THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract
It is now an established fact that the use of technology facilitates teaching and learning in English language classrooms. With the advancement of technology, social networking websites have emerged too. Social networking sites have been quite popular among various age group users particularly the young users since their invention. Also, they are conceived to be able to motivate (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009) and expose learners to the authentic use of the target language (Baralt, 2011). This paper examines what are the social networks and brief history of some of them. It also goes further to look at the technology of social networks such as face book, WhatsApp, telegrametcand language teaching through the use of various researches conducted on social networks and language teaching around the globe. Moreso, educational implications of social networks are highlighted. Lastly, suggestions were offered and conclusion was drawn.

1.0 Introduction

The innovation and advancement of social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, WhatsApp,Instagram,Skype etc. has increased further use of technology in this generation's day to day life. These social networking websites have also proven to be useful in language learning as they are more engaging and inspiring for learners to use the target language, and minimizes learners' fear and nervousness and authority of the instructor (Gilbert, Fiske, &Lindzey, 1998; Beauvois, 1998 cited in Millis, 2011). Moreover, the online social networks also provide an opportunity for both instructors and learners to be exposed to the language through authentic activities and materials and thus can promote constructivist learning through meaningful communication (Woo, Herrington, Agostinho, & Reeves, 2007). According to Chartrand (2012), the online social networking sites not only motivate the Net-generation learners to use relevant learning materials, but also let the learner experience the authentic usage of a language in communication. Since students can relate more if online social networks are used for language teaching, this invariably promotes language acquisition to a great extent.

Social Networks

Social networking is the use of internet based social media programs to make connections with friends, family, classmates, customers and clients. Social networking can be done for social purposes, businesses or both. The programs show the associations between individuals and facilitate the acquisition of new contact. Examples of social networking have included Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, 2go, Instagram, Skype etc.

According to Wikipedia "a social networking service (also social networking sites SNS or social media) is a platform to build social networks or social relations among people who share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections". There some common features to be related to social network service (1) social networking services are web 2.0 internet-based applications, (2) User –generated content (UGC) is the lifeblood of SNS organisms, (3) user create service-specific profiles for the site or app that are designed and maintained by the SNS organization, and (4) social networking services facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user' profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.

Most social networks services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Social network sites varied and they incorporate new information and communication tools such as mobile connectivity, photo/video/sharing and blogging. Online community services are sometimes considered a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community are group- centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interest with people in their network.

Technology of Social Networks and Language Teaching

Technology is an increasingly influential factor in people's life in general and in the field of education in particular. Digital devices are used both to complement established education aids and develop new ways of learning. Technologies are a diverse set of tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and process information. They namely include computers, the Internet, broadcasting devices and cell phones. The introduction of new technology into schools has determined changes in pedagogy where teachers are adopting new methods of teaching facilitated by the new technology.

Technology offers powerful learning and teaching tools that demand new skills and understandings both from learners and teachers. This may provide better results of teaching effectiveness compared to traditional teaching methods. It creates a healthy environment regardless of time, place and pace which lead to self-study autonomous learning where language is always described as a self-study subject. The internet has created an effective new teaching context by means of Web-based collaboration which promotes classroom interaction so as to increase opportunities for students to offer English an authentic use and to create a learner-centered learning environment. Many social networks and means such as Wiggio, blogs, wikis, Facebook, twitter, Skype, YouTube and many others are now used for various purposes. Of course, such tools are also used by teachers to serve as a platform for teacher-student and student-student communication inside and outside classroom. They live in a digital era.

2.0 Literature Review

Many researchers have been conducted to ascertain whether social networks like Facebook, WhatsApp, telegram etc. have any positive impact on language teaching. Below is a review of some research conducted on the use of Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and Skype on the teaching and learning of English language.

2.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking service launched in February 4th 2004. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommate and follow Howard University Student Eduardo Saverin. The websites membership was initially limited by the founders to Howard Students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area the Ivy League, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United States, Corporations and by September 2006, to everyone of age 13 and older with a valid email address.

