

Facebook as an Online Tool for Learning English among Private Institutes' Students in Kurdistan

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Abstract— Facebook, an internet and social networking application, is a part of the daily lives of millions of students throughout the world. Students utilize Facebook to communicate with one another and to participate in games, because they utilize Facebook on a regular and comfortable basis. The participants in this research study were selected from Private Institutes in Erbil, Kurdistan, by the researchers. The researchers used a quantitative approach to analyze the current study, with a particular emphasis on descriptive statistics. The questions in the survey were created by the researchers to encourage students to choose the response that best reflects their typical Facebook usage without infringing on their personal information. The findings revealed that students who took part in the study made some personal decisions that were in opposition to those made by their peers, which was due to the nature of human beings. However, when it comes to using Facebook as an online tool for language acquisition, the good impressions outweighed the negative ones by a wide margin. The students perceived Facebook as a positive tool that could be implemented into educational systems so that it could be utilized in conjunction with other approaches. Since the usage of Facebook in daily life has become inevitable, why not use it for a good cause? It is necessary to conduct more in-depth research in order to collect more data as well as to form a sort of public opinion in order to make this piece of research more reliable and valid. This will allow us to make the research more formal and effective by collecting more data and forming a sort of public opinion.

Keywords— Social, network, Facebook, users. motivation, EFL, Kurdistan

I. INTRODUCTION

Students are able interacting on social networking sites, and they frequently fail to pay attention in class as a result. Most of the time, students are making noise, conversing with one another, playing on their iPhones, sharing images, and so on. Several academics from around the world have expressed their dissatisfaction with the above-mentioned factors, which may be seen in their facial expressions, reflecting their frustration with the situation. When it comes to Facebook, educators have a general concern about how students are using the social media site. However, regardless of what adults believe, social networking continues to be a fixture in the lives of teenagers. For our pupils, technology is an essential part of their everyday lives, and they are comfortable with the concept of "facebook and twitter." Facebook is widely utilized by people of all ages for a variety of various entertainment, collaboration and material sharing, according to (Niu, 2019). The usage of Facebook on a regular basis has a negative impact on students' academic and professional lives. Its viewer visuals, as well as the ease with which it may be navigated through. In addition to the growing number of languages accessible, Facebook has become increasingly popular among people in general and among students in particular for academic purposes. According to Fithriani, et al. (2019), because the main purpose of using Facebook is to interact rather than to learn, a frequent Social media user may not pay close attention to language ambiguity. In this research, efforts have been made to explain the effects of Facebook, if any, on the learning process of English.

1.1 The Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to develop electronic educational services by shedding light on the challenges of the current

situations, evaluate e-teaching/e-learning management systems, and explain how to keep pace with the global universities requirements.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In previous research conducted among undergraduate students in the same field, it has been discovered that a large number of students lack the English language proficiency necessary to function effectively in the classroom (Barrot, 2018). The standard technique of academic writing teaching, according to the researchers, is insufficient in terms of improving students' academic writing skills. Because of this, the present study is being conducted to determine whether instructing students in the use of Facebook as an online tool for learning English is beneficial.

1.3 Research Question

The purpose of this study is to provide answers to the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the students' encouragements for utilizing social media sites for instance Facebook?

Research Question 2: Is there any evidence that Facebook has had an impact on people's ability to read and write in the English language?

Research Question 3: Do you notice any notable changes in your vocabulary or writing/communication abilities as a result of your regular Facebook usage?

1.4 Conceptual Framework

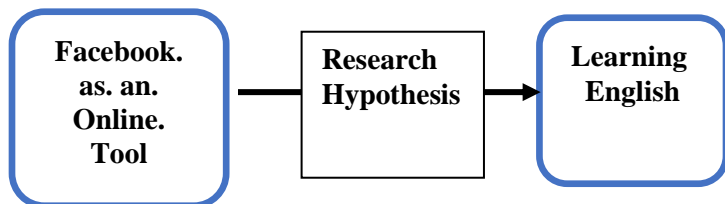


Figure 1- Research Model

1.5 Research Hypothesis:

Research Hypothesis: The use of the Social network has no effect on the learning of English as a second language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Facebook in Teaching and Learning

