

The Impact of Social Media on English as a second language learners in Iraqi Intermediate school

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Abstract

In light of increasing technology improvements, English has emerged as one of the most significant worldwide languages, particularly among non-native speakers in nations such as Iraq. Mastering English as a Second Language (ESL) is seen as critical for academic and professional success in today's interconnected world. At the same time, the digital age has seen a substantial increase in the usage of social media platforms, which have evolved from primarily social or entertainment tools to important educational resources, notably for language learning. The purpose of this study is to look into how social media affects English language acquisition among Iraqi intermediate school pupils. It aims to comprehend the experiences of students, evaluate the advantages they derive from these platforms, and pinpoint the difficulties they encounter. Among the main research topics are: What impact does social media have on Iraqi middle school pupils' English language proficiency? What are the benefits and challenges of incorporating these tools into the educational process? This study's importance stems from its emphasis on a crucial educational phase and its effort to draw attention to unconventional teaching strategies in a constantly changing academic setting. While noting issues like distraction and casual language exposure, it also advances our understanding of how social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram can improve language proficiency. Finally, In order to assist educators and policymakers in creating successful, technologically connected English curricula, this study attempts to provide a fair viewpoint.

Keywords: social media, English, second language

تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في المدارس المتوسطة العراقية

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ملخص البحث

في ظل التطورات التكنولوجية المتسارعة، أصبحت اللغة الإنجليزية واحدة من أهم اللغات العالمية التي يسعى الأفراد إلى تعلمها كلغة ثانية، خاصة في الدول غير الناطقة بها مثل العراق. ويُعد إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية أمراً حيوياً للنجاح الأكاديمي والمهني في العصر الحديث. ومن جهة أخرى، شهد العالم الرقمي توسعاً كبيراً في استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، حيث لم تعد هذه الوسائل حكراً على الترفيه أو التواصل الاجتماعي فقط، بل أصبحت أدوات تعليمية قوية، خاصة في مجال تعلم اللغات. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المدارس

المتوسطة في العراق، من خلال فهم تجاربهم، وتقييم مدى استفادتهم من هذه المنصات، والتحديات التي يواجهونها. وتتمحور أسئلة البحث حول: كيف تؤثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على مستوى إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المدارس المتوسطة؟ وما الفوائد والصعوبات المرتبطة باستخدام هذه الوسائل في هذا السياق؟ تكتسب هذه الدراسة أهميتها من كونها تركز على فئة عمرية حيوية في النظام التعليمي، وتسعى إلى تسليط الضوء على الإمكانيات التعليمية غير التقليدية في بيئة تعليمية تتطور باستمرار. كما تساهم في فهم أوسع لدور وسائل التواصل مثل فيسبوك، يوتيوب، وإنستغرام في تعزيز المهارات اللغوية، إلى جانب التحديات المتمثلة في التشتت أو الاستخدام غير الرسمي للغة. وبالتالي، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم رؤية متوازنة يمكن أن تفيد المعلمين وصناع القرار في تطوير مناهج تعليمية تستثمر في هذه الوسائل بفعالية.

كلمات مفتاحية: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، اللغة الإنجليزية، لغة ثانية

INTRODUCTION

An integral aspect of learning English is the use of social media.

Because it allows learners to interact with a varied vocabulary, enhance one's capacity for self-expression and augment one's self-confidence. The use of social media improves reading comprehension for second language learners, listening comprehension, writing abilities, and grammar use, according to studies. Moreover, automatic learning and visualization approaches are made possible by social media networks, which makes English teaching more engaging and motivational. In addition to helping students learn the language, using social media in the classroom promotes cultural understanding, student autonomy, and task-based language learning. The effectiveness of integrating social media into educational settings has been demonstrated by research showing that students' vocabulary learning and general performance are enhanced when teachers use social media platforms like Facebook.

