



Exploring the Role of Social Media in Learning English at the Secondary School Level

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الملخص:

هدف هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف تصورات طلاب المدارس الثانوية تجاه دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. استخدمت الدراسة استبياناً كطريقة رئيسية لجمع البيانات. وتم إجراء تحليلات إحصائية لحساب البيانات المستخلصة من الاستبيان. كان المشاركون في الدراسة 40 طالباً من المدارس الثانوية في طرابلس، ليبيا. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلاب يستخدمون وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتعلم اللغة وتحسين مهاراتهم في اللغة الإنجليزية. كان لدى الغالبية العظمى من الطلاب (96%) حساب على فيسبوك، واختاروا فيسبوك كأكثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي استخداماً لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشفت النتائج أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كانت فعالة بشكل خاص في مساعدة المتعلمين على تجاوز أخطائهم اللغوية (المتوسط = 3.95)، وجعل تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية أسهل وأسرع (المتوسط = 3.95)، وتوفير مصادر وفيرة من المعلومات لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية (المتوسط = 3.95). كما أظهرت النتائج أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ساعدت في تحسين مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب (المتوسط = 3.9)، وزيادة مستوى ثقتهم في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية (المتوسط = 3.9)، وتعزيز تعلمهم الذاتي المستقل (المتوسط = 3.85). خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الطلاب لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. أخيراً، بناءً على النتائج، تم تقديم بعض التوصيات والاقتراحات الرئيسية. الكلمات المفتاحية: تصورات الطلاب، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، فيسبوك، تيك توك، واتساب، يوتيوب.

Exploring the Role of Social Media in Learning English at the Secondary School Level

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this study was to explore secondary school students' perceptions towards the role of social media for English learning. The study employed a questionnaire as the main data collection method. Statistical analyses were carried out to calculate the data from the questionnaire. The participants of the study were 40 secondary school students in Tripoli, Libya. The findings of the study showed that the students used social media for language learning and improving their English. The majority of the students (96%) had a Facebook account and chose Facebook as the most used social media for learning English. Further to that, the findings revealed that social media were particularly effective in helping learners overcome their language mistakes (mean = 3.95), making learning English easier and faster (mean = 3.95), and providing plentiful sources of information for learning English (mean = 3.95). The findings also showed that social media helped improve students' writing skills (mean = 3.9), increased their confidence level to communicate using English (mean = 3.9), and reinforced their self-independent learning (mean = 3.85). The study concluded that students had positive attitudes towards the use of social media to learn English. Finally, based on the findings, some key recommendations and suggestions were made.

Keywords : Students' Perceptions, English Learning, Social Media, Facebook, TikTok, Whatsapp, YouTube.

Introduction:

The vast technological innovation in science, technology, and media have changed the status of foreign language learning today, stressing the importance of engagement, interaction, and challenge for learning. Traditional



teaching methods which rely only on textbooks are no longer enough. The role of social media has become an integral part of our lives changing the way we communicate, share information, and build connections with others (Boyd & Ellison (2007). Social media has an instrumental role in learning English as it offers opportunities for English learners to improve their writing, reading, listening and speaking skills. Social media involves many media applications that can help language learners find out the meaning of a word or sentence faster and easier. Social media includes various online platforms which are accessible to language learners via electronic devices like smartphones, computers, and tablets, which enable them to share ideas and communicate more efficiently. There social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Telegram have become powerful creative tools for language learning in the digital age. These platforms enable language learners to connect with others elsewhere worldwide (Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Social media can offer wide range of information to the customs and traditions of native speakers to foster linguistic competence and cultural understandings (Harrison & Thomas, 2009). Moreover, social media can involve videos that can enhance language listening and speaking skills by offering a useful resource for language learners. As stated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the role of social media is to facilitate global communication, mutual intelligibility and awareness. Pavlik et al. (2015) stated that access to social media can make it an effective tool for information sharing among learners across the globe. While Facebook is often known for socializing and networking with others, it can also be used as an efficient tool for teaching and learning (Lohnes & Kinzer, 2007). In addition to that, with most students having mobile phones and other devices, Facebook can provide a more convenient platform for discussion activities, which allow learners to create groups, share information, and engage in online discussions. This virtual platform can help



learners to communicate effectively in a more interactive and stimulating learning experience. By using Facebook platform, students can practice their English skills in a non-intimidating and anonymous learning environment, which fosters their confidence and reduces their fear of making mistakes (Hoopingarner, 2009).

