Using Facebook to Engage Iraqi EFL University Students in Learning

Instructor: Hussein Gumar Karam
Wasit University \ College of Education for Human Sciences
hkaram@uowasit.edu.iq

Abstract

Facebook was established in 2004 and has grown up increasable to become not only the most common social networking site in the world but also the most famous social networking tool of the past decade for students' online learning. This study attempt to finding out the Iraqi University students' awareness of using Facebook in learning EFL .The sample who participated in the study were 150 students the 2nd year at the Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University. Furthermore, results illustrated that students believe their language skills improved throughout using Facebook, and further, their confidence, motivation, manner relating to language learning and improved through their previous experiences. Facebook for learning and teaching because of its unique integrated function that offers pedagogical social and technological. It also recommends that Facebook's platform provides the student with a large number of activities that can be personalized and customized for students' Teaching and learning requirements whether they be writing, reading listening, or speaking tasks.

Key Words: Iraq EFL University Students, Using Facebook, Teaching and learning, engage.

استخدام الفيسبوك في تعليم الطلبة العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانكليزية كالغة اجنبية

م. حسين كمر كرم

جامعة واسط / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

hkaram@uowasit.edu.iq

الملخص

تأسست شركة الفيسبوك في عام ٢٠٠٤ ، وقد نمى نشاطها ؛ ليصبح أكثر المواقع ووسائل الإتصال والشّبكات الإجتماعية شيوعًا في العالم ؛ بل أصبح أيضًا أشهر أداة للتواصل الإجتماعيّ على مدار العقد الماضي ؛ لتعليم الطلاب عبر الإنترنت. تحاول هذه الدراسة معرفة مدى وعي طلاب الجامعات العراقية باستخدام الفيسبوك في تعلم والتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، حيث بلغ عدد المشاركين في الدراسة(١٥٠) طالباً في المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية التربية / جامعة واسط . أوضحت النتائج أن الطلاب يعتقدون أن مهاراتهم اللغوية قد تحسنت خلال استخدام الفيسبوك ، فضلا عن ثقتهم وتحفيزهم وطريقة تعلمهم اللغوية قد تحسنت من خلال تجاربهم السّابقة في الفيسبوك للتّعلم والتّدريس ؛وذلك لما امتلكه من وظيفة متكاملة وفريدة والتي شملت الأبعاد العلميّة ، والتّربوية والإجتماعية والتّكنولوجية. وتوصي أيضًا بأن توفر منصة الفيسبوك للطالب عددًا كبيرًا من الأنشطة التي يمكن ان تكون شخصية ومخصصة لمتطلبات التعليم وتعليم الطلاب سواء كانت المهمة كتابة أو قراءة أو إستماع أو التحدث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطلبة العراقيين، وسائل الاتصال المعرفي، الفيسبوك، التعليم

1. Introduction

According to Srivastava (2005), mobile phones have become an essential part of our daily life nowadays. It has been rising very quickly since 1995. Ludlow and Duff (2009) assert the internet has had a more impressive influence on education than any preceding technical innovation because it allows individuals of all ages to contact training and education programs. The problem is that, the teacher noticed mainly students' lack ability in English with particular skills listening, speaking, reading, writing, in spite of hard work by teachers have been made to help them improve their education. Online social networking sites like Facebook have captured the interest of the teachers and students as learning tool for language learning and teaching.

According to Birch and Volkov (2007) student interaction in the online discussion can assist a learner-centered approach to teaching, give students an ability to apply, obtain skills and knowledge in a helpful, and encouraging environment.

1.1. Aim of the Study:

The aim of the study is finding out the Iraqi University students' awareness of using Facebook in learning EFL.

1.2. Limits of the Study:

This study is limited to Iraqi EFL University students the 3rd at the College of Education for Human Sciences Ibin-Rush University of Baghdad and the College of Education Human Sciences Wasit University during the academic year of 2021-2022.

1.3. Procedures of the Study:

The study is conducted according to the following procedures:

1-The target sample of the study is the 2nd year Iraqi EFL students at the Department of English, College of Education at Wasit University.

