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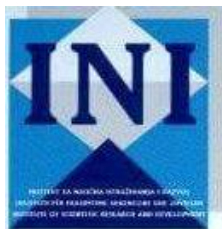
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SOCIAL MEDIA AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE PARLIAMENT OF MONTENEGRO

Sonja Ilić, MSc, PhD Candidate,
University “Mediterranean”, Podgorica (MNE)
infomonte@t-com.me

Apstrakt

Ovaj rad istražuje uticaj kvaliteta sadržaja, segmentacije ciljne publike i diverzifikacije objava na angažman korisnika na društvenim mrežama, sa posebnim fokusom na Skupštinu Crne Gore. Oslanjajući se na anketu sprovedenu među 85 zaposlenih u Skupštini i analizu sadržaja sa zvaničnih naloga ove institucije na društvenim mrežama, studija ispituje na koji način personalizovane digitalne strategije mogu doprinijeti jačanju povjerenja i podstaći učešće građana. Nalazi naglašavaju značaj raznovrsnosti sadržaja - poput video-materijala, infografika, prenosa uživo, vebinara i Q&A sesija, koji omogućavaju dvosmjernu komunikaciju i otvaraju prostor za smislen dijalog s javnošću. Takođe, segmentacija usmjerena ka specifičnim ciljnim grupama, uključujući mlade i profesionalce, povećava i relevantnost i efikasnost komunikacije. Integracija savremenih tehnologija, uključujući chatbotove i analitiku podataka, podržava personalizovanu interakciju i omogućava Skupštini da bolje razumije i odgovori na potrebe građana, čime se jača demokratski legitimitet u savremenom digitalnom okruženju.

Ključne riječi: društvene mreže, angažman, parlament, segmentacija, povjerenje

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of content quality, target audience segmentation, and content diversification on social media engagement, with a specific focus on the Parliament of Montenegro. Drawing on a survey of 85 staff members of the Parliament, combined with an analysis of its official social media channels, this study examines how tailored digital strategies can build public trust and stimulate citizen participation. The findings highlight the importance of content diversity, including videos, infographics, live streams, webinars, and Q&A sessions, which enable reciprocal communication and foster meaningful dialogue with the public. In addition, segmentation directed at specific audiences, such as young people and professionals, increases both the relevance and effectiveness of communication. The integration of emerging technologies, including chatbots and data analytics, supports personalised interaction and enables the Parliament to better understand and respond to citizens' needs, thereby reinforcing democratic legitimacy in the digital era.

Keywords: social media, engagement, parliament, segmentation, trust

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the role of social media as a contemporary marketing tool in institutional communication, with a specific focus on the Parliament of Montenegro. It examines how content quality, audience segmentation, and content diversification influence user engagement, as well as how digital communication strategies support two-way interaction and help build public trust in parliamentary institutions. As noted by Leston-Bandeira and Bender (2013, p. 2), social media can transform information sharing into deeper understanding, identity formation, and ultimately, active participation.

Social media plays a central role in institutional outreach and public visibility, reshaping how institutions engage with citizens. Although the Montenegrin Parliament uses digital platforms to disseminate political information, interactivity and citizen participation remain limited. This represents a valuable opportunity to reinforce participatory culture through more dynamic and personalised communication.

This study explores the relationship between digital communication and institutional transparency, advocating for inclusive and interactive models of parliamentary engagement. By adopting strategies that include high-quality content, targeted messaging, and technological tools such as data analytics and chatbots, parliaments can better identify and respond to citizens' needs, thereby reinforcing institutional credibility.

Digital tools, including social networks, websites, and email, are increasingly used to personalise political messaging and support civic involvement (Chadwick, 2013, p. 122). These platforms enable content creation and exchange within online communities (Obar and Wildman, 2015), while interactive profiles empower users to generate and disseminate information (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Gardašević et al. (2018) highlight the significance of understanding these networks as central to modern communication and marketing practices.

The choice of platform and communication strategy depends on institutional objectives (Krstić and Đurđević, 2017). Contemporary political communication increasingly relies on social media, which are used by government officials, political organisations, and citizens to interact and shape influence (Ignatova, Ivichev, and Khusnoiarov, 2017). These platforms also enable surveillance, propaganda, and opinion evaluation, redefining the relationship between citizens and the state (Qin et al., 2011; Marić et al., 2017). To preserve neutrality and institutional integrity, parliaments, following Canadian recommendations, should adopt clear guidelines and ethical standards for staff use of social media, ensuring that boundaries between private expression and official communication are maintained (Armitage, 2012, pp. 36–39).

Integrating social media into parliamentary operations increases transparency and enables direct interaction (Coleman and Blumler, 2009; Griffith and Leston-Bandeira, 2012). Facebook and YouTube currently dominate user engagement (Anadolija, 2024; Čavić, 2025), while TikTok and Instagram are emerging as platforms with growing political relevance. Recent trends, including authentic content, artificial intelligence, and digital community-building, further highlight the democratic potential of these tools (Loopia, 2024).

Parliaments in the United Kingdom and the European Union increasingly recognise the role of social media in fostering civic participation (Digital Democracy Commission, 2015; IPU, 2019). A consistent and strategic approach, rather than ad hoc use, is essential for building trust and improving citizen interaction. The UNDP's digital governance initiative further suggests that digital platforms can enhance institutional resilience and public confidence (UNDP, 2016).

Even though parliaments differ from commercial brands, political marketing plays a critical role in shaping public perception. When used strategically, social media enable parliaments to embody transparency and facilitate two-way communication (Park, Hyun, and Thavisay, 2021; Parliament of Montenegro Research Centre, 2020).

Ahmad (2017) builds on Lees-Marshment's framework, which identifies three political marketing models: product-oriented, sales-oriented, and market-oriented. The last of these, which focuses on dialogue and adapting institutional practices to citizens' needs, is most applicable to parliaments seeking to revitalise democratic interaction (Lees-Marshment, 2003, 2004, as cited in Ahmad, 2017, p. 76). As Petrović (2016, p. 399) notes, social media facilitates political participation by activating new actors and encouraging real-world involvement, thereby directly supporting democratic development.

Parliamentary institutions today must maintain relevance while enabling meaningful democratic participation. Despite widespread interest in politics, especially among youth, there is increasing evidence of a decline in political efficacy (Prior, 2022). This coincides with a rise in informal and accessible forms of political expression via social media. Yet fewer than 20 per cent of parliaments actively use digital forums and debates (Serra-Silva, 2018). While the United Kingdom has embraced targeted consultations, Portugal relies on permanent forums with limited citizen uptake.

Germany's Bundestag exemplifies best practices by using social media not only to inform but also to foster dialogue and support the formation of public opinion. It operates across various platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Mastodon, Bluesky, and X, and is guided by principles of neutrality, professionalism, and inclusiveness (Konzept des Deutschen Bundestages für die Kommunikation in sozialen Medien, 2023, pp. 1–3).

Estonia and New Zealand offer further insight. Estonia employs AI tools in its e-Parliament systems for transcription and legislative analysis, while New Zealand uses Instagram and YouTube to deliver youth-oriented, multilingual content. These examples highlight how digital innovation can enhance accessibility and boost engagement, particularly among younger audiences.

The Montenegrin Parliament has made important strides in digitalisation, including live streaming, e-petitions, and AI-driven tools such as the AI Lex system (Skupština Crne Gore, 2025). However, interactivity remains limited. Practices from Estonia suggest that influencer collaboration and authentic formats can expand reach. Miltsov (2022) notes that TikTok, for example, helps adolescents express opinions and shape their identity.

The Parliament of Georgia's strategy for the period 2019 to 2020 serves as a valuable reference point. It emphasises targeted promotions, platform-appropriate content, and transparency through performance monitoring. It also advocates for youth-focused communication, including internship

posts, open calls, educational videos, and behind-the-scenes material (Parliament of Georgia, 2019, pp. 4–21).

These comparative insights inform strategic recommendations for enhancing the Montenegrin Parliament's digital communication. Crucially, digital transformation must address both technical infrastructure and communicative strategy. Tools such as Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), AI analytics, and chatbot interfaces can help sustain long-term civic engagement and institutional credibility.

The paper is structured into six interrelated chapters. The first outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework, with a focus on digital democracy, political marketing, and institutional communication. The second details the methodology, including mixed-method approaches, sampling, and statistical techniques. The third analyses current communication practices. The fourth presents findings from the empirical study. The fifth explores broader implications and comparative models. The sixth offers strategic conclusions for strengthening transparency, participation, and public trust in legislative institutions.

Ultimately, the key question remains: Are parliaments truly ready not only to provide access to information but also to offer genuine opportunities for active citizen participation?

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Social media has become a key tool in redefining the relationship between legislative authorities and citizens, particularly in the context of institutional communication through digital technologies. This study aims to analyse the role of the Montenegrin Parliament's social media presence in fostering civic engagement and building public trust. Special attention is given to three factors: content quality, audience segmentation, and post diversification, which are examined through the lens of contemporary institutional digital communication.

These factors were operationalised through variables measuring perceptions of communication efficiency, interaction quality, and barriers to two-way communication. These variables serve as indicators of content quality, segmentation, and diversification. Demographic characteristics, such as age and education level, and behavioural patterns, for example following official institutional accounts, were also considered as potential factors influencing these perceptions. Although no formal moderation analyses were conducted using regression models with interaction terms, inferential statistical tests, including the Chi-square test, the Kruskal–Wallis test, and the Mann–Whitney U test, were applied to examine group differences and assess potential moderating effects.

The central research question derived from these objectives is: Do content quality, audience segmentation, and post diversification on the Montenegrin Parliament's social media platforms influence citizen engagement and trust in the institution?

The methodological approach combined quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical-comparative methods. The quantitative segment included a survey conducted in February 2025 with employees of the Parliament of Montenegro's Professional Service. The questionnaire covered perceptions of efficiency, openness, and perceived limitations in digital communication with citizens. The sample

included 85 respondents, and the data were analysed using SPSS software, focusing on correlational and inferential statistics. Spearman's correlation analysis explored relationships between variables. The Chi-square test assessed associations between age and perceived efficiency. The Kruskal–Wallis test examined differences in interaction quality by education level, while the Mann–Whitney U test compared responses based on whether participants followed institutional accounts. Descriptive analysis was used to summarise average ratings and standard deviations regarding digital interaction and communication constraints.

Additional insights were drawn from a previous internal study involving 62 employees of the Montenegrin Parliament.¹ This study included questions about the integration of MPs' digital profiles on the Parliament's website and the perceived role of artificial intelligence in enhancing engagement. These findings complemented the main study and provided a deeper understanding of institutional capacities, digital literacy, and readiness for strategic digital transformation.

The qualitative component involved content analysis of posts from the Parliament's official social media accounts, namely Facebook, Instagram, and X, published between 1 and 28 February 2025. The analysis focused on post frequency, content formats, visual elements, and levels of user engagement.

Based on the findings, a SWOT analysis was conducted to identify key dimensions of the Parliament's communication via social media, specifically its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Additional depth was provided by comparing practices in Estonia and Georgia.

The theoretical framework integrates political marketing models (Lees-Marshment), digital democracy principles (Coleman and Blumler), theories of personalised political communication (Chadwick), and modern perspectives on digital engagement (Prior, Serra-Silva). This interdisciplinary approach supports a multidimensional interpretation of institutional communication.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in advancing theoretical approaches to public sector communication through social media, particularly within parliamentary institutions. Its social relevance is reflected in its potential to improve democratic processes and citizen participation through digital channels. Furthermore, it provides empirical insight into how parliamentary institutions in Southeast Europe, amid EU integration, approach social media use.

Although the sample is not representative of the general public, the fact that participants are directly involved in parliamentary operations adds specific value to the findings, offering insight into practical challenges and opportunities in institutional communication. Limitations related to sample size and composition highlight the need for future research involving citizens and focus groups as end-users of parliamentary services. While this is not a longitudinal study, the three-

¹ The internal research conducted between December 2024 and February 2025 was carried out by the author using a survey instrument entitled *Perceptions of Digital Tools and Integrated Marketing Communications in the Parliament of Montenegro*, as part of the broader research project *Integrated Marketing Communications in the Digital Age: How Digital Platforms Are Transforming Parliamentary Engagement with Citizens*. The author is employed by the Parliament of Montenegro as Head of the Web Presentation Department.

month research period provides sufficient methodological consistency for a reliable analysis of communication patterns.

This multidimensional methodological design supports the formulation of strategic guidelines to strengthen public trust and participatory democracy. It also enables a comprehensive assessment of how content quality, audience segmentation, and post diversification influence perceptions of communication efficiency, interaction, and institutional trust.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION - A CASE STUDY OF THE MONTENEGRIN PARLIAMENT

To assess the communicative potential of the Montenegrin Parliament on social media, a survey was conducted in February 2025 among 85 participants, comprising employees of the Parliament's Professional Service.

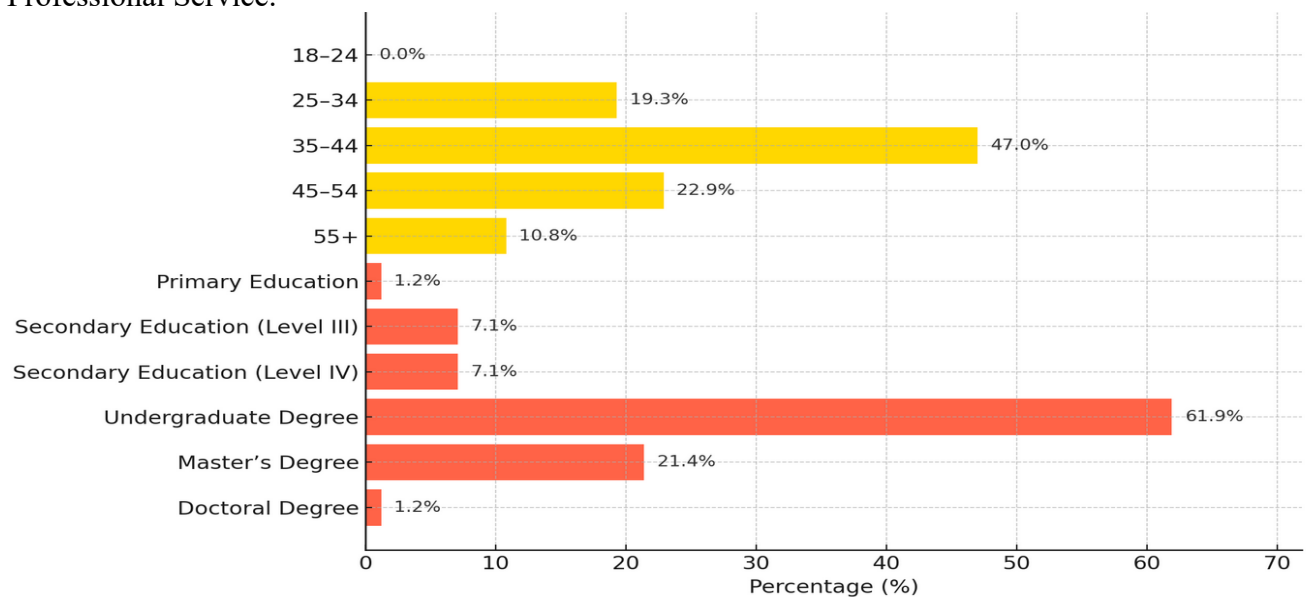


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by age and education level (expressed as percentages)

The focus of the research was on the perception of the efficiency, interactivity, and impact of digital channels on citizen engagement and trust.

The results indicate a moderate level of trust in social media as sources of information about the institution's work. More than half of the respondents (54.2%) believe that social media partially enables citizens to access information, while 28.9% consider these channels to be effective. However, a certain segment (16.9%) remains sceptical, highlighting the limited impact of the current digital content.

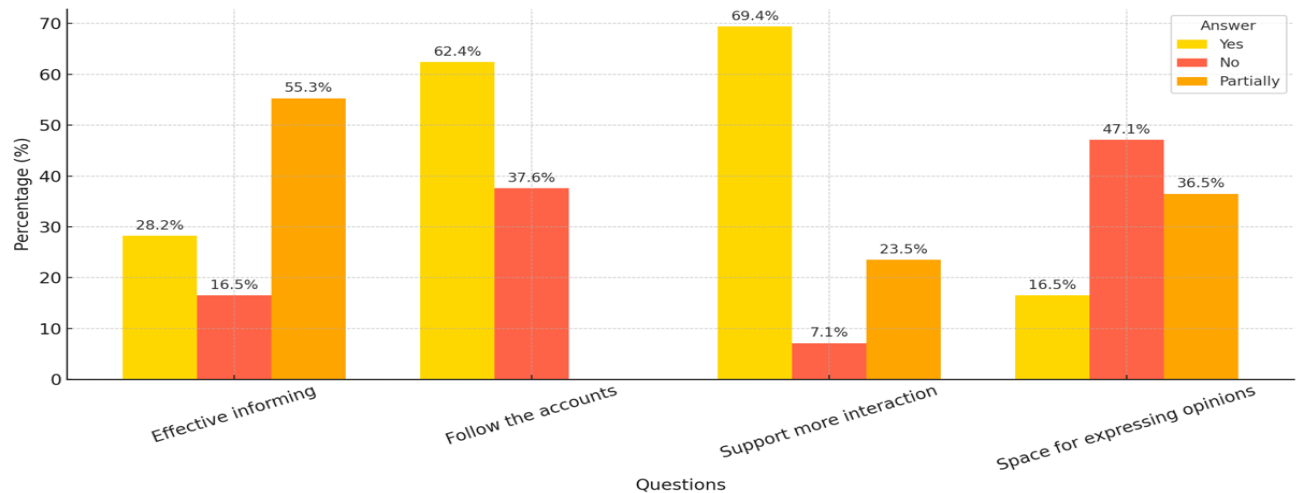


Figure 2. Respondents' views on the informational function and interactive potential of the Montenegrin Parliament's social media presence

The findings reveal clear ambivalence in respondents' perceptions regarding both the effectiveness of institutional communication via social media and the extent to which these platforms facilitate citizens' expression of opinion. Although a majority report following the Parliament's official accounts, the results point to prevailing scepticism towards existing mechanisms for interaction and two-way communication. Importantly, the data reflect a strong demand for more substantial digital participation, as well as widespread support for the development of advanced interactive formats aimed at enhancing citizen engagement. The perception of limited bidirectional communication is particularly troubling, as it reflects a continued reliance on unidirectional messaging - an approach fundamentally misaligned with the core principles of digital democracy, which prioritise interactivity, institutional responsiveness, and reciprocal exchange. It is also characteristic that a significant number of respondents do not follow the accounts, which implies that the content is not sufficiently engaging, even for internal audiences.