According to Kostikova, et. al. (2019), Facebook is a popular social networking website that allows users to engage and collaborate inside a pre-defined virtual community setting. As a social networking site and online interaction tool, it also allows users to build a publicly or privately profile in order to connect and interact with those who are a part of their extended social platform. Facebook is the largest social networking site, with approximately a billion users, and it allows people to connect with one another, discuss interests, and join groups. Facebook is the most popular social platform on the internet (Rokhmah, 2020). As a result of its effectiveness, the vast majority of

university students and evening high school students use this site on a regular basis to achieve both academically and socially objectives (Böreki and Aydin, 2020). In accordance with Toker and Baturay (2019), students spend an average of one hour each day on the site, with the majority of that time spent engaging in social activities. Facebook, on the other hand, may be used for more than just social purposes and can even be used for intellectual purposes. Also available to educators are policies regarding Facebook in schools, emerging guidelines for the use of Facebook in learning and teaching, safety and privacy settings on Facebook, promoting good permanent residency in the digital world, using Facebook's page and group structures to communicate with students, embracing the learning styles of teachers and students, and using Facebook as a professional development tool (Peeters, 2019).

2.2 Educational Use of Facebook

Currently, social media platforms, particularly on university campuses, are often regarded as effective venues for teaching practice, and this is especially important. According to Moorthy and colleagues (2019), Facebook serves a variety of functions, including exchange of information, interaction, cooperative building, and alteration. Despite the fact that the primary reason for students to use Facebook was to maintain interaction with friends (Bett & Makewa, 2020), Chu et al (2019) later discovered that students would be in favor of exchanging informal experiences if unable to share atmosphere and shared responsibilities is established in the Facebook. According to Klimova and Pikhart (2020), as compared to standard face-to-face engagement, students learn to discuss with instructors using social media platforms such as Facebook. Mukhlif (2020) asserted that Facebook provides an informal educational experience for introducing modern issues and the viewpoints of guest specialists who are not affiliated with a college or school, exposing pupils to acceptable "modern environment" issues in this way. Kasuma et al. (2017) describe Education functions on Facebook are divided into three categories: cooperation; interaction; and resource allocation. The term "communication" focuses on activities such as allowing classroom interaction, facilitating class discussions, distributing homework and projects by educators, notifying about course materials and links, and participating in academic clusters connected to their colleges, departments, or classes. The term "communication" refers to activities such as users joining academic clusters linked to their colleges, divisions, or classes, and carrying out group works by Sha (Barrot, 2018).

2.3. Language Learning and Social Networking

A recent study by Barrot (2016) found that innovations are being created that have the potential to be transformational in the domain of foreign language acquisition. In general, it is recognized that technological advancements are opening up new opportunities for expanding and developing varied online learning environments, while also enhancing interactivity, involvement, and feedback among students, social groups, and instructors. It is also discussed whether learning languages is about how students progress their language ability, but also about how the process of learning influences on their personal and professional development in terms of values and cultures, something that has been frequently ignored in software language development research. Sirivedin and colleagues (2018) proposed that Facebook could be a useful platform for intercultural communication exchanges. In a related manner, Chugh and Ruhi (2018) believed that Facebook can be useful to interpersonal communication. They believed that the notable features of Facebook contribute to a great educational process while maintaining a high level of privacy and security. Several lines of information have been

presented to support the claim that Facebook aided language acquisition. Cetinkaya and Sütçü (2018) discovered that registered users can improve their communication and writing skills by engaging in virtual social interactions on social media platforms such as Facebook. It was discovered by Dhir et al (2017) that language proficiency through Facebook was successful due to the fact that virtual social activities assist learners in improving their effective communication skills in real life. Moreover, Ventura and Martn-Monje (2016) employed Facebook as a venue for conducting effective evaluation in their study. As a result, peer assessments on Facebook were found to significantly increase students' learning interest and inspiration, according to the findings. All of these encouraging findings reinforced the notion that social relationships on Facebook have an impact on the outcomes of language acquisition (Zdemir, 2017).

