

Implications of Using Social Media for Learning English as a Second Language:

An Action Research

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Abstract

The Success of any nation depends on the efficacy of its human resources. Humans are needed to be educated in all spheres for the same. The present education system should be up to date for making the growth of nation. Presently, technical education gives much priority to technical knowledge rather than focusing on language skills which is one of the most essential skills these days. It lessens the chances of the engineering students to get placements as they fail to express themselves in English language which is a need for the day. Thus, social media can be an effective tool which can help them to learn English as a second language. The objective of this study is to investigate implications of using social media in learning English as a second language for the first year engineering students of the proposed college in Gujarat as an action research. The students in the targeted college are coming mostly from the rural background and they are unable to express themselves in English language classrooms. To add to this situation, the students are more addicted to use social media in the present scenario. Keeping this in mind, a case study was conducted to know the ratio and its implications of using social media for learning English as a second language especially for the educational purpose.

Keywords: English as a second language, social media, engineering students, language skills

1. Introduction

The Success of any nation depends on the efficacy of its human resources. Humans are needed to be educated in all spheres for the same. The present education system should be up to date for making the growth of nation. Our society calls this 21st century as the “century of information” and social media plays a vital role in this world of information. Dewing (2010 , p.1) defined social media as follow: “ The term social media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities”.

Presently, technical education gives much priority to technical knowledge rather than focusing on language skills which is one of the most essential skills these days. The students are not used to the traditional methods of teaching for learning a language and thus social media can be an effective tool to learn English as a second language. As students are more addicted to social media these days, it can be the best effective tool for learning English language. The aim of the research is to involve them to use social media for giving their own views and suggestions regarding social media itself.

2. Objectives of the Action Research

- To encourage students’ participation to use social platform.
- To inculcate technology-based learning in today’s education.
- To combine language learning as well as socialization.
- To improve proficiency in learning English language.

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3. Sample of the Study

The subject of the research was first year engineering college of Gandhinagar Institute of technology, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. A total of 105 students voluntarily participated in the survey. Out of those 80% were boys and 20% were girls who were selected as sample for the research. This was a group of students coming from various social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The students belonging to Mechanical, Civil, Computer, Information Technology, Electrical and Electronics and Communication participated in the survey.

4. Methodology and Procedure of the Research

The Questionnaire method is used by the researcher with an aim to find out the ratio and effectiveness of using the platform of social media in learning English as a second language. The study has been undertaken, keeping in mind, the random observation of use of social media in their daily life. Thus, it was a better idea to make the right use of this platform to learn English language. The study was conducted by using the social media platform where 18 questions including personal details were sent to the students through E-mail. The type of questions is asked to tick the appropriate answers. The replies were collected in return to get the responses from the students.

5. Observation of the Study

In Figure-1, it shows the use of technology in the learning process in the present scenario. Technology enhances the language learning by adding something new and innovative methods beyond the traditional methods of teaching. In the present era of globalization, language teaching in engineering colleges is a need of the hour and it is difficult for all the learners to make his own cup of tea of language learning. Thus, technology enables the learners to comprehend the tasks by doing activities which indirectly helps in gaining technical knowledge and using it in real life contexts. As they are used to more technological tools every day, it is the common belief of the engineering students to go for technology-based learning. According to the research done, 95.2% believes in technology-based education.

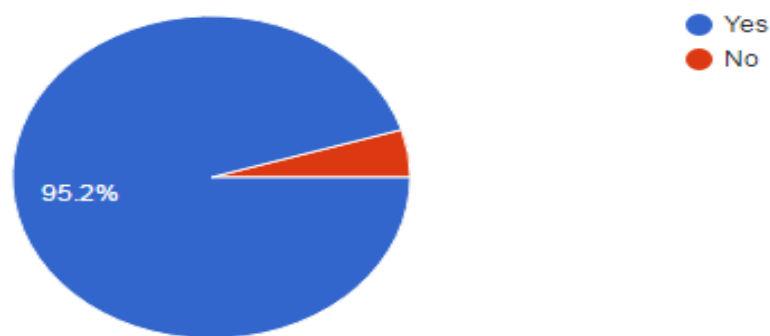


Fig.1. Percentage Distribution of technology-based learning in present scenario

In Fig.2, it shows the use of social media in the learning process. Social media plays a major role in teaching and learning a language. It helps to form a new teaching model these days. It helps the learners to be active users of technology. It creates a good platform of exchange between learners and teachers and makes a learner friendly classroom. 76.2 percentage of the learners shows the major use of social media in the learning process.

