The Impact of the Use of Facebook on Developing Writing Skills in Learning English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

With over two billion members, Facebook has established itself as the undisputed leader among social networking sites in the modern era. As a consequence of this, studies have been conducted to investigate its viability as a classroom setting for a variety of educational domains, along with the study of English as a second language (EFL). According to the results of several research studies, Facebook is beneficial for the development of productive language. Talents such as writing are seen as having the lowest demand and the most challenging skill to acquire and master. As a result, this research aims to investigate the effect that Facebook has on the maturation of writing skills and abilities in picking up English for those who speak other languages. The process revolves on looking for accessible information in combination with studies on the study issue, which is the influence that Facebook has on students' abilities to write in English as a Foreign Language, in the Web of Science and Scopus are two of the most important databases in the world. The search was not restricted to any particular time period at any point. Based on the findings of this research paper, making use of Facebook may have a beneficial impact on one's ability to improve their writing abilities in English as a Foreign Language classrooms, particularly in the framing and organizing of ideas, increasing motivation, and building as well as encouraging pupils to work together in groups, increasing their vocabulary, and helping them become less reserved. Nevertheless, there is a need for more experimental study in this field in order to shed light on other elements of the process of writing, such as communicative language ability, which may be enhanced by employing Facebook, in addition to academics hailing from regions other than Asia.

Keywords: Facebook, Social Media, Writing Skills

1. Background and Introduction

There has been a recent uptick in the use of virtual social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Friendster, Hi5, and LinkedIn. These are all examples of sites in this category. It serves as a tool for communication and is outfitted with a variety of applications. With respect to those social working networks, Facebook appeared to be one of the most prominent candidates, with over two billion members. Facebook has established itself as the undisputed leader in terms of popularity.

According to Mazman and Usleul (2010), the three fundamental features of Facebook which are communication, cooperation, and sharing, are parallelized with learning and education. These qualities, in addition to Facebook's simplicity of use, are the foundation around which Facebook's educational

goals are built. According to the findings of the study, one of the most essential aspects of Facebook is its versatility in terms of the uses to which it may be put (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Facebook has features that are comparable to those of an educational tool, such as the ability for users to provide and receive feedback from their peers and to engage with each other (Mason & Helvie, 2011).

Students may have the chance to attain, in a more pertinent and formalized settings, many feasible online skills, including critical evaluation of resources, effective virtual socializing, and sorting and deciphering data by engagement in various online learning activities such as discussing in online forums and gathering information online, as proposed by Donnely (2005). Moreover, Facebook is proposed as a teaching resource by Alhomod and Shafi (2012) in the context of a classroom setting. They demonstrate its usage at each level of team-based learning as a means for teachers and pupils to interact with one another.

Learners are now making heavy use of social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook because they offer the possibility of becoming a valuable source of information that may help their academic discussions and interactions. Both experts in the field and academic scholars have taken notice of the significant interest that students have in social networking sites and the frequency with which they use them. While educators are beginning to include activities found on social networking sites (SNS) in their lessons, researchers have also made several attempts in order to provide more insights and information about the efficiency of this website.

In brief, Facebook is a cutting-edge instrument for communication that also has the potential to be used as an advanced tool for the purpose of enhancing linguistic skills and capabilities. Writing abilities are one example of a component of language acquisition; on the one hand, it needs more focus from the learner, but, on the other hand, is not seen as being very engaging. As a result, the aim of this essay is to place emphasis on the competency that is often underemphasized in language instruction. Writing abilities are strangely perceived to be less significant than they really are since they are the least productive in today's environment, which places a greater emphasis on the verbal part of human contact. However, Facebook is the primary platform that functions as a social media tool. This means that its primary concentration is on human interactions, which makes it a potentially helpful platform. Accordingly, this research focused on the most prominent social network sites, such as Facebook, the most popular social networking site (SNS). Our objective was to identify how students might profit from such technologies throughout the linguistic experience.

2. Literature Review

The goal of English classes at the tertiary level is to help students acquire the English communication skills necessary to succeed in more formal educational institutions. These abilities are necessary for study reasons. At this stage, teachers must be aware of and fully comprehend the areas of weakness that students encounter when acquiring the four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in order to design effective instruction and to facilitate learning in improving their linguistic competence. In academia, both teaching and learning revolve around scholarly work, which serves a variety of objectives depending on the setting. These objectives include testing, training, and accessing certain professional. It is quite normal for curricula designed for students at the tertiary level who come from a

range of nations and study a variety of subjects (Lea & Street, 1998). It begins by concentrating on individual scholastic abilities; later on, it is improved and perfected by adding additional oral and written assignments, with the goal of making the use of such abilities more holistic (Jordan, 1997). As shown by McNeil (2020), the utilization of social networking sites (SNSs) in higher education can bring up a variety of critical topics, some of which include the following: discourses expectations arise from the application of an informal 'outer' area to manage an academic environment; whether the interaction alters the power balance between instructors and students; whether it shortens the social difference among people who participated; and whether it shapes the authenticity in individual work.