Based on the background above, this study intends to explore students' perceptions towards the role of social media for EFL language learning. Therefore, by exploring the role of social media as a potential learning tool for learners as for the development of language skills, motivation, confidence, interest, encouragement, self-learning, this study intends to challenge the common view that social media platforms are only assigned for socializing and not for academic learning purposes. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the role of social media in language learning, more specifically by examining the effect of the four main online communication platforms, namely, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Tik Tok, on English language learning.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the main objectives of the study:

- 1) To explore the role of social media in English language learning at the secondary school level.
- 2) To make implementable suggestions & recommendations for incorporating social media in English language education at the secondary school level.

Key Questions of the Study

The following key questions were addressed in the study.

- 1) What is the role of social media in English language learning at the secondary school level?



2) What implementable suggestions & recommendations the study make to include the role of social media in English language learning at the secondary school level.?

II. LITERATUR REVIEW

Social media refers to the online space environment where many people can share information, communicate and interact using a particular language. It consists of various digital and virtual platforms, networking sites, online forums, where language users convey meaning, express identity, and build relationships. In this learning environment, social media can provide valuable opportunities for learners to interact and communicate using authentic materials with native speakers to practice their language skills in a more interactive way. Social media as a language learning tool highlights the significance of using the digital text and context for language learning as how it can be utilized to enhance the language acquisition.

Definition of Social Media

Social media are defined as online platforms that help users to communicate and share information freely without time or space constraints. It consists of various online platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, YouTube, and TikTok, etc. These online platforms are well known among learners due to their ease and accessibility which allows them to extend their languages kills beyond the classroom environment (Husain, 2014). Social media as a source of information can provide an efficient communication between teachers and students to enhance students' motivation and develop their language skills in online learning environments (Susilawati & Suprayitno, 2020). Online social media platforms can be a valuable resource of information for language learners, which offer them plentiful opportunities for information sharing, communication, and vocabulary development (Kajder & Bull, 2004). Social media allow learners to share their views, interact and build social relationships (Goodwin-Jones, 2003). This view is supported by the constructivist approach to language learning which emphasizes the importance of online platforms for language learning (Kern, 2006). The role of social media in English language learning is significantly great, which provides learners with opportunities to improve their writing, reading, and language performance (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One of the key aspects that social media can provide is interaction for learners to engage with other social communities (Ferdig, 2007). Social



media is an online environment where digital technology can be used to allow users to communicate, share information and interact through online virtual platforms.

Role of Social Media in Language Learning

When social media are used effectively, they can be highly instrumental for many purposes, such as, improving students' English language skills since online platforms can enhance students' language proficiency beyond classroom setting.

Social media plays a key role in language development and language learning. It offers English learners with opportunities to improve and develop their language skills. Social media allows teachers to access their online courses, provide their feedback, share their teaching materials. As a medium of instruction, social media is highly effective for enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class.

Facebook as a social media in Language Learning

Among the most popular social platforms is Facebook that has been studied in different contexts due its role in language learning and teaching. The importance of this is supported by Aydin and Selami (2012), who argue that social networking sites can allow users to develop and maintain social relationships based on shared interests. Other researchers including Boyd & Ellison (2007) defined social networking sites as web-based platforms which enable users to share public information, build connections with others, and access various features. On the top of these online social platforms is Facebook that provides a wide range of opportunities, including information sharing, messaging, media sharing, and group discussions, which makes Facebook a popular, accessible and ideal platform for educational purposes, particularly at the tertiary education level. Blattner & Fiori, (2009) stated that Facebook can enhance social relationships, build social communities, and foster educational communication and interaction among learners and teachers. Thus, through using Facebook, teachers can assign tasks and activities, give immediate feedback and correction, and ease interactive learning experiences. During the learning process, learners can also use Facebook to share information with their peers, access learning materials, and can participate in group discussions in a more interactive and communicative learning environment. Research has shown the role of Facebook in language learning resulted in enhancing students' engagement, increasing their interest



and motivation, and extending their learning beyond the classroom environment (Alhomod & Shafi, 2012).

YouTube as a social media in Language Learning

The role of YouTube has shifted from a mere entertainment platform to an effective tool for learning, which provides a wide range of educational videos and reels that allow learners to access to various learning needs. (Bora et al., 2021). YouTube as a potential learning tool is highly valuable due to its relevance, convenience and affordability, which makes it an attractive resource for language learners. Al Amini & Abdul Aziz, (2023) pointed out that by integrating YouTube into the teaching process, teachers can create an engaging atmosphere for learners by motivating their learners to actively participate in the learning process. Additionally, teachers can opt out for educational videos or links to enable students to access them at any time, which leads to flexible learning.