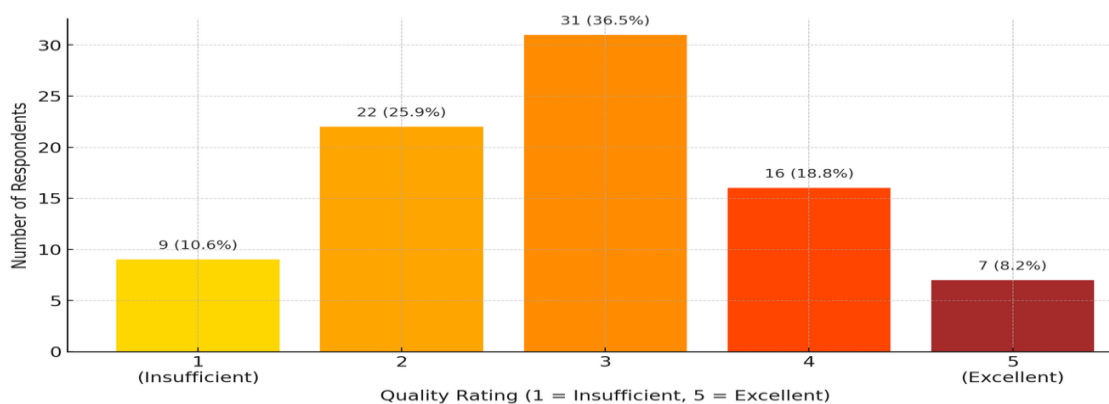


Figure 3. Evaluation of citizens' perceptions of the quality of interaction with the Parliament of Montenegro via social media

The assessment of the current level of citizen engagement is low, with an average score of 2.88 (on a scale from 1 to 5), with the most frequently assigned scores being 2 and 3.

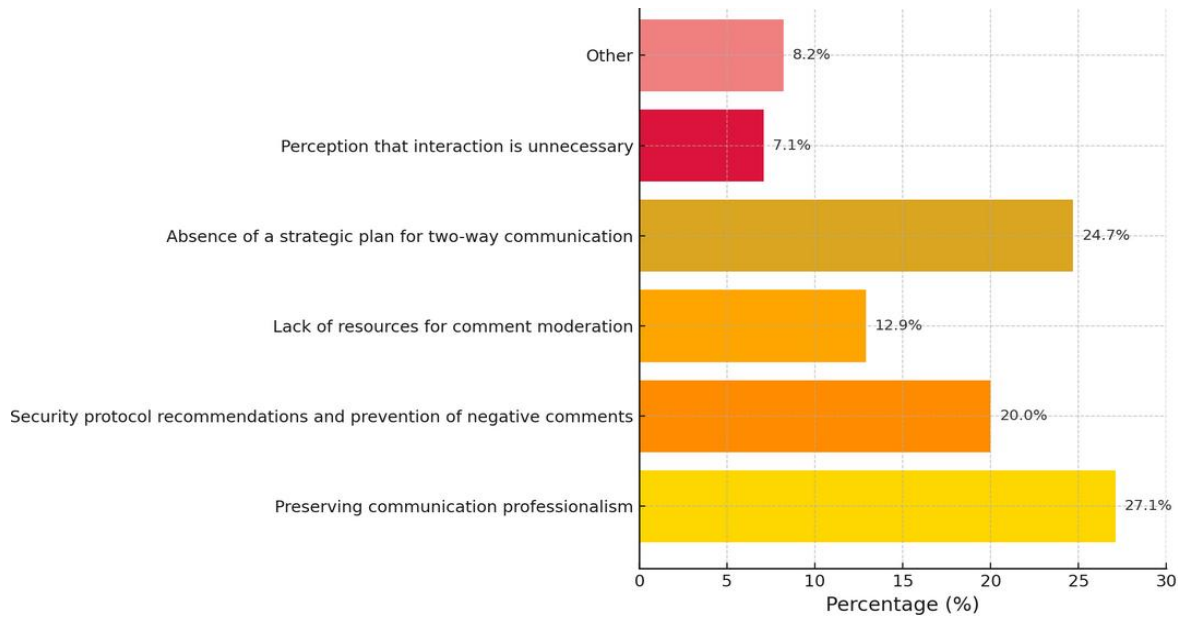


Figure 4. Perceptions of barriers to enabling two-way communication on the Parliament's social media channels

The presented data indicate that respondents predominantly perceive technical and organisational constraints as key barriers to enabling two-way communication via the Parliament's social media platforms. Concerns regarding the potential misuse of comment sections and a lack of human resources for moderation emerge as the most frequently cited reasons. These perceptions indicate a cautious institutional stance on open digital formats and highlight the need to develop strategies that balance transparency with responsible digital content management. In this context, the findings reaffirm the challenges identified by Coleman and Blumler (2009) in the transition from one-way information dissemination to participatory digital democracy, where it is essential to ensure both institutional control and citizen engagement.

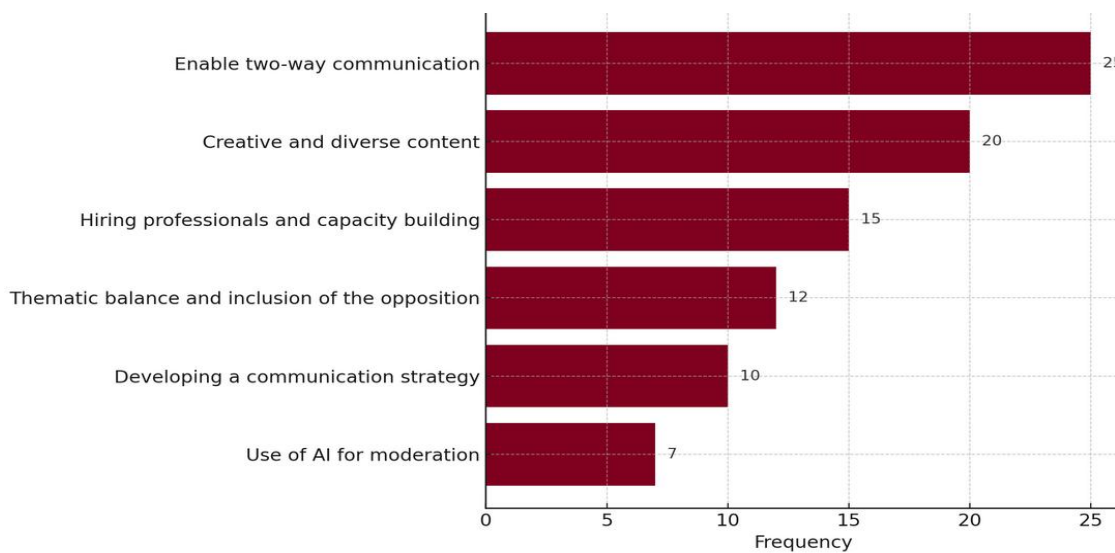


Figure 5. Recommendations identified through qualitative analysis of open-ended responses

The qualitative dimension of the research was further enriched by an analysis of responses to an open-ended question aimed at identifying ways to enhance two-way communication and content delivery via social media platforms. The following key themes systematically emerged from the data:

1. **Facilitating open interaction with citizens:** A majority of respondents emphasised the need to enable comment functionalities, citizen-led inquiries, and participation in discussions - thus overcoming the limitations of unidirectional information dissemination.
2. **Professionalisation of digital communication:** The employment of experts in digital marketing, communication, and moderation is viewed as a necessary step towards a more effective and substantively enriched institutional presence.
3. **Content and visual innovation:** Suggestions included the use of infographics, video materials, live broadcasts, event announcements, and educational posts covering topics relevant to diverse target groups, including youth and the general public.
4. **Thematic inclusivity:** Respondents underscored the importance of incorporating opposition perspectives, fostering pluralism of opinion, and ensuring balance in the presentation of parliamentary activities, in order to address and reduce perceptions of political bias.
5. **Formulation of a digital communication strategy:** A clear need was expressed for the development of a comprehensive strategic document to define guidelines for interaction, comment management, moderation, and publishing standards.
6. **Technological innovation:** Some participants recommended the use of artificial intelligence for automated content moderation, aiming to enhance transparency while preserving the security of the digital environment.

This research reveals a significant opportunity to improve the institutional presence on social media through the implementation of two-way communication, the professionalisation of communication practices, and the strengthening of transparency. Such developments would make Parliament more accessible to citizens and reinforce its function as a public service institution in the digital era. Accordingly, the findings confirm that employees themselves recognise those very dimensions of digital strategy that are both theoretically grounded and empirically linked to higher levels of civic engagement and public trust.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of strategic potentials and challenges in the digital communication of the Parliament of Montenegro via social media

Strenghts	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active presence on social media platforms • Official YouTube channel broadcasting all sessions and events live • Use of Flickr as a key platform for archiving and sharing photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identical content across all platforms • Lack of content diversity • One-way communication without comment functionality • Absence of dedicated accounts for parliamentary working bodies • Discontinued activity of the official Viber community • Underutilisation of the educational and institutional potential of communication materials • No presence on LinkedIn • Lack of interaction through the official YouTube channel • Absence of a storytelling approach in communication • Limited use of interactive formats (e.g., webinars) aimed at both MPs and citizens • Lack of "behind-the-scenes" content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of two-way communication via social media • Platform-specific communication strategies • Introduction of AI-based moderation and comment filtering tools • Improving technical infrastructure for the application of artificial intelligence • Aligning digital policies with legal frameworks • Launch of the Archibot 3.0 tool • Establishment of a dedicated section for public Q&A with MPs • Educational content as a tool for civic engagement and reputation building • Expansion of the "Barbara Prammer" network of democratic workshops • Opening a public platform for strengthening citizen engagement • Monthly and semi-annual digital communication reports • Integration with the e-Parliament system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid evolution of social media and emerging platforms • Inadequate professional management of digital content • Spread of disinformation and inappropriate comments • Open comment sections perceived as risky • Risk of misinterpretation of information • Delayed or absent responses to negative comments • Data protection and privacy concerns

In response to the need for a more comprehensive evaluation of the communication potential of the Parliament of Montenegro on social media, a SWOT analysis was undertaken, grounded in previously presented survey findings and qualitative insights. The objective of this analysis is to systematically identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the institution's presence on social media, thereby enabling a more precise definition of strategic directions for improvement. Furthermore, this analytical framework offers an opportunity to refine and clearly delineate the conceptual foundations of the study, contributing to a deeper understanding of the specific challenges and prospects within the digital communication landscape.

The SWOT analysis of the Parliament of Montenegro's social media engagement provides a comprehensive overview of the institution's existing capacities and identifies the principal factors shaping its online presence. Among the most notable strengths are the institution's active presence across multiple platforms and its utilisation of multimedia tools—such as YouTube and Flickr—which enhance transparency and promote public access to parliamentary activities.

At the same time, the analysis reveals several structural weaknesses, including content uniformity, limited interaction with citizens, inadequate adaptation to platform-specific features, and the

absence of a presence on professional networks such as LinkedIn. These limitations constrain broader public engagement and impede effective citizen participation in legislative processes.

Conversely, the identified opportunities signal considerable potential for enhancing digital communication through two-way interaction, the implementation of personalised content strategies, the application of artificial intelligence, and integration with systems such as the e-Parliament, which is already developed and operationally viable.

Nevertheless, the threats associated with the rapidly evolving social media environment necessitate a cautious institutional approach—highlighting risks related to disinformation, algorithmic manipulation, excessive automation, and legal concerns surrounding data protection. These issues present significant challenges to institutional credibility and the maintenance of public trust.

In sum, the SWOT analysis affirms that, while the Parliament of Montenegro's social media presence constitutes a valuable digital asset, it remains an underutilised resource for advancing democratic participation and fostering trust between citizens and public institutions. By further clarifying these conceptual dimensions and assessing their strategic implications, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the evolving interface between institutional communication and digital public engagement.

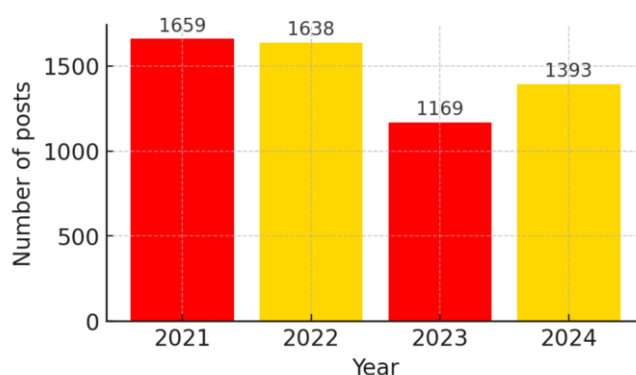


Figure 5. Number of posts on the social media accounts of the Parliament of Montenegro, 2021–2024.²

In light of the research findings, an overview of the number of social media posts from the Parliament of Montenegro between 2021 and 2024 has been included. Although the overall volume of posts reflects a certain level of institutional activity, the data reveal a pattern of stagnation, with no sustained upward trend. The decline observed in 2023, followed by a modest recovery in 2024, indicates that posting frequency on its own is insufficient to encourage deeper citizen engagement. The absence of two-way communication and a lack of visually engaging content have been identified as key limiting factors. Accordingly, it is recommended that future efforts prioritise content quality, platform-specific adaptation, targeted communication, and the development of more innovative and interactive formats.

² The internal analysis of the digital activities of the official accounts of the Parliament of Montenegro, conducted by the author, who is employed at the Parliament of Montenegro as the head of the Department for Internet Presentation.

Insights from the previous internal study: As part of a broader research framework focused on the digital transformation of the Parliament of Montenegro, a prior internal study titled “*Perceptions of Digital Tools and Integrated Marketing Communications in the Parliament of Montenegro*”³ was conducted. The research was carried out using a structured survey, which was administered to a sample of 62 employees from the Parliamentary Service, covering diverse age and educational profiles. This composition provided a representative insight into institutional perceptions concerning digital tools and strategic communication. Among other topics, the questionnaire featured two items specifically focused on the perceived role of social media and artificial intelligence in promoting transparency and facilitating interaction with citizens.

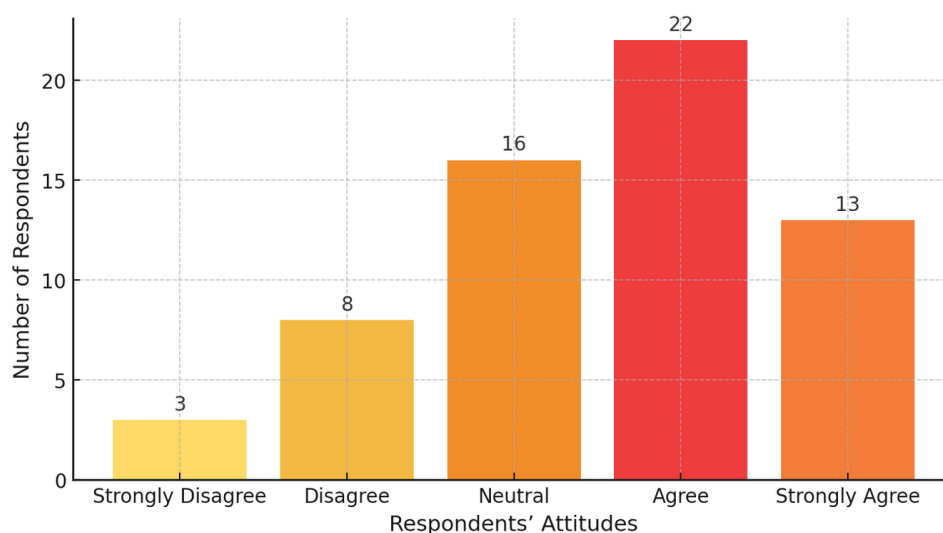


Figure 6. Respondents' views on including links to MPs' digital profiles on the Parliament of Montenegro's website

The research shows that more than half of the respondents (56.5%) express a positive attitude towards the integration of hyperlinks to MPs' digital profiles on the official Parliament website. This result reflects institutional awareness of the need to enhance the accessibility of elected representatives and to transition from unilateral, formalised modes of communication to more open and personalised digital formats. It also affirms the perception that MPs, as legitimate representatives of the citizens, should not limit their communication to traditional press releases, but rather establish more direct and transparent digital channels of interaction with the public - thereby contributing to strengthened democratic accountability and increased public trust in institutions.

³ Ibid.

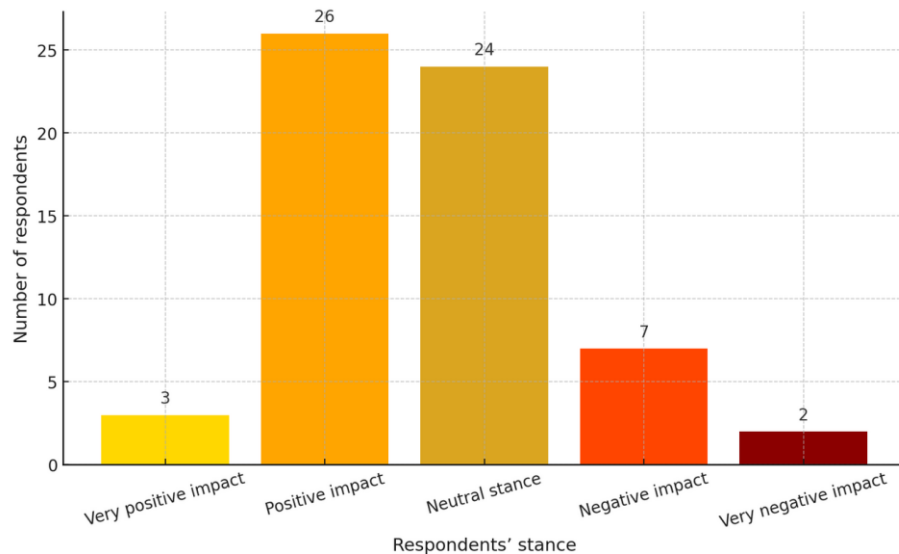


Figure 7. Respondents' stance on the effects of artificial intelligence on transparency and communication with citizens⁴

The results show that the largest number of respondents (29 individuals, or 46.8%) express a positive attitude towards the effects of artificial intelligence on transparency and communication with citizens. A neutral stance accounts for nearly the same proportion (38.7%), indicating a degree of caution and a need for further information on the potential and limitations of AI technologies. Negative attitudes (14.5%) are less prominent, yet they reflect concerns regarding the ethical, legal, and communicative aspects of digital automation. These findings suggest a complex picture of institutional perceptions, characterised by a moderately favourable view, but also underscoring the need for further reflection and the formulation of strategies for responsible digital transformation.

