Learning via Snapchat: real communication in TEFL

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Abstract: Technology changes approaches to education, and social media use has become more common for university students. One of the most popular social media platforms is Snapchat. It is a very effective tool to communicate, engage, and exchange ideas. The present study is intended to explore the effects of Snapchat as a tool of learning on the development of English as a foreign language (EFL) female students' achievement and establish the benefits of Snapchat in learning the target language. Fifty-six EFL female students participated in a quasi-experimental study; pre- and post-test comparisons were made based on an achievement test between two classes in the preparatory year at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. One class (the experimental group) learned their English coursebook via Snapchat, and the other (the control group) was taught by traditional methods. The result of the t-test revealed no significant differences in the pre-test; however, in the post-test, the mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group. Interviews showed that creating stories, video chatting, snap stories, and filters for snaps were the most popular features among students. Moreover, students found Snapchat a good source to provide authentic materials that suited their interests and needs—they saw it as a funny, useful, attractive, and entertaining tool for learning EFL lessons. The findings support the beneficial effect of Snapchat as a new and inspiring pedagogy, which teachers are recommended to use to create authentic language practice opportunities outside the classroom.

Keywords: Snapchat, social media; EFL; language learning; communicative approach.

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التعلم عبر سناب تشات: تواصل حقيقي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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جامعة طيبة

ملخص: تُغير التكنولوجيا طرق التدريس، حيث أصبح استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي أكثر شيوعًا بين طلاب الجامعات. وأحد أشهر منصات التواصل الاجتماعي سناب تشات ، فهو أداة فعالة للغاية للتواصل والمشاركة وتبادل الأفكار. تهدف هذه الدراسة الكشفَ عن تأثير Snapchat كأداة للتعلم في تطوير تحصيل طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وإثبات فوائد Snapchat في تعلم اللغة المستهدفة. شاركت ست وخمسون طالبة في دراسة تجريبية ؛ تم إجراء المقارنات بين نتائج الاختبارات القبلية والبعدية بناءً على اختبار تحصيلي لدى شعبتين في السنة التحضيرية بجامعة طيبة بالمملكة العربية السعودية. تم تدريس الشعبة الأولى (مجموعة تجريبية) كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية الخاص بهم عبر Snapchat ، والأخرى (المجموعة الضابطة) تم تدريسها بالطرق التقليدية. أظهرت النتيجة عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في الاختبار التمهيدي. ومع ذلك، في الاختبار البعدي، كان متوسط درجة المجموعة التجريبية أعلى بكثير من المجموعة الضابطة. وأظهرت المقابلات أن استخدام المميزات الشائعة للقطات يمكن أن يوفر مواد أصلية تناسب اهتمامات الطلاب واحتياجاتهم في أداة ممتعة ومفيدة ومسلية لتعلم دروس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تدعم النتائج الأثر الإيجابي لـ Snapchat كطريقة تعليمية جديدة وملهمة، والتي ينصح المدرسون باستخدامها لخلق فرص ممارسة لغوية حقيقية خارج الفصل الدراسي.

كلمات افتاحية: سناب تشات ، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، تعلم اللغة ، الطريقة الاتصالية.

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Introduction

Mobile learning is in great demand locally and internationally, as shown by several international conferences based on English language learning in a mobile world. Moreover, the effects of COVID-19 have had a noticeable impact on schools around the world. The pause in in-classroom teaching did not cause a decrease in demand for teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) but rather an increase, with schools switching from face-to-face to online learning methods. Online sources, including social media, are quite possibly the most well-known and suitable apps to utilize for improving EFL students' skills. Snapchat is a social media app that gives students the chance to listen, speak, read, and write with real native speakers while allowing them to interact directly in real situations (Al Harbi, 2021).

Snapchat is a photo-sharing app that allows users to send photos and videos, add text, filters, lenses, or other effects, and share them with friends—so-called snaps. The main feature is that these snaps dissolve after a few seconds (Utz et al., 2015). Moreover, "Snapchat is both a messaging platform and a social network, with as a main characteristic its ephemeral nature, since the main content, named 'My Story', which is a series of videos or photos of the user, has an expiration date of 24 hours" (Gkoni et al., 2017, p. 1).

