INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EFL LEARNER

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Annotation. This thesis investigates how social media affects students studying English as a foreign language (EFL), looking at the advantages and disadvantages of using these platforms for language study. The study explores how EFL students use social media to practice their language skills, interact with native speakers, get resources, and get feedback. It also takes into account possible disadvantages including distraction, false information, and offensive language. This thesis looks into how social media affects EFL students in an effort to offer advice on how to make the most of these platforms' advantages while resolving its drawbacks in order to guarantee successful language learning results.

Key words: social media, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, language learning, opportunities, challenges, language practice.

The rapid growth of internet has affected the language learning systems of youngsters both positively and negatively. The learning environment has changed for the past few decades into the way students' need for independent learning atmosphere on social media sites is required.

According to the daily observations and recent scholarly traditions in the article by Dhanya (2016) "a certain amount of learning takes place beyond the limits of individual mind. Learning a different language involves social aspects which influences the way in which individuals learn language. Language learners are able to enhance their language skills due to different avenues in which social media have created. Social media provides the learner with the possibility of participating in actual, real-time, relevant conversations taking place online, and participating the target language with or without the help of an experienced teacher by his or her side."

In 2016, Dhanya suggested that today almost all youngsters own devices like mobile phones. Findings showing Chinese people owning more mobiles than land-line ones at the same time some African countries' people possessing more than one cell phones suggest that sometimes youth spend their time on social media getting more information using their technologies than they get inside the classroom provided by their teachers (Dhanya, 2016, p. 106).

First of all, let us find out the meaning of social media. As the scholar from Iran named Namaziandost (2018) states thst "Social media" is the combination of the two words which mean interacting with society to meet and exchange information. The

latter word describes the group of people consisting of at least two connecting together with the help of electronic devices. Both together mean connecting on the internet with the group of people to exchange information.

The authors Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) suggest that "social media is a current phenomenon that includes both web-based communication with Internet user through the websites and interaction with others via cellular phones. It is very clear that education industry is in the midst of revolution caused by the evolving technologies allowing students to create content, exchange ideas and share knowledge. So much so that in the last few years there has been extensive discussion and heated debate exploring social media in journal articles and conferences. Much of this discussion has focused on developing a clearer understanding of capabilities of such technology as a new platform for enhancing students' independent learning and how much social media has yielded as academic achievement and whether it could be used as new pedagogical tools outside or even inside the classroom".

The main focus of this study is Technology and Language equipment, speaking and writing skills along with their problems in EFL learner.

The authors claim that "as education institutions are embracing social media there is a need to optimize the positive effect of such technologies to bring them into pedagogy to make instruction and learning active and applicable to the cyber environment of the new millennium. In recent years, more and more are making a presence on social media such as Blogs, YouTube, Facebook to create affective ways for the establishment of the collaborative and interactive online learning system. Therefore, technology driven culture is featuring prominently in all pedagogical activities" (Namaziandost, & Nasri, 2019, p.204).

Technology and Language Equipment in the EFL Classroom

The authors Al Musa (2002); Namaziandost, & Nasri (2019) agree that " the last two decades have witnessed rapid explosions information which lead to an urgent need to cope with the ongoing scientific acceleration in all fields. Information revolution, which yielded the internet, is the most important technological accomplishment to date. Internet enables people to cancel the distances, shorten time, and make the world more like a small electronic screen".

Namaziandost, & Nasri (2019) claim that "with the increasing reliance on technology and the need for digital proficiency, it is expected that the use of online technology to work with second language acquisition is a natural by-product of the changing face of the educational world". Slim, and Hafedh (2019) claim that Independent learners, too, can benefit from social media as these students tend to rely on themselves in retrieving information when they can access it, either through Facebook or YouTube.

