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The Effects of Social Media on Afghan Students Learning English Speaking and Reading Skills

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Abstract: Social media (SM) entertains and teaches new skills. Hence, an evaluation is proposed to assess the impact of SM sources on intermediate English language proficiency in Peshawar, Pakistan. Examining Google Scholar and Research Gate articles and papers will do this. Social media is well-respected and popular among EFL instructors who must change their teaching approaches. Conventional classrooms still prioritize speaking above writing and reading. EFL teachers and students with inadequate oral skills find teaching speaking difficult. College students utilized Facebook and Google the most, the report found. Students' English language skills were also affected by these sites. So, the study recommends that English teachers, curriculum creators, and textbook reviewers promote performance-based education. Reviewing studies, results, and areas for further study is crucial. Social media can give authentic input, low-stress practice areas, multicultural communication, and increased learner collaboration, according to the study. The study also found that social media might cause distractions and inconsistent information. Lastly, the paper proposes numerous research avenues.

Introduction

English language learning for non-native speakers in a country where it is not the national language is commonly referred to as English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In the case of Peshawar, Pakistan, Afghan students studying English language and literature are considered EFL learners because nearly 49% of the population speak Dari as their first language, and 68% of the population can speak Pashto, with 40% speaking it natively and 28% as a second language. Social

media (SM) is a set of internet-based applications built on the web's foundations and allow for user-generated content (Kaplan and Heinlein). Social media is an umbrella term that encompasses various subcategories, such as blogs, Facebook and Myspace. Several people (3.96 billion) use social media, especially Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, WeChat and Instagram, worldwide.

Table 1

Social media	2023	2022	2021	2019	2018	2017
INSTAGRAM	2000	2000	1082	1000	1000	800
YOUTUBE	2514	2500	2000	2000	1900	1500

WHATSAPP	2000	2000	1950	1900	1500	1300
WECHAT	1309	1263	1203	1164	1080	980
TIKTOK	1051	1000	800	782	652	428
SNAPCHAT	635	557	397	398	255	225
PINTEREST	445	444	367	366	250	200
TWITTER	556	426	326	382	326	320
FACEBOOK	2958	2910	2603	2498	2270	2167

Among EFL instructors who must evolve outside the conventional methods of teaching where teachers used to complete most of the job, social media has garnered much respect and popularity. Furthermore, writing and reading still receive more focus in traditional classrooms than in speaking. Consequently, EFL students who need help in oral performance find it difficult to learn to speak. The most significant benefit of using social media for English language learning is that it empowers EFL students to practice their language skills independently, in hotels, at homes, on the road, or in markets. The present review examines how SNSs are used and influenced in the context of EFL. It aims to provide details about the following: a) what are the primary objectives of these investigations, and how are they being attained? b) What are the

main implications drawn from the papers investigated? Particularly: i) How are social networking sites employed to facilitate EFL learning in various contexts? ii) What educational goals are achieved by these research works? iii) What possible outcomes do they perceive? d) Which challenges do they draw out? 3) What study of these studies identified gaps?

Social Media a tool for Linguistic acquisition

The four primary skills in language acquisition or learning are writing, listening, and reading (Oxford, 1990, pp. 5-6). These skills are very important in increasing the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, syntax, pronunciation, usage and meaning.

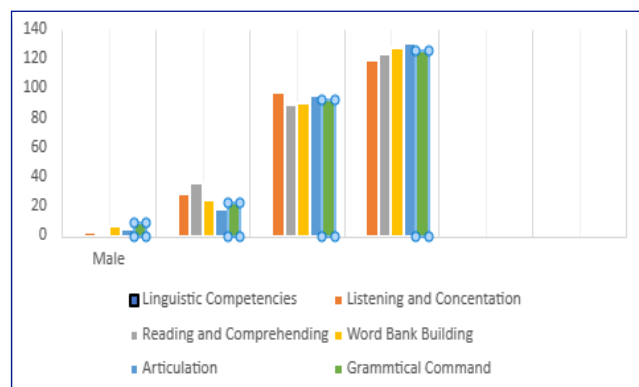
Table 2

Parameters	Response							
	Male				Female			
Linguistic Competencies	Never	Seldom	Regular	Multiple Times a day	Never	Random	Regular	Multiple Times a day
Listening and Concentration	3	29	98	120	8	32	100	110
Reading and Comprehending	1	36	89	124	15	35	120	80
Word Bank Building	7	25	90	128	14	30	113	93
Articulation	5	18	96	131	10	40	112	88
Grammatical Command	9	23	92	126	18	46	98	88

