



## English Language Learning among Media Department Students at the University of Derna via Facebook as a Social Media Tool

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### Abstract

Social networking has become integral to daily life, with Facebook standing out as a vital tool for communication. This study examines the use of Facebook for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) among undergraduates in the Media Department at the University of Derna, focusing on gender disparities. A questionnaire survey of 120 students indicated that they use Facebook on a regular basis, and the participants exhibited good attitudes, high motivation, and confidence in their ability to use the platform to enhance their English skills. They reported significant benefits, including acquiring new vocabulary and syntactic structures. The study concluded that both male and female students held positive attitudes toward learning English after using Facebook. The study concludes by encouraging further research into students' perspectives on Facebook as a language-learning tool and addressing potential challenges in its integration.

**Keywords:** Technology, social media, Facebook, English language learning, gender.



## 1. Introduction

With the advancement of technology, numerous social networks have offered tools to enhance foreign language acquisition. According to Blake (1998), "technology can substantially improve second language acquisition by digitally enhancing learners' interaction with a variety of authentic materials" (p. 210). This was said in the context of educational technology. According to Godwin-Jones (2008) and Sturgeon and Walker (2009), social media are modes of social communication that are developed for learners who are interested in interacting with persons from different countries in order to acquire a foreign language in an easy and convenient manner.

Modern days are recognized by their information and communication technologies, in which social networking websites have been widely used such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp etc. Globally most of the societies are heading towards becoming technological and knowledge-based society. Therefore, those who do not embrace the technology will be undeveloped and conceivably will be neglected. Media platform is unavoidable as it has become the most valuable tool in almost every part of humans being on their daily basis. Online world is regarded as the first revolution, and thus has significant impact on education in general and teaching and learning English language in particular.

Social media provides extensive global resources for language learning, enabling direct interaction between foreign language learners and native English speakers. Mastering a foreign language is crucial for building interpersonal connections, expressing oneself effectively, and engaging with communities. Both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) can be significantly improved through online platforms.

Mealman (as cited in Abidin, Ahmad, & Kabilan, 2010, p.185) asserts that foreign language learners can improve their skills, self-awareness, confidence, and lifelong learning capacities. Social media platforms are crucial in assisting students in acquiring life skills and fostering a good disposition towards studying English.



Social media has profoundly transformed people's lifestyles across communication, knowledge exchange, commerce, and education. It is now a major focus of scholarly investigation, fueled by its rapid expansion and pervasive influence. Notably, language educators and applied linguistics researchers have documented the transformative effects of social media on foreign language acquisition methods (Chaubey, 2025). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, HelloTalk, and Tandem offer authentic input, vocabulary and grammar exposure, and intercultural communication opportunities—though they also bring digital distractions (Nuri, 2024).

Experimental studies further show that using YouTube and Instagram in language courses can significantly boost learners' grammar and speaking abilities (Hazaymeh & Khasawneh, 2024). Comprehensive literature reviews reveal additional benefits: increased motivation, reduced anxiety, learner collaboration, and genuine language use (Ghafar, 2023), while classroom-focused social media use enhances engagement and interaction despite some risk of distraction.

According to the findings of a recent study, individuals who have gotten learning, participation, and inspiration through the use of a social networking website have demonstrated superior results in an English proficiency exam when compared to individuals who have received education on an individual level (Wamba & Carter, 2016).

Studies concerning web-based communication platforms, such as Facebook, a prominent social network, assist students in accessing a wealth of readily available material. Foreign language learners can communicate with others, including family, friends, and teachers, at any time they like.

Social media and its use have turn out to be obvious in area of teaching and learning which may guide to a major change in how we organize learning circles in the expectations. Social media has made it possible for a more flexible language learning experience, in which learners are given more control and guidance.

The purpose of the paper is to investigate the function of social media in the context of a successful instance of learning English as a foreign language through the use of Facebook.



There is a possibility that the findings of this study will bring more attention to the problem of learning a foreign language through relationships made through social networks.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

In the course of time, social media has evolved from being something that we want to something that we require. For the purpose of bringing together people from all over the world, social networks are often regarded as one of the most essential components of the Internet. Because of this relationship, many tasks have been made easier, and a great number of individuals have profited. Facebook is certainly one of the social networks that is utilized the most frequently. In addition to Facebook, there are a great number of other social networking sites besides Facebook that offer a variety of features and functionalities. Some examples of these sites are Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and many others.