Snapchat is a new communicative technology to be considered in the exploration of new platforms as an important aspect of innovative pedagogical practice. As noted recently by scholars (Johannes, 2020; Al Fadda, 2020; Lee, 2019). Snapchat has gained rapidly in popularity, overtaking other communication technologies and becoming popular among younger people and EFL college-age users. Snapchat has become impossible to disregard, as its users' number in the millions and it is among the top 13 apps downloaded. According to a statistical report, there are nearly 300 million daily Snapchat users (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020). Most users are adults under the age of 35, and 76% of users spend half an hour per day on Snapchat (Aslam, 2018). The ages of learners using Snapchat vary widely. It is vital for students and teachers to collaborate in the use of technology in language learning, but this collaboration should be for pedagogical reasons (Manca, 2020). Social media is the most cost-effective way to increase learning outside the four walls of a classroom (Heatley & Lattimer, 2013). Using Snapchat is a great opportunity to give students a chance to use authentic materials based on a communicative approach. Experts in the field of TEFL confirm that the communicative approach in TEFL is one of the most effective methods (Umirova, 2020). Most of the research suggests that the level of authenticity involved in communicative activities is the main factor that determines whether a task is effective (Lööf, 2010). Snapchat could be a good resource for authentic materials, which is the basic element of the communicative approach. It enables students to communicate fluently and freely in interesting ways, practising the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in real-life situations to perform real functions (Gilmore, 2007).

In the communicative approach, authentic materials are more motivating than invented texts; they are more interesting and enjoyable for students than artificially constructed ones (Albiladi, 2019). Snapchat is full of lively and engaging authentic materials as well as a variety of activities and exercises based on the communicative approach to develop language skills and other aspects of language.

Statement of Problem

In Saudi institutions, English is taught as a foreign language, which means that it is not the language Saudis use for communication and learners do not have direct access to it outside the classroom context. The best way to learn a foreign language is continuous participation in real situations (Ibáñez et al, 2011). Unfortunately, EFL students at the university level usually lack opportunities to use the second language in authentic communication environments. Most Saudi students at the university level have weak basic communication skills and are unmotivated to participate in English conversations or write their reflections. They are anxious about their speech being mocked; speaking or reading aloud are considered as unfavourable and difficult tasks (Juraid & Ibrahim, 2016). Furthermore, students have problems of misunderstanding, as cultural differences may not arise in general education classroom learning because policy makers and publishers focus on the structure of the language rather than cultural information about the society (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). At the university level, where students

are required to engage with authentic materials, they need to enrich their cultural knowledge of the external society, and a teacher should facilitate tasks to avoid misunderstanding (Steffensen & Joag, 1984).

At this point, the study aimed to investigate the impact of using communicative activities via Snapchat on the development of EFL female students' achievement and establish the benefits of using Snapchat in learning the language.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned goal and context, the researcher formulated the following research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: What is the impact of using communicative activities via Snapchat on the development of English language proficiency among Saudi female EFL students?
- RQ2: What do students like most about using Snapchat in language learning?
- RQ3: How do students view the benefits of using Snapchat in learning EFL?

The following is the null hypothesis for addressing RQ1:

There is no significant difference in the average mean score on the English achievement, post-test between students taught using Snapchat (the experimental group) and those taught without it (the control group).

Significance of the Study

This study aims to improve students' EFL by using Snapchat as a platform to provide communicative activities and authentic materials in the learning process. It takes advantage of Snapchat's features to develop learners' linguistic competence and practice by performing communicative activities, which were not considered in previous studies.

The findings of this study suggest that Snapchat, as a new communicative technology, is an important aspect of pedagogical practice that fits the needs of the communicative approach and presents learners with opportunities to communicate in real-life activities. The growing demand for technology justifies the need to establish an effective educational tool such as Snapchat, which could provide authentic materials for real-life activities that suit learners' interests and needs. Curricula designers will be guided on what should be emphasised with the criteria and interests of learners in terms of the significance of using this app to improve EFL students' performance. The study will reveal the advantages of allowing students to create their own stories and focus on higher-order thinking skills by using digital learning. Thus, this study offers an empirical and practical method for learning EFL via Snapchat, guided by theory.

Research Limitations

This study has potential limitations that should be borne in mind when the findings are interpreted. This empirical study was limited to female EFL students in the preparatory year at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarrah, Saudi Arabia. It assessed students at a specific time during the first term of 2020 and used achievement tests and interviews as instruments for collecting data. The sample studied Q: Skills for Success, Level 2, published by Oxford. The study was limited to the use of Snapchat in learning EFL language skills and other aspects of the language. All participants were Saudi, with an average age of 19 to 21 years old, and their native language was Arabic.

