STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE FACEBOOK CONTEXT

by **Atef Odeh AbuSa'aleek**

Unaizah Community College, Qassim University

Qassim, KSA PO.box 4394 Unaizah 51911

atefodeh @ hotmail.com

Abstract

Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Facebook (FB) are currently highly used by students because technology has the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations. This paper attempts to present a comprehensive picture of what has been investigated in terms of the use of Facebook as an online English language-learning environment and inquires whether this learning model can enhance students' learning of English. It also aims to explore the students' perceptions towards learning English in the Facebook context following four treatments, language improvement, confidence, motivation and attitude. The sample who participated in the study was N=65, in the department of English language and translation enrolled in a B.A program.

Findings revealed that the EFL students believe that FB as an online learning environment facilitates, supports, and encourages their English language learning. In addition, the findings indicate that students' motivation and confidence towards English language learning improved via FB. The study also revealed that students had a positive attitude towards this learning model. In light of the findings of the study, it is recommended that TEFL teachers should plan learning classes that use SNS such as Facebook as a learning platform.

Keywords: Online social networks; Facebook; Computer-Mediated Communication

1. Introduction

Online social networks have captured the attention of students, teachers, educators and policy-makers as an educational tool for language teaching and learning. The development and application of Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs, online discussion boards, Flickr, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and others, have increased in popularity in the recent years. These new applications allow users to interact and collaborate with one another via social media in a virtual community (McCarthy, 2010).

2. Background

2.1. Facebook as a social networking site

Social Networking Site (SNS) is a platform that provides an easy, accessible way to connect and interact with others, share ideas and opinions and gather feedback in (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009).

Facebook is a social networking service launched in February 2004, owned and operated by FB. The website's membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United States, corporations, and by September 2006, to everyone of age 13 and older with a valid email address. The main concepts associated with Facebook are "wall", "info", "blog", "friends", "like", "unlike", "comment", "poke", "send message", "share photos", "links", and "video", which provide users with a variety of means to communicate and interact with each other and to make new friends all over the world. By September 2013, 1.06 billion monthly active users were using *FB* to communicate, interact, and socialise with one another (Facebook, 2013).

Up to July 2011 more than 500 million people were using FB to communicate, interact, and socialize with others synchronously and asynchronously (Facebook, 2011). In addition, the worldwide number of active Facebook users of the first quarter 2014 amounted to 1.28 billion active users each month. In the third quarter of 2012 the number of active Facebook users surpassed 1 billion. Furthermore, as of fourth quarter of 2013, the social network had 945 million monthly mobile active users.

Northcote & Kendle (2001) suggested that participating in online learning activities such as discussing in online forums and searching for information online may give students the opportunity to acquire in a more incidental, informal manner many practical online skills such as critical analysis of resources, effective online communication, and filtering and deciphering information. Alhomod & Shafi (2012) propose FB as an educational tool in a classroom scenario, showing its use at each level of team-based learning for students and teacher to communicate with one another in a team-based learning system.

Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as FB are currently highly used by students because technology has the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations. Students' strong interest and frequent engagements toward SNS have attracted both practitioners' as well as academic researchers' attention. Instructors start to integrate activities on SNS into their instruction whilst

researchers begin to put their efforts into exploring the influence of SNS on students (Wu & Hsu, 2011).

2.2 Research on language improvement in the Facebook context

Several studies have been conducted to investigate whether social networking can be used as a tool in the educational arena. Many studies have disclosed positive impacts from the use of FB as an online learning community and a successful tool for formal teaching and learning activities (Alhomod & Shafi, 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Fiori, 2009; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Liu, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Mahmud & Ching, 2012; Mills, 2009; Northcote, & Kendle, 2001). On the other hand, many studies have disclosed the negative impact of FB and showed it may not always be appropriate or successful for formal teaching and learning activities (Fodeman, & Monroe, 2009; Lohnes & Kinzer, 2007; Queirolo, 2009; Salaway, Caruso & Nelson, 2007; Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy, Dalgarno & Gray, 2010).

Rosen (2010) states that social networks provide opportunities for exchange of synchronous and asynchronous communication, social interaction, and multimedia information. Social networking encourages engagement with language socialization. Students use FB to share group works, pictures, applications and lessons, resource books, announcements.

