

The Impact of Feedback in Facebook on Students' Language Proficiency

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Abstract – Facebook is a wealth of knowledge, which allows group discussion, asking questions, exposing to different perspectives, observing new information, sharing experiences, discovering newness of life, and socio-pragmatic development. It is an open platform for knowledge exchange from scholars with minimum cost but maximum effectiveness. The idea of using Facebook as a learning tool was implemented in an English for Specific Purposes course at a private university. This study was conducted to find out the effects of online feedback in Facebook on students' language proficiency and investigate their attitudes toward learning through Facebook. Forty participants were selected to take part in the experiment during the first semester of 2017 academic year. Two assignments were a requirement of the course comprising news writing and news reading. In each assignment, scores were given to students' practice and real performance. The study employed feedback offered by teacher and peers in Facebook as a tool to develop students' proficiency. The findings reveal that there were statistically significant improvements in the revised writing draft and news reading which were linked to peers and teacher feedback. An enormous decrease in making mistakes indicated that students used the comments to improve their performances. In addition, the replies from an open-ended questionnaire indicated positive attitudes toward the use of Facebook as a learning tool. However, several disadvantages along with suggestions are useful for future course development.

Keywords – Facebook, language proficiency, feedback

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1. Introduction

Computer-mediated network can be integrated as a constructive educational tool to foster e-learning. The platform makes it more resourceful, convenient and interesting between virtual learners and classmates together with learners and teacher than conventional learning settings. Studies conducted in the last decade have illustrated the impact of internet implications enhancing meaningful educational experiences [1]. Passive learners become more engaged and motivated in learning on such an asynchronous platform. Its default structure enables teachers to easily design and manage an interesting online course. Inevitably, teachers, in an asynchronous setting, are to learn new technology innovations for more dynamic learning quality, adopt new societal communication approaches, and adjust their pedagogical postures to utilize e-tools to foster academic objectives such as language competence and critical thinking skill [2].

Among many social networking websites, Facebook has indubitably emerged as one of the most vibrant ubiquitous phenomena for decades. The social network links and revitalizes communication and interconnectedness of peers, family, acquaintances, co-workers, friends of friends, circles, and even “people you may know.” Users, from their locality, simply and spontaneously click away words, pictures, animations, graphics, or clips to their social spheres in any geographic regions of the world as far as Wi-Fi is accessible. Their online messages vary from browsing social updates, common causes, affinity, apprehension, preoccupation, political preferences, controversial issues, and religious concerns, to exchanging information. Research discloses that the visual communication benefits users to perpetuate and strengthen relationship with their clique, community and network [3]. The numerous advantages of Facebook are vivid for the mainstream due to anytime-and-anywhere accessibility, familiarity to the majority, and friendly-user functions. Facebook better serves social interaction to stimulate positive collaboration and active contribution.

1.1 Facebook as a Platform of Feedback

Facebook is an outburst of the online world where teachers and students are actively engaged in their daily activities [4, 5]. Through Facebook, teachers can embed multimedia to splash colorful experiences to serve learners' various learning preferences and styles in unconventional fashions. According to Churches [6], Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive levels can be employed in the social network; for instance, "liking" is equivalent to remembering, "tagging and subscribing" refer to understanding, and reasoning a decision means evaluating. In accordance with Casey and Evans [7], social network creates a collaborative community and facilitates students to become critical thinkers who learn from one another, active participants, curious explorers, creative designers, and better communicators. Therefore, the enormous potential of this versatile online learning tool is highly possible to strengthen teachers' credibility into students' culture and community, foster students' individualized opportunities for deeper and meaningful intercommunications with teachers, peers, native speakers, and authentic sources [8]. To conclude, Facebook creates a positive and active learning atmosphere that promotes collaboration, social interaction with peers, gurus and professionals, and freedom to learn without time and physical boundaries.

Such casual learning outside class supports knowledge acquisition and construction as found in many studies. Comparatively, Facebook was deployed for digital-based learning to facilitate student's learning along with working [9]. The outcomes demonstrated student achievement with higher scores, active participation, and more learning enjoyment in the course. Moreover, Wang, Woo, Quek, Yang and Liu [10] notified student preference in Facebook due to its functions similar to Learning Management System (LMS). Interestingly, a research study revealed students' strong belief regarding Facebook that it was considered a purposive online platform creating learning environment, especially for English [11]. Ng'ambi, Brown, Bozalek, Gachago, and Wood show findings related to transforming learning and teaching methods collected from schooling in South Africa where social network sites were partially used for sharing resources [12]. The study reveals that the online platforms incredibly built a learning and growing community where reciprocal learning among students was reinforced, students' interaction with professionals took place, and learning outside class was furthered.

