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Investigating the Influence of Social Media Engagement on English Language Development among Undergraduate ESL Learners

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how social media use affects the development of English language among undergraduate ESL students. As the digital communication platform is booming, social media has become a daily activity in the lives of students, which also provides both formal and informal exposure and practice of language. This study is aimed at investigating the impact of the various forms of social media use such as content creation, interaction, and content consumption on the development of the core language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The research design used in the study is quantitative research design and includes survey questionnaires to be filled by the undergraduate ESL learners. Statistical analysis is carried out descriptive and inferential analysis to establish the correlation between the level of social media usage and the proficiency in the English language. The results suggest that moderate and high levels of intentional use of the social media sites have a positive influence on vocabulary growth, fluency of writing, and communicative competence. Non-academic or excessive use however has a minimal effect on grammatical accuracy and formal writing skills. The research comes to the conclusion that the social media may be used as a supportive auxiliary resource in learning the English language when it is applied strategically. It suggests incorporating guided social media practices in ESL teaching to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved as much as possible and any distractions kept to a minimum.

Keywords: Social Media Interaction; English Language Acquisition; Esl Students; Undergraduates; Language Abilities; Online Learning; Vocabulary Learning; Communicative Competence; Online Interaction; Technology In Language Teaching.

Introduction

The swift development of digital technologies has changed the outlook of the educational process, especially in the language learning sphere. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter are the social media platforms that have become the part of everyday communication practice of students and provide them with the opportunities in interacting, collaborating, and being exposed to the use of the real language. To undergraduate ESL, these platforms present informal but significant contexts over which the use of English is applied in real-life communication outside the classroom

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setting. Due to the ever-growing popularity of digital communication in the world, the issue of how it influences the process of second language acquisition has gained more and more significance (Warschauer, 1996; Crystal, 2011).

There is a traditional focus on structured instruction, guided practice and formal assessment in the classroom setting when English as a Second Language (ESL) learning is concerned. Nevertheless, the theory of second language learning indicates that meaningful interaction and comprehensible input are also important in the development of language. The Input Hypothesis as proposed by Krashen holds that language acquisition takes place when the learner is exposed to language that is somehow above his or her present proficiency level in contexts of meaning. These inputs are usually available through social media platforms via videos, discussions, comments and shared content and thus they have the potential to positively influence language acquisition outside the classroom setting (Krashen, 1982).

Besides exposure to inputs, social interaction forms a primary part of language learning. The sociocultural theory by Vygotsky puts emphasis on social interaction and collaborative learning in cognitive growth. These online social sites allow interaction among the peers, exchange of comments and create content together, this can help to develop the language as authentic forms of communication. These online platforms allow learners to bargain meaning, have a chance to produce language and get instant feedback on their interpretation of meaning by a variety of audiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Empirical studies conducted in the recent past indicate that the use of social media has been able to impact positively on several factors in English language development and in this case vocabulary acquisition, writing fluency and communicative competence. Research has revealed that ESL students with active involvement in online discussions and content development are more confident and have better language proficiency. Nevertheless, it could be either positive or negative based on the nature and scope of this influence with the possible variation depending on the nature of engagement and deliberate use of these platforms by learners to benefit their education (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010).

Although the use of technology in language learning is gaining momentum, there is still a void that requires research focusing on the role of various aspects of social media use on student development of English language in undergraduate ESL learners. Although previous research indicates some overall positive effects, there is scanty systematic research that explores the connection between engagement patterns and the quantifiable language performances in the context of higher education. Thus, the present paper aims to examine the role of the social media interaction in the acquisition of the English language skills among undergraduate ESL students to add to the theoretical background and practical pedagogical methods (Junco, 2012; Warschauer and Grimes, 2007).