2-The sample of the study consists of 150 students (males and females randomly chosen).

3-The Instructor has been chosen a suitable rubric to measure the awareness of using Facebook in learning and teaching, under the supervision of specialists in ELT and Linguistics and take any comments, modifications, and suggestions when it's necessary.

4- Interpreting the results by using the proper statistical means that suit the study.

5- Conclusions and recommendations are drawn.

2. Literature Review

2.1. History of Facebook App in Learning

Facebook was firstly designed for University students created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University but was extended to other colleges in Boston, and regularly most universities in USA and Canada, by September 2006, to every person of age 13 and older with a valid email address (Conole, 2010). The term Facebook came from the publication that some colleges distribute to students at the beginning of the year to assist students to get to

know each other well. Facebook, synonymous with social media among university students and the school, can be described as the most well-liked social network tool in history (Omar, et al., 2012). It has the maximum number of visitors among all the social network tools. Facebook users of the first part of 2014 amounted to 1.28 billion active users each month. Facebook is one such site, which has seen an enormous increase since its opening (Leutner and Plass :1998). Facebook's task is to make the world more connected and open. People use Facebook to stay connected with colleagues, classmates, family, and friends to find out what's going on in the world and to express and share what matters to them (Bosch, 2009).In the last few years, students of English as a foreign language started using social network site like Facebook and it has obtained great fame among them.

2.2. The Advantages of Using FaceBook App in EFL Classroom

The Teacher can get a lot of benefits from using Facebook. For example, it can help the teacher to connect students outside the classroom (Pilgrim and Bledsoe, 2011). It can learn about tendencies and problems in EFL education in addition to getting ideas for classroom practice. Using Facebook in an EFL classroom can help the learner to develop their oral production as well as their reading and writing skills (Bosch, 2009). It makes English language learning and teaching more holistic, practical, and interactive. (ibid) pint out that students can learn new vocabulary words during friend post comments using words, they feel inspired to find the meaning of those words. Equally, those students who play games on Facebook feel compelled to improve their English skills. Manan et al. (2012) describe that using Facebook to attach the theory and concept learned in class to real-life context is a good way to improve students' understanding. (Wang and Chen, 2007) argue that learners believe that Facebook provides a chance for authentic communication and interaction that they haven't practiced before. It enhances assurance in language acquisition and a sense of connection among themselves. McCarthy (2010) notices that students can interact and communicate in an online environment at their speed and get time to consider comments and responses rather than being "put on the spot" as in the physical classroom. So, Facebook provides many advantages for teachers and students.

2.3. Challenge of Adoption of Facebook in Classroom

Many studies have revealed the negative effect of Facebook and show it may not regularly be successful or appropriate for formal learning and teaching activities (Fodeman, and Monroe, 2009). Some students find it so hard to read the material online because they are familiar with the traditional book-centered method. The problem in studying life online can be difficult by the disruption of the user in the structure of the field and by the power of the examiner in representing the culture (Markham, 2005). One student, for instance, responded that it was not easy to 'talk' to teacher who h/she saw daily on Facebook. Teacher always refused the request from the student to be friends or group members, even if the student desired to talk about something important to them. Yunus et al (2012:44) say an additional problem that teacher face is that the favorite language is used by main students to work together on Facebook. Extremely few students use Standard English to work together with each other. So, the quality of English used in online communications is very poor (Manan et al., 2012). There is also concern that social network sites "increase the possibility of new risks to the self, such as the loss of bullying, privacy, harm contacts and further" (Livingston and Brake, 2010: 75). That is why several schools exclude the use of the internet and Facebook in schools.

