



EFL Learners' Perceptions Regarding Facebook Use in English Language Learning Proficiency Development at University Level

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The purpose of this study was to highlight the views of university-level learners regarding the use of Facebook for English language learning proficiency development. That is why a descriptive study was conducted among university-level mature learners. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection and then the collected data was set, coded, and then used SPSS version 24 for its analysis. Different statistics like percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used for data analysis. Results of the study clearly indicated the positive role of Facebook use in English language learning proficiency development at the university level.



Introduction

The life style of our young university level learners changed according to the changing situation and too much use of social media sources through mobile phone and other electronic devices. That is why we need to introduce those aspects of learning which are associated with online social media our course outlines and national curriculum in order to get positive benefit from online social media sources like Facebook etc. There are different uses of social media which are very important for English language learning as compare to other traditional methods of teaching and learning English (Warschauer, 2004, p. 24). The use of technology is beneficial not only for teachers to improve their teaching methods and to apply new techniques during the teaching process but it is also beneficial for learners because it aware the learners about new techniques and methods and enhance their learning (Facer & Abdous, 2011). In Costa Rica and in the world, the most successful social networking site is Facebook. Facebook statistics for Costa Rica show 1,964,280 users to December 2012, a paramount figure considering that the country's population in 2014 reported only 4,755,234 inhabitants. The increasing appeal of Facebook may be explained in the strong communities that are formed in this network where interaction is constant. As stated in a study by Wu and Hsu (2011), Stated that Facebook is mostly used social network which motivates the EFL learners to greater extent in learning process of English language.

Facebook is an online source of sharing information that is why the learners may get help from this source in EFL classrooms. Facebook is one of the most important tools of social media which is used by millions of people form primary level to university level. Facebook users create their own profile and then share different type of new information, pictures, and videos with friends, class-fellows and relatives. It also has positive and useful application for teaching learning process. It is a technological tool which makes the learners capable to create positive relationship with their respectable teachers and thus through that way they may get help from their teachers and they may share their experiences about different topics (Murphy, 2009). In light of previous research studies about the use of Facebook for learning purposes showed that it is one important tool for learning process and especially for language learning. According to Piriya Silpa (2010) research which she has conducted on "the effects of application of Facebook as of the classroom" she conducted her study and at the end she found that Facebook is a useful tool for language. Similarly, on the other side, Bosch (2009) also conducted a research study about exploring students use of Facebook and lecturer engagement with students via social media.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out perceptions of university level learners regarding Facebook use in English language learning proficiency development (across gender group).
2. To find out perceptions of university level learners regarding Facebook use in English language learning proficiency development (across discipline).



3. To make appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the study

Review of Literature

Facebook is one the most famous tools or sources of social media which enables its users to share their view and ideas with other friends and family members. The history of Facebook is that it was created by Mark Zuckerberg just for college students but later on it becomes familiar in the world and now its users are increasing day by day. Facebook is not only limited now to college or university students but its open to everyone, and users may share videos, photos, and update his or her profile means it's easy for users to complete their work related to social interaction and social awareness.

Facebook Use and Teaching Learning Potential of Communication

Social media sites are very common nowadays a large number of active users of Facebook and sources of social media are used everywhere in the world. There are a number of articles are publishing about the users and role of social media (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). Similarly, Cheung and Lee (2010) also described and suggested the Web 2.0 and other social networking sites that most of the students of university level and college level spend their time in social interaction with friends, class fellows and even teachers. Now it is something of great thinking for the educators to utilize the various social media sources in a systematic way and to get benefit from this online social networking in teaching learning process. They mentioned the Web 2 as one of the most important sources of international collaboration and communication. The competition between the competitors of Facebook and the United States is trying to cross the Australian in social networking marketing (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). The origin of Facebook is Harvard University and expectation regarding the Facebook social media was that to be looked by students and teachers and people of management for their own purpose, it is an easy way of spreading message and devilry of message successfully (Freeman, 2009). The importance of Facebook social media may not be neglected because it provides the learners opportunities to do practice of learning materials (Bart, 2010).The previous research studies clearly mentioned the value and significance of Facebook social media like (Roblyer, et al. 2010) focus on learning through social media sources like Facebook that it enhance the learning outcomes of the English language learners, because social media sources enable the English language learners to do practice of students centered activities practice. The educators are trying to utilize the various social media sources in such a way that teachers and learners may do practice of teaching learning process while using the social media sources. (Roblyer, et al, 2010).

