



## A STUDY OF SNAPCHAT AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT USING CREATIVE PEDAGOGY



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6553-3436>

**PRISCA GODSPOWER OCHULOR**

Department of English and Literary Studies

Bingham University Karu,

Nasarawa State

[ladvpgodpower@gmail.com](mailto:ladvpgodpower@gmail.com)

Received: 03.08.2024

Reviewed :05.08.2024

Accepted: 07.08.2024

### ABSTRACT

*The traditional classroom is being replaced by the use of Snapchat as a teaching and learning tool, as the world collapses into a small group where communication in a common language is acceptable. As researchers explore the world of technology, new social media apps such as Snapchat emerge, capturing the attention of the younger generation. In light of the discovery, there is a need to examine Snapchat as a tool for vocabulary development, so that users are not deceived into thinking it is just for social activities. In light of the aforementioned, the study uses a qualitative research methodology in conjunction with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructive theory as a framework. Additionally, the paper uses an innovative instructional strategy to address vocabulary development and the study of Snapchat. The study advises that teachers make learning entertaining and creative by allowing students to unlock their creative potential in a process and enhance learning, particularly in their vocabulary.*

**KEY WORDS:** Constructivism, images, pedagogical strategy, snapchat

### Introduction

Digital media and social media images are changing in tandem with the global experiences of language shift, language extinction, and language change. Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook are now considered to be reserved for older people. These days, Snapchat and TikTok are attracting the interest of younger people. The 90s saw the widespread adoption of handwritten letters as the modern form of communication. More recently, however, text messages have replaced handwritten letters as the primary means of communication. Stickers, emoji, and gifs are examples of digital media that use word placement to emphasize the meaning of images in order to prevent misunderstandings. With pictures and images, Snapchat is more interactive. This is due to the fact that it chooses various images, both animate and inanimate, to correspond with certain

words or sentences. It has the same ability to choose words that complement images or pictures.

Snapchat facilitates the user's ability to visualize objects that are familiar to them or their conversation partners. It provides support for a wide range of global images. The user is helped in choosing the image that resonates with him by the familiar objects and the location. Snapchat provides the user with a selection of appropriate images along with words, in contrast to WhatsApp images where the user chooses and annotates the image. Its features include information, videos, and images that disappear after 25 hours of user participation until the problem is fixed. It is entertaining to use Snapchat as a creative writing pedagogy tool for vocabulary development. Creative pedagogical strategy is a practice of teaching that uses creative imagination to engage students and teachers in learning. It entails presenting the subjects to

students in an educational setting with a context that specifically calls for creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork. To apply the creative pedagogical approach to vocabulary development and Snapchat study, each student needs to have an Android phone with the Snapchat app downloaded. With Snapchat, users can create words by combining pictures with them. For example, the phrase "Hello, goody" is a greeting; however, when the emoji button is pressed, Snapchat offers the language user additional ways to render the expression, like "How are you, Goody? "Hey sweetie", "Hey what's up sweetie", "Hi sweetie", or "Yee-haw! Additionally, it includes images of people saying hello in various font styles and sizes. Furthermore, it allows you to filter the images, which adds to the learning experience and makes it interesting.

With the use of creative pedagogical strategies, students can approach their studies holistically and learn in an engaging and interactive way. Snapchat is a platform where this creative learning can take place, and creative pedagogical strategies are both creative and enjoyable. Snapchat offers a feature whereby images, videos, and pictures can be displayed to explain words that might be unfamiliar to learners. A Snapchat image can be equally displayed, and the app will show words that describe the image. It is not limited by culture. It provides various options based on the word or name of an object, regardless of its location. The best way to help young learners develop their vocabulary is to use creative pedagogical strategies in conjunction with studying Snapchat. With these contextual backdrops in mind, this paper employs Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory to investigate the relationship between vocabulary development and Snapchat through the use of creative pedagogical strategies.

### Statement of the Problem

Digital media stickers, emojis, and GIFs can only be used in specific cultural and geographic contexts on platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Telegram. Users download and choose the images with accompanying captions to enhance

their understanding of the chosen images. Most social media users find Snapchat fascinating because it is used for social interaction and fun. They are unaware, however, that Snapchat can also be used as a basic tool for teaching and learning new words, resulting in vocabulary development. This lack of awareness about the use of Snapchat in teaching and learning new words has created a gap in the literature on vocabulary development. To address this gap in literature, this paper seeks to highlight the use of Snapchat in studying vocabulary development, particularly when creative pedagogical strategies are used.

