

Analyzing the Impacts of Social Media Use on Learning English Language

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Abstract: *The study investigates the using social media and it's impacts on learning English language. Social media has been used widely for connecting with the social world locally and globally, for entertainment purposes and information sharing. Social media platforms offer cost-effective and versatile channels of communication that are accessible to young individuals despite their widespread geographical distribution. The data was collected from a sample of 307 undergraduate learners at SMIU Karachi using the survey approach. The study utilizes a quantitative methodology for both data collection and analysis. SPSS was used for the data analysis. The study's findings suggest that numerous social media platforms have been used as the tools for learning in the context of learning English language. Undergraduate students use social platforms to augment their language speaking abilities, develop language fluency, participate in public speaking, and proficiently convey their perspectives. It is recommended that the use of social media platforms is easy for the facilitation of constructivist learning. This study offers significant insights for stakeholders, including learners, instructors, parents, and researchers, about the application of social media for teaching and learning purpose among young learners.*

Keywords: *Social Media, ESL Classrooms, Learning, English Language, Young Learners*

Introduction

The utilization of technology within language teaching approaches and its subsequent impacts on language acquisition, evaluation, and sociolinguistics have grown progressively evident (Barrot, 2022; Abdelrady & Akram, 2022). The realm of education, including language teaching and learning, has been greatly influenced by recent technological breakthroughs (Akram et al., 2021). The development of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can be ascribed to a range of causes, which encompass the

investigation into the language acquisition potential of the Internet (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017; Kern, 1995; Lashari, Mashori, Abbasi & Talpur, 2018). The utilization and advancement of language abilities have been significantly facilitated by the emergence of social media platforms. The emergence of social media has brought about a significant change in the application of technology, transitioning its emphasis from mostly individualistic to a more socially oriented approach within educational societies with a focus on sustainability. These technologies have the purpose of enhancing the process of creating and disseminating content generated by users, while also enabling individuals to engage in interactive communication within a digital community (Hew & Cheung, 2013; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Madiha, Lashari & Ammara, 2023).

Social media platforms are extensively utilized by young learners as a means of internet connectivity and social interaction. This platform is widely utilized and financially rewarding for the purposes of sharing content and disseminating knowledge to a large audience (Lashari et al., 2023b). The general populace typically adheres to prevailing trends and influential figures on social media platforms, aligning their interests with many domains such as sports, fashion, music, movies, dramas, public speakers, events, and programs. Social media, due to its versatile capabilities, transcends conventional educational boundaries in order to cater to the diverse learning needs and preferences of learners (Barrot, 2020; Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Manca, 2020; Abbasi et al., 2019). The space serves as a platform for a diverse range of socially interactive educational events and for the purpose of combining education and entertainment called edutainment which refers to a genre of entertainment specifically crafted with the intention of imparting knowledge or educational content to individuals (Lashari et al., 2023a). The underlying premise of this approach posits that learners achieve optimal performance when they are fully engaged in activities that are both stimulating and enjoyable (Labus et al., 2015; Okan, 2003). The use of social media for edutainment objectives aligns with the observation that students predominantly perceive it as a platform for entertainment and social interaction, rather than as a platform for academic pursuits (Bugeja, 2006; Abbasi et al., 2019).

Leu et al. (2013) and Akram et al. (2021b) also observed that technological progress is rapidly influencing changes in pedagogy. Instead of focusing on individual literacy skills that have historically been unique in schools, researchers suggest that more sophisticated research with the advent of smart phone and use of applications (Lashari et al., 2023b; Imran & Lashari, 2023) and use of social media in a more globalized society will focus on the specific ways young people interact with smartphones, both inside and outside educational setup (Fayaz et al., 2023; Madiha, Lashari & Ammara, 2023). New technological innovations have also penetrated the field of language learning context (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). The social media has become the most widely used tool and that is accessible with the help of smartphone (West, 2019). Leu et al. (2013) expressed that the use of smartphone for social networking in a learning environment offers students the opportunities to teach various skills that will

facilitate information retrieval and analysis, problem-solving, understanding innovative advances, learning the target language.

Despite the studies conducted in this field, there is a dearth of quantitative studies that helps to understand the research landscape of social media in language learning. The existing literature also highlighted the limited number of studies (Hattem & Lomicka, 2016; Reinhardt, 2019). The study will contribute into existing knowledge for future studies.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of social media use on language learning among undergraduates.
2. What is the effect of social media use on language learning outcomes?

