IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Dr. V.M SARANYA Assistant Professor, Department of English PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore

saranyavmpsg@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media is emerging in various forms to bring all the people around the world interlinked each other. It plays an indispensable role in fostering interest in learning English as a foreign language by providing a broad range of authentic materials. Both internet and social media have a strong impact on the preferred learning styles of young learners from non native English speaking countries who are eager to learn the language. In the present global scenario of pandemic outbreak, when all the lives are stuck inside the domicile, social media can influence the language learners in an enormous standard since millions of people breathe on it. This article tries to illustrate how social media has influenced teaching and learning English at the present scenario. There is no controversy in using social media as a learning platform since it has already been integrated into an informal education system for decades. Language teachers have changed their roles into 'facilitators' by adhering to such innovative practices in the teaching learning process. The role of a facilitator is to create a stress-free learning environment and to promote more group activities. The social media helps the language instructors to stay connected with their students around the world and to stay updated in the teaching field. It is the right time to reconsider the roles of teachers and learners as the elevated impact of social media on education, since it is now inevitably integrated to our daily lives. This research study proves that social interaction through social media is a stimulus for the language learners to develop their communication skills.

Keywords: Social Media, Communication skills, English Language Teaching, Social Interaction

INTRODUCTION

The face to face traditional method of language learning, which largely depends on lecturing, makes the learning a mechanical memorization and boring among the students. Since English is spoken in many countries it is very important that this language has to be

taught in such a way that it will help us not only to speak and to write but to communicate effectively. The traditional methods of teaching English in the classroom makes the teaching-learning process a monotonous activity and make the students passive learners. So, diverging from the usual methodology and to use innovative methods and techniques for teaching English language is very essential in this scenario.

Developing language proficiency is the most important thing necessary for making inter-personal relationship for self-expression and social interaction. Internet is the most powerful tool for developing the language skills through social media. The two types of language skills are receptive (listening and reading) skills and productive (writing and speaking) skills. Both the receptive skills and the productive skills can be developed by the use of social media. The learners who learn English as L2 improve their interpersonal skills by using different social media that enable them to foster their interest in learning English. The popular social networks like facebook and WhatsApp help the learners to use a huge amount of useful information which can be acceded at anytime. Learners can interact with any other people from any corner of the world; they can keep in touch with their family and friends whenever they want. Language and culture are dependent and comprehending second language culture improves comprehending of the language (Chen & Yang, 2007). The learning materials available in the social media provide good areas for group documents and offer the best method for developing language skills.
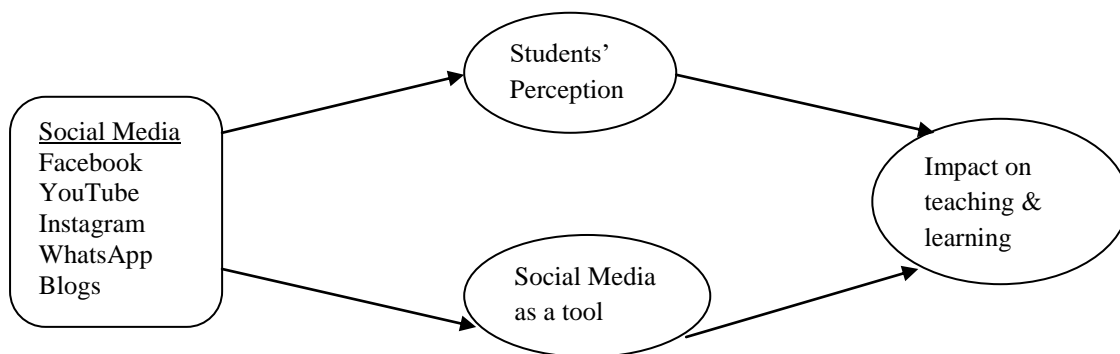
While using the social media, learners get the opportunity to communicate with their peers all around the world instead of being inside the single classroom. Getting more confident is the most important feature a learner can achieve through communicating with the people in various corners of the globe. As a whole, computer and internet are the tools which attract the language learners to use their language skills worldwide. Hence the media opens the door to the outside world where the student-teacher interaction can be done anywhere at any time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While exploring the views of researchers about the role of social media in language learning, it is clear that it increases the interaction between teachers and students. Depew says that "Social media increase power of speech through online conversation about various issues with native and non native speakers" (Depew,2011). Kendle and Northcote in their opinion say that learners get chance to learn the skills implicitly when they discuss the methods online and searching for the information.(Kendle,2001). They earn high confidence because of the more feedback they get when discussing in the online situation.(Davis & Thiede,as cited in Chen & Yang,2007,p.863). A synchronized e-chat which has task based instruction was performed by Lee to increase learner relation and communication skills.(Lee,2002). An equal chance is supplied by the internet technology to the learners of English as second language.(Goodfellow&Lamy,1999).