Consequently, researches like the present one may need to scrutinize how social media is used or can be potentially used in foreign language learning environments. Many colleges in the context of Libya use social media and students in various institutions waste a vast amount of time online, but the extent to which learners and teachers use social networks for instructional objectives is moderately unexplored (Algwil, 2022; Alhadad & Ertürk, 2017).

The findings of the current research may reveal new insights on the significance of using social media in the context of learning a foreign language. These new insights may pertain to the ways in which social media influences the acquisition of a foreign language outside of the typical academic environment.

### 1.2 Research objectives

1. To identify the extent of Facebook use among the studied sample.
2. To investigate the disparities between female and male students about their perceptions of Facebook for English Language Learners (ELL)?
3. To investigate potential significant differences in participants' perspectives on vocabulary and grammar learning based on gender.
4. To investigate which language skills will be enhanced by language learning and instruction on Facebook.



5. To examine male and female students' attitudes toward ELL after engaging with Facebook"

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

The present research is considered to significant for English language teachers and learners this may offer some insight for them to concentrate on the practice of social media in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Eventually, the findings of this study and recommendations for future study may help individuals using social media to be aware of the problems and difficulties they may face.

## 2. Literature Review

Integrating social media in the context of teaching and learning is advised to be modern in educational system. In the era of social media, e-learning and distance learning provide opportunity for learners to be a web knowledge based. Generally, social media gives learners chance to capture and share various study resources based on their educational technique. Social media motivates learners to spend more time in searching and getting useful information according to educational activities. Most considerably, freshmen and Sophomores make use of the social media for purpose of learning English as a foreign language.

### 2.1 Technology

Technology is regarded as one of the significant elements in the present days. (Gumport & Chun, 1999) stated that technology plays a critical part within the learning process and the outcomes in superior education settings. Technology provides access to the data or information, and it also influences the product and by extension the methods of learning. furthermore, (Alm, 2006) confirmed that a variety of technology have been engaged in the area of educational process. Technology provided diverse websites in numerous distinctive frameworks, Technology frequently incorporates web pages, text, pictures, audio, photos, video, authentic materials, talk gathering, chats, emails and music.

One of the websites that technology developed is Web 2.0 which consists of live materials, podcast, video cast, wikis, blogs, online discussion boards, and social networking. Also, technology offers platforms that can be utilized in learning and teaching environments in



which its applications may afford new channels for learners as well as instructors to receive informative and constructive feedback.

## 2.2 Social Media and Language Learning

It is noteworthy that the terms *social media* and *social networking* are often used interchangeably. Social media refers to digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and exchange content in various forms—including text, images, audio, and video—as well as to engage in interactive communication. These platforms encompass social networking sites, microblogging services, and online communities, where large numbers of individuals engage in dialogues, share personal communications, ideas, and information, and participate in educational, social, and professional networks. Various types of social media can also be leveraged to support language learning in multiple ways. For instance, mobile phones host a range of applications that facilitate language practice, cultural exchange, and reading skill development, while synchronous communication tools such as video calls can enhance speaking proficiency by enabling real-time interaction with speakers of the target language (Kapoor et al., 2023).

There are kinds of social media and social websites, they can be classified as: Gadgets, such as mobile phones, desktops and notebooks etc., like these available choices certainly advantage all users in various ways but fascinatingly, new users may considerably benefit from such options. Various studies stated that English language learners have developed their language ability through different gadgets (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Another important type of social media is blogs. Web blogs are also supposedly one of the forms of social media. A lot of people have shaped their own blogs and use these blogs to write things which vary from information and their perceptions on some precise issues. Different blogs can help learners to develop their reading skill as well as their vocabularies. Eventually, Facebook is one of the significant types of social media in our modern days. Blattner & Fiori (2009) recognized that Facebook is the preeminent social network due to its extensive user base exceeding billions, and it is regarded as one of the fastest-growing and most renowned applications on the Internet.



### 2.3 Social Networking for Language Learners

Researchers acknowledged that web 2.0 technology highly develop language learning. They posited that social networking enhances the online educational environment, asserting that online learning pertains to the development of learners' linguistic skills and the impact of the learning process on their personal growth. Harrison and Thomas (2009).

