

The Use of Social Media in Facilitating the Teaching and Learning Process: A Case Study of Undergraduates at University of Bisha in Saudi Arabia

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: January 15, 2019

Accepted: February 17, 2020

Published: February 28, 2020

Volume: 3

Issue: 2

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.2.11

KEYWORDS

Social Media, Technology, Boost, English language skills, Teaching Learning Process

ABSTRACT

The study explores the use of social media in accelerating the teaching and learning process of English language. It was conducted in the Girls college of Al Namas, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. The electronic questionnaire consisted of multiple closed questions to acquire both qualitative and quantitative results. The participants are undergraduate students of the English Department of the above-mentioned college. The data was analyzed using pie chart and histogram. During the period of teaching English language, we, as lecturers, noticed that the students are very efficient in the use of modern technology, but unfortunately, they do not use them in the target language, instead they use all the social media networks in their mother tongue, i.e, Arabic. This way even being coherent to the modern technology they do not use it to improve their second language skill. Their disposition of using Arabic language everywhere and everything creates a big hindrance for them to avail the benefits of social media networks in learning English language. Through this paper we tried to motivate the students to enhance their capabilities to utilize social media network in boosting their English language skills. At the same time, we have tried to make the English language as an interesting subject to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Introduction

This research is about the effective use of Social Networking Sites in the process of teaching and learning English as a second language, in the college of Sciences and Arts for Girls, Alnamas, University of Bisha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Although; Kaplan and Haenlein; (2010) showed in their research that in Saudi Arabia, incorporating technology into second language learning classrooms is not something new. But we observed that in the above-mentioned college, technology is used mostly in the mother tongue rather than the target language which is a big obstacle for the students to attain proficiency in the target language that is English.

Objectives of the Study

- a. To give emphasis on the usage of social media in the target language (English) among the students of the Girls College Al Namas, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia
- b. To make a cheerful environment in the process of learning English language through social media.
- c. To make the teaching of English language effective and efficient among the students of the Girls College Al Namas, University of Bisha, K.S.A.

Hypothesis of the Study

- a. There are benefits of using social media as a tool in learning English as a second language among the undergraduate students of The College of Science and Arts, for girls Al Namas, University of Bisha, K.S.A.
- b. Using social media facilitates the learning of English as a Second language among the undergraduate students of The College of Science and Arts, for girls Al Namas, University of Bisha, K.S.A.

The Statement of the Problem

Various researchers (Sharma, 2019; Maulina and Pahamzah, 2019; Alshalan, 2019; Asserraji, 2020; Jannatussholihah and Triyono, 2019; Toor, 2018) highlighted the important role of using new technologies in the process of learning a foreign language, but little attention so far has been paid to the reactions of students to this method of teaching. During the period of teaching English language, we, as a lecturer, noticed that the students are very efficient in the use of modern technology but, unfortunately they do not use them in the target language that is English, instead they use all the social media networks in their mother tongue which is Arabic. This way even being coherent to the modern technology they do not use it in improving their second language skills. Their disposition of using Arabic language everywhere and everything creates a big hindrance for them to avail the benefits of social media networks in learning English language.

The Significance of the Study

“Social networks aren’t about Web sites. They’re about experiences.”
Mike DiLorenzo, NHL social media marketing director

Contemporary Teaching and Learning process has come of age, which is no longer restricted in the four walls of a language classroom. With an advancement in science and technology, one can see communication flourishing in the bosom of some today’s highly popularized social networking sites. It is remarkable to see that Social Media has created a new community where teachers and students do not have to communicate by means of the traditional face-to-face classroom environment. According to Schmidt and Brown (2004) “The formal use of Social Media can be recognized as a combination of online and traditional classroom teaching”. They believe that such a combination could enhance the teaching and learning environment as well as technology literacy of both students and teachers. As per the research done by ACUTA in the spring of 2010, “Social networks of the electronic variety have become thoroughly embedded in contemporary culture. People have woven these networks into their daily routines, using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, online gaming environments, and other tools to build and maintain complex webs of professional and personal relationships. CIOs likewise have recognized the importance of building social networks, using not only these electronic tools but also the old-fashioned methods of face-to-face communication and relationship-building. Today, establishing these networks is more important than ever in order to manage changes in technology and expectations in the current economy. The communications makeover of IT organizations begins with understanding the higher education landscape and moving inward in concentric circles. IT leaders have long been knowledgeable about higher education, including government policy, finances, and the competitive outlook; now, the importance of broad generalist knowledge is filtering lower in the organization.”

