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**Ecoles préparatoires attitudes envers les médias sociaux pour apprendre l'anglais**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to analyse the attitude of preparatory school students towards social media in learning English in terms of different variables. In this study, the survey method, which is one of the types of qualitative research, was used. The study group comprised 220 beginner and intermediate-level students studying at the Preparatory School of Near East University. An attitude scale for the attitudes towards social media in learning English, which was devised by the researchers used to collect data for the research. Consequent to the study, it was observed that the students who took part in the study used social media sites frequently in order to improve their foreign language by watching TV programmes, series and videos in English language as well as to find about English words which they are not familiar with. It was also stated that the social media application used most frequently by the students was "Facebook". It was finally found out that the attitude of the students towards social media in learning English was positive and it is independent of gender, having a social media account and web page, the frequency of using social media environments and the time spent online

**Resumen**

Le but de cette étude est d'analyser l'attitude des élèves des classes préparatoires envers les médias sociaux pour apprendre l'anglais en fonction de différentes variables. Dans cette étude, la méthode d'enquête, qui est l'un des types de recherche qualitative, a été utilisée. Le groupe d'étude comprenait 220 étudiants débutants et intermédiaires de l'école préparatoire de l'Université du Proche-Orient. Une échelle d'attitude pour les attitudes vis-à-vis des médias sociaux dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais, qui a été conçue par les chercheurs et utilisée pour collecter des données pour la recherche. Suite à l'étude, il a été observé que les étudiants qui participaient à l'étude utilisaient fréquemment des sites de médias sociaux afin d'améliorer leur langue étrangère en regardant des programmes télévisés, des séries et des vidéos en langue anglaise, ainsi que de rechercher des mots anglais ils ne sont pas familiers avec. Il a également été déclaré que l'application de média social utilisée le plus souvent par les étudiants était «Facebook». Il a finalement été découvert que l'attitude des étudiants à l'égard des médias sociaux dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais était indépendante du sexe, qu'elle disposait d'un compte et d'une page Web sur les médias sociaux, de la fréquence d'utilisation des environnements de médias sociaux et du temps passé en ligne

**Keywords**

Social media; Internet; Social media platforms; Web technologies

**Mots-clés**

Médias sociaux; L'internet; Plates-formes de médias sociaux; Technologies web

## 1. Introduction

Developments in information technologies which followed the invention of the Internet in late 20<sup>th</sup> Century gave rise to various changes in daily life and in forms of communication. Interpersonal face-to-face communication was gradually replaced by forms of communication based on technological means. Social media is at the centre of these new forms of communication in the virtual environment. Social media represents all the tools, services and applications in virtual environments that enable individuals to interact by using web-based technologies. Social media has reshaped the individuals' collaboration, communication, work, learning process and interaction. Due to their user-friendly and flexible nature, social network sites can be used more easily in comparison to other educational management systems. The fact that several students share things among themselves and form groups by following simple steps provides great facilities in terms of communication and feedback. Furthermore, the social media also benefits institutions own to its features like supporting the learning process of students, enhancing blended learning experiences and contributing to the teaching and assessment process of teachers (Öztürk & Talas, 2015; Wu, 2015).

Feyzioglu (2016) argues that “*of the overall developments and improvements in the field of “education-teaching, communication and technology”* from the very existence of mankind till our century, the most significant ones took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in its second half. Developments which started with the primordial communication technologies continued with inventions like “*paper and writing, telegraph, electricity, radio and television*” and with the invention of the computer, “*information technologies*” entered our lives. Consequent to the development of the computer and its becoming widespread, the imagination-stretching effects of the invention of the Internet, which established communication and connection between computers, began to be understood over time.

The focus of the developing technologies has been to occupy a place in the daily lives of individuals more than they did previously. The social media has begun to play an important role in our daily lives with Internet use being made widely available for use by individuals and with the increase in the use of mobile devices (Mayisela, 2013).

Social media is one of the significant means of communication emerging with the development of the Internet and influencing the society. At present, it has attracted the attention of educators in numerous educational institutions. In terms of education, it provides the users with many significant facilities like a collaborative environment, document-resource sharing, sharing of knowledge and skills as well as communication (Bedir, 2016; Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016).

At the present time, social media platforms are classified under various different sub-headings according to their content management and purposes. Expressive and collaborative social media are just two of those. The expressive social media are social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram where individuals share their own content in order to express their feelings, ideas and state of mind. The collaborative social media, on the other hand, is the name given to social media platforms where individuals share knowledge in order to inform the others on a certain subject. This type of social media platforms are sites where users can post new content and intervene to existing contents. In addition, these are sites where one can have or share information and which allows one to tag those. The most notable example of this platform is Wikipedia (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016; Mayisela, 2013).

Also, it is mentioned that students acquired and generated information and shared it with their peers in social media environments, actively participated in those environments, structured their knowledge and improved their creativity (Alwagait, Shahzad & Alim, 2015; Cakır & Korucu 2015).