### Objectives of the Study

The aim of this article is to examine how creative pedagogical strategies can be combined with Snapchat app to improve the vocabulary of young learners. The objectives of the study include to:

1. examine how Snapchat app can be used as pedagogical tool for vocabulary development;
2. identify how creative pedagogical strategy can be combined with snapchat app to make learning fascinating and fun; and
3. highlight snapchat features that can help users to create a mental picture of meaning of new words and images.

### Review of Related Literature

Snapchat is an image transforming application invented by Reggie Brown, Evan Spiegel, and Bobby Murphy during their undergraduate studies at Stanford University. The application was officially introduced in September 2011, and by May 2015, nearly 100 million people were downloading the application daily and more than 18% of social media users utilized Snapchat (Kafai & Burke, 2016). The principal features of Snapchat are pictures and messages. Snapchat is a website and application that enables one to create and share content or to participate in social networking. It is available for both IOS and Google Android devices. It is a mobile app that allows users to send and receive photos and videos. It uses a device camera to capture snaps and send them out to other Snapchat users. It allows the sender to draw or insert

text on the snaps and send them out to other Snapchat users and also determine how many seconds the recipient can view it before the file disappears from the recipient's devices. The use of Snapchat has led to transformative shifts in language usage, emphasizing grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics (Miller, 2016). It is one of the most popular social media apps that gives kids and teens what they want. It is a simple way to share every moment while simultaneously making them look awesome unlike other social media applications like Facebook and Twitter which broadcast everything one does. Snapchat uses messages that are meant to disappear at a given time. The app has a lighthearted design and its photo filters and effects tend towards rainbows and flower crowns which interest young learners. It has a Snap map to see each other's location on a map (Zaidieh, 2012). Walter (2017) opines that Snapchat should be utilized as a tool for learning, rather than keeping up with new technologies in classrooms. He suggests that learning should be enhanced in a fun and meaningful way. Some people use Snapchat for fun, such as snapping pictures, editing photos, filtering pictures, adding and making friends online, and fiddling with their phones to take away boredom.

Freire (1974) states that in making learning fun, teachers should incorporate Snapchat into their lessons because the app has many benefits. He adds that Snapchat provides a good opportunity for educators to take learning outside the classroom noting that teachers can use the app to post a short video to help summarize the materials learned in the class. Ochulor et. al., (2023) prove that 97.5% of 40 secondary school students access social media, but none of them use Snapchat for language learning. This paper, therefore, seeks to demonstrate to all Snapchat users that the app can be used for language learning, especially in vocabulary development. O'Brien (2016) presents ways teachers can post a virtual presentation of lessons using Snapchat. He opines that it has been proven to be one of the easiest and helpful tools to teachers as it allows them to interact with students and conduct the teaching and

learning process at home. To Hanif et al. (2018), learning with Snapchat is very fascinating. It is mostly collaborative activities both at home and in school. At home parents and more experienced siblings motivate and assist the learners, while in the schools, the teachers and able pairs are there when assistance is needed. It is observed by Miller (2016) that conventional teaching trends and less effective instructional materials, socioeconomic background, the extent of exposure to language, participation level, low interest in learning, and negative mindset, as well as attitude, contributed to the failure to acquire proper vocabulary (Jesson et al., 2018). The interest of this paper is to highlight strategies that can make learning through Snapchat interesting and erase negative mindsets toward proper vocabulary development. Most young learners enjoy using Android phones to search through the internet. They make friends online, chat, and snap pictures. Using the tools of fun and social interaction as a basic tool for learning will draw their attention and make learning fun too (Jeffrey & Craft, 2006).

Vocabulary knowledge has been recognized to be vital in boosting language proficiency and has a positive connection to language progress (Zaidieh, 2012). It is for the above reason that this paper highlights ways of making vocabulary development knowledge interesting to boost language proficiency, especially for the learners of English as a second language. Snapchat is considered a medium where some strategies can be applied to make a positive connection to language progress. Creative pedagogical strategy is a method of teaching where teaching is learner's centered on creative imagination from both the learner and the teacher (Cream, 2016). It is of the learner's opinion creative strategies include game-based, project-based, visual thinking, task-based, ICT/mobile-based, and character-based. According to Walter (2017), when incorporating technology in classroom practice through creative pedagogical strategies, English language users were found to be able to acquire good vocabulary both in writing and reading. Jeffrey & Crafts (2006) aver that online

interaction in virtual classrooms and Mobil learning (m-learning) have also demonstrated significant positive effects on students' vocabulary in reading and writing. Davies et al. (2013) state that when compared to conventional teaching methods, integrating Mobil-assisted language learning is superior in helping learners mortise a list of long words and phrases.

