Facebook As An Innovative Teaching Tool For English Language Learning in the Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

Facebook may play a role in promotion of learning English as a second language for students by providing a wide assortment of materials. The purpose of this study is to investigate and scrutinize the students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of Facebook which may be helpful in English Language learning. It deliberates on the effects and potential for using Facebook in the field of learning and teaching English as a second language. One hundred and forty four Technical students from Kota participated in the study. A 30-item questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was used in this study. The results show that Facebook maybe used as an educational tool, in the Indian context. There remains great scope for further research to explore the area and its effects on the students.

Keywords — innovative teaching; effects and potential; Facebook; educational use.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology plays a very important role in today’s world. It influences the way people communicate, work and learn. Technologies and Social networking sites (SNSs), such as Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, Google+, Twitter, and LinkedIn, have become a part and parcel of Indian students’ everyday lives. Facebook, which was established in 2004, has grown to become the most popular SNS in the world (Mazman & Usluel, 2010).

Despite the enormous amount of work done in this field in foreign countries, little research has been done in India, especially in the State of Rajasthan. The present study aims to provide empirical data which may be of help for English language teachers for using FB as an innovative tool for language learning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Facebook is regarded as not only the most prevalent SNS in the world (Mazman & Usluel, 2010) but also the most conspicuous social-networking site with immense potential for students’ learning (Omar, Embi, & Yunus, 2012). As such it has attracted millions of Internet users, in India.

Social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook have innumerable features that make them popular all around the world. They help in constructing the youth’s virtual lives and in forming social relationships on a day to day basis (Bumgarner, 2007; Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Selwyn, 2007; Stutzman, 2006; Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Chi-Wai Kwok, 2010). Their increasing use by the youth has resulted in an increased demand for integrating them into teaching and learning activities and for modernizing pedagogies as per the students’ learning styles (Selwyn, 2007; McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Lockyer & Patterson, 2008; Munoz & Towner, 2009; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Omar, Embi, & Yunus, 2012). Several researchers have emphasized the potential of social networking sites for teaching learning (Cook et al., 2008). This effect has also been established in the area of second language (L2) learning, due to their capacity for making the students more active as a learning community (Alm, 2006) and for improving the students’ overall interest in language learning (Pinkman, 2005; Liou & Peng, 2009; Jones & Shao, 2011; Shih, 2011; Wang & Vasquez, 2012 Buzzetto-More, 2012).

Recent studies confirm SNSs like Facebook can not only play a role in enhancing the students’ language learning (Lockyer & Patterson, 2008; Nakatsukasa, 2009), but also in enhancing student satisfaction (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Li & Pitts, 2009; Mills, 2009; Harwood & Blackstone, 2012; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Shih, 2011; Wang & Vasquez, 2012; Yunus & Salehi, 2012). FB’s role in promoting collaborative learning alongside the face-to-face delivery of content (Menzies et al, 2017) and for E-learning (Moghavvemi, 2017) has also been established.

Facebook, which remains the most popular among them (Boyd and Ellison 2007), allows its users to post information and comments and chat with others. These features play a significant role in the acquisition of language skills for ESL/EFL learners. FB provides students with opportunities to practice...
English language, the interactions enable them to actively engage in the writing process and improve their writing skills. The computer-based grammar checkers and spelling checkers help them in learning spellings. Further, the use of FB has been found to have a constructive influence on increasing students’ motivation and attitude (Kabilan, Ahmed and Abidin 2010). Several studies on Facebook’s use as an educational tool have shown its positive impacts on students’ motivation, commitment and attitudes. Studies have affirmed Facebook’s impact on motivation on students in higher education (O’Sullivan, Hunt, & Lippert, 2004; Bugeja, 2006; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; Ziegler, 2007; Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield, & Lampe, C. (2007); McCarthy, 2012; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011; Terantino & Graf, 2011; Suthiwartnarueput & Wasanasomsithi (2012); Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

Chenzi et al (2012) maintain modern communication tools help the students to communicate with the teacher and with their peers, while others (Wu and Hsu, 2011) contend Facebook provides an environment that is pressure-free for English learning because it is a virtual community composed of a closed group.

Shih (2011) maintains that Facebook’s unique features such as popularity and accessibility attracted the students and eased their resistance to learning.

III. THE STUDY

A. Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to measure the students’ opinions and perceptions about the use of the Facebook group as an innovative tool for English language learning in the Indian context. Research Questions

- How do the students in Kota, Rajasthan spend time on FB?
- What are the students’ perception and attitudes towards Facebook?
- What is the impact of using Facebook on their overall academic performance?
- What are the students’ perception and attitude towards the use of FB for English Language learning?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Data were collected from 144 students from Kota, Rajasthan, India. Participants were predominantly engineering students having a mean age of approximately 18.722 (SD=0.89633).

The sample consisted of 101 male participants (70.1%) and 43 female participants (29.9%).

Before conducting the Manova, the missing data and multivariate and univariate outliers were examined and the assumptions were checked.

Out of the sample of 144, seven cases were dropped from the calculation due to the reason that the cases appeared outliers. The statistical technique of Manova is very sensitive to missing values and outliers.