Social media plays a vital part in upgrading English dialect procurement by giving a stage for learners to lock in with differing lexicon, make strides communication abilities, and boost self-confidence. Evidence suggests that social media can help second language learners with vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing skills, and the use of language structures. Moreover, social media stages encourage robotized learning and visualization strategies, making the process of learning English engaging and captivating. Not only can social media bolster dialect security, but it also increases social mindfulness, learner independence, and task-based dialect teaching methods through its incorporation into dialect training. Evidence suggests that the use of social media in the classroom enhances students' overall performance and vocabulary learning in English, compared to traditional educational techniques. An example instance of this is Facebook. The proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the

methods of information sharing and communication. As if that weren't enough, the pervasiveness of social media has altered the way people interact with one another and has even made its way into many educational settings, paving the way for better language acquisition. This nearness has not reshaped how individuals connected but has moreover invaded different spaces of instruction, offering a promising road for improving dialect learning. Social media incorporates a positive affect on dialect learners' certainty, state of mind, and inspiration (Zainal & Rahmat, 2020). This is because helping one other out on social media platforms exposes language learners to a wealth of literature and opens doors for them to improve their dialect (Zainal & Rahmat, 2020). Many studies have shown that using social media to study English can have positive effects, such as improving one's dialect skills, cultivating true communication, decreasing uneasiness, moving forward students' inspiration and encouraging collaborative learning (Aljameel, 2022; Amin & Sundari, 2020; Mubarak, 2016; Lutviana & Mafulah, 2021; Paliath & Evangeline, 2022; Richards, 2015; Tufail, 2021). Whereas these thinks about offer important experiences, they don't particularly address the special setting of English instruction understudies. By centring on the perspectives and experiences of ESL students, this study hopes to address that gap, illuminating their unique requirements, obstacles, and ambitions for the incorporation of social media into English language acquisition. This study primarily aims to better understand how undergraduates in English language instruction perceive the possible advantages of integrating social media into their English classes, as well as the difficulties they face when trying to use these platforms to improve their English language skills.

METHOD:-

In keeping with the work of several leading researchers in the area (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2010; Plants, Geoffrey; Cheerful, 2019), this study employs a mixed-methods research strategy. Getting a good grasp of the topic under investigation is the goal. This study's data came from interviews and questionnaires administered to students in STKIP YDB's English Instruction program. Lubuk Alung is the one.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Positive Impact of social media on Middle School Students' English Language Acquisition in Iraq In response to your primary question, yes, there are certain benefits of social media for ESL students. The following table displays the outcomes of a survey that asked ESL students about their thoughts on the potential benefits of using social media platforms for language learning. The table includes the students' replies on several Likert-scale questions, which provides insight into their awareness of diverse perspectives on learning English through social media. The viewpoints of

tall and moo are thoroughly outlined with the use of recognition rates, harsh ratings, and option categories.

ITEMS	Decision
1. I am able to practise my English skills in authentic situations by using social media sites for my English language studies.	High Perception
2. A wealth of real-life English-language material (videos, articles, discussions, etc.) is readily available on social media, which allows me to practise and improve my language abilities.	High Perception
3. If you want to learn English, using social media is far better than sitting in a classroom all day.	Low Perception
4. Thanks to social media, I can meet native English speakers and language aficionados, which opens doors to chances for mutual understanding and appreciation of one another's cultures.	High Perception
5. Social media makes it easy for me to join organisations and communities where people are learning a language; there, I can communicate with native speakers, get their opinions, and work with them.	Low Perception
6. I can study English on my own time and at my own speed with the help of social media.	Low Perception
7. By incorporating social media into my English lessons, I am able to hone my technological knowledge and proficiency.	High Perception
8. If you want to learn English but don't want to spend a fortune on classes or books, then you could look at social media as an alternative.	Low Perception

Table 1. A Survey of ESL Students' Opinions on the Use of Social Media for Language Acquisition