The demand for creative skills is high in the era of social media and technology. Lack of creative pedagogical strategies often challenges how students learn to write. Drilling and memorization are common strategies in many schools where teachers provide materials for students to memorize and rewrite to pass the examination (Stalin & Tan, 2020). Snapchat with creative teaching strategy is not designed to pass the examination purpose but to develop the vocabulary of the learner by activating their brains with activating involving task. According to Cremin (2006), lack of creativity in teaching methods and technique, content creation and procedure negatively affect learning. Teaching and learning vocabulary with Snapchat involve activities and concentration from both the teacher and the learner. It has been said that an Android phone or laptop where Snapchat is downloaded is required. The following activities using Snapchat enhance vocabulary development. To incorporate a constructivist learning theory in teaching/learning, a teacher is made to refrain from giving direct instructions to the students but, set a learning environment that allows students to imagine, articulate, express, illustrate, perceive, and apply new information with minimal supervision and Snapchat is the most appropriate platform for online teaching/learning language development. Constructivism is also a pedagogical approach (Hanif et al., 2018) that is based on the belief that learners create their understanding of the world around them and it is based on their experience through their everyday lives as they grow, they transmit the information they have accumulated into knowledge like coloring which is a feature in

Snapchat, they also take an active role in the learning process.

### Theoretical Perspective

The theories used in the study are Vygotsky's (1978) social constructive theory and Glassfeld's (1987) cognitive theory. The two theories are not mutual exclusive, as underpinning both is the belief that students learn by constructing their own knowledge. Cognitive constructivists concentrate on the importance of the mind in learning whereas social constructive focus on the key role played by the environment and the interaction between learners. According to Glassfeld (1987), learners use their cognitive structures to interpret the environment while Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory emphasizes that teachers must refrain from giving direct instruction to learners, but set a learning environment that allows them to imagine, articulate, express, illustrate, perceive, and apply new information with minimal supervision.

The cognitive theory emphasizes on Creative pedagogical strategy and it is like the application of social constructivism theory as it involves the creative imagination (mind) of both the teacher and the learner. It provides a setting (social environment) that requires imagination and collaborative capacities. In this paper, Snapchat is the learning environment for vocabulary development which enables English language learners to interact with native or more experienced speakers. It also allows for creative imagination with minimal supervision. It gives room for illustration and applies new information in a set environment with minimal supervision from the teacher. The teacher is to refrain from giving direct instructions like in the conventional classroom. Snapchat and its features can enable learners to describe pictures using words like massive downpour, accident, courage, and flowers, learning a language for vocabulary development, the Snapchat feature enables the learner to describe emotions and feelings, for instance, depression, anger, and so on.



Constructivist is also a pedagogical approach based on the concept of constructivism. The theory argue that learning is better when students make and share tangible artefacts (Ackermann et al., 2009). In describing creative pedagogies, Csikzentmihalyi (2002) states that it is the use of space and time, the study outside the classroom and game-based learning approaches, as well as, respectful relationships, non-prescriptive planning participation as learners in the classroom activities. The constructive view highlights the importance of knowledge construction process and considers making as an inherently social activity through which learners design artefacts that are of relevance to a larger community (Kafai and Burkey, 2016).

### Data and Methods

The study employs a qualitative research method to examine snapchat app and creative pedagogical strategies. Snapchat app is a social media networking service that allows users of iPhone, Android, Smartphones or windows PC to snap pictures, send photos, filter pictures, make video, connect friends, listen to news, design and exchange images with people all over the world. The social media app is available for download on any smartphone with an internet connection. The data for the study is Snapchat app. The study examines four learning activities that can be carried out using the Snapchat combined with creative strategy. The activities are labelled activity 1-4. The study analyses the activities using the Vygotsky's (1978) social constructive theory and Glassfeld's (1987) cognitive theory.

### Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The data chosen for this study are examined and discussed in this section. The intention is to study snapchat and vocabulary development using creative pedagogical strategy. The analysis of the activities is done below:

#### Activity One: Ability to Describe Pictures

The picture of a flower can be downloaded in a group Snapchat and the teacher asks each learner to describe the picture using simple or complex words. As the learner clicks on the emoji button on his

phone, different names of flowers and their pictures will pop up and the learner will choose the right name for the flower displayed.

