

The Influence of Douyin on College Students' English Learning

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Abstract. English learning is a vital part of life for college students. College education emphasizes independent learning. Thus, students' learning outcomes mainly depend on their self-learning ability and learning methods. With the development of science and technology, Internet becomes a way for students to learn English. Douyin, as the largest short video platform in China, has a large number of users. Many college students use Douyin to learn English. However, learning with Douyin is essentially a fragmented informal learning. The effect of learning English through Tiktok is questionable. How Tiktok affects students' English learning is a topic worth discussing. Therefore, this paper explores this issue through a survey questionnaire. Totally, 62 students participated in this survey and filled out the questionnaire. The finding indicates that using Douyin to learn English has both advantages and disadvantages, which will be analyzed in combination with fragmented learning.

Keywords: Douyin, social media, College students, English learning.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, with the improvement of science and technology, the Internet and transportation develop rapidly. The communication between different parts of the world has become more convenient. As a lingua franca, English plays a great role in the communication between people with different native languages. Today's college students are grew up in the Internet environment, and have strong learning ability [1]. Thus, many students begin to learn English by various ways with the help of Internet. One of the common way for contemporary Chinese students to learn English is learning by smartphone Apps. Douyin, with 809 million users, is one of the most popular apps among college students. Learning type of video is a big part of it. English learning videos often attract a lot of people's attention. At a time when universities attach importance to independent learning ability, it is becoming more and more common for college students to learn English through Douyin. However, there are still many questions about using mobile phones for learning, such as how effective is this learning method? What the advantages and disadvantages this method has? Therefore, this research will investigate these questions through a questionnaire survey to Chinese college students. This paper hopes to provide an insight into this issue.

2. Literature Review

The research on Douyin as one of the tools of English learning mainly focuses on students' views on Douyin and its specific role. Few studies have been conducted from the perspective of fragmented learning. Lee (2022) examined creative uses of emerging image-based social media for informal language learning. It investigates new technological features on Instagram and Douyin and how they are utilised as resources for language learning [2]. Tan, Rajendran, Muslim, et al. (2022) held the point that among all social media platforms, none can boast the ubiquity of Douyin [3]. Their findings indicated that video-related features and the duet challenge feature in Douyin have potential in promoting engaging and meaningful learning, in the context of a virtual environment [3]. This potential has enabled the use of major pedagogical strategies, such as digital assignment; active learning; collaborative and team-based learning. Wei (2022) studied on the influence of short videos such as Douyin on college students' study and life [4]. Fang & Fu (2022) researched through the

investigation and research on the duration of some college students' use of Douyin, their preference for watching videos and their attention to English videos [5]. The purpose was to understand the current situation and preference of college students' use of Douyin to learn English, so as to carry out relevant activities more targeted and help college students strengthen their interest in English learning by using Douyin and improve their English skills.

The literature on fragmented learning mainly only studies the phenomenon of fragmented learning and gives relevant conclusions. Few papers are conducted with a very specific Internet learning style as the research object. Li (2017) took English teaching in a certain college as an example and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of Internet fragmented learning. The research showed that this kind of learning method may improve students' learning attitude [6]. However, it will make the knowledge more fragmented, so it can not replace the role of teachers [6]. Geng (2019) analyzed the current situation and problems of college students' fragmented learning, and on this basis put forward relevant suggestions to improve the effectiveness of college students' fragmented learning [1]. Zhang (2022) analyzed and discussed the effective strategies of fragmented college English learning which was based on the technical advantages of big data [7]. Li & Song (2022) demonstrated the out-of-focus problem of fragmented learning among college students. They learned how to build models of the factors that influence attention through fragmentation [8]. By testing and analyzing, the influence relationship and influence path coefficient among each factor variable in the influence factor model are further explored [8]. Sun (2022) took a normal university student as the object. The paper studied the strategy of promoting fragmented learning in deep learning for college students [9]. Li & Hu (2023) analyzed the actual characteristics and the tendency of fragmented learning [10].

