Reflecting on online book reviews

Julie Van de Vyver, e-lang citizen team

Teacher Sheet

Task

Your students will be given the following task.

> You are going to reflect on book reviews and several comments made on these reviews on Instagram. By analysing book reviews, you will discover various ways (genres, language, etc.) in which reviews are written. You will also find out how users react and comment on other's book reviews on Instagram.
>
> To do so, you will select and analyse a number of 'bookstagram' posts and see how users respond to these posts.

Website

https://instagram.com (#bookstagram; #bookstagrammer, #bookreview, #booklover, etc.)

Instagram is an online social network available in many languages. It uses hashtags and there are specific # for reviews in different languages like #bookstagramfrance.

You may also use other platforms instead of Instagram, according to the needs and relevance to the learners.

- https://www.goodreads.com/ (Website available in English);
- https://tiktok.com (Website available in many languages, community: booktok)

CEFR level - For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

	Dimensions covered in task	(Potential) specific objectives

Digital Citizenship	Ethical and responsible	Understand the potential impact of the post and its comments on other users. Become aware of copyright issues, age appropriateness, etc.
Meaning-making literacy	Media literacy	Become aware of a culture of positivity - positive use of emojis and likes.
	Knowledge of how information is generated and disseminated	Become aware of how posts take account of the target group with # to target specific communities.
	Multimodal literacy	Understand the importance of text and emojis, @... and #.

Main language activity

- Written reception: read book reviews and comments on book reviews.

- Oral production: discuss book reviews.

Possible steps

- Learners can be provided with the choice of two to three book reviews with comments. In pairs, they can choose reviews on books they are interested in.

- You can invite learners to compare the reviews in pairs: do they contain questions, a synopsis, quotes from the book or opinions? Compare the authors of the reviews: are they popular? Do they often publish reviews?

- Groups can share their answers with the class and write down a potential list of elements that are contained in book reviews on Instagram.

- After this collective discussion on initial posts, they can have a look at the comments in small groups and discuss their meaning and form.

- The groups can express their preferences and make a screen capture of the two comments they particularly appreciate before uploading the picture(s) on a class Padlet (or another collaborative wall). They can explain underneath the picture(s) what criteria led to their decision.

- The selection can then be discussed with the class.

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Student Sheet

Task

You are going to reflect on book reviews and several comments made on these reviews on Instagram. By analysing book reviews, you will discover various ways (genres, language, etc) in which reviews are written. You will also find out how users react and comment other's book reviews on instagram.

To do so, you will select and analyse a number of bookstagram posts and see how users respond to these posts.

Website

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CEFR level - For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

While completing this task, you can:

- understand the potential impact of the post and its comments on other users;

- learn how a post is built (text and other features) and how it targets specific communities;

- become aware of the culture of positivity in these communities.

Hints

Work on the language-related aspects

When analysing reviews, pay attention to the language choices (positive language, short/long comments, etc.), the adjectives, and adverbs, and the motivational and emotional language (e.g.: use of emojis instead of language).

For you to think about

While completing the task, you can reflect on the following.

- When were the comments posted? Was it long after the post was uploaded?

- Are the comments based on reliable information? If so, is it visible in the post?

- Might some comments influence your opinions/actions? If so, how?

- Did you notice authors of reviews that seem popular (they often write reviews)?