#### Analysis

Most learners may not have seen the flower displayed in real life and as such may not know the name. However, with the use of Snapchat, so many flowers will be displayed with their names and the learner will use his cognitive ability to choose the name that matches the flower displayed thereby adding a new word to his existing vocabulary which in turns assist in increasing his knowledge.

#### Activity Two: The Ability to Describe New Vocabular

The teacher can display a new word like rapport and ask the learners to design the word with different font sizes and display the meaning. The learners get involved by searching for different font sizes to beautify their work. Everyone will display the meaning of the word and like his/her work to be better than that of others.

#### Analysis

The activities are interesting and brainstorming. The more the learners design the new word with different font sizes, it registers the meaning of the word in their brains, making it easy not to forget, thereby increasing their vocabulary. Getting the meaning of a word with snapchat is very simple as it has an inbuilt AI that helps in quick search of word meaning.

#### Activity Three: Ability to Show Emotion and Feeling

The teacher can ask the learners to snap themselves with Snapchat to display different emotions like joy, depression, or anger. The learners will be so interested in snapping themselves using a filter which is one of the features in Snapchat to filter and color their faces to display different moods. If the picture is filtered as smiling the emoji icon will display Joy or happiness making young learners acquainted with moods and names associated with that mood.

#### Analysis

Snapping and filtering are fascinating and fun which every learner will like to engage with. A learner may filter his picture expecting Snapchat to display that he is happy on clicking the icon. Instead of writing joy, it will display depression which will make the learner rework till he gets the expected result. This makes learning creative and demanding thereby increasing vocabulary. Every filtered picture must display the emotion if clicked on, in doing such a different emotion a child has a matching word to express it.

#### **Activity Four: Ability to Acquire Skills for Delivering Meaning with Precision**

The teacher can use Snapchat to check the learners' ability to acquire skills by asking them to create content on how a flower is grafted into the stock of another flower. The learner will first ascertain the meaning of the word 'ingrafted' before making the video. He needs to select flowers from a poll of flowers in the Snapchat emoji icon and stock one into the other. A perfect example of this is the Hibiscus and Rose flowers. The hibiscus can be used to signify the flower while the rose denotes the stalk. The learner can create a name that can combine the flowers such as: 'Rose- Hibiscus Flower' and then send videos to the teacher or for others to view. This makes learning involving and creative which is the application of both cognitive and social constructivism theory.

#### **Findings, Conclusions and Recommendation**

The history of Snapchat is a fascinating journey marked by innovation, competition, and cultural shifts. It provides a platform for language learners to connect with native speakers and other learners which has helped to improve language skills. Learning a new word or enhancing existing vocabulary is made easy with Snapchat using creative pedagogical strategy. This paper has highlighted the use of Snapchat as an educational tool in enhancing teaching and learning, especially in the area of vocabulary development. Snapchat has a feature known as a Snapchat story which is a collection of moments in the form of pictures and videos taken together to create a narrative on

Snapchat that can be viewed for hours. The teacher or learner can post the video of the new words learned in the classroom, a Snapchat group or to the individuals to replay. Listening to a video of what you have seen or heard or seeing yourself in a video with others is fascinating and every word repeated draws a real mental picture to the learner, thereby making abstract words concrete in the mind of a learner. Snapchat also have a feature known as Snap map which displays locations in real-time, which helps learners to know the names of places thereby increasing their knowledge of words. The Snap map also features news and events from around the world. To enhance the good production of sounds is to listen to newscasters and native speakers or experienced teachers in that field. As Snapchat has a snap map that also displays news, it can enable learners to listen to news from more experienced people thereby not only increasing their vocabulary but enhancing good production of sounds (phonics).

In the study of Snapchat and vocabulary development, the learners exhibit the ability to learn new words, acquire various adjectives to describe their action or their work and verbs to justify their actions or work. Creating content such as videos of what was learned or accessing videos from the teacher is a great acquisition of skills that Snapchat enables the learner to do during the course of learning. Since the Snapchat app has a feature that displays a snap map that names and shows the location of the interlocutors, it encourages vocabulary development as the learner will expand his knowledge of places and their names. Learners can also listen to news which enables them to make the right choice of words and the right production of sounds. In displaying the aforementioned abilities, the learners are exposed to new words with minimal supervision from the teacher. There is fun creation while learning is taking place, learning is also more involving than memorization. As new words are learned, old words are expanded, and knowledge of place and location are also inculcated in the learner. To this end, teachers are encouraged to incorporate the use of Snapchat in their curriculum for

progressive learning especially in language learning and vocabulary development. This will help to make learning interesting and interactive.