In the last few years, the students of English as foreign language started using social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook (FB) and it has gained extreme popularity among them. Social networking contains various components of computer-mediated communication such as asynchronous and synchronous interaction and sharing pictures and videos. Blattner & Fiori (2009) argue that FB is a "powerful learning tool that is not only built of synchronous and asynchronous technologies that has transformed learning but has also extended the reach of those communicative tools" (p. 19).

Facebook is a social networking site that facilitates online communications among the students second language. Blattner & Fiori (2009) state that FB can be used to improve students' performance of the English language, increase motivation and trigger authentic language interaction. They argue that FB has "unique features that offer constructive educational experiences while maintaining privacy and safety" and that the potential of FB is "growing everyday with new applications" (p. 8) that are yet to be explored and examined. FB is one such site, which has seen huge growth since its launch. FB offers a means of informal communication among its users (Leutner & Plass, 1998).

McCarthy (2010) states that students can communicate and interact in an online environment at their own pace and take time to consider comments and responses rather than being "put on the spot" as in the physical classroom. Communication and relationships initially generated in the virtual environment can be brought into the classroom.

English language learners can use the original resources present in the SNS to gain knowledge of the English language. There are groups dedicated to learning English languages in EFL and ESL contexts on social networking sites. These groups afford their members with regular updates of grammar, vocabulary, and much new information. English language learners can also access links posted on the group page by other members. Conversation and discussions can also be prompted to encourage among the practicing English language learners, who can share knowledge and help each other.

Student interactions in online discussions can facilitate a learner-centred approach to teaching and provide students with an opportunity to practice and acquire knowledge and skills in a supportive and encouraging environment (Birch & Volkov, 2007; Moore & Iida, 2010; Stacey, 2002). FB has great effect on students' performance in learning English because it has become a basic component of student daily life. Kabilan et al. (2010) found that the students believed FB could be utilized as an online environment to facilitate the learning of English. Nevertheless, teachers or language instructors have to integrate FB as an educational project with predetermined learning objectives and outcomes for the learning experience to be meaningful. FB has facilitated students' language learning, can make a more collaborative class environment and even motivate them to learn (Abu Bakar, 2010; Bakar, 2009, & Seitzinger, 2006; Pinkman, 2005).

According to Liu (2010), FB has the potential to become a valuable resource to support students' educational communications. FB is considered to be the most popular platform for online social networking among university students. It is also regarded as the latest example of communication technologies that have been widely adopted by students.

Haverback (2009) conducted a study to investigate students' creation and participation in an online learning community on FB to discuss assignments, ask and answer questions, post information, and support one another for their Reading Education Methods course. The findings indicate that students were motivated to be involved in FB discussions and they grasped a better understanding of the theoretical principles ensuring effective reading. In addition, students also developed better ideas as a group compared to when they read individually.

Previous studies concerning the educational use of FB generally concern teacher-student or student-student interactions. FB can be used to create a group or a network, build an educational application, integrate FB into current educational tools and share classroom and topic information with other users of the FB (Alhomod & Shafi, 2012). Shih (2013) investigates the effect of incorporating blended learning with FB and peer assessment for English for specific purposes course for college students. Findings indicate incorporating FB in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course can effectively assist college students in learning how to communication in business English contexts. In addition, students improved their professional knowledge not only from the in-class instruction but also through peer assessment on FB.

Mahmud & Ching (2012) investigate how FB could be incorporated as a pedagogical means in the ESL settings, reporting on the students' stance and perception of the use of this social networking site to enhance their L2 learning. Findings indicate the utilization of FB generally enhanced students' L2 skills such as reading and writing, expanded their social circles, improved their communication skills and minimized their apprehension when learning and using the language among their peers. Prior experience with a computer can increase the frequency of positive behaviours and openness towards computer-mediated learning and its benefits. Learners who frequently utilize computers find it easier and more convenient to learn through them (Conn, Roberts, & Powell, 2009).