Blattner and Fiori (2009) asserted that Facebook has the potential to be an effective platform for linguistic communication. According to Godwin-Jones (2008), Facebook has the potential to enhance interpersonal communication. They assumed that exceptional functions of Facebook make available a constructive learning environment for language learners.

Ajjan and Hartshorne (2008) reported that Facebook users may enhance their communication and writing skills through authentic social interactions on the platform. Mill (2009) determined that language acquisition through Facebook was effective, as authentic social interactions enhance learners' vocal communication skills in real-world contexts.

Additionally, Shin (2011) utilized Facebook as the medium for assessment. The data suggested that evaluations on Facebook significantly improved students' learning engagement and motivation. These positive outcomes indicated that social interactions on Facebook influence the consequences of language learning.

### 2.4 Gender differences on the use of social media

A study conducted at the University of California demonstrates that female students allocate more time to social networking sites, engaging with friends and fostering a positive collective self-esteem associated with enjoyment and leisure. In contrast, male students tend to utilize these platforms for unproductive purposes, lacking educational benefits (Barker, 2009).

learners from diverse cultural and social surroundings employ SNS in a different way. In Libyan case students use Facebook just for chatting, they use Facebook for fun such as making friendships, communicate with friends. Consequently, students of varying genders and cultures may utilize Facebook differently for educational purposes; thus, it is imperative for us as educators to enhance our awareness of these differences to create more effective learning experiences.





## 2.5 The role Facebook as a Language Learning tool

In these modern days, social media have been broadly established as professional platforms for intellectual communications, particularly on institution of higher education campuses. According to Blattner and Fiori (2009), Facebook is the most popular social media platform currently available, with over 200 million users. Additionally, it is one of the websites that is expanding at the quickest rate and is the most well-known on the Internet. The research conducted by McLoughlin and Lee (2008) revealed that Facebook fulfills numerous roles, including interaction and the dissemination of information.

Facebook has been a valuable mean to develop communication among educators and undergraduates (Godwin-Jones, 2008; Sturgeon & Walker, 2009). Facebook has a significant influence in the educational context for both instructors and students (Villano, 2007). It encourages learners to diligently complete their homework, facilitates the acquisition of foreign languages (Abidin, Ahmad, & Kabilan, 2010), and positively impacts language proficiency growth (Depew & Skerrett, for example, as stated in Aydin (2014), p. 157). A significant impact was made by Facebook on the development of students' community habits. It is hypothesized by Hamilton (2009) that Facebook has the potential to provide an atmosphere that is suitable for connecting young people who are passionate about books and authors, hence developing literary communities among these individuals (Walker, 2010). According to Shahrokni (2009), Blattner and Fiori (2009) highlighted the fact that Facebook has the potential to boost competitiveness among individuals who are learning a second language and so assist them in acquiring a diverse and unique vocabulary.

Besides social interaction barriers, Facebook also brings significant effects on language competence and performance. When activists make use of Facebook as an instrument for academic target by investigating the site using English language, immense opportunities arise for users to gain knowledge as well to English language with millions of users at the same time. learners are capable of getting untaught knowledge or information after a variety of interactions with other users on Facebook. When students acquired direct or indirect recommendations in Facebook, it can be used for language improvement goal.





### 3. Methodology

The research method applied in this current article is a case study design as it engages a particular group of media students in the faculty of arts and sciences at university of Derna. This research is meant to gain insights into students' awareness on the use of Facebook as a substitute mean in learning English for this reason case study is the most excellent technique to be used as it facilitates the authors to gain comprehensive and meaningful information that might clarify the events. Quantitative approach is used in this current paper as the experiential evaluation consists of numerical analysis and measurements.

The data of this present research will be collected through primary data. Primary data, also identified as first-hand data, it is mainly contemporary data collected, self-administered and planned by the researcher. The research team has purposely designed the questionnaires according to the objectives to make certain the reliability and accurateness of the outcome.

The questionnaire, adapted from Kabilan et al. (2010), is organized into six sections: Section A: Facebook use, Section B: Facebook engagement, Section C: Facebook interaction, and Section D: Facebook participation. The utilization of Facebook, Section C Part D addresses the acquisition of English on Facebook, Part E discusses the languages utilized on the platform, and Part F examines demographic information. The concentration of this paper is on part D. Above and beyond, the giving out procedure is completely carried out by the research team.