Literature review

Social Media Use

The core concept of social constructivism posits that the formation of knowledge is a social phenomenon that emerges through interconnectedness and collaborative engagement with fellow individuals (Amur, Bukhari & Lashari, 2023). The theory of constructivism posits that human knowledge is actively produced by the learner, who builds upon their existing knowledge and experiences to develop new understanding. In the constructivist approach to learning, the student assumes an active part in the construction of their knowledge, rather than being a passive recipient of information (Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). The internet offers a vast array of worldwide resources for language acquisition. It facilitates direct communication between second language learners and native English speakers (Mondahl & Razmerita, 2014; Madiha, Lashari & Ammara, 2023). Ramzan et al. (2023) have claimed that overlooked potentials of social media are as instruments for boosting ESL students' engagement and performance. Ramzan et al. (2023) have also suggested that influence of social media use can be helpful to educators and policy makers.

With the increasing affordability of digital devices, they have become integral components of individuals' everyday routines, including educational activities (Dantes et al., 2017; Artana et al., 2018; Dantes et al., 2019; Suwastini et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2021). Ramzan et al (2023) have confirmed that teachers can also incorporate various helpful in collaborative techniques. Web-based interaction platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram have gained popularity as social networks that facilitate access to vast amounts of readily available information, thereby aiding learners in their educational pursuits. Language learners have the ability to maintain communication with individuals of significance, such as their family members, friends, and even their instructors, at their convenience. Second language learners have the capacity to acquire several forms of knowledge and develop an understanding of the legal systems of various cultures.

Use of Social Media in Teaching and Learning

Certain educators have experienced advantages from instructing in a casual yet productive setting through

the utilization of social media platforms. Students may employ YouTube to access materials pertaining to their subjects (Bukhari et al., 2023), as well as utilize e Learn's Blog, Forum, or Wiki tools in accordance with the requirements of their subjects (Li, 2017). Additionally, they may access Facebook or other social media tools for the purpose of enhancing their own learning endeavors (Dettori & Torsani, 2013; Fayaz et al., 2023).

Indeed, the incorporation of both formal and informal learning has been proposed as a means to augment the learning of formal language skills. Additionally, it has been found to be a potentially effective method for facilitating students' self-regulated learning (Dabbagh, & Kitsantas, 2013, Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). Students were shown to utilize Facebook not only for official purposes, such as engaging in peer interactions for compulsory course-related learning, but also informally for non-mandated course-related topics (Towner, & Muñoz, 2011). In addition to the aforementioned factors, pupils may possess individual preferences regarding the instruments and frequency of access for English language acquisition. Furthermore, social media platforms serve as a means to enhance communication and promote expeditious dissemination of information among individuals. There is a potential for students to engage in the sharing of materials through their preferred social media platforms as a means to fulfill their academic obligations, such as completing assignments or homework.

Use of Social Media In English Language Learning

Several studies have examined the advantages of incorporating social media platforms to enhance students' English language proficiency (Al-Arif, 2019; Damanik, 2019). These studies have also explored the potential benefits of social media in improving students' vocabulary, grammar, and spelling skills (Ayuningtyas, 2018; Aloraini, 2018; Listiani et al., 2021). Researchers have debated the potential of social media (Ariantini et al., 2021) to enhance students' English proficiency (Alwehaibi, 2015; Espinosa, 2015; Listianiet al., 2021; Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023) and to promote the development of their multiliteracies (Eisenlauer, 2020; Elkaseh, Wong & Fung, 2016). Additionally, social media platforms have been found to contribute to students' intercultural awareness (Ozdemir, 2017), critical thinking skills (Pattanapichet & Wichadee, 2015), and facilitate more authentic learning experiences (Vanek, King & Bigelow, 2018).