3. Method

The study used a questionnaire with fifteen multiple choice questions and a short-answer question to evaluate the influence of Douyin on college students' English learning. To be specific, the multiple choice questions have five answers that indicate the degree, which are very disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, and very agree. The first part is about the objective role of Douyin in English learning. The second part is about the subjective effect of Douyin on college students' English learning. The research object is college students in China. Totally, 62 questionnaires were collected.

4. Results

In investigating the objective role of Douyin, when asked whether Douyin meets the demand, nearly half of the people agree, and 21% of people are unsure because the concept of demand is not very clear. That is to say, Douyin English learning meets the needs of most people. The reason for those who disagree is that they are not adapted to fragmented learning. The results of other issues are similar, with the number of people agreeing far exceeding those opposing.

However, in investigating the subjective role of Douyin, contrary to the objective effect, the majority of people hold an opposing attitude, and a few people agree that Douyin can promote learning initiative. When asked the ability of autonomous learning, the number of uncertain people accounts for a large proportion, that is to say, the relationship between Douyin and learning initiative is weak and unclear.

In addition, the frequency of a keyword appearing in all responses is very high: fragmentation. Fragmentation is a new characteristic of obtaining information that has emerged with the development of the information age. And this characteristic has gradually penetrated into learning and life. Due to the fast pace of modern life, fragmentation has adapted well to this. Fragmented learning has the advantages of flexibility, convenience, and speed. At the same time, the preference push of Big data will also make learning more personalized and customized. However, fragmentation is often criticized for being too shallow and random. Many scholars call for learning to return to the most primitive textbooks and classrooms. The answers in the questionnaire also show that too much

fragmented English knowledge not only fails to aid learning, but also disrupts the framework of English knowledge. 'Flash by' is also a high-frequency vocabulary, and it is generally believed that fragmented knowledge does not have deep memory points and does not have a significant impact, and can only be used as a supplement to professional learning.

5. Advantages and Disadvantages

5.1. Advantages

Douyin can provide students with an English learning environment, as students can read and listen to English materials and also communicate with others in English on this platform. Thus, English can be learned in a quite straightforward way. Besides, learning with Douyin is convenience. Students can open their phones and browse related videos anytime and anywhere. There are many short videos from American TV dramas for them to practice listening. Over time, their listening skills will be well trained. Many professional English bloggers also teach English exam taking skills in videos, and so on. There are two ways for students to acquire knowledge in Douyin; The first method is to obtain it through big data push during video browsing. The second type is to search for English knowledge and engage in targeted learning. The cost and time required for these two basic methods are extremely low, for instance, students can receive English knowledge on the way back to their dormitories.

Another obvious benefit is the diversity of information and knowledge. In traditional learning methods, such as books, students can only learn about a certain field of knowledge. Generally speaking, the volume of content covered by a textbook is limited, and many knowledge points cannot be well explained and extended due to space limitations. But the combination of Douyin software and English learning is giving full play to the advantages of modern science and technology, that is, extremely high carrying capacity. Students can browse the knowledge of a particular topic they want to acquire at any time. For example, when they are learning English literature and drama, they can watch video materials on Douyin to understand the author's life and historical background at that time. These additional information gained can help them better digest the English knowledge they are interested in, expand their knowledge and horizons.

It is worth mentioning that some features of Douyin can also help students learn English. Douyin is so popular because it caters to the personalized needs of young people. It uses big data that can be targeted and pushed based on the video types that users tend to prefer. In English learning, Douyin can also present more similar videos according to the content of short videos that students usually watch. For example, if a student wants to practice his oral pronunciation through Douyin and has viewed many videos of pronunciation training, Douyin will put the same kind of oral videos on his home page. It can be said that this has actually reached a personalized learning mode. The fun of Douyin will also attract more college students. Compared with the traditional boring teaching mode, Douyin combines English learning with humorous forms of expression, so that students can experience joy in language learning. Therefore, students' initiative in English learning can also be improved.