2.3. Research on student motivation, confidence, and attitudes towards English language learning in the FB context

Akbari, Eghtesad & Simons (2012) investigated students' attitudes and expectations towards the use of social networks for language learning before and after the course. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference between participants' attitudes before and after the course. In the pre-course questionnaire, the majority of students considered Facebook to be generally useful because through such social networks they can communicate and share knowledge. After the online course, most students stated that Facebook has great potential for being used as an effective formal educational tool. Furthermore, the post-course questionnaires revealed that students' positive attitudes towards the usefulness of social networks increased.

Eren (2012) investigated students' attitudes towards the use of Facebook in a language classroom. The sample of the study comprised 48 undergraduate students who were enrolled in a one-year compulsory English preparatory class in Gaziantep, Turkey. Findings indicated

that students showed positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook activities as a supplement to classroom instruction, but traditional classroom-based language learning remained the backbone of language education.

Kabilan et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative survey study exploring the students' general practices or uses of FB, and their views on FB as an online educational environment for English language learning. The sample of the study were 300 undergraduate students at Universiti Sains Malaysia, and their motivation, confidence and attitude towards English language learning via FB were measured. The findings indicate that the students agreed that FB can be an online learning environment to assist them in learning the English language.

Wang & Chen (2007) conducted a pilot study to investigate the needs of distance language learners and the importance of online synchronous interaction in distance-based language learning. They suggest that synchronous learning management systems were positively received by distance language learners, who perceived it as providing interaction and communication that they would otherwise not have. Findings indicate that learners felt more confident, connected and their isolation was reduced. Tifarlioglu (2011) pointed out the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies have changed the way people use the Web in the field of education and in foreign language learning since 2004.

3. The study

3.1. The aim of the research

Despite the fact that the status of social networking sites among college students is undeniable, the potential of this tool to positively affect student learning remains in question. This can be because FB is a case of new technology intended for social interaction and other purposes, not necessarily language teaching and learning. Therefore, there is need for a careful and thoughtful integration process to present a basis for the status of new teaching and learning activities.

The present study explores the students' perceptions towards learning English in the Facebook context following four treatments, language improvement, confidence, motivation and attitude. This study aims at presenting a comprehensive picture of what has been investigated in terms of the use of FB as an online English language-learning environment. More specifically, it sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. Is Facebook as an online learning environment facilitating learning English among college's students?

2. What are students' perceptions towards Facebook as an online English language learning environment?

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted in the Department of English Language and Translation, Unaizah Community College and Arts & Science College at Qassim University in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A quantitative survey was conducted to explore the students' perceptions towards learning English in the Facebook context following four treatments, language improvement, confidence, motivation and attitude.

For this purpose, 100 randomly chosen participants were asked to participate in the survey. However, the actual sample who participated in the study was N=65, since only those who are Facebook users were considered for further analyses. 35 of the participants were excluded because they did not have a social network account.

3.3. Instrument

The instrument used in this survey was a questionnaire made by Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin (2010). The questionnaire originally consisted of 16 items, but it was modified to suit the study. The questionnaire was validated by two external raters, who were requested to check the suitability of content and clarity of instructions. They suggested introducing items such as whether using FB encourages students to spend more time while learning English and whether FB helps students to overcome their spelling mistakes. They also suggested deleting two unnecessary items.

The questionnaire used in this survey consisted of two sections. Section A solicited demographic information of the students and their language usage, namely students' level in the college and their language ability. Their gender was not included in the survey because the college is only for male students. Section B comprised items eliciting information on the effect of FB as an online English language learning environment and to explore students' perceptions towards learning English in the Facebook context. This questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale, in which responses ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The items in the questionnaire covered the aspects of students' improvement of language skills, students' motivation, confidence, attitudes towards English language learning via FB.

For the analysis of the demographic data, frequencies and percentages were used whereas for the description of items in the questionnaire, mean scores, frequency and

percentages were employed to describe the students' perceptions on FB as online English language learning environment.

3.4. Findings and discussion

The findings are presented in three sections. The first one presents the students' general performance on FB. The second section answers the question whether or not Facebook as online learning environment facilitates learning English among college students. The third section investigates students' perceptions towards FB as online English language learning environment. This section will be divided into 3 parts to address confidence, motivation and attitude.