Many studies have been done about facebook which is acting as a good tool for learning English as a global language. Facebook has been used as a useful tool for improving interaction between teachers and their students.(Godwin-Jones,2008). It has a very good impact on the academic settings for the teachers as well as the students (Villano,2007). The role of the cultural differences in developing more relations through social networks has been proved by several researches(Cho,2010) and the people who are associated with varied cultured folks are found to be more adaptable to the new culture (Ryan, Margo & Sharp,2011).

Researches on e-mails and language learning are also another way to prove the importance of social media in the teaching of English as a foreign language. The researchers explored that e-mails help the language learners to have a long term interaction with their instructors by receiving the right feedback at right time.(Wang, as cited in Li,2000,p.31). Teachers from different countries have been using email as a successful tool for giving various projects for the students of different cultures and languages. It is also amazing that the native speakers have given informative email feedbacks on the learners of second language.(Sotillo,1997). Goodwin supplied a preface in language development and culture

arrangement by Email for a group of Latin Amerca's researchers before their entering into the USA.(Goodwin as cited in Liaw,1998,p.337).

Other researches were about the use of computers in language learning. Researchers examined the role of computers in the language learning and found it is one of the best tools to developing language skills. Language teaching-learning process was operated by microcomputer and also use for the concept of communicative competence, the notional and functional syllabi and language teaching methodologies based on the Communicative Approach (Tell & Kelm, as cited in Liaw, 1998,p.336). Even though the social media and the computer network system cannot solve all the problems in a short time, this literature review shows that the social media like facebook, email and other resources can help the language learners to a certain extent to eradicate the barriers of improving their communication skills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has created new avenues in the field of innovative learning system. The recent trends in learning system show that a certain amount of knowledge is gained from the learning which is not confined in the circle of a human mind. In this point of view, the significance of social media cannot be neglected. Social media provides the language learners with a convenient platform for participating in real time conversations and practicing the language without keeping the instructor by his side. British Council conducted a survey among the young learners of English all over the world in 2007 to evaluate the role of internet in the field of ideal language learning. The result proved that to make the language classes relevant and effective, the teachers should use new learning technologies and hence they can take the students to the outside world from the classroom. Many students exercised their votes for the informal learning through the social media without the help of a teacher. The research showed that the informal social interaction gives the people the opportunity to socialize globally as well as learning a virtual language. A successful student tries to merge studying and socializing, which helps him to develop his language skills and personality skills.

Learning through social media enables the language learners to learn the target language in a non classroom environment at their own pace. Majority of the people in the world own mobile phones irrespective of rich or poor, and it is quite interesting that among them most of the users are youngsters. So, in such a case the young learners can learn more from using the social media technology than what they learn in the classroom.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The average young generation in the world today owns technology in their hand. It is quite common among young people using mobile applications such as facebook and WhatsApp. This scenario creates the feeling in them that they are always connected to the entire world. The educational implications are, therefore, with the innovative methodologies which the teachers have been used. The novel teachers should implement the teaching technologies in their classrooms in order to make the students interested in learning. They should demonstrate to the students, the various methods to access the information and opportunities through technology. Students' networking skills should be paid more attention so that the interaction can help them to keep the learning experience relevant to the real time experience. Teachers should take the role of a facilitator who can train the students rather than a lecturer who gives only the lecture notes and assignments.

It cannot be denied the fact that there are some disadvantages of using social media especially by teens and youngsters. They are not able to keep healthy communication with multiple people on internet in some situations due to cyber bullying and stalking. Lacks of teens around the world are using social media but all are not with the negative intentions. So, while the social media has its own advantages, it has certain disadvantages also, if it is used for what it is not intended for. But still it has become the most influential resources for the language learners across the world.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Facebook

Facebook is the most commonly used social network service that many young learners use in their daily life. This can promote the connectivity among the people who live in different places like to share their knowledge and information. Facebook is used by the instructors to share the learning materials, initiate discussions, foster collaborations between the learners. It incorporates an array of learning tools such as videos, images and chats which can be used in conjunction with other social media network platforms. Facebook has proved its social values with many advantages. Facebook can be used both in closed groups and opened groups as per the need of the instructors whether to use it for wider audience or limited audience. There are millions of facebook users all around the world and it is surprising that many of the online teaching websites use facebook as their major resource sharing platform. The various advantages of facebook are,

- Requests can be given to the learners to receive the feedback or to create statistical data about the course by creating polls.

