

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE: FACEBOOK INTEGRATION INTO ENGLISH CLASS**

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**Dr. Nafiseh Zarei**

Faculty of Education and Humanities, Unitar International University, Malaysia

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### Abstract

Nowadays the use of Facebook has become popular among students. Almost all students own electronic gadgets to access Internet in order to use social media. Facebook as one of the social medias can provide positive benefits for students. The purpose of this qualitative research was to investigate students' motivation towards using Facebook to enhance English language skills. 22 Malaysian postgraduate students from an English Language course were selected as the participants of the study. The data were gathered through an observation checklist and semi-structured interview questions. The results of this research demonstrated that Facebook helped the students improve English language learning and it considerably increased their motivation in the process of learning. Furthermore, learning via Facebook helped the students to enhance their writing skills, English vocabulary, idioms, and proverbs through making helpful comments on each other's tasks. The learning process was joyful, stress-free, effective, and constructive.

**Keywords:** Facebook, English language skills, social networking sites, motivation, constructivism, social interaction

### Introduction

In this period of modernization, online life has widely impacted individuals and their mentality from numerous points of view which could bring the great and, in some cases, the bad out of it. These web-based lives, for example, Facebook gets numerous individuals around the globe to interact with each other. The correspondence that happens amid the utilization of this sort of internet-based life underlines on dialect by one way or another as one needs to initiate a discussion. In English as Outside Vernacular Arabian college setting, most understudies do not have enough chances to be secured in with assemblage practices wherever they will relate and confer victimization English. This has even limited understudies' business to solely recipients of responses on creation based on the usual supply, the trainer, instead of suppliers of information. Irrespective of the means that in such ancient knowledge acquisition condition, the trainer is that the primary wellspring of healing contribution on understudies' reasoning of, there are still a lot of chances for educators to

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allow stages and responses on every person understudy's task a comparable location within the Learning Center inhabitant setting.

Past analysis underlined the activity of understudy relationship in such grouping add their slang knowledge acquisition sweetening as they soak up the vernacular by victimization it for imperative cooperation, correspondence, and course of action. This examination anticipated to investigate the percentages and challenges of casual correspondence regions since knowledge acquisition condition in written. Long range relational correspondence goals (Social Networking Sites (SNSs)), for instance, Facebook is a standout amongst the latest points of reference of exchanges developments that has been extensively grasped by understudies. Social media is a new form of media that involves interactive participation. Media such as radio, television station, newspaper company, or a movie production studio are used to distribute messages to many people. Nowadays, news is accessible throughout these social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, and etcetera.

Facebook is a popular free SNS that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, as well as family and colleagues. It is also a famous website for youngsters to communicate with people from all around the world. Through Facebook, people can learn and widen their vocabulary in English language and improve their English skills. Facebook has a variety of interactive features which attract the users to play and enjoy it (Boyd&Ellison. 2007). It provides a convenient platform for the development of discourse communities with its varied participatory mechanisms. Students can create their personal profile page allowing them to list interests and activities and share with others. Facebook is currently highly used by students because technology has the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations. It is also an ideal platform to share helpful academic tips and articles so that others can benefit from them too. In fact, Facebook can be a mechanism for building English language skills. For instance, research has shown that Facebook builds students' English reading skills. Students can read an assortment of messages from others which provides them with the opportunity to study their way of formulating sentences as well as their choice of words.

#### Literature Review

Godwin-Jones(2008, P.7)stated that “tools and platforms such as Facebook that enhance communication and human interaction can potentially be harnessed for language learning”. In fact, these platforms have become new sites for potential research. Social media has made an impactful presence in everyone's lives and is now making its way into the educational world. Since Facebook is majorly utilized for communication in English language, this is a plus point for anyone to use this social media to learn English. According to Shih (2011)

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“Facebook can improve the grammar skills effectively”. Kajornboon (2013) mentioned that Facebook can be said to be a powerful tool that provides the teachers and learners a space for learning English as well as to promote learning attributes. With the diversity of knowledge and experience that Facebook provides, it makes the acquisition and learning of the language to take place in a more potent manner. Stacey (2002), Birch and Volkov, (2007), and Moore and Iida, (2010) clarified that people can discuss and share all kinds of information, knowledge, and resources almost instantly through the status function; it functions like an online discussion board. Furthermore, interactions in online discussions can facilitate a learner-centered approach and provide students with an opportunity to practice their knowledge and skills in a supportive and encouraging environment.

It is significant to note that various explorations on web-based learning are motivated by constructivist and social learning speculations (Hrastinski, 2008). Since 1990s, constructivism has made a strong impact on training, especially in the field of instructional technology (Woo and Reeves, 2007). Uzunboylu, Cavus and Ercag (2009) declared that social constructivist hypothesis expect under study demonstration and reflect inside a situation which are trailed by reflecting, abstracting, and expanding experiential knowledge. On the other hand, Vygotsky (1978) concentrated more on the impacts of social interaction, language, and culture on learning.

Significant associations in a learning environment are intended to upgrade importance, including sharing different perspectives and encounters, in networks of training. Also, Birch and Volkov (2007) and Wilson and Stacey (2004) brought up that social constructivist worldview centers on learner-focused learning in which students can share their insights, skills, experiences, and points of view with one another. Understudies are urged to participate in dynamic exchange with different understudies and educators and to team up with other dormancies with the end goal to build information and find standards for themselves (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Wang (2010) additionally reported that online learning has been supported by learning speculations that stress the production of a situation where students can access and share learning and assets with each other. In this sense, web-based/technology-upgraded learning is ready to animate and bolster the learning process and improve learning results (Lee and Woods, 2010).

