

The 2019 Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology *“Revitalization and Representation”*

Conference Proceedings Papers

January 23-26, 2019

Royal Angkor Resort
Siem Reap, Cambodia

Hosted by
The Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia

The Conference on
ASIAN LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY
2019
Siem Reap, Cambodia
<https://cala2019.cala.asia>

The CALA 2019 Proceedings Paper 8 - 1

Language in Real and Virtual Spaces, Paper 1

**Utilization of Facebook as a Supplemental Tool in
Developing English Communication Skills: Basis
for a Proposed Syllabus in Purposive
Communication**

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Utilization of Facebook as a Supplemental Tool in Developing English Communication Skills: Basis for a Proposed Syllabus in Purposive Communication

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Abstract

Most studies show that students use Facebook as a powerful tool for social interaction, and English language learning purposes. The study aimed to assess and present empirical data on the students' perceptions on the acceptability and usage level of Facebook as a communication tool in developing English communication skills and to identify possible variables that could initiate programs on how students maximize study time in connection with Facebook's usage.

The majority of the respondents used Facebook daily in learning English reading, writing, listening and speaking. Respondents have moderately agreed that Facebook can be used as a supplemental tool in developing communication skills in reading, writing, and listening but slightly agreed on speaking.

There was no significant difference in the extent of usage and the results of the communication skills test in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The correlation between perception and performance for listening skills was positively very weak while performance in writing and reading skills was positively weak. However, the correlation between perception and performance for speaking skills was negatively weak.

Lastly, the majority of the respondents have encountered problems in using Facebook, such as in inappropriateness of comments, pictures, or videos posted on Facebook, slow Internet connection outside and within the university, and lack of security and validity of information.

Keywords: Social Media, communication skills, Facebook, English

Introduction

When Mark Zuckerberg established Facebook in 2004, the social media site became a beneficial tool among teachers and students in using innovative teaching and learning methodologies as revealed in the studies of Kayri and Cakir (2014). Many studies show that one of the sites students use is Facebook. They show that it is a powerful tool for social interaction, popularity, social relations, and English language learning purposes. Since Facebook has high potential in providing social communication and interaction, this research aimed to investigate the utilization of Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing communication skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking.

In investigating the usefulness of Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing the students' communication skills, the researcher of the present study determined the respondents'

perceptions on Facebook and administered tests in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The 100 respondents have all attended the Technological University of the Philippines.

The results of the study will be used as a basis for a proposed syllabus design in Purposive Communication.

Statement of the Problem:

The study aimed to assess the usefulness of Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing students' communication skills. In consonance with this problem, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

1. What was the profile of each respondent?
2. What was the extent of the respondents' utilization of Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing communication skills when grouped according to their demographic profiles?
3. What were the students' perceptions on the use of Facebook in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) when grouped according to their demographic profiles?
4. What are the results of the communication skills test?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' extent of usage and the results of the communication skills test?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' perceptions and the results of the communication skills test?
7. What are the problems encountered in the use of Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing communication skills?
8. What courses of action may be proposed to enhance communication skills in learning English as a Second Language?

Methodology:

To gather data needed to address the problem in the study, the researcher sought verbal and written permission from the Dean of the College of Engineering. The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaire to the respondents. Survey questionnaires and the comprehension skills test excluding a speaking test were retrieved immediately after the respondents completed answering them. The data were collected in the summer of 2018 from students enrolled in the Engineering courses of the university, which included Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Electronics Engineering.

Treatment of Data:

To interpret and analyze the data, the researcher employed the following statistical treatments to obtain a valid and reliable interpretation; frequency distribution, percentage, the mean, standard deviation, a z-test and ANOVA.

Results:

1. Profile of the respondents
 - 1.1 Age. Majority of the respondents or 69% belong to the age bracket of sixteen to twenty (16-20) years old while 31% belong to 21-25 years old.