Facebook has a variety of interactive features and it attracts the users to play and enjoy it (Ellison etal., 2007). The Facebook provides a convenient environment for the development of discourse communitieswith its varied participatory mechanisms. The students can create their personal profile page allowing them tolist interests and activities and share with others. They also belong to a 'Network' defined primarily by theeducational institution with which they are, or have been, affiliated.

Many features such as the "like" button, comment application, and sharing button in Facebook tagline "giving people the power to share and making the world more open and connected" creates space for autonomy andengagement in exchanging ideas and knowledge due to active roles consumed by learners (Ashton & Newman,2006). In Facebook, users can have their own group of interests, share and exchange messages between themvia the available applications easily (Kwong, 2007). One of the available applications is that "My Notes"provide users with opportunities to write and blog almost anything under the sun (Kwong, 2007).

The interactive feature of Facebook is believed to provide students with great opportunities to practicetheir writing. In other words, students post their written pieces, receive comments, write and post their owncomments, and reply to other Facebook group members. Therefore, this interactive communication enablesstudents to actively engage in the writing process and improve their writing skills. Also, the computer-basedgrammar checkers and spelling checkers that students use from time to time while interacting on Facebookgroups, are considered to be powerful ways of providing immediate feedback on their written output. Further,the use of Facebook is deemed to have a positive impact on boosting students' motivation and attitude (Kabilan,Ahmed, &Abidin, 2010).

Previous study by Melor et al. (2012) revealed that Facebook can be embedded in writing activity asthe participants utilize the features in Facebook to learn new vocabulary by reading the comments of the otherstudents in the group, discussion in getting ideas for writing, and spell-check by peers. The study also provesthat using Facebook actually can help the students in completing their essays easier by participating in theFacebook group discussion.

Another study was conducted by Mislaiha B. (2015). This study attempts to explore the use of Facebook in teaching and learning English in a Malaysian college.The aims are to examine the kinds of language teaching and learning activities carried out via Facebook, theuse of Facebook in facilitating the teaching and learning and the limitations of using Facebook in teaching andlearning. The findings indicate that reading, writing and discussion activities can be held via Facebook and allof the participants agreed that Facebook helps them in learning English. This study implicates that the use ofFacebook as an alternative tool that can be used for teaching and learning to enhance students' interactions outsidethe classroom.

Similarly, Mervat Abd E. (2016) carried out a study on using Facebook to develop Grammar discussion and writing skills in English as a foreign language for university students.This study aimed at investigating the effect of Facebook on grammar discussion and writing skill in English as a foreign language for university students. The study sample consisted of 60 students at Oklt Al Sqoor College ofScience and Arts in Saudi Arabia and was divided into two groups: 30 students for the experimental group and 30 students for the control group. The instrument of the study was an EFL grammar and writing test. Students in both the experimental and the control group were pre-tested using the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) grammar and writing test. After that the experimental group was taught using Facebook while the control group was taught using the traditional method. Finally, students in both groups were post-tested using the EFL grammar and writing test. Results of the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of EFL grammar and writing. This difference can be attributed to using Facebook.

Another research titled "Using Facebook to Enhance Students' Writing Skills "is an MA degree conducted byAhazeejAbdulateef at Sudan University of Science and Technology, March 2013. This study aimed at giving room for student-centered activities and chose Facebook to allow learners a wide variety of activities and experiences that can support learning away from the limited time of the classroom. A sample of 13 EFL students from Ahfad University for Women (majored in English) sat for Pre-test by writing an essay using pen and paper.Then a Facebook group called "Let us write" was created where the sample was taught a course on writing essays on a Facebook page followed by a post test and a questionnaire to check students' attitude using Facebook for writing practice.Results of the Facebook test showed great progress when compared to the paper and pen test and the questionnaire showed positive attitudes in using Facebook to practice the writing skill. Students were highly motivated to practice English writing informally that gave them more freedom and time rather than the limited time and restricted context of the formal instruction. Moreover, they greatly benefited from their peer comments and feedback.

2.2 WhatsApp

WhatsApp messenger is an American proprietary cross-platform instant messaging client for Smartphone. It uses the internet send text messages, documents, images, video, user location and audio media messages to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers.As of February 2016, WhatsApp had a user base of one billion, making it the most popular messaging application.