While teaching English language in the department of the College of Sciences and Arts for Girls, Al Namas, we noticed that girls are always adhere to the gadgets, be it mobile, tablets, iPod, laptop etc. but, when it comes to communicate in the target language English, they stuck. They are constantly on social media. They don’t even pay attention to the classes. They are always chatting, posting pictures, and who knows what else! That network does not let students focus on what really matters! In the words of Fewkes & McCabe, 2012, p. 93 “social networking is second nature to our students”. When we observed closely we found that they use the devices in Arabic language instead of English which deters them from enhancing their English language skills. As an English Lecturer, it is really disheartening to see the students using these modern technologies not as a learning tools but just as the medium of entertainment and communication.

The girls of the College of Sciences and Arts for Girls, Al Namas, are very active in using different technical applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. but they hardly ponder to use the same for the improvement of their English language skills in spite of many motivation. The reason behind it could be fear of being wrong, fear of being mocked at, lack of yielding motivational instructions, or lack of language learning environment.

The above-mentioned problems can be resolved by the following suggestions.

Introduction of New Teaching Method: We have witnessed from ages that there have been many teaching methods used for any language learning. But every era demands a specific method; so as the present era call for a new teaching style in which Social Networking Sites (SNS) can be included. The different SNS can be used as the main tool of teaching and learning target language. As said by Grgurovic, 2010 “The widespread use of technology in all areas of life has led to its growing presence in educational settings”. According to Picciano (2009), face-to-face and online activities should be integrated in the classroom in a planned and pedagogically valuable manner in order to support the students’ academic development. Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin (2010) also pointed out that “computer-mediated communication is one of the oldest yet still most valuable tool of network-based language teaching, as it puts learners in direct contact with others for authentic communication, and therefore, has positive outcomes for teaching and learning of English” (p. 181). So, we can suggest that different forte of various SNS apps can be utilized as the main tool for teaching learning process.

Assignments should be Given Online: In order to make the teaching and learning process more entertaining as well as more communicative, students should be engaged through assignments given on different SNS apps. For instance, they can be asked to create and vent out their views on blogs, twitter etc. or they can be asked to make their own page on Facebook, Instagram or on other platforms in the target language.

Apps Group should be formed among Students and Teachers: Many SN apps provide the facility to create groups that can be very well utilized to make the teaching learning process fruitful. As we are aware of the human nature that one can grasp on any given subject more quickly by informal communication as compare to any traditional ways of learning. According to Pascarella and Terrenzini (1991), some of the most effective faculty members are those that create an informal relationship with their students. Over recent decades, numerous studies have suggested that student and faculty interaction have a notable impact on students “outcome, both in the intellectual and the social realm” (Endo & Harpel; 1982). We would also like to quote David Alston who says, “Social media is not a media. The key is to listen, engage, and build relationships.”

Students and Teachers should Watch Educational Movies or English series together: Although it sounds little odd but it can be very beneficial to teach and learn the English language, if used efficiently. It is evident from various researches that human mind can remember 75% of what they see than what they read and listen. Audio-video have always been used vitally as the major tool in order to teach any language. Since video stimulates more senses, ears and eyes, it increases students’ motivation. It is the best medium that one can use in order to speak with the new generation. Students do have a very good time watching videos online and videos are maybe the perfect medium that one can use for showcasing new knowledge. They also boost communication and entice them to learn new stuff. Although only passively watching movies would not help to learn English language unless it is used practically. YouTube is the most eminent app amongst the students to watch videos. Thus, teachers and students should together watch the educational movies or videos in the class to explain any subject matter more vividly.

