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EFFECT OF FACEBOOK IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE BY LIBYAN STUDENTS

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Abstract

Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms that allow billions of people to communicate and interact with each other. It has become a prominent tool of many people for expressing their opinions, ideas, messages, etc. As it is also widely used by students, it becomes a good tool to use the same for learning purposes. This paper aims to verify whether Facebook is an appropriate tool to develop language skills among Libyan high school students and to discover the benefits of using Facebook in the classroom in learning English as a second language among Libyan high school students. It also sheds light on issues concerning using social networking websites in academic field of teaching English language meaningfully. Data were collected from the results of tests given to students after teaching them English language via Facebook. The results showed that Libyan students have positive attitude toward using Facebook in learning English language.

Keywords: Facebook, English language, Libyan students.

Introduction

In Libyan high school, where English is taught as a second language, students lack opportunities for communication, interaction and exposure to English language because Libyan high school teachers pay more emphasis on grammar and vocabulary which are not suitable for teaching English language. They believe that teaching explicit knowledge of grammar will result in improving communication skills. Also, in classroom, students do not pay attention and focus what the teachers teach and the main role is for the teachers while the

role of students is passive. This is going to create gap between formal literacy in high school and students' informal learning interest where new generation of students thrive on online recreational activities.

Learning language in the classroom is good. But it is not enough, it lacks some beneficial activities that prompt and motivate students to use language that they learned in the classroom. The researcher utilized Facebook to carry out these beneficial activities that the students may be trained well. The researcher created a close group on Facebook for Libyan high school students, then invited them to

join the page. The researcher downloaded relevant files, videos, photos, games, links for conducting activities outside the classroom. The researcher choose materials from other sources such as books, websites and journals. These materials selected according to learning objectives and to suit with different students levels. These activities on Facebook such as watching videos of native speaker and voice recording of the students, helped students to develop their speaking and listening skills. Also, playing vocabulary games, reading file and writing suitable sentences for photos posted in Facebook helped students to progress their writing and reading skills. So, the main aim of this research was to employ and utilize Facebook as a platform for Libyan high school students to develop their language skills and to enhance the role of the students in learning English as a second language. Also, this research encouraged Libyan teachers to keeping up with the age of technology and use it in their teaching. The purpose of using technology in Libyan higher schools was to improve the quality of teaching and learning which enhanced the relationship between students and teachers.

Research Methodology

The methodology that used in this study gave pre and post- tests to the students of two groups. The tests gave to (100) hundred students of the English department at Libyan high school. They were a mixed group and their ages were between 15-20.

Pre-test: Students were assessed for their level of competency of English language by using Facebook and the results were recorded.

Teaching students: Students were taught English for two months. There were two groups. Each group contained (50) students.

The control group: This group was taught English in the traditional way. The teacher used blackboard and book with activities in the classroom.

Experimental group: Another group was taught English in the tradition way with using activities on Facebook:

1. The teacher taught students the content of the book in the classroom.
2. He taught them one unit.
3. Each unit in the book had four English skills.
4. Besides teaching in the class, the teacher taught English through Facebook.
5. The teacher created an account and closed group on Facebook for Libyan students, then invited them to join the page. All of the students had computer or mobile phone and already had personal account on Facebook.
6. The teacher downloaded the appropriate content related to the topic that he/she taught in the classroom.
7. The students also shared related material that they had.
8. The content or material that teachers or students downloaded may be, photos, games, power point slides, film, links, documents, recording voice, post or any other material related to the topic.
9. Students discussed and shared according to what that post is required in comment, like, unlike, share, tag, send message.
10. The discussion was between the concerned teacher and students and also among students.
11. Share feature played an important role in Facebook activities because student could share alltypes of information and knowledge.
12. Students could go back to the content on the Facebook any time they want.

Post-test: After two months of teaching by using Facebook besides traditional method, there was an evaluation. Students were tested again. This test revealed the students' progress level and their ability to use English language in the correct way.

Findings

This study investigated the effect of using Facebook in improving English language skills. The study found that Facebook had a positive effect on Libyan students at learning English language. The

results revealed significant differences between the two groups in favour of the experimental group which made significant progress in the post-test. It was obvious that the variety of topics, themes and activities helped students to demonstrate impressive collaboration to the extent that they were attracted to the Facebook group so as to read the posts, add comments, answer questions, post their views, agree or disagree with other's posts. On the findings below, Facebook can be a visionary, recommended platform for English learning. The findings of the research are supported by many other studies that found Facebook making positive effect on learning English as second language.