However, initial observations of past studies have indicated that not all forms of social media have been utilized as educational tools, particularly in the context of English Language Learning. One interesting observation pertains to the dearth of academic research examining the utilization of YouTube videos as a means to enhance students' grammar skills, despite the abundance of grammar-related content available on the platform. Similarly, there is a noticeable absence of studies investigating the efficacy of employing Facebook or WhatsApp for the purpose of enhancing students' spelling abilities, despite the compatibility of these platforms with the device's built-in spelling check feature (Ariantini et al., 2021). Hattem and Lomicka (2016) conducted a comprehensive analysis of Twitter research in the field of

language learning, focusing on studies published between 2009 and 2016. Based on the results of their study, the authors reached the conclusion that Twitter can be considered a feasible instrument for language learning due to its ability to foster contact, provide a sense of community, and facilitate the processes of noticing and negotiating meaning. In a comprehensive analysis conducted by Barrot (2018), a total of 41 research studies sourced from Scopus were examined. The findings of this study revealed that Facebook has been utilized as a pedagogical instrument for language instruction within the context of English as a Second Language (ESL). Facebook has been used widely in learning context for accessing the different teaching channels (Solmaz, 2018). The study has broader scope in use of social media in learning the target language. It is novel study in its nature and wider in scope.

Method & Procedure

The study uses quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The study uses purposive sampling by adopting survey methods for the data collection. The sample comprises of the N=300 undergraduate learners of Sindh Madressatul Islam university students enrolled in various programs. The data was collected by using a survey google form. SPSS was used to measure the data. Survey questionnaire has been used for the data collection and analysis. Google online form was used to collect the data from the respondents.

Table I.

Demographic Details of the Sample of the Study

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Department	Frequency	Percent
Males	167	55.6	Business Administration	38	12.37
Females	140	44.4	Education	27	9.1
Total	307	100	Information Technology	22	8.75
Age	Frequency	Percent	Data Science	23	7.4
18-22	154	50.16	English	35	11.66
23-27	119	38.8	Media Studies	48	15.55
28-32	32	10.39	Computer Science	25	8.25
33-37	2	0.65	English	60	18.6
Total	307	100	Environmental Science	20	5.4
Domicile	Frequency	Percent	Public Administration	9	2.92

Urban	202	65.79	Total	307	100
Rural	105	34.2	Semesters	Frequency	Percent
Total	307	100	I st -4th	206	67.21
			5 th -8th	101	32.79
			Total	307	100

The table results show that N=307 participants participated in the study. There was n=167 participants male and n=140 were female participants. Male participants contribute more than female participants which make 55.6% of total sample. While the participants who were in age between 18 to 22 years old were n=154 and participants who were from 23 to 27 years old were n=119. Those who were from 28 to 32 years age bracket were n=32. The participants who are greater in number 18 to 22 years are higher in number than the rest of the sample. The sample was taken diverse to see that other departments are using the social media for their language learning purpose or not. The highest number of participants who participated in the study were from department of English which contributes 18.6%, second highest number of the participants were from the department of Media Studies which was 15.55%, third highest sample was from department of Business Administration which is 12.37% while the participants from Education, Information Technology, Data Science, Computer Science, Environmental Science and Public Administration also participated in the study. The sample was taken from all enrolled students and those who were from semester I to 4th were 67.21% total in and from 5th to 8th were 32.79% of the population.

Results

Table I

Descriptive Statistics of Social Media use for Language Learning

No	Items	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	Use social sites for my subject understanding.	14.1	12.8	13.4	34.4	25.3
2	Use social sites for my specific subjects.	17.8	15.6	30.6	24.4	11.6
3	Use a social site for better performance in classroom.	28.4	23.8	22.2	17.5	8.1
4	Use social sites for my subject understanding.	30.3	24.1	22.5	14.7	8.4
5	Use social sites to find the answers of study related questions.	11.7	17.8	12.4	35.5	22.6

6	Use social media to develop my speaking skill.	12.5	9.9	13	27.8	36.8
7	Use social media to develop my fluency in English.	8.4	11.4	15.5	35.5	29.2
8	Use social media to learn about course related material.	26.2	30	21.6	14.7	7.5
9	Use social media for improving pronunciation.	18.1	17.2	19.1	30.9	14.7
10	Use social media for understanding subject related queries.	15.93	19.37	17.5	31.56	15.64
11	Use social media for English fluency.	19.7	12.5	30.6	24.1	13.1
12	Using a social media for improving grammar.	17.5	14.1	28.4	24.4	15.6
13	Use social media for improving writing skill.	21.6	21.3	30.8	14.4	11.9
14	Use social media for improving my public speaking skill in English.	5	6.6	24.4	48.8	15.2
15	Use social media for improving reading skill.	16.1	17.2	19.1	30.9	16.7
16	Use social media for innovative vocabulary.	18.1	17.2	19.1	30.9	14.7
17	Use social media for critical thinking.	20.3	24.1	22.5	14.7	18.4
18	Use social media for innovative ideas.	28.1	17.8	26.5	15.1	12.5
19	Use social media for communication skills development.	26.9	19.1	25.9	14.7	13.4
20	Use social media for better communicating of my ideas.	11	17.2	18.3	31.6	21.9