The role of social media in youth political engagement: A comparison between Estonia and Montenegro: In the context of digital transformation, social media plays a pivotal role in shaping political engagement, particularly among younger demographics. Estonia stands out as a country that employs innovative approaches to digital communication, whereas Montenegro has only recently begun to integrate social media into its institutional communication strategies, with full integration still lacking.

The Estonian Parliament has acknowledged the significance of maintaining a presence on platforms favoured by younger generations. A prominent example includes its collaboration with Goal Marketing and influencer Roosabanaanike, aimed at increasing the number of young followers on Instagram and Facebook (Tooming, 2024). This campaign adopts a direct, personalised approach, incorporating humour and everyday themes to portray members of parliament as accessible and connected to the community. Such efforts aim to reduce the perceived distance between institutions and young citizens, aligning with broader trends in digital democracy.

⁴ Internal survey conducted among employees of the Parliament of Montenegro, December 2024 – February 2025, based on institutional insights and research carried out by the author in her official capacity.

Beyond institutional campaigns, research indicates that young Estonians utilise social media to express political views in ways that may not be explicitly political but are rather creative and symbolic—for example, through parody, humour, and memes (Thorson, 2014). However, despite high levels of digital literacy and technological integration, limitations persist. Young people often avoid direct political expression due to concerns about misinterpretation and social repercussions. Social media thus functions not only as a space for freedom of expression but also as a complex environment requiring a balance between authenticity and self-regulation.

The Estonian case study, as presented by Allaste and Saari, illustrates that social media enables specific forms of political expression, particularly among youth who tend to favour indirect forms of engagement such as humour, parody and suggestive posts. This form of "subactivism" allows participation in political discourse without direct confrontation, a factor especially significant in contexts marked by low institutional trust. Approaches that blend emotional relevance and personalised content contribute to greater civic engagement and a heightened sense of inclusion, thereby affirming the importance of content quality and form in institutional communication on social media (Allaste & Saari, 2020).

In contrast, Montenegro only established a social media presence for parliamentary communication at the end of 2020, yet without enabling reciprocal interaction. While there is a digital presence, actual engagement remains limited. Posts on social media predominantly focus on the activities of the Speaker of the Parliament, the Vice-Speaker, and the three Deputy Speakers, with these posts being identical across all platforms, including the official website of the Parliament of Montenegro⁵. Meanwhile, key content such as educational materials, reports, session broadcasts, and inclusive programmes are notably absent, thereby missing the opportunity to foster an active and informed citizen community, particularly among young people.

In this regard, the Estonian model demonstrates how digital marketing and the strategic involvement of influencers can attract attention and potentially increase political participation. Nevertheless, even in Estonia, engagement often remains at the level of "clicktivism,"⁶ where political participation is reduced to liking and sharing content without deeper involvement (Amin, 2010, as cited in Allaste & Saari, 2020).

In both cases, it is evident that the mere presence of social media is insufficient - what matters is how institutions use these platforms and the extent to which they enable authentic, transparent, and bidirectional dialogue. Montenegro, therefore, has ample room for developing strategies that target young audiences more effectively, fostering greater openness and interactivity in its parliamentary social media accounts. Particular attention should be given to content themes relevant to youth, using formats and language that resonate with their everyday experiences, as exemplified by Estonia.

Evaluation of institutional communication on social media: An analysis of engagement and two-way communication on the Parliament of Montenegro's social media platforms reveals substantial

⁵ www.skupstina.me

⁶ Clicktivism - also known as slacktivism or lazy activism — primarily refers to activities such as 'liking' or 'following' on social media platforms. This form of activism is also regarded as a type of pseudo-activism (Petrović, 2016, pp. 401–402), representing a distant and passive form of support and engagement.

limitations in citizen interaction, despite the institution's presence on several digital channels. Although the Parliament uses these platforms to disseminate information, communication predominantly flows in one direction, with very low levels of user engagement. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of activity on Facebook, Instagram, and X during the period from 1–28 February 2025 confirms a significant imbalance between the follower count and actual user interaction. On Facebook, only two comments were registered across 31 posts, while Instagram and X saw no comments during the same period. The number of likes varied minimally (from 0 to 21), indicating a passive reception of the published content.

The Parliament's content is largely homogeneous and institutionally focused, emphasising the activities of presiding officials, which may appear detached from the broader public. Furthermore, although X has the largest follower base, it shows the weakest engagement metrics. Video content is almost entirely absent, even on Instagram, further diminishing the platform's potential for civic involvement. The lack of content tailored to the specificities of each platform, combined with the absence of a strategic digital approach, significantly undermines the reach and relevance of the posts.

To improve outcomes, comparative insights from the Parliament of Georgia suggest the value of strategies that include posts encouraging interaction, online surveys, digital campaigns, educational materials, and paid promotional methods (e.g., Facebook Boost) (Parliament of Georgia, 2019–2020, pp. 11–15). It is also recommended to introduce formats such as Q&A sessions, "behind the scenes" content, live streams with MPs, and content adapted to the unique features of each platform. These measures could significantly increase the visibility of parliamentary work, enhance trust, and foster a sense of inclusion among citizens.

The analysis of specific indicators and content limitations confirms that there is considerable potential for enhancing the digital communication of the Parliament of Montenegro. Communication goals must be redefined in line with contemporary public administration practices as well as citizens' expectations in the digital realm, with an emphasis on interactivity, visual diversity, and institutional transparency.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL INTERACTION

Although the Parliament of Montenegro has, for several consecutive years, been recognised as the most transparent legislative body in the region, thanks to initiatives such as the regular publication of semi-annual activity reports, the implementation of e-petitions, and a high level of administrative transparency (Parliament of Montenegro, 2024)⁷, there remains a need for further advancement in the use of social media as a key component of public communication.

Accordingly, a study was conducted involving 85 respondents, all of whom are employed within the Parliamentary Service of Montenegro. Given the professional roles of the respondents as advisers within the Parliamentary Service of the Parliament of Montenegro, their insights represent a relevant source for identifying key challenges and opportunities for improving institutional communication.

⁷ <https://www.skupstina.me/me/clanci/skupstina-ponovo-najtransparentniji-zakonodavni-dom-u-regionu><https://www.parliament.ge>

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping perceptions of institutional digital communication, the study was guided by the research question: *“Do content quality, target audience segmentation, and content diversification on the Parliament of Montenegro’s social media platforms influence citizen engagement and trust in the institution?”* The methodological framework combined both correlational and inferential statistical analyses, encompassing not only the relationships among variables but also the differences in perception across various respondent groups. Spearman’s correlation analysis identified associations between key indicators, while Chi-square, Kruskal–Wallis H, and Mann–Whitney U tests were used to examine how demographic factors (such as age and education) and behavioural patterns (e.g. following official accounts) influenced perceptions of digital interaction. This multidimensional analytical framework enables the reliable mapping of the determinants of civic engagement and institutional trust within contemporary institutional communication practices.

Table 2. Spearman’s correlation results for key variable pairs

Variable Pair	Spearman ρ	p-value
Efficiency – Interaction	0.73	< 0.001
Interaction – Limitations	0.57	< 0.001
Efficiency – Limitations	0.43	0.0003
Interaction – Support for Interaction	0.045	0.72
Limitations – Support for Interaction	-0.25	0.048

Spearman’s correlation analysis revealed that the perception of the effectiveness of social media in informing citizens strongly correlates with the assessment of current interaction ($\rho = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$), as well as with the evaluation of limitations in two-way communication ($\rho = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, a higher perception of interactional limitations was associated with lower support for two-way communication ($\rho = -0.25$, $p = 0.048$). These findings confirm that perceptions of content quality and openness are directly related to how institutional interaction is experienced and to support for its improvement, underscoring the role of qualitative dimensions in digital strategy.

The study also examined the relationship between age and the perception of the effectiveness of the Montenegrin Parliament’s use of social media for communication with citizens. Given the categorical nature of both variables (age group and perceived effectiveness: “yes”, “partially”, “no”), a Chi-square test of independence was applied. The test produced a value of $\chi^2 = 5.10$, with a p-value of 0.531 and six degrees of freedom. This result indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in perceived effectiveness across age groups, as the p-value exceeds the conventional threshold ($p > 0.05$).

Although age did not emerge as a significant factor in this study, which is understandable given that the respondents are employed within the Professional Service of the Parliament of Montenegro, prior research highlights pronounced generational differences in digital platform preferences. Younger individuals tend to prefer dynamic and visually-oriented formats, such as TikTok videos, Instagram Reels, and content with interactive features, while older users are more likely to rely on Facebook as a source of political information and as a platform for analytical discussion.

Studies by Manning (2013, 2015) show that older citizens use digital platforms not only for accessing information but also for active political participation. Facebook, due to its structural features and capacity for focused discussions, facilitates deeper analysis of political topics and promotes more sustained engagement, particularly when content is delivered through personal narratives and case studies.

In this context, although demographic variables were not decisive within this specific sample, they remain relevant when designing and distributing institutional content for broader citizen audiences. These insights suggest that while demographic segmentation may not be decisive in all institutional settings, the development of digital strategies should prioritise content relevance, accessibility, and functional design.

To assess the impact of education level on the perception of interaction between the Parliament and citizens through social media, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed. This method was selected due to the ordinal nature of the dependent variable and the failure to meet the assumptions required for parametric testing. The test examined the interaction ratings (on a scale from 1 to 5) across education categories: primary ($n = 1$), secondary ($n = 12$), undergraduate ($n = 52$), master's ($n = 18$), and doctoral ($n = 1$). The test produced a value of $H = 10.23$ and a p-value of 0.069, indicating that there are no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$), though the p-value is close to the threshold, suggesting a latent difference in perception among the various educational backgrounds. This implies that respondents with higher levels of education may associate the quality of interaction with satisfaction, reinforcing the need for audience segmentation. Given that all participants are directly involved in institutional communication, their responses provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current strategies.

The study also explored whether following the official social media accounts of the Parliament influenced perceptions of interaction quality. Participants were divided into two groups based on whether they followed the accounts, and their ratings of interaction were compared using the Mann-Whitney U test. The test produced a U value of 998.5 and $p = 0.157$. As the result was not statistically significant, it suggests that simply following official accounts does not affect perceptions. Rather, the perceived quality and interactivity of content are more influential. This supports a shift in strategy towards improving content quality and fostering engagement, rather than focusing solely on increasing follower numbers.

Descriptive analysis of digital interaction perception: A descriptive analysis was conducted to evaluate the views of employees of the Parliamentary Service of Montenegro regarding institutional communication via social media. The analysis focused on two key indicators: assessments of current interaction with citizens and evaluations of limitations in two-way communication, such as the inability to comment and limited dialogue options.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of respondents' attitudes towards the interaction between the Parliament of Montenegro and citizens via social media (n = 85)

Survey Item	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Assessment of interaction between the Parliament of Montenegro and citizens via social media	2.88	1.1
Assessment of limitations to two-way communication on the Parliament of Montenegro's social media	2.32	1.3

Descriptive Analysis of Digital Interaction Perception: A descriptive analysis was also conducted to examine the views of employees within the Professional Service of the Parliament of Montenegro regarding institutional communication via social media. The analysis focused on two key indicators: the assessments of the current interaction with citizens and the evaluations of the limitations in two-way communication, such as the inability to comment and the restricted opportunities for dialogue.

The mean rating of current interaction was moderate ($M = 2.88$; $SD = 1.10$), while the score for two-way communication was lower ($M = 2.32$; $SD = 1.30$), reflecting perceived limitations. These findings align with earlier statistical results and reinforce the need for improved accessibility, relevance, and engagement in content.

Open-ended responses underscored three priorities for enhancing communication: content quality, audience-specific adaptation, and format diversification. Suggestions included enabling comments, hiring communication professionals, using creative multimedia formats, incorporating diverse perspectives, and creating a coherent communication strategy. These insights, grounded in institutional experience, validate the research question by confirming the relevance of key digital strategy components.

A previous internal study, entitled "Perceptions of Digital Tools and Integrated Marketing Communications," involved a sample of 62 employees within the Professional Service of the Parliament of Montenegro. The survey included questions regarding the integration of MPs' profiles with the official website of the Parliament, as well as the use of artificial intelligence in communication between the Parliament and citizens. More than half of the respondents supported linking digital profiles as a means of enhancing transparency, while 42% viewed the role of artificial intelligence positively and 39% adopted a neutral stance. Although conducted on a separate sample, these findings further reinforce the conclusions of the main study concerning the importance of innovation and trust-building.

Based on the SWOT analysis addressing the central research question, several conclusions emerge:

- Despite being present on multiple platforms, the Parliament's communication is hindered by content uniformity, limited interactivity, and insufficient platform-specific adaptation, all of which weaken engagement and trust.
- Opportunities lie in platform-tailored content, educational and interactive formats, integration with e-Parliament features, and the strategic use of AI tools.

- Ultimately, content quality, diversification, and strategic segmentation are essential to making social media a functional tool for democratic dialogue.

Posting frequency data from 2021 to 2024 shows that high activity levels alone do not guarantee engagement. While 2021–2022 saw more posts, 2023 saw a decline, with a slight recovery in 2024. However, interaction remained low. This confirms that the quantity of content, without relevance and interactivity, has a limited effect. It also indicates that frequency of posting alone does not suffice to foster engagement. Future efforts should focus on personalisation, strategic targeting, and the relevance and quality of content.

The comparative analysis between Montenegro and Estonia reinforces the importance of content quality, segmentation, and diversified formats. Estonia's model, combining influencer campaigns, youth-oriented messaging, and strategic platform use, demonstrates effective engagement. Montenegro's current approach remains formal, with uniform posts and no audience targeting, missing key engagement opportunities. Influencer involvement and youth-focused campaigns should be considered. The example of the Georgian Parliament also highlights the importance of Q&A sessions, surveys, and paid campaigns in enhancing public visibility and trust. Both Estonian and Georgian practices offer applicable strategies for improving the digital engagement of the Parliament of Montenegro.

The final analysis confirms that the lack of diversification, personalisation, and segmentation are directly linked to weak engagement and low trust. One-way communication still dominates, with little feedback or adaptation to audience expectations. Low interaction statistics, homogeneous formats, and the neglect of video content highlight a passive approach. Adapting to the audience's language, expectations, and visual standards is essential for strategic success.

Theoretical and empirical studies support this conclusion. Market-oriented communication models stress the importance of listening to citizens and adapting accordingly. International examples (Estonia, New Zealand, UK, EU) show that rich, interactive content supported by AI and participatory tools fosters trust. In contrast, top-down models limit engagement. Therefore, embracing personalised, participatory, and innovative content is vital.

Prior (2022) further notes that content authenticity and relevance drive digital engagement, especially among youth. Despite their interest in politics, many feel ineffective, and static digital formats do little to change this. Global underuse of digital forums (Serra-Silva, 2018) confirms this communication gap.

In conclusion, the study affirms the need to prioritise content quality, personalisation, and engagement over mere output volume. This transition is crucial for building trust, fostering participation, and strengthening the legitimacy of parliamentary institutions.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The findings of the research highlight a significant need to redefine the approach to digital communication within the Parliament of Montenegro. While the institution's presence across multiple digital platforms is evident, limited interactivity, uniform content, and the lack of clearly

defined target groups represent substantial obstacles to effective citizen engagement and the building of trust.

Empirical data indicate that a high level of activity (in terms of the number of posts) does not automatically translate into a greater degree of citizen engagement. Key factors influencing perception and interaction include the quality, relevance, and interactivity of the content. This finding is supported by theoretical models that favour a market-oriented communication approach, where institutions listen, respond, and adapt to the needs of their users.

Through open responses, employees of the Parliamentary Service clearly articulate the priorities: enabling comments, professionalising communication, using multimedia, including opposition voices, and developing a comprehensive strategy. These demands align with the comparative practices of Estonia and Georgia, which confirm that targeted content, tailored to the specifics of individual platforms, combined with interactive formats, significantly contributes to strengthening democratic legitimacy and institutional visibility.

Descriptive and inferential analyses show that demographic variables are not decisive within the sample of employees but remain important for broader target groups. No statistically significant difference in perceptions of effectiveness was found based on age or social media usage habits, although the data suggest latent differences depending on education level, which implies the need for a more developed segmentation strategy.

The SWOT analysis identifies real opportunities and threats: the potential for transforming digital presence lies in high-quality, educational, and personalised content, while risks stem from disinformation, automation without control, and the neglect of the visual and linguistic standards of the digital audience.

Particularly valuable insight comes from the comparison with Estonia, whose communication model encompasses personalised campaigns, cooperation with influencers, and active youth involvement. In contrast, the Montenegrin model remains predominantly formal and one-way, which reduces the potential for developing digital democracy.

Based on the research findings, it is proposed to introduce the innovative practice of *digital parliamentary ambassadors* – specially trained institutional representatives who would communicate parliamentary work through personal profiles on popular platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This model would combine authenticity and professionalism, providing a personalised channel for interaction with citizens, especially the younger generation. In this way, the perceived distance between citizens and the institution would be reduced, creating conditions for building trust through a personal tone, visual dynamism, and real-time interaction.

In conclusion, the implications of the research confirm that the transformation of the communication strategy must be based on content relevance, personalisation, and two-way interaction. Otherwise, digital presence remains a passive reflection of formal communication rather than a functional channel for democratic dialogue.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of social media as a contemporary medium of communication between parliaments and citizens, with a particular focus on the Parliament of Montenegro. The theoretical framework, grounded in models of political marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2003, 2004), principles of digital democracy (Coleman and Blumler, 2009), and insights into personalised communication (Chadwick, 2013), enabled a deeper understanding of the relationship between content relevance, citizen engagement, and trust in institutional practices.

Empirical findings confirm that mere presence on social media, if not supported by two-way communication, remains limited in both scope and democratic impact. Content quality, audience segmentation, and format diversification emerged as essential for fostering interaction, while one-way communication, a formal tone, and uniform post structures failed to stimulate active participation. Comparative practices from Estonia, Georgia, and the United Kingdom demonstrated more effective results when social media was approached strategically, combining targeted content, interactive formats, and platform-appropriate communication styles.

A particular challenge – and opportunity – lies in establishing meaningful communication with Generation Z and Generation Alpha, whose expectations are shaped by immediacy, emotional tone, and visual dynamism. Existing institutional projects, such as the “Democratic Workshops,” can serve as a foundation, but they require expansion through modern, digital-first approaches tailored to younger audiences.