A study by Yunus & Salehi (2012) revealed that Face book can be embedded in writing activity as the participants utilize the features in Face book to learn new vocabulary by reading the comments of the other students in the group, discussion in getting ideas for writing, and spell-check by peers. Their study also proved that using Face book can help the students in completing their essays easier by participating in the Face book group discussion. Kho & Chuah (2012) carried out a study on encouraging ESL (English as a Second Language) Discourse Exchanges via Face book and from the results obtained, it is recommended that the

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educators should incorporate the teaching and learning activities with online social networks such as Face book to create more fun and interactive lessons. Based on the findings of their study, the students involved actively in exchanging opinions through Face book as compared to traditional classroom.

#### Methods

This qualitative study investigated students' motivation towards using Face book to enhance English language skills. 22 postgraduate students (17 females and 5 males) from an English Language course at a Malaysian private university were recruited. The students were already familiar with SNSs and Face book as one of them. The students were to create their own Face book account for the purpose of this research. The lecturer posted various topics and questions related to the course objectives once a week after each face to face class for one term. The students were advised to take part in the activities in Face book, however, their participation was not compulsory and there were no rewards or additional marks assigned for their online discussions and tasks. The lecturer played the role merely as an observer and a facilitator by posting the topics and questions on his Face book. All the activities were related to the topics taught to the students in the class during the semester. Data collection occurred over 12 weeks during one semester. The researcher used observation checklist and semi-structured interview questions in order to collect the data qualitatively. The research instruments were checked and verified for the validity and reliability of the data. The data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis via categorization of the specific themes and coding.

#### Results and Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, it is interesting that although the students' participation was not compulsory; all students took part in Face book activities by answering the questions posted by the lecturer. They had a lot of discussions and sharing of thoughts regarding the topics provided in Face book. Majority of the students believed that Face book is lively and colorful, and they enjoy spending time on Face book activities daily. They expressed interest in the contents published by the lecturers as well as their classmates. Learning via Face book motivated the students to stay active in the learning process almost daily. Some research has shown that using social media as an educational tool can lead to increase students' engagement (Chen et al. 2010; Dunne et al. 2012; Junco 2012).

All students engaged themselves in online activities and they were focused on reading the posts. They stated that Face book was very useful for learning especially when they knew what information they need to find. They were motivated to participate in online discussion and ask questions as well as answering the lecturer's questions. As mentioned by Malhiwsky(2010),increased motivation may therefore be expected to lead to an increase in engagement. The students mentioned that Face book creates an interesting learning environment which is totally different with the traditional learning setting. Similarly, Boster

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et al. 2002; Swan et al. 2005 and Reynol 2012 argued that using technology influences students' motivation in a positive way.

According to the data collected through semi-structured interviews, the out-of-class interaction which took place in an online platform (Face book), helped to increase the students' interest and motivation not only in the lessons and topics but also, in doing their class assignments and tasks. Therefore, lecturers should be more active in conducting activities in the Face book group. This in turn will motivate the students to participate more. using Face book during the English lessons developed higher degrees of learning, engagement, and motivation. A study by Horn and Staker (2014), also showed that online interaction helps increase students' interest and motivation. (Mazer et al. 2007; Mills 2009; Blattner & Fiori 2009; Ross et al. 2009; Kabilan et al. 2010; Wise et al. 2011) indicated that using Face book considerably increases motivation in the process of learning.

The data from the observation indicated that the students had a significantly high level of engagement and motivation in participating the Face book activities. Bandura & Walters (1963), Becker (1964), and Weiner (2000) stated that motivation is an important variable, along with engagement, in learning process. Akbari, et al (2016) argued that motivation relates to emotions and engagement relates to (mental) activities. They believed that when students' engagement and motivation increase, language learning experiences would be more practical.

Based on the students' feedback, Face book helped them to learn from their friends during the online discussions. They mentioned that they received helpful tips and advices regarding the topics as well as their class assignments. The interaction among them motivated them to come online regularly in order to share thoughts and ideas regarding the lessons. They stated that Face book created a joyful meaningful learning process as the learning setting was not formal like the traditional classroom. The students enjoyed posting not only texts but also, videos and YouTube links in order to guide each other towards the answers to the lecturer's questions. The learning process was joyful, stress-free, effective, and constructive. The students were motivated to take part in Face book activities due to the effectiveness of the learning process. They improved their writing skills, English vocabulary, idioms, and proverbs through sharing their comments.

#### Conclusion

This study explored the students' motivation towards using Face book to enhance English language skills. In general, all students agreed that Face book helped them improve English language learning and it considerably increased their motivation in the learning process. The results of this research revealed that learning through Face book does not only improve students' team working skills, but also helps them gain better results in learning as well as class assignments and tasks. Moreover, the findings of this study demonstrated that the students improved their writing skills, English vocabulary, idioms, and proverbs through

sharing their comments in Face book. It is worth noting that the findings of this study and the benefits of using Face book cannot be generalized to other group of students. Further explorations are needed to find out how Face book and other SNSs can be integrated in a classroom for teaching and learning not only English language, but also other languages. It is highly recommended to lecturers to conduct online activities in Facebook for the students to enhance learning process.

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