Students should be Enforced to use English as their Language for Communication: Students should be persuaded to use English language as their medium of communication in the everyday life. Such environment should be created around the students which incite them from within to learn the language voluntarily. For this too SNS plays a prominent role. As narrated by Robbins-Bell, S. (2008) “Although the barrier between inside and outside

the classroom has been difficult to overcome, new social media forms today are starting to break down that barrier and enable dialogue. Social networks, instant messaging, blogs, and virtual worlds not only allow conversation but rely on it. These popular social media services feature high levels of participation, numerous contributions and discussions, and even detailed debates”.

Literature Review

Revolution is one of the most important prodigies of human society in every section so is the education. The technical revolution that we are witnessing in the present era demands linking formal education to social media especially in the area of learning English as a second language. Social media such as, YouTube, Facebook, video stream, cooperative conversation, Twitter, WhatsApp and Google Apps comprise e-learning resources that put emphasis on active participation, connectivity, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas among its users. Generally, social media allows students to pick up and share various study resources according to their learning style. The effective and attractive nature of social media may motivate learners to devote more time which in turn enable them concentrate on their educational activities owing to the cooperative, constructivist and genuine learning chance these social media has to offers. Most significantly, learners make use of the social media for purpose of learning English as a second language. The current study aims at measuring, and exploring the potential, functions that the social media may provide the language learners. Finally, the purpose of the review of literature on this paper is to evaluate the roles that social media play in the learning English as a second language in the College of Sciences and Arts for Girls, Al Namas, K.S.A.

Gumport and Chun (1999) posited that technology plays a significant role in the learning process and outcomes in higher education settings. It does not only provide access to the information we use, but also influences the product and by extension the process of learning. Moreover, Alm (2006) stated that various technologies have been employed in the area of education. One of the systems is Web 2.0 which was developed after the existence of Web 1.0., which commonly contains web pages, text, pictures, audio, photos, video, authentic materials, discussion forums, chats, emails and music. Web 2.0 on the other hand consists of live materials, podcast, video cast, Flickr, wikis, blogs, online discussion boards, and social networking. Also, the technology can provide platforms that can be used in learning atmospheres in which its applications may provide new channels for learners to receive informative and constructive feedback.

Social Media is noteworthy that the notion social media and social networking are being used alternately. Social media refers to the social software in the form of websites and other online groups such as social networking and micro blogging which are created by a sizable group of folks (known as users) to share conversations, personal messages, ideas, information or to grow social and professional contacts.

Types of Social Media and Social Networks Sites

There are various kinds of social media which may be used in several ways. It should be noted that things around us can be used if we know how to use them. For instance, most people have smartphones, but they barely use all the applications available in it. Sometimes they are not appropriately directed and at times they don't have the chance or time to spend on learning new things. However, this is not the case for English learners, because software and applications available on smartphones may assist English learners to connect with others. The types of social media and social network sites can be classified as follows:

- a. Language of the Gadgets, such as mobile phones, desktops and, notebooks offer their users the option for the language which they prefer to use. Such choices definitely benefit all users in many ways but interestingly, new users may significantly benefit from such options. As it has been reported in a number of studies many individuals in various language learning settings have improved their second language learning by opting for English as their preferred language of their gadgets (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