Sampling design is a procedure of choosing a suitable number of units from the subjects of interest to give precise information about the whole respondents (Creswell et al, 2007). The participants of this study are undergraduate students from university of Derna, particularly, from the department of media. A sample size of 120 students are included in this study and the amount of this population is adequate to attain an accurate and consistent result. The subjects are divided into two groups, male and female, the male group consist of 40 students whereas the female group consist of 80 students, according to their age, they are ranging from 19 to 24.

This current research will apply SPSS 18 in analyzing and examining the collected data qualitatively. A questionnaire will be distributed in order to find out about the potential role of Facebook in learning English.



#### 4. Findings and Discussions

**Figure 1. Using Facebook according to gender**

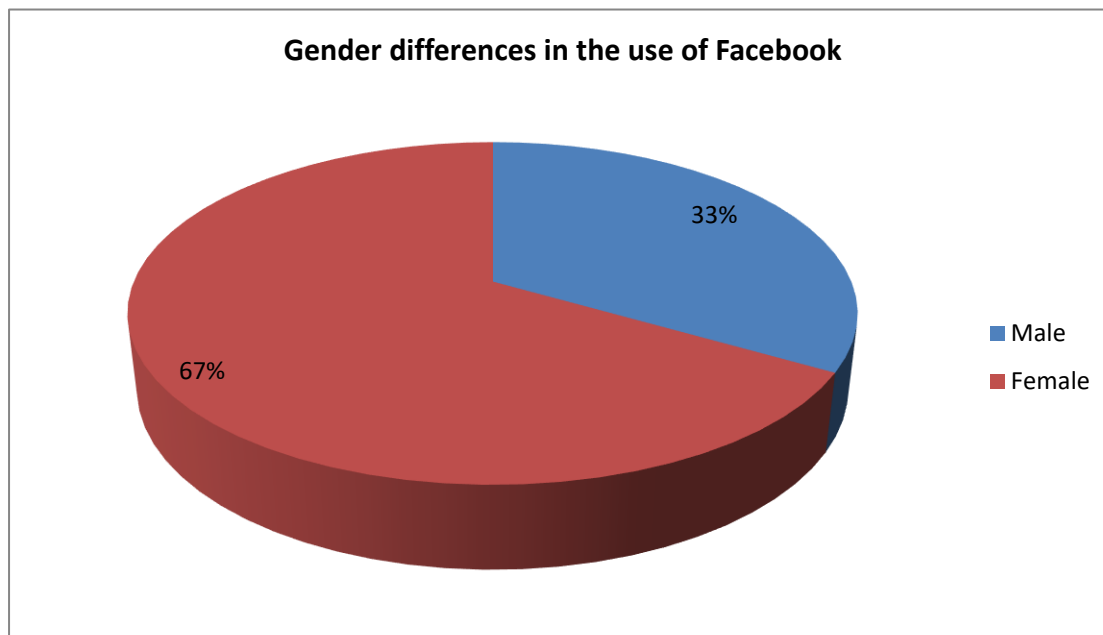


Figure 1. shows the frequency of answer to the first question of the survey How often do you use the internet (Facebook)? The percentage of the stated figure below shows that female use Facebook more than male. 67% percent of the participants (female), use the internet every day whereas 33% percent of the participants (male), use the internet a few times in a week.

#### 4.2 Using Facebook according English language learning

**Table 1. T-test Results for Differences in Participants' Opinions on Vocabulary and Grammar**

	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Female group	80	2.8	0.42	2.43*	.013
Male group	40	1.4	0.46		

$P < 0.05^*$



The survey was designed to assess students' proficiency in vocabulary and grammar. An independent t-test was conducted for the female and male groups to assess the overall impact of Facebook on language learning, utilizing the aggregate scores from the two categories (vocabulary and grammar). The results demonstrated a substantial disparity between the two groups ( $t=2.43$ ,  $p<.05$ ) regarding total learning. This result suggests that there were statistically significant differences in participants' learning outcomes associated with Facebook use, specifically regarding vocabulary acquisition and grammar proficiency.