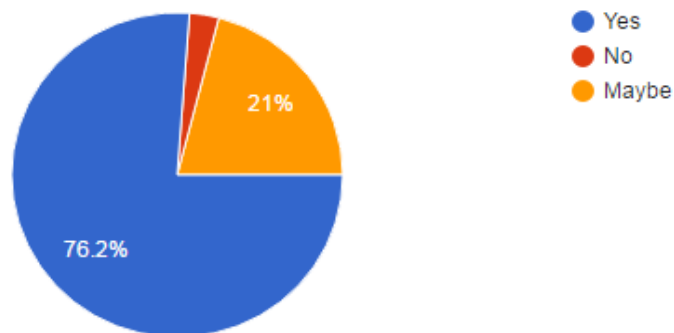


Fig.2. Percentage regarding the use of social media in the learning process.

In Fig. 3, it shows frequently used applications in the social platform. The applications like whatsapp, facebook, youtube, pinterest, twitter and blogs are mostly used by the young learners. These applications mostly help them to be in touch with the social world also. The figure suggests that whatsapp and youtube are the most commonly used application by the learners. Youtube consist of large number of educational videos about learning English. Facebook also serves as a successful networking site to motivate learners to share their ideas and thoughts that may sometimes be very difficult to express in a classroom setting. These will maximize their learning in listening, speaking, listening and writing skills. It serves as the best educational tool in language learning. At the same time, it depends on how one makes the best use of the online resources.

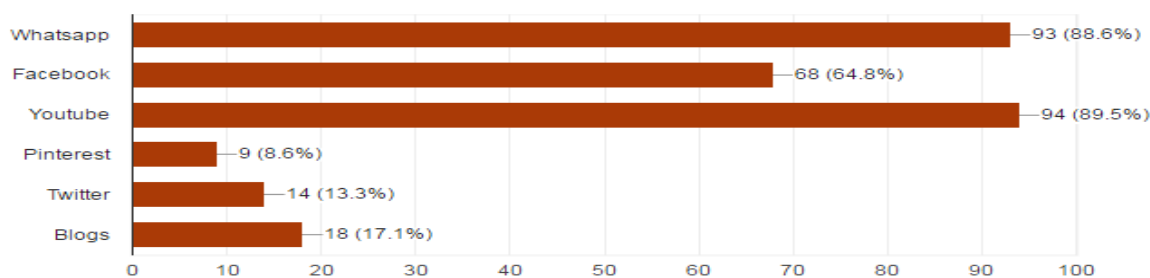


Fig.3. Percentage showing frequently used applications in social platform

In figure -4, it shows that social media plays a major role in improving proficiency in learning English. Sometimes, the learners get addicted to learn the English language and try to learn it as the medium of language is English in all the social media platforms. The figure shows that 68.6% of the learners believe that social media is helpful in learning English language. Thus, teachers should motivate students to indulge in social platforms and involve them to become more creative in language learning.

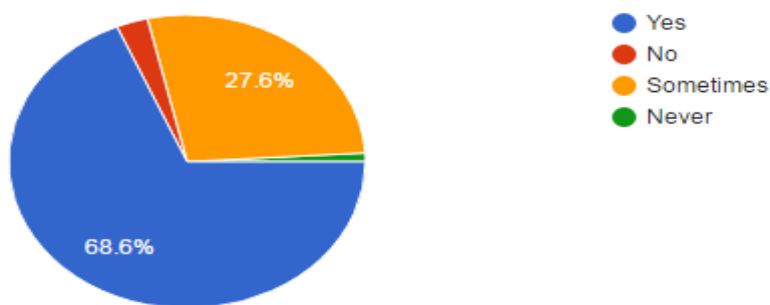


Fig.4. Percentage reflecting improvisation of proficiency in learning English

In figure -5, it shows that social media helps to learn lexical parts in English. Because of social media, words are moving very rapidly around the world within weeks and months. It's the age where the language is changing quickly and the technologies have developed and the mixture of both the language and technology gives rise to development of lexical knowledge as well as raise a chance for the learners to improve a specific area where they are interested in. Vocabulary development is the highly learned area which is helping students to learn at its most. It connects large number of learners as well as teachers which gives a scope to improve language skills. It also helps them to learn sentence structure, short phrases, unique coined terms, idioms and phrases, funny emojis and acronyms.

