

The Role of Social Media Sites in the Enhancement of English Language Learning at the University of Tabuk

Abdulrahman M. Abdulrahman Alfahadi Ph.D

Faculty of Education and Arts

Department of English Language and Literature

***Abstract:** The spread of social media applications such as Facebook, You Tube, Twitter and Instagram and the wide use of Smartphone and tablet technology, helps students to improve social learning outside the schoolroom. Having interactive language learning environments is the main factor which encourages EFL learners to log into these sites, especially for Saudi university students who have only limited time inside English language classrooms. To meet this need, social media can be used by English language learners in order to create communities of learning where students can practice English language skills.*

This study aims to investigate how social media sites can improve English language skills among Tabuk University students and to determine what the most common social media sites are that the learners use in order to practice English language skills. The researcher concludes that social media sites can be incorporated in the EFL syllabi as teaching and learning aids because they contain a huge combination of sound, text and videos where students can comment and get direct remedial feedback. The study also finds that You Tube is the most common social media site that the students at Tabuk University use to practice English Language.

***Key Words:** Social media, English Language Learning*

Introduction

Bozarth (2010) defined social media sites as online materials created by the general population, unmistakable from substance delivered by expert scholars, writers, or produced by mechanical or broad communications. Cases of social advancements used to make online networking incorporate; those for correspondence, for example, web journals, cooperation, for example, wikis, groups, for example, Facebook, surveys and feelings, for example, Amazon pursuer audits, and interactive media, for example, YouTube.

O'Keeffe and Pearson (2011) affirm that being involved in different kinds of social media sites has shown to be of great benefit in upgrading correspondence, social association, and even specialized abilities. Online networking locales, for example, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

have been offering daily opportunities to connect with classmates, friends, and people that have similar interests. Nowadays, it is easy for students to get online data about their training concerns. Brilliant learning assets are progressively accessible to understudies on an assortment of points important to this populace, for example, their opinions on teachers, syllabus and assessment. Students who have learning problems can log on to web sites to develop support networks of learners with similar conditions.

Web-based social networking locales permit understudies to finish online huge numbers of the errands that are critical to them: They can stay associated with cohorts sharing pictures, trading thoughts and doing bunch ventures. Online networking interest can likewise offer learners more profound advantages that stretch out into their perspective of self, group, and the world. For instance, Facebook and comparative online networking programs permit understudies to assemble outside of class to team up and trade thoughts regarding assignments.

Questions of the Study

This study intends to answer the following questions:

- 1- How can social media sites enhance English language skills among Tabuk University students?
- 2- What are the most common social media sites that the learners use in order to improve English language skills?

The Significance of the Study

The learners of English as a foreign language can acquire more language skills via social communication. On Facebook, they can log onto the pages of prominent figures such as presidents, kings, queens and actors. On YouTube, learners can watch and listen to lectures and lessons given by experienced teachers.

The findings of this study will clarify the advantages of the effective use of social media sites among the learners of English as an outside dialect at the University of Tabuk and will help syllabus designers and policy makers of English language pedagogy in regards to how to

incorporate social media strategies in formal instruction which will encourage learners to use the language inside and outside the classroom and in real situations.

Literature Review

Graddol (2006) argues that as the need intensifies for social, economic and technological communication at a global level, the accessibility of English as a worldwide dialect is quickening globalization. Then again, globalization is accelerating the utilization of English dialect. He gives a factual vision specifying that there could associate with 2 billion individuals all the while learning English on the planet's schools and universities and as free grown-ups. Almost 33% of the total populace will attempt to learn English in the meantime.

Bloom (2009) contends that a solitary voice could yell just as such. A daily paper, book, radio station, or some other media relying upon large scale manufacturing had depended on some focal distributed power to convey its substance. A phone could give anybody a chance to impart around the world, however just to one individual or to - at most - a modest bunch of endpoints at once. The Internet permits one correspondence to be distributed and got by any number of individuals on the planet at the same time and could allow all of them to react all the while however they wanted. This new correspondences capacity was a development that was from numerous points of view as an imperative apparatus for human correspondence as dialect itself. Correspondences to and from any number of individuals could act naturally arranging on, possibly, any scale as opposed to being sorted out by means of pecking orders, for example, governments, religions, tribes, or organizations. New routes for society to survive and flourish were unquestionably unavoidable as the Internet offered another global environment for human interchanges to be shaped.

Bozarth (2010) states that social media tools can melt away many of the barriers between learners and create more informal, friendly, and interactive learning environments. Teachers and students who are annoyed with components of the conventional approach will discover some help through utilizing online networking. These online locales can offer reasonable situations for proceeding with discussions past the time limitations of the classroom timetable. It can broaden

the learning procedure past the bounds of the classroom and bolster the advancement of groups of learners.

