THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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"He who dares to teach must never cease to learn"
John Cotton Dana, 1912

Abstract

Education is a power tool that enables a person to perceive and disseminate his knowledge in a meaningful way. Education plays an important role in the development process of any society. In fact, education is considered as the most important means to empower people with knowledge, skills and self –confidence that enable them to participate in the development process.

The world is considered to a 'Global City' because every hook and corner of the world can communicate with any part of the world sharing information. The role of media in this global city is both significant and valuable and has far reaching influence on society especially on students.

The twenty-first century people live in a drenched world of social media where they can search for the possibilities of enhancing knowledge that is stretched all through the corners of the global village. English is the one of the six official languages of the U.N.O and link language of the commonwealth countries. The rapid spread of industrial development, Science, Technology, International trade, English has become a world language. It is the means of International Communication; there are many methods for teaching English over the years which provided some kind of stepping stone towards an approach or theory which has ultimately aided the progression of teaching methods.

With the above brief introduction an attempt is made in this paper to explore how the use of multiple social media tools could be helpful in learning and teaching English language.

Key words: Social media, Language teaching and Learning, Learning Style

INTRODUCTION

Marco Prensky (2001) wrote about a fundamental change in the way young people interact with technology. The high increase in the demand for information worldwide has led to the increase in the access to the Internet and mobile communication.

At a time when the Internet became more accessible to the mass market, a new generation of "digital natives", born between 1977 and 1955, grew up surrounded by technology and became accustomed to using new media throughout 87daily lives. There's no doubt that social media has had a drastic impact on the sheer volume of people we are now able to communicate with. One of the most notable ways that social media has influenced the English language is through the appropriation of existing vocabulary .Evidently, social media is a rich playground for experimenting creating new words and repurposing old ones.

MULTIPLE TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

There are three types of learning environment apart from formal education due to the new communication technologies: Distance Learning, Online learning and E-learning. Distance learning is designed according to the existing course to overcome the distance, i.e., time and place .Online learning is to get connected to the learners through the social media on the Internet, while E-learning covers both electronic media used on the campus and off the campus. Linking formal education to social media may be considered new in the area of learning and teaching of English language. Social media comprises Wed2.0 e-leaning resources that put emphasis on active participation, connectivity, collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas among its users.

(Gumport and Chun, 1999) posited that technology plays a significant role in the learning process and outcomes in higher education settings. It does not only provide access to the information we use, but also influences the product and by extension the process of learning. Moreover, (Alm, 2006) stated that various technology have been employed in the area of education. One of the systems is Web2.0 which was developed after the existence of Web 1.0., which commonly contains web pages, text, pictures, audio, photos, video, authentic materials, discussions forums, chats, emails, and music. Web2.0 on the other hand consists of live materials, podcast, video cast, Flickr, wikis, blogs, online discussion boards, and social networking.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

The advent of smart phones, tablet computers and on campus Wi-Fi means that students are always connected, sharing, publishing, playing and networking (Cavazza 2012). The mushrooming of social networking websites like Face book and You Tube are becoming very much popular and has become a part and parcel of daily life for many people. Because of this features, young people are fascinated to browse the social networking sites in getting the required information of English Language. However, it cannot be presumed that students are aware of the pedagogical values of these tools. The high frequencies of students using social media to share and obtain materials with each other to complete assignments, in addition to the high correlation between them illustrate that students, more or less, were goal-oriented, material acquisition for assignment purpose. Comparing with the other learning activities sharing and obtaining materials are the most consistent student activities in their learning practice through the means of social media.

The challenge for educators is to show students how social media can be used to achieve learning. The online activities between teachers and students can cause negative impacts to teachers themselves such as the obsession of social networking or false teacher-student relationships. The different forms of language used to communicate in social media sites among students, their peers and teachers need to be carefully monitored; otherwise, some misunderstandings may occur in the interfere with the learning and teaching process.

CONCLUSION

A great number of learners agree that social media serves as a beneficial learning and teaching platforms that may help improve the English Language learning and teaching as well as adding up the learners' knowledge. Thus, a typical classroom atmosphere is still the most desirable for the learning and teaching of the English Language. The main criterion of social media in teaching is ease of use for both teachers and students and also that there is no registration or account creation needed for students prior to them using the services.

Considering the findings of the study we have come to the conclusion that the positive effects of the social media surpass negative effects. To minimize the negative effect of social media on the students it is important to educate the students on healthy use of information and communication technology. Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that the learners enjoy using social medial since it was stimulating and pleasurable. As a result, social media reinforce motivations and self-determination in students learning environment.

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