- b. **Movies:** Watching movies is also a beneficial activity for the learners, as many of the learners resort to it for entertainment purposes. Now, films and TV shows are an integral part of almost everyone's life; an ordinary person spends a minimum of two hours watching TV programs. Considering the potential of TVs in helping improve language learning, it can be argued that TV time can be used for learning new words on a daily basis which may help language learning process more entertaining and enjoyable unlike the formal ways in classrooms. Another benefit of using films as a language learning tool is that it provides an authentic source of learning involving native speakers with different pronunciation. The difference between the learning of language through reading books and the one through communication can be differentiated by means of the condition that learners also have some vested interest in watching movies not only for enjoyment but also for learning the new things shared in those movies. Movies also provide learners with the knowledge of correct pronunciations, which is rather difficult to acquire from the books which are used by teachers inside the classrooms. The films mostly model 'real' situations outside of the classroom, particularly interactive language or the language of real-life conversations. Films and TV shows expose the natural expressions and the natural flow of speech which happen in various genres of conversation, which are particularly beneficial for ESL students who are not living environment in an English-speaking environment. Learners who are in such a situation may rely on television and films as they can offer the learners with this real-life language input. The film also can be employed as a source for follow-up jobs such as debates, discussions on role plays social issue, rebuilding a conversation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
- c. **Blogs:** Web blogs are also reportedly one of the forms of social media. Millions of people have created their own blogs and use them to write things which range from news and their perceptions on some specific issues. They invite the readers to reply by adding or posting comments on their blogs. Blogs discourse a broad range of topics and they reportedly assist in improving the reading speed, vocabularies and promote proper use of grammar and enhanced reading comprehension of language learners. Blogs can be employed in various ways for different purposes. For example beginners by means of referring to a particular language blog learn new ideas on how people use blogs to interact with each other. It also helps to learn new vocabularies in the different modern context of a particular time. The language of blogs is not intended for the sophisticated readers, as some scholars claim that it is simple and easy and blogs are a source of talking to an ordinary reader (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
- d. **Twitter:** (Murthy, 2011) pointed out that microblogging and social networking facility that users like the most is the small messages of 140 characters. This little arrangement is the sole way of communication that has inspired the minds of the users, which in turn, has become a fascinating method for learners to keep in touch with each other as well as with the teacher.
- e. **Facebook:** Facebook is a popular website that allows users to interact and collaborate within a pre-defined virtual community (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Janice Petosky, an educator and researcher, said once: "Teachers have to find out where the students are, and work from there. Well, the students are on Facebook" (2014, p. 1). This is a reality, and teachers need to take advantage of it. Learning can take place anywhere as long as there are meaningful interactions between learners that lead to construct knowledge. Therefore, if teachers use Facebook effectively, many of the practices and experiences that occur in this social network can contribute to enhance learning. Actually, this can be considered a form of constructivism because it gives students the opportunity to work collaboratively, learn together and from each other, build learning communities, and construct knowledge through the interaction of members of these communities (Kabilan et al., 2010). It is also a fun way to get to know friends, classmates, to reconnect with childhood friends and to share information. As a result, students find themselves being more in touch with the latest news and events. However, it is evident too that the way students read and write keeps on changing on the Facebook and later students realize that there is no one to instruct them to change, where it has linguistic errors.

- f. **YouTube:** It is said that images can be worth 1000 words, and moving images, as video, can add authenticity to the portrayal of theoretical material. Video can enable improved communication of lecture material. The English language teacher has been using video as an instructional tool and a communication medium for teaching English for many years ago. YouTube is considered a source of online material that can play a key role in the teaching and learning field. The abundance of online materials and resources on YouTube is overwhelming. It can provide students with everyday videos and authentic situations that may help them improve their understanding and performance in English language lessons. As many researchers have observed, learners can gain positive indicators when they watch authentic and real-life clips (Maness 2004). Using YouTube videos to teach English classes as supplementary material can provide learners with good understanding and knowledge of their lectures. In addition, it is likely to make the learning process more fun and meaningful. Furthermore, it gives students the opportunity to memorize their lessons more easily. The total free and conveniences of YouTube opens the experience of online video to a wide range of students despite of any financial conditions. It can engage students, offering them into an environment that encourages them to communicate to new people, view and share their own opinions as be parts of the community. Therefore, YouTube is casing a revolution amongst the educations, especially ESL students, with amazement and a certain amount of enchantment.