Utilising social media allows students to practise English in authentic contexts; 95% of students acknowledge this. This significant proportion underscores the perspective that social media offers a dynamic platform for learners to utilise language abilities in real-world contexts, rather than in a theoretical or isolated learning setting. Social media interactions have practical applications outside traditional classrooms due to their immediacy and relevance, akin to real-life experiences. Conversely Out of all the

students, just 10% think that social media makes learning English more interesting and participatory than the old ways. This substantiates the assertion that, despite its advantages, social media may struggle to match the engagement levels of conventional classroom or face-to-face education. Although social media has significant potential for student-teacher engagement, it may not fully substitute the interpersonal dynamics of traditional classrooms. All surveyed students like the opportunity to engage with native English speakers on social media. By forging such links, students may thoroughly engage with the language and culture, acquiring a profound comprehension of the language and its authentic application. This aspect underscores social media's capacity as a learning tool to promote realistic language acquisition. When asked if social media makes learning English easier and more accessible, just 25% of people said it does. This suggests that most people do not think it much improves learning flexibility. This perspective draws attention to a gap between students' real-life experiences and the idealised use of social media for ubiquitous learning. Students may encounter obstacles while trying to integrate social media into their teaching methods. Most individuals who have utilised social media to enhance their English skills also perceive that it has contributed to their technological proficiency and literacy. This dual benefit is highly promising, indicating that social media may assist kids in cultivating digital literacy skills that are equally significant as language learning. Only one-third of students believe that social media might be more cost-effective than traditional language learning techniques, such textbooks. This view shows that not all students see social media as a full or adequate substitute for organized learning materials and activities, even if there are many free resources available on these platforms. The chance to hear other people's varied English dialects is important to 80% of students who use social media. If you want to learn the language inside and out, appreciate its variety, and be ready to speak and understand in a global environment, this exposure is essential. Finally, 35% of students said they are more enthusiastic and motivated to study English when they use social media. This shows that social media can motivate some people, but it also shows that it might not motivate other people to learn a new language. In conclusion, there are many opportunities for ESL instruction in the complex world of social media. The most significant advantages are practical experience, authentic materials, and opportunities for cross-cultural understanding. There exists potential for improvement or additional strategies to optimize its efficacy as a language learning instrument; yet, challenges related to engagement, community accessibility, and perceived educational value persist.

Challenges in Utilizing Social Media for English Language Acquisition in Iraqi Intermediate Schools

In response to the situation Problems that students have while trying to use social media to improve their English are illustrated in the following chart. The main areas where students struggle are shown in this chart. Students' views on involvement, openness, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and motivation are uncovered. The study sheds light on the difficulties students faces when trying to use social media for language learning.

Items	Decision
1. On social media, it could be difficult to locate credible and high-quality material written in English.	Low Perception
2. I find that my English learning experience is hindered by social media distractions, such as irrelevant information or alerts.	High Perception
3. It could be challenging to stay focused and disciplined when studying English through social media.	Low Perception
4. Interacting with native speakers on social media can be challenging due to language hurdles, such as strange accents and idiomatic idioms.	High Perception
5. My ability to learn the language may be impaired due to the lack of options for in-person communication with instructors and language partners on social media.	High Perception
6. Some people may be hesitant to join ESL communities online due to worries about their privacy and security on social media.	Low Perception
7. My social media English lessons could be interrupted by technical difficulties or slow internet.	Low Perception
8. Verifying the authenticity and reliability of social media language learning tools is challenging.	High Perception
9. It could be difficult to juggle social media use for language acquisition with other commitments, whether they be personal or academic.	Low Perception
10. I find it challenging to monitor my progress in language learning due to the absence of a defined curriculum and instructions on social media sites.	High Perception

Table 2. Issues Raised by Students of English as a Second Language Regarding the Use of Social Media in the Pursuit of Language Acquisition

