Students Attitude Towards the Use of Social Media for Learning Purposes
(Case Study: Al-Baha University, College of Sciences & Arts-Biljurashi)

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Abstract
The paper aimed at recognizing the attitudes of using the social networking sites among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi context. To the continued growth of the cyberspace era has brought with it a permanent change in the way that students interact and socialize. Based on analytical, descriptive method. The study has reached to findings of it the bulk of the respondents report a positive attitude towards social networking on their English language learning.And of the study recommendations more research studies in this area should be carried out, for order to develop best practices for its implementation in teaching and learning in EFL in the Saudi contexts.
Keywords: Social network, Saudi Arabia academic purpose, students attitude.

Introduction
The continued growth of the cyberspace era has brought with it a permanent change in the way that students interact and socialize. A major part of this change is the advent of so-called social networking sites on the Internet, which have evolved to become virtual communities where people communicate, share information, and perhaps most important, build and maintain ongoing relationships. On-line social networking communities such as Facebook and MySpace have become part of the daily life of a majority of college-level students, with a potentially far-reaching impact on the way that they study and learn. The emergence of social media changed the communication landscape and the way people interact. Additionally, instead of being only a digital content consumer, one can also be a digital content producer. The use of social media facilitates communication and collaboration among users to support the student-centered learning environment.

Social media technologies have not only substantially changed the way organizations, communities, and individuals communicate and socialize with each other, but they have also changed the way people learn, share information, exchange knowledge, and create new ideas. Usage of these emerging technologies is growing rapidly among the present generation of students. Because the net generation has grown up with web 2.0 social media technologies, these to have tremendous popularity in students' social lives, and yet they become digital natives.

Social Media
Media (plural of medium) is another word that has many definitions and I will argue that it has two distinct meanings relevant for teaching and learning, both of which are different from definitions of technology. The word 'medium' comes from the Latin, meaning in the middle (a median) and also that which intermediates or interprets. Media require an active act of creation of content and/or communication, and someone who receives and understands the communication, as well as the technologies that carry the medium.
Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) define social media as follows:

> A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It is a medium for social interaction as a super-set beyond social communication enabled by ubiquitously accessible and scalable communication techniques. (p.63)

Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. In today's social space social media is undoubtedly one of the most powerful origins of information and news, and constant updates aided by platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Wikis. (Ralph and Ralph, 2013. P.451). Social media then, includes the various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet and to share information and resources.
Prensky (2006) stated that:

> Our students are no longer "little versions of us," as they may have been in the past. In fact, they are so different from us that we can no longer use either our 20th century knowledge or our training as a guide to what is best for them educationally. Our students as, digital natives, will

continue to evolve and change so rapidly that we won't be able to keep up (p. 9).

Social Media in Education

In recent years, social technologies have been widely used by students on a daily basis. Although it was perceived as a type of technology used mainly for social and entertainment purposes, it has gradually been adapted for use in education(Top, 2012).

There are many free and inexpensive applications available in app stores that provide potential opportunities to the academic world. The use of these applications helps to create social-media-focused culture that is influencing how people communicate, teach, and learn (Mao, 2014). Lau (2012) reported that online social networks help initiate learning activities among students. Students who use online social networks can develop their knowledge based on extensive communications and knowledge sharing from the social network sites. Mao (2014) investigated high school students' affordances for social media, their attitudes and beliefs about these new technologies, and related obstacles and issues in using social media. Findings indicated that students show positive attitudes and beliefs about social media use in education. Specifically, students believed they could improve their learning when using social media and also enjoy using social media for an assignment or their own learning after school. However, some students thought that social media created distraction and was time consuming.

Educators recognize the power of social media to transform learning, and they are now integrating these online tools in their instructions. The features of social media complement the constructive philosophy of teaching and learning that allows learners to create, co-create and share knowledge with global audiences beyond classroom walls (Seo, 2013). However, as social media tools have the opportunity to change education, many institutions still wonder how to adapt to these tools (Barnes & Tynan, 2007).