Literature Review

The explosion of technology has led teachers to integrate it into their classrooms (Cennamo, Ross, & Ertmer, 2013). There has always been controversy regarding the value of using social media as a technological tool in teaching English, though Heatley and Lattimer (2013) claimed that "social media is the most cost-effective way to expand learning outside the four walls of your classroom" (p. 8).

Nowadays, many Saudi students use social media apps to support their English learning, and 35% of them use Snapchat (Alqarni, Lally, & Houston, 2019). Some teachers have started using Snapchat as a way to push learning outside of the classroom and onto their students' smartphones (Will, 2016). "While not originally educational in design, the app can be harnessed and adapted to meet a myriad of educational goals, creating an innovative way for educators to connect with students and to make classroom content come to life" (Coffman, 2017, p. 9). Moreover,

social media's effects, learners' satisfaction, and self-management of learning have significantly affected students' intentions to use smartphone apps for English language learning (Ahn, 2021).

Why use Snapchat as tool of learning?

Snapchat could be a good resource for educators and learners to search for and use authentic texts and materials in real-life situations in which language learning may occur. It is difficult to ignore Snapchat, as it is full of authentic materials and its users' number is in the millions (Taskiran, Gumusoglu, & Aydin, 2018). Traditionally, language teaching in Saudi Arabia, as in many other countries, has been teacher-centered and textbook-based, with little use of authentic materials and few opportunities for students to engage in real communication in the target language. However, recent years have seen a shift towards a communicative approach and growing interest in the use of digital technologies (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Learners all over the world tend to use social media platforms as mediators to learn (Al Rahmi et al., 2015). In this research, Snapchat is addressed as a learning tool. The Snapchat application reached 100 million users by 2015, and over 4 million snaps are sent and received every day, which is more than the number of posts on Facebook and Instagram combined (Juhász et al., 2018, p. 1). These facts emphasize the need to address the use of Snapchat as an educational platform. Using Snapchat and Instagram as a teaching method is easy, flexible, and collaborative (Al Fadda, 2020). It enables students to take their time to watch the snaps and learn at their own pace. Conditionally, they must watch stories within 24 hours based on the features of the app.

Snapchat is a particularly unique new communicative platform; it is a multimodal mobile messaging service that sends short-lived messages that users access only via a mobile device. For the purpose of language learning, Snapchat approaches both text and images as being of equal importance within the application. Users have up to ten seconds to view messages before they disappear, which develops a better understanding, motivates learners, and influences their interests. Snapchat has grown rapidly in popularity; it is vital to pedagogical practice and enhances learners' critical thinking (Lynch & Bartels, 2017). Little research has examined the effect of Snapchat on education in

particular, but many scholars agree on the value of using social media in general in EFL classrooms (Al Fadda, 2020; Alturki & Alharbi, 201; Burbules, 2016; Freyn, 2017).

Various types of social media influence the ways individuals communicate, and these effects prompt recommendations to use social media in educational settings. Young people, in particular, use Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat in increasing numbers. These are the platforms where they share and learn; consequently, it is anticipated that teachers will discover ways to utilize and integrate these technologies (Burbules, 2016). Based on a survey by Alturki and Alharbi (2018) on female students' participation in social networks at Saudi universities, Snapchat and Twitter are the most interesting apps for Saudi female students.

However, despite its effectiveness, some teachers think that social media has no place in the classroom and complain about their students' addiction to their cell phones. Burbules (2016) adds that, in any case, modern media comes with danger as well as positive potential outcomes. Creative teachers need to keep the advantages and disadvantages of social media in mind for learning purposes.

Al Fadda (2020) explored the impacts of social media on learning English, concentrating on mobile apps (Snapchat and Instagram) to develop speaking and reading skills. The study found that Snapchat is an effective social media platform for engaging learners in learning the English language, as it provides practical cultural knowledge and increases interactions. The author recommended further research to determine the impact of Snapchat on learners' English-speaking skills.

Freyn (2017) proved that using Snapchat with university EFL students increased their practise of English outside the classroom. Nine students at a small private university participated, using their Snapchat accounts to answer the teacher's questions posted before and after the lessons. The study confirmed that the use of Snapchat in an EFL classroom was a success, and students were engaged and excited.