TikTok as social media in Language Learning

TikTok as a social media platform can allow users to create, edit, and share videos using various forms. It is a powerful tool for online learning due to its accessibility and convenience enabling learners to access it anywhere and anytime via a mobile learning platform. As stated by Hamsia, (2024), a social platform, like, TikTok has effectively enhanced students' English proficiency in speaking owing to the platform distinctive feature of engaging learners in an interactive nature. Therefore, TikTok can be an effective tool for enhancing students' language skills, mainly speaking skills in EFL instruction, highlighting it as a powerful resource for language teachers.

WhatsApp as a social media in Language Learning

Platforms, like WhatsApp, is a popular mobile application that enables users to send and receive information from all types, including written texts, audios, videos, images. WhatsApp supports with the Constructivist approach to language learning that learning is a social interaction and information sharing between learners. It is an efficient tool for language learning allowing learners to interact and communicate anywhere and anytime. Therefore, studies have shown that WhatsApp can enhance the learners' language performance, particularly in enhancing English as Foreign Language (EFL) skills. (Mustafa, 2018).



A study was carried out by Vipin Sharma (2019) aimed to investigate Saudi students' attitudes on social media usage to promote EFL learning revealed that students indicated their positive attitudes towards the use of social media and they felt more confident, less anxious, more competent, and more willing to communicate in English on social media.

Another study was conducted by Nouf Alorain and Walcir Cardoso (2018) to investigate Saudi students' attitudes towards the use of Social Media such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and WhatsApp showed that real differences were found among beginner and advanced learners in their attitudes about the effect of social media on language learning.

Hence, despite all the differences and similarities of the study with previous research studies, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of using social media for EFL language learning. By investigating the potential role of social media as a learning tool in the development of students' language skills, motivation, confidence, interest, encouragement, self-independent learning, this research seeks to challenge the common notion that social networking sites are only suitable for socializing and not for academic purposes. This study explores the impact of social media on language learning, specifically examining the use of four prominent platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok, to gain a deeper understanding of their role in English language acquisition based on the following questions:

II CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Participants

For the purpose of the study, the researcher used a sampling technique in choosing those respondents and how those may affect the research as a mean for checking validity. In conducting this research study, the process of selecting the participants who took part in the research is very essential. 40 third year secondary school female students as the subjects of the study. Based on some considerations, the researcher had prior familiarity with the students as she did her teaching practices in the chosen school. Secondly, the students are social media users and have gadgets, therefore they have a good experience



in using social media for learning. Thirdly, the researcher recommended the final year students as she believes that the students would participate with the researcher cooperatively.

Data collection Method

This research is quantitative in nature with the aim of exploring the third-year secondary school students' perceptions towards the role of using social media for English language learning. The data collecting technique the researcher used to gather the data related to the focus of the research was a developed questionnaire based on the literature review on social media. In this study, the main instrument used for gaining data was a questionnaire as it was the most appropriate tool for data analysis. The result of the questionnaire collected from the participants was displayed descriptively to answer the research questions .

Students Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect data, consisting of closed-ended questions that represented participants' views. The questionnaire had two parts: demographic information and social media language usage, and the role of social media in learning English, including language skill development, motivation, and confidence. A Likert-scale format (20 items) was used, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies (Sharma, 2019; Altam, 2020) and written in Arabic to ensure clarity and avoid bias.

Research Procedure

Before administering the questionnaire with the students, the researcher followed these steps to collect data first, the researcher prepared a questionnaire adapted from four relevant studies and the questionnaire verified by academic lecturers for its suitability and relevance and piloted with to 8 students. This process ensured the questionnaire's validity and reliability for the study

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved using a five-point Likert scale to measure participants' responses, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Descriptive statistics,

including means and standard deviations, were calculated to determine respondents' perceptions. Statistical analysis was used to analyze closed-ended questionnaire items, providing insights into students' attitudes towards the role of social media in learning English. Specific formulas were applied to calculate means and standard deviations for each question. The interpretation of the five-point scale of the questionnaire was as follow:

–Mean: $(\sum fx) / \sum f$

–Standard Deviation: $\sqrt{[(\sum f(x - \mu)^2) / \sum f]}$

Where:

–f = frequency

–x = value (1–5)

– μ = mean

Therefore, only the highest percentages and the highest means with standard deviations of the responses would be considered to represent the students' positive agreement about the role of social media in learning English.