2.4. Advantages of Facebook for EFL

2.4.1 Advantages for EFL Students

In terms of learning, Facebook has a number of advantages. For example, it increases human information and interpersonal exchange between members (Lin et al. 2016), which "enhances engagement and enhanced communication" (Godwin-Jones, 2008). Facebook may also help Teaching and learning to improve their communication skills by providing them with opportunities to communicate with others (Voivonta & Avraamidou, 2018). Furthermore, growing evidence suggests that students' speaking performance, as well as their writing and reading skills, can be improved by utilizing Facebook in EFL classes (Niu, 2019). This network has positive and significant effects on students, while also making English language teaching and learning more useful, collaborative, and universal in its use. A study conducted by Fithriani et al. in 2019 with hundreds of college students from industrialized countries, for example, is a good example of this. During the research, they looked into whether utilizing Facebook to enhance cooperative learning in EFL classrooms improved the learning outcomes for students. In a similar vein, Kostikova et al (2019) evaluated the responses of 18 college students to the use of Facebook in a language lesson. The main objective for the participating individuals was to improve their English language skills and make connections with other English language learners. As a result, learners were required to write postings and answer to other people's postings in English in order to progress. This activity has the potential to improve learners' interaction skills as well as their reading and comprehension abilities in English as a result of their participation (Rokhmah, 2020). Online debate has been found to be less intimidating for a number of students in recent years. In a study conducted by Börekci and Aydın (2020), it was discovered that struggling students who were unable to keep up with the fast-paced class discussion preferred online activities that they perceived to be much easier to understand. Students were more engaged in online activities, as opposed to face-to-face class activities, in which only the more confident students would participate in class conversations (Toker & Baturay, 2019). As a result, students' communication and interaction in the target language can be significantly improved through the use of Facebook (Peeters, 2019). The social networking site Facebook also provides students with relevant learning experiences that allow them to practice their language abilities in a more accidental and casual setting (Moorthy, et al 2019). This assists individuals in developing links between instructional tasks and real-world situations. Students will be able to apply the abilities they have gained in the classroom to real-world circumstances outside of the classroom in this manner (Bett & Makewa, 2020). Chu and colleagues (2019) discovered that connecting terms and models learnt in class to real-world situations on Facebook is an effective strategy to improve students' grasp of the

material. According to the findings of a study done with 219 teenagers from various EFL courses, Facebook was a powerful instructional tool that assisted pupils in improving their English language skills. Despite the fact that this study was conducted in an ESL environment, the findings are applicable to EFL classrooms as well.

2.4.2 Advantages for EFL Teachers

The use of Facebook by teachers can provide them with a number of benefits. For example, it can assist educators in engaging people from outside the classroom (Klimova & Pikhart, 2020). Teachers can also gain knowledge about current advancements and challenges in EFL instruction, as well as concepts for use in the classroom, by using this instrument. In essence, while Facebook is widely recognized as a digital means of engagement, it is also a method of knowledge collection, as evidenced by the fact that it provides effective professional content for Educators (Mukhlif, 2020). The benefits that Facebook provides to instructors, though, are not limited to the ones listed above. Educational institutions across the country have set up and published pages on Facebook to advertise their institutions as well as share vital resources for students and teachers (Kasuma, 2017). These sites often contain information about current trends and concerns in English language instruction, classroom materials, chances for professional development, and other related topics. In addition, they provide teachers with the option to interact with other EFL instructors on assignments. In this sense, following educational groups on Facebook is "a means to gain fast response times and tools without incurring any costs and through an online medium that is almost certainly already being used" (Barrot 2018). Many advantages are available to EFL educators who follow EFL instructional pages on social media. Among other things, they can obtain free effective classroom resources, develop and maintain friendships and collegial or professional relationships for mutual benefit, and receive valuable educational information such as notifications of journal publications, teacher-tips, new books and e-books accessible for classroom teachers, among other things (Barrot, 2016). In this way, Facebook offers numerous advantages to instructors all over the world, but they are not the only ones who gain from this social media network.

2.3 Learning English As A Second Language In Kurdistan

According to Shriveling et al (2018), English is the most widely spoken language in the world. English is taught as a second language in the majority of countries. In Kurdistan, several Kurdish parents send their children to language schools to learn English in order to obtain a competitive educational advantage. The majority of school educators develop their own instructional materials. Several educators have been singled out for praise because their schoolbooks are extremely successful. Many schools treated English as a formal learning topic, with students spending the majority of their time examining school textbooks rather than conversing with one another in English. As a result, students had little opportunity to practice communication with one another in English (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). Some supplementary education programs at schools have recently implemented social media as a communication and teaching platform, which is a promising development (Cetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018), which is an encouraging step forward.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

In this study, the researchers chose participants from Private institutes, Erbil-Kurdistan. The group of students comprised from various disciplines (undergraduate) and with different language levels 41 students (21 males, 20 females) participated in this study. The participants ages ranged from 17 to 35 years.

