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LEARNING LANGUAGE THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides useful information on how series of language learning social networks have exploded up, and they make education more exciting, effective, communicative and thought-provoking than usual. Language learning measures, within the classroom, have been changing along with advances in skill. When referring to alternative ways of improving English learning, social media absolutely must be mentioned. The internet has the latent to deliver language learners with massive resources of reliable written, acoustic, and video materials to supplement lessons. More recently, however, the immense popularity of social networking websites such as Live Mocha, Bussu, Italki, Palabea, Lang-8 etc., has shaped novel opportunities for linguistic students to interact in trustworthy ways that were previously difficult to achieve. Developments in skill mean that currently, beginners of a language can easily interact with their peers in meaningful practice that helps faster language acquisition and motivation. Social networking can generate a better English communicative milieu for students. They do not have to go to the country where the mother tongue is English, they just have to connect to the internet and interact with people from English speaking countries. Thus the paper indicates that the social networking sites can be used by language learners to explore new relationships rather than merely maintain existing ones and to achieve better understanding. Keywords: Social networking sites, language learning, technology,

Thought-provoking language is a significant part of the language procurement method. Language learners now-a-days are considered "Digital Inhabitants" who are existing in a digital environment and integrally think dissimilar because of this attention to technology. Now- a -days, technology-based education is just like fast food to the minds of students. It creates something new beyond the human mind or human resources. Technology is intended to improve language skills for the 21st century learners.

One of the other aspects of information technology is website. Today, the world became a global village. Present generations are learning the language through websites in a short period. The website technology contains a number of methodologies according to English language. To the present generation, teachers may gather the information and it also provides ideas for classroom, plans and, very important tips for

disadvantaged or advanced students. Every so often, the technology is minimizing the usage of books and provides clear instant information.

Many software like Ginger spelling correcting Technology, internet ESL journal, language software like Globarena, English Mastery . English pronunciation dictionary, Rosetta Stone and many more which are open and free to learn a language individually.

However, a positive aspect to social networking sites is that they can be utilised to conduct out of classroom online collaborative learning sessions, which is the main theme of this paper, which discusses the findings and analysis of a study utilizing social networking sites for conducting such language learning sessions. Thus, encouraging students to speak and experimenting with the language is an integral part of learning.

Social networking sites work to capture every moment of our life. A web-based learning environment can promote constructive learning through authentic activities relative to the vast amount of information available on the internet. Mentors can provide substantial variety of tasks to the students that are available in a blend of formats such as text, graphic, audio, and video. Moreover, these subsidize an increase in students' enthusiasm.

Social media and social websites work to Catalog our experiences the same way a scrapbook does, but because social media is interactive, not only you get experience the same events as your friends; your friends get to react to your experience. Even research suggests that social networks allow for direct access and interaction with large number of people and communities, encourage collaboration and discussion of course material, and promote immediate distribution and progress of written, audio and visual content.

Typically, most of the undergraduate students are busy with other classes, part-time jobs, and socializing with their friends, thus, they have little time for out of class work. There is scarcely enough time for students to significantly improve their speaking skills, and it can be challenging to encourage students to practice their language skills outside of the class. For this, the internet has helped to alleviate this restriction, and due to the incredible processing power of modern computers combined with the fast transfer speeds provided through the broadband internet connection, sharing sound and video files has become a reality.

Social networking Web sites:

Ever since their emergence over a decade ago, social networking sites have been proliferating in number and popularity worldwide. Social networking is a facet of living that, like the internet itself, recognizes no national or social boundaries, and become a way of life. Social networking Web sites, such as You Tube, Twitter, Face book, and Whats App have become extremely popular among internet user who wish to share their ideas, videos, and other activities online. These Websites can be accessed easily; they are free and interesting to users, and are the new tools for language learners to express themselves in authentic ways.

- **YouTube** is an exciting Web device. It is one of the popular visual websites which can help students to promote themselves into communication in a dynamic way. As far as language learning is a concern, YouTube is an unlimited resource for language learning. To illustrate, one can listen to all kinds of spoken languages (formal, informal, colloquial, slang) and all genres (songs, debates, talks, poems) and learn a lot of vocabulary in a framework, which, without uncertainty, will help students to remember effortlessly.
- **Face book** is used as the medium for conducting an online collaborative learning real- time or synchronous session. It is widely adopted by large segments of the population. It is the medium through which updates can be posted, contest conducted and videos or pictures are shared. A teacher can also ask students to write daily news, reviews and post it on Facebook. The other students can comment or make correction on it.
- **Twitter** is another social networking tool that provides communication every time and everywhere. It allows the user to send text- based messages called tweets with a maximum length of 140characters.

People constantly tweet over Twitter to reach out those who are at the point of decision-making and introduce them to their service.