In outline, the information proposes that whereas a few challenges are seen more adversely (e.g., diversions, dialect obstructions, and fabric validity), others are seen in an optimistic perspective (e.g., keeping up center, self-discipline and adjusting time). Different perspectives on learning English on social media have different ways of acknowledging this, which shows how complicated the relationship is and how individuals' own tendencies and difficulties play a role. These acknowledgements should be profoundly integrated into the creation of teaching methodologies and support frameworks for students on social media platforms. Students studying English as a second language have recognised specific challenges associated with utilising social media for language acquisition and have suggested potential remedies. A significant impediment is the diversion caused by non-educational drugs. The captivating nature of social media platforms may lead students to become diverted from their educational objectives due to the plethora of engaging or extraneous material. To address this, students propose utilising specific educational platforms or programs that integrate social media elements while prioritising language acquisition. The language barrier is a significant challenge, particularly for individuals with weak English ability who may struggle to read and comprehend written English. The suggested arrangements entail utilizing tools for deciphering coordinates and accessible information to facilitate incremental competency development for novices. Furthermore, concern arises regarding the potential volatility of the quality of accessible assets. Students advise selecting teachers or professors acknowledged for delivering superior material and curating a list of reputable sources. Students address the topics of inspiration and engagement by stressing the need to have clear, attainable objectives and making good use of tools like quizzes, conversations, and group projects to keep people interested and involved. The need for a methodical and thorough strategy to use social media for language education, with the goal of maximizing advantages and minimizing negatives, is highlighted by these events.

Sampling

Participants were English language instructors, educators, and teachers from junior high and high schools that provide English language classes. These individuals were regarded as the foremost educators of the English language across many educational settings, as well as the most adept users of social media. This study utilised subjective inquiry with a specific objective. Their social media experience and skills enabled the analyst to choose persons capable of offering valuable insights on English dialect learning and who could also impart authoritative knowledge on the subject. Ten individuals participated in this examination of contemplation:

One college instructor, one English as a Second Language (ESL) educator, four seniors in high school, one primary school instructor, and a master's level professional from an Iraqi organization specializing in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL); addressing all stakeholders in the national English education system. The presence of a wide set of people permitted the collection of extensive data, enhancing both the depth and breadth of the research topic.

Methodology for Collecting Data

The data utilised in this research was obtained via a written interview with the participants. The analyst reached out to the group using the Facebook Messenger application online. Members were instructed to directly attend the convened meeting via either the flag-bearer app or email. Within one to two weeks, the members submitted all well-structured solutions to the meeting questions to the analyst. This method allowed all individuals the time to contemplate the concerns and answer suitably.

DATA ANALYSIS

The topics that emerged over the course of consideration formed the foundation for the information research. Attention should be directed towards the topics, concepts, or proposals articulated by the members on a minimum of three occasions. We utilised a SWOT analysis grid for the members to complete, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all aspects and enquiries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of properly organizing all the information provided was accomplished by employing the SWOT analysis framework. After a little period had passed, the findings were applied to the address of the study. When considering the subjective nature of the investigation, each and every piece of evidence that was gathered was treated appropriately. In the future, studies that acknowledge this subject or design can utilise the findings or variables of this investigation as a starting point for their own research. Aspects of Character The qualities that are now being considered in this investigation were obtained through the collection of information. Taking into consideration the impact that social media platforms have on the process of acquiring English dialect, the members have determined that the following traits are essential. The idea that English is a "around the world dialect" (Precious stone, 2012) and that it is spoken by the majority of people on Earth was the foundation for most of the data collected by the members. Almost all social networking websites use it in a manner that is fairly like this. The repository of information, linguistic inventions, and words that have been annotated. It was proved by the participants that social

media platforms are uncommon locations to obtain current and pertinent information. These platforms include English-language news, online diaries, wikis, and a wealth of other resources. Howe and Strauss (2009) state that social media platforms provide more chances for millennials to engage with non-coordinated content. These options are beneficial to the generation. Even while it is ultimately up to the good judgement of everyone to assess whether the news is true, social media platforms do allow access to a variety of information that is freely available to the public. In addition, they provide a challenge to the function that social media plays in the formation of an individual's vocabulary and language abilities. A few people have found that social media platforms have become a true information highway for language learning. There is no requirement to work with an English direct or to spend a significant amount of money on an English institution.