Lööf (2010) examined the level of authenticity involved in teaching approaches and authentic materials used, intending to identify general attitudes towards the communicative approach and authentic materials. The researcher collected descriptive data through interviews, observations, and questionnaires among

senior high school students in Sweden and university teachers from Japan. Teachers reported great benefits from using a communicative approach. Other findings, however, revealed that it is difficult to constantly provide comprehensive and authentic input.

Coffman (2017) presented content and connected educators with high school and university learners via Snapchat. Photo clips provided public interest and opportunities for parents, educators, and students' engagement in informal fun. Snapchat was seen as a unique way to connect educators, students, and academic content outside of the classroom norm.

It is impossible to ignore Snapchat in language learning, as it allows users to communicate with native and non-native speakers and practise the language in real-life situations using authentic materials. Jin (2012) mentioned that "the features of various technologies enable more authentic and engaging interactions in L2 between learners and their speakers, including native speakers and non-native speakers of the target language" (p. 34). Salisbury and Pooley (2017) argued that almost all social-networking sites raised authenticity—directly or through language such as "real life" and "genuine"—in positive materials. They added, "With Snapchat, online and offline users interact in real time. We no longer have to capture the 'real world' and recreate it online—we simply live and communicate at the same time" (p. 12).

The Communicative Approach and Authentic Materials

The purpose of teaching language via the communicative approach is to help students use the language for communication. It focuses, therefore, on the need for comprehension and communicative classroom activities. Therefore, the communicative approach highlights students' use of the language, not for its own sake but to exchange ideas and information with others (Kilickaya, 2004).

Authentic materials are those used in the target culture for actual communicative needs. They are pieces of language from the "real world" that the teacher uses in the EFL classroom. Snapchat is considered full of authentic English examples and real stories, and students can be engaged and share their real stories with the class (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014).

Hockly (2015) mentioned that having learners connect with each other in real-life situations fits well with interactionist and sociocultural aspects of dialect learning. Some EFL instructors have rapidly grasped the benefits of putting their learners in touch with others through technology—whether L1 speakers of the target language or L2 foreign language learners—as a way of encouraging "authentic" communication and expanding learner motivation.

To sum up, previous studies support the idea of using Snapchat to learn a language (Ahn, 2021; Burbules, 2016; Lynch & Bartels, 2017; Marko, 2017). Previous research highlighted the importance of Snapchat, and some authors considered it the best strategy for learning languages (Alturki & Alharbi, 2018; Al Fadda, 2020; Freyn, 2017). According to Lööf (2010), Jin (2012), and Salisbury and Pooley (2017), it is evident from the studies that researchers have regarded Snapchat as a good source for authentic materials. In addition, some studies have examined the advantages of Snapchat in learning the language, such as Hockly (2015) and Al Fadda (2020). The aim of the current study is to help increase and improve students' EFL skills using Snapchat in their learning process. In the current study, the researcher takes advantage of Snapchat's features to develop learners' linguistic competence and enable them to engage in communicative activities. These activities include the ability to record videos, take photos, chat, access the feeds of popular media sites in English, and create individual and group stories. Furthermore, users can add text, drawings, links, stickers, filters, special effects, and sounds to videos and photos.

Methodology

The researcher adapted a quasi-experimental method and focus group interviews to address the research questions. A pre- and post-test design was used to discover whether using communicative activities via Snapchat is effective in facilitating the learning of EFL for preparatory-year students. The achievement tests were based on the students' usual coursebook, Q: Skills for Success, Level 2, Second Special Edition, published by Oxford. The researcher randomly selected two classes among fifteen in the preparatory year as the experimental group and the control group. The research took place in the first semester of the 2019–2020 academic year and lasted 10 weeks. The intervention involved one 30-minute class each week, in which both groups performed communicative activities based on units in the textbook, including, for example, performing brief spoken introductions, listening

to an interview to find the mistakes, and practising new vocabulary. The only difference was in whether activities were introduced via Snapchat or by the teacher as part of a traditional lesson. After the intervention, the researcher used short, open-ended questions to interview participants and elicit data about the students' attitudes. The main goal was to find out how students felt about the present programme and what they liked most about using Snapchat in language learning.