WhatsApp offers distinctive features including audio and video enable the users to bring in benefit for learning particularly language learning.Many studies were conducted on the use of WhatsApp in the teaching and learning of English. Muhammad A. (2017) conducted a research on the effect of using WhatsApp Messenger in learning English language among university students. The study aimed at finding the effect of using WhatsApp app messenger in learning English language among university students. The participants of the study consists 40 students. They were divided in to two groups. The control group consists of 21 students taught in traditional way while the experimental group consists of 19 students taught through using a combination of between WhatsApp and traditional learning the results of this study showed that there were differences in theachievements of the students in the experimental group and the control group. This difference was in favorof the experimental group. The differences between the two groups indicated that integrating the WhatsAppapplication in teaching English language improved the abilities of the learners of the experimental group.

Similarly, Sanaz J.&Azizeh C. (2016) carried out a study aimed to investigate the role of WhatsApp in the vocabulary learning improvement of Iranian junior high school EFL students. 60 students, 30 male and 30 female participated in the study. The experimental group were taught using WhatsApp while control group were taught using their text books. The results revealed that usingWhatsApp had significant role in vocabulary learning of the students. The results also showed that there was nota substantial difference between male and female students regarding their vocabulary knowledge after usingWhatsApp.
Another study was conducted by Ahmad S. (2017) to find out the effectiveness of usingWhatsApp messenger as means of communication between supervisors and students. Survey design was used to know the opinions of students about the effectiveness of using WhatsApp in communicating between students and teachers. The result shows that 93% of the subjects supported the use of WhatsApp messenger as a means of communication between supervisors and students.

Also, Mona, M. (2017) carried out a study titled "Using WhatsApp to enhance students learning of English language". This study was conducted in College of Science & Arts Majarda King Khalid University, English Department. The population of the study was 36 female students from 1st level who were studying Listening & Speaking 1 course in the 1st semester 2013-2014. The researcher has used the analytical descriptive method to conduct this study in King Khalid University.

A students' questionnaire and instructor observation were the tools for collecting the data, results were coded manually and analyzed using SPSS. Almost all study-findings supported using WhatsApp to enhancestudents learning and enthusiasm, using WhatsApp helped students to develop English skills, enriched their vocabulary and learn from their mate's mistakes, although the study laid out some disadvantages of the experience such as preparing the materials and having discipline in the group.

Therefore, from the above studies, one can see that WhatsApp application is very useful and can support teaching of many English Language items to students. The use of messages feature can be used to teach vocabulary development and composition writing can be taught with the guidance of the teacher. He should create and manage the group. Then, the teacher will initiate the activity and post it to the platform. When the students respond he should be making comments and corrections where necessary and this will go continuously.

2.3 Telegram

Telegram is a Cloud - based instant messaging service. Telegram clients exist for both mobile (Android, ios, windows phone, ubuntu touch) and desktop systems (windows, OS X, linux). Users can send messages and exchange photos, videos, stickers and files of any type. Telegram also provides optional end-to-end encrypted messaging with self – destruct timers, but these features have been contested by security researchers and cryptography experts.
Telegram is supported by the Russian – born entrepreneur PovelDurov, who is now a citizen of Saint Kitts and Nevis, travelling the world in self – imposed exile. Its client – side code is open – source software whereas its server – side code is closed – sourced and proprietary. The service also provides Applications to independent developers.

The application 'Telegram Messages' can help teach students to communicate and collaborate effectively with the delay time not only with the classroom, but also with the university, the community and beyond. It can benefit students' learning, seamlessly incorporating literacy into the learning auditory. Also, 'Telegram Messages' can help teachers be more efficient in delivering instructions, engaging and managing students, grading and giving fast and effective feedback. It saves classroom time and accelerates students' achievements by initiating them online before class begins. Therefore, to help students succeed in their learning, teachers can move content into interactive and engaging multimedia process for differentiated and empowering learning.