Feedback is a useful source of information for students to correct their mistakes and improve

language proficiency. At the present time, channels to give feedback are available outside class; for example, Facebook is a convenient option for a group or class to share opinion and receive comments to increase student language ability. Rollinson mentions that to develop language skills, Facebook is a favorable choice because feedback contributed on Facebook helps students to recognize mistakes and revise their writing [13]. Furthermore, students' critical thinking skill is also polished when reading classmates' writing. Referring to a study, student learning was significantly enhanced through the integration of the use of Facebook and peer evaluation when perceiving other peers' writing [14]. A study investigating the peer feedback and rewriting of the first drafts manifested that feedback on Facebook did improve rewritten work [15]. Comparing to direct confrontation environment, more chances on Facebook are on hand for students' reinforcement in communication with teacher and classmates. To conclude, feedback in a wired learning platform yields a lot of benefits such as more opportunity for feedback, new feasibility for contributors and recipients of feedback, cultivating the learning environment, and strengthening community [16].

1.2 Students' Language Proficiency

Instructional design and practice are considered crucial to successful learning outcomes [17]. In addition to textbook content, supplementary learning activities, exercises, readings, and writings especially courses related to language, technology can be blended for academic purposes to color learning experiences and facilitate more opportunities in practice to increase students' language proficiency. Thus, online activities can be designed to facilitate intercommunication and social interaction. Studies regarding multimedia learning reveal that students' attention, participation, proficiency and long-term memory increase significantly, when they learn from a platform where pictures and words are combined, [18]. Therefore, technology with various media components such as texts, sound, images, and videos can be used as a meaningfully embedded learning tool to foster reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, especially when their peers give feedbacks [19].

One of the course objectives is to develop students' language proficiency. In this regard, the gain-score model is considered the most basic measurement of change available. To ensure each student's achievement, student progress monitoring is implemented as a measurement tool to evaluate data of student performance. As Deno puts up, when student progress monitoring is employed, student learning is augmented, teacher decision making is

better, and student awareness in their achievement increases [20]. Teachers assess students' current ability and goals to be reached, and set the rate of achievement the students are to accomplish.

According to Good, Simmons, and Kameenui, research demonstrates validity and reliability in measurement of student progress in English learning [21]. Some research findings also support that when student progress monitoring is implemented systematically, teachers better evaluate students who need additional assistance in learning. Moreover, students' achievement becomes more satisfactory [22]. However, mastery measurement is beneficial to meet short-term instructional objectives. Teacher determines what to learn in a unit and design a criterion-referenced measurement to evaluate each progress students reach. By the measuring tool, teachers can identify students' progress to the rate of achievement.

In the current study, the criterion-referred growth model is used to compare each individual student's mastery against a set metric. In the study, the standard rubrics applying to all sections were employed as a mastery measurement for the particular assignments. For the first assignment, the main aim was to compare students' news reading performance on Facebook Live and the revised performance in class. Regarding the news writing task, the first and second performances were evaluated to detect any improvement. It is also necessary to examine whether there was progress or improvement on their particular mistakes after receiving teachers and peers' feedback.

This study has set three research questions as follows:

1. To what extent did the use of Facebook improve students' language proficiency?
2. Did the students have the improvement on their particular mistakes after receiving teachers and peers' feedback?
3. What were students' attitudes towards learning through Facebook?

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Participants

This study aims to investigate how the use of Facebook Live could improve writing and speaking English skills of undergraduate students. The participants in this study were 40 students (19 male and 21 female) who enrolled in English for a Specific

Purposes course, a required course, in a private university. It was a 3-unit credit course that met three hours weekly within a 14-week period. This course was usually taken by Communication Arts students.

2.2 Instruments

Data were collected from proficiency scores, feedback, and an open-ended questionnaire. The study particularly focused on two assignments students were to complete; News Reading (Speaking) and E-Newspaper (Writing). Nevertheless, scores were rated twice for each assignment. The first performance was assigned for practice (13 points) to receive feedback and comments from peers and the teacher, while the second performance was assessed to get another 13 points. On the final week of the semester, the students were asked to answer the open-ended questionnaire surveying their opinions towards the use of Facebook as a learning tool, advantages, disadvantages, and suggestions.

