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RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEARNING ENGLISH USING FACEBOOK: STUDENTS 'PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING' IN FA CE BOO K CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to indicate the benefit of Facebook in learning English as a foreign language. It examines students' perception of using Facebook for practicing their English. It also discusses the opportunity the social media, i.e. Facebook, has for students to learn English. To this end, Three matrixes: language change, self-stem and motivation were used to elicit information from the participants regarding their practices of English Language learning using Facebook .Sixty-five students who were all from Department of English Language and Literature participated in the survey. The findings thus reveal that students have benefited greatly from Facebook. It has allowed them to communicate globally in which English is used as a lingua franca. Hence, it was found that students have developed self-confidence to use English as a medium to communicate through Facebook, and they are motivated to use it to learn English as a Foreign Language. As a result, it is recommended that English Language instructors should consider Facebook as a tool to help their students learn and practice their English.

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INTRODUCTION

Facebook services have been recorded the view of learners, instructors, experts of education and adopters as an educational implement/device for language teaching and learning. The situation and application of Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs, direct discussion boards, Flicks, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and others have changed greatly few years ago. These recent applications allow customers to involve with one another through media contact in a real world (McCarthy, 2010).

Facebook as contact service: Group contact (GC) is a class that gives simple, possible direction to join and work with others in running issues, expressing feelings and gathering reflection/responses (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). Facebook is a group contact address that was announced and explored in February 2004. The address participants were allocated by the investigators to Harvard students. However, it was extended to other learning institutions in Boston area, and gradually to more universities in the United States. Then, at the beginning of September 2006, everyone from age 13 and above was

involved in it; people with reliable electronic mail means. The core concepts of Facebook are "wall", "info", "blog", "friends", "like", "unlike", "comment", "poke", "send message", "share photos", "links", and "video", which give users opportunity to communicate and participate with each other and to create friends throughout the world. By September 2013, one point six million in a month were active customers using Facebook to speak, work, and mobilize with each other (Facebook, 2013). In July 2011, 500 million people were using Face book to chat, to work, and mobilize with others. On top of this, in 2014, first generation Facebook customers are up to 1.28 billion available throughout the month. In the third generation of 2012, the number of active Facebook customers was 1 billion; in 2013, it was 945 million monthly. Northcote & Kendle (2001) stated that Facebook helps in direct access learning practices; for example, discussing in direct access forums and searching for data address. It gives students the chance to have informal behavior online skills, useful online clear data, and tomove and disperse information. Alhomod & Shafi (2012) stated that Facebook as an educational tool use ful at the level of group learning for students and instructors to speak with friends. Group contacts, for instance, Facebook (on line learning) hugely benefit learners. Online learning helps to connect learners. Students' willingness sets connections around group or individual service of both practitioners together with academic researchers.

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Professors add activities on group contacting services into their guide lines. Researchers put their power in showing the conflict of social connecting services on learners.

Research work on English learning via Face book: So many researchers have conducted studies to discover if group may be accessible tool through learning situation. Many studies have disclosed affirmative output from the use of Facebook as direct learning and an essential tool in normal education practices (Alhomod & Shafi, 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Fiori, 2009; Kabilan, Ahmad, Liu, 2010; Madge, Hooley, 2009; Mahmud & Ching, 2012). Nevertheless, a lot of researches have disclosed the effect of Face book and it might not frequently be necessary in normal education works (Fodeman, & Monroe, 2009; Lohnes & Kinzer, 2007; Salaway, Caruso & Nelson, 2007; Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy, 2007). Rosen (2010) viewed that, online contacts all o w direct and indirect chat. Group contacts increase English socialization and mobilization. Students use Facebook to facilitate people's activities, applications, topics, references and, advertisement. Years ago, students studying English as a foreign language started social contacts like Face. Group contacts include different elements of computer- mediated in sending and receiving information; for example, direct and indirect interconnecting and sharing o f pictures and videos. Blattner & Fiori (2009) argue that Facebook is a "powerful learning tool that is not only built of synchronous and asynchronous technologies that have transformed learning but has also extended the reach of those communicative tools"