3.4.1. Students' general activity on FB

It was found that the majority of the students (84.61%) who had a FB account said that they joined FB more than two years ago. Only 15.38% of the students stated that they have been the FB members for one year. Table 1 presents responses of respondents regarding the length of time as a FB member.

Table 1. Length of time as a Facebook member.

	Years			
	1 year	2	3	Total
Frequency	10	18	37	65
Percentage	15.38%	27.69%	56.92%	100%

Table 2 below presents data regarding the language used by EFL students for FB interaction. The students used both English and a mix of English and Arabic in FB interaction.

Table 2: Language used in Facebook communication.

Language used	Frequency	Percentage
English and Arabic	55	84.61%
English	10	15.38%
Arabic	0	0

Table 3 below gives an account of the number of times that EFL students logged in to their FB accounts.

Table 3: Frequency of logging into FB account.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Frequency	48	13	4
Percentage	73.84%	20%	6.15%

It shows that the majority of EFL students were active members of FB. It is seen that 48 students (73.84%) who logged in to their FB account 1-3 times per day; 13 students (20%) logged in 1-3 times per week and 4 students (6.15%) only logged in to their FB account 1-3 times per month.

3.4.2. Facebook as an online learning environment facilitating learning English

Table 4 shows the responses to the question whether FB as online learning environment facilitates English Language learning.

Table 4. Perception of language improvement via FB.

No	Items	Strongly Disagree (1) %	Disagree (2) %	Slightly Agree (3) %	Agree (4) %	Strongly Agree (5) %	Mean
1	I practice writing in English via Facebook.	3.07	9.23	18.46	40	29.23	3.83
2	I practice reading in English via Facebook.	7.69	4.61	21.53	43.07	23.07	3.69
3	Facebook enhances my English communication skills.	1.53	3.07	33.84	29.23	32.30	3.87
4	Facebook enhances my confidence to write in English.	3.07	12.30	18.46	43.07	23.07	3.70
5	Facebook helps me to overcome language mistakes.	0	10.76	13.84	32.30	43.07	4.07
6	I learn new words in English via FB.	3.07	0	21.53	36.92	38.46	4.07

Table 4 demonstrates that the EFL students believed that FB as an online learning environment facilitates, supports, and encourages their English language learning, hence, it assists EFL students in the process of improving their English language skills. The majority of the participants (69.23% - the aggregated result of 'agree' and 'strongly agree) agreed that FB could be used to improve their writing skill (mean score=3.83), while 66.14% of the students agreed that they can practice their English reading skills (mean score=3.69).

It further seen that FB users believed that FB enhances their English communication skills (mean score=3.87), 61.53% of the students agreed that FB could be an effective environment. 75.37% of the students (the aggregated result of 'agree' and 'strongly agree) also agreed that FB helps them to overcome their language mistakes and learn new words.

The possible explanation for students' favourable attitudes towards using FB as an online English language learning environment may be that CMC makes it possible for the EFL learner to use the FB site whenever he/she wants at any place. Moreover, FB promotes self-reliance; student-centered approach that usually leads to the improvement of learner's language proficiency and growth. Hence, they can gain knowledge/skills from the speakers of English and engage in authentic asynchronous and synchronous interaction.

3.4.3. Students' perceptions towards FB as online English language learning environment

This section will be divided into 3 parts covers the following areas, confidence, motivation and attitude of the students.

Table 5 presents data regarding the responses of the respondents about their opinion as to how FB increases their confidence in learning EFL.

Table 5 Enhancing students' confidence via FB.

No	Items	Strongly Disagree (1) %	Disagree (2) %	Slightly Agree (3) %	Agree (4) %	Strongly Agree (5) %	Mean
1	Facebook enhances my confidence to write in English.	3.07	12.30	18.46	43.07	23.07	3.70
2	Facebook enhances my confidence to read English materials.	3.07	10.76	18.46	46.15	21.53	3.72
3	Facebook enhances my confidence to communicate using English.	0	10.76	20	50.76	18.46	3.76

Table 5 indicates that 66.14% of EFL students (the aggregated result of 'agree' and 'strongly agree') agreed that they feel more confident to write in English after having used FB (mean score=3.70). Moreover 67.68% of EFL students believed that participating in reading English materials via FB has increased their confidence (mean score=3.72). As far as the students' communication skills are concerned, 69.22% of the EFL students believed that FB has improved their level of confidence while interacting with other users of FB (mean score=3.76).