Social media community is widening and increasing gradually and rapidly the research studies highlighted like it (Subrahmanyam, et al. 2008) suggested that Facebook is a social media tool mostly rapidly used and it is basically a learning tool and it enhance the learning competences of the learners. Social media sources like Facebook facilitate the learners and help them in learning process. As Yu et al. (2010)



also described the role of social networking that social media sources and especially the online social networking are the sources of autonomous learning and self-initiated learning. It is that source which makes them able to improve their vocabulary and share their views and maintain personal links with others. Similarly, the other important aspect of social media use for English language learning is that it provides the English learners opportunities to do practice of various language learning activities in peer-to-peer and also group activities. Group activities refer to those activities when more than two friends are connected through social media like Facebook and they discuss one point together in order to find out something new or to share their experiences regarding various things. Especially in distance and virtual learning also Facebook plays a pivotal role. In distance learning system the students may share their views with other students and teachers in real face to face communication and solution of various mathematical and other difficult points which are difficult for them (Obar, et al., 2015).

Facebook Groups and Language Learning

There are various social media sources like WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr etc. Facebook is also one of the most famous social media tools used as a social networking service. At the beginning it was completely for college students now in this present digital era it has become the most common social networking site. According to 2013 there were 18.5 million Facebook users in 2013 (Tanaraksakul, 2015). It is true that not only the number of Facebook or social media sources increased but also the educators are trying continually to utilize the services of social media sources to language learning programs. Nowadays social media sources like Facebook are used as a supplementary source for teaching learning process between teachers and learners especially in distance and virtual education. Students are using the various social media for variety of purposes for example searching of new topics and then sharing it in friends and class fellows (Kalpan, et al., 2010).

Similarly, the most important point regarding the use of social media in teaching learning process is that it facilitates the learners and it is the most convenient source for learners because the classroom materials are available for them everywhere and every time and the learners may get help from their seniors and teachers without any hesitation. Social media sources are also very important for those students who are naturally shy and feel hesitation in face-to-face teaching learning process in the classroom but on Facebook and other social media sources they may share their views with other class-fellows and teachers freely and they feel free while sharing views with others (Buettner, 2016). The other thing is that the interaction through Facebook is not a face-to-face interaction due to which students may feel anxiety (Murphy, 2009) that is why the social media-based interaction promotes the student's level of motivation towards the English language learning (Krashen, 1988). There are Facebook groups which are helpful for learners because through these Facebook groups the learners may share their ideas with others and get help from one another knowledge (O'Neill, 2010). Social media groups like Facebook may be used for



educational setting because the administrators can save the lecture and then the users may send it other users for their help in order to get benefits from it (Buettner, 2016).

Facebook Role in English Language Learning

Facebook is the most important social media tool or source which is used not only in Pakistan but it is used in all around the world. It is a Web 2.0 application serving the online community in the world for example according to Costa et al. (2015), in Thailand the number of active Facebook users reached to 15,948,040 in July 2015. Thailand is in 16th number in the world for Facebook users but fact is that most of the users are 18 to 24 years age which is 33% of the total population. And it was highlighted in the above-mentioned study that most of the social media users are university level young learners because they are mature and they have approach to social media application any time. In the above-mentioned study, it was also mentioned that Facebook social media is mostly used for educational purpose. Facebook is used as an educational tool for English language skills and competencies development to greater extent and no one can deny from this value and significance of Facebook in English language skills and competences development. Through Facebook the learners may write paragraph in Standard English and then they may share it with other friends. Similarly, a large amount of vocabulary grammatical knowledge is there available on internet the learners may download various topics and grammatical rules and then they may share it with other friends and class-fellows for their extension of knowledge and information about that topic or field of interest through the help of social media source like Facebook (Valentine & Repath-Martos, 1997).

Facebook: A social networking community

According to Crook et al. (2008), Social media sources Web 2.0 like Facebook is a social networking site which is quite change from Web 1.0 because the Web 2.0 is more beneficial for users as compare to Web 1.0 because of its functions. Facebook is a Web 2.0 online networking site, which provides a number of opportunities to its users, mostly engages the learners in various activities. The most important point regarding Facebook is that it allows its users to download new and up to date materials which are shared by other users regarding various things. It is one of the most important sources of communication and an easy way to stay in contact with other friends, class-fellows, and teachers. Social media is used now in this present competitive age as a supplementary learning tool for teaching learning process and facilitate not only learners to learn something but the teachers to share their views with their students in an easy and systematic way (Barseghian, 2011). Similarly, according to Stelter (2008) social media is one of the most familiar sources of communication which is used as a social networking for sharing information, sending messages, chat, and also collaborate within the system. When the learners of English language use social media sources like Facebook for English language learning and set their profiles, and similarly, save contacts and other related activities which are