Regarding the interview data, the responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Firstly, the interview questions were designed based on the aim of the study. The interview data were examined, and categories related to the objectives were coded. The coded data was checked by an experienced professor. Both the researcher and the experienced professor have reached similar conclusions.

Sampling

The study population consisted of students in their preparatory year at Taibah University. The researcher selected two classes for sampling: class 1 for the experimental group and class 2 for the control group. Each class contained 28 students. Thus, the total population of the two classes comprised 56 female EFL students (the researcher could not access male students due to the segregated education system in Saudi Arabia). All participants' native language was Arabic, and they were beginners in EFL, with an average age of 19 to 21 years old. The study took place in Al-Madinah, West Saudi Arabia. The socioeconomic conditions and education levels of all students were similar.

The pre-test showed that the two groups were of a similar proficiency level, as shown by the non-significant difference in mean scores (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the pre-test

	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Pre-test	Control group	28	47.28	6.57	1.24175
	Experimental group	28	47.17	6.43	1.21613

Materials and research content

Snapchat has many significant features that teachers can use to develop learners' language achievement and help them practise communicative activities to enhance the four language skills. These features include the ability to record videos, take photos, chat, access the feeds of popular media sites in English, and create individual and group stories. Furthermore, learners can add text, drawings, links, stickers, filters, special effects, sounds, and costumes to their photos and videos. In the current study, teachers made use of the cultural knowledge found in authentic materials via Snapchat. The following is a summary of the data collection procedures:

1. 1. One student was asked to create a group and invite the teacher and the rest of the students to encourage them to use and practise the four language skills.
2. 2. The teacher posed a question with a funny filter and/or voice, and the students answered with filters and voice changes as well.
3. 3. The teacher posted snaps to students that required replies to encourage their speaking and writing.
4. 4. The teacher gave feedback to students, using stickers and emojis to motivate them.
5. 5. Since messages are only viewable for up to ten seconds before they disappear, students had to immediately repeat new vocabulary to enhance their ability to remember and repeat what they had listened to.
6. 6. Students listened to native speakers' conversations (involving new words or sentences), modelled the conversations, and explored the manner and place of articulation through rehearsal, "say and tell," or a camera.
7. 7. Every day, before or after English class, the teacher sent a snap, including a question to introduce the new topic or revise and check understanding.
8. 8. The teacher sent an image or short video related to the lesson and asked students to write a description of what was shown. Video offers authenticity—a wide variety of voices, accents, and real situations.
9. 9. The teacher posted Snapchats about new grammar, and then students wrote the answers.
10. 10. According to students' interests and needs, they selected content from a snap channel or top stories, followed the channel, and wrote a report about it.

Examples of communicative activities are reported in Appendix I.

As noted previously, the communicative activities in which students were involved during these weekly sessions were based on units in their regular textbook, and so the same activities were set for both experimental and control groups. As noted above, the difference was simply the use of Snapchat as the platform by which teachers presented activities and students performed them, versus the regular face-to-face classroom interaction in the control group.

Instrument

To gather data about language proficiency, both groups took identical pre- and post-tests covering listening and speaking skills, reading and writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The aim of conducting the pre-test was to make sure that there were no significant differences between the control group and the experimental group in their prior knowledge of English. The aim of conducting the post-test was to measure the effectiveness of using Snapchat in enhancing female students' EFL communicative competence.

The researcher developed an achievement test based on oral and written tests in the standard textbook, Q: Skills for Success, Level 2. In the oral test, three language-teaching scholars evaluated learners' aural skills using a rubric for assessing learners' abilities in content, grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. The maximum total score for aural skills was 20 points. The written test assessed other skills, containing 40 items divided into four main parts: reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Each skill contained ten items, and each item scored one mark. Students were asked to choose the correct words according to reading, fill in the blanks in conversation, match some words with their meanings, and write a short note. The maximum total score for written and aural tests was 60 points. Students were assessed on their performance on the test as a whole, not on individual skills.

To establish tests' reliability, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to test internal consistency and estimate the equivalence of items from the test (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). The total reliability of the achievement test was 0.85, indicating a high degree of internal consistency. Moreover, to confirm that the achievement test measured what it was designed to measure, it was evaluated by experts in educational studies and EFL specialists. Their notes and comments were carefully considered. Test questions were reformed according to their suggestions.