Previous Related Studies in various contexts to date have uncovered various issues in among social media communities. For instance, Mills (2011) carried out a study that focused on the nature of students' participation, knowledge acquisition, and relationship development among social media communities. Facebook was used as a collaborating tool on which students could share resources that may help improved the various topics discussed in classrooms. He also observed that students referred to course content, developed identities through the improvement of interpersonal, presentational, and interpretative modes of communication, engaged in meaningful learning experiences, and contextualized interactions among these social communities. (Chen, 2013) carried out a study which aimed to explore the ways of social media being used to invest in new features which may lead to the socialization among fictional communities. From an ecological perspective, their study showed how a learner exhausted avenue to establish their identities and their results suggested that social media were used as a way to socialize and invest identity in the context of graduate studies and to interact with broader communities and networks. Moreover, he looked into two bilingual writers and how they planned and built identities in literary practices on social media. The results of the study revealed that writers accepted many plans, subjected positions and even re-appropriated symbolic resources afforded by the social media as they aligned themselves with intended collective and particular identities at both local and global levels. Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) provided an analysis of comparable social media communities, i.e., Kontakte, in the context of Russian classrooms. Online activities, phenomenological debates and discussions with native- speaking students focused on identity construction by means of the interactions. This study showed that even at its beginning stages, research on social media indicated a beneficial impact of using such media on the second language learning practices. The following section examines the most practical issues which are related to developing and incorporating social media-based tasks and activities in relation to second language learning. Gonzalez (2012) proposed that the digital generation of students learn inversely in comparison with their predecessors, and they are reliant on the online sources for accessing information and interacting with the others. Social media applications are helpful in educational settings, and more studies are required to be carried out to assess if language learning practices on social media result in improvement which are desirable for "pedagogy 2.0".

Shih (2011) pointed out that the advantages of social media in learning and improving the second language can be characterized as unique and entertaining atmosphere, Facebook has been reported in some studies to lessen students' stress levels and enhancing learners' engagement and interactions. The study showed the influence of social media on learners at the University of Taiwan and the learners were found to enjoy interacting among their

peers in English and felt comfortable expressing their opinions and sharing their thoughts. Students reported that Facebook was informal. Thus, students may experience less pressure and more confidence when using Facebook to state their views on most of the topics. Yunus (2012) studied the students' perceptions on the effectiveness of social media on teaching and improving second language learning skills in Malaysia. They integrated social networking services in the second language classrooms to enhanced online classroom interaction between students and teachers, which has promoted interaction in English learning environment. Moreover, White (2009) reported that social media helped to improve the students' motivation and academic writing in Japan. Moreover, it is also believed that the online discussion provided students with the opportunity to interact with their instructors and peers, which in turn may lessen the students' stress. Zaidieh (2012) studied the challenges and opportunities with regards to the use of social media in education in Malaysia. He reported similar findings in which students felt comfortable and had less pressure with the time they had to answer questions because they did not have to respond to questions immediately as in the classroom setting. The second advantage of social media in an ELL environment is that using social media helps enhance students' critical thinking. Existing research shows that SM (Social Media) plays a significant role in promoting students' creative thinking skills (Yunus, 2012). Students' activities may create and cultivate their brainstorming ability as well as thinking skills. Finally, the literature review indicates that social media has been a place for the learning of second language via different social media applications. It is remarkable that there is an insufficiency of educational materials and equipment as well as language labs in the College of Sciences and Arts for Girls, University of Bisha, Al Namas, K.S.A., the undergraduates may expand the social media platform for the exchange of educational materials. The students may use these materials to supplement their English language knowledge and therefore, may be able to deal with their equivalents positively in the global world.