#### 4.3 The perceptions of students regarding the use of Facebook for English Language Learners

**Table 2: Male and female students' perceptions of their English language skills**

Item	Male (n=40)			Female (n=80)		
	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes
(Subsequently using Facebook, I feel that I have ...)						
a) *Increased English proficiency	7	14	19	18	24	38
b) *Learned new English words	14	11	15	20	25	35
c) *Learned new English sentences	9	14	17	15	25	40

Table 2 demonstrates that female students exhibited higher percentages than male students across all three items. The disparities between genders were substantial, indicating that female students exhibited more favorable opinions, a better willingness to learn, superior language skills, and proactive efforts in developing English proficiency on Facebook.



#### 4.4 Learners' attitudes toward Facebook in Language Learning

**Table 3. Male and female students' insights of their attitudes for ELL after using**

Item	Male (n=40)			Female (n=80)		
	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes
(After using Facebook, I feel that ...)						
a) *I Like learning English more	9	13	18	20	28	32
b) *Learning English is easier	7	14	19	20	25	35
c) * English is more interesting	8	10	22	10	30	40

Table 3. exhibited substantial disparities among the three items, with female students exhibiting higher percentages than their male counterparts. This suggests that female pupils have more favorable attitudes toward ELL on Facebook than their male counterparts.

The intention of this study is to investigate the role of social media in learning English as a foreign language in Libya. The students involved in this study shown a favorable disposition towards utilizing social media for the acquisition of English as a foreign language. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, have gained immense popularity among Internet users seeking to share their opinions and participate in various online activities.

Social media is widely accessible, free, and appealing to users, serving as a contemporary platform for English students to express themselves creatively. Educators may promote student learning through this type of activity. This study presents a significant finding that demonstrates social media's efficacy in facilitating the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

A considerable portion of participants holds the view that Facebook has positively impacted their vocabulary enhancement, sentence formation, and general proficiency in the English language. Significant differences exist in how male and female students perceive



motivation, attitudes, and the development of English language skills, with female students demonstrating more positive perceptions compared to their male peers.

It is important to emphasize that social media has primarily facilitated the communication between students and native English speakers. In conclusion, the investigation also provides insight into the technical proficiency of the students in utilizing certain social media tools. The majority of the students had never participated in an online forum, and none had ever created a blog. Nevertheless, these were not regarded as their limitations, as they were able to quickly overcome the challenges they encountered.

## 5. Conclusion

Consequently, the implementation of Facebook for educational purposes necessitates appropriate conditions and support from all stakeholders. Utilizing Facebook for learning enhances students' collaborative skills and facilitates superior academic outcomes. Utilizing Facebook enables students to enhance their acquaintance with one another, elevating education to its pinnacle and rendering it more engaging, therefore fostering more enriching learning environments.

It is recommended that the instructors increase their engagement in facilitating activities within the Facebook group. This will thus encourage greater student participation. The study plan's design must be meticulously prepared in advance to provide comprehensive coverage of all topics related to utilizing Facebook for activities. The educational institution should recognize Facebook's potential in facilitating the teaching and learning process. Consequently, they want to enhance the internet connectivity provisions for students and faculty. The unavailability of subjects was a significant challenge to the investigation.

A significant number of participants believe that Facebook has favorably influenced their vocabulary development, sentence construction, and overall English language proficiency. There are notable disparities between male and female students' perceptions on motivation, attitudes, and the acquisition of English language abilities.

As a conclusion, Facebook has the potential to facilitate the acquisition of the English language by students from Libya through the process of accidental learning. However, the scope of this study is limited to a thorough examination of Facebook's overall usage. Future



research may investigate the experiences and interactions of students within a designated group for the purpose of English language learning, as well as how they are exposed to and utilization of the English language on Facebook. Additionally, specific instructional activities on the platform, such as content reading and writing, may be investigated, and how they relate with English language acquisition may be investigated. The students' understanding of the benefits and limitations of this technology in relation to their education will be improved by the use of these areas.

Ultimately, Facebook offers distinctive features that enable educators to create activities that include communication, collaboration, and sharing tactics. These tactics are deemed helpful for learning through social networks. This study demonstrated that the implementation of appropriate techniques favorably influenced both students' learning attitudes and academic achievements through Facebook.



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