2.4. Characteristics of Facebook Groups Making.

Students can learn to interact and actively with teachers and classmates more and simply. Shy students can feel more relaxed to talk about and give his/her view on Facebook (Brown, 2011). Communication through Facebook is not face-to-face communication so that students felt less worried which resulted in growing enthusiasm in language learning (zafar, 2009). According to Facebook, groups of members can share, connect, and even work together on an idea or a given topic". McCarthy (2010) notices that the major reason for groups is to assist Facebook users to meet people about any community or topic. There are some essential features. Facebook groups have the capability for an administrator to communicate with members of the group straight. Group chat is possibly one of the most important characteristics of Facebook Groups making. All members of a group can connect in a particular chat window. The capacity to post document basic text "Doc" with a slight

amount of markup is existing; documents also have a review history which users can guide reverse through (O'Neill, 2010). According to (Espinosa, 2009), the student who is busy in academic Facebook English groups actively participates in them and welcomes the use of the online social network tools for academic, additionally to social, purpose. Generally, the student who uses Facebook for different academic reasons, from the informal to the more formal obligatory contribution, planned a series of benefits.

2.5. Social Networking Sites in Language Learning

In the recent decade, social network sites have been broadly accepted as resourceful platforms for academic communication, particularly on the university campus. Blattner and Fiori (2009:20) believe that Facebook is the biggest social network site that boasts more than 100 million members, and it is one of the best-known and fastest-growing sites on the Internet. (Ellison and Steinfield, 2007: 1147) point out that though early in Facebook appearance, the major cause for using Facebook by the student was keep in a contact with friends . According to Roblyer, et al (2010:136), in contrast with traditional face-to-face communication, students prefer communicating with the teacher by Facebook. This may decrease direct embarrassment. These types of collaboration can support a sense of community and connection between the students allows for a more attractive learning experience. Javanovic, (2012) remark that one can't debate it that today both students and teacher live in a world of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and other social media. Griesemer,(2018), argues that most students have been using these social media in their individual lives but the time has come to accept the media for learning instruction.

2. 6.Using Facebook in the EFL Classroom

Yunus et al (2012), state that facebook help the teacher to join with their students outside of the class and talk about course works, class actions, and valuable links. People can post, share interests, and upload different media to social network services so that their friends could find valuable information. Kabilan et al., (2010:44), describe that students will get accountability for their work because they have larger people when they use social networking;

this may enable them and their work and guide them to self-directed learning. (Kharbach, 2014) mentioned that Facebook allows EFL teacher to begin the online discussion, post articles to develop reading comprehension exercises, begin online chat among students and English native talkers, and many other activities. This platform provides teacher with a successful tool to manage class assignments and projects. (Markham, 2005) sees that facebook has many possible uses such as posting information, asking and answering the question, and engaging students in writing and reading activities that are cooperative to develop their English skills. (Espinosa, 2009) points out as an outcome, the cause why many teachers, particularly English language teachers, are using Facebook in their classes, because it presents many advantages not only for students but also for teachers themselves.

2.7. Facebook as a Practical Tool in Education

(Millward, 2013), Argue that not only the number of users has expanded, but its benefits have grown, too. Teachers are working to understand that Facebook has become influential in the classroom as a collaborative learning instrument. (Lantz-Andersson, and Bowen, 2013) claim that, it is a social network site and online communication tool that allows consumers to build a private or public profile to interact and connect with the public who are part of their extensive social networking. Janice Petosky, (2014: 1), establish "Teachers have to observe where the students are, and work from there. Fine, the students are on Facebook" if teacher using Facebook efficiently, many experiences and practices that happen in this social networking can improve to develop learning. (Conole, 2010), considers that "platforms and tools like Facebook are helpful to develop human interaction, language learning, and communication," In fact, Facebook can be a useful device to engage students in writing, reading, and many additional EFL learning actions more secondarily and informally. (Joinson, 2008; Pennington, 2009) remark that student prefers to use Facebook for some instruction actions like textual educational resources, sharing multimedia, debate, and interacting with other colleagues in discussion. That is why many teachers are using this social networking for learning purposes in different classrooms, as well as English classrooms.

3. Procedures

3.1. The Population and Sample

The population of the present study consists of the 2nd year college students admitted to the Department of English at College of Education for Human Sciences Ibun-Rush University of Baghdad and College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University. The total number of the population is 200.The sample of the present study has been chosen from the 2nd year students enrolled at the Department of English College of Education Wasit University for the academic year (2001-2022). The total number of the second year students is 150 students.