related to Facebook application then through this way they may get help from the whole world in English language learning more conveniently as compare to other traditional ways and thus through this way they may improve their English language skills and competences. According to Murphy (2009) Facebook is such a social media tool which is used for communication and social interaction but the fact is that when the students use Facebook for sending messages or receive the comments of other friends then they do not use their real name that is why they do not feel anxiety or shyness during sharing of information or communication. Thus, through this way they English language learners use Facebook for getting knowledge from their friends and even teachers without any hesitation or anxiety. Such a learning style can reduce the Affective Filter and eventually enhance motivation and risk taking in language learning (Krashen, 1988). The other important benefit of social media tool Facebook is that it provides the English learners a number of opportunities to write assignments, solution of difficult questions through other friends who are save with them as contacts or teachers that is why the learners may get help from social media even outside the classroom (Brady, et al., 2010). As it is mentioned above the features and advantages of social media tool Facebook in English as foreign language learning i.e., writing assignments, sharing of information, development of vocabulary, and so many other benefits the other important one is that it builds positive attitudes of students. Shih (2011) described in his experimental study that the use of Facebook in English language learning plays an important role and said that it develops the positive attitudes of the English learners besides other advantages of social media sources in English language learning. Similarly, another study which was conducted by Al-Shehri (2011) on male university level students highlighted that social media sources like Facebook plays an important role in English language learning. The findings of the study highlighted that learning through Facebook is new for English language learners and it is interested for English language learners. Learning through Facebook facilitate the English language learners and provide the English language learners opportunities to improve their vocabulary and get relevant information about the surrounding which are helpful for them in English language learning process (Brady, et al., 2010).

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female learners regarding Facebook use in English language learning proficiency development at university level.
2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding Facebook use in English language learning proficiency development at university level.

Methodology

Population of the study was all the student of public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enrolled in MA, M.Sc programs session 2015-16. The study was

descriptive in nature that is why self-developed questionnaire was used for the collection of data and finally data was collected from only 789 respondents both social sciences and pure sciences across gender groups. The researcher used one and same questionnaire for collection of data from the students of both social sciences and pure sciences. The validity and reliability of the modified questionnaire was checked in pilot study. The reliability of the questionnaire items were estimated with Cronbach’s Alpha. The data was collected through questionnaire in this way that the researcher explained orally the statements of questionnaire to the respondents and then the learners filled the questionnaires according to the given instruction and then the collected data was analyzed through statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, independent T-test. In order to perform these statistical tools the researcher used SPSS (version-24).

Results

Figure 1: Facebook

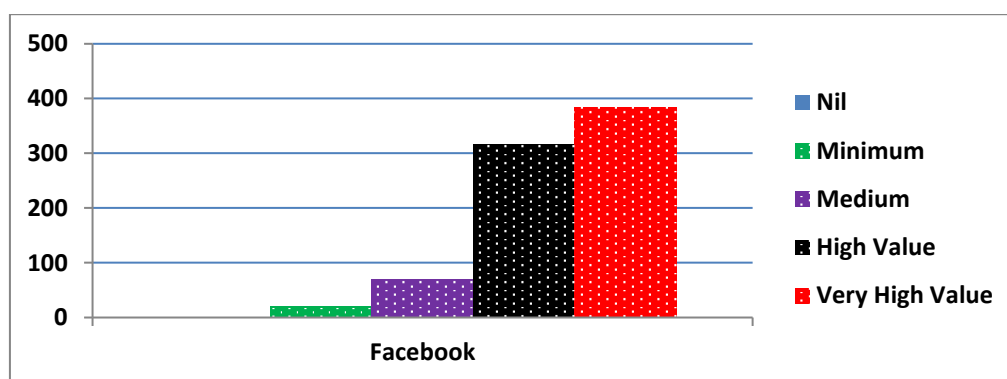


Table No 1: Views of Learners Regarding Facebook’s Role in English Language Learning

Scale Used	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Nil	----	----	-----	----
Minimum	20	2.5	2.5	2.5
Medium	70	8.9	8.9	11.4
High Value	316	40.1	40.1	51.5
Very High Value	383	48.5	48.5	100.0
Total	789	100.0	100.0	

The above table 1 showed the views of university level learners regarding the role of Facebook in English language learning proficiency in a very clear manner. Those learners who say that Facebook does not improve the English language learning proficiency of learners are zero, those who are of the view that Facebook improve minimum are also zero similarly, medium 30 percentage 3.8% High value 38 percentage 4.8% , and those who say that the role of Facebook in English language learning is very high are 721 percentage 91.4%. Thus in light of the result of the present study majority of learners are in favor of very high value which may not be



neglected but rather appreciated that Facebook plays an important role in English language learning proficiency development at university level because its provide multiple opportunities of learning environment to learners.