Facebook is system of interconnecting people or things which activate direct languages differentiation involving students studying English as a second language. Blattner & Fiori (2009) stated that Facebook changed students' perception of the English language, enhanced encouragement and caused real language interpersonal connections. They debated that Facebook has different characters of constructive educational experiences while maintaining privacy and safety" and that the potential of Facebook is "growing always with new applications" that are yet to be described and determined. Facebook has b e e n growing since its inception. Facebook offers an action or system by which a result is achieved within several members (Leutner & Plass, 1998). McCarthy (2010) explained that students can learn and develop their confidence in direct access in giving ideas and their existing experience than in the physical. Learners always rely on social contact services to learn and understand English Language and literature. Hence, most of the learners might not be aware in learning grammar, vocabulary, meaning situations and others. Thus, students always get certain incentives/encouragement/ from social media service. Students' participations in direct communications can make them to work and get awareness and skills in supportive and encouraging situations (Birch & Volkov, 2007; Moore & Iida, 2010). Facebook has evident change on students' capacity in learning English due to its basic elements of students' routine life. But, language instructors have to inculcate Facebook as an educational map/study with planned achievement and result for the learning experience to be useful. Facebook facilitates language learning and sociability (Abu Bakar, 2010; Bakar, 2009). Liu (2010) showed that Facebook as a tool has a lot of advantages: support students' educational intersections, show popular platform; for example, it is

highly adopted by learners. Haverback (2009) conducted a study to investigate students' creation and participation in an online learning community on Facebook; that is to discuss assignments, questions, post information, and support on one another for their reading education methods course. Thus, the findings indicated that students were motivated to be involved in Facebook discussions and they grasped a better perception of theoretical principles ensuring effective reading. In addition, students also developed better ideas as a group compared to when they read individually. Past studies s a w Facebook as traditional assets like teacher-student or student- student interactions. However, students bring skills not only from the class instruction but also through peer assessment on Facebook. Thus, it is helpful and essential for the students to adopt using Facebook. Mahmud & Ching (2012) studied how Facebook could be added as a pedagogical process in English as a second language settings. As a result, they reported students' instance and cognition of the benefit of social networking; i.e Facebook to increase their second language learning. To this end, the article indicated that Facebook increases students' second language awareness such as reading, writing, expanding their social circles and improving their communication skills and minimizing their apprehension of learning and using the language a mong several members. Prior familiarity experience with a computer can increase the repetition of affirmative behaviors and openness towards computer-mediated learning and its benefits. Learners frequently use computers to see it simpler and more available to learn through them (Conn, Roberts, & Powell, 2009). English language for enthusiasm, confidence and feeling in Facebook context

Akbari, Eghtesad & Simons (2012) investigated students' feeling and expectations towards the use of social network, Facebook, for language learning before and after the course. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference between students, attitudes before and after the course. In the pre-course questionnaire, the majority of students considered Facebook to be useful. Because of the social networks they can make reaction and share familiar experience. After the online course, most students stated that Facebook has great potential for being deployed as an intended etiquette educational device. Moreover, the post-course questionnaires disclosed. So, the students' affirmative feeling towards the deploying of social contacts was enhanced. Wang & Chen (2007) in a pilot study investigated the interests of distant students' language and the use of direct synchronous in distance-based language learning, they showed that direct learning engagement cycles were positively received by students who took the course alternatively not face to face.

The intention of the research

No matter how the levels of community contacts in several members of college students are undetectable; the power of this weapon positively affects learners' learning questions. These can be because of the reason that Facebook is new scientific knowledge aimed for communities' interpersonal communications and feedback, not essential language teaching. There is need for careful and thoughtful inculcation to demonstrate argument for the level of activities acquired recently. This article showed learners' perception of learning English in Facebook context covered through matrixes like

language change, self-esteem, encouragement and self-confidence stimulus. Thus, this article attempted to study the benefit of Facebook in learning English Language online. More importantly, it sought to react to the following two research questions. Do social media; Facebook, context encourage students' learning English in several universities?. What are learners' perceptions of Facebook in English language learning circumstances?

Limitation of the study: In doing this survey, the researcher had some difficulties, such as: lack of time, problems in preparing the questionnaire, lack of source of reference materials, misunderstanding of questions by respondents and lack of fund.

Participants: The detailed investigation was conducted in a university in Ethiopia, Wolkite University from the University of South Nation and Nationality of People. For this survey, pilot test was made to see if all expected students were Facebook users. Later, hundred randomly chosen students were requested to participate in the survey. However, the actual sample who participated in the study was sixty five using simple random sampling method. Thirty five of the participants were kept out for the reason that they did not have a community network service; Facebook, through online or similar organization by which learning is held.

Instruments: The instrument used was a questionnaire made by Abera Tsegaye. The questionnaire was improved to get reliable responses. The questionnaire was validated by two external raters, who were asked to check the suitability of lessons and clarity of directions. They considered direct responses to encourage learners to spend more time while learning English. It helped students to overcome their spelling fault and to remove unimportant items. The questionnaire used in this survey consisted of two sections. Section A solicited demographic information of the students and their language usage, namely students' level in the university and their language capacity. Their gender was not added in the survey because the college is only for male students. Section B comprised items producing data on the effect of Facebook as an online English language learning environment and to indicate learners' perception towards learning English. This questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which answers varied from „strongly disagree” to „strongly agree”. The items in the questionnaire covered the aspects of students' improvement of language skills, students' motivation, confidence, and feeling towards English language learning via Facebook. They were also interviewed informally to make the questionnaire responses reliable. For the analysis of the demographic data, frequencies and percentages were used and for the description of items mean scores, frequency and percentages were employed.