Part I :Students' Personal Information

Personal information	Number	Percentage
1–Student gender		
A:Male	0	0%
B: Female	40	100%
2–The ownership of Facebook account		
A:Yes	36	96%
B:No	4	4%
3–The duration of Facebook usage		
A:Less than 9 months	2	5%

B: More than 1 year	6	15%
C: Around 2 years	14	35%
D: 3 years and more	18	45%
4-Language preference when using Facebook.		
A:English	10	25%
B: Arabic	20	50%
C: English and Arabic	10	25%
D: Others	0	0%
5-The frequency of logging into Facebook		
A:Daily	32	80%
B: Every other day	4	10%
C:Weekly	2	5%
D:Monthly	2	5%
E: Never	0	0%
6- Social media most used for learning English		
A:Facebook	18	45%
B: YouTube	4	10%
C: Tick tock	16	40%
B: Watsap	2	5%
Total	40	100%



Table 1

Table 1 shows the students' personal information about social media and their social media usage habits.

The findings in the table showed that the sample consisted of 20 female students (100%). As for the ownership of Facebook, almost all students (96%) had a Facebook account, while only very few of them 4% did not. Regarding the duration of usage of Facebook, the findings showed that around 45 % of students have been using Facebook for 3 years or more and that almost 35 % of them have been using it for around 2 years, followed by only 15 % students who have been using it for more than 1 year and that 5% of them have been using it for less than 9 months.

As long as students' language preference on Facebook is concerned, almost 50 % of students prefer using Arabic on Facebook while 25% prefer using English. However, only 25 % of students use both English and Arabic on Facebook.

With respect to the students' frequency of logging into Facebook, the majority 80 % of students log into Facebook daily, followed by few students 10% log in every other day, and that 5 % log in weekly.

In terms of the most social media used for learning English, around 45 % of students use Facebook most for learning English, followed by 40 % use TikTok, followed by 10 % use YouTube and only very few of them 5% use WhatsApp for language learning.

Overall, the data indicated that Facebook is the most used platform among these students as the majority of them own Facebook accounts using it on a frequently basis. While Arabic is the second preferred language on Facebook for half of the students, a high percentage of students prefers to use English indicating the role of social media for English language learning. Generally, Facebook is found the most popular social media platform among students for learning English, which was followed closely by TikTok. These findings suggested that language teachers and policymakers should consider the potential of social media, particularly Facebook, in enhancing secondary school students' English language learning.

Part II : The role of social media in learning English

The role of social media in learning English	Means	Standard deviation
1) social media has helped me improve my writing skill in English	3.9	1.14
2) social media has helped me improve my reading skill in English	3.75	1.09
3) social media has helped me improve my English communication skills.	3.7	1.27
4) social media has helped me improve my listening skill in English	3.85	1.19
5) social media has helped me improve my pronunciation skill in English	3.75	1.09
6) social media has helped me improve my grammar skill in English	3.35	1.39
7) social media has helped me overcome my language mistakes.	3.95	1.21
8) social media has increased my motivation to communicate with peers in English.	3.65	1.35
9) social media has increased my motivation to read online English materials.	3.8	1.21
10) social media has increased my motivation to write in English.	3.8	1.29

11) social media has increased my confidence level to communicate using English.	3.9	1.18
12) social media makes learning English more interesting than printed books	3.7	1.38
13)I have positive attitude towards the importance of social media for learning English	3.6	1.32
14) social media makes learning English easier and faster.	3.95	1.16
15) social media has encouraged me to spend more time in learning English.	3.5	1.32
16)Learning English through Social Media is fun and pleasing.	3.7	1.27
17) Learning English through social media reinforces self-independent learning.	3.85	1.28
18)Social media reduces my anxiety towards EFL learning.	3.65	1.31
19) Social media offers a more relaxed and stress-free language learning environment.	3.8	1.21
20) Social media provides plentiful sources of information for learning English.	3.95	1.12

Table 2

Part II: The role of social media in learning English

The findings as shown in table 2 suggested that social media has a positive impact on learning English, with mean scores ranging from 3.35 to 3.95. The overall mean was approximately estimated at 3.82, and the overall standard deviation was approximately estimated at 1.26. This finding suggested that, on average, most students tended to agree that the role of social media was helpful for learning English despite a moderate level of variation in their responses.