Telegram is a messaging app with a focus on speed and security; it's super-fast, simple and free. You, as a teacher, can use Telegram on all your devices at the same time. With Telegram, you can send messages, photos, videos and files of any type (doc, zip, mp3, etc.), as well as create groups for many students or channels for broadcasting to unlimited audiences. Telegram can take care of all your teaching messaging needs. Thus, the teacher can be in touch with students any time anywhere. Telegram is for everyone who wants fast and reliable messaging and calls. Telegram supports replies, mentions and hash tags that help maintain order and keep communication in large communities efficient. The teacher can appoint admins with advanced tools to help these communities prosper in peace. Students' groups can be joined by anyone and are powerful platforms for discussions and collecting feedback.

Telegram can take up nearly zero space on the phone. The Telegram is considered a student-centered asynchronous teaching method that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing outside the constraints of time and place among a network of people. Asynchronous learning is based on a student-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of peer-to-peer interactions. This approach combines self-study with asynchronous interactions to promote learning, and it can be used to facilitate learning in traditional on-campus education, distance education, and continuing education. This combined network of learners and the electronic network in which they communicate are referred to as an asynchronous learning network.

Hence, telegram can be employed to teach vocabulary development. To do it successfully, the teacher should create group on telegram messenger and add students. He should then send a story to the group members and allow them to read. The new words should be underlined and allow the students to write their meanings. Also, they should construct sentences using those words. While they are sending their work, the teacher should keep responding and making comment and corrections where necessary.

Some of the studies conducted on the use of telegram in teaching language include:"The Impact of Telegram as a Social Network on Teaching English Vocabulary among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners" byFarid Ghaemi (2017) a study was conducted to investigate the effects of short massages services (SMS) via socialnetworks on EFL learners' vocabulary learning process. To this end, an experimental approach was applied to assess theefficacy of SMS-based teaching on students' vocabulary learning. A PET proficiency test, two time-series vocabulary progress tests, and a post-test were applied to explore the effects of SMS on students' vocabulary learning process.

Then the differencein mean scores was compared to answer the research question. The study has revealed that: (1) the use of SMS via social networks as a teaching tool had a positive effect on students' vocabulary learning; (2) the experimental group obtained somewhat higher scores in the post-test than in two time-series progress tests, making the difference between the progress tests and post-test significantly different; (3) the difference between the two progress tests and post-test for control group was not statistically significant; and (4) the experimental students were more differentiated than the control students, as shown by a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of both groups in post-test in favor of the experimental students.

Another study is "The Effectiveness of Social Media Network Telegram in Teaching English Language Pronunciations to Iranian EFL Learners" by Ismail X. (2017). The study examined the effectiveness of using social media network TelegramR in teaching English language pronunciation to Iranian EFL learners. Participants of this study included 30 Iranian EFL learners (in two experimental (N = 14) and control (N = 16) groups) who received different treatments over the four weeks. The results of pre-test and post-test revealed that the pronunciation of participants in experimental group improved significantly compared to control group but we found no significant improvement in pronunciation of participants in experimental group from post-test to delayed test which was administered four weeks later. The results of current study revealed that using social media networks in teaching language features can be very effective and promising.

2.4 Skype

It is an application that provides video chat and voice call services. Users may exchange such digital documents as images, text, video and any others, and may transmit both text and video messages. Skype allows the creation of video conference calls. It is available for Microsoft windows, Macintosh, or Linux, as well as Android, Blackberry, and both Apple and Windows Smartphone and Tablets.

Skype is based on a premium model. Much of the service is free, but Skype Credit or a subscription is required to call a landline or a mobile phone number. At the end of 2010, there were over660 Million worldwide users, with over 300 Million estimated active each month as of August 2015. First released in August 2003, Skype was created by the Sweden NiklasZennston and the Done Janus Frils, in corporation with AhtiHeinlaPriitKasesalu, and Joan Tallinn, Estonians who developed the backend that was also used in the music- sharing application Kazaa.

Skype is a communication tool that allows users to make audio and video calls over the Internet. Calls to other Skype users are free. Skype also offers a computer-to-land-line service for both local and international calls, as a fee-based service. Similar to needing an e-mail address to send e-mails, a Skype account is required in order to make and receive calls.
2.4.1 The Educational Use of Skype:

Although Skype is a commercial product, its free version is being used with increasing frequency among teachers and schools interested in global education projects.[5] For example, Skype is being used to facilitate language exchange. Students in different parts of the world are paired off, each is a native speaker of the language that the other wishes to learn. In conversations over Skype they alternate between the two languages.