3.2. Instrument of the Study

To attain the aim of the study, an appraised tool has been chosen. This rubric has been distributed and constructed to the 2nd year students at the Department of English as a statistical instrument. The survey is a set of sentences. It consists of 25 items which students must strongly agree, slightly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree on as shown in the survey.

Table (1)
Rubric to Measure Using Facebook to Engage Iraqi EFL
University Students in Learning.

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Facebook helps students develop their listening skill.					
2	Facebook assists students develop their speaking skill.					
3	Facebook helps student develop their reading skill.					
4	Facebook helps students develop their writing skill.					
5	Facebook aids students in developing their grammar.					
6	Facebook helps students employ new vocabulary.					
7	Students like to communicate regularly with teachers, peers, and colleagues in English on Facebook.					

8	Students usually listen and watch English songs, music tracks, and videos posted on Facebook.				
9	Facebook make students feel relaxed, and less stressed in language learning tmospheres and it gives access to more realistic everyday language uses.				
10	Students find Facebook enjoyable, interesting, and simple to use, share, follow, and to discuss lecture materials.				
11	Students follow Facebook posters who boost learning goals.				
12	Students think that Facebook is a great instrument in learning and teaching.				
13	Students think that teachers should create discussion groups on Facebook.				
14	Students can be engaged in Facebook study discussions and can enhance their as well.				
15	Students' scoring achievement may decrease due to Facebook overuse.				
16	Students prefer Facebook groups to discuss homework, assignments, and schoolwork, and to share information with their colleagues.				
17	Students find Facebook study groups helpful in monthly or final exams.				
18	Facebook helps students reduce language errors.				
19	Students have positive attitudes towards Facebook EFL learning groups.				
20	Students have negative attitudes toward learning EFL by Facebook.				
21	Facebook encourages students to invest more time in learning English.				
22	Facebook helps students assess others' work and share the results with colleagues.				
23	Facebook helps students organize their ideas before writing.				
24	Student get happy in sharing opinions or ideas on Facebook.				
25	Facebook-based learning makes English learning more exciting.				

3.3. Face Validity

Face validity is the appropriate kind to find out whether the instrument is valid to do the aim of the present study or not. Face validity is the best kind of validity to be considered concerning the instrument of any study (Quaigrain, 2017:353). Face validity is defined as the level to which a test appears to assess the information or abilities (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:196). To make sure of the face validity of the test, the items of the test were exposed to a jury of specialists who are known for their long experience in the field of teaching ELT, linguistics. The test has been judged valid by all the juries which means 100% agreement, except for slight modification and notes as changing a word, needing spelling, and grammar correct.

Table (2)
Names of the Jury Members

No.	Academic Rank	Name	Field	University and College
1	Assistant professor	AL-Ibadi Qassim Hamadi	ELT	College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University, Ph.D. in ELT
2	Assistant Professor	Al-Husseini Hashim Alwai	Linguistics	College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University, Ph.D. in Applied linguistics
3	Assistant professor	AL-Atabi Faris Kadhim	ELT	College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University, Ph.D.in ELT.
4	Assistant Professor	Al-Majdawi, Ali Muhsin	Linguistics	College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University, Ph.D. in Applied linguistics
5	Assistant Professor	Abdulsada, Mohammed Nasser	Linguistics.	College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University, M.A. in Applied

3.4. The Pilot Administration

Harris (1969:25) defines a pilot study as "trying out the test material on a similar group to that for whom the test is being designed". The pilot study aim to check the clarity of the survey instructions and items, define the exact time needed to answer the items, analyze the test items to find out the difficulty level, and discriminating power. To conduct a pilot study, the

instructor has applied a test on a random sample consisting of 50 students selected from the 2nd year, from the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences Ibin-Rush University of Baghdad which represents the pilot study sample. The findings of the pilot administration have a party that there is no doubt in the instructions of the survey.