- Questionnaires can be created to comprehend the interests of the learners and make them active in the learning process.

- Course materials that are uploaded in the facebook can be accessed at anytime, anywhere to minimize the classroom time and corrections can be made now and then if necessary.

- Notification received from facebook can allow the learners to keep track of anything happens in its page such as creation of new groups, comments, posting new materials etc.

- Instructors can create group assignments and the evaluation can be done in order to promote the collaborations among the students and also between the teacher and the student.

The young learners enjoy learning through this platform and it gives them a new learning experience where they get the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom.

Instagram

Istagram is a social media platform which was launched in 2010 as a photo sharing platform. It contributed its great growth in the social media network by adding its features like sharing the video, images and texting.(Ellison,2017). Among the research studies conducted on the use of instagram in English language learning, it is found that it is an effective platform that helps the students to communicate with their peer groups. It helps them to interact with other students and the teachers and encourages them to work as a team. Instagram can be used as a platform for applying numerous learning activities like digital storytelling, role play, speaking and recording, picture based grammar activities etc. Thus it can assist the students to develop the four skills of the language - listening, speaking, reading and writing.

YouTube

YouTube is the most popular social network which contains vast educational resources. There are millions of educational videos in the site that the learners can access for learning at anytime, wherever they might be. By creating a YouTube account the instructors can record a video of their lecture and upload it in the YouTube site. The learners can access the videos, download them and practise the target language online or offline. The language lectures can be enhanced with right videos. The teachers can bring fun to the classroom by using YouTube videos and make the students more engaged in learning. A YouTube playlist the well-organized area where all the learning videos are posted and the students can access them by using the link. Most of the students learn better by watching than reading. Another

advantage of YouTube is that it allows recording class lectures and saving them for future learning because it is a storehouse for saving informative learning resources. If the link is created for the recorded class it can be sent to the students for future viewing and it helps a lot for the students who miss the real-time class.

Blogs

Blogs are highly powerful media for expressing and sharing ideas to the outside world in an easy way. A blog is a self published platform which consists of creative writings, images and videos. Keeping the content short and updated makes the blogs attractive and exciting. Instructors can create their own blogs to share the lecture notes and they can encourage the students to write something, however small, and post it in order to develop their reading and writing skills. In case of group blogs, the instructor can handle it as the administrator deciding on what permissions to give the students to access to, setting up the blog in the best secure way, the widgets required and so on. If necessary, the teacher can also hand over a certain limit of control to the students, maintaining a safe and fruitful blogging environment.

WhatsApp

As the technology development goes more rapidly, the computer and laptop are no more a high technology. Smart mobile phones have taken the role of communicating worldwide in faster and smarter. The availability of many applications on the application store gadget has given new inspiration to all the language learners to gain language proficiency easier. WhatsApp messenger is a proprietary, cross-platform, encrypted instant messaging platform for smartphones. It helps the language learners to share and convey the text messages, documents, images, audios and videos using standard mobile numbers. It became the most popular social network application because of its user friendly messaging system. The communication through WhatsApp is easier than other networking applications which need several steps to start with. By sharing learning materials on WhatsApp students get accustomed to practise their English with a passion on the language. In addition, it is very interesting and advantageous that they can share not only academic information but also numerous interesting facts, as well.

CONCLUSION

The high popularity of social media platforms and their effectiveness in sharing information prove that they are the best tools in the teaching learning process. The most commonly used social media platforms like facebook, twitter and WhatsApp gained more popularity in the recent days as language learning educational tools. Since social media is the part of every student's life, only such platforms can help the learners in this scenario. The concept of traditional face to face classroom teaching is highly risky and has faded away at this time of pandemic outbreak. Aiming to fulfill this gap of teaching and learning, social media platforms have become an integral part of learners' everyday practices within their study. The teacher is no longer the sole source of learning content, and with the guidance of the teacher students can shape their learning using the appropriate platform. The study shows that the use of social media for the purpose of language learning has been popularized worldwide because most of the second language learners approved English learning via social media channels and its positive effects.

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