3.2 Procedure

Multiple choices and Yes/No questionnaire distributed to the students via Facebook, email and printed hard copy. The students filled the questionnaire and sent them back to the researchers. The questionnaire was designed in a way to be user friendly and to take maximum 7 minutes to be completed. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included 8 multiple choice questions. The questions were about their purposes behind using Facebook and students had to choose the best answer that fits their desire. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of 10 Yes/No questions about the frequency of using some features of Facebook that are related to language learning, the students were free to choose Yes/No peer question according to their preferences. The researchers were closely observing and approaching the participants to clarify any sort of ambiguity that may occur to the students from the questionnaire.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Table 1-Demographic. and. Basic. Information. about. the. Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	21	51.24
	Female	20	48.8
Age	17-21	21	51.24
	22-26	14	34.16
	27-35	6	14.64
Hours Spent on Facebook	Less than 1 hour	4	9.76
	3 hours	19	46.36
	6 hours	7	17.08
	Depends`	11	26.84
University Department	Prep	20	48.8
	Undergraduate	11	26.84
	Graduate	10	24.4
Hours Spent on Facebook by Prep students	BAU prep Hours	20	48.8
	less than 1 hour	3	0.8
	3 hours	11	26.8
	6 hours	1	0.02
	Depends	5	0.12

Table 2-Distribution of Respondents motives to use Facebook

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Social interaction	9	21.96
Passing time	9	21.96
Entertainment	4	9.76
Companionship	1	2.44
Communication	18	43.92
Motive behind using Facebook by Prep Students		
Items	Frequency	Percentage
Social interaction	4	20

Passing time	7	35
Entertainment	3	15
Companionship	1	5
Communication	5	25

The findings revealed that nine students (21.96 percent) out of the 41 students who took part in the study are mostly using Facebook to conduct social interaction with other students. In the meantime, another 9 (21,96) pupils are utilizing Facebook to simply pass the time. Few of them (9.76 percent) use Facebook for pleasure, and even fewer than that (2.44 percent) use Facebook for companionship, according to the survey. However, when compared to the other percentages, Facebook is the preferred method of contact for the vast majority of students.

Table 3-Users Application Usage on Facebook According to Priority

Items	1	%	2	%	3	%
Update status	15	36.6	10	24.4	16	39.04
Upload photos	15	36.6	16	39.04	10	24.4
Upload videos	13	31.72	10	24.4	18	43.92
Play games	12	29.28	11	26.84	18	43.92
Chatting with friends	18	43.92	9	21.96	14	34.16
To post an opinion / thought or statement	11	26.84	14	34.16	14	34.16
Comment on friend's post	14	34.16	16	39.04	11	26.84
Prep School students use a Facebook features according to priority						
Update status	10	50	5	25	5	25
Upload photos	5	25	6	30	9	45
Upload videos	11	55	3	15	6	30
Play games	10	50	5	25	5	25
Chatting with friends	3	15	5	25	12	60
To post an opinion / thought or statement	10	50	5	25	5	25
Comment on friend's post	3	15	10	50	7	35

According to the findings, 39.04 percent of respondents' top priority is to update their status, while (24.4 percent) stated that their top priority is to submit images. 43.92 percent of those who answered the survey said they prioritized either uploading videos or playing video games as their top priority. The priority of 34.16 percent of the participants was either to communicate with friends and family or to post an opinion on a topic. 26.84 percent of those who took part in the survey said that commenting on friends' posts was their top priority.

Table 4-The. Purpose. of. Using. Facebook. in Regards to English Learning

Items	N	%
Enhance vocabulary in English	7	17.08
Improve my English writing skills	6	14.64
Improve my communication skills	28	68.32
It has become part of daily life	15	36.6
I think life without FB would be boring	7	17.08
I often think about English language spelling/grammar while chatting with	11	26.84

friends		
I often think about English language spelling/grammar posting on Facebook	8	19.52
Overall points which are related English language improvement	32	78.08
Prep School Students	N	%
Enhance vocabulary in English	4	20
Improve my English writing skills	3	15
Improve my communication skills	13	65
It has become part of daily life	6	30
I think life without FB would be boring	3	15
I often think about English language spelling/grammar while chatting with friends	8	40
I often think about English language spelling/grammar posting on Facebook	3	15
Overall points which are related English language improvement	1	.4

Not many students who participated in the study are paying attention to enhance their vocabulary (17.08%). Fewer than that (14.64%) also would care about improving their writing skills via Facebook. But a good number of the participants (68.32%) have found Facebook a good place to improve their communication skills in general. Some of the students (36.6%) have admitted that they start their day with checking Facebook and (17.08%) found life to be boring if Facebook didn't exist. (26.84%) of them do really think of English language and its correct way to use while chatting with friends. And the fact is students have taken prep school. While (19.52%) of the participants do think of grammar and language rules such as spelling while posting on Facebook.