The future of parliamentary communication lies in the integration of advanced technologies – including artificial intelligence, chatbots, sentiment analysis⁸, and micro-segmentation⁹ – into a broader communication ecosystem that balances automation with human connection. While digital tools can enhance efficiency and reach, lasting trust is built through authenticity, recognition, and ongoing interaction.

In response to these findings, this study proposes an original institutional innovation: the introduction of digital parliamentary ambassadors. These would be specially trained professionals from fields such as journalism, civic education, digital storytelling, and political communication, mandated to share parliamentary work through personal yet institutionally authorised social media profiles. Operating on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, they would explain complex procedures in relatable ways, document behind-the-scenes processes, conduct interactive sessions with citizens, and humanise parliamentary narratives through creative visual storytelling. By doing so, they would act as a bridge between the formal institution and diverse digital

⁸ Sentiment analysis is a technique that employs artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) to examine tone, emotions, and attitudes expressed in written communication, such as social media posts, comments, or news articles - in order to understand the sentiments conveyed. This analysis helps identify how the public perceives particular topics or events, which is especially valuable for political organisations in shaping communication strategies that align with the emotions and needs of citizens (Liu, 2012).

⁹ Microsegmentation is a marketing strategy that involves dividing a broad target audience into smaller, precisely defined segments based on specific characteristics, behaviours, or interests. This process enables the creation of personalised messages that are relevant to each group of individuals. In the context of this study, microsegmentation may involve categorising citizens according to demographic data, political views, or specific interests, with the aim of delivering content that is most appropriate for each group.

communities, particularly those that feel politically excluded or underrepresented. Their role would support broader goals of civic education, youth inclusion, and democratic renewal.

Ultimately, social media are not simply channels of dissemination, but spaces for democratic negotiation. Parliaments that recognise this potential, and adapt accordingly, will not only gain digital visibility but also institutional relevance. In the digital era, a market-oriented communication strategy – one that listens, adapts, and resonates with its audience – is essential to reinforce democratic legitimacy and reconnect institutions with the public they serve.

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TEACHING HISTORY THROUGH THE ARTS *THE CASE OF CINEMATOGRAPHY*

Prof.Asoc.Dr. Ilir Sallata
Prof.Asoc.Dr.Ndriçim Mehmeti
Msc.Sonja Llana

*University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, Faculty of Education, Life Long Learning Centre

*Albanian University, Departament of Education and English Language

*University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durres, Faculty of Education, Life Long Learning Centre

*il_ir@hotmail.com

*cimmehmeti@yahoo.com

*sonja.llana@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The use of cinematography in teaching history is an effective method that enables a deeper understanding of historical events and figures. Films provide an exceptional opportunity to bring historical events to life and to develop students' cultural and emotional sensitivity. This paper examines the benefits and possibilities offered by the use of cinematography in historical education, including the portrayal of historical events through film, the analysis of inaccuracies and artistic liberties that may appear in them, as well as the practices and activities that can be carried out after watching a film. The use of films as an educational tool helps develop students' analytical and critical skills and enhances the understanding of the emotions and motivations of historical figures. Furthermore, films help teachers create a more engaging and rich learning environment, encouraging in-depth discussions and providing opportunities for the development of critical and reflective skills in students. Cinematography, as a teaching tool, has the potential to change the way we view and understand history, offering opportunities for a more dynamic and engaging learning experience.

Keywords: cinematography, teaching, history, learning activities, film analysis.

Introduction

Teaching history has always been a challenge for teachers, as it is difficult to convey historical events and periods without creating an emotional and direct connection with students. Cinematography has the potential to reflect historical events in a visual and dramatic way, offering students a more immersive and engaging experience (Hutcheon, 2006). Films can help create an atmosphere of events and provide a broader understanding of historical periods by using elements such as music, actors, and visual scenes that highlight the emotions and tensions of the era.

This article aims to examine the use of cinematography as a tool for teaching history by analyzing the benefits and challenges associated with using films as an educational resource. It will explore how films can be used in the classroom to enhance students' understanding of historical events and periods, providing a more lively and engaging learning experience. The use of cinematography can also help develop students' critical skills, such as analyzing context and comparing historical facts with artistic films (Miller, 2010).

Films provide the opportunity to illustrate historical events in a form that is easy to understand and can also create a strong emotional connection to the events of the historical period. Cinematography has the ability to reveal the sensitivity, dramatization, and consequences of historical events, offering a deeper and clearer experience than simply reading written materials. As Burke (2011) emphasizes, films have a unique ability to convey historical information through a combination of images and narratives that cannot be achieved through books alone.

In this context, the use of cinematography is a tool that helps build a richer understanding of history. It provides the opportunity to present events and individuals in a way that helps students better understand the motives and consequences of historical events, as well as create a deeper connection with them. The use of film can also help address some of the key challenges in teaching history, such as information overload and lack of student engagement (Hutcheon, 2006).

Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative approach to explore the role of cinematography in teaching history, analyzing how films can be effectively integrated into educational practices to enhance historical understanding. The research is based on both theoretical perspectives and practical examples to analyze the benefits and challenges of using films in history teaching.

The foundation of the research is a review of existing literature related to the intersection of history, education, and the arts, with a particular focus on cinematography. Key theories examined include active learning (Dewey, 1938), the potential of visual media to engage students emotionally and intellectually (Burke, 2011), and the role of film in developing critical thinking and historical empathy (Hutcheon, 2006).

A selection of films was made based on historical accuracy, educational potential, and thematic relevance to the topics being explored. These films were critically analyzed to understand how they represent historical events and their ability to convey the emotional, social, and political contexts of the time.

Primary data was collected through a combination of film analysis and classroom observations. Class environments where the films were integrated into history lessons were observed, with a focus on student engagement, discussions, and critical analysis during and after the screenings. In addition, interviews with teachers and students were conducted to gather perspectives on the effectiveness of using films in history teaching.

Theories supporting the use of art in teaching

The use of art, including cinematography, has always been an important tool in the field of teaching. Several theories and pedagogical approaches support this practice:

John Dewey's (1938) theory of active learning emphasizes the importance of the active involvement of students in the learning process, encouraging them to make personal connections with the materials they are studying. Cinematography provides extraordinary opportunities for student engagement, as it emotionally and intellectually involves them with the events and characters portrayed in the film. Through watching films, students can create direct and immersive experiences with the history they are studying, helping them better understand the context and consequences of historical events.

Project-based learning is highly popular in modern education and encourages students to engage in activities that require creating tangible products or solving problems. The use of film can help students create projects based on historical films by analyzing and discussing its elements, such as events, characters, and the messages it conveys (Miller, 2010). Cinematography, as a visual and narrative medium, provides an opportunity for students to work together to analyze and discuss the themes and historical events depicted in the film. This process of group discussion and analysis helps develop critical thinking and collaboration skills (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Pedagogical benefits of using cinematography

The use of cinematography in teaching can contribute to the development of students' skills and the acquisition of historical events and contexts.

Watching films requires students to have high analytical skills, as they must interpret and understand the messages of the events and characters in the film. Cinematography can help students develop the ability to analyze characters' motivations, the impact of events, and how they are portrayed in the film. This can lead to a deeper understanding of historical events and different contexts. Cinematography also provides an opportunity to examine individuals' efforts to adapt and respond to different historical situations, making it an effective tool for developing critical thinking (Burke, 2011).

Through film, students can express their ideas and sensitivities in creative ways. They can create projects based on films, engage in debates and scriptwriting, or develop presentations that analyze various elements of films (Hutcheon, 2006). This engagement encourages creativity and develops students' abilities to think independently and deeply.

Cinematography can offer a direct perspective on historical events and help students better understand the emotional and social dimensions of different events. The use of films can enable a more vivid and clear description of historical periods, including aspects such as ideologies, wars, and relations between social groups. Through in-depth film analysis, students can develop a richer understanding of history and grasp the impacts that events have had on individuals and society (Miller, 2010).

Cinematography for teaching history

Cinematography has extraordinary potential for reflecting historical events, bringing history into a visual and emotional format that helps viewers better understand the context and consequences of certain events (Buckland, 2015).

Examples:

"Schindler's List" (1993) – Director: Steven Spielberg

This film is one of the most well-known and powerful portrayals of the Holocaust, focusing on the story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who saved the lives of over 1,100 Jews during World War II.

Through the use of powerful cinematographic techniques, including dark images and muted colors, the film poignantly and truthfully reflects the suffering of Jews under the Nazi regime. Additionally, the emotional scenes and portrayal of Schindler's heroic actions highlight how one individual can make a difference in a time of terror and darkness. This film emphasizes not only the tragedy of the Holocaust but also the strength of courageous and humane actions amid an indescribable period of violence and suffering (Spielberg, 1993).

"Gladiator" (2000) – Director: Ridley Scott

The film tells the story of Maximus Decimus Meridius, a Roman soldier who is betrayed and loses everything—his family and his honor. Maximus, seeking revenge, becomes a gladiator and fights in the arenas of Rome for freedom and to avenge the death of his loved ones. The film addresses powerful themes such as revenge, honor, and the fight for freedom, while reflecting the political and social structure of the Roman Empire.

Through this film, Ridley Scott uses cinematography to explain the social and political reality of the time, presenting Rome as a divided and insecure society, where emperors have absolute power and citizens are often oppressed. Through the story of Maximus, the film shows the possibility of confronting injustice and the power of an individual to change his fate, despite the circumstances (Scott, 2000).

"Colonel Bunker" (1998) – Director: Kujtim Çashku

Colonel Bunker is a political parable based on factual portraits of the rigid structures upon which the Parnojak regime terrorized our people. It is 1974, and the Stalinist-like Albanian government, which has distorted the virtues of all the cities of the world, retreats into a form of neurotic isolation. A program known as "Bunkerization" was created. The film focuses on the portrayal of a man who lives with real anxieties. Muro Neto, a professional soldier, is known as "Colonel Bunker." (Çashku, 1998).

"Slogans" (2001) – Director: Gjergj Xhuvani

The events take place during the years of communist dictatorship in a village school. Everyone was forced to obey the orders coming from above. Students and teachers were required to write slogans on the hills with stones, praising the regime in power. The film depicts the efforts of teachers to educate and form new generations, teaching them the values of socialist ideology, but also highlights the teachers' passion for their work and the impact they have on the lives of children and the community (Xhuvani, 2001).

"Mësonjëtorja" (1979) – Director: Muharrem Fejzo

The story focuses on the efforts of patriots and intellectuals to create educational opportunities for Albanian children at a time when education in the Albanian language was banned by the Ottoman occupation. The film reflects the struggle of teachers and nationalists to open Albanian schools and overcome the barriers of the Ottoman occupation, as well as their passion and sacrifices for education. Through this film, the importance of education for Albanians and its impact on the formation of national identity is highlighted (Fejzo, 1979).

Challenges in using cinematography

The use of films can help students connect the information they learn with different historical contexts and understand more deeply the impact of various events on society (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009).

One of the main challenges in using cinematography in teaching is that many historical films use artistic liberties to describe events, sometimes ignoring important historical details. This happens due to the need to create an engaging and emotional story for the audience, but it can lead to inaccuracies that affect how students understand history. For example, many films focus on dramatized characters and events surrounding historical events, which can create an inaccurate perception of what actually happened (Buckland, 2015).

Another major challenge is choosing the right films for teaching. While some films are historically accurate and can be used to teach specific events, others may include artistic embellishments that could distort the understanding of those events. Films containing fictional elements can be useful for exploring deep emotional themes but may not be suitable for teaching precise historical details (Baron, 2012). There are also ideologically biased films that do not provide an accurate representation of events. Inaccuracies in film can jeopardize the understanding of history and, as a result, may create a distorted view of events that could negatively impact students' knowledge (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009).

To ensure that a film is educational and accurate, it is important to carefully assess its content before using it in teaching (Kidd, 2013). The dilemma between historical accuracy and artistic freedom is a key issue that teachers must consider.

Educational activities after watching films

Discussion and character analysis

After watching a film, a guided discussion can help students analyze the characters and their motivations.

After watching "Schindler's List", students could discuss the character of Oskar Schindler and the motivations that led him to save many Jews during the Holocaust. The discussion could focus on questions such as: "What made Schindler change his mind and act heroically in such a dark period?" This will help students understand not only the consequences of the Holocaust but also the morality and ethics of individuals' actions in extreme circumstances (Spielberg, 1993).

In the film "Gladiator", students could analyze the character of Maximus and his relationship with Emperor Commodus. The discussion could include the theme of the struggle for freedom, injustice, and revenge, as well as how these themes relate to Roman society. Questions such as: "Why does Maximus seek revenge? How do the wars and policies of the Roman Empire affect his life?" could be important to deepen the understanding of the Roman social structure (Scott, 2000).

Comparison with historical facts

After watching "Colonel Bunker", students can conduct research to compare how the film portrays the communist regime and repression with historical documents and testimonies from the time. The activity could include questions such as: "How is state power depicted in the film and how does this relate to the real events of the communist period in Albania?", "What role do security institutions and espionage play in the communist period, as portrayed in the film, and how are they reflected in historical documents?" (Çashku, 1998).

During the period of communist dictatorship in Albania, schools were a powerful tool for spreading and consolidating Marxist-Leninist ideology. Teachers were required to teach students about the values and ideology of the regime and praise the party leaders. Thus, after viewing the film *The Slogans*, the discussion could include questions such as: "How is the communist regime depicted in the film, and how similar is this to how schools and teachers functioned in communist Albania?" (Xhuvani, 2001).

Creation of film-based projects

After watching the film, students can create projects related to the themes of the film and the historical events depicted. For the film "Mësonjëtorja" (Fejzo, 1979), students can carry out the project "Education as a tool of resistance against oppression." This project could focus on the role of education as a tool for resistance during the period of Ottoman occupation and as a key factor in preserving Albanian culture and language. Students can research historical sources and analyze real events from that period, comparing the efforts for Albanian education in the film with what actually happened in reality. Students can conduct research on the history of Albanian education during the Ottoman period and create a visual presentation (such as posters or a PowerPoint) to illustrate the importance of opening Albanian schools.

The discussion could include questions such as: "What impact did education have on the development of the Albanian nation?" and "How did the Ottoman state use education as a tool to control and oppress Albanians?"

Conclusions

The use of cinematography to teach history has proven to be a powerful and effective method that helps students gain a deeper understanding of historical events, develop cultural and historical sensitivity, and improve their analytical skills.

Cinematography allows students to experience past events in an engaging and visual way, which helps develop empathy and understanding of the emotions and motives of historical figures (Spielberg, 1993; Scott, 2000). It also offers opportunities to explore and analyze historical inaccuracies in films and to encourage discussions related to various interpretations and consequences of historical events.

Through practical post-film activities such as discussions, comparisons with historical sources, and project creation, students' analytical skills are developed, helping them better understand the context of events and their consequences. Furthermore, the use of films develops cultural sensitivity, encouraging discussions on various social and historical topics that are important for modern society.

For teachers, it is important to choose films that are reliable and reflect accurate historical events, while also being open to using artistic films that may offer a different interpretation of historical events.

After watching the films, teachers can organize activities such as group discussions, character analyses, comparisons between film events and historical sources, and the creation of projects that link the film's theme to the historical period being studied. These activities can help students gain a better understanding of events and develop their critical skills.

Cinematography has an extraordinary potential to change the way we see and understand history. It offers the chance to experience historical events on an emotional and visual level, allowing students to feel connected to the events and characters that have shaped the past. Instead of just watching dry facts and data, students can gain a deeper understanding of the motivations of individuals and the impact of historical events on society.

The use of cinematography can contribute to a richer and more engaging lesson, offering students great opportunities to deeply understand history and its effects on contemporary society.

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ALBANIAN LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF BALKAN LITERATURE

Leomir Smajli

Abstract

During the realization of this paper, it is envisaged to reflect the connection of Albanian with the Balkan languages. As we know, the Albanian language is one of the oldest Balkan languages and is part of the Indo-European languages. In Kosovo or Albania and wherever Albanian is spoken, there are influences of foreign languages with or without cause, whether from: borrowings, the albanianization of words, neologisms, or consequently from modern technological influences which are inevitable nowadays, and so on resulting in closeness with the surrounding Balkan languages.

The purpose of this topic is to examine the relationships and mutual influences between Albanian and other Balkan languages, emphasizing the common linguistic features and analyzing the linguistic interaction.

The aim is to highlight the features that testify to a long linguistic and cultural coexistence in the Balkan space, as well as to understand the role of Albanian in this process within the framework of the common features of Balkan discourse.

By delving into such a study, whether research, historical or etymological of words or relying on their external similarity, whether sound (phonetic aspect) and taking into account the historical development of languages within the Balkan context, we arrive at the conclusion of the linguistic connections in question.

We are mainly dealing with the emphasis on information, developments, connections, adaptations, and even comparisons with Balkan languages. The characteristic of the approximation of Albanian to Balkan languages, whether from the semantic content of language units; or in the lexical meaning of words and expressions as well as phraseological expressions summarized in semantic units, clearly shows the inter-Balkan connections.

The focus of the topic is with a special treatment showing the connections between the past and the present, based on the chronology of the connections of the Balkan languages historically.

Keywords: *Balkan languages, connections, comparisons, approximations, Indo-European languages.*

Introduction

The Albanian language, beyond research or scientific points of view, has antiquity, has its own written and spoken code, has its own character apart from the need to be understood and communicated between people. Issues related to the interconnection of Balkan languages, as well as the influences of other languages, that is, Balkan ones, have been meticulously studied by experts in the field for a long time. But, among other things, as a “problem” that presents the influences of foreign languages as reciprocal connections in the Albanian language, the German linguist Hugo Schuhart claimed that no language is completely pure. So, there cannot be a language of a people that, despite its civilization, does not contain elements of foreign languages. As a result of Albanian with a context connecting with other languages, there are also interferences that correspond as linguistic features to another language and that are made through specific individuals in a community. Therefore, languages, like cultures, are rarely self-sufficient. It is inevitable. Bilateral relations between individuals bring the needs of the speaker of a language into direct or indirect contact with those of the neighboring language, which relationship can be of a specific character (friendly or hostile).

The simplest connection between two languages, and not only, can occur especially in the borrowing of words, therefore bringing with them phonetic changes.

Albanian, as do other Balkan languages, day by day try to update their independence in relation to each other, being as independent as possible in the vocabulary, both lexico-grammatical and substantive.

The thematization of the relations of Albanian with the languages of the Balkans in Albanian studies is neither new nor unknown. Since the 19th century, various aspects that connect this language with other Balkan languages were investigated. In fact, the entire history of the Albanian language always appears interconnected with other Balkan languages, new or ancient, living or dead. Meanwhile, such issues (the place where Albanian would have been spoken in antiquity, its relations with unknown or little-known languages of antiquity) continue to be the subject of discussions even in very serious linguistic circles with the search for answers as close as possible through scientifically acceptable conceptions (Ismaili, 2015).