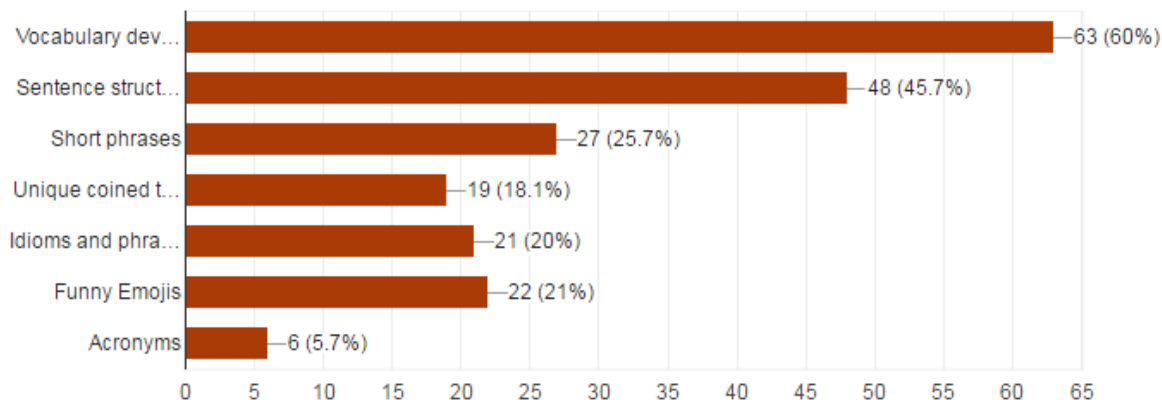


Fig.5. Percentage showing the role of social media to learn lexical parts in English

In figure -6, it shows the applicability of social media in the real life. The figure indicates that 88.6 % of students use social media websites in their daily life. 11.4% of the students are not using social media. This ensures that the students are more used to digital platforms and they enjoy working with the online platforms. This also proves that they are more conscious about importance of social media on learning language skills.

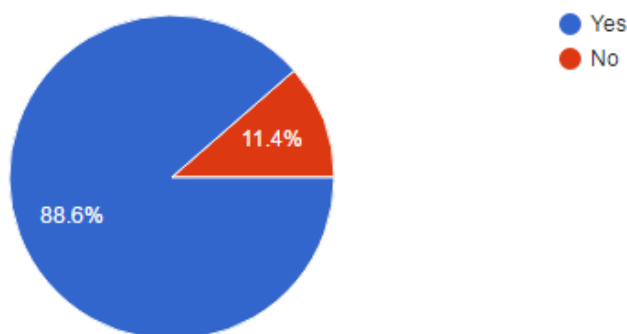


Fig.6. Percentage showing the role of social media regarding real life use.

In figure-7, 83.8% of students are in the view of recommending social media to other students. This result may come from their personal experiences by using social media in their routine work. Majority of the students believe that social media helps to improve language skills in one or the other ways. It gives a practical as well as live platform to the students to discuss and find out appropriate solutions regarding language learning.

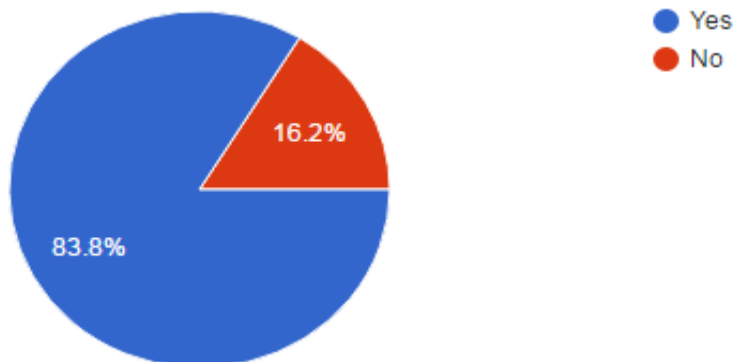


Fig.7. Percentage showing recommendation of using social media to other students for learning English

In figure-8, it shows that social media will create an enthusiastic and learner friendly classroom if implemented in the classrooms. It will make the students active and involve them in the real-life use. It will help the learners to engage them deeply and produce fruitful results.

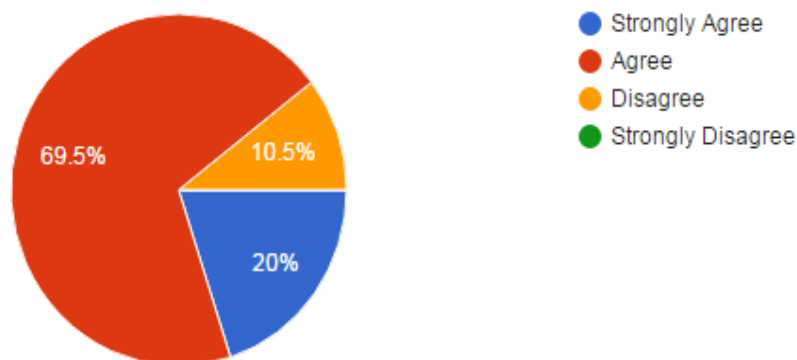


Fig.8. Percentage showing impact of social media for creating an enthusiastic and learner friendly classroom

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude, social media can be an additional tool which can help students to acquire language skills. In addition, it will make the learners conscious regarding the use of social media, if it is used for learning process. Social media also proves to create pleasant and attractive situation for obtaining better results. Though there are disadvantages of using social media, one must keep a watch on the track record of the learners regarding the same. The obtained results says that social media is really helpful and effective in improving language skills. It is also recommended that the teachers and learners have to be conscious about flawless use of the social media platform in teaching learning process.

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