Table 5-Survey Questions

Items	N	%
Participants become less careful of grammar and spelling while writing on Facebook	23	56.12
Respondents used abbreviated words such as 'gr8', 'lol' etc.	23	56.12
Participants believed that their Facebook friends understand the abbreviated	32	78.08
Respondents preferred to use abbreviated words/phrases because it saved time	26	63.44
Few respondents greeted their friends informally on Facebook	21	51.24
Respondents sometimes wrote 'U' for 'You' and 'n' for 'and' in their academic writing	11	26.84
Participants felt a necessity to convey as much information in few words as possible	22	53.68
Participants thought that Facebook encouraged them to use words and expressions	25	61
Participants believe that Facebook influence them to learn English as foreign language	28	68.32
Some of participants found Facebook to be encouraging them to use incorrect words	20	48.8
Prep School student's responses	N	%

Participants become less careful of grammar and spelling while writing on Facebook	11	55
Respondents used abbreviated words such as 'gr8', 'lol' etc.	10	50
Participants believed that their Facebook friends understand the abbreviated	18	90
Respondents preferred to use abbreviated words/phrases because it saved time	11	55
Few respondents greeted their friends informally on Facebook	9	45
Respondents sometimes wrote 'U' for 'You' and 'n' for 'and' in their academic writing	4	20
Participants felt a necessity to convey as much information in few words as possible	8	40
Participants thought that Facebook encouraged them to use words and expressions	10	50
Participants believe that Facebook influence them to learn English as foreign language	10	50
Some of participants found Facebook to be encouraging them to use incorrect words	7	35

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study has begun our research by hypothesizing that the use of Facebook website has neither interference nor assisting on English language learning. We also raised some critical questions in the research hoping that we will get some answers to challenge the hypothesis. The results showed that 68.32% of the students who participated in the survey have agreed that Facebook improved their communication skills and 78.08% agreed that Facebook has assisted them in learning English as a foreign language. Although 48.8% of the Participants have found Facebook to be encouraging them to use incorrect words or terms that may not be used in academic papers. Also 63.44% of the participants have agreed that using abbreviations (Lol, CUS, IMHO, ASAP, etc.) save time therefore they use it.

6. CONCLUSION

The students who participated in the study showed some sort of harmony about the benefits of using Facebook for learning a foreign language and especially English language. The researchers have designed the questions in the survey to stimulate students to give the answer that best fit their normal use of Facebook without breaching their privacy. The students who participated in the study however had some personal choices which were in contrast to others and this is due to human nature. But never the less the positive impressions surpassed the negative ones when we talk about using Facebook as an online tool to learning language. The students saw Facebook to be a positive method that may be incorporated to the educational systems so that to be used by side with other approaches since the use of Facebook in daily life has become inevitable so why not to turn it to a good cause. In order to make this piece of research more

reliable and valid we need to go ahead and conduct more in-depth research to collect more data and to form a sort of public opinion to make the research more formal and effective.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

The growing role of Facebook in students' learning language

1- What is your gender?

Male Female

2- Please circle the correct range of age that includes you.

17-21 22-26 -27-35

3- Where do you study?

Level 1 level 2 level 3

4- What is your daily use of Facebook by hours?

One hour 3-6 hours 6-12hours depends

5- Which of the following is your main motive to use Facebook?

- Social interaction
- Passing time
- Recreation
- Relationships
- Messaging

6- Choose from the options according to top priority

- Update status
- Upload photos
- Upload videos
- Play games
- Chat with friends
- Post statements
- Comment of friends posts

7- Do you use Facebook to:

- Gain new words in English
- Refine writing skills
- Better communication skills

8- What do you think of Facebook?

- Facebook has become part of my daily activities
 - My day without Facebook would be meaningless
 - A good place to refine English language while chatting
 - A place where I practice English grammar and spelling.
- 9- Do you overlook the rules of English and spelling while chatting or posting?
- Yes
 - No
- 10- Do you use abbreviated words such as LOL, CUS, IMHO, ASAP, etc. while on Facebook?
- Yes
 - No
- 11- Do your contacts understand them?
- Yes
 - No
- 12- Do you use abbreviated language to save time?
- Yes
 - No
- 13- Do you sometimes write “n” for “an” and “u” for “you” ?
- Yes
 - No
- 14- Do you greet your friends on Facebook in a formal way?
- Yes
 - No
- 15- Do you try to convey as much information as possible in one word?
- Yes
 - No
- 16- Do you try to learn new words and terms while on Facebook?
- Yes
 - No
- 17- Does Facebook encourage you to learn English as a foreign language?
- Yes
 - No
- 18- Does Facebook encourage you to use language in an incorrect way or ungrammatically?
- Yes
 - No