In a study in 2018 conducted in the EFL context with a sample of 500 students (50% male and 50% female) of different age range between 18–

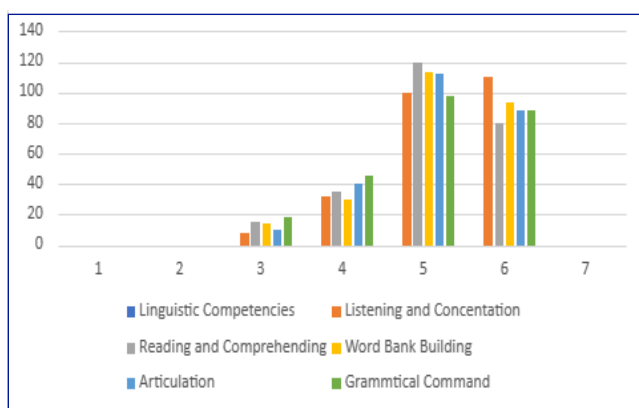
26 at the University of Peshawar, Pakistan, to explore the influence of SM in the enhancement of language skills.

Figure 1



90% of male students agreed that they use social media for reading, writing and speaking of English language, and 10% of respondents disagreed

Figure 2



While of female students, 72.5% agreed, and the remaining 26% denied the usage of social media for language learning, which implies that male students are utilizing these platforms to enhance their language skills, similarly in another study was conducted on 50 female preparatory year Saudi students studying EFL at the English Language Institute, who was studying abroad, speaking Arabic as their first language. In 2017, Allam et al. (2017) found that the rate of adoption of Twitter among students was relatively low,

with only around 43% of students displaying favourable attitudes towards it. Those who expressed a neutral or negative opinion may need clarification about effectively using Twitter for learning purposes or may only utilize it in specific situations.

Writing Competency via social media

Writing is a social activity that allows us to react to those around us and the environment. Writing occurs in particular, frequently predetermined situations. We never write; we always write to a specific audience(s) with a specific goal. It is a talent that allows one to convey ideas or thoughts to others with clarity, cohesiveness, and coherence. In Haidari et al.'s (2020) study, using social media and Wikis was beneficial in enhancing students' writing skills by helping them overcome various writing-related issues.

The study also demonstrated that using social media positively affected learners' language proficiency, collaboration, teamwork, and critical thinking abilities (Al Jahromi, 2020; Pikhart & Botezat, 2021). Another research conducted by Al-Tamimi et al. (2018) investigated the impact of Facebook on improving English writing and vocabulary among undergraduate students in a Jordanian EFL setting. According to the study's results, the experimental group demonstrated significant improvements in writing and lexicon compared to the control group after using Facebook. Similarly, Mabuan (2018) explored using blogs as a teaching tool for English instruction and their relationship with students' writing skills. The findings from this study suggested that students considered blogs as crucial platforms for developing English writing skills as they fostered free expression, facilitated peer interaction, and improved language proficiency. The available literature offers a substantial body of evidence supporting social

media's positive influence on non-native English speakers' linguistic output.

Speaking is an Interaction

Chomsky (2014) asserted that our language is constantly and organically evolving, adapting to the changes in our society. Meanwhile, Brown (1994) and Burns & Joyce (1997) described speaking as a process of structured meaning, which involves receiving, creating, and reactively disseminating information. Systematic speech is used to express ideas. Speaking is described in various ways in applied linguistics, including as an interaction, a social activity, and a situation-based activity (Azadi et al., 2018; Thornsbury, 2005; Attila, 2017). Social media offers many opportunities for practice and suitable contacts with other English speakers. As a result, technology use has increased quickly in Peshawar, Pakistan, which is already common among university students and teachers, as suggested by several authors like Mushtaq & Benraghda (2018). The country's protracted conflict badly harmed students' higher education and political unrest, as reported by several global authors (Noori & Orfan, 2021a,b and Taheryar, 2017). For instance, numerous colleges and institutions were shut down, and infrastructure was destroyed during the Taliban administration (Noori, 2021a). Universities and schools resumed operations once the new administration took office in 2001, and educational institutions began integrating technology into teaching and learning (Babury & Hayward, 2014).