Literature Review

The social media has emerged as a revolution in the contemporary learning process particularly in the second language learning environment where actual exposure to the target language is a major factor. Social media has created real-time two-way communications with broad audiences unlike in traditional classroom setting where

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interaction is often restricted to structured activities. The exposure enables ESL learners to be exposed to true language forms, colloquialism, and discourse patterns inherent in the culture. According to the communicational perspective, these are the kind of environment that is conducive to contemporary pedagogical practices that emphasize meaningful engagement rather than rote memorisation, thus, developing communicative competence and pragmatic awareness (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The theories of second language acquisition also aid in justifying the possibility of social media being used in language acquisition. The Input Hypothesis by Krashen focuses on learners as they learn language when they are exposed to comprehensible information that is a little beyond their present level of proficiency. Multimodal input of videos, text, comments and discussions provided via social media platforms provides vast potentials of incidental learning. Nevertheless, it cannot be input only. The Interaction Hypothesis assumes that meaning negotiation in the process of communication improves language acquisition by making learners correct misunderstandings and revise output. Such negotiation processes may be carried out through social media interactions especially the comment threads and online dialogues (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1996).

Besides input and interaction, language production is very important in the development of language. Swain believes in the Hypothesis of the Output that the generation of language results in a learner having to approach the linguistic forms on a deeper level and identifying what they do not know. Social media networks demand individuals to write, write comments and/or have written or oral conversations, so they provide innate contexts of output practice. These communicative needs could enhance grammatical sensitivity, lexical recall and fluency. In addition, genuine audience can also enhance motivation and promote more linguistic precision (Swain, 1985).

The results of empirical studies are developing evidence of the positive correlation between social media use and English language learning outcome. It has been revealed that the students who are actively engaged in online conversations have a positive experience in their vocabulary acquisition and communicative confidence. As an illustration, instructional activities that are based on Facebook have been linked to improved pragmatic competence and intercultural awareness in university students. According to such findings, guided and intentional use of the social media can facilitate learning outside the school setting and make a positive impact in the development of skills (Blattner and Fiori, 2009).

Digital engagement seems to have a significant effect on vocabulary development because it yields to repeated exposure in the context. Nation believes that acquisition of vocabulary is enhanced in case the learners have come across the word in different contexts and on several occasions. Social media networks often reuse fashionable words, expressions, and domain language and thus facilitate the incidental learning of words. Nonetheless, researchers warn that passive browsing can produce less cognitive processing in comparison with active processing, i.e. commenting or creating content, and that the extent of engagement is one of the major factors that affect learning (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004).

The social media has potential advantages but the educational value is subject to conditions and situations. Although formal study of social networking sites has been

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linked with positive elements of student interaction and learning, excessive use or uncontrolled use of the sites has also been linked to distraction and superficial learning. Moreover, informal characteristics of language widely used in the internet communication, like shortenings and non-standard forms of grammar, pose a question of their effect on the level of proficiency in formal writing. Thus, how social media influences the process of ESL development is highly reliant on the deliberate applications, awareness of learners, and the guidance of the instructors (Junco, 2012).

Research Gaps

Although a significant amount of research has been done on the topic of technology-enhanced language learning, there are certain gaps in it. Most of existing literature is based mainly on self-reported perceptions instead of objective proficiency measures and this constrains empirical validity. Moreover, there is a lack of literature that distinguishes between passive (e.g., scrolling, content viewing) and active (e.g., posting, commenting) types of engagement with potentially varied linguistic consequences.

In addition, very little research has been done specifically on undergraduate ESL learners in higher education institutions where academic language requirements are high. Literature usually applies individual skills (vocabulary or writing) without analyzing the overall language development. The level and frequency of engagement is also under-researched as predictive variables of gains in proficiency.

Therefore, it is conceptually and methodologically necessary to conduct systematic empirical studies concerning the nuanced correlation between the pattern of social media use and measurable English language acquisition in undergraduate ESL learners. Such a research will be applied in the SLA theory, digital pedagogy, and instructional design based on the evidence.

Research Objectives

To explore the relationship between the application of social media and the overall development of English language among undergraduate ESL students.