RESULTS

The findings are presented in three sections. The first one presents the students' general performance on Facebook. The second section answers the question whether Facebook as online learning environment facilitates learning English among college students or not. The third section investigates students' perceptions of Facebook as online English language learning.

This section will be divided into three parts to address these matrixes like: confidence, motivation and self-confidence behavior of students.

Students' overall features on Facebook

It was found that a large number of students (84.61%) who had a Facebook service said that they joined it more than two years ago. Only 15.38% of the students stated that they have been Facebook members for one year. Table 1 demonstrated answers of respondents regarding the length of time as a Facebook member. The following table showed the data of English as foreign learners for Facebook users. The students used both English and combine English and Amharic in the interaction. It is found that most of the students studying English as a foreign language were active participants of Facebook. It is seen that forty eight students (72.84%) logged on to their Facebook account one to three times a day; thirteen students (18%) logged on one to three times per week and four students (5.15%) only logged on to their Facebook account one to three times a month.

Book as an online learning situation that facilitates effective English learning: Table 4: showed the feedback to the question if Facebook as online learning tool increases English Language learning. The above table indicated that Facebook as direct learning tool that aids students' perception; it encourages, helps, and makes better their English language learning. Hence, it supports English foreign learners in changing their English language skills. Most of the participants (69.23% agreed (choosing agree and strongly agree responses) that Facebook could help in their writing skill (scored mean=3.83), while 66.14% of the students agreed that they can read English (scored mean=3.69). It is further seen that Facebook users believed that Facebook maximizes the students English communication skills (mean score=3.87). 61.53% of the students agreed that Facebook could be an effective environment. In addition, 75.38% of the students (the aggregated result of “agree” and „strongly agree”) agreed that Facebook helps them to correct their language mistakes and learn new words.

The possible explanation for students' favorable attitudes towards using Facebook tool may be available to the EFL students in any place, time and situation. Moreover, Facebook passes self-reliance, learner based systems that often move to the change of learner's language proficiency and development. Hence, they can get knowledge/skills from the users of English and put in real asynchronous and synchronous communication. Learners' perception of Facebook as online English language learning curve. The table below indicated that, the respondents believe in social contact services; Facebook, that increase skill in learning English as a foreign language. The above table showed that 66.14% of English foreign learners (the total result of “agree” and “strongly agree”) agreed that they feel more confident to write in English after using Facebook (mean score= 3.07). Moreover 67.68% of English Language students believed that participating in reading English materials via Facebook has increased their confidence (mean score=3.72). As far as the students' communication skills are concerned, 69.22% of the English language students believed that Facebook has improved their level of confidence while interacting with other users of Facebook (meanscore=3.76).

Table 1. Length of time as Facebook users

Years using Face book	1 year	2 years	3 years	add
Number of respondents	10	18	37	65
Percent from 100%	38%	27.69%	56.92%	100 %

Table 2: Intersecting languages

Use of language	Repetitions	Percent from 100%
English and Amharic	55	84.61%
English	10	15.38%
Amharic	0	0

Table 3. Repetition in using /logging on/ Facebook account

Items	Within a day	Within a week	Within a month
repetitions	48	13	4
percent	72.8%	18%	5.15%

Table 4. Perception/ cognition of language change via Facebook

No	Lists of Items	Strongly disagree Scale 1	Disagree Scale 2	Slightly Agree Scale 3	Agree Scale 4	Strongly Agree Scale 5	Mean
1	Facebook helps me in practicing writing	3.07	9.23	18.46	40	29.23	3.83
2	Facebook helps me in reading English	7.69	4.61	21.53	43.07	23.07	3.69
3	Face book enhances my English communication skills	1.53	3.07	33.84	29.23	32.30	3.87
4	Face book enhances my confidence to write in English	3.07	12.30	18.46	43.07	23.07	3.70
5	Facebook helps me to overcome language mistakes	0	10.76	13.84	32.30	43.07	4.07
6	I learn words in English via FB	3.07	0	21.53	36.92	38.46	4.07

Table 5. Improving/valuing the quality learners' feeling of self-assurance via FB

NO	Lists of items	Strongly agree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	me
1	Face book enhances my Confidence to write in English.	3.07	12.30	18.49	43.07	23.07	3.0 7
2	Face book enhances my confidence to read English	3.07	10.76	18.49	46.15	21.53	3.7 2
3	Facebook increases my skill in communication	0	10.76	20.02	50.76	18.46	3.7 6