Social networking sites are used to provide a platform for educational activities and meet the demands of the younger generation. Several online platforms have gained popularity since the COVID-19 epidemic, and paradigm shifts in higher education, and the use of social networking sites in Afghan learning and teaching has drastically expanded (Naim & Sandaran, 2020; Noori & Noori, 2021; Rasiah, 2014).

The Concept of Reading

According to Palani, reading involves various cognitive processes such as thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving, making it a crucial tool for knowledge transfer. Developing reading skills is an academic activity that enhances reading strategies, and with it, success in academics and occupation can be improved. Although traditional reading methods should continue, using social media can greatly enhance and enrich the learning experience, especially for today's learners who are more inclined towards interactive web applications. The social interaction learning principle presented by Bandura (1977) and Kapp (2011) affirms that social media can enhance learning abilities and motivation among EFL students. Effective learning occurs when learners witness desired behaviours and develop internal guidelines based on their interpretation of correct behaviours.

Factors influence their success in learning.

There are several factors which can influence students learning ways. Among the reported factors, some are given here; (1). Grades and gender (2). Fields of study (3). Involvement of parents and teachers (4). The anxiety of language learning (5). Academic achievement and record (Alimyar, 2020).

Parental involvement in early childhood education has many benefits, but parents can run into problems that make it hard for them to be involved in their children's schooling. For example, low-income families may struggle to pay for school events, fees and a good place for their kids to learn at home due to high inflation (Jamil, 2022), other macro living factors (Jamil, Rasheed et al. 2023) institute responsibility (Jamil & Rasheed, 2023)

Psychological effects of social media

In light of the increasing prevalence of mental health concerns, it is imperative to understand the impact social media has on teenagers' well-being, as Kim noted in 2017. Psychiatric

terminology such as "addiction" is frequently employed to describe problematic internet behaviours. However, some unusual behaviour may be typical of younger generations on social networks, such as excessive selfie-posting, as discussed by McCrae et al. in 2017. Despite this, experts in the field, including psychologists, have cautioned against the harmful consequences of social media use on the personal and social development of young people, as reported by Greenfield in 2014 and Twenge in 2006.

Conclusions

Considering social media as massive data sources, language-creating content, and vocabularies, the researchers recommend that lecturers employ these significant masses of information supplied in online networking, whether in real learning environments or outside formal learning. Social media facilitates teachers teaching. It can be used pedagogically to encourage students to write, improve their understanding of readership and authorship, and advance their writing skills. These social media features can help students' writing development in academic settings and increase chances for second language learners to write in their daily lives. Furthermore, educators could consider utilizing social media to instruct their students. By incorporating digital resources such as videos, audio, and images, as well as interactive tools like games, applications, and social networks, teachers can cater to the interests of modern-day learners drawn to such mediums. Research indicates that such tools should be integrated into learning and teaching. Oelofse (2013) argues that the exposure of second or foreign-language learners to new languages in new technologies undeniably influences their perceptions of the world.

According to recent research, students can utilize formal and informal English according to the writing aim and situation (Thurairaj & Roy, 2012). EFL students will be better able to switch between standard and nonstandard English if

they know Internet slang terms like Leet and code-switching. Social media is the finest for engagement, which sometimes occurs in a classroom. EFL instructors also teach lessons outside of English. It has been demonstrated that increased motivation and self-assurance combined with reduced anxiety in online settings give EFL learners anxiety-free spaces to create language instinctively and creatively. (Al Jahrami, 2019). Alongside the English courses, EFL teachers can create an online English learning community on Facebook, WeChat, or WhatsApp with the aid of student assistants. Then, students can comfortably express their ideas and address any inquiries about English.

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