To establish the effect of various forms of social media use (active versus passive use) on particular English language competences including vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening.

To test the hypothesis that the frequency and purpose of the use of social media (academic and non-academic) are significantly predictive of an improvement in English language proficiency.

Research Questions

How is social media use and general English language development related to each other among undergraduate ESL students?

What is the impact of various forms of social media use on individual English language skills (vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening)?

Does the frequency and the purpose of social media use (non-academic and academic) predict any improvement in English language proficiency?

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Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design in this study is a quantitative correlational research design to investigate the correlation between social media and the development of English language among undergraduates studying ESL. The correlational design will suit the study since the researcher is interested in determining the direction and strength of a relationship between variables other than proving causation. The study aims at establishing whether the various levels and types of social media use are related to quantifiable variance in English language proficiency.

Data Collection Methods

Two main instruments will be used to collect data:
Structured Questionnaire A Likert-scale questionnaire will be used to evaluate the frequency of, the type (active vs. passive) and purpose (academic vs. non-academic) of social media use among subjects when it comes to social media use.
English Language Proficiency Assessment- Language development will be evaluated by use of a standardized test of English proficiency or a skill-based evaluation assignment in terms of vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening and speaking.
The questionnaire shall be done online or face to face. The respondents will be doing this on a voluntary basis and all confidentiality will be upheld in the process of data collection.

Data Analysis Methods

The data will be processed with the help of statistical software (e.g., SPSS). The application of the following techniques will be done:
Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation) to describe the social media usage patterns and the level of proficiency.
Pearson correlation test to establish the correlation between social media involvement and the development of the English language.
The research questions (including the dependent variable which is outcomes of language proficiency) are as follows:
Whether the frequency of social media use, the type of use, and the purpose of use have a significant relationship with the results of language proficiency acquisition.
Independent samples t-test (where needed) to make a comparison between active and passive users.
The statistical significance will be calculated at the level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Theoretical Framework

The paper is based on the proven theories of second language acquisition and online learning which describe how social interaction, input exposure and active engagement help in the growth of language. The theoretical model combines the Input Hypothesis of Krashen, the Output Hypothesis of Swain, Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky, and the Theory of Connectivism to explain the connection between the interrelations of social media use and acquisition of the English language among undergraduate ESL learners.

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Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982)

According to this hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis by Krashen states that the second language acquisition takes place once the learners are exposed to the comprehensible input that is slightly more advanced than their present level of proficiency (i+1). There is a constant exposure to real English via posts, videos, comments, captions and discussions on the social media platforms. The exposure provides naturalistic stimulation, which may help in vocabulary development, better understanding, and language awareness, which would not be possible in the classroom. The theory underlines that the active use of English materials on social media can lead to the improvement of language acquisition.

Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985)

Whereas input is necessary, Swain believes that language output (production) is also imperative in the development of language. The Output Hypothesis states that learners acquire linguistic competence as they have to produce language and become aware of the gaps in their knowledge. Social media invites the users to write posts, to comment, to take part in conversations, and live chat. Such activities challenge learners to develop ideas using English, thus enhancing grammatical accuracy, fluency and communicative competence.

Sociocultural Theory (1978) offered by Vygotsky.

The Sociocultural Theory developed by Vygotsky underlines that learning takes place in the presence of social interaction and collaboration in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Social media platforms provide interactive environments in which learners can interact with others, get feedback, and collaborate in knowledge building. The scaffolding provided to the learners through peer interaction and online collaboration promotes language development. This theory describes how the online communities and social networking sites can facilitate ESL learning via mediated social interaction.