5.2. Disadvantages

Although Douyin English learning does have many benefits, some fatal defects can not be neglected. Firstly, learning English by Douyin tends to be fragmented. Fragmentation of learning that cannot bring deep thinking since it is usually conducted in a short and fragmented manner, making it difficult to form a systematic and complete learning system and unlikely to bring about deep thinking. Deep thinking requires learners to have sufficient time and energy to conduct in-depth analysis, reflection, and exploration of the learning content, in order to achieve a deep understanding and application of knowledge. Nonetheless, fragmented learning often emphasizes rapid acquisition of knowledge and information, which means it is difficult to provide sufficient time and space to meet the needs of learners for deep thinking.

More seriously, this drawback may lead to the illusion that one has a lot of knowledge. This learning method can easily lead learners to overestimate their knowledge level, as they only understand some knowledge points in a certain field and fail to deeply understand the internal connections and essential laws of the field. This limitation may result in learners being unable to find fundamental solutions when encountering problems in practice.

Another disadvantage is that Douyin English learning may lead to inaccurate knowledge and information confusion. In fact, this can be attributed to the fragmented way Douyin transmits information, and there is no particularly strict threshold requirements for producing and uploading videos. That is to say, some erroneous knowledge may also be absorbed by students while in this stage of college students, they still do not have the ability to fully distinguish between true and false information. Unfiltered erroneous information may cause serious consequences. The excessive influx of scattered information into the brains of college students can also lead to confusion in their thinking and a lack of logical and theoretical framework construction.

5.3. Suggestions

The main substantive role of college students in learning English is to pass exams, such as the CET-4 and CET-6 related to graduation, the exams required for postgraduate interviews, and the English proficiency tests that may be required for job interviews. Therefore, in terms of learning content selection, students should be closer to their own goals and carry out targeted learning and improvement. However, the quality of English learning content on Douyin varies. Students need to ask their teachers to determine what is acceptable and what is not. So as not to learn something wrong.

After making sure that the learning content is correct and suitable for them, students can set a learning goal. Since the final goal is mainly to pass the exam, the small goals set in the learning process can be determined according to the practice scores of the practice paper bought. While learning through video, it should be supplemented by practicing exercises to ensure that there is an effective learning output every day or every period of learning time. It is best to find a study partner and supervise each other to avoid being distracted by other video content during the study process, so as to ensure learning efficiency.

In addition, since learning with Douyin will lead to too fragmented knowledge, students need to build more systems by themselves. After all, fragmented knowledge is not an advantage in itself, but its effective use can be beneficial to students. Therefore, students can establish a framework system while watching videos to learn knowledge, so that the learned knowledge has a more complete logical connection. Insist on fragmented input and systematic accumulation. In addition, students should try their best to ask professional teachers for their opinions every once in a while. It is indeed more convenient to learn by Douyin, but the help provided by teachers is still irreplaceable.

6. Summary

This study examines the influence of learning English with Douyin as fragmentation learning on college students. The investigation shows that learning English by Douyin has the advantages and disadvantages of fragmented learning. It has flexibility, personality and convenience. However, it can have shallowness and randomness too. To improve the efficiency, college students can set an objective and learn in the direction of the goal and improve learning enthusiasm. Besides, they can establish the framework of knowledge system to keep fragmented input and systematic accumulation.

In conclusion, when facing new learning opportunities and methods brought by the development of technology, students should make changes based on their own situation. It is necessary to have the ability to filter information when fragmented information flows into students' cognition through a large number of social media (not just Douyin). Of course, fragmented learning should not be seen as a raging beast. As a product of the times, it should be adapted rather than simply resisted. Anyway, it is just a learning tool, and when used well, it can have unexpected effects.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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