Table No 2: Views of Learners Regarding Facebook’s Role in English Language Learning. (t-test)

Questionnaire Statement		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Use of Facebook Improve my English language Learning Proficiency.	Male Students	400	4.4600	.59099	35.426	.000
	Female Students	389	4.2288	.86250		

The table no 2 of t-test application showed the difference between views of male and female learners regarding ranking of various social media sources for English language learning at university level. Here in this table we see that mean score of male respondents is 4.4600, standard deviation is .59099, mean score of female respondents is 4.2288, standard deviation is .86250, F-value is 35.426, with sig. .000. Thus in light of the result of the present study majority of learners are in favor of very high value which may not be neglected but rather appreciated that Facebook plays an important role in English language learning proficiency development at university level because its provide multiple opportunities of learning environment to learners. Here the views of respondents clearly indicate the views of leaners regarding Facebook role in English language learning proficiency development.

Table No 3: Views of Learners Regarding Facebook’s Role in English Language Learning. (t-test)

Questionnaire Statements	Discipline	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Use of Facebook Improve my English language Learning Proficiency.	Social Sciences	390	4.3385	.65585	13.238	.000
	Pure sciences	389	4.3368	.82936		

The table no 3 of t-test application indicated the difference between views of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding ranking of various social media sources for English language learning at university level. Thus the mean score of social sciences respondents is 4.3385, standard deviation is .65585, mean score of pure sciences respondents is 4.3368, standard deviation is .82936, F-value is 13.238, and P-value is .000.



Table No 4: Views of Learners Regarding Facebook's Role in English Language Learning(ANOVA)

Questionnaire Statements	Relationship	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Use of Facebook Improve my English language Learning Proficiency.	Between Groups	10.542	1	10.542	19.385	.000
	Within Groups	427.998	787	.544		
	Total	438.540	788			

Here the views of respondents clearly indicate the views of learners regarding Facebook role in English language learning proficiency development.

The table 4 of ANOVA application highlighted significance difference between the views of male and female learners regarding ranking of the six social media sources which the researcher has selected for this present study. In statement one which about Facebook sum of squares between groups is 10.542, and 427.998, 1, 787, mean squares 10.542 and .544, F-value 19.385, and p-value .000. Here the views of respondents clearly indicate the views of learners regarding Facebook role in English language learning proficiency development. The difference is clear.

Table No 5: Views of Learners Regarding Facebook's Role in English Language Learning(ANOVA)

Questionnaire Statements	Relationship	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Use of Facebook Improve my English language Learning Proficiency.	Between Groups	4.333	2	2.166	3.921	.020
	Within Groups	434.207	786	.552		
	Total	438.540	788			

The above table 4.23of ANOVA application showed significance difference between the views of social sciences and pure sciences learners regarding ranking of the six social media sources which the researcher has selected for this present study. In statement one which about Facebook sum of squares between groups is 4.333, and 434.207, 2, 786, mean squares 2.166 and .552, F-value 3.921, and p-value .020. Here the views of respondents clearly indicate the views of learners regarding Facebook role in English language learning proficiency development.

Discussion

Social media sources like Facebook not only develops the learning competencies the English language but also develops the positive attitudes of the English learners to greater extent as Shih (2011) described "the effects of using a blended teaching approach on the development of ESL students' writing abilities" and at the end of the study concluded that social media sources like Facebook builds the positive attitudes



of the learners. The students who use Facebook for English writing proficiency may improve their English language skills and competencies like vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and along with all these the attitudes of the learners also improved through this process. Similarly, Al-Shehri (2011) conducted a study on 33 male university level learners at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. The majority of students were English language learners and finally the findings that study concluded that when the learners at university level use social media sources like Facebook then they are in contact with other friends and relatives and through this way their stay in connection with others and sharing of various pictures and posts develop their abilities to synthesize ideas and facts from various sources of information. It means that social media sources like Facebook enable the English learners to get main idea from the given text and write the summary of it. Thus, in light of the previous studies already conducted on the role of Facebook in English language learning proficiency development at university level to highlight the perceptions of mature learning learners regarding the positive role of Facebook in English language learning proficiency development in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were made in light of the results of the study: It was concluded that in light of the findings of the study that Facebook is one of the most famous sources of social media and plays positive role in English language learning proficiency development.

It was also concluded in light of the results of the study that Facebook use facilitates English language learners to learn English as a foreign language because there are different online active Facebook groups which provide suitable information regarding English language learning proficiency development. The following recommendations are made in light of the results of the study. It may be suggested for future researchers that the same study may be conducted in experimental design in order to find out highlight the importance of Facebook in foreign language learning proficiency development at university level.

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