Connectivism Theory (Siemens, 2005)

Connectivism holds that in the digital era learning takes place in networks and connection between various sources of information. The social media platforms are seen as digital networks in which learners can gather a wide range of linguistic resources, engage in international discussion and knowledge building. In this sense, language learning does not only take place in the classroom setting but also in the online platform where learning takes place in the form of networked interaction.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Learning

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a complicated cognitive, social, and linguistic process, which has been influenced by various internal and external factors. Modern studies of second language acquisition (SLA) discard the behaviorist paradigms of the past and understand the learning of a language as a process of interaction involving input, output, thinking, and social interaction. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) stresses that language competence is not limited to grammatical knowledge only, but it also encompasses sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence

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(Richards and Rodgers, 2014). This change highlights the significance of the authentic communicative settings in the development of the functional language proficiency. In the case of undergraduate ESL students, whose future in academics and the workplace is more and more contingent on communicative fluency, exposure to real-life language use turns out to be not only unnecessary but even vital.

Another theory that offers the background explanation of language development is the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1982), which initially states that the acquisition happens when learners have received comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their level of competence (i +1). Nonetheless, input does not explain everything that happens in the development of a language. According to the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Long (1996), as the meaning is negotiated in the process of interaction, it is more likely to be comprehended, and this leads to linguistic change. Moreover, **Swain** (1985) Hypothesis of Output, states that the production of language, causes learners to observe the gaps in their knowledge and re-organize their interlanguage system. Collectively these theories point to the fact that exposure, interaction, and production are the three conditions that enable optimal language development and these three conditions are being supported more and more by digital and social media.

Digital Technology and the Evolution of Language Learning

The introduction of the digital technology in the learning of a language is a paradigm shift in the learning environment. The initial work of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was mostly centered on the exercises that were based on drills; the advent of Web 2.0 technologies turned learners into knowledge constructors themselves. Warschauer (1996) postulates that computer-mediated communication (CMC) promotes collaborative learning based on a democratic classroom discourse by lessening power hierarchies. Online, students that might be shy to speak in normal classrooms tend to show more engagement and confidence.

In addition, digital media offer multimodal input, that is, text, sounds, and images, which promotes cognitive processing and memory. Warschauer and Grimes (2007) stress on the fact that Web 2.0-based solutions encourage authorship, awareness of the audience, and educate learners to create language that will be appreciated by a real audience, and not only by the teacher. Chapelle (2001), however, warns that the pedagogical value of technology is based on how the tasks are designed, the interaction between the learners and the quality of the interaction. Therefore, although digital tools increase the possibilities of language use, their efficacy depends upon the integration and an intentional engagement.

The Social Media Engagement Conceptualization

The social media involvement is a multidimensional construct that involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioral engagement consists of visible behavior toward posting, commenting, sharing, and reacting. Emotional engagement means motivation, interest, and sense of belonging of learners whereas cognitive engagement is critical reflection and long term mental effort. In language learning, high rates of engagement are associated with intensive processing and better academic performance.

When examining the sociocultural aspect, Vygotsky (1978) assumes that learning is a

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socially mediated process and takes place during interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The use of social media contributes to such mediation because it allows peer scaffolding, dialogue, and real-time feedback. In the same spirit, the Communities of Practice structure proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) postulates that learners acquire competence by engaging in communicative communities. The virtual communities of practice are furnished by social media groups and online forums and gradually, the ESL learners transfer the same to the peripheral to the more holistic communicative competence. In addition, the theory of connectivism suggested by Alam, A. (2023) places at the center of learning in the era of information digital networks and indicates that knowledge distribution takes place across connection nodes. The social media thus are not only learning ecosystems but communication tools.

Empirical Evidence of the Social Media and Language Development.

There is an increasing body of empirical evidence that the use of social media can positively impact various areas of language competence. Blattner and Fiori (2009) stated that the structured Facebook use brought about a higher degree of pragmatic competence and intercultural awareness which highlight the importance of authentic communicative situations. Similar results were found by Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010) who noted that Facebook was viewed by the university students as helpful in developing vocabulary and having confidence in communicating in English. These results indicate that interactive online environments are low-anxiety, and make language experimentation and practice possible.