Hence, decision was taken to filter these seven cases from the final sample. The final sample size became one hundred and thirty six (N=136).

B. Measure

A survey questionnaire comprising thirty questions was developed, some questions were taken from secondary resources and some were drafted by the researcher.

Section 1 of the instrument asked respondents to provide demographic information including Age, Gender and Contact Number.

Section 2 invited students to provide information on the aggregate percentage in engineering, number of hours spent studying in the English Language per week, Facebook use frequency, information related to the student’s perceptions of the impact of Facebook and the Facebook use patterns.

The questionnaire included closed responses, such as yes/no and Likert type scaling.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Data was analyzed through quantitative techniques. Quantitative data (e.g. Means, Std. deviations, frequencies, percentages) were analyzed using SPSS version 21.

Aside from basic descriptive analysis, the main analytic technique implemented was a multivariate analysis of variance MANOVA, which was used to examine the relationship of Facebook use frequency with number of hours spent studying and the aggregate percentage of the students.

In the present study, it was observed that the students used Facebook for various reasons as reported by them: “for uploading pictures and videos” (Mean=2.87), “for chatting” (Mean=2.83), “for sharing posts” (Mean=2.82), “It fills up free time” (Mean=2.58), “for seeking entertainment” (Mean=2.53), and “to know what my friends are up to” (Mean=2.30) respectively.

The other purposes for using Facebook as reported by students were “it is a part of my routine” (Mean=3.05), “it is a great source of entertainment
and information” (Mean=2.27) and “it helps me to stay connected with my near and dear ones” (Mean=2.22) respectively. These findings support the previous studies, which have demonstrated that Facebook is used for the satisfaction of several needs by the college going students, including keeping in touch with friends as well as making new friends (Ellison et al., 2007; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), for gathering information about friends and family (Dunne, Lawlor, & Rowley, 2010; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009) and socializing with others called “staying connected” by Dunne et al., (2010).

In the study, the relationship between various variables such as time and frequency of Facebook used by the students was examined. Additionally, ordinal variables (i.e. scale variables) were used to define the dependent variables (i.e. aggregate percentage of the students and the hours spent studying per week).

The aggregate percentage variable ranged from 1-5 (i.e., 1=0-20%, 2=20%-40%, 3=40%-60%, 5=60%-80%, 6=80%-100%). The scale for ‘hours spent studying per week’ variable was from 1-5 (i.e. 1=less than one hour per week, 2=1-5 hours per week, 3=6-10 hours per week, 4= 11-15 hours per week, 5=16 or more hours per week).

The independent variable Facebook use frequency was taken as a nominal variable with two categories (i.e., 1=daily and multiple times, 2= once in a week or even less than that).

Histograms were generated for each dependent variable and also within each grouping variable to examine the data for normality. The box’s test indicated that the homogeneity of covariance assumption was met (p>0.005). For the univariate results, using the Levene’s test, the homogeneity of variance assumption was met for both aggregate percentage and hours spent (p>0.005).

A one-way MANOVA was performed on dependent variables aggregate percentage and hours spent studying. The factors included Facebook use frequency (daily and multiple times/once in a week or even less that that). The multivariate main effects were statistically nonsignificant for Facebook use frequency (Wilk’s Lambda=0.995, F=0.305, p=0.737).

The results indicate that the Facebook frequency did not adversely impact the students’ studies, or their aggregate percentage. As such, FB may safely be used as an innovative educational tool for English Language learning.

The students were asked if FB makes language learning interesting. The question was aimed at finding out the extent to which the students had felt comfortable using Facebook for language learning.

The students’ responses proved their attitude is positive towards the use of FB for English Language learning, which may benefit the teachers as the learner’s appeal for technology and willingness to communicate, would decrease teacher dominance and language learner anxiety (Mills, 2011).

The students stated that FB helped them in improving their vocabulary. This affirms the previous studies which have been commended social sites for their educational value and potential and for their capacity to encourage student motivation and engagement (Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009; Ziegler, 2007).

VI. THE CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The students’ perceptions and attitudes demonstrate that the use of fb for english language learning can be of great help for the students as well as for the teachers. The students’ responses indicate that fb assisted them in familiarizing with the english language as well as acquiring and practicing new vocabulary. In addition, their responses reflected their positive attitudes toward fb use as they felt motivated and comfortable. There is an absence of concrete data in context of facebook usage and language learning from india, the present study tried to an extent to establish the correlations between fb and english language learning. the study shows that the language teachers need to develop better ways for the integration fb with pedagogy and consider ways for integrating social sites like fb with studies. However, there are a number of challenges that should be taken into account when incorporating fb in teaching/learning. These challenges are embedded in the risks that are associated with the use of such sites in general and fb in particular, including safety (selwyn 2007), identity theft, bullying, stalking and blackmailing (gross and acquist 2005) and time management (selwyn 2007) envy, and depression among college students (edson et al 2015). the study further prompts the need for documenting the students’ perceptions and attitudes and the influence of fb on their language skills. Similar research can be replicated with the students who have taken admission under different courses at other institutes in india to understand the differences in results.
REFERENCES


Facebook-to-extend-learning-into-students-digital-lives/