As an acceptable and current state of affairs is the concept that Albanian and the Balkan languages have a connection in the use, application, approximation of some words in the general context. In other words, the genetic affinities of Albanian with other languages are not distant and not difficult to distinguish.

Research methods and hypothesis generation

This research aims and is based on the thesis “The Connection of Albanian with Balkan Languages”, where various references are given as part of this research and research, comparative and analytical analysis of scientific research on the topic is used. The hypotheses issued or raised for the supposed connections of Albanian with any of the Balkan languages are often found based on arguments of a historical-cultural or even geographical nature. However, the most important raising is that of the connection, adaptation, interweaving and coincidence with neighboring languages by well-known authors in the field.

Albanian language similarities with Balkan languages

As was pointed out in the above data, the Albanian language has had, has and continues to have connections with Balkan languages, based on the impositions of many external and internal factors from their influences, with special emphasis on the influx of peoples that we then inherit as a given and from time to time the linguistic situation of Albanian also changes. Some of the Balkan languages, starting from: Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and visible elements from Turkish, all of these as a result of interstate movements, leaving behind each one of them very few elements of their languages.

As a result of the mutual influences between the languages of the Balkan Peninsula and of the influences conditioned by the common historical destinies of the peoples of this peninsula, these languages have acquired a series of common features that are not found in other languages, or that clearly show that, even when they are found in another language, they are an internal Balkan development. Such common features have developed especially in Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Greek, which from this point of view are rightly called Balkan languages (Demiraj, 1994, p. 66).

Historically, the year 1972 is known, that is, this year is a jubilee in other words, because from this year onwards, Albanian as a Balkan language has established with its founders the Orthography Congress, which thereby set the norms of a single literary and linguistic language for all Albanian speakers, which language was written on a dialectal basis and mainly in two variants: in the northern variety (Gheg) and in the southern variety (Tosk).

We find such inter-Balkan overlap also in the field of vocabulary, in general works as well as in special studies by various linguists who have treated some overlaps with vocabulary themes. Even the author Standfeldi has paid special attention to these overlaps, treating in turn the Greek, Latin, Romance, Albanian, Slavic, Turkish, etc. words that occur in two or more Balkan languages. Special attention has been paid to words inherited from the substrate as well as to borrowings in different languages. In all these works of the above-mentioned authors, concrete examples have been pointed out that in the Balkan languages there is a variety of common words, spread in different ways by the interference of Greek, Latin, Slavic, Turkish, etc. (Demiraj, 1994).

It has become common to say among linguists that the 19th century was the time of the historical and comparative study of languages, and in particular of Indo-European ones. Such a statement is widely justified (reasonable), but this does not mean that no comparative research of languages had been carried out before, nor that during the 19th century every other issue of linguistics was neglected. But the fact remains that during this century modern, theoretical and methodological conceptions were developed in the field of historical and comparative linguistics and that scholars focused their efforts and insight on this issue of linguistics more than on others. At the beginning of linguistic change, two or more languages, which diverge from the mother tongue, show lexical and structural similarities; but lexical similarities are those that last longer. Two languages with different typologies still maintain a kind of lexical similarity, which is why it is possible for linguistic frictions to be placed in the Indo-European family (Robins, 2007).

Thanks to the development of the Balkan languages, they have proven their evolution and antiquity through writing, and one of them is Albanian, which does not always derive from the languages i.e. Therefore, Albanian, during the course of its normative formation, has lost many

inherited linguistic assets, although it has tried to preserve essential features, such as the case system and word choice. It should be noted that with regard to neighboring (Balkan) and world languages, Albanian has discovered some words that are not foreign. This includes onomatopoeic words, such as: *brohorit*, *shushurimë*, *gërhas*, *ulërij* and so on.

Influences on Albanian grammar

The most important Balkanisms that extend throughout Albanian are:

- 1) The reversal of the definite article;
- 2) The convergence of the genitive and dative cases;
- 3) The resumption of the adverbs;
- 4) The formation of the future with the help of the verb “dua”;
- 5) The formation of the numerals 11 to 19 with the help of a preposition.

Here it is worth emphasizing that, of the common phenomena of Albanian with the Balkan languages that extend throughout Albanian, only the convergence of the genitive with the dative is generalized throughout the Balkan languages (Greek, Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian), the others have a more limited scope. For example, the postposition of the definite article, as well as the formation of the numerals 11-19 with the help of a preposition, as well as the forms of the accusative mood are absent in Greek. The latter is also absent in Romanian, while the recovery of the antonyms is not generalized in Romanian, it is found most often in Albanian, in the Macedonian dialects and less often in Eastern Bulgarian, while in Greek only in its northern dialects.

As can be seen, these phenomena weaken or disappear the further east and south of the Balkan languages we go; the more generalized they appear in the western regions, including Macedonia. I think this is an indicator that perhaps should not be underestimated or forgotten.

Grammatical interactions in Balkanisms

To properly understand the situation of the Balkan languages, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the Balkans was a multifaceted mixed area: the Roman dialect was transformed into vernacular Latin due to its spread, integrating many language groups of conquered and subjugated peoples.

Regarding the creation of analytical forms of the perfect in the Albanian language and in other Balkan languages, the prevailing opinion is that they were acquired under the influence of Balkan Latinism, but there is also another opinion, that in this case we are dealing with a Balkan phenomenon, namely, a group of scholars see this feature and other analytical developments as coming from ancient pre-Roman periods, that is, they are pre-Balkan linguistic developments - inherited features (Miklosich, Weigand, Budimir, Pisani). Çabej adds that in our case it is not a question of an influence on the system of forms, but, rather, of a grammatical calculus, imitation of a foreign form of expression with the subject of the language (*factum habeo*, *casus*, *sum*, *casum habeo*) shq. “I worked, I did, I was”, maqed. In addition to the early construct *sum*

dosol – developed other new forms imam dojdëno, sum dojdën, rum. am vinita “I came”, am vidzuta “I saw”.

Analytic verb forms have been created in Germanic languages and Slavic languages. These data testify to a general tendency of Indo-European languages to create analytical verb forms that express the meaning of the perfect more clearly.

Albanian and Romanian, when it comes to the past tense, also construct intransitive verbs using the auxiliary verb kam, kam tënë, kam akcijë, kam dalje, while the Romance languages use – jam: sono venuto, sono stato, je suis venu, por j'ai ete; German. ich bin geëesen, ich bin gekommen.

As a characteristic feature of Balkanisms, the derived forms of the admirative in Albanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian are also omitted. Short forms of the participle and forms of the present auxiliary (kam): pasë + kam = paskam, imperfect: pasë + kësha = paskësha; paskam pasur, paskësha pasur.

Common features have also been observed in the number system of 11-19 in Balkan languages (Slavic languages, Latvian of the Baltic group, Albanian and Romanian). In this Albanian numbering system (11-19), Çabej adheres to Jokli's opinion according to which we are dealing with a single isogloss of languages: Albanian, Baltic-Slavic and not an imitation from Slavic languages, as Puscariu thinks. There can be no influence from Slavic languages, especially in the way of forming numerals with twenty. Here in Albanian, Jokli sees a pre-Indo-European relic, because the vigesimal numbering system, in contrast to the decadic system, which is characteristic of the Indo-European world, is a feature of a pre-Indo-European substrate in the Albanian language (twenty, forty, once thirty and forty).

These features and many others, which appear common to most Balkan languages, have been studied here and more than a century ago by linguists (Ajeti, 2017).

The structural and comparative concept of Balkan languages

In all the Balkan studies/Balkanology so far, it has been clearly highlighted that the Albanian language and the "Albanian world" constitute one of the most important segments of these studies. The lover of comparative, but also Balkan studies, Eric. P. Hamp, in an interview for the newspaper "Rilindja" of Pristina in 1978 said: "the Albanian language is the essence of Balkan studies". Earlier scholars, founders of Balkan studies, such as G. Weigand, also placed Albanian at the heart of Balkan studies. And indeed, just a superficial look at the situation in the last two centuries would clearly show that Albanian, its various dialects, are in intensive contact with various Balkan languages and dialects - South Slavic, Macedonian, Greek within the main Albanian area and within the Greek space, Romanian in various Albanian-Romanian situations, but also Albanian-Romanian-Macedonian Greek, Turkish, Roma, etc. Studies such as that of Juoko Lindstedt have shown Albanian practically participating in one way or another in all the features characteristic of the Balkan Sprachbund: the postpositional clause, the doubling of the object, the use of prepositions instead of cases, the dative/genitive fusion, the purpose/location fusion, the general relativum, then the auxiliary verb + the past verb, the future volo, the future past as a conditional, the perfect habere, the evidentials, the analytical comparison, etc. According to these features, the indexing of the Balkan languages gave this

picture: Balkan Slavic was first with an index of 11.5 (within it Macedonian with 12.0), Albanian with 10.5, Balkan Romanian and Greek with 9.5, Romani with 7.5, which only partially agrees with the finer divisions that see Albanian, Bulgarian-Macedonian, Aromanian, Torlak in the center, while in a second place Greek, Romanian and others.

But Albanian has a special position towards Balkanisms, whether conceived as inherited or as contact induced. If we take the phonetic structure, Albanian in its current state, unlike the Balkan languages, has nasal vowels in one of its main dialects, has vowel lengths with functional value in that dialect (it had this earlier in its entirety), uses the infinitive, in addition to the infinitive with *do*, it also has the infinitive with *kam*, and has a developed habit system. There are areal connections with other Balkan languages everywhere, but also differentiations within it, a truly dynamic situation of inclusion in/or exit from the Sprachbund while being in its geographical center.

In this entire range of interests, the discipline of Balkan studies, for the aforementioned methodological reasons and for reasons of the inadequacy of explaining phenomena, has recently moved significantly in its conceptions, either towards resolute contestations, such as the denial of the possibility of the existence of a separate linguistic discipline on these grounds since the beginning of the s. 20, either as a result of the contestation of a Sprachbund due to the further expansion towards Eurolinguistic spaces, or even due to new insights into the field of language contacts at the level of oral languages, in which case the experience of studies of creoles and language contacts as a whole have brought new insights.

In the second half of the 20th century, various journals for Balkan, linguistic, cultural, historical, and ethnological studies were founded, such as *Zeit-schrift für Balkanologie*, *Linguistique balkanique*, *Süd-ost Forschungen*, *Revue des études sud-est-européennes*, etc., research centers and study centers were developed in various countries, such as Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Naples, Amsterdam, Chicago, Warsaw, Poznan, St. Petersburg, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, Thessaloniki, etc. The Association for Southeast European Studies was founded, which became the organization of international congresses for four years starting in 1966, and various projects were undertaken everywhere.

Balkan studies among us have been developed in the framework and in parallel with historical studies of Albanian, where often the aspects of internal and comparative-historical reconstruction have been more important, but since early on areal and genuine Balkan aspects have also been investigated. Since A. Xhuvani, and especially E. Çabej, M. Domi, I. Ajeti, S. Floqi, Sh. Demiraj, B. Bokshi, in the generations that have already created a rounding of their knowledge, our researchers have problematized aspects of Balkan importance in the views of Albanian issues, often also for the very position of Albanian in that framework. Studies on nodes, on the future, on the vowel *ë* or the infinitive, on the doubling of the object or on the gender/dative relations of Albanian have automatically placed them at the center of Balkan studies interests. Since early on, Eqrem Çabej had expressed a rather relative opinion regarding the common Balkan features. According to him, there are common developments of a phonetic nature, but their examination can be seen first between two or three languages, such as, for example, between Albanian and Romanian or between Romanian, modern Greek and Albanian (Ismajli, 2015).

Results

From the results obtained, we reach several conclusions based on scientific research, with special authors in the field of Balkan linguistics.

The results of a concrete analysis on the topic in question may include:

- Discovery of lexical borrowings - comes as a result of Balkan languages in Albanian, such as those from Greek, Slavic and Turkish.
- Common grammatical features - such as the placement of the definite article at the end of the noun, a characteristic shared with Romanian and Bulgarian.
- Similarities in syntax and verbal structure - where as research we can highlight the similarities in sentence construction and the use of verbal structures between Albanian and other Balkan languages.
- Development of Balkan identity through language - Balkan languages, including Albanian, have developed a special linguistic identity that distinguishes them from other European languages.

Discussions

The influences of Albanian on other Balkan languages and vice versa are not simply a borrowing of words, but also an adaptation of linguistic structures which testifies to a deep cultural and linguistic integration between communities. Albanians, being one of the autochthonous peoples of the Balkans, have influenced and been influenced by the surrounding languages and cultures, including long periods of coexistence with the Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans, who have left their mark on the languages of the region.

Such discussions help to understand the historical development of Albanian in the Balkan context and its role in the process of "linguistic Balkanization" by positioning it as an important part of the linguistic mosaic of the Balkans.

The literature used is of a scientific context by authors labeled as serious recipients in the field of Balkan studies in the issues of Balkan languages.

Rexhep Ismajli's book "Studies on the History of Albanian in a Balkan Context" is of particular importance in the field of interlinguistic relations.

It is always worth studying the author Shaban Demiraj, especially the book we have referenced "Balkan Linguistics", which details in a very concise way the study as a scientific in-depth study. Robert Robins' book, "History of Linguistics" historically emphasizes language as an evolving character.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have addressed some of the characteristics of the connection between Albanian and Balkan languages, also mentioning its history. The topic was of a research and summary type.

Since the similarities between the Albanian language and Balkan languages are inevitable, this implies that despite the literary norms of standard Albanian, our language is related to many aspects of the features of speech, pronunciation, and sometimes even writing.

In conclusion, the connections between Albanian and Balkan languages are numerous and important, reflecting the historical, geographical and cultural interactions between the peoples of the Balkan region. The Albanian language, as a separate language in its Indo-European group, has undergone numerous influences from neighboring languages in the region, such as Greek, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian and Romanian, through long historical contacts and coexistence in the same geographical space.

Ultimately, the linguistic connections between Albanian and the Balkan languages are complex and interesting, and represent an excellent example of the mutual cultural and linguistic influences that have helped shape the identity of the Balkan languages.

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADOPTION AND LEARNING OBSERVED THROUGH NATIVIST THEORY

Liridôna **Bislimi** - High School of Medicine "Dr. Xheladin Deda" Mitrovica, "St. Cyril and Methodius" University, Skopje, Macedonia

Abstract:

This paper provides an overview of the theories of foreign language learning. It initially makes a distinction of the notions of acquisition and learning by presenting the attitudes of several linguists on the issue. It further offers commentary on the various interpretations of these notions. Psychological and linguistic approaches will be discussed in order to identify and define these interpretations, such as structuralism in linguistics, behaviorism in psychology, cognitive psychology and transformational- generative grammar.

The common theoretical approach of both structuralism and behaviorism resulted in a theory of learning, known as the audio-lingual habit theory. According to this theory, learning a foreign language, as any other form of learning, represents a process of acquiring and forming habits, while not making a distinction between the processes of acquisition of the mother tongue to the one of learning a second or foreign language.

The paper further discusses the attitudes of the nativists, which offer a contrasting description of the process of learning, i.e., acquisition of language. According to the Nativist Theory of Language or the transformational- generative grammar (or simply generative grammar), there is an innate ability to learn a language i.e., a Universal Grammar that is the base of language knowledge, common for all languages. The cognitive approach in psychology, on the other hand, gives advantage to the rationalistic approach before the empirical one, i.e., while comparing the language acquisition and language learning, it attends to the complexities of personality and emotions. This papers further focuses on Chomsky's attitudes in his criticism of behaviorism as well as his opposite view to the process of learning a language. According to him, each person owns a Universal Grammar consisting of absolute, universal laws that apply to all languages.

Lastly, the paper examines Brown's, River's and Ellis's conclusions and finalizes the discussion with the Krashen's theory of acquisition and learning a language. This is the first theory that made an attempt to establish a connection among various factors in the process of learning a foreign language, starting from the influence of the age of the learners up to the disputable role of the teaching process. Krashen's Monitor theory uses elements from the linguistic theory of foreign language acquisition, primarily Chomsky's attitudes regarding the innate knowledge of a language, but it additionally includes elements from the cognitive theory, since it points out the importance of the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge while determining the dichotomy of acquisition and learning.

Keywords: *learning, acquisition, foreign language, theories*

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning and / or adopting a foreign language is a topic that has always prompted discussions among linguists. When it comes to learning a foreign language there are many dilemmas about the correct use of terms and, of course, a unanimously acceptable solution is lacking. The process of learning the mother tongue, which by nature is considered a unique process, is defined as language acquisition. The acquisition of a foreign language, according to Krashen, is "an unconscious process, which in all its aspects is similar to the process of acquisition of the mother tongue and is the absorption of language through natural communication" (Krashen, 2005). In the pedagogical and psycholinguistic literature this term is often used interchangeably with the term teaching.

Learning in the broadest sense can be defined as "the acquisition or acquisition of knowledge in a subject or skill through learning, experience or teaching" (Brown, 2010, p. 7), i.e. learning is the acquisition of new information about to which man is exposed.

Krstic defines adoption as "a widely accepted term for the term teaching", which refers to "the general processes of acquiring school material, cultural modalities, practical skills, behavior, etc." (Krstić, 2008, p. 653).

Learning a foreign language is considered as conscious knowledge of language rules, which does not directly contribute to the improvement of communication, while learning a foreign language occurs unconsciously, spontaneously and directly affects the improvement of communication skills (Oxford, 2016, p. 4)

Learning a foreign language is initially done consciously, and later through practice the knowledge of the target language is improved and used unconsciously. The terms learning and mastering a foreign language do not mean two separate processes, but two processes that together lead to the improvement of general language knowledge. Both processes, learning and adopting a foreign language, are very important for improving communication skills, especially at higher language levels (Campbell & Wales, 2018; Canale & Swain, 2010; Ommagio, 2016)

Some linguists believe that there is no fundamental difference between learning and adopting a language. Stern (Stern, 2013, p. 19) considers that the term adoption is only a stylistic variant of the term learning, and Ellis has a similar view, using these terms as synonyms (Ellis, 2007, p. 6). But in professional terminology there is often a difference between adoption and teaching.

Different interpretations of the terms learning and language acquisition can best be seen through the psychological and linguistic directions that identify and define these terms, viz. through structuralism in linguistics, behaviorism in psychology, cognitive and transformative-general psychology.