2.3 Learning Procedure

Facebook Live was embedded as a learning tool for the students to practice their news reading and receive teacher and peers' comments and response, and also to submit their first-draft and finished e-news article. Teacher created a class group in Facebook with a privacy setting, so the students would feel more relaxed.

For the first assignment, students were assigned to take a role play as a professional TV journalist. Facebook Live is a terrific feature to the class activities that allowed the teacher to model news reading together with pronunciation of difficult words and sounds and to remind the students of news reading tips for the News Reading Assignment. The students were live on Facebook within one-week time, and teacher would comment and correct each student individual's news reading and manners as a professional newscaster. Their peers would respond by sending Facebook's reactions emojis or verbing emotion icons such as Like, Love, Ha-ha, Wow, Sad, and Angry right away. The students could view the video clips through live streaming within one week outside class time. After receiving Teacher and peers' feedbacks, the students had a chance to improve themselves and correct their pronunciations as well as manners as a TV news reporter for their news reading in class to get scores. Therefore, students' news reading in class was obviously found better and their increasing confidence was recognized.

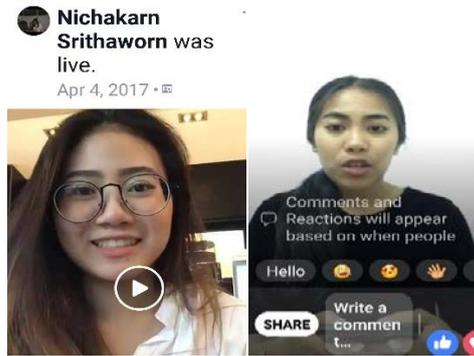


Figure 1. Students practicing news reading on Facebook Live

The students were to write their own news article with a Headline, Lead catching the reader’s attention, then introduced the topics to be discussed in their subsequent paragraphs, and finally wrote the tail. Through this online tool, the students submitted their first-draft news article for their news article assignment on the group in Facebook to get some comments from the teacher and peers within one week. The following week, the students rewrote their news article and posted their E-Newspaper on the Facebook group to get scores.



Figure 2. Teacher and peers’ comments and response



Figure 3. Student’s final work

2.4 Data Analysis

To see the improvement of students’ news reading and writing skills, the mean scores gained during the practice in Facebook and in class were compared by using Paired Samples T-tests. In addition, the mistakes found in two assignments were counted using frequency. Data gained from the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed and grouped into the same categories.

3. Research Findings

Research Question 1: To what extent did the use of Facebook improve students’ language proficiency?

Table 1. shows that the students’ average scores in the first and second news reading performances were 7.43 and 9.85 respectively. The average scores for the first and second writing performances were 7.94 and 9.90. The results indicate that the use of Facebook had a great impact on students’ improvement in language proficiency since they significantly gained higher proficiency in both news reading and writing ($p < .05$).

Table 1. Comparisons of students’ language abilities between the first and second performances

Assignment	Mean	SD	df	t	p
News reading 1	7.43	1.169	39	-15.283	.000
News reading 2	9.85	1.578			
News Writing 1	7.94	1.598	39	-16.642	.000
News Writing 2	9.90	1.919			

Research Question 2: Did the students have the improvement on their particular mistakes after receiving teachers and peers’ feedback?

Table 2. Comparisons of frequency of mistakes in News reading

Mistake	1 st performance	2 nd performance
consonants	39	20
vowels	82	49
syllables	56	38
grammatical endings	57	41
word stress	61	39
rhythm in sentences	35	22
special emphasis	34	20
thought group	56	40
linking	44	21
intonation	47	33
delivery	56	44
eye contact	37	21
Total	604	388

Table 2. reveals 12 categories of mistakes occurring when students read news. For the first performance, it is clear that vowels and word stress were the mistakes that the teacher and peers suggested to correct the most. The second performance indicates that students improved their news reading proficiency since they had fewer mistakes after getting feedback. The number of mistakes decreased in all categories. The feedback that they got from Facebook was very useful in correcting the mistakes.

Table 3. Comparisons of frequency of mistakes in news writing

Mistake	1st performance	2nd performance
spelling	29	16
word form	38	22
tense	56	34
punctuation	28	19
article	76	34
preposition	45	23
pronouns	34	16
word choice	45	34
subject-verb agreement	77	45
capitalization	29	17
sentence structure	67	56
content removed/added	43	23
Total	567	339

According to Table 3., students made mistakes in subject-verb agreement and article the most in the first performance. However, they could improve their news writing as the mistakes in the second performance decreased in all categories after they got feedback from the teacher and peers.