Table 6 presents data regarding the responses of the participants about their perception on whether FB increases their motivation to learn EFL.

Table 6 Enhancing students' motivation via FB.

No	Items	Strongly Disagree (1) %	Disagree (2) %	Slightly Agree (3) %	Agree (4) %	Strongly Agree (5) %	Mean
1	Facebook increases my motivation to communicate using English.	0	10.76	27.69	30.76	30.76	3.70
2	Facebook increases my motivation to read English materials.	3.07	3.07	18.46	40	35.38	4.01
3	Facebook increases my motivation to write in English.	1.53	10.76	24.61	38.46	24.61	3.73

The majority of the EFL students agreed that FB could be an online environment for enhancing students' motivation in general. Hence 61.52 % of the students (the aggregated result of 'agree' and 'strongly agree') registered their opinion that FB enhance their motivation to communicate in English (mean score=3.70), while 75.38 % of the students agreed that FB enhances their motivation to read English materials on the FB pages (mean score=4.01). In addition to all this, 63.07 % of the students agreed that FB enhances their motivation to write in English (mean score=3.73).

As regards students' attitudes, Table 7 presents data regarding the responses of the participants about their perception of how FB improved their attitudes towards learning EFL.

Table 7. Students' attitude towards learning English via FB.

No	Items	Strongly Disagree (1) %	Disagree (2) %	Slightly Agree (3) %	Agree (4) %	Strongly Agree (5) %	Mean
1	Learning via Facebook makes learning English more interesting.	0	9.23	20	43.07	27.69	3.87
2	I have positive attitudes towards learning EFL via Facebook.	4.61	7.69	18.46	41.53	27.69	3.80
3	I have positive attitudes towards English as a language.	1.53	6.15	12.30	49.23	30.76	4.07
4	The use of Facebook makes learning English easier.	1.53	6.15	24.69	40	27.69	3.86
5	Facebook encourages me to spend more time learning English.	3.07	12.30	6.15	30.76	47.69	4.07

The findings of the study revealed that EFL students had generally a positive attitude towards FB as an online English language learning environment. The majority of the EFL students with a mean score of 3.80 agreed that they have positive attitude towards learning EFL via FB. On the other hand, 80% of EFL students showed positive attitudes towards English as a language (mean score=4.07). Most of the EFL students (78.45%) believed that FB encourages them to spend more time learning English (mean score=4.07).

One possible explanation for EFL students' positive attitudes towards learning EFL via FB is that this has become a popular environment for developing language skills. FB is considered to be one of the most frequently used internet-based forms of interaction and communication with others. Social networking sites offered wide opportunities for users to share information, create conversations and develop their own content of interest easily. This also shows that they do their best to seize every possible opportunity to increase their knowledge.

FB can help increase motivation and enhance students 'achievement by affecting students' attitude and helping them feel more independent. Generally, the technology has the proven potential to promote second language learners' learning motivation and computer technology can help second language learners, strengthen their linguistic skills, affect their learning attitude, and build their self-instruction strategies and self-confidence.

The findings of this study are also in accord with the results reported by the previous studies as regards investigating FB as an online English language-learning environment and students' perceptions towards this learning model (see, for instance, Alhomod & Shafi, 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Fiori, 2009; Kabilan et al., 2010; Liu, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Mahmud & Ching, 2012; Mills, 2009; Northcote, & Kendle, 2001).

4. Conclusion

FB is considered to be the most modern model of communication technologies that has been generally adopted by L2 students. FB is also the most popular platform for online social networking among L2 students. This SNS contains groups dedicated to learning English, and these groups provide their members with regular updates of grammar, vocabulary, and much new information. Thus, FB provides opportunities for exchange synchronous and asynchronous communication, and social interaction..

FB can be used to improve students' performance in the English language, increase confidence, foster motivation and trigger authentic language interaction. Interactions in FB

discussion can facilitate a learner-centred approach and provide students with an opportunity to practice and learn knowledge and skills in a supportive and encouraging environment. L2 students are likely to use FB to share group works, pictures, applications and lessons, resource books, announcements. Students and teacher can communicate with each other in a team based learning system.