2. LEARNING THROUGH AUDIOLINGUAL THEORY OF EXPERIENCE BENEFIT

Structuralists, who are contemporaries of behaviorists, describe language as a whole that can be broken down into smaller units that can be described and then merged into a whole. The basic element of linguistic theory that considers the organization of a sentence into syntagmas is the term structure. A characteristic of structuralism is the interest in exploring linguistic structure, namely form, not meaning. Structuralism is related to the behavioral concept of learning, ie the object of study is linguistic behavior, because it is the only aspect of language that can be directly observed. According to behaviorists, language learning, like any other form of learning, develops as a consistent response to certain stimuli that do not depend on the internal needs of the organism, but on the environment. Behaviorists argue that human behavior can be fully explained, that is, predicted based on the situation in which it occurs, and therefore speech can be explained through external factors that influence its occurrence. Behavior theory is considered to be fully empirical because it emphasizes that experience plays a crucial role in the acquisition of speech and language and does not give any importance to reason (Dikro & Todorov, 2017, p. 122).

Empiricism and the same theoretical view of structuralism and behaviorism lead to the theory of learning known as the audio-linguistic theory of habit acquisition. According to this theory, language learning, like any other learning, is the acquisition or formation of habits and there is no distinction between learning a mother tongue and learning a second or foreign language. Behaviorists believe that language is a set of patterns that are learned through multiple repetitions and exercises, and that speech is defined as a set of learned responses, i.e. a set of stimulated responses. Language acquisition is explained as the induction of reactions arising from the external environment (Carroll, 2016, p. 14).

Learning a second or foreign language is simply suppressing the habit of speaking the mother tongue with the habit of speaking the target language, whereas the habits acquired initially can only hinder or influence the adoption of new habits. Alternatively, both processes are based on the repetition of linguistic units, practice, association, and analogy without explanation. The child is born as a *tabula rasa* (lat. *Tabula rasa*), without prior knowledge of the language and the world around him and learns on the basis of personal experience gained in the principle of conditioning (Kitic, 2000, p. 16.).

The application of the audio-linguistic theory of the acquisition of teaching habits leads to the following conclusion: "language is a habit that can be learned only if the student refers to that language, that is, if he uses that language" (Politzer, 2016. p. 2, cited by: Kitic, 2000, p. 16).

3. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADOPTION AND LEARNING OBSERVED THROUGH NATIVIST THEORY

Because the previous schools could not explain the essence of the problem, because they only emphasized what is visible and what is manifested, and refused to think, there is a change in the view of language in the form of a new rationalist approach, i.e. . nativist theory or generative grammar of transformation (or simply generative grammar) into linguistics and cognitive approaches to psychology. These two new theories have caused controversy among scholars, both in linguistics and psychology, as well as in the methodology of teaching foreign languages (Kitic, 2000, p. 17).

The basic idea of nativists is that language ability is innate and that there is a so-called universal grammar that forms the basis of linguistic knowledge and is the same for all languages. Nativists assume that there is an abstract device for language acquisition that allows the child to adopt any natural language (McNeil, 2017, p. 63). Language is considered to be a complex, specialized skill that develops spontaneously in children, without conscious effort and without formal instructions, despite the remaining cognitive skills. Language is understood as a cognitive process that is not the result of external stimuli, but is the result of the innate ability of the human mind. The speed with which children discover the rules that govern the language system and the ability to use them creatively, that is, to form sentences they have not heard before, leads to the assumption that man was born with knowledge of the rules that govern the system linguistic.

Cognitive learning theory includes Ozbel's cognitive theory (Ausubel, 2018) and Rogers humanistic psychology (Rogers, 2015). Ozbel's cognitivism, emphasizing the meaning and meaningful context of linguistic communication, directly influenced theoretical and practical approaches to language teaching and learning. Rogers's humanistic psychology sees man as a complete person, with a physical, cognitive, and emotional identity, and emphasizes, unlike Osbel, the emotional side of the person, which has been empirically crucial to human behavior and learning.

Humanistic psychology, when comparing language acquisition and learning, highlights the complexity of personality and emotions. The process of language learning and acquisition is seen as a set of variables that can not be controlled, such as empathy, extroversion, restraint, imitation, anxiety, fear, etc. Understanding emotions is crucial if learning a foreign language is understood as the acquisition of another linguistic ego, that is, another identity (Guiora, 1972, p. 55; cited in: Kitic, 2000, p. 22).

Like cognitive psychology, transformative-generative grammar favors the rationalist over the empirical approach to analogy-based analysis. Generative grammar, unlike structuralism, does not deal with languages, but with language in general, with the essential, not the visible, with the deep, not with the superficial linguistic structure, insisting on the differences between the visible, the visible, the essential and the thella. Within the generative

theory are placed two basic properties of language, i.e. language is an innate ability and language learning is, above all, a cognitive process with conditioning (Kitic, 2000, p. 17).

Numerous researches in the framework of generative theory, which are based on the assumption that the acquisition of the mother tongue is systematic, ie carried out in a certain order, explain the process of learning the mother tongue. This process, in essence, remains unexplained with the theory of behavior due to the limitations of the theory itself, because it is mathematically impossible and can not be explained logically, how children, according to the stimulus and reaction model, can understand and produce expressions in this way. large and for such a short period. Behaviorists do not explain, interpret, or cite the principle of linguistic creativity (McNeill, 1998, p. 412; cited in: Kitic, 2000, p. 19).

Renowned linguist Noam Chomsky rejects structuralism and criticizes behaviorism in explaining language learning differently. According to him, in every person there is a kind of universal grammar which consists of absolute principles, ie universal laws that apply to all languages and variable parameters that explain the differences of languages and that are gradually "discovered" at the beginning. years of life. The child learns the mother tongue, but not by imitating adults and adopting habits, but he has in himself a kind of internal mechanism for the acquisition of the native language through which he is able to formulate rules for the language and based on them to generate any construction (Chomsky, 1996).

The creator of the idea of the device for language acquisition (hereinafter LAD), Chomsky, believes that LAD is only one component of the whole system of intellectual structures, ie. in other words, the ability to speak a language is only one of the skills of the mind (Chomsky, 1996: 26). It is a hypothetical mechanism created to explain the adoption of a language, the characteristics of which are represented through an acquired linguistic system called universal grammar. Chomsky speaks his native language, but according to some scholars, access to universal grammar is to some extent achieved even by one who learns a foreign language (Chini, 2005, p. 30).

4. BROWN, RIVERS AND ELISE ATTITUDES ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

Many authors do not emphasize the difference between language acquisition and learning, but even when they do, they start from different assumptions and different criteria and therefore reach relatively different conclusions.

Brown, driven by the fact that mother tongue is easily and successfully acquired, and foreign language, especially in school, is difficult, sometimes even unsuccessful, is interpreted by these processes taking into account physical, cognitive, emotional and linguistic factors. Brown uses the terms teaching and adoption for both mother tongue and foreign language, but the detailed analysis he makes of the process of mother tongue and foreign language adoption, as well as the conclusions reached, show that the lack of terminological difference is more

many terminological tendencies in contemporary American methodology, rather than ignoring the distinction between adoption and learning (Brown, 1990, p. 58; cited in: Kitic, 2000, p. 21).

Numerous studies prove that mother tongue acquisition and foreign language learning are similar processes, and the emergence of interventions is what makes the process of learning a foreign language a specific process. Brown says that "adults have a systematic approach to mastering a foreign language and tend to formulate language rules based on whether linguistic information is available to them in their mother tongue or in a foreign language" (Brown, 1990), p. 57; cited in: Kitic, 2000, p. 21). Rivers criticizes the audio-linguistic methods accepted and evaluated so far and presents his counter-arguments, both against this method and against all those who do not distinguish between learning and adoption. She believes that the difference between learning a mother tongue and learning a foreign language is not enough, so she sees learning a foreign language as a variable process that depends on the age factor, so she argues that "learning a language Foreign language is a similar process. to learn a mother tongue at a young age, but a completely different process when it comes to adult learners "(Rivers, 1993, p. 235; quoted in: Kitic, 2000, p. 22).

Mother tongue acquisition is an innate skill that is closely related to the development of cognitive skills so that the child learns to speak and learn (Rivers, 1993, p. 233). What is also important and crucial for the adoption of the mother tongue is the high level of motivation, because for the child the mother tongue is necessary and indispensable for communication. But when an adult begins to learn a foreign language, he or she already controls the speech organs and may have difficulty acquiring new speaking habits.

Because of this, according to Rivers, in 90-95% of cases the emphasis is held by the mother tongue, but precisely this emphasis on the linguistic expression of another language is a sign, ie linguistic and cultural privilege (Rivers, 1993. p. 236). What makes an additional difference in the adoption of the mother tongue and the foreign one is the timely exposure of the language as well as the stages of the process of the adoption of the mother tongue. Namely, unlike the mother tongue, the student is exposed to the foreign language for several hours a day or a week. Children master their mother tongue in stages, while learning a foreign language requires the student to master the use of sentences, complex grammatical structures, etc. from the beginning. (Rivers, 1993, p. 20).

Ellis argues that the adoption of a mother tongue and a foreign language are not identical processes, because the differences exist and are confirmed by the very fact that the mother tongue affects the acquisition of a foreign language. Native language adoption is characterized by statements that adult speakers would never use as such and that are lacking in foreign language learning (Ellis, 2007).

5. KRASHEN'S THEORY OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

Krashen, the founder of the much-appreciated and then severely criticized theory of the monitor or monitor model, as a proponent of the natural approach to language learning, despite the differences between language learning and language acquisition, believes that mother tongue and language foreign can be adopted. According to him, one can talk about the adoption of a foreign language and this is supported by numerous empirical studies, only if the message of the target language is understood. This is the first and basic condition, but still not sufficient for language to be acquired (Krashen & Terrell, 1994, p. 19; cited in: Kitic, 2000, p. 24).

According to Krashen, we learn language in two ways. The first way is acquisition, ie the unconscious and intuitive process of creating language knowledge, a process that is identical to the natural process of language acquisition by children and as such focuses on content, not form. The other way is learning, ie the conscious process in which students pay attention to forms, while language learning is "knowing the rules", ie conscious knowledge of grammar (Krashen & Terrell, 1994: 18).

Unlike Krashen, Chomsky believes that the acquisition of a foreign language is a different process from the acquisition of the mother tongue. Considering Chomsky's attitude important, Krashen argues that the difference in adoption / learning is very similar, even identical, to Chomsky's difference between acquaintances (Krashen, 1995: 24).

Krashen's theory, originally called the model monitor, then the input hypothesis, and finally the meaning hypothesis, remains essentially the same. This is the first theory that attempts to link several different factors in language learning, from the influence of age to the controversial role of teaching (VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p. 25).

The research conducted within a discipline called "*Second Language Acquisition*" in English is based on two theories of foreign language acquisition. According to cognitive theory, language knowledge is not different from other types of knowledge, while according to the opposite view, ie according to language theory, language knowledge is unique, separate from other knowledge systems and therefore language acquisition is guided by mechanisms that nature is linguistic (Ellis, 2013, p. 347)

Krashen's monitoring theory refers to elements of linguistic theory of foreign language acquisition, mainly Chomsky's views on innate knowledge of language, but also includes elements of cognitive theory because it emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between implicit knowledge. and explicit, in defining the dichotomy of adoption and learning

The original theory called the model monitor is presented in ten hypotheses, and is then modified and termed as monitoring theory by which the author explains the language acquisition process in five hypotheses: the language acquisition and learning hypothesis; natural order hypothesis; monitor the hypothesis; the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. Based on the above hypotheses, Krashen establishes the principles of foreign language acquisition. The essential difference between mastering and learning a language is

the difference between conscious learning, that is, remembering the rules, and unconscious language acquisition that occurs only as a result of exposure to language. Krashen argues that there is no possibility of interaction between intuitive, implicit and unconscious knowledge. acquisition of formal, conscious and explicit knowledge, i. Learning. Krashen is one of the most well-known supporters of the assertion that learning does not turn into appropriation, hence the so-called. The "non-interfacial position" according to which language learning and acquisition are different processes and there is no connection between them. According to him, there is no need for conscious prior knowledge of a rule, but language acquisition occurs only in one way, when the person understands the input contained in structures that are at level $1 + 1$ where he represents the level of student competence, and $1 + 1$ is the first consecutive level in natural order.

Krashen explains his view that conscious learning does not become unconscious acquisition through the following statements: first, he says that sometimes there is acquisition without learning, so some students have considerable competence in non-native language, but consciously do not know much rules; second, argues that there are times when learning never becomes acquisition, i.e. the learner can know the rule and continue to break it; third, he emphasizes that no one can be expected to know all the rules (Krashen, 1992, pp. 83-87).

Regarding the Krashen dichotomy of the self-sufficient and the learned, Pallotti says that enlightenment occurs "accidentally" when students focus on understanding and transmitting communicative content, while learning occurs "on purpose" and is based on the fact that the student sets himself as aim at acquiring language skills. structures in themselves (Pallotti, 2011, p. 243).

6. CONCLUSION

The distinction between acquiring and learning a foreign language is in some ways accepted by many scholars, but it is still difficult to find evidence to support such a distinction. In this paper, we presented the different interpretations of the terms language learning and acquisition through the psychological and linguistic directions that identify and define these terms.

By presenting different theories about learning and / or mastering a foreign language, we can conclude that many linguists do not emphasize the difference between learning and mastering a language, but even when they do, they start from assumptions and criteria of different and consequently come to relatively different conclusions.

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ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CREATING EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM LESSON PLANS

PhD (c) Zylfije Tahiri

South East European University, Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication, Tetovo, North Macedonia

zt32329@seeu.edu.mk

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8646-3789>

Abstract

This study investigates how teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) see using artificial intelligence (AI) in developing successful lesson plans for the classroom. To add to the continuing conversation on the revolutionary potential of AI in language instruction, it explores teachers' attitudes, convictions, and concerns regarding its integration using various research techniques. The study posits that instructors' attitudes may vary depending on their familiarity with AI, teaching experience, readiness for technology, and educational beliefs, with a prediction of more favorable attitudes from those with greater familiarity with AI and an inclination towards constructivist teaching methods.

Structured as an objectivist investigation, the study employs surveys and interviews to gather data from diverse EFL instructors, examining the factors that impact their perceptions. Statistical techniques like theme analysis for qualitative data and inference and descriptive statistics for data that is quantitative data are used in the analysis. Preliminary findings suggest a range of levels of familiarity with AI among instructors, with generally positive views towards utilizing AI for lesson planning, tempered by concerns about job security and potential bias in AI algorithms. Interviews underscore the AI's potential to facilitate customized learning experiences, improve collaboration among educators, and simplify administrative tasks.

Noteworthy factors such as alignment with pedagogical principles, institutional backing, and technological proficiency contribute to shaping instructors' attitudes toward AI. The study's findings offer practical recommendations for the strategic integration of AI in language instruction, emphasizing the importance of aligning AI tools with educational beliefs and offering support for instructors to enhance their technological competencies.

Keywords: pedagogical alignment, institutional support, technological proficiency, constructivist teaching, personalized learning.

Introduction

In today's quickly changing educational scene, the integration of technology and pedagogy has gained prominence, providing creative ways to improve teaching and learning experiences. Among these technical breakthroughs, artificial intelligence (AI) appears as a revolutionary instrument with immense potential to disrupt different aspects of education. (Al-Shawabkah, 2017) describes AI as the abilities given to computers that enable them to perform tasks that get smarter and behave like people. The computer and information technology discipline focuses on designing and developing computer systems that mimic human intelligence, as cited (Mukhallafi, 2020). AI technology is rapidly evolving due to advancements in mobile web, big data, supercomputing, sensor networks, and brain sciences. New features like deep learning, transdisciplinary integration, human-machine cooperation, communal free information, and autonomous manipulation have enormous impacts on economic development, societal advancement, and the global landscape (Liu, Lei, & Zerui, 2022). Within the realm of language instruction, particularly EFL, the integration of AI holds promise for redefining traditional teaching paradigms and optimizing classroom practices. AI systems can save instructors time by automating mundane activities like grading and feedback (Schmidt, 2022) as cited (Hazaymeh, Abdeldjalil, & Abdelghani, 2024). Artificial intelligence applications can improve language learning by making it more engaging and interactive, increasing motivation, and improving decision-making skills (Jeon, 2022) as cited (Hazaymeh, Abdeldjalil, & Abdelghani, 2024). AI may also encourage student independence by utilizing voice recognition technologies. This technology allows students to practice public speaking and receive quick feedback on tone and pronunciation. Using AI technology in EFL teaching can improve student learning and language proficiency in the classroom. EFL teachers must use AI tools that align with their teaching objectives and boost student learning. AI technology may provide teachers with statistical information on learners' learning language progress, strengths, and limits to guide instructional decisions (Ilkka, 2018) (Hazaymeh, Abdeldjalil, & Abdelghani, 2024). One area where the impact of AI is particularly noteworthy is the creation of effective classroom lesson plans. Lesson planning is a cornerstone of instructional practice, serving as a blueprint for educators to organize content, activities, and assessments to facilitate student learning. Using AI technology, instructors might expedite the lesson preparation process, customize education, and modify teaching tactics to match the various requirements of students. In this context, knowing EFL teachers' attitudes regarding incorporating AI in lesson design is critical. Exploring instructors' attitudes, beliefs, and concerns sheds light on the prospects and pitfalls of incorporating AI into language teaching methods. Moreover, assessing how EFL instructors see the role of AI in lesson planning can inform decision-making processes, curriculum development efforts, and professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness and student engagement. This study intends to add to the ongoing discussion about the junction of AI and language education by investigating EFL teachers' perspectives on using AI to create successful classroom lesson plans. By explaining educators' attitudes and views, this study aims to fill a gap in the current literature and give a thorough knowledge of the potential problems associated with using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in language training. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, including questionnaires, interviews, and content analysis, to capture the multidimensional character of EFL teachers' thoughts about AI-driven lesson preparation. This endeavor aims to provide detailed insights that might drive policy choices,

curriculum design, and professional development programs focused on leveraging AI's potential to improve teaching and learning outcomes in EFL classrooms. This article investigates EFL teachers' perspectives on using AI in effective classroom lesson plans. This study aims to add to the continuing discussion about AI's revolutionary potential in language teaching by exploring instructors' attitudes, views, and worries, as well as to give practical recommendations for its strategic implementation.

1.1 Hypothesis

H1: EFL instructors' attitudes toward AI in creating effective lesson plans vary based on their familiarity with AI, teaching experience, technological readiness, and pedagogical beliefs. More positive attitudes are expected from those with higher familiarity with AI, a constructivist teaching philosophy, greater teaching experience, and higher technological readiness.