Teachers are using Skype in unique ways to fulfill educational goals. The videoconferencing aspect of the software is valuable in that it provides a way to connect students who speak different languages, hold virtual field trips, and reach out to experts in varying fields of study. These experiences allow students a chance to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real-life experiences and it also achieves further learning opportunities.

Skype in the classroom is another free tool that Skype has set up on its website. It provides teachers with a way to make their classrooms more interactive and interesting. Skype in the classroom is a service that teachers can sign up for that will allow students to meet other students, talk to experts, and share ideas. Teachers can collaborate with other teachers around the world and design different learning experiences for their students. There are various Skype lessons, in which students can participate. Teachers can also use Skype's search tool and find experts in the field of their choice.

James C. conducted a research on "Teaching Oral English Online- Through Skype (VOIP). This study focuses on the teaching of English conversation to undergraduate students in Iran whereby native speakers of English function as Conversation Facilitators (CFs) using audio conferencing (Skype) to talk with small groups of students or converse one-to-one. Semi-structured interviews with eight CFs aimed to find out more about how the conversations were being conducted as well as investigating the extent to which the task design was providing an adequate basis and stimuli for the dialogues.

Another study is "Advantages and disadvantages of using Skype for educational purposes" by Melnyk, A. The purpose of this article is to provide knowledge about pros and cons connected with the usage of Skype during the process of study foreign languages among Russian people. Research in this sphere is not very developed as internet technologies are new method in education. Our task is to delight all sides of this research. A qualitative exploratory research method was applied to interviews and notes via Skype between students and their web teachers. The data were analyzed using phenomenography. The findings are based on the pole in the Internet. The advantages were: being able to be at home; well-known being and convenience for the students; and attend ones possible regardless of geographical distance. Barriers were that the Internet connection works intermittently with audio or picture.

2.4.2 Educational Implications using Social Networks

1. Social Networking web sites help in education by allowing students and teachers in one platform.
2. Students get closer to art and design, and are exposed continuously to new ideas, given a big chance to feed their creativity.
3. They can communicate their thoughts and perceptions over different topics with a large no. of users, and raise their voice.
4. Social networks, like Facebook provides opportunities to enhance the development of socio-pragmatic competence in language learners as well as the sense of community in language classrooms.
5. It helps in creating awareness among the mass.
6. Students can get up-to-date and recent information from Social Media.

2.4.3 Challenges of Using Social Networks

1. The attention to details, pronunciation and grammar, have declined drastically, because most of the students do not write complete sentence, use proper grammatical method while writing text/message.
2. The active involvement of students on social sites while study results in reduction in their focus of attention. Consequently, their academic performances decline.
3. The more time students spend on social sites, the less they spend socializing person. Students who spend a great deal of time on social networking are less able to effectively communicate with person.

4. Most students maintain privacy while uploading photos and videos in Social Networking Sites; this can lead to criminal activity.

5. Students get addicted towards Social Media, instead of spending time with family in leisure period; they prefer chatting with online friends and unknown faces

3.0 Conclusion

Social Networking websites like Twitter, Facebook, Myspace and YouTube are becoming more and more popular and have become part of daily life for an increasing number of people. Because of their attractive features, young people are attracted to Social Networking Sites. Literature indicates that Facebook is the most popular sites among the youths; because it provides individuals with a way of maintaining and Strengthening social ties which can be beneficial to both social and academic settings.

3.1 Suggestions

In view of the above therefore, the paperoffers the following suggestions:
Some social network badly affects the young people's privacy, safety, focus of attention to study, physical as well as mental health. So, it is strongly recommended to check student's activities on Social Networks and also minimize the use of Social Networking sites for the benefits of the students' community. Also, to minimize the negative effect of Social Network, it is vitally important to educate our students on healthy use of information and communication technology as well as providing them a healthy environment. Parents may also be suggested to spend as much time to their wards in leisure period, maintain a friendly relation and try to meet their queries so far as possible in order that their child might not get much be habituated or addicted towards social networking sites.

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