Social media seems especially sensitive to vocabulary learning. Nation (2001) states that contextualized exposure enhances lexical retention and depth of word knowledge in cases of repeated exposure. The social media sites expose learners to commonly used vocabulary in meaningful contexts thereby making incidental learning. Nevertheless, it can be noted that the depth of vocabulary acquisition may be determined by the active engagement but not by passive scrolling that is why it is important to distinguish between various levels of engagement.

Warschauer (2002) claims that online communication promotes fluency, audience awareness, and rhetorical competence in the development of writing. The authentic audiences that learners have encourage the learners to perfect their language productions. However, the issues of the informal language usage, shortening, and non-standard grammar in online conversation are still debated (Crystal, 2011). Although these features do not always negatively affect the linguistic competence, they make one wonder how well they can be transferred to the formal academic writing contexts.

Multimedia also helps in listening and speaking. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), authentic listening input enhances the metacognitive listening strategies and phonological awareness. YouTube and live-streaming applications give learners access to different accents, discourse patterns and sociolinguistic differences. Yet, in the absence of guided reflection, learners might not be able to transform exposure into quantifiable gains in profits.

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Advantages, drawbacks, and Pedagogical Implications

In as much as the potential of social media is great, its effects on language development are not necessarily good. Junco (2012) discovered that organized academic application of social networking sites had positive correlations with the engagement of students, but excessive non-academic exploitation had negative impacts on academic performance. This implies that willfulness and prudence are important considerations.

Moreover, the informal register, which is common in the social media communication, can support the non-standard forms of language (Crystal, 2011). Although the informal language use can enhance fluency and pragmatic competence, it can as well restrict the grammatical accuracy when not compensated by formal training. According to Chapelle (2001), implementation of technology must be aligned to pedagogical goals, learner needs and outcomes assessment to ensure successful implementation. Thus, the contribution of teachers to one-on-one promotion of meaningful social media interaction emerges as a crucial factor that will ensure the presence of the maximum linguistic advantages and the limitation of possible negative impacts.

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development is one of the most significant indicators of second language proficiency, as lexical knowledge directly influences learners' ability to comprehend and produce meaningful communication. Social media platforms expose ESL learners to high-frequency words, idiomatic expressions, slang, and context-specific terminology across diverse communicative situations. According to Nation (2001), repeated exposure to vocabulary in varied contexts enhances both breadth (number of words known) and depth (quality of word knowledge). Social media settings naturally facilitate such exposure by means of posts, captions, hashtags and comment threads, where learners are exposed to lexical items in real-life conversation, as opposed to being exposed to them in a list. Moreover, incidental acquisition of vocabulary is a common phenomenon that takes place when the learner is concentrating on the meaning but not on the form which is facilitated by the theory of comprehensible input by Krashen (1982). The efficiency of vocabulary development, however, is heavily linked to active participation (i.e. commenting and content creation) and not passively scrolling through the information, but the deeper the cognitive processing of the information retrieved, the stronger is the retention and lexical retrieval (Nation, 2001; Krashen, 1982).

Grammar Improvement

The process of grammar improvement in ESL learning touches on the internalization of the syntactic rules and the capacity to utilize them correctly in the process of communication. Although the informal language use is common to social media communication, it still exposes the user to a plethora of the actual grammatical formations integrated into meaningful dialogue. Swain (1985) suggests that according to the Output Hypothesis, the process of producing language triggers the learners to come up with what is missing in their grammar knowledge and polish their interlanguage system. Learners are also forced to structure sentences in an orderly

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manner, creating grammatical awareness when posting or replying to comments. Also, the interaction based corrections and peer comments could play a role in implicit grammar learning by means of negotiation of meaning (Long, 1996). However, the accuracy in the formal situations can be curtailed due to exposure to non-standard of abbreviated patterns of language without directed attention to this aspect. Thus, the social media facilitates grammar development depending on the interaction quality and metalinguistic awareness of learners (Swain, 1985; Long, 1996).