The problem also pertains to the fundamental aspects of how language is used inside an SNS. Facebook's many interactive features encourage its users to take part in games and otherwise have fun on the platform (Ellison et al., 2007). Facebook, with all of its many options for user participation, makes for an ideal setting in which to foster the growth of online discussion groups. The students have the ability to establish their own personal profile pages, on which they may describe their hobbies and interests, which they can then share with other people. They are also members of a "Network," the primary defining characteristic of which is the educational institution with which they are now or formerly associated. A previous study conducted by Ghani (2015) found that Facebook can be incorporated into the activity of writing and in learning English. The participants used the features of Facebook to learn new vocabulary by reading the comments left by the other students in the group. They also used the discussion to get ideas for writing, and they had their classmates check their spelling. Participating in a Facebook group conversation is one way that utilizing Facebook may actually make it simpler for students to complete their assigned essays, as the research presented here demonstrates. Encouraging Second Language Conversations on Facebook was the topic of research conducted by Kho and Chuah in 2012. And based on the findings, it is suggested that teachers and professors combine the teaching and learning activity with online social networks like Facebook in order to provide more engaging and entertaining classroom experiences for their students. According to the findings of the research, students engaged more actively in the exchange of ideas or views through Facebook in comparison to conventional classroom settings. Aside from that, the students reported that reading the remarks made by their peers in the group helped them increase the size and scope of their vocabulary.

3. Methodology

The current section is devoted to the research methodology followed in the current study. To address the way Facebook is used in the teaching and learning of writing, the setting and participants who took part in the current study will be described. Second,

3.1. Participants

The research was carried out in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at Qasim University's Arts & Science College, Unaizah Community College, and the Department of English Language and Translation. A quantitative survey was carried out with the purpose of exploring the students' perspectives with regard to learning English within the setting of Facebook after receiving one of four treatments: language improvement, confidence, motivation, or attitude.

In order to accomplish this goal, we requested one hundred individuals who had been selected at random to take part in the survey. In spite of this, the total number of people who took part in the survey was calculated to be N = 65. This is because, for the subsequent analyses, only Facebook members were taken into account. Because they did not have an account with any of the social networks, participant number 35 was disqualified.

3.2. Data Collection Procedures

This questionnaire, which was developed by Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin, served as the survey's primary instrument (2010). The questionnaire included 16 questions when it was first created, but those questions were changed so that they would be more relevant to the research. Two external raters were brought in to verify the questionnaire. They were asked to evaluate whether or not the material was appropriate and whether or not the instructions were understandable. They proposed bringing up topics such as whether or not using Facebook inspires students to spend more time studying English and whether or not using Facebook helps students overcome their spelling problems. They also proposed eliminating two things that were not essential. Moreover, the information obtained from the interview as well as the document on Facebook was subjected to a qualitative analysis. The observation fieldwork form was used to record and evaluate all of the activities that took place inside the group. These activities included posting messages, transferring files, commenting, liking and sharing. Separate and semi-structured interviews were carried out with each of the students and the instructor, and the interviews were done with each of them individually. After receiving permission from those who were participating, notes were taken and the interviews were taped so that they could be listened to afterward. After that, the captured audio was transcribed, and a theme analysis was performed on it.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire that was utilized to conduct this survey was divided into two parts. The student's level at the college as well as their language proficiency was requested in Section A of the questionnaire, as was demographic information on the students and their language use. Their gender was left out of the poll since only male students are allowed at the institution where it was conducted. The questions in Section B were designed to elicit information on the influence that Facebook has as an online English language learning environment and to investigate students' perspectives with regard to the process of learning English within the context of Facebook. The replies to this questionnaire were rated on a Likert scale, which consisted of five points and ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The factors of students' motivation, confidence, and attitudes about English language learning through Facebook were addressed by the questions in the questionnaire. These aspects were related to the student's growth in language abilities.

3.4. Ethical Issues

Consent was taken from all the participants. The participants were informed of the reason behind taking part in the survey. All the data collected was used anonymously for the objectives of the current study. No sharing or any exploitation of the data was allowed.