## References

1. Ackermann, E., Gauntlett, D., & Weckstrom, C. (2009). Defining systematic creativity. *Lego Learning Institute*.
2. Adagbonyin, A.S., Aluya, I., and Edem, S. (2016). "A Corpus-based Approach to the Linguistic Features in Nigeria and America Presidential Speeches". *Journal of Linguistics, Language and Culture*. 3(1):1-27.
3. Cremin, T., & Barnes, J. (2018). Creativity and creative teaching and learning. In *Learning to teach in the primary school* (pp. 428-442). Routledge.
4. Cremin, T., Burnard, P., & Craft, A. (2006). Pedagogy and possibility thinking in the early years. *Thinking skills and creativity*, 1(2), 108-119.
5. Cremin, T. (2006). Creativity, uncertainty and discomfort: Teachers as writers. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(3), 415-433.
6. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). *Flow: The classic work on how to achieve happiness*. Random House.
7. Davies, D., Jindal-Snape, D., Collier, C., Digby, R., Hay, P., & Howe, A. (2012). Creative environments for learning in schools. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 8(1), 80-91.
8. Edem, S. and Aluya, I. (2019). 'Pragmatic Face and Ideology in Selected Speech Discourses of President Muhammadu Buhari'. *Ife Journal of Languages and Literatures*. 5(1): 91-101.
9. Freire, P. (2020). Pedagogy of the oppressed. In *Toward a sociology of education* (pp. 374-386). Routledge.
10. Von Glasersfeld, E., & Von Glasersfeld, E. (1987). *The construction of knowledge: Contributions to conceptual semantics* (No. 3). Intersystems Publications.
11. Hanif, M., Asrowi, A., & Sunardi, S. (2018). Students' access to and perception of using mobile technologies in the classroom: The potential and challenges of implementing mobile learning. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 12(4), 644-650.
12. Jeffrey, B., & Craft, A. (2006). Creative learning and possibility thinking. *Creative learning practices: European experiences*, 73-91.
13. Jesson, R., McNaughton, S., Rosedale, N., Zhu, T., & Cockle, V. (2018). A mixed-methods study to identify effective practices in the teaching of writing in a digital learning environment in low-income schools. *Computers & Education*, 119, 14-30.
14. Kafai, Y. B., & Burke, Q. (2016). *Connected gaming: What making video games can teach us about learning and literacy*. Mit Press.
15. McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. (2008). Mapping the digital terrain: New media and social software as catalysts for pedagogical change. In *Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) Annual Conference* (pp. 641-652). Deakin University.
16. Miller, D. (2016). *Social media in an English village* (p. 220). ucl Press.
17. O'Brien, M. L. (2020). *A qualitative study exploring teacher perceptions of the impact of social media usage on middle level learners* (Doctoral dissertation, Millersville University-Shippensburg University).
18. Ochulor, P. G., Yusufu, A. K., & Adebayo, M. (2023). A Pragmatic Analysis of Digital Media
19. Stickers, Emojis and Gifs Towards Vocabulary Development. *English Language, Literature & Culture*, 8(4), 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ellc.20230804.11>
20. Ogunsiji, A. and Aluya, I. (2022). Lexical Repetition and Syntactic Parallelism in Selected Political Essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu. *The Universal Journal of Language*. 23(1): 77-107.
21. Said, N. E. M., Thambirajah, V., Yunus, M., Hua, T. K., & Sultan, F. M. M. (2022). Exploring English Descriptive Writing

- Vocabulary Acquisition through Creative Pedagogical Strategies. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 28(4).
22. Stalin, L. T., & Tan, K. H. (2020). Use of snapchat to enhance primary school english as second language learners in the writing of personal information. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 9(4), 330-338.
23. Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard university press.
24. Walter, J. (2017). Getting Started with Snapchat in your Classroom. *Dostupno na: https://www.kqed.org/education/404331/getting-started-with-snapchat-in-yourclassroom* (5.7. 2022).
25. Zaidieh, A. J. Y. (2012). The use of social networking in education: Challenges and opportunities. *World of Computer Science and Information Technology Journal (WCSIT)*, 2(1), 18-21.