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The use of Twitter as a tool for the application of the English language in a disciplinary subject of the Career of Nutrition and Dietetics of a Chilean university

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Abstract. The Nutrition and Dietetics Program of a University of Chile proposed the strengthening of the use of the English foreign language in the students of the career through the use of a social network. The objective of this study was to analyze the level of satisfaction on the part of the students regarding the use of Twitter as a tool for the application of the English language. During the first semester of 2023, the application of the use of Twitter was implemented in the subject "Entrepreneurship and Marketing" in which the teacher, through a comment on Twitter, related the disciplinary content of the subject and later the students expressed their opinions of according to what was seen in class. Among the results, it stands out that more than 50% of the students indicated that the Twitter activity allowed them to implement grammatical structures that they already knew and allowed them to use already known vocabulary. Regarding the use of English, students can practice their language skills in real communication situations by interacting on platforms such as Twitter, they are able to participate in conversations, ask questions, share ideas and opinions about a certain topic.

Keywords: Twitter, information and communication technologies, foreign language English, nutrition and dietetics.

1. Introduction

Bernardo O'Higgins University (UBO) applies the Curricular Evaluation in the initial training cycle, in order to monitor compliance with the Learning Results that are framed in the Graduation Profile. In this sense, the Nutrition and Dietetics Program, based on the results of the Initial Cycle Evaluation, proposed different innovation actions regarding the improvement plan, highlighting the strengthening of the use of the English in the students of the career. Thus, its is the most spoken language worldwide and because the scientific literature in the area of nutrition and food is written in English. Therefore, the incorporation of the English foreign language component in one of its disciplinary subjects is proposed, with the purpose of contributing, improving and innovating in the training of future nutritionists graduated from this house of studies.

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The work of the foreign language will be through the Twitter platform since it is an easily accessible social network and it has a maximum of characters to use.

2. Theoretical Framework

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are defined as "a scientific, technological and engineering discipline and a management technique used in the management of information, its application and link with cultural issues" (UNESCO, 2002).

The inclusion of ICTs in the learning processes and in the curriculum of the careers, has offered teachers to redesign traditional teaching activities to expand them with new activities, resources and learning strategies (Pastora & Fuentes, 2021). The inclusion of educational technologies in educational processes occurs in a context of varied availability of digital resources that are counted today as the internet, cell phones, tablets and social networks (Villacres, *et al* 2020).

The use of ICT has given rise to mobile learning (Sánchez, *et al* 2019), an instance of learning by the student through their interaction with mobile devices, energizing their learning process (De-la-Hoz, *et al* 2019). Mobile devices are a communication component among university students, thanks to internet access, allowing the use of social networks (Gillate, *et al* 2017). One of the most used social networks is Twitter, which enables people to connect and communicate information quickly, reaching a large audience (Nickles, *et al* 2022). Twitter has emerged as a new educational medium, allowing learning to be mobile, real-time, and collaborative (Thamman, *et al* 2020).

The objective of this study was to analyze the level of satisfaction on the part of the students regarding the use of Twitter as a tool for the application of the English language.

3. Method

Descriptive study, in which 22 students of the subject of "Entrepreneurship and Marketing" of the first semester 2023 of the Career of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics of the UBO participated.

An instrument was designed for this study, which consisted of three response items. The answers to the statements-based items offered five levels on the Likert scale with respect to the statements made.

The application of the use of Twitter was implemented for the first time in the subject "Entrepreneurship and Marketing", located in the 7th semester of the career training. To carry out this project, the teacher of the subject left a comment on Twitter related to the disciplinary content of the subject and the students expressed their opinions according to what was seen in class (See Fig 1.).

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Fig. 1. Comment on Twitter of the teacher and student.

4. Results

The results obtained in relation to student satisfaction regarding the use of Twitter are shown below:

Table 1. Level of satisfaction of the university students of the Nutrition and Dietetics Career regarding the experience of using Twitter as a tool for the application of the English language

Criterion	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The level of English that I have allowed me to carry out the Twitter activity effectively	9,1% (2)	0	22, 7 % (5)	45,5 % (10)	22, 7 % (5)
The Twitter activity gave me confidence to address the use of the foreign language English.	4,6% (1)	9,1% (2)	22, 7 % (5)	22, 7 % (5)	40,9 % (9)
The Twitter activity allowed me to implement grammatical structures that I already knew.	0	9,1% (2)	18,2% (4)	50 % (11)	22,7 % (5)

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The Twitter activity allowed me to use vocabulary that I already knew.	4,6% (1)		4,6% (1)	27,2% (6)	36,4% (8)	27,2% (6)
The Twitter activity allowed me to learn new words.	9,1% (2)		0	18,2% (4)	9,1% (2)	63,6% (14)
The Twitter activity allowed me to discover new grammatical structures.	9,1% (2)	4,6% (1)	22,7% (5)		9,1% (2)	54,5% (12)
The Twitter activity helped me better understand the content reviewed in class.	9,1% (2)	0	22,7% (5)		13,7% (3)	54,5% (12)

Source: self made.

5. Discussion

Twitter is a useful tool for students, it gives them access to authentic content, practice in real situations, collaborative and autonomous learning opportunities, development of reflection skills and expression of ideas (Gallardo & López, 2020).

The interest of Twitter to favor the learning of the contents in a certain subject has been increasing, improving the learning process among students, promoting communication and the development of responsibility among them (Tejedor, et al 2021).

Twitter for academic purposes is undoubtedly an option, to the extent that students are motivated to use this tool in an academic context, but without a doubt having the necessary technical knowledge is essential (Rodríguez & Restrepo, 2015).

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6. Conclusions

Students can practice their language skills in the use of the foreign language English in real communication situations, since, when interacting on Twitter, they are able to participate in conversations on a given topic.

It is possible to conceive the management of social networks by students for educational purposes. It is important that teachers are updated in the use of ICTs, in order to increase their digital skills, promoting educational innovation.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Absence of oral interaction, so it would be interesting to consider the use of a platform that encourages the development of this skill. The character restriction on Twitter can make it difficult to fully and detailed ideas.

Future research would show whether these strategies are effective in reading research in English or communicating with international nutrition experts.

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