Apart from these, the other social networking websites chosen for language learning are-

Live Mocha (<http://www.livemocha.com>). Babbel (<http://www.babbel.com>), bassu.com etc., provide opportunities for users to interact with other users in order to learn a new language. These sites were chosen out of the pool of language learning websites because of their inclusion of free web 2.0 tools and collaborative learning opportunities. Every website contained some social networking tools and user-based content, as well as static, site-created content.

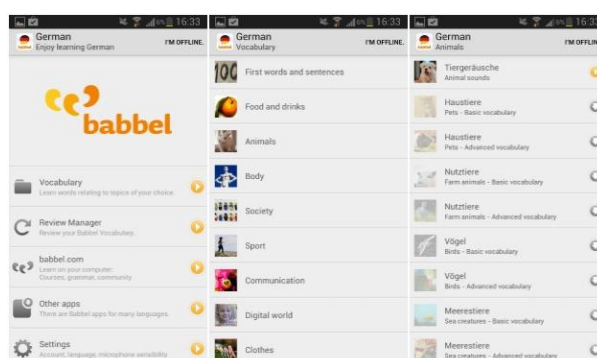
LIVE MOCHA:

It blends engaging self-paced online lessons with a social learning environment to allow individual users to choose how they would prefer to learn a new language. Users can track their progress through online courses and access other learners directly from their profile pages in the most natural way to learn a language. Tutoring takes place between members, in which native speakers of the community can be called upon to correct non-native speakers in voice or text chat. As the name suggests, Live mocha is intended to mirror the relaxed homely atmosphere where members can interact with one another breaking down the boundaries between study and leisure, teacher and student online community of like-minded language learners.



BABEL:

Babbel offers a free-access language learning site with social networking and wiki elements. The site encourages collaboration, as users are encouraged to add content and feedback on others content. Interactive courses offered on the babbel.com web page can be completed online without installation. There are learner and grammar series, vocabulary lecture, as well as courses with tongue-twisters, proverbs, and melodies. Babbel Android Apps are available in the Google play store also. It relies on current technology and teaching methods that aim to make language learning simple. Multimedia reading and writing exercises, listening comprehension and pronunciation training, etc, Training the correct pronunciation is a special focus for Babbel.com

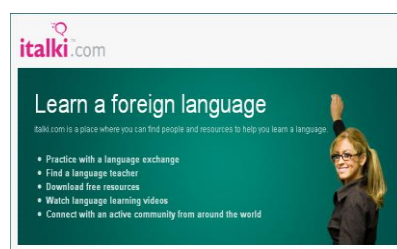


Bussu.com:

This site offers interactive lessons and social networking possibilities in a host of languages. It offers courses based on levels A1, A2, B1, and B2. The study material for language is typically broken down around 150 units. Units consist of multiple-choice questions, speaking and writing assignments. Operators act as either learner or instructor, correcting one another's work. They can communicate through chat-window, audio connection or a webcam connection.

**ITALKI:**

Italki is one of the oldest language learning sites; it combines web 2.0 elements like social networking, user-generated content, and cloud sourcing to support a global community of language learners from over 90 languages.

**Lingua@net**

Lingua@net is a social networking site that offers advice on language learning, level-assessment, language learning, and online communication in many (European) languages. It's particularly valuable as a source of social networking and online communications opportunities with native speaker in the target languages.

LINGUAELIVE:

LinguaeLive is developed by teachers, it connects people who want to learn each other's language. Students can work with peers in complementary languages, no matter how far away.

VOX SWAP:

This site pairs language learners who want to engage in social networking while practicing their target language.

XIHA LIFE:

This site allows learners and native speakers to communicate via multiple languages with speakers around the world.

The Negative Impact of Social Networking sites on language Learners:

Social networking can be both good and bad depending on the usage. It has its benefits for connecting with many people easily only at the touch of a button. Potential harm by these sites is students become victims

of social networks more often than anyone else. That is why, when they are reviewing course material online, they get involved in these sites to slaughter their tediousness in their study time, distracting themselves from their work. Another negative side effect of the social networking sites is students mostly use slang words or shortened forms of words on social networking sites. For instance, they prefer using a letter for a word: 'U' for 'you'; 4 for 'for'; 'C' for 'see'; 'b' for 'be'; shortened form instead of complete words. For example, 'bcoz' for 'because'; 'b/w' for 'between'; 'gonna' for 'going to'. Occasionally, examiners have come across such text language in the answers during evaluation. Another drawback is students start relying on computer grammar and spelling check features, which reduces their command over the language and their creative writing skills. Lastly, overuse of these sites on a daily basis has many negative effects on the physical and mental health of students.

CONCLUSION:

Social networking is one of the key emerging trends of recent years with Face book YouTube, Twitter etc., at the forefront of the movement. It has made the life of people easier and more interesting; its negative impact has created insecurity among language learners. Everything has some good effects and some bad effects but it totally depends on an individual how to apply good outcome and how to renovate bad outcome into good effect.

At last, I would like to conclude –

“Social networking sites should improve our lives, but not become our life”.

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