The Arab Social Media Report (2015) mentions that, in Saudi Arabia, Facebook had the highest usage among social media users at the beginning of 2015. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates represent up to 80% of users in the Gulf region.

Stanciu et al. (2012) analyzed the effect of informal organizations on the instructive procedure in Romanian advanced education. They used a theoretical framework regarding the educational value of social networking web sites, proposing a model on how to use Facebook in higher education leaning process. They collected data through a survey on students and academics at the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. The findings of this study reveal that social networking sites have become very popular among students and might be considered valuable tools for education.

Bosman and Zagenczyk (2011) believe that online networking's capacity to empower individuals to connection, share, and work together has made its utilization more basic in individual, business, and instructive spaces. Online networking empowers individuals to reconnect with previous schoolmates and associates and recharge past connections. Individuals share photographs, recordings, and furnish others with successive redesigns concerning their lives. Additionally, web-based social networking facilitates cooperation for work ventures and group occasions. In training, online networking offers new and energizing open doors for instructing and learning. Customarily, training has connected addresses, composed correspondence and, all the more as of late, PCs for direction, however now the conceivable outcomes are boundless.

The Methodology of the Study

The research methodology for this study is descriptive. An elucidating study tries to discover certain actualities concerning a current marvel. This method is applied because this study aims at eliciting the opinions of the students of Tabuk University on how the usage of social networking sites can improve their English language acquisition and which social media sites they use most in order to improve English language skills. Sixty copies of a questionnaire have been distributed

as an instrument of data collection. The participants are all first-year students from the faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Discussion and Comments

Using a questionnaire as data collection instrument, the researcher intended to explore the role of social media applications in the enhancement of English language learning. For the first question of the study, the researcher divided the items - from 1 to 12 - into three sections; each representing a factor that helps in responding to this question.

No	Statement	M	SD	Result
1	I find it easy to log into social media sites.	4.50	.79	Strongly agree
2	It is simple to discover my accomplice via web-based networking media locales and include him as a contact.	4.03	1.00	Agree

Table 1: The Ease of Blogging on Social Media Sites

There is no doubt that social networking has changed the way we interact with each other, from sharing our thoughts and photos to creating a classroom group with the "What's up" application. Table (1) clearly shows that the respondents strongly agree that it is easy to log into social media sites and find a partner and add him as a contact. The highest mean was 4.50, indicating that it is very easy to students to log into these sites because most of the students have smart phones connected to the internet ,so they can use these devices anywhere and at anytime. Social media applications have enabled them to communicate with larger number of people all over the world in a way that they could not do locally.

No	Statement	M	SD	Result
3	Using instant messaging programs is a good way to practice English language.	4.17	.68	Agree
4	Using social media sites is a good way to practice speaking English language.	4.10	.93	Agree
5	When I use social media applications ,I can practice listening and speaking without fear of committing mistakes	3.83	1.05	Agree

6	I think my native English language partners help in improving my English language level.	4.37	.78	Strongly Agree
7	Social media sites improved my writing skills.	4.33	.69	Strongly Agree

Table 2: The Ability to Practice English Language Skills on Social Media Sites

Table (2) clearly reveals that the students profoundly trust that online networking applications can help them in rehearsing the skills of English language. The respondents support the idea that social media has developed their writing skills. Social media applications provide fruitful environments for discussion and turn-taking because they provide a large range of multimedia aids such as sound, graphics, photographs, animation and videos, as well as direct links to references.

Chartrand (2012) believes that the Internet can give dialect learners numerous assets of bona fide composed, sound, and video materials to supplement lessons. Educators can get a wide collection of materials for learners to think about in class or after class for autonomous learning and to empower learner independence. These days, the monstrous fame of person to person communication sites has made new shots for dialect learners to cooperate in bona fide ways that were already hard to accomplish. Progresses in innovation imply that learners of a dialect can without much of a stretch interface with their partners in significant practice that supports dialect procurement and inspiration.