The result of the study seems interesting in terms of use of social media for language classes. The results show that learners actively use social media for learning English language. The statement with highest results indicates that the learners use social media for their English language fluency development with 29.2% strongly agree and 35.5% agreement of the respondents which is 64.7% agreed responses. The statement which is second highest is use of social media to develop my speaking skill is with highest responses with 36.8% strongly agree, 27.8% agree which makes 64.4 % total agreement. The third

statement with highest responses is use of social media for learners subject understanding well with 34.4 strongly agree and 25.3% agree which makes 59.7% total agreement of the responses rates. The statement with fifth highest responses is use of social media for the study related questions with 35.5% agreements and 22.6% strongly agree responses which makes 58.1% of total agreed responses. The statement with lowest agreed responses is use of social media for course related material with 22.2% agreed responses while 26.2% strongly disagree and 30% disagreement of the respondents.

There are the responses which represent higher disagreement of the response rates. The statement with highest disagreement responses is use o social media for course related material with 26.2% strongly disagreeing, 30% agree and 13% undecided responses. The statement with highest disagreed responses is use of social sites for subject understanding with 54.4% highest disagreed responses. The statement with third highest disagree is use of social media for better performance in class is with 28.4% strongly disagree and 23.8% disagree responses which makes 52.2%.

The results of the study are interesting and are aligned to the literature that social media has positive impacts on learning English language. The learners use social media as a self-guiding tool to develop their speaking skill, fluency in English language, public speaking skill, communicating better ideas and developing the understanding about the subjects by looking at relevant content.

Discussion

The results of the study are interesting and are aligned with the empirical studies in the context of use of social media for learning English as a second language. Social media has been used extensively among young learners for different purposes (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023). The results show that undergraduate learners have the ability to avail themselves of a diverse array of valid material on social media platforms, including but not limited to videos, articles, and discussions. This exposure can facilitate their acquaintance with legitimate language usage, idiomatic expressions, and colloquial language. Numerous social media platforms provide avenues for language exchange collaborations, enabling language learners to engage in conversational practice with individuals who possess native fluency in the target language. This has the potential to significantly enhance the development of fluency.

Social media networks possess a plethora of multimedia content, encompassing a wide range of visual imagery, video recordings, and auditory elements. This particular type of language learning approach has the ability to effectively engage learners with diverse learning styles and preferences, hence enhancing the overall enjoyment and effectiveness of the language learning process.

Social media platforms offer users the opportunity to enhance their public speaking skills through the creation and dissemination of films, as well as engagement in live broadcasts. Engaging in this activity has the potential to enhance self-assurance and cultivate proficiency in spoken communication. The act of generating material on various social media platforms, such as blog posts, podcasts, or YouTube videos, provides learners with an opportunity to articulate their thoughts and viewpoints in the English

language, so fostering proficient communication skills and facilitating the growth of ideas. Social media platforms facilitate the connection of learners with a worldwide community of English speakers, hence providing opportunities for engagement with a wide range of ideas and cultures. This exposure can contribute to the development and improvement of their language proficiency and communication abilities. Social media platforms possess a considerable potential for causing distractions, hence posing a challenge for learners to maintain their attention on language acquisition amidst the presence of enticing content.

Conclusion

The social media platforms are used by young people for different purposes like connectivity, entertainment and information about the world around. Social media use has positive and negative impacts on the users because not all content disseminated through social media platforms may be deemed reliable or suitable for individuals who are in the process of acquiring a new language. It is imperative to exercise discretion and select credible sources while engaging with informational material. The proficient utilization of social media platforms for the purpose of learning English language proficiency, enhancing public speaking abilities, and fostering efficient communication is contingent upon the learner's capacity to maintain a balance between active engagement with pertinent content and the avoidance of potential distractions. When utilized fairly, social media can serve as a helpful tool for those learning a language, enabling them to establish connections with others, have access to genuine language materials, and enhance their linguistic proficiency.

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