Students are using these websites to connect and interact with friends and others. Also, they use it to share knowledge, look for information and try to solve problems related to their learning activities. Thus, students are aggressively adopting social networking sites to perform different activities and tasks in order to enhance their learning. Embedding new technologies within the learning process needs to be wisely introduced and carefully designed. Such field encourages a lot of research, where many scholars research is discussed. For using social networking websites as an educational tool and integrated within the learning process [21, 4], still more investigation needs to be done in order to clarify their value as a learning environment. Consequently, this paper aims to understand the students' perceptions regarding using Social networking websites within their learning process.

Therefore, understanding students' attitudes and expectations regarding utilizing social media technologies to support learning could help instructors gain better vision of how these digital natives are using such tools for learning purposes.

In overall, educators are aware of social media's benefits and high adoption rates (Moran, Seaman and Tinti-Kane, 2011).

Previous Studies in Saudi Context

According to the Saudi Gazette website, a study has been released recently on social media in the Arab world. "According to the report, Saudis are the most active social media users in the Arab region, with an estimated 393,000 using Twitter and nearly four million using Facebook" (Fatany, 2012, p. 1).

Asiri and Alqarni (2015) explored the main advantages of using Twitter for EFL. The study presented the potential benefits of using Twitter as an educational tool among high school students in Jeddah, inside and outside their schools. The study showed a positive effect of Twitter in the learning and educational process especially on English language learning process.

Kutbi (2015) conducted a study on how undergraduate female students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Perceive the social media website Twitter as an educational Tool. The results of the study found that high percentage of the participants, 84%, prefer the use of Twitter as a learning tool. This high percentage proves that youth has a huge growing interest in technology. According to the Internet World Stats, 53% of Twitter users around the world are females and 77 % of them are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five (Internet World Stats, 2013).

Research Method

This study used a quantitative research design based on a survey method through questionnaires. The analytical, descriptive method has been used. The survey method employed in this research because it is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

i. To investigate students' perception on social media.
ii. To discover students' perception towards adopting social network as an learning platform.
iii. To identify the differences on students' perception attitudes on social media as tool for language learning.
iv- To determine the perception of social networking used in academic purposes.
In what ways do Saudi Arabian students use social networking in learning activities?

Significance of the Study
The significance of the study stems from the fact of the great role that played by social media in language learning.

Research Questions
This study examined the following research questions:
1.   What are the attitudes of Saudis students towards the use of social media in the EFL learning the language?
2.   For what did the students make use of social media ?
3.   How did the students prefer to access the social media?

Population of the Study
The population of the study was the final year undergraduate students in al-Baha University, College of Sciences & Arts- Biljurashi they were 30 in number.

Instruments
The primary data for this research study was collected through a questionnaire; the data of the questionnaire was collected from30 respondents. In addition, this collected data lead this research study to the exploration of the attitudes of social media on student's learning performance.

Data Analysis and Discussions
1- I have social network accounts, such as WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter accounts

	F	P
Agree	29	96
Disagree	1	4
Not sure		
		100

    From Table above, it is evident that 96% of the respondents in this survey seem to believe that they have social network accounts, such as WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter accounts. Whereas 4% have not.

2- I believe social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter could be used in a classroom setting

	F	P
Agree	19	64
Disagree	8	26
Not sure	3	10
		100

    As the above table shown 64% believe that social media tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter could be used in a classroom setting. While 26% do not believe so. And only 10 % were not sure.

3- Social media have enhanced my FL learning

	F	P
Agree	24	80
Disagree	6	20
Not sure		
		100

    80% of the respondents have strong believe that social media have enhanced their FL learning. While 20% disagree with the statement.