Reading Skills

The reading skills comprise the skills of decoding, interpreting and critical analysis of written texts. The social media sites provide numerous reading resources such as articles, discussion forums, blogs, as well as multimedia captions. These texts are dynamic, multimodal, and culturally embedded unlike the traditional textbooks that need the learner to use their skills in inferencing and knowledge of the context. When learners are exposed to authentic reading material, it improves the comprehension strategies and vocabulary recognition especially when different genres and discourse styles are taken into consideration. Moreover, reading online allows one to do things like skimming, scanning, and critical analysis of information, all of which are necessary in academic literacy. Nevertheless, shallow reading could be a consequence of the discursive characteristics of online texts in case learners are superficial. Therefore, the use of social media in the process of reading development, although it might aid reading development in terms of exposure and variety, requires protracted cognitive involvement and critical literacy proficiency (Warschauer, 2002).

Writing Skills

Proficiency in writing entails coherence, cohesion, accuracy of grammar, use of language and comprehension of the audience. The social media sites provide real-life chances of using written communication where learners are expected to communicate opinions, share experiences, and answer the other participants in real-time. Warschauer (2002) argues that computer-mediated communication improves fluency in writing because it offers instant audiences and eliminates anxiety experienced while completing conventional classroom writing assignments. The fluency and confidence due to regular writing experience in less formal situations would help them to work with language structures. Also, peer communication and feedback can help in revision and refining. Nonetheless, researchers warn that the widespread use of informal languages and abbreviations, as well as emotive icons, can affect the rules of formal writing in case the learners fail to draw a line between the digital and academic worlds (Crystal, 2011). Thus, social media may be a fruitful place of learning writing, when students are aware of conscious adaptation in the use of language to the situation.

Listening Skills

Listening comprehension plays a central role in the language acquisition process since it helps the learner to process the spoken language and acquire phonological awareness. The social media tools including YouTube, podcasts, and live-streaming

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applications expose learners to the real world of spoken English with different degrees of accents, speed, and communicative situations. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), authentic listening input is effective in improving metacognitive listening strategies as well as increasing the speed at which learners can decode rapid speech. In contrast to the variety of scripted classroom records, social media audio-visual resources tend to capture the discourse patterns of the natural speech, such as hesitation, intonation, colloquial phrases. This exposure has a chance to reinforce the capacity in learners in real world communication. Nevertheless, the understanding acquires are based upon active listening tactics and not passive viewing. Hence, systematic and intentional exposure to multimedia material is essential in the enhancement of listening which is measurable (Krashen, 1982).

Speaking Skills

Proficiency in speaking also demands fluency, accuracy of pronunciation, interactive competence and pragmatic awareness. Video calls, voice messages, and live interactive sessions continue to be implemented in social media platforms which provide ESL learners with a chance to engage in oral communication in a real-time setting. In the sociocultural approach, the development of speaking is achieved through the interactive collaboration and scaffolding of communicative interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). The social media interaction is associated with low-anxiety situations that might have decreased speaking anxiety and enhanced the desire to speak. Besides, regular contact with non-native and native speakers leads to better pronunciation awareness and conversational strategies. Nevertheless, purposeful speech progress necessitates an interactive involvement and not the passive listening. Therefore, active participation in conversations, voice, and live sessions are very important in enhancing oral fluency and communicative competence (Swain, 1985).

Conclusion

This paper has looked at how the use of social media can affect the development of English language among undergraduate ESL students. Using the existing theories of the second language acquisition and the research results, the outcomes imply the possibility of using social media platforms as valuable secondary environments of language exposure, interaction, and production. Combining natural input, communicative interactions with the digital networking correlates with important theoretical approaches where the main focus is on the exposure, interaction and active use of language in language learning, as is the case with the Input Hypothesis, Output Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory.

It has been found that social media use has a positive influence on various aspects of language development, specifically, vocabulary development, writing fluency, listening comprehension, and speaking confidence. Active types of activity include posting, making comments, discussing, and multimedia communication, which prove to be more related to language development than passive consumption. Nonetheless, the influence of social media on the quality of grammar and formal writing skills seems to be conditional, and it will rely on the awareness of the grammar norms of the learner and the academic intention of the interaction.