The findings revealed that the role of social media was particularly effective in "helping learners overcome their language mistakes" with a (mean = 3.95), followed by "making learning English easier and faster" with a (mean = 3.95), and "providing plentiful sources of information for learning English" with a (mean = 3.95).

The findings also found that "social media helped improve students' writing skills" with a (mean = 3.9), followed by "increased their confidence level to communicate using English" with a (mean = 3.9), and "reinforced their self-independent learning" with a (mean = 3.85).

Additionally, the results showed that "social media increased students' motivation to read online English materials" with a (mean = 3.8, SD=1.21), "write in English" with a (mean = 3.8; SD=1.29), and "offered a relaxed and stress-free language learning environment" with a (mean = 3.8; SD=1.21).

However, while social media was perceived as helpful among secondary school students, their "grammar skill improved" with a (mean = 3.35), and followed by "encouraging learners to spend more time learning English" with a (mean = 3.5) had relatively lower mean scores.

Overall, the findings revealed that the role of social media was a valuable tool for learning English as most learners generally agreed that it helped improve their language skills, increased their motivation, and provided a positive learning experience. However, the standard deviations were recorded relatively low suggesting that the students' perceptions were generally consistent.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggested that role of social media was valuable for English language learning as the majority of the students indicate a significant role of social media in various aspects of language learning. Therefore, the discussion of the findings highlighted some key implications which were as follows:

First, the findings of the study suggested that social media platforms could enhance and facilitate language learning by offering students with opportunities to practice their language skills, giving them access to authentic materials, and connecting them with others.



This finding supports previous research that highlights the potential role of social media in language learning. (Yunus et al (2012); (Ehsan & Nasri, 2019); Idris et al (2012); Harrison & Thomas (2009).

Second, the findings revealed that students indicated some improvement in their language skills, including writing, reading, listening, and speaking. This suggests that social media can be used a useful supplementary method for learning beyond traditional language instruction, which gives students more opportunities to practice to develop their language skills.

Third, the findings also indicated that social media could increase learners' motivation to communicate in English and boost their confidence level. This could presumably attributed to the interactive nature of social media, which enables students to engage with peers and teachers and receive feedback on their language performance

However, while the findings of this study seem promising, one should consider the limitations of this study. Future research studies should investigate the impact of the long-term effects of social media on language learning and examine the possible challenges towards the use of social media for language learning & teaching.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggested that language teachers should consider incorporating social media into their teaching practices and beyond classroom instruction. This suggests that language teachers should include social media platforms to facilitate students' language learning, provide instant feedback & correction, and enhance students' engagement in the active learning process.

Overall, the findings of this study highlighted the key role of social media for English language learning and suggested that both language teachers and students can utilize the power of social media to improve the language learning outcomes.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following are some of the key recommendations and suggestions made:



For language teachers:

1. English language teachers should consider the key role of social media into English language learning curricula by integrating social media platforms to foster the traditional teaching methods and engage students in the learning process.
2. language teachers should encourage students on how to be self-independent by offering them with resources and guidance to use social media for self-directed learning.
3. language teachers should create social media-based tasks by creating activities that enhance students' language skills, such as online group discussions, peer work writing correction activities, and pronunciation drilling practice.

For language students:

1. language students should work hard to make use of social media and look for more opportunities to enhance their language performance by regularly using social media platforms to practice their language skills, such as pronunciation, writing, reading, and speaking.
2. language students should engage in online communities by participating in discussions with native speakers in order to communicate and interact with them in English.
3. language students should set their goals and regularly check their progress for language skill improvement by using social media analytical tools.

On the whole, by implementing these recommendations, language teachers, language students can work together to enhance the key role of social media platforms for English language learning.



Conclusion

This research aimed to understand how high school students view the use of social media for learning English. In this study, 40 students from Tripoli, Libya, took part by filling out a questionnaire. The researchers analyzed the collected data using different statistical techniques. The results indicated that students actively utilize social media to enhance their English proficiency, with Facebook being the top choice among platforms, as nearly all participants had accounts. Furthermore, the findings highlighted that social media is particularly effective in helping students correct grammar mistakes, making learning English simpler and more efficient. It also provides an abundance of resources for language learning. According to the students, social media fosters self-directed learning, improves their writing skills, and increases their confidence when speaking English. Overall, the students considered social media to be an effective aid in their English learning journey. Lastly, the study offers several important recommendations and suggestions based on these findings.

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