After the intervention, the researcher interviewed students in the experimental group with open-ended questions about their feelings about the experimental programme. Interviews took place in focus groups to investigate the second and third questions of the study: "What do students like most about using Snapchat in language learning?" and "How do students view the benefits of using Snapchat in learning EFL? Focus groups were used for the following reasons:

- They allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of how students felt about the experimental programme.
- The group was relatively homogeneous, and participants had similar backgrounds.
- Based on the tendency for humans to socialize and interact in groups, students in the focus group stimulated each other by responding to one another's thoughts.
- Conflicting feelings raised in the group could be illuminated.
- It can add more information than conducting individual interviews.
- It encourages participants who may not wish to be interviewed on their own or who feel shy.
- Finally, it saves time to interview a group of students together (Bolderston, 2012).

Data Analysis

The qualitative data (achievement test scores) were analysed using descriptive statistics: frequency, means, and standard deviations. A *t*-test was conducted to determine the significance of differences in mean scores between the two groups (taking 0.05 as the criterion *p*-value for significance) to answer RQ1.

To answer RQ2, participants' references to various previously identified features of Snapchat were analysed using a simple frequency count.

RQ3 was addressed descriptively, using examples of typical participant comments given in response to an open question about what benefits they perceived in the Snapchat intervention.

Results

To answer RQ1, the researcher tested the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the average mean score on the English achievement test between students taught using Snapchat (the experimental group) and those taught without it (the control group) in the post-test." The results of the analysis of the post-test scores are reported in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of the post-test

|	Groups	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*SEM*	*Median*
Post-test	Control group	28	48.53	5.88	1.11	48
	Experimental group	28	52.60	8.69	1.64	57

The mean score of the experimental group was 52.60 with a standard deviation of 8.69, while the control group's mean score was 48.53 with a standard deviation of 5.88.

Table
3 t-test analysis for students' achievement in the post-test

	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Posttest	0.00064	3.85	27	0.03	4.07	1.02

Table 3 shows a significant difference between the results of the control group and the experimental group. Students taught with Snapchat performed better than those taught by traditional methods, as their mean was higher than that of the control group. Moreover, the difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.85$, $p = 0.00064$). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis. The above results showed a positive effect from the use of Snapchat in teaching EFL students in the preparatory year, as represented by the level of EFL students' achievement on the test.
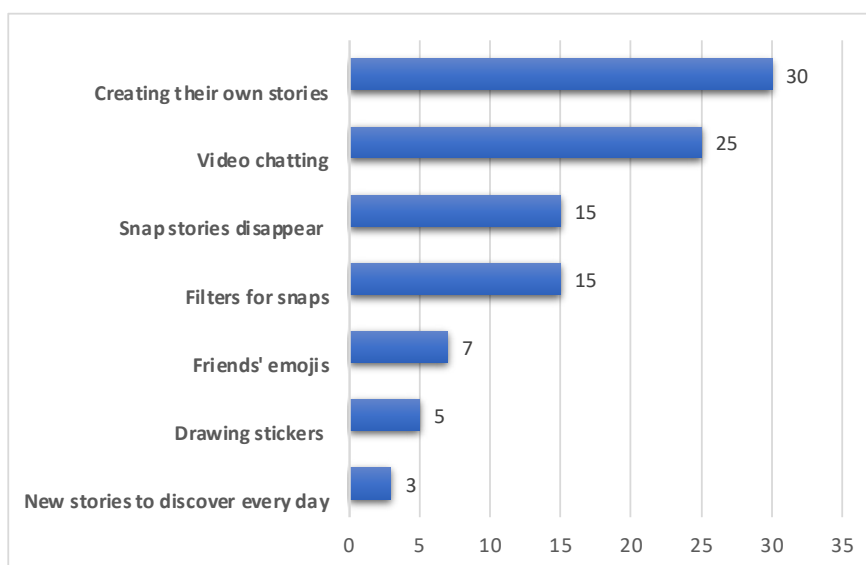
Figure 1 Students' favorite features of Snapchat used in language learning.

RQ2 and RQ3 were answered via focus group data on students' views about using Snapchat in language learning. The experimental group took part in focus group interviews and revealed positive responses to the programme. The RQ2 of the study was about the aspects that students liked most about using Snapchat in language learning. The results indicated that "creating their own stories" and "video chatting" were the most popular (30% and 25%, respectively).

For example, one participant commented, "Snapchat allows me to share daily snippets of my life with my friends in EFL activities, and my friends share their stories with me too."