One of the most used social networking sides is YouTube having thousands of educational sites for independent language learners or additional source of information to get along with the classroom activities. Moreover, it is a home for over ten million video lessons for acquiring L2 some of them were created by experienced and over qualified language teachers. Which can help to improve the four skills of the language: writing, reading, listening as well as speaking. Next one can be Facebook allowing the learners to get the opportunity to have a conversation with the both target language learners like themselves and the native speakers of the target language which could help them to improve their lexical resources and speaking skills. These two sites given above create the chance of attending the live lessons directly despite the time zone, race, or nationality differences. Moreover, there is another internet platform named Blog that can include series of relative information with the examples from the well-known scholars' articles. Furthermore, blogging means serious and hot discussions on the topic and regular updates of information. In here usually the text are short and very easy to understand by the learner which can create the classroom atmosphere.

The other very useful and demanding site is Skype in which learner can attend the lectures or online studies conducted on the other part of the world. With the help of it they can communicate with their teachers or have online debates with friends and peers. In addition, vocabulary level can be fixed using videos or voice recordings. Any of those social networking sites above require only one gadget like mobile phone or a computer to log in and use the opportunities they suggest.

Speaking Skill

The Iranian scholars Namaziandost, & Nasri (2019) suggest that according to the majority of language teacher the main aim to learn the second language is to speak it fluently. "Speaking is a key used between people to communicate in the social context. Also **speaking** is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts"(Namaziandost, & Nasri, 2019, Chaney, 1998, p.13). Namaziandost, & Nasri (2019) claim that "speaking plays a crucial part in foreign/second language teaching and learning. It has occupied a significant and delicate rank all the way through the history of language teaching. It is worth mentioning that the four skills are described in terms of their direction as far as language teaching is concerned, that is to say, the language generated by the learner (in speech or writing) is referred to as "productive" while, language directed at the learner (in reading or listening) is called "receptive". Another important idea is "the channel", which refers to the medium of the message (aural/oral or written). Thus, speaking is the productive aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal "utterances" to convey the meaning".

Speaking is the skill which requires serious care, learners need to be confident in the classroom to express their feeling or opinions in the second language. In order to

achieve the high level confidence they can use the electronic devices and social media as source of information. Moreover, any of the given techniques can be beneficial to improve their speaking skills like live discussions on social media or voice online recording processes.

Speaking problems in EFL students

Although English as a foreign language learner know about the English language they find it difficult to speak in the second language. Many studies conducted by several scholars namely Bakeer (2018) and Chaney (1998) have shown that oral speaking skills have been ignored during the lesson or it has been used mostly by the teacher themselves. However, it is concluded that "oral language, even used by the teacher, hardly ever functions as a means for students to gain knowledge and explore ideas. To develop the knowledge to deal with the oral communication problems in an EFL context, researchers first need to know the nature of those problems and circumstances in which "problems" are constructed" (Namaziandost, & Nasri, 2019, p. 203).

One of the main problems students face while trying to say in L2 during the lesson is the fear of making mistakes and becoming the one to get humiliated. They are very shy to deliver their speech in front of people consisting of more than three or four.

Writing skills

Writing is considered another important skill to learn in foreign language, students might come across with difficulties to master the skill. The reason for this may be the differences between their mother tongue and target language. Those two languages have different requirements in terms of writing which makes it sophisticated. Dhanya (2016), clarifies that the teacher is no longer the sole source of content, and the students are able to shape their learning in ways which align closely with the needs of their daily lives. "All the above encourage the user to engage with information in English, reading and writing both formally and informally. The use of these techniques can act as a bridge to facilitate communication inside and outside the classroom. These devices can be a powerful teaching and learning device too" (Bakeer, 2018, p.48)

Social media provide English Language Learners with choices of when, where and how to study and enables them to take charge of their own learning by focusing on content instead of struggling with the mechanics of reading and writing English" (Bakeer, 2018, p.48). The findings of the study in the article (Bakeer, 2018, p. 52) revealed that "social media plays an important role in writing development of English learners at the university level, and arouse the interest of English learners towards the English language learning, and the English learners may use ICTs and social media for a long enough time, without any hesitation or boredom. Similarly, the findings of the study revealed that the use of social media is easy for young university level learners

as compared to books, or other text materials while going to library and get books related to writing development.

The learners may use social media sources like Facebook, Twitter, You-tube, Whats App, and other tools of social media to improve their English language and writing skill through digital media by developing a daily writing practice and regular habits for deepening a conversation with oneself and with colleagues".

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