Table 6: Valuing quality learners' motivation via Facebook

No	List of items	Strongly disagree Scale 1	Disagr ee Scale 2	Slightly agree Scale 3	Agree Scal e 4	Strongly a gree Scale 5	mean
1	Facebook increases my use of English	0	10.76	27.69	30.76	30.76	3.70
2	Facebook increases my motivation to read in English	3.07	3.07	18.46	40	35.38	4.01
3	Facebook increases my English skills	1.53	10.76	24.61	38.61	24.46	3.73

Table 7. Students' feeling on learning English via Face book

No		Strongly disagree Scale1	Disagree Scale2	Slightly agree Scale 3	Agree Scale 4	Strongly agree Scale 5	mean
1	Learning via Facebook makes English easy	0	9.23	20	27.69	27.69	3.87
2	I have positive attitude in learning English via Facebook	4.61	7.69	18.46	41.53	27.69	27.69
3	I have positive attitude to learn English	1.53	6.15	12.30	49.23	30.76	4.07
4	The use of Facebook makes learning easy	1.53	6.15	24.69	40	27.69	3.86
5	I learn English in spending much time	3.07	12.30	6.15	30.76	47.69	4.07

Students learning English as a foreign language agreed that Facebook could be a tool for increasing learners' motivation. Thus, 61.52 % of the learners (the aggregated result of "agree" and strongly agree) registered their idea that Facebook increase their motivation in English communicative skills (mean score=3.70), while 75.38 % of the students agreed that Facebook enhances their motivation to read English materials on the Facebook pages (mean score=4.01). Besides, 63.07 % of the learners agreed that Facebook increase their motivation in developing writing English (mean score=3.73). The following table presented data regarding the answers of the respondents about their understanding of how Facebook changed their feeling towards learning English as a foreign language.

The findings showed that learners of English language had great affirmation in using Facebook as an online English language learning situations. 69.22 % of English language students with a mean score of 3.80 agreed that they have affirmative feeling in learning English foreign language via Facebook. Nevertheless, 79.99% of English as foreign language students indicated affirmative attitudes towards English as a language (mean score=4.07). Majority of English as foreign language studying at the university (78.45%) showed that Facebook helps them to learn English language and literature (mean score=4.07). One possible elaboration for English language students' affirmative views towards learning English foreign language via Facebook is that this has become the most valuable tool for developing language skills. Facebook is considered to be one of the most frequently used internet-based forms of interaction and communication with others. Facebook offered huge alternatives for beneficiaries to share data create dialogue and develop their own content of interest easily. This also indicated that they do their best to seize every possible chance to enhance their experience gained. Facebook increases motivation and enhances students' attitude and helps them feel more confident. In a nutshell, the Facebook has the proven abilities that may be developed and lead to future success for second language learners' learning motivation and computer technology. And also it strengthens learners' linguistic skills, affects their learning attitude, and builds their self-instruction strategies and self-confidence. The findings are also in accord with the results reported by previous studies on Facebook as an online English language-learning environment and students' perceptions towards this learning model (Alhomod & Shafi, 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Fiori, 2009; Kabilan *et al.*, 2010; Liu, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Mahmud & Ching, 2012; Mills, 2009; Northcote, & Kendle, 2001).

CONCLUSION

Facebook is considered to be the most modern model of communication technologies that has been generally adopted by English as a Second Language students. Facebook is also the most popular platform for online social networking among English as Second Language students. This survey contains groups dedicated to learning English, and these groups provide their members with regular updates of grammar, vocabulary, new feeds. Thus, Facebook provides opportunities to exchange synchronous and asynchronous communication, and social interaction. Facebook is used to improve students' performance, increase self-assurance, foster motivation and trigger authentic language interaction in English language. Communications in Facebook can make learning easier and

give learners a chance to meet challenges, get awareness and skills in supportive and encouraging services applicable for online learning. Second language students are happy to use Facebook to share group works, pictures, applications and lessons, resource books, announcements. Students and teacher can communicate with each other in a team based learning system. Kabilan *et al.* (2010) state that, from the perspective of incidental learning, learning of English in Facebook is feasible. This is because the technologies that support Facebook and features that characterize Facebook are able to inculcate students in meaningful language-based activities, even though their initial intention of joining Facebook is to socialize.

It was planned appropriately as part of an educational project, and features of Facebook would be able to make it easier and create effectual and meaningful learning of English within an online community of English language learners. Thus, Kabilan *et al* (2010) believed that Facebook and its features can be used as an educational instrument in order to include the learners of English in an online community. The findings showed that the participants believed that Facebook as an online learning context facilitates, supports, and encourages their English language learning. On top of these, they decided to improve their English Language learning skills. Moreover, they indicated that students have a positive attitude towards this learning model, and most of the English Language students agree that Facebook could be an online area for increasing students' motivation and confidence in general.

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