1.2 Aim of the study

The key goal of this study is to investigate EFL instructors' perceptions of the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in creating effective classroom lesson plans, as well as to investigate the factors influencing EFL instructors' attitudes and beliefs about the use of AI technologies in lesson planning.

1.3 Objectives of this study are as follows: assess the level of familiarity among EFL instructors with AI technologies and their current practices in lesson planning; identify the pedagogical beliefs and teaching philosophies of EFL instructors; examine how these beliefs influence their perceptions towards AI-driven lesson planning; investigate the relationship between EFL instructors' teaching experience and their attitudes towards the integration of AI in lesson planning; explore EFL instructors' technological readiness; and examine its impact on their acceptance of AI technologies in the context of lesson planning.

1.4 Research questions

RQ1: How do EFL instructors perceive the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in creating effective classroom lesson plans, and what factors contribute to their attitudes and beliefs towards AI-driven lesson planning?

RQ2: What is the level of familiarity among EFL instructors with AI technologies, and how does this familiarity correlate with their current practices in lesson planning?

RQ3: How do EFL instructors' pedagogical beliefs and teaching philosophies influence their perceptions towards AI-driven lesson planning, and what implications does this have for the strategic integration of AI technologies in language instruction?

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The value of this study stems from its ability to enlighten educational stakeholders, legislators, curriculum creators, and technological innovators about the practical issues and ramifications of adding AI into language teaching procedures. This study adds to the continuing discussion about technology and language education convergence by filling a gap in the literature on EFL teachers' impressions of AI-driven lesson preparation.

Literature review

To address the research questions, a systematic literature review was conducted, yielding clearer findings by eliminating distractions from extensive documents on Artificial Intelligence in English as a Foreign Language.

2.1 History of AI's development

John McCarthy, who is widely recognized as the founder of AI, coined the term in 1955 while drafting a proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence in 1956. (Sumakul, Fuad, & Didi, 2022). It sparked various debates and controversies over whether machines can think, and the distinction between human intelligence and AI was explored. AI is a current computer science that develops programming approaches to mimic human intellect and perform tasks similar to human behavior. The discipline aims to interpret human intelligence, exploring its patterns and dimensions. It investigates the mental capacities of the human mind in real-world conditions, simulating some of its capabilities and processes. It converts brain processes into computer equations, which are used to solve complex problems. Expert Systems is a field of AI that collects and analyzes data on human experiences to replicate and apply this knowledge in specific areas. These systems continually develop mental simulations based on the events and challenges individuals encounter while interacting with AI devices. This improves the teaching process by resulting in accurate judgments (Al-Feqi, 2012) (Mukhallafi, 2020).

2.2 The Role of Artificial Intelligence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Contexts

According to (Raphael, 2017), learning English is a crucial educational goal at personal, academic, and vocational levels. Educational programs determine it and approaches that emphasize the development of incentives and good attitudes toward language acquisition, as well as the use of skills in communication, teaching, and learning, as cited in (Mukhallafi, 2020). (Walker, 2007) Emphasized the relevance of employing AI apps to create written texts, improve students' sentence construction abilities, and practice writing and reading skills. (Lotze, 2016) using AI applications can enhance English language skills and communication abilities through interactive dialog boxes, as cited in (Mukhallafi, 2020).

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), various AI applications that utilize analytical techniques—such as machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), artificial neural networks (ANNs), and affective computing (AC)—have been extensively adopted and are significantly influencing the learning experience (Jiang, 2022). AI has been shown to improve language teaching and learning (Gao, 2021; Pikhart, 2021; Klimova et al., 2022) and online EFL

learning, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic as cited (Zitouni, 2022) many reviews of AIED have been published thus far (Chen, 2022) as cited (Jiang, 2022). Consequently, the following six major kinds of AI in the EFL context were characterized by (Jiang, 2022) Automatic Evaluation Systems, Neural Machine Translation Tools, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, AI Chatting Robots, Intelligent Virtual Environments, and Affective Computing in ITS. In general, NMT tools, AI Chatbots, and ITSs are learner-facing AI systems that can facilitate adaptive or customized learning. Simultaneously, AESs, IVE, and AC in ITSs may be viewed as teacher-facing systems capable of supporting instruction and reducing effort by automating administration, assessment, feedback, and data detection (Jiang, 2022). In an actual EFL setting, several AI applications may play complementary roles in enhancing both teaching and learning. For example, AESs, NMT tools, and ITSs can be used as monitoring and tutoring tools in EFL education to improve EFL learning primarily from cognitive and linguistic perspectives (Groves and Mundt, 2015; Abu Ghali et al., 2018; Gao, 2021; Koh, 2022). EFL teachers can also use IVE to create an interactive and collaborative virtual reality learning environment to support EFL instruction (Melchor-Couto, 2017; Lan et al., 2018) (Jiang, 2022). AI technology aims to develop human-like reasoning, comprehension, planning, learning, communication, perception, tool usage, and machine manipulation skills (Bin, 2019) as cited (Liu, Lei, & Zerui, 2022).

Effective lesson preparation is essential for teachers to deliver instruction successfully. However, many teachers assess students' learning environments based on their subjective perceptions and experiences. They often rely on pre-made teaching materials and courseware from online resources, which can create challenges in understanding the overall teaching schedule and objectives. To overcome these limitations, Liu, Lei, and Zerui (2022) provide intelligent lesson preparation using *Watson*, which captures real-time data on students' learning conditions. It provides teachers with high-quality materials tailored to chapter topics and offers personalized courseware for students. (Liu, Lei, & Zerui, 2022). The current information-based education approach faces challenges in improving teaching quality and boosting student motivation. Conversely, AI technology has the potential to effectively address these issues. (Liu, Lei, & Zerui, 2022) We can use the *Knewton platform* to create personalized content for different learning styles, simulate teaching scenarios, and enhance student engagement with multi-screen switching, interactions, and in-class quizzes. (Liu, Lei, & Zerui, 2022).

2.2.1 AI Technology and Classroom Applications

AI serves several educational purposes, such as personalized learning, tutoring, and digital assessment. EFL instructors can integrate two AI applications into their classrooms: *Duolingo*, which focuses on vocabulary and grammar practice, <https://www.duolingo.com>, and *Lingvist*, which provides lessons in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/lingvist>. Awarding points for completing lessons enriches the learning experience (Hazaymeh, Abdeldjalil, & Abdelghani, 2024).

2.3 Is Artificial Intelligence a friend or enemy?

AI enables personalized learning, prompting the question: "Is AI a friend or foe?" To explore this issue, it's essential to consider teachers' perspectives, as they play a significant role in shaping the

quality of student learning outcomes when technology is integrated into education.(Cope, 2002), (Ding, 2019) (Ertmer, 2005), (Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2018) as cited in (Sumakul, Fuad, & Didi, 2022).

According to research undertaken by reputable experts (Sumakul, Fuad, & Didi, 2022), Artificial Intelligence (AI) might be regarded as a friend as a result of this study, which found that participants have positive impressions of using AI technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Study participants felt that artificial intelligence (AI) can effectively support teachers and improve student learning. When integrating AI into language schools, it's essential to consider both students' motivation and teachers' technological expertise. As a transformative technology, AI is shaping language education and presenting various challenges for instructors and learners alike. To understand this topic better, we need more data from diverse teachers and to consider the perspectives of students and other education stakeholders, particularly in language teaching and learning. (Sumakul, Fuad, & Didi, 2022).

Methodology

This study adopts an objectivist approach, collecting data based on perceptions and experiences. It posits that social entities function as independent physical realities that shape the universe. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study explores EFL instructors' perspectives on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in lesson planning. The objective is to identify the factors that influence their attitudes toward AI technology. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

3.1 Participants

EFL instructors from various institutions, including language schools, universities, and private tutoring centers, participated in the study. Using a purposive sampling strategy, participants were chosen to represent different demographics, teaching contexts, and technological proficiency levels.

3.2 Sampling Strategy and Justification

This study used a purposive sampling strategy to select participants capable of offering relevant insights into the integration of AI in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lesson planning, allowing for targeted selection based on their specific knowledge and experiences.

3.2.2 Achieving Saturation

Qualitative saturation is reached when further data collection no longer uncovers new themes. In this study, saturation was evident after interviewing 10 participants, as no new information emerged, indicating that the data were sufficient to address the research questions.

3.2.3 Purposive Selection Criteria

Participants were selected based on their teaching experience, familiarity with AI, and diverse teaching contexts to provide a wide range of insights relevant to AI-driven lesson planning.

3.2.4 Iteration and Analysis

An iterative process of data collection and analysis was used, with continuous interviews and theme refinement until no new information emerged.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Survey

Quantitative data was collected through structured surveys given to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors. The survey assessed participants' familiarity with AI technologies, lesson planning practices, pedagogical beliefs, teaching experience, and technological readiness using Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions.

3.3.2 Interviews

Qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected survey respondents. These interviews will explore participants' perceptions of AI-driven lesson planning, focusing on their attitudes, beliefs, concerns, and expectations. Open-ended questions will facilitate in-depth discussions and capture diverse perspectives.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative survey data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, summarized participants' responses. Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analyses, examined relationships between variables and identified predictors of EFL instructors' perceptions of AI-driven lesson planning.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. Transcripts were coded to identify recurring themes related to participants' perceptions and beliefs about AI technologies in lesson planning. Emerging themes were refined and organized into a framework that aided in interpreting the findings.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

This research follows ethical guidelines for human participants. Informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were assured of anonymity, with measures in place to protect their privacy throughout the process.

Findings

One hundred and four esteemed professors specializing in the English language graciously took the time to complete an electronic questionnaire. These distinguished individuals hail from various nations and reputable institutions of higher learning.

The findings from the questionnaire have been meticulously analyzed and are detailed below, explicitly linking the results to the research questions and hypotheses outlined in the introduction. This connection ensures that the findings directly address the study's objectives, providing clear insights into the research questions.

4.1 Questionnaire findings

Familiarity with AI Technologies (RQ1, H1):

Chart 1 illustrates that 43 out of 104 participants are extremely familiar with AI tools in language instruction, while only 4 have limited familiarity. This supports the hypothesis (H1) that familiarity with AI varies among instructors, impacting their perceptions of AI integration.

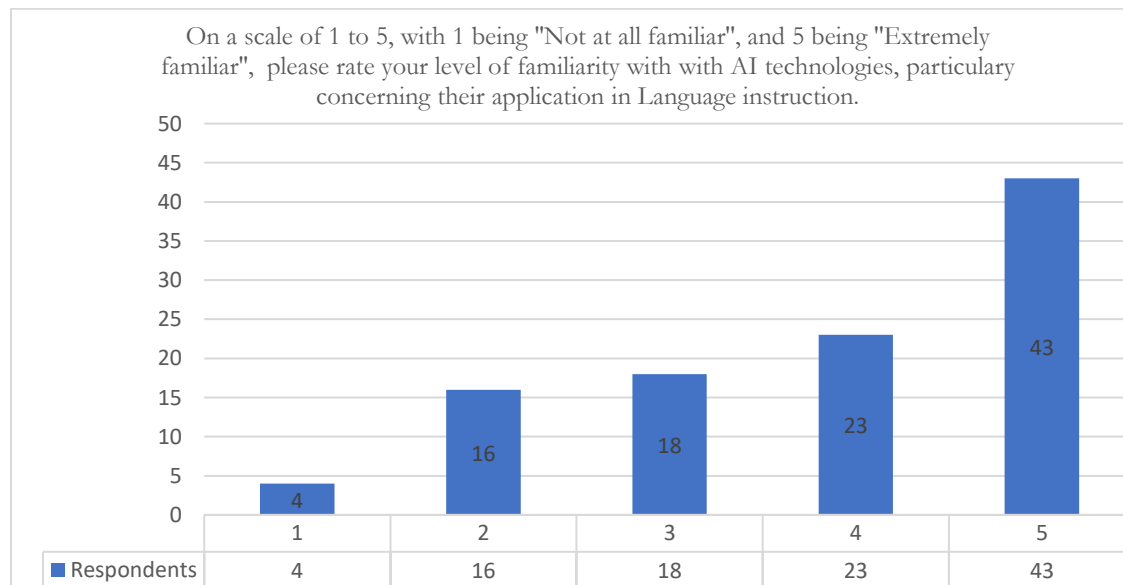


Chart 1: *EFL instructors' familiarity with AI technologies in Language instructions. Source: Author's own Calculation.*

The preliminary findings of the survey are displayed in Chart 1, highlighting the responses of 104 participants. Among the participants, 43 demonstrated a strong understanding of AI tools within

the realm of Language Instruction. Conversely, 4 respondents indicated a limited understanding of AI tools as they pertain to Language Instruction.

Factors Influencing Attitudes (RQ2, H1):

Chart 2 shows that 30 participants believe AI integration positively impacts lesson planning. This aligns with the hypothesis that those with higher familiarity with AI (and possibly constructivist teaching philosophies) hold more favorable attitudes.

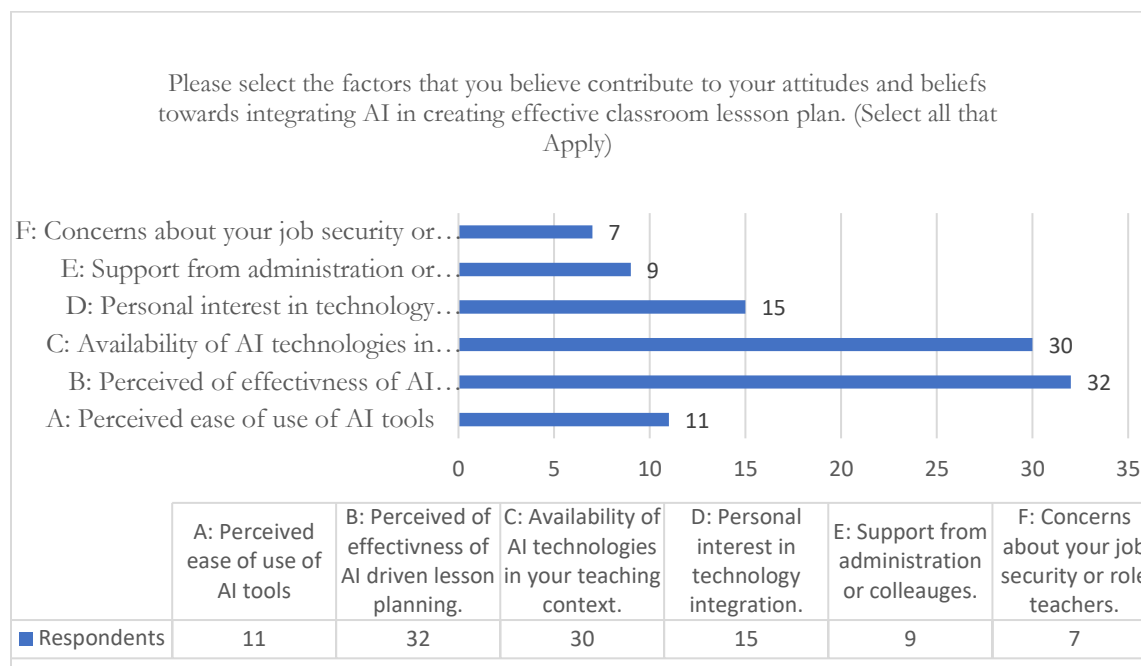


Chart 2: Factors influencing EFL instructors' attitudes toward integrating AI in lesson plan design. **Source:** Author's own calculation.

Based on the analysis of responses to question two in the electronic survey, it was discovered that 30 out of 104 participants hold the belief that the incorporation of AI technologies in educational settings could have a positive impact on their perceptions of AI implementation to develop engaging classroom lesson plans. Additionally, 32 out of the 104 respondents have expressed their approval of AI-driven lesson planning, while 15 respondents have shown interest in integrating technology into their teaching practices. Furthermore, 11 individuals out of the total 104 found AI tools to be user-friendly, whereas 9 respondents required assistance from colleagues or administration. Finally, 7 respondents out of the 104 surveyed have voiced concerns regarding job security and the evolving role of teachers. The detailed findings of the survey have been visually depicted in Chart 2 for further examination and reference.

Frequency of AI Use (RQ3, H1):

Chart 3 reveals that 77 out of 104 instructors often use AI in lesson planning. This finding supports the hypothesis that higher technological readiness correlates with more frequent use of AI.

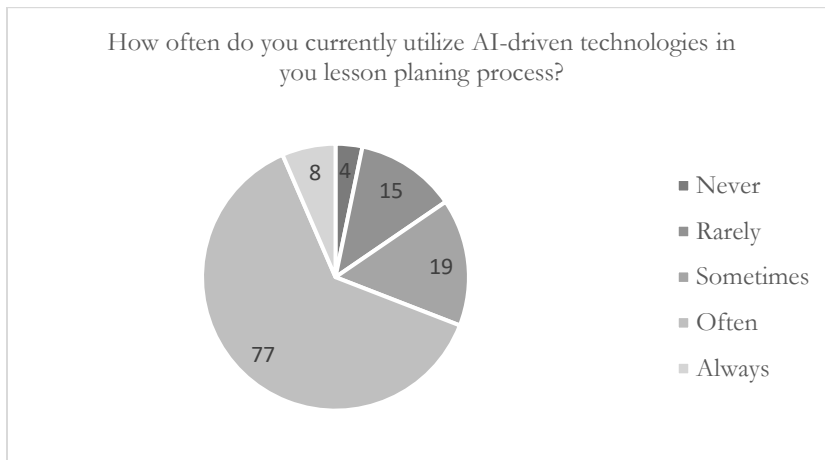


Chart 3: The frequency of use of AI-driven by EFL instructors. **Source:** Author's own Calculation.

The results of the third question in the electronic survey are visually represented in Chart 3. According to the data, 77 out of 104 EFL professors regularly integrate artificial intelligence into their lesson-planning procedures. Additionally, 15 out of 104 professors reported occasional usage, while 8 out of 104 professors indicated constant usage. Only 4 out of 104 professors admitted to never utilizing AI in their lesson planning.

Teaching Philosophies (RQ3, H1):

Chart 4 indicates that 54 instructors believe their teaching philosophies moderately influence their views on AI integration. This finding supports the hypothesis that pedagogical beliefs impact perceptions of AI.