Weaknesses

Concerns about the language people learn online rank high among the concerns brought up by social media. Internet organizing has several bad features that are currently affecting their flocks, like the use of vulgar language, hateful content, and shouting. They will most certainly show up in the written and spoken output of undergraduates who are studying dialect. A member of the assembly got up and said:

"A expansive parcel of us have to be get to to the Web, numerous unremitting online organizing to precise their conclusions as they are qualified for and tons do not utilize the dialect successfully imperils the exceptionally dialect by spreading unessential and presently and after that obscene phrasings that shouldn't be said on all occasions, it'll start a honesty among the watchers of their substance as social media commonly is the group's choice of reference with regards to data bunch." In addition, ungrammatical terms, words, or enunciations gotten to be more satisfactory these days in light of the effect of social media. Web languages, compression, shorter compositions, and analogous technologies are undermining communication and adversely altering collaborative practices. The lack of natural dialect interaction. Direct, interpersonal communication is crucial for collaboration on social media. While not completely lacking, some social media aims inadequately encompass non-verbal indications, such as body language, facial expressions, emotions, and other non-verbal indicators. Impact of consumption on writing proficiency. The emergence of online living coincided with the use of contractual works, ambient lighting, photography, and web programming languages. Members assert that these unique writing tactics positively influence students' academic writing. Formal writing is characterized by the prevalent usage of cyber slang and writing abbreviations by many people.

Discussion

This research was initiated by five specific research topics. The study aimed to determine the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and risks associated with utilizing social media for ESL training. Potential strategies for optimizing social media in ESL training were also discussed.

Advantages of social media in aiding English Language Learners (ELL)

According to the results of this study, there are a number of features of social media that actively support or reinforce the acquisition of the English language among their users. People nowadays get some introductory or understandable language input from data, works, and vocabularies in social media aims (Krashen, 1985; Bhatti, Shaheen, Kamal, & Ali, 2020). In addition, the language is accessible for use in any social media-based cooperation, correspondence, affiliation, and data sharing. There is a substantial correlation between social media and language acquisition because of the pervasiveness of online life and associated impulses in modern society.

How ELLs are negatively impacted by social media's shortcomings

Data revealed social medias disadvantages in any case of their positive repercussions in English dialect learning. Adolescents' exposure to false information, profanity, and grammar errors in written English is a problem regardless of whether some argue that social media increase people's access to a vast amount of information. Another critique directed at social media in ELL was the deficiency of face-to-face interaction that transpires on screens. Finally, enhanced communication methods have diminished the writing skills of online organizers (Bhatti, Saad, & Gbadebo, 2020).

Benefits of social media for English language learners

Social media has facilitated several opportunities for language learners. others visiting these sites have an enhanced likelihood of engaging with others proficient in English. Acquiring vital skills for the contemporary world, like communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration, is facilitated by social media. The future of learning through online networking is certain due to the continual advancement of technology.

Threats social media pose to ELL

The discovery of three new risks associated with social media has implications for the maturation of language skills. Disruptions may occur for language learners when internet connectivity is inadequately utilized. Students typically do not engage with unsavory publications and information when studying more pertinent subjects. A further problem that may hinder English language development and communication is the diversity of