Fluency via Facebook

In the first class, learning participants hesitated to share their information in Facebook group, some were quiet, some tried to post short comments and then left conversation.

After the first two classes of the operation step, it was found that most learning participants shared in all the posts. They performed better in the fluency of writing with more fluent conversation, longer comment, share more information, more interaction with each other. "Learning participants' fluency had progressively developed toward the project's completion." Sirivedin, 2018.

Facebook as learning environment

Such result agrees with Dweikat, (2016) who stated that for a language class, Facebook group provided a new environment in which learners can use language as well as interact with non- native and native speakers of the target language. The learning process in the classroom can be extended to a virtual environment where language acquisition can also take place. Students who had used Facebook group were able to make announcements, share resources, take part in online discussions and participate in daily activities. .

Facebook enhances students' ability in learning English.

This result seems to be in consistent with Aubry, (2013) who found that learning English via Facebook provided students with more

opportunities to engage personally, communicate and work collaboratively for life and learning through social interaction. For some learners who are shy to speak up, Facebook offered an element of privacy in social interaction during the discussion. Learners are believed to be able to express themselves, share their views, and acquire new information or knowledge.

Sharing material resources by Facebook

This result agrees with Shih (2011) who found that Facebook was the perfect social media platform to incorporate into the classroom. Students were able to share all material resources that they had with their teacher and other students. At the same time, Facebook allowed students to exchange information by providing links about study materials.

Facebook as a correction tool

This result supported with Wongsathorn, 2010 who stated that it promotes better writing skill. It focused on participants' opportunities to be aware of their progress and mistakes and to have the opportunity to fix and improve them. Comments from peers, peer assessment, or feedback are essential for the effective grammar skills improvement of the participants. Participants had also a positive attitude toward regular correction from peers and the instructor. Participants were able to correct each other messages at any time.

Diversity in Facebook

This result agrees with Trentin, 2010 who found that the variety of Facebook's features can promote adult learning. Facebook has various features or applications that learners can use to facilitate their learning, such as multimedia, images with text, various quotation, video clips, message alerts and a dictionary. These handy facilities affected their attitude toward learning which caused attitude changes during learning. Participants have a more positive attitude toward learning through Facebook and feel more confident in learning through interaction.

Facebook as an interaction tool

This result supported by other studies Shih, 2013 and Kajornboon,2013 that found that Facebook is a powerful tool to use as a space for interaction. Interaction between participants can foster knowledge sharing. They came to interact, exchange knowledge, discuss with each other, and help each other to fix mistakes. They exchanged their knowledge and wanted to learn more. When they had greater interaction, they had chances to practice.

Belief in self-effectiveness

This result agrees with Dweikat, 2016 who found that the learning participants had strong beliefs that they could successfully improve their English skills through the Facebook group. Also they had a strong will to learn English through Facebook.

Confidence and Satisfaction

According to Ibrahim, 2013 who agrees with this result, the study found that most learning participants gradually developed their confidence overtime from the first week of the project. They commented, shared, exchanged ideas and knowledge, asked and gave advice, discussed and debated, motivated, and helped correct each other through interaction on Facebook. They felt more confident to correct others.

At the end of the project, it was found that most learning participants enjoyed English learning through the Facebook project. They felt more enthusiastic about English learning and wanted to learn more.

Conclusion

As a summary, it can be said that Libyan students' performance at high school in learning English language was improved with the use of Facebook in the post-test. With Facebook, more meaningful learning environment can be created and that is advantageous in learning English language. Also, Facebook features make the learning process easier and fun filled. In addition to that, Facebook allows students to discuss with peers, give feedback and comment on the activities (a variety of posts and activities uploaded onto the Facebook)

- It was concluded that Facebook is an appropriate tool to learning English if uses in correct way and it has a great effect in improving the students' interest in learning English Language
- It is easy for English learners as compare to books reading and other text materials, and arouse the interest of English learners towards the English language learning, and the English learners may use Facebook tools for a long enough period of time without any hesitation or boredom.
- Noteworthy, the students agreed that Facebook has by and large impacted in their English language learning skills.

RECOMMONDATION

The researcher presents the following recommendations which may represent some guidelines for teachers of English to the Arab learners:

- a. Teaching English language for high school via Facebook should be controlled by the teacher.
- b. Allowing students to upload and share the information that they have with their teacher and other students, this can enhances cooperation between teacher and students and between students themselves.
- c. Inform students, that social media can help them to improve their language if used in correct way.
- d. Paying more attention to use new technology for teaching English language inside the classroom.

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