In 2003, the year when Language Learning & Technology was introduced, nobody could envisage the influence of the computer technology and the Internet on second and foreign language learning and teaching. Within the years that passed, researches which sought to

analyse second language learning by means of technology appeared on Language Learning & Technology. This period demonstrated expansion and growth in many aspects. Making research on issues of learning languages by technological means have been facilitated by the expansion, acceptance and use of technologies. The period in question also saw an expansion in the approaches aimed at studying second language acquisition and further constructs and methods which can be employed in the research for the use of technology in second language learning. Language Learning & Technology, in that regard shows us how rich researches on the use of technology in language learning (Chapelle, 2010).

Language Learning Social Network Sites (LLSNSs) are used popularly by a plethora of users globally. Yet, the participation of individuals therein or what is learned by such sites is not widely known. Language learning social network sites (LLSNSs) which actually are online communities promoting cooperation between learners of language (Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Sanchez-Castro & Strambi, 2017; Sun et al., 2017). Provide structural tutorial facilities for students and they efficiently use the things they learn while communicating with native speakers from all over the world. LLSNSs which come into being combine two significant elements of Computer Assisted Language Learning, namely instruction and communication (Lin, Warschauer, & Blake, 2016).

In the past, classroom was the only place for learning a second or foreign language with the teacher being the sole source of information and knowledge. In the present time, individuals also learn languages in environments other than the institutions. This applies especially for English as a second or foreign language which is accessible on the Internet over the media and through the expanding field of entertainment. Other languages are also made easier to access thanks to the Internet which additionally provides facilities for interaction in target languages. The present issue deals with computer-assisted language learning in extracurricular and extramural contexts where learning is linked to educational institutions to a certain extent unlike the previous kind of learning (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2017).

The most noteworthy development in web technologies in recent years is the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 technologies. The opportunities provided by this new technological infrastructure have enabled individuals to abandon the role of mere content viewers and become users who participate in and contribute to content production. For this reason, the Internet has evolved into a platform which is far more participative, interactive and collaborative. The social media environments have been adopted by the target population together with the Internet and gained power. Due especially to social sharing networks; they are able to exert their influence on broader populations. The web-based applications used to communicate with the target population, social media, social networks, blogs, microblogs, simulation applications where one finds himself in a virtual world, radio broadcasts and television in the electronic media give rise to environments which strengthen interpersonal communication (Álvarez Valencia, 2016; Ozaydin, Baykus & Cemrek, 2014).

Newly made researches show that a social constructivist approach to language learning is supported also by Web 2.0 applications. Nevertheless, various types of obstacles connected with technologies and learning tasks cause students to become disengaged in different learning stages (Liu, Chen-Chung, Pin-Ching Wang, & Shu-Ju Diana Tai, 2016).

The aim of this study is to find out the attitudes of preparatory school students towards social media in learning English and analyse those by various variables. It is believed that any positive attitude of students towards social media in learning English would contribute to studies to be made to that end, shed light on researches to be made in relation to the use of social media networks for educational purposes and shape similar student-oriented studies to be made. The following sub-aims have been set for the purposed of the research.

### **1.1. Sub-aims of the research**

Do the attitudes of preparatory school students towards social media in learning English vary by age, gender, level of education, having a social media account, having a personal web page,

having an e-mail account, the most widely used technological device, the level of information on social media environments and tools, the place of access to the Internet and social media, the frequency of use of social media environments, time spent online and the most frequently used social media application?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research model

This research uses the survey method as it is aimed to identify the attitudes of graduate students towards social media in learning English according to demographic variables. The general survey method is a survey made on a universe composed of multiple elements or on a group obtained therefrom in order to come up with a general judgement on the former (Karasar, 2015).

### 2.2. Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of 220 students studying in the preparatory school of one of the private universities in North Cyprus. Convenience sampling, which is a type of purposive sampling, was used as the sampling method. Convenience sampling enables the researcher to work in a fast and practical way. For, in this method, the researcher opts for the convenient and easily accessible case (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008).

### 2.3. Data collection tool

The questionnaire form was used to collect the necessary data for the research. To that end, a data collection tool made up of three parts was devised. In the first part of the data collection tool, information on the demographic characteristics (nationality, age, gender and level of education) of the students were sought to be reached. The second part consists of 10 close-ended questions aimed at identifying Internet usage frequencies and social media usage habits of students. The third part of the tool includes the “*Scale of Attitude Towards Social Media in Learning English*” comprising 24 items. A 5-point Likert type scale was preferred for the expressions used to measure the attitudes of students. The responses of “*I strongly disagree (1)*”, “*I disagree (2)*”, “*I neither agree nor disagree (3)*”, “*I agree (4)*” and “*I strongly agree (5)*” obtained were given points such that the most positive category would get 5 and the most negative one would get 1 point. The following ranges were taken into account while assessing the arithmetic mean of the data obtained in accordance with the scale used in the research (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
Scale ranges

Weight given	Options	Range
1	I strongly disagree	1.00 – 1.80
2	I disagree	1.81 – 2.60
3	I neither agree nor disagree	2.61 – 3.40
4	I agree	3.41 – 4.20
5	I strongly agree	4.21 – 5.00

The questionnaire contained 30 items formed by the researcher by making use of similar studies following a literature review and by getting the views of students. The scale of attitude towards social media in learning English was examined by a linguistic expert in terms of the language used. For the scope and face validity of the scale, views of the 6 university lecturers 3 of whom are from the ELT and 3 of whom are from computer education and instructional technology department were resorted to. Experts suggested that 4 items should be taken out of the scale. The necessary corrections were made in line with the views of the experts and the



trial form of the data collection tool devised to identify the attitude of preparatory school students in respect of social media in learning English was finalized. It was suggested that the number of items should at least be double taking into account processes like the factor analysis of group size and item analysis (Kline, 2014). The trial form of the data collection tool devised to allow for the conduct of the validity and reliability analyses of the tool itself was applied on 100 students as a preliminary experiment group.