4. Results and Discussion

The results summarized in Table 1 demonstrated the effect of applying Facebook as an online educational environment by analyzing the response of the students and learners.

Table 1: Descriptive of Likert Scale Items

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree (1) (%)	Disagree (2) (%)	Slightly Agree (3) (%)	Agree (4) (%)	Strongly Agree (5) (%)	Mean
1	I practice writing in English via Facebook	3.07	9.23	18.46	40	29.23	3.8
2	I practice reading in English via Facebook	7.69	4.61	21.53	43.07	23.07	3.69
3	Facebook enhances my English communication skills	1.53	3.07	33.84	29.23	32.30	3.87
4	Facebook enhances my confidence to write in English	3.07	12.30	18.46	43.07	23.07	3.70
5	Facebook helps me to overcome language mistakes	0	10.76	13.84	32.30	43.07	4.07
6	I learn new words in English via FB	3.07	0	21.53	36.92	38.46	4.07

Table 1 illustrates that EFL students think that Facebook as a virtual education platform promotes, enables, and motivates their English language learning; as a result, Facebook helps English learners in the process of enhancing their English linguistic competence. The majority of the respondents (69.23%, which is the combined outcome of 'agree' and 'strongly agree') stated that Facebook could be utilized to enhance their literary skills (mean score = 3.83), while 66.14% of the pupils believed that they can strengthen their English reading comprehension (mean score = 3.69).

In addition, it was found that Facebook users feel that using Facebook improves their English communicative skills (mean score of 3.87) and that 61.53% of students think that Facebook has the potential to be a productive classroom. The consolidated results of the responses "agree" and "strongly agree" revealed that 75.37% of the respondents agreed with the claim that Facebook assists people in overcoming their verbal faults and learning new terms.

Students' positive attitudes toward using Facebook as an online English language learning setting may have something to do with the fact that CMC enables English as a foreign language (EFL) learner to access the Facebook site whenever and wherever they wish, which may be one viable answer. In addition, Facebook encourages independence and a student-centered methodology, both of which often result in an enhancement in the learner's permitted language ability and overall progress. As a result, individuals are able to gain information and skills from native English speakers and participate in genuine asynchronous and synchronous conversations with one another.

The findings of the current study agree with the findings by Kabilan, M.K., Ahmad, N., & Abidin, M.J.Z. (2010) who found that a positive impact of Facebook is observed on students. However, the current study is a recent one in contrast to their study. Facebook has further been developed. It is a marketing platform based on algorithms that match the interests of its uses with the content of content creators and business managers. Students, therefore, should be careful with the content with which they interact. They should look for and interact with educational posts and videos so that Facebook can keep suggesting such posts to them.

5. Conclusion

Consequently, utilizing Facebook for educational purposes is required to come with the necessary conditions, as well as the support of all participants. Students who get their education via Facebook not only see improvements in their ability to work effectively in groups, but also in the academic outcomes of their studies as a whole. Students are able to improve their relationships with one another, take their education to the greatest level possible, and make it more exciting by utilizing Facebook. As a result, learning environments are made more robust as a result. It has been proposed that the professors should participate in activities more often on the Facebook group that they are a part of. The children will be encouraged to participate more as a direct result of this. It is also necessary to prepare ahead for the creation of the study plan and make sure that all relevant subjects are covered while using Facebook in order to carry out the activities. It is important for the educational institution to be aware of the role that Facebook may play in facilitating the teaching and learning process. As a result, they have to make improvements to the internet connection facilities that are available to the teachers and pupils. The research encountered difficulties due to a lack of access to the subjects.

This study makes an effort to demonstrate, by contrasting and evaluating the specific findings of a small number of outcomes, the possibilities, and opportunities that Facebook provides to the process of learning, specifically with regard to English as a Second Language (ESL) and writing abilities. It has been proven that Facebook will provide a fresh perspective to the learning process by increasing student engagement, and it is possible that Facebook may introduce additional new methods to the learning process as well. The use of Facebook has a positive effect on the development of writing skills in English as a foreign language. This is especially true in the areas of shaping and organizing ideas, increasing motivation, developing and supporting collaboration among peers, improving vocabulary, and reducing shyness in students. The major limitations that were encountered in the current study were related to sample size and time constraints. A larger sample size would yield possibilities for conducting inferential statistical tests. Moreover, more time would enable the researcher to go for a longitudinal research design instead of snapshot research. However, the current research paper has to a larger extent achieved the research research objectives.

Conflicts of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Biography

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