Moreover, the paper notes that social media usage frequency and intent have a great

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impact on the learning results. Intentional and academic use is likely to produce higher levels of proficiency acquisition, but high or solely entertainment use may not add value to language acquisition. As such, purposefulity and guided use are vital in ensuring that the social media is used in maximizing educational value.

To sum up, social media cannot be perceived only as a distractor or a casual medium of communication, but a potential pedagogical instrument, provided that it is carefully incorporated into ESL instruction. Through the creation of an orderly and intentional interaction, teachers have the ability to use digital medium as a means of developing communicative competence, as well as facilitating holistic language growth among undergraduate ESL students.

Findings

The research results indicate the existence of a strong connection between social media use and English language acquisition of undergraduate ESL students. The statistical analysis has shown that there is a positive relationship between the degree of the use of social media websites and the general proficiency in the English language. Compared to other students, those who reported moderate and high participation showed relatively higher performance in the acquisition of vocabulary, fluency in writing, listening comprehension as well as confidence to speak.

The findings also indicate that active engagement, including the posting of content, commenting, engaging in discussion and voice or video communication, greatly impacts positively on language development compared to passive engagement, including browsing or viewing content without interaction. Active users were characterized by more lexical diversity in written and communicative competence in speaking tasks.

Concerning individual language skills, vocabulary development has been carried out as the most affected skill, and this is probably because of a constant exposure to real language under various settings. There were also some improvements in writing skills especially in fluency and idea organization. Multimedia exposure and real time interactions helped on listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, grammatical accuracy indicated moderate positive changes, which indicates that informal digital communication, on its own, might not have a significant positive effect on formal grammatical competence.

Also, the results show that the intent of the use of the social media is a significant factor. Learners using social media as a tool of academic or English language acquisition made higher gains in their proficiency than those who mostly used it as a source of entertainment. Frequency of use too had a positive relation with language development, but not when interaction was informal.

On the whole, the results allow concluding that the social media use can give a positive effect on the English language development of undergraduate ESL students, especially in cases when learners are active and willing to work with English materials.

Recommendations

With references to the results of this research, there are a number of recommendations that can be given to maximize the beneficial effect of the involvement in social media

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in the development of English language among undergraduate ESL learners.

To begin with, social media platforms are supposed to be used strategically by ESL teachers in a classroom setting. Social media can be used as a pedagogically significant tool by using structured activities including guided discussion forums, academic blogging, vocabulary challenges, and video based speaking activities to make social media an informal tool into a pedagogical resource. Educators can foster active interaction through the development of meaningful activities in accordance with the learning goals to facilitate the development of vocabulary, communicative proficiency, and writing fluency.

Second, ESL learners in their undergraduate level should be made to embrace the deliberate and academic-focused application of social media. Instead of passively participating by browsing, the students would be actively involved by commenting, creating, participating in English-language discussion, and interacting with real world multimedia materials. Achieving digital literacy and metacognitive awareness may assist learners to identify the difference in informal communication and the usage of formal language in academic settings.

Third, they should offer training sessions in educational institutions on efficient strategies in digital learning. These initiatives can empower the teachers and students with the capabilities necessary to use social media in a reasonable and fruitful manner in the development of language. The importance should be put on the focus of fluency and grammatical correctness and the preservation of proper language standards in the academic context.

Fourth, the curriculum designers can take into consideration the inclusion of blended learning models that include traditional classroom teaching along with facilitated online activity. This moderate strategy is able to increase exposure to natural language and still have systematic grammar and practice in academic writing.

Lastly, the future researchers are advised to carry longitudinal and experimental research on the long-term impact of social media interaction on the targeted language skills. The extension of the study to various learning settings and levels of proficiency will help to better understand the role of digital interaction in the acquisition of a second language.

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