Kabilan et al. (2010) state that ''from the perspective of incidental learning, learning of English in FB is feasible. This is because the technologies that support FB and features that characterize FB are able to engage students in meaningful language-based activities, even though their initial intention of joining FB is to socialize. If planned appropriately as part of an educational project, the same technologies and features of FB would be able to facilitate and produce effectual and meaningful learning of English within an online community of English language learners'' (p.7). Thus, Kabilan et al. (2010) support the idea that Facebook and its features can be used as an educational tool in order to engage the learners of English in an online community.

The findings of the study showed that the participants believe that FB as an online learning environment facilitates, supports, and encourages their English language learning. In addition, they believe that FB generally improves their L2 skills. Moreover, the findings indicate that students have a positive attitude towards this learning model, and the majority of the EFL students agree that FB could be an online environment for enhancing students' motivation and confidence in general.

References

Abu Bakar, N., & Latif, H. (2010). ESL Students feedback on the use of blogs for language learning. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *16*(1), 120-141.

Akbari, E., Eghtesad, S., & Simons, R. J. (2012). Students' attitudes towards the use of social networks for learning the English language. Retrieved on 28-Sep-2015 from http://conference.pixelonline.net/ICT4LL2012/common/download/Paper_pdf/357-IBT70-FP-Akbari-ICT2012.pdf.

Alhomod, S. M., & Shafi, M. M. (2012). Best practices in e-government: A review of some innovative models proposed in different countries. *International Journal of Electrical & Computer Sciences*, *12*(1), 1-6.

Bakar, N.A. (2009). E-Learning environment: blogging as a platform for language learning. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, 594-604.

Birch, D., & Volkov, M. (2007). Assessment of online reflections: Engaging English second language (ESL) students. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *23*(3), 291-306.

Blattner, G., & Fiori, M. (2009). Facebook in the language classroom: Promises and possibilities. *Instructional Technology and Distance Learning* (ITDL), 6(1), 17–28.

Caruso, J. B., & Salaway, G. (2007).The ECAR study of undergraduate students and information technology. *EDUCAUSE Centre for Applied Research, 1-15.*

Conn, S. R., Roberts, R.L., & Powell, B.M. (2009). Attitudes and satisfaction with a hybrid model of counselling supervision. *Educational Technology & Society*, *12(2),* 298–306.

Eren, Ö. (2012). Students' attitudes towards using social networking in foreign language classes: A Facebook example. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *3*(20), 288-294.

Facebook (2011). Statistics: people on Facebook. https://www.Facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics. Retrieved on July 8, 2011.

Fodeman, D., & Monroe, M. (2009). The impact of Facebook on our students. *Teacher Librarian, 36(5)*, 36–40.

Haverback, H. R. (2009). Facebook: Uncharted territory in a reading education classroom. *Reading Today*, *27*(2), 34. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/223418449?accountid=30906.

Kabilan, M. K., Ahmad, N., & Abidin, M. J. Z. (2010). Facebook: An online environment for learning of English in institutions of higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *13*(4), 179-187.

Kennedy, G., Dalgarno, B., Gray, K., Judd, T., Waycott, J., Bennett, S.,& Churchward, A. (2007). The net generation are not big users of Web 2.0 technologies: Preliminary findings. *ICT: Providing choices for learners and learning. Proceedings ASCILITE Singapore*, 517-525. Retrieved from http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2235&context=edupapers.

Leutner, D., & J. L. Plass (1998). Measuring learning styles with questionnaires versus direct observation of preferential choice behaviour in authentic learning situations: the visualizer/ verbalizer behavior observation Scale (VV-Bos). *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 14, 543-557.

Liu, Y. (2010). Social media tools as a learning resource. *Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange*, *3*(1), 101-114.

Lohnes, S., & Kinzer, C. (2007). Questioning assumptions about students' expectations for technology in college classrooms. *Innovate*, 3(5), 1-6.

Madge, C., Meek, J., Wellens, J., & Hooley, T. (2009). Facebook, social integration and informal learning at university: "It is more for socializing and talking to friends about work than for actually doing work". *Learning, Media & Technology*, 34(2), 141–155.

