendations.** Parents and educators should provide supervised access to age-appropriate social media content that encourages language-rich interaction. They are advised to encourage the use of child-friendly apps and social media channels that are designed to support vocabulary, storytelling, and communication skills. Schools should incorporate digital literacy education to help children critically engage with online language and communication. Parents are recommended to ensure that social media use complements—not replaces—face-to-face conversations and traditional language learning activities. They are advised to motivate children to produce their own digital content (e.g., short videos, blogs) to enhance expressive language and creativity.

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