Research Question 3: What were students’ attitudes towards learning through Facebook?

When students were asked to express their attitudes toward the use of Facebook as a learning tool, most of them felt that Facebook is an appropriate instrument as they are familiar with it.

“I like it, it was not boring. It was easy for me to submit my work and for teacher to review students’ work.”

“I agree with the use of Facebook Live as another channel of learning and contacting with Teacher. It enables us to learn better.”

“Facebook is suitable since it’s my e-routine.”

Regarding advantages, many students mentioned the frequent use of Facebook in daily life. This indicates that using Facebook as a learning tool is considered easy and convenient.

“Facebook is what we are on all the time, so, it is very convenient.”

“Facebook provides a notification function, so I can be alert to interact with teacher and peers all the time.”

“I tend to forget some work on paper, but not what is on Facebook because I access Facebook everyday.”

Interestingly, several students also revealed disadvantages due to some factors such as the internet and shyness to be online.

“It would be a trouble for those who are not social networkers.”

“The internet can be a problem to access, update, or upload files.”

“Even though, it was good to see my friends live on Facebook. I was uneasy and shy to be seen as well.”

“It was good that our class group was in a private setting.”

Some students suggested useful points for future use. This reminded the teacher of what to prepare before the course starts. Their replies indicated that the activity would cause lots of workload.

“When compared to LINE, I prefer Line because it is more convenient for me. However, Facebook is better when uploading big files.”

“The use of Facebook in learning can be employed as a supplementary activity, not all the time.”

“The time for students to live on Facebook should have set during the daytime; otherwise some of us would miss when some friends lived at night.”

4. Discussion

The current study investigated the effectiveness of Facebook use as a learning tool on language proficiency development. The findings which reveal that the learning process enabled students to improve performances of the two given assignments could support previous studies [14, 15, 16]. The reasons why these students could improve language performances can be explained by two reasons. First of all, they had a chance for rehearsal before the real

performance for the real score. This was much better than allowing them to perform and giving grades. Secondly, potential of Facebook supports online pedagogy outside classroom, motivates flexible learners, increases their engagement, and assists learning become more practical and effective. Facebook not only provides space for students to give and get feedback, but it is a place to demonstrate live-performances. Facebook is suitable to be employed for digital-based learning to facilitate student's learning together with working [9].

Another significant finding is about the decrease in language mistakes as a result of feedback which positively affected performances and scores. This was in accordance with what Rollinson states that, to develop language skills, feedback contributed on Facebook helps students to learn mistakes and revise their work [13]. Facebook is like a platform for learning and receiving constant feedback since students could make use of the comments acquired to reduce the mistakes. Communication among students and teacher on Facebook is a good example of how technology with various media components such as texts, sound, images, and videos can be employed as a meaningfully embedded learning tool to foster reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, especially when receiving feedbacks from peers [19]. Blended learning offers an appropriate meaningful design with the use of particular media and tool relevant to the course content, objectives, activities, and students' skills expected, and evaluation. Sociocultural theory, according to Vygotsky [23], advocates that students' high-order functions can be developed through social interactions and constructive communication with others learners. Students' knowledge, skills, and proficiency take place through modelling of behaviors [24].

The last issue for discussion is students' positive attitudes towards learning through Facebook. Based on opinions on using Facebook as a learning tool, it was found that most students believe that Facebook is a suitable learning platform. Facebook Live is a good channel for mutual learning. Regarding advantages, they expressed that they are familiar to Facebook since they use it in daily life. It is very convenient and friendly-user. The finding is found to be similar to previous studies [9, 11], which show that students have more enjoyment and positive opinions when learning through Facebook. Although students show positive thinking about using Facebook as a learning tool, they still mention several disadvantages such as internet problem and diffidence. Moreover, they also propose several issues that are really useful for developing future courses such as specification of time for Facebook Live, supplementary activity use, and possibility to use other social media.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights an implication of Facebook as an innovative learning platform in an English classroom. Favorable results of online feedback in Facebook regarding student's language proficiency and positive attitudes toward learning are found. Another important finding reveals that Facebook can be more than a tool to develop students' proficiency since it allows interaction between teacher and students and students to students. It can be used to increase involvement in learning outside class through online communication. The use of Facebook for mutual learning can increase students' learning motivation. Therefore, Facebook is an effective instructional tool that can be implemented in future courses to facilitate learning.

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