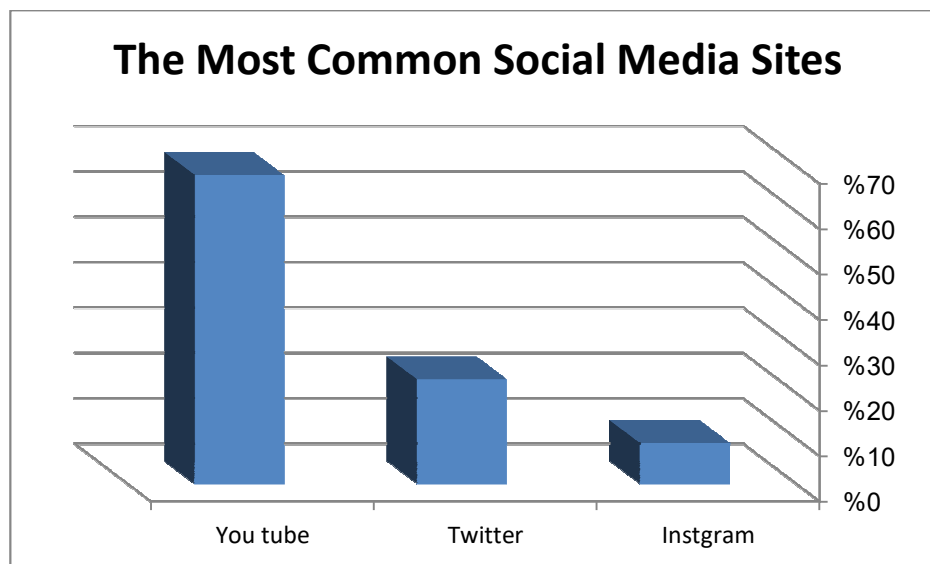
No	Statement	M	SD	Result
8	It was less demanding for me to notice errors in my English when I utilize web-based social networking locales than when I stand up boisterous.	3.13	1.39	Neutral
9	On the off chance that I couldn't comprehend a message sent by my partner, I let him or her know.	3.90	1.03	Agree
10	In the event that I understood a misstep when I practice English, I amend it by sending my partner another message with the rectification.	4.27	.95	Strongly Agree
11	When I utilize long range interpersonal communication destinations, it was simple for me to see my partner's English mistakes.	3.70	.92	Agree
12	Social media sites should be incorporated in the syllabus as teaching and learning aids.	3.57	1.16	Agree

Table 3: Incorporation of Social Media Applications in English Language Pedagogy

Table (3) shows that students can correct their mistakes when they are practicing English language skills online, but it may be too difficult for them to realize these errors when they write or speak. Social media provides them with the possibility of realizing their mistakes and correcting them by talking or sending a message containing the correct sentence or, perhaps, the correct word only.

Therefore, students get many benefits from these sites, where they can practice listening, speaking, reading and writing without fear of committing mistakes or being embarrassed among their classmates. Most of the respondents have positive feelings about the incorporation of online networking sites in the English language syllabus as aids of learning and teaching.

Answering the second question, the researcher asked the respondents directly about the most common social media site that helps them in improving their level in English language. Graph (1) reveals this clearly:



Graph (1) – The Most Common Social Media Sites

Most of the respondents (68%) have chosen You Tube as the most common social media site that helps them in improving their English language level. Less than a quarter of the participants

(23%) prefer Twitter to practice English language skills, whereas (9%) of them chose Instagram as an application that permits them to gain more knowledge about English language.

Conclusion

It has been clear that social networking has changed the way we interact with each other, from sharing our thoughts and photos to creating a classroom group with the "What's up" application. The study shows that it is easy to log into social media sites and find a partner and add him as a contact. It also shows that social media applications have enabled students to communicate with larger number of people all over the world in a way that they could not do locally.

It likewise uncovers that the students profoundly trust that online networking applications can help them in practicing the skills of English language. The results support the idea that social media has developed students' writing skills.

Moreover, the study shows that students can correct their mistakes when they are practicing English language skills online, but it may be too difficult for them to realize these errors when they write or speak. Hence, Social media provides them with the possibility of realizing their mistakes and correcting them by talking or sending a message containing the correct sentence or, perhaps, the correct word only.

Therefore, students get many benefits from these sites, where they can practice listening, speaking, reading and writing without fear of committing mistakes or being embarrassed among their classmates.

Finally, the study shows that YouTube is the most common social media site that helps students whereas Instagram records the lowest percentage as it permits them to gain more knowledge about English language.

Recommendation

The researcher recommends that social media applications be used inside the English language classrooms as teaching aids. Using social media sites, there can be combination of sound, text, animation video, etc. Therefore, teachers and students would have various means of presenting their materials which would make the entire class more effective. For example, if encountering a boring topic but a necessary one, students can log onto You Tube and get an interesting video

which will help them comprehend the topic easier. Teachers can make use of visual images for boring topics to maintain the students' attention. On social media sites, students can display their written texts and use sounds, pictures, and videos to convey their learning in different ways, which will assist them in comprehending the information.

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