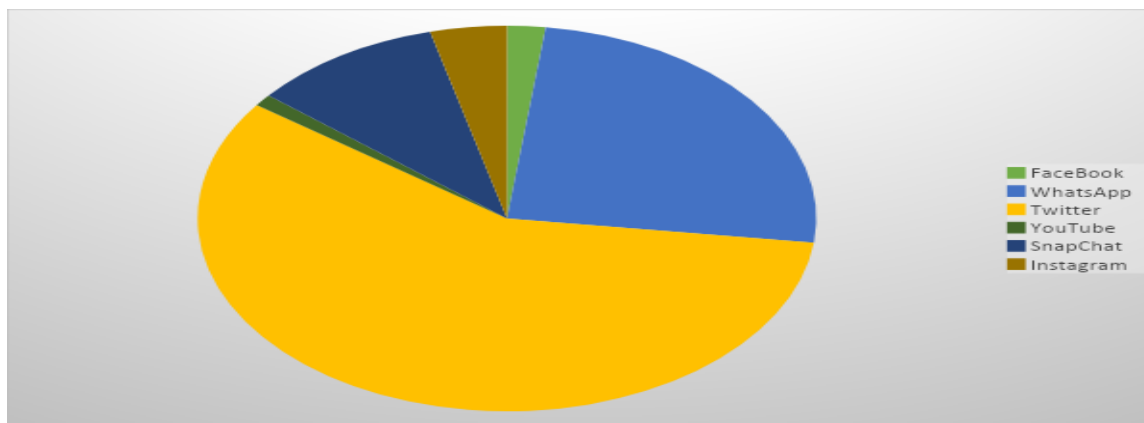
Methodology

This research was conducted in the College of Sciences and Arts for Girls Al Namas, University of Bisha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An electronic questionnaire was distributed to 200 undergraduate girl students of the age ranging from 20 to 30 years, enrolled in different levels of English major. Data is collected qualitatively and quantitatively. It consisted of six parts in which the first part encapsulates personal information of the students regarding their age, gender etc. the rest of the parts have various questions concerning the usage of social media in their everyday phenomenon. For instances, how often they use social media in self-learning, in academics and especially in learning English language.

Results

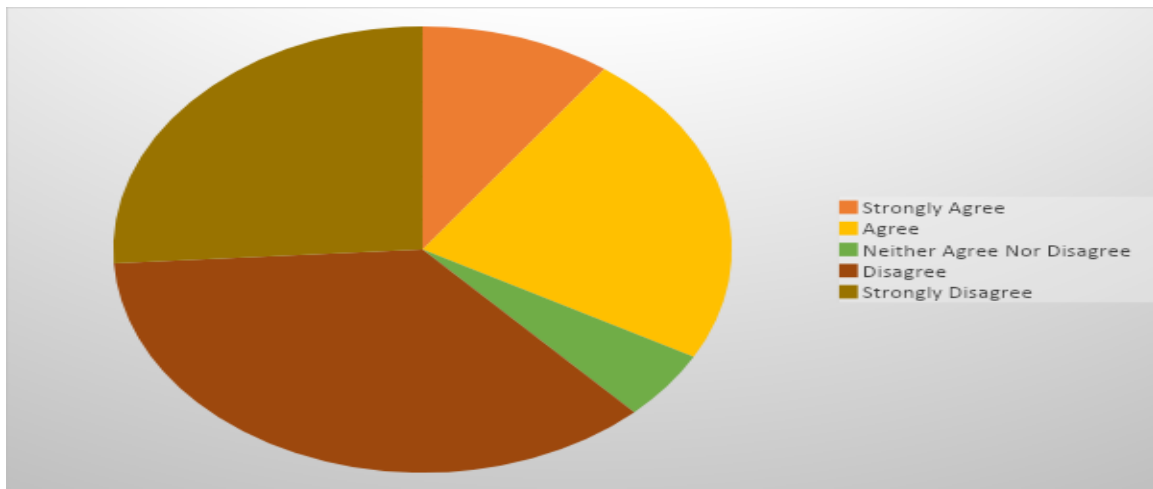
The findings of our study are as follows:

Mostly used Social Media for learning Second Language.