4- Social media have changed my FL learning culture

	F	P
Agree	16	54
Disagree	6	20
Not sure	8	26
		100

    As for the notion 'Social media have changed my FL learning culture' 54% come to be in favour. In addition 20% were against the idea, whereas 26% were not sure.

5- Make my learning, interesting and more convenient

	F	P
Agree	17	57
Disagree	6	20
Not sure	7	23
		100

The above table illustrated that 57% of the respondents seen that social media have made their learning more interesting, and convenient. While 20% disagreed with the very same idea. And 23% were not sure.

6- Social media providing the chances of learning English language

	F	P
Agree	25	84
Disagree	2	6
Not sure	3	10
		100

As shown in the above table 84% seen that social media providing better chances of learning English language. 6% disagreed with the same statement, while only 10% were not sure.

7- Social media is a good place to have discussions with "guest speakers" both from inside and outside the Kingdom.

	F	P
Agree	23	74
Disagree	4	13
Not sure	4	13
		100

74% of the respondents and as above table shown with idea that social media consider a good platform of having discussion with guest speakers from inside and outside the Kingdom. In addition 13% were in disagreement with the very statement. While 13% were not sure.

8- Improve my communication with teachers and classmate

	F	P
Agree	22	74
Disagree	2	6
Not sure	6	20
		100

As for the statement 'Social media improve my communication with teachers and classmates' 74% were in agreement with idea. While only 6% in disagreement. And 20% were not sure.

9- Social media negatively affects my attention span

	F	P
Agree	2	7
Disagree	8	26
Not sure	20	67
		100

Only 7% of the respondents seen that social media negatively has affect their attention span. 26% disagreed, whereas 67 % which represented the majority were not sure.

10- Help me become an independent learner

	F	P
Agree	20	67
Disagree	4	13
Not sure	6	20
		100

'Help me become an independent learner' as for this statement the majority of the respondent with 67% were believed that social media has helped them to be independent learners. Only 13% were in disagreement. In addition 20% were not sure.

11- Assist gaining more information on different subjects

	F	P
Agree	26	84
Disagree	2	6
Not sure	2	6
		100

The bulk of the respondents with 84% assured that social media assisted them to gain more information on different subjects. Whereas only 6% were in disagreement. In addition 6% were not sure.

12- Improve my language skills

	F	P
Agree	28	94
Disagree	2	6
Not sure		
		100

As the above table displayed 94% of the respondents come to agree with idea that social media greatly have improved their language skills. While only 6% were disagree with the very same idea.

13- Social media help me to contact as well interact with classmates

	F	P
Agree	28	94
Disagree	2	6
Not sure		
		100

94% of the respondents come to show their agreement with the statement that social media magnificently have helped them to contact as well interact with their classmates. While only 6% were disagree with the very same notion.

14- Using social media to me is time consuming

	F	P
Agree	12	40
Disagree	14	4
Not sure		46
		100

'Using social media to me is time consuming' for this notion 40% of the respondents believed that the usage of social media is time consuming. While only 4% were in disagreement with idea. And 46% which were the majority were not sure.

15- I do not think social media offers any benefit to me professionally

	F	P
Agree	4	13
Disagree	16	54
Not sure	10	33
		100

As shown in the above table only 13% of the respondents did not think that social media offers them any chances or benefits to them professionally. 54% were in disagreement with same idea. And 33% of them were not sure.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research was to explore students" attitudes towards social media supported language learning. The findings suggest that social media can be very useful as an educational tool. It is clear from this study that the current generation of students at al-Baha University, College of Sciences & Arts- Biljurashi- department of English language favour the use of social media not only to socialize, but also to meet their educational needs. With regards to the attitudes, students do hold positive attitudes about using social media, though there were very few who do not. The existing literature shows that social media, when used as a learning tool, does provide educational benefits.

The study recommends more research studies in this area so as to closely understand how experienced EFL learners utilize social media in their classes in order to develop best practices for implementing social media in teaching and learning in EFL in the Saudi contexts.

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