- 1.2 Gender. Sixty four percent of the total respondents are male while thirty six percent are female.
 - 1.3 Course. There is an equal distribution of respondents.
2. Length of Utilization of Facebook
 - 2.1 Age. Most of the respondents, regardless of age, utilized Facebook for 4-7 hours daily in reading, writing, and listening.
 - 2.2 Gender. The majority of the respondents, regardless of gender, spent 4-7 hours in using Facebook: 48.44% in reading, 43.75% in writing, and 55.56% in listening.
 - 2.3 Course. Most of the electronics, electrical, and civil engineering student-respondents spent 4-7 hours daily in using Facebook in reading, writing, and listening, while no or little time was spent in speaking.
 3. Respondents' Perceptions on Facebook
 - 3.1 Age. The majority of the respondents in the 16-20 age range moderately agreed that Facebook could be used as a supplemental tool in developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
 - 3.2 Gender. The majority of the respondents, regardless of gender, moderately agreed that Facebook could be used as a supplemental tool in developing reading, writing and speaking skills.
 - 3.3 Course. Most of the Electrical and Electronics Engineering student-respondents moderately agreed that Facebook could be used as a supplemental tool for reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
 4. Results of the Communication Skills Test

Results of the tests show that the majority of the respondents obtained an excellent rating in the listening test, a very good rating in speaking, and a good rating in reading and writing.
 5. Relationship between test results and respondents' demographic profile
 - 5.1 Age. There was no significant difference between the respondents' demographic profile and the results of the communication skills test in reading which obtained a p value of 0.4892; on the other hand, writing received a p-Value of 0.2779 while listening and speaking garnered a p-Value of 0.7284 and a p-Value of 0.3075 respectively.
 - 5.2. Gender. There was no significant difference between the communication test results and the demographic profile of male and female respondents in reading, which saw a p-value of 0.3964; on the other hand, writing garnered a p-value of 0.6071 while listening and speaking obtained a p-value of 0.0661, and a p-value of 0.4509 respectively.
 - 5.3 Course. There was no significant difference between the results in writing skills test which obtained a p-value of 0.8486 and in listening which saw a p-value of 0.0112. However, there was a significant difference in the respondents from the four courses in reading and speaking which saw a p-value of 0.000006 and a p-value of 0.0126 respectively.
 6. Relationship between the length of usage and the test results
 - 6.1 Age. The correlation between length of usage and results of the test according to age bracket was positive in reading, and very weakly positive in speaking, writing, and listening.
 - 6.2 Gender. The length of usage and test results of male respondents had very weak positive

correlation in reading and listening while there was a very weak negative correlation in writing.

6.3 Course. There was a positive correlation between the extent of usage and test results of the mechanical and civil engineering respondents in reading; the same positive correlation is shown in the writing skills test of electronics engineering respondents, and the listening skills test of electrical engineering respondents.

7. Relationship between respondents' perceptions and results of skills test

There was a very weak positive correlation between perception and performance in listening skills, weak positive correlation between perception and performance in writing and reading skills, and weak negative correlation between perception and performance in speaking skills.

8. Problems encountered in using Facebook

The majority of the respondents encountered problems in using Facebook, such as (1) inappropriateness of comments, pictures, or videos posted on Facebook, (2) slow Internet connection outside and within the university and (3) lack of security and validity of information which was ranked high.

Discussions:

1. Using Facebook has become a routine for most adolescents, regardless of demographic profile.
2. Facebook encourages development of reading, writing, and listening skills.
3. Proficiency in communication skills can be achieved despite his/her demographic profile.
4. One's good communication skills, except in speaking, are determined by his/her good perception.
5. Good or poor performance in communication is determined by length of usage.
6. Heavy usage of Facebook positively affects comprehension skills.
7. In spite of its usefulness in developing reading, writing and listening skills, Facebook poses barriers to its utilization.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers. Teachers need to be creative and up-to-date with current technology in order to keep abreast of a fast-paced society. Teachers can utilize Facebook as a powerful instructional tool to engage students in meaningful language-based activities and to enhance the communicative competence of language learners. It is also suggested that lecturers should be more active in conducting activities in Facebook groups and should recommend sources of learning materials for students.
2. Schools. Educational institution should be aware of the capability of Facebook in supporting the processes of teaching and learning. Thus, they should provide better Internet connection facilities to students and lecturers.
3. Students. Students should utilize Facebook as a supplemental tool in developing communication skills.
4. Future researchers. For further research, researchers can explore the effects of other

language skills by uploading written texts, audio and video topics on Facebook that check comprehension and communication competencies. Moreover, qualitative research can be conducted in identifying the communication process involved in terms of language structure, style, tone, and the like.