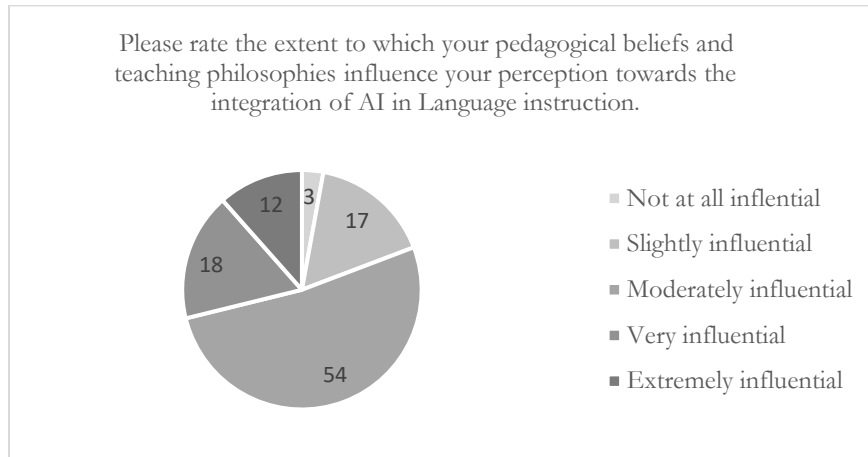


Chart 4: Influence of teaching philosophies of EFL instructors towards AI integration in Language instruction. **Source:** Author's own calculation.

The data from the fourth question in the electronic questionnaire has been visually represented in Chart 4. Among the 104 instructors surveyed, 54 indicated that their pedagogical beliefs and teaching philosophies have a moderate impact on their views regarding the integration of artificial intelligence in language instruction. Additionally, 18 instructors reported a high level of influence, 17 indicated a slight influence, 12 believed the influence to be significant, and 3 stated that it had no impact at all.

Benefits and Challenges (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3):

Chart 5 summarizes perceived benefits such as increased efficiency (30 respondents) and personalized lesson plans (32 respondents), as well as challenges like the loss of human touch (10 respondents). This highlights the practical implications and concerns related to AI integration in EFL instruction.

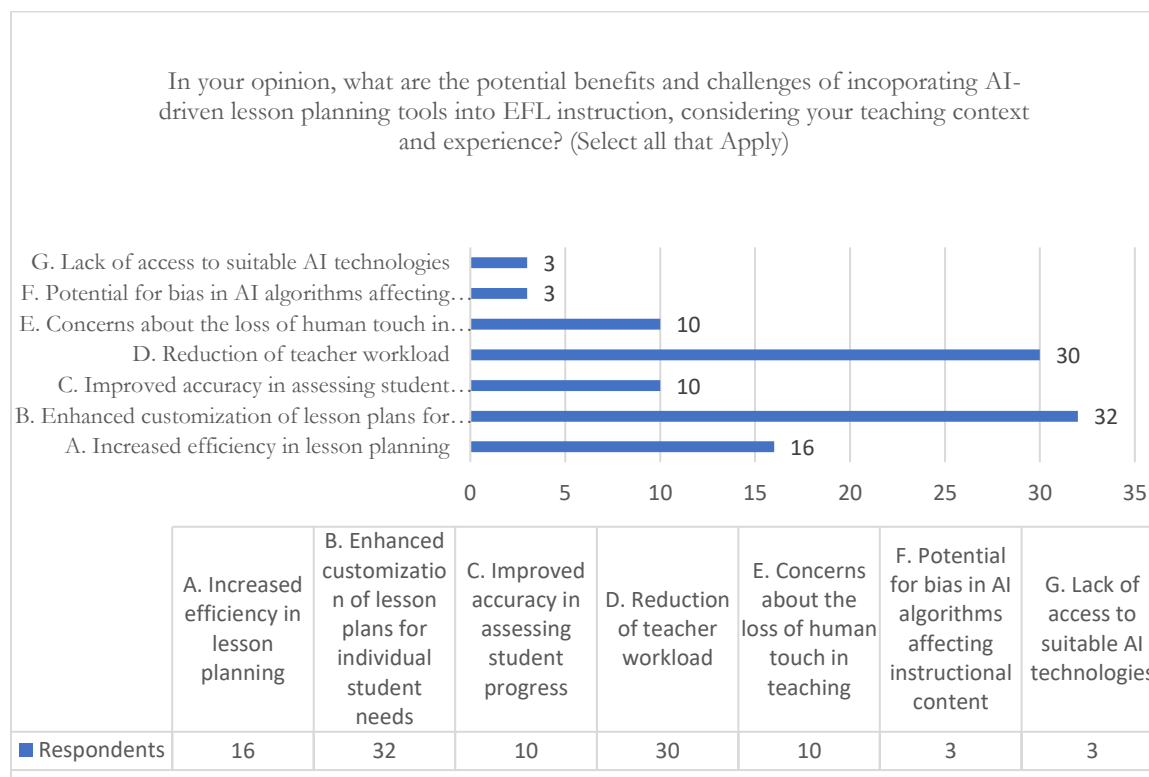


Chart 5: Benefits and Challenges of Incorporating AI-Driven in EFL Instruction. *Source: Author's own calculation.*

Chart 5 illustrates the findings of the fifth inquiry in the electronic survey. The data indicates that 30 out of 104 participants think that the utilization of AI-driven tools for lesson planning in EFL education has the potential to alleviate the burden on teachers. Furthermore, 32 out of 104 respondents believe that the integration of AI could facilitate more personalized lesson plans tailored to the individual needs of students. Additionally, 16 out of 104 participants express confidence in AI's ability to streamline the process of planning lessons, and 10 out of 104 respondents are convinced that AI can enhance the accuracy of assessing student progress. Conversely, 10 out of 104 respondents harbor concerns about the loss of interpersonal connection in teaching with the introduction of AI. Furthermore, 3 out of 104 participants express apprehension about the possibility of bias in AI algorithms impacting educational content, while another 3 out of 104 respondents feel that they do not have access to appropriate AI technologies.

4.2 Interview findings

In this investigation, a cohort of ten (10) English as a foreign language instructors underwent interviews. These findings furnish qualitative insights to complement the quantitative data obtained through the administration of a questionnaire.

1. How do you perceive the potential of artificial intelligence in assisting you with creating effective lesson plans for English language teaching?

Theme	Sub-Themes	Number of respondents
Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Effective English Language Teaching.	Development of Adaptive Assessment Methods	1
	Enhancing Collaboration among Educators	1
	Interactive Learning Platforms	1
	Instant Feedback and Continuous Improvement	2
	Innovative Teaching Approaches and Materials	1
	AI-assisted Material Generation and Time-saving	2
	Identifying Learning Gaps and Remedial Actions	1
	Streamlining Administrative Tasks	1

Table 1: *EFL Teachers' Opinions on Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Effective English Language Teaching.* **Source:** Author's own analysis.

Table 1 showcases the data gathered during the initial inquiry session with the esteemed English language scholars. One survey participant emphasized the importance of developing flexible assessment methods to customize assessments based on individual student needs. Another participant underscored the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in promoting collaboration among educators, enabling them to share resources and strategies more efficiently. A third participant noted the significance of interactive learning platforms powered by AI to actively engage students in the learning process. Two participants recognized the value of AI in providing immediate feedback to students, fostering continuous improvement in their English language skills. Another participant highlighted the potential of AI to support innovative teaching approaches and provide access to a variety of teaching materials. Two participants pointed out the advantages of AI in creating teaching materials and saving time for educators, allowing them to concentrate more on instructional activities. One participant acknowledged AI's ability to identify gaps in students' learning and recommend effective remedial actions. Another participant mentioned the role of AI in streamlining administrative tasks related to English language teaching, enabling educators to devote more time to teaching and learning activities.

2. Can you share any experiences or thoughts on how AI technologies could enhance or complement your current practices in lesson planning for EFL instruction?

Theme	Sub-theme	Number of respondents
EFL instructors' experiences and thoughts on the effects of AI in lesson planning.	Personalized Learning	2
	Language Assessment	2
	Automation of Tasks	2
	Student Support and Engagement	2
	Real-time Adaptation and Inclusivity	2

Table 2: EFL instructors' experiences and thoughts on the effects of AI in lesson planning. **Source:** Author's own analysis.

Table number 2 displays the data collected for the second question of the interview with the English Language professors. The qualitative data obtained from the interview has been meticulously categorized into sub-topics based on assigned codes. The numerical value at the end of each sub-topic denotes the number of professors who shared their opinions on that specific sub-topic in their responses. Two respondents shared their experiences and thoughts on how AI affects tailoring learning experiences for individual students. Two respondents discussed the impact of AI on language assessment within lesson planning. Two respondents talked about how AI helps automate various tasks related to lesson planning. Two respondents expressed views on how AI influences student engagement and support in lesson planning. Two respondents provided insights on the role of AI in real-time adaptation and promoting inclusivity in lesson planning.

3. What level of familiarity do you have with AI technologies, and how do you think this familiarity impacts your approach to incorporating AI-driven tools in your teaching?

Theme	Sub-theme	Number of respondents
EFL instructor's familiarity with AI in EFL Education	Understanding and Recognition of AI's Potential	3
	Confidence in Integrating AI Tools	2
	Continuous Learning and Professional Development	3
	Pedagogical Alignment and Evaluation	3

	Proactive Exploration and Innovation	2
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Table 3: *EFL instructor's familiarity with AI in EFL Education.* **Source:** Author's own analysis.

Table three shows the findings for question three of the interview with the English language professors, which are as follows: Three respondents expressed knowledge of AI's potential in EFL instruction, demonstrating an understanding of its capabilities and consequences. Two respondents showed various degrees of trust in using AI technologies in their teaching methods. Three respondents emphasized the need for continual learning and professional growth in properly incorporating AI into their teaching approaches. Three responders emphasized the alignment of AI technologies with pedagogical concepts, as well as the need to evaluate their success in EFL instruction. Two respondents demonstrated a proactive approach to investigating and developing AI in EFL instruction, suggesting a willingness to experiment and adapt.

4. How do your personal pedagogical beliefs and teaching philosophies influence your views on integrating AI technologies into language instruction?

Theme	Sub-theme	Number of respondents
Integration of AI Technologies in English Language Instruction	Personalized Learning and Differentiation	2
	Enhancing Critical Thinking and Engagement	2
	Constructivist Approach and Authentic Learning	2
	Inclusivity and Accessibility	2
	Fostering Lifelong Learning Skills	2

Table 4: *The Use of AI Technologies in English Language Teaching.* **Source:** Author's own analysis.

Table 4 summarizes the feedback from English language professors regarding the fourth interview question. The key findings are: Two respondents noted that AI technologies can personalize learning experiences and address individual student needs. Two highlighted AI's role in fostering critical thinking and boosting student engagement. Two emphasized the importance of a constructivist approach in integrating AI into instruction. Two discussed the significance of AI in promoting inclusivity and enhancing accessibility for all students. - Two mentioned that AI can facilitate the development of lifelong learning skills among students.

5. In your opinion, what factors contribute to EFL instructors' attitudes and beliefs towards AI-driven lesson planning, and how might these factors affect the strategic implementation of AI in language teaching?

Theme	Sub-theme	Number of respondents
Factors influencing EFL instructors' attitudes towards AI-driven lesson planning	Perceptions of practicality and usability of AI tools.	1
	Influence of prior experiences with technology in the classroom.	2
	Alignment with pedagogical beliefs and teaching philosophies.	4
	Perception of institutional support and readiness for innovation.	5
	Level of technological proficiency and need for support and training.	3

Table 5: Factors influencing EFL instructors' attitudes toward AI-driven lesson planning. **Source:** Author's own analysis.

The following data was collected from the fifth question of an interview with English language professors and is categorized into sub-themes. The numbers indicate the number of professors who shared their opinions on each topic: One respondent commented on the practicality and usability of AI tools in lesson planning. Two respondents shared how their previous experiences with technology influenced their perspectives on AI-driven lesson planning. - Four respondents emphasized the importance of aligning AI-driven planning with their pedagogical beliefs. - Five respondents provided their views on institutional support and readiness for innovation in adopting AI-driven lesson planning. Three respondents indicated their level of technological proficiency and expressed a need for training to effectively implement AI-driven lesson planning.

Discussions & conclusions

The literature review discusses the historical development of artificial intelligence (AI) and its current applications in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. It emphasizes how AI enhances teaching and learning through various tools, including machine learning and intelligent tutoring systems. Additionally, the review discusses AI's potential in revolutionizing lesson preparation and delivery, offering personalized learning experiences through platforms like Watson and Knewton. However, it acknowledges the importance of factors like student motivation and teacher expertise in effectively integrating AI into language education. The review underscores AI's potential to improve EFL education by enhancing teaching practices and personalizing learning experiences. It emphasizes the importance of considering pedagogical factors and suggests that more research with diverse perspectives is essential to fully leverage AI's benefits in language education.

The findings from the electronic questionnaire provide critical insights into AI integration in EFL instruction, offering a nuanced understanding of instructors' perceptions. These results are discussed in the context of existing literature, addressing discrepancies and confirming previous studies. The positive attitudes toward AI integration (Chart 2) align with studies by Gao (2021) and Pikhart (2021), which highlight the potential of AI to enhance language teaching and learning. Concerns about job security (Chart 2) and the loss of human touch (Chart 5) introduce new dimensions to the discourse, as these issues were less emphasized in previous studies (Zitouni, 2022). This highlights the need to explore the socio-emotional impacts of AI in education. The findings suggest that familiarity with AI and constructivist teaching philosophies positively influence attitudes toward AI integration. This emphasizes the importance of technological readiness and pedagogical alignment in adopting AI technologies (Cope, 2002; Ertmer, 2005). The presence of four respondents with limited understanding highlights the need for targeted educational initiatives. Chart 2 explores the diverse attitudes of EFL instructors toward integrating AI in lesson planning. Although 30 out of 104 respondents believe AI can enhance lesson planning, seven expressed concerns about job security and the changing role of teachers, signaling important issues for discussion regarding AI adoption in education.

Chart 3 offers a detailed view of how often EFL professors integrate AI into their teaching. The data reveals a predominant inclination toward regular utilization of AI-driven tools in lesson planning, with 77 out of 104 professors incorporating such technologies into their pedagogical practices. This trend underscores a growing acceptance and integration of AI within the educational landscape, albeit with variations in adoption rates among instructors. Moreover, Chart 4 clarifies the influence of teaching philosophies on EFL instructors' perspectives regarding AI integration. While a majority of respondents (54 out of 104) acknowledge a moderate impact of pedagogical beliefs on their views, variations in the perceived influence underscore the complex interplay between individual philosophies and technological adoption. This highlights the need for tailored approaches to support educators in navigating the integration of AI within their instructional frameworks. Lastly, Chart 5 delineates the perceived benefits and challenges associated with AI-driven instruction in the EFL context. Many respondents believe AI can reduce teachers' workloads and improve personalized lesson planning. However, concerns about losing interpersonal connections and biases in AI algorithms must be addressed through ethical guidelines and equitable access to technology. The questionnaire results reveal a complex landscape of attitudes toward AI integration in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. While many instructors are familiar with AI tools and are open to using them, significant concerns about teaching beliefs, job security, and ethical implications persist. To ensure responsible integration of AI in language instruction, promoting AI literacy and addressing bias and equity concerns are essential. By taking a proactive approach, educators and stakeholders can harness AI's potential while maintaining the integrity of language education.

Interviews with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors provide insight into their views on using artificial intelligence (AI) in lesson planning. These findings reveal both opportunities and challenges of AI's integration in teaching practices. Participants noted AI's potential to enhance language instruction, particularly through adaptable assessment methods that cater to individual

student needs and encourage personalized learning experiences. AI has become a key factor in promoting collaboration among educators, improving resource exchange and teaching effectiveness. Its interactive platforms engage students actively, creating a dynamic learning environment, while instant feedback mechanisms support continuous improvement in language skills. AI also innovates teaching methods and materials, providing access to diverse resources and easing administrative burdens, which allows educators to focus more on instruction. The insights from EFL instructors reveal that AI enhances lesson planning through personalized learning, language assessment, task automation, student support, and real-time adaptation. While recognizing AI's potential, participants emphasized the importance of familiarity and confidence in using AI tools. Effective integration necessitates ongoing learning and alignment with pedagogical principles. Proactive exploration and innovation are essential for embracing these technological advancements. Incorporating AI into English language instruction aligns with pedagogical beliefs, fostering personalized learning, critical thinking, and inclusivity. Factors influencing EFL instructors' attitudes toward AI include perceived practicality, past experiences, institutional support, and technological proficiency. Ultimately, adequate training and support are crucial for the successful implementation of AI-driven methods. The findings from interviews with EFL instructors provide valuable insights into the potential of artificial intelligence in enhancing lesson planning for English language teaching. While participants recognized the diverse benefits of AI integration, including personalized learning, collaboration, and efficiency gains, they also acknowledged the importance of familiarity, alignment with pedagogical principles, and institutional support in realizing these benefits. Moving forward, strategic efforts should focus on providing professional development opportunities to enhance instructors' familiarity and confidence in utilizing AI tools effectively. Moreover, initiatives to align AI-driven approaches with pedagogical principles and institutional priorities are essential for ensuring meaningful integration into teaching practices. Additionally, investment in technological infrastructure and support mechanisms is crucial to address instructors' varying levels of technological proficiency and facilitate the seamless integration of AI-driven approaches. Overall, the integration of artificial intelligence holds immense potential to revolutionize English language teaching by fostering personalized, engaging, and inclusive learning experiences. However, its successful implementation requires concerted efforts to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities, ultimately advancing the quality and effectiveness of English language instruction in diverse educational contexts.

Limitations & practical implications

This study provides important insights into AI integration in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction, but has some limitations. The sample size of 104 EFL instructors may not represent the global diversity of language educators, and self-reported data may introduce biases. A purposive sampling strategy was used to mitigate these issues. Future research should aim to expand the sample size and include longitudinal data for better generalizability.

The implications of this study are significant. AI has the potential to personalize learning and reduce teacher workload, potentially transforming EFL instruction. However, it is vital to address

job security and ethical concerns. Professional development programs should enhance instructors' familiarity with AI tools and ensure they align with their teaching beliefs and institutional support.

Recommendations

- Investigate effective teaching approaches aligning with diverse philosophies for integrating AI into EFL instruction.
- Investigate strategies for mitigating research bias and the ethical implications of using AI in language education.
- Evaluate the impact of teacher training programs on EFL instructors' confidence in using AI tools.
- Conduct long-term studies to evaluate the lasting impacts of AI-driven instruction on language learning outcomes.

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Abbreviations

AI- Artificial Intelligence

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

AESs- Automatic Evaluation Systems

NMT- Neural Machine Translation

ITSs- Intelligent Tutoring Systems

ML- Machine Learning

NLP- Natural Language processing

ANNs- Artificial neural networks

AC- Affective computing

IVE- Immersed Virtual Environment

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