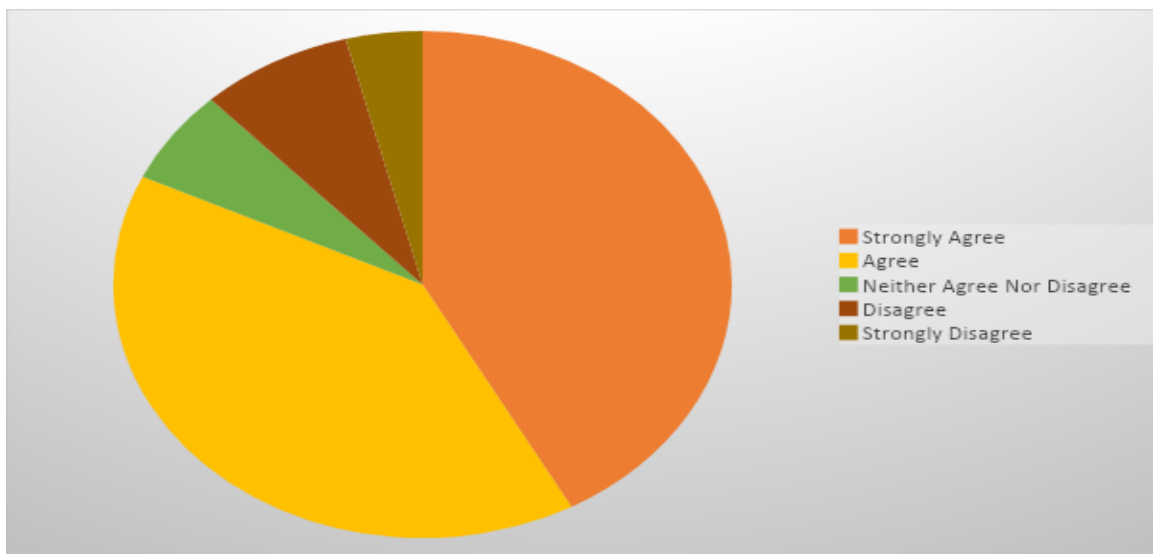
The above pie chart shows that the mostly used application is Twitter and WhatsApp. Almost 58% of the girls use Twitter and 25% use WhatsApp to express their point of view socially. We cannot say that the girls of the Asir region of KSA are not aware of the modern technology. They frequently use social media applications to communicate with each other. Being lecturers, we have discovered that they, for all the subjects and different sections, create WhatsApp group and they discuss each and everything whether it is a lecture, assignment, test or whatever. However, it is really sad to spot them using Arabic language regularly instead of English which could have helped them improving their second language skills naturally.

Use of Social Media in Self Learning.

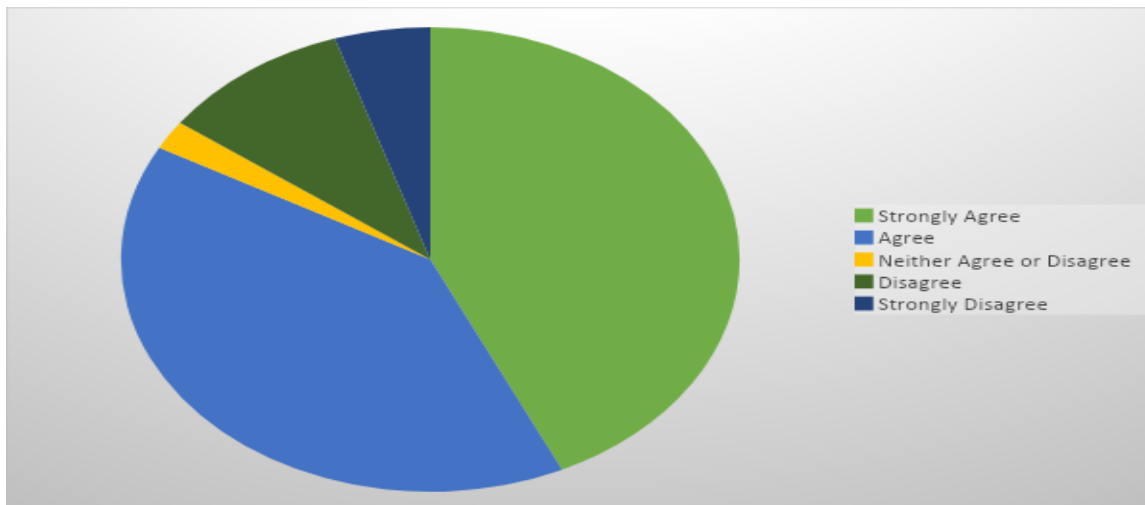


As we have mentioned above that even being very much updated and skilled in the use of modern technology as well as latest social media apps the girls of Asir region of KSA are not taking benefit of the modern technology which are right under their nose and on their finger tip. Their habitual use of Arabic language over English language deters them in enhancing their second language skills be it writing, reading, listening, speaking or making their word vocabulary stronger.