These were followed by "snap stories disappear" and "filters for snaps" with 15% for each item, then "friends' emojis" with 7%. A few participants indicated enjoying "drawing stickers for snaps" and "new stories to discover every day" (5% and 3%, respectively). Some participants listed several features, such as the following examples: "I like using filters, stickers, and lenses to add special effects and backgrounds to stones" (see figure 1).

The RQ3 of the study was, "How do students view the benefits of using Snapchat in learning EFL?" The interview revealed that overall, students were satisfied with the experimental programme, and thought it addressed their needs and interests. They found Snapchat to be a good source for authentic materials. They saw it as an amusing, valuable, attractive, and enjoyable tool for learning EFL lessons.

In particular, participants commented on the confidence they gained from using Snapchat, which avoided the pressures inherent in both traditional lessons and other social media, as in the following examples:

"It allows me to practise the language without fear of mistakes".

"The good thing about Snapchat is that it doesn't have comments, likes, dislikes, or sharing" (which could lead to some users feeling inadequate).

Discussion

This paper has demonstrated the effect of using communicative activities via Snapchat on the development of EFL female students' achievement and provided evidence of the benefits of using Snapchat in learning a language. Overall, the findings confirm that Snapchat is an effective platform for teaching English and en-

hances learning of the language. The average score of the experimental group on the achievement test was higher than the average score of the control group. The results of the present study agree with those of Al Harbi (2021), Lynch and Bartels (2017), and Freyn (2017) on the positive effect of teaching using Snapchat to increase academic achievement. Accordingly, Snapchat has a positive impact on teaching in terms of increasing academic achievements for EFL learners.

The main question for the present study was whether there would be a significant difference between the two groups. Findings showed a significant difference between them, revealing that Snapchat was an effective strategy for teaching EFL. This may be because students found plenty of authentic materials for real-world communicative needs. Assignments required them to select authentic materials that suited their interests and needs, as revealed by Gilmore (2007), Lööf (2011), Salisbury and Pooley (2017), and Albiladi (2009). Learners could learn how to communicate freely with people; the ways teachers interacted and communicated helped and encouraged students to improve their speaking skills, which is the most neglected skill (Al-Khresheh, Khaerurrozikin, & Zaid, 2020). Students found Snapchat to be a useful, flexible, and entertaining way to learn English. Students found Snapchat interesting; when the teacher quoted educational phrases from movies or cartoons or posted phrases with pictures and videos, students were motivated to find these phrases used in real situations, as the result matches Freyn (2017) and Al Fadda (2020). Many students interacted beautifully with the lessons because of their firm desire to learn and increase their authentic knowledge about practising the language. They found it useful because self-learning is the best way to make learning a language easier and faster. Finally, the evidence supports the use of Snapchat as an effective strategy in teaching to foster the best results. Snapchat is considered one of the most useful social media platforms for learners to use English in a simple, attractive way. It is an inspiring strategy that can encourage learners to listen to, speak, read, and write English daily.

Conclusion

Recent research confirms that much EFL learning occurs via social media due to the time learners spend

on it and because it has become a habit of their daily lives. Based on the analysis of the findings, it can be concluded that Snapchat had a positive empirical impact on developing English proficiency. Snapchat features are important factors to consider when designing curricula for learning the target language. It is suggested for teachers to apply Snapchat strategies in activities outside the classroom, as it has revealed benefits in engaging learners in communicative activities. Training courses should be provided for EFL teachers to help them practise using various features of Snapchat in learning activities. Additionally, it may be worth taking this opportunity to integrate the use of Snapchat into EFL curricula, such as by providing authentic materials that encourage real language use in real situations and develop an understanding of the target culture. The responses in the interviews reflected the benefits of using Snapchat as a strategy to practise the language and enrich students' vocabulary when creating their own stories and using video chatting. Snapchat is considered a new, positive, and pedagogical platform. Students found it a stimulating, pleasant, and inspiring experience. Further investigations on the topic should address the effect of other types of social media on the four English skills or the influence on each skill separately, the effects of Snapchat on language proficiency, and other variables, such as motivation for learning the target language. This study opens the door for further research on the same topic but with male EFL learners to overcome the limitations of this study. This study contributes to the body of knowledge as the use of social media in education is accepted but still limited.

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Appendix I Examples of various communicative activities via Snapchat