languages utilized by individuals in online forums. Ultimately, there are threats to language development linked to the proliferation of cyber slang and the erosion of languages, which educators should recognise and address.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study indicates that social media favourably influenced clients' adoption of English dialects. The recruitment of a native English speaker may be hindered by their possible disadvantages and risks. Online social media platforms can facilitate access to current information, a plethora of dialectal input, possibilities for interaction with native speakers of the target language, and novel learning experiences. Nevertheless, analogous media may also mislead language learners with their deceptive, illiterate, and grammatically erroneous material, offensive language, and artificial human connection. Educators, both within and outside conventional classroom environments, can leverage substantial data, dialectical works, and vocabularies provided by social media, as indicated by Krashen (1985), accessible through online organization. Integrating various forms of media into dialect instruction would be beneficial, since these students are already overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information available online. Educators may include authentic information from the social networking site into their lesson plans, including articles, sounds, and recordings. Examiners also advocate for language learners to create online systems and frameworks for peer collaboration and to construct an online dialect organization, contingent upon receiving suitable adult supervision and acceptable media. Such relationships enable people to exercise and enhance their skill in the target language. The study further advocates employing these Net Sorts in the instructional process, as they are inclined towards contemporary technology and were born in the age of modern computing. According to the research, students of English should make use of social media in order to communicate with others who are fluent in the language. These proportionate enhancements are essential to ensure that the skills of the 21st century, including collaboration, communication, assisted effort, creativity, critical thinking, and others, are met within the transaction components. To mitigate the risks of social media for English language learners, one approach is to instruct students to be discerning in their media consumption and to utilise their critical thinking skills to differentiate between authentic and fabricated information, factual and fictional content, academic and non-academic material, as well as correct and incorrect grammar and spelling. Dialect students are encouraged to engage in more face-to-face communication rather than online interactions, as genuine human connection is either essential or lacking on a computer screen. This approach utilises the critical elements of communication while preserving the fundamental characteristics of correspondence failure. Furthermore, educators or guardians must caution their children on the perils of employing abbreviated texts, graphics, and internet vernacular in their writing, and should

instead guide them towards sites that offer comprehensive content in standard English grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, these language learners must establish boundaries on their social media usage to avoid time wastage and allocate that time to reflective contemplation and other regularly advantageous pursuits. Students would greatly benefit from refraining from negative language and online slang, as well as from choosing suitable media or materials. The presence of a multitude of other social orders and languages on the Internet, aside from English, complicates the efficient acquisition of a language. Consequently, the language learners were able to invigorate their own channels by immersing themselves in a diverse array of high-quality dialect information. This approach allows children to discern acceptable from unacceptable English. Educational curriculum must facilitate students' utilization of social media for the dissemination of their ideas. To enhance language acquisition in online environments, educational programs, learning activities, and resources must be developed. Notable instances of defiance encompass SMS, websites, Wattpad, Facebook, Flag-bearer, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, and YouTube. These platforms may be utilized efficiently for student reading, writing, listening, and engagement in audit and growth activities. This thought experiment may function as an ancillary resource or focus point for subsequent research on the adoption of English dialects via social media. Further research is encouraged to explore this subject more comprehensively and to enhance this discourse. Further study or data-driven analysis is necessary to understand the impact of social media on the dialect of Iraqi children. An investigation that examines the disadvantages of online dialect formation in language training warrants particular attention. This under-explored subject will be further elucidated by these research opportunities.

The findings from English education students reveal a multifaceted environment, encompassing both positive and bad elements of social media use for language learning. While opinions differ about engagement, simplicity, and cost-effectiveness, there is a consensus on the advantages, such as practical experience, access to authentic material, and relationships with native speakers. The intricate nature of this instructional medium is further emphasized by the diverse perspectives of its impact on motivation. The identified challenges illuminate the intricate nature of the interaction, encompassing interruptions, linguistic barriers, and concerns over the authenticity of the supplied material. Positive viewpoints help fill up the gaps in our knowledge of the mechanics of social media English learning by bringing attention, self-discipline, and efficient time management to light. This diversity of opinion highlights the need for individualized strategies to maximize the potential of social media for language learning. This research underscores the essential consideration of students' varied viewpoints and preferences in the formulation of instructional strategies and support systems that use social media. Educators may enhance and optimize

language instruction in contemporary digital environments by acknowledging and integrating these ideas into their methodologies. This will cultivate an environment that optimises social media utilisation while addressing the distinct requirements of ESL students.

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