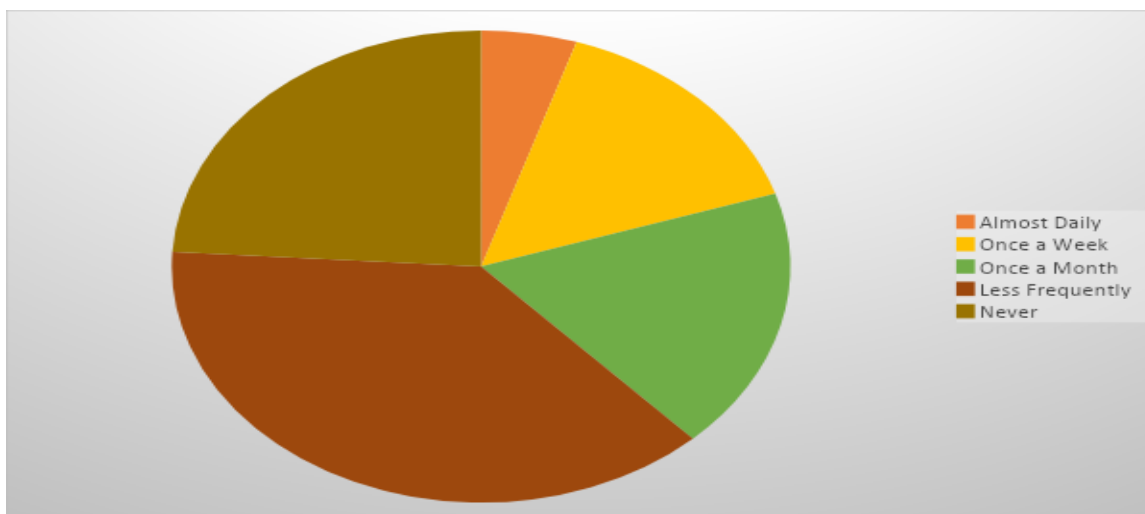
Use of Social Media in Academics.



The Impact of Social Media on Students.



Daily use of Social Media in Learning English.



Conclusion

This study measures the importance of social media in second language learning. The findings of the study reveal that most of the sampled students use social media but not in order to improve their English language proficiency. We gauged that social media may be regarded as a tool which is helpful in improving the language learning familiarity. Hence, drilling is needed when using social media for English language learning. It is noteworthy that social media maybe an effective tool in improving students' English language learning given that it is used sensibly and accurately. The students believe that social media is an exquisite and substantial tool for learning the English language, but they hesitate to use it in enhancing their target language skills. It is impressive to note that social media offers a range of tasks that may assist students in integrating communication, act as a team, and share plans. Students may use YouTube for the subject-related materials and also utilize the eLearn's Blog, Forum or Wiki tools as per their subject requirements, or access Facebook or other social media tools for their own learning practice. In fact, in this research, the integration of formal and informal learning has been recommended as a way to magnify formal language learning. Also, it has been found to be a promising approach to support students' self-regulated learning. The more the students share materials (including information, files, links...) via social media for

classmates to complete assignments or to discuss informal things in the target language the more they obtain materials from classmates to complete their own assignments, vocabularies, grammatical structures, different writing styles etc. and vice versa. Literally, our research manifests that it can lead to a significant change in how we structure learning spheres in the future. It has the potential to change the traditional relationship between teachers and students, thus giving more control and guidance to motivate students which can result in a more satisfactory learning experience. Undoubtedly, it has created an E-Environment in the realm of New Age Education. It is an emphatic assertion that "Social Media Sites are not a part of our life, it is fully part of our living."

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