3.5. Reliability of the Test

According to Chavez (1985:4), "reliability is one of the essential characteristics of any good quality test. It refers to the stability of measurement which makes validity probable and indicates the quantity of confidence that can be located in the outcomes of a test." The reliability coefficient has been computed by using Pearson Correlation Formula where the coefficient is found to be 0.78.

3.6. Final Administration of the Survey

After achieving face validity, pilot Administration, and reliability. The survey in its final description was administered to the students Department of English Language from College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University. They are asked to respond to the assumptions domain of the survey by choosing one of these alternatives (strongly agree, slightly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree on using Facebook in learning. The administration came out with the following results:

Table (3)

The Weighted Mean and the Weighted Percentile of the Survey Items for Using Facebook in Learning.

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile
1	24	51	59	34	6	0	4.03	80%
2	8	57	53	28	8	4	4	80%
3	6	46	59	27	14	4	3.86	77%
4	9	37	59	42	11	1	3.8	76%
5	10	45	47	41	16	1	3.79	75
6	3	34	63	32	18	3	3.71	74%
7	16	36	59	34	18	3	3.71	74%
8	14	24	69	47	6	4	3.68	73%
9	25	28	60	48	14	0	3.68	73%
10	7	41	48	33	25	3	3.66	73%
11	15	48	37	33	30	2	3.66	73%
12	2	29	57	45	19	0	3.64	72%
13	11	30	63	30	26	1	3.63	72%
14	1	21	62	55	10	2	3.63	72%
15	23	30	53	42	25	0	3.58	71%
16	22	26	61	37	25	1	3.57	71%
17	13	32	52	36	29	1	3.56	71%
18	4	27	53	40	30	0	3.51	70%
19	19	13	70	47	17	3	3.48	69%
20	18	17	60	53	16	4	3.46	69%
21	21	29	46	46	24	5	3.46	69%
22	17	29	44	36	38	3	3.38	67%
23	5	29	30	50	37	4	3.28	65%
24	12	18	44	52	32	4	3.26	65%
25	20	18	47	35	43	7	3.17	63%

3.7. Results and Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from the present study, Data has been analyzed statistically by using the weighted mean and the weighted percenttile to find the statistical differences for using Facebook in learning. We see that the first and second items 24, 8 (Students get happy in sharing

opinions or ideas on Facebook.), (Students usually listen and watch English songs, music tracks, and videos posted on Facebook.) got the highest weighted mean (4.03. 80%, 4. 80%).Third item is 6 got high the weighted mean (3.86, 77%). Meanwhile the items 3 and 16 (Facebook helps students develop their reading skill.), (Students prefer Facebook groups to discuss homework, assignments, and schoolwork, and to share information with their colleagues.) got an equal-weighted mean (3.71. 74% 3.71. 74%). In the last domain, item 20 (Students have negative attitudes toward learning EFL by Facebook.) got the lowest weighted mean (3.17. 63%). Because of its prevalence and popularity in students' life, teachers are required to regard Facebook as a learning tool that creates a better society of learners, offering students a different road for personal knowledge progress, links, and informal and formal learning. The aim of the study is to find out the Iraqi University students' awareness of using Facebook in learning EFL. The populations of the study are the students at the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences Ibun Rush University of Baghdad and the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University. The sample of the study is the students at the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences Wasit University. Finally, it's concluded that items 24, 8 got the highest weighted mean (4.03. 80%, 4. 80%). Meanwhile, item 20 got the lowest weighted mean (3.17. 63%). This means Facebook is a useful tool in learning and teaching EFL classrooms.

3.8. Recommendations

1- It is recommended to stay an open mind about Facebook's learning value as students generally establish a positive attitude toward its helpfulness.

2- Activities are conducted during a learning people collected from colleagues; learners take a dynamic task and exhibit more independence to develop their weak points even if they were individually satisfied.

3-Facebook's platform provides the student with a large number of activities that can be personalized and customized for students' learning requirements whether they be writing, reading, listening, or speaking tasks.

 4-Activities through Facebook are connecting and students can cooperate and reflect on their learning, then confidence, motivation, and positions will develop.

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