Mahmud, M. M., & Ching, W. S. (2012). Facebook does it really work for l2 learners. *Academic Research*, *3,* 357-370.

McCarthy, J. (2010). Blended learning environments: Using social networking sites to enhance the first year experience. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,* 26(6), 729-740.

McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. (2007, December). Social software and participatory learning: Pedagogical choices with technology affordances in the Web 2.0 era. In *ICT: Providing choices for learners and learning. Proceedings ASCILITE Singapore 2007* (pp. 664-675). Retrieved from http://www.dlc-ubc.ca/wordpress_dlc_mu/educ500/files/2011/07/mcloughlin.pdf.

Mills, N. A. (2009). Facebook and the use of social networking tools to enhance language learner motivation and engagement. Paper presented at the Northeast Association for Language Learning Technology (NEALLT) Conference, Yale University, New Haven, CT, 30–31 October.

Moore, K., & Iida, S. (2010). Students' perception of supplementary, online activities for Japanese language learning: Group work, quiz and discussion tools. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,* 26(7), 966-979.

Northcote, M., & Kendle, A. (2001). Informal online networks for learning: Making use of incidental learning through recreation. Paper presented at the International Education Research Conference, December 2–6, Fremantle, Australia. Retrieved from http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/4882/.

Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *30*(3), 227-238.

Pinkman, K. (2005). Using Blogs in the foreign language classroom; encouraging learner independence. *The JALT CALL Journal*, *1*(1), 12-24.

Queirolo, J. (2009). Is Facebook as good as face-to-face? *Learning & Leading with Technology*, *37*(4), 8–9.

Reinhardt, J., & Zander, V. (2011). Social networking in an intensive English program classroom: A language socialization perspective. *CALICO Journal, 28(2), 326-344.*

Rosen, L. D. (2010). *Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the way they learn*. New York: PalgraveMacmillan.

Salaway, G., & Caruso, J. B. (2007). *The ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology*, 58-61. 58-61. Research report. Louisville. Retrieved from http://www.csus.edu/irt/cio/strategic planning/Documents/Undergrad-Students-and-IT-2014-Full-Report.pdf.

Seitzinger, J. (2006). Be constructive: Blogs, podcasts, and wikis as constructivist learning tools. *Learning solutions e-magazine*, 1-14. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joyce_Seitzinger/publication/200772664_Be_constructive_Blogs_ podcasts_and_wikis_as_constructivist_learning_tools/links/0f31752d5e86b2970d000000.pdf

Shih, R. C. (2013). Effect of using Facebook to assist English for business communication course instruction. *TOJET*, *12*(1).52-59 Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1008867.

Stacey, E. (2002). Learning links online: Establishing constructivist and collaborative learning environments. In *Proceedings of the International Education & Technology Conference: Untangling the web-establishing learning links* (pp. 1-6). ASET.

Tilfarlioglu, F. Y. (2011). An international dimension of the student's attitudes towards the use of English in web 2.0 technology. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 10*(3), 63-68. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ944929.

Wang, Y., & Chen, N. (2007). Online synchronous language learning: SLMS over the Internet. *Innovate*, 3(3), 1–7. Retrieved from http://www.editlib.org/p/104259/.

Waycott, J., Bennett, S., Kennedy, G., Dalgarno, B., & Gray, K. (2010). Digital divides? Student and staff perceptions of information and communication technologies. *Computers & Education*, *54*(4), 1202-1211.

Wu, P. & Hsu, L. H. (2011). EFL learning on social networking site?: An action research on Facebook. Presented at Teaching & Learning with Vision Conference. Queensland, Australia, November 2011. Retrieved February 3, 2012, from http://tlvconf.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/tlv-paper-wu.pdf.

Yunus, M., Salehi, H., Sun, C., Yen, J. ,& Li, L. (2011). Using Facebook groups in teaching ESL writing. *Recent Researches in Chemistry, Biology, Environment and Culture, 75*(1), 75-80. Retrieved from http://www.wseas.us/e-library/conferences/2011/Montreux/COMICICBIO/COMICICBIO-11.pdf.