In order to determine the items to form the scale, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and total item correlations were calculated using the data obtained from the teacher candidates during the preliminary trial. The selection of the items was based on the criterion that the total item correlation coefficient should be over the value of .30. The means and standard deviations of the items to be included in the scale are between 3.15-4.39 and .71-1.61 respectively. When the results of the item analysis made to assess the distinctiveness of the items were analysed, it was concluded that there was a single item with a total item correlation below the value of .30 and the rest of the items had correlations varying between .32 and .62. Two of the expressions were taken out of the scale as their values remained below .30. The reliability of the scale was measured with the Cronbach's Alpha test and the reliability coefficient of the whole scale was found to be Cronbach's  $\alpha=.88$ . If the Cronbach's alpha value is over .70 then it is said that the scale is very reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2011). Accordingly, it was concluded that the scale was reliable. Consequent to the preliminary trial, it was revealed that the remaining 24 items were clear and a change of expression was needed in a few items. Thus, the necessary changes were made and the data collection tool was finalized.

#### 2.4. Application

Prior to the application of the scale which was finalized following its introduction to the preliminary experiment group, the necessary permission was obtained from the Head and Deputy Head of the Department in the preparatory school. Subsequently, the school administration and the teachers were engaged with and the questionnaire form was applied to the students within the suitable course hours decided upon.

#### 2.5. Validity

The construct validity of the scale was tested through factor analysis, which is regarded as the most effective method by many researchers (Kahn, 2006). KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity tests were conducted for the compatibility of the data and the sample number with factor analysis. For the compatibility of the data with factor analysis, the result of the KMO should be over .60 and the Bartlett's test should be meaningful (Büyüköztürk, 2011). Lastly, the explanatory factor analysis was conducted to ensure construct validity for the scale, the results of which are given below.

**Table 2.**  
KMO and Bartlett test results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,853
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1896,680
	df	276
	Sig.	0,000

As can be seen on Table.2, the KMO value pertaining to the scale was measured as 0,853 and the Bartlett's test was found to be meaningful. The KMO coefficient gives information on the suitability of the data matrix for factor analysis as well as on the suitability of the data structure for deriving factors. For factorability, the KMO value is expected to be over .60. The Bartlett's test analyses whether there are relationships between the variables on the basis of partial correlations (Büyüköztürk, 2011). Accordingly, it was identified that the data are suitable for factor analysis.

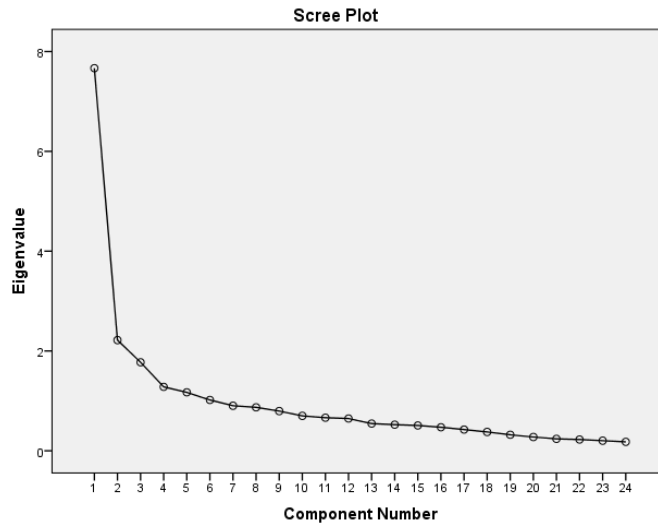


Figure 1. Scree Plot Graph

Table 3.  
Results of Factor Analysis

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.667	31.947	31.947	7.667	31.947	31.947	4.154	17.309	17.309
2	2.218	9.241	41.188	2.218	9.241	41.188	3.970	16.541	33.850
3	1.773	7.389	48.577	1.773	7.389	48.577	2.478	10.327	44.177
4	1.281	5.338	53.915	1.281	5.338	53.915	1.867	7.779	51.956
5	1.171	4.879	58.794	1.171	4.879	58.794	1.641	6.838	58.794
6	1.018	4.243	63.037						
7	0.903	3.760	66.798						
8	0.870	3.627	70.424						
9	0.796	3.317	73.741						
10	0.700	2.918	76.659						
11	0.662	2.760	79.419						
12	0.646	2.692	82.111						
13	0.545	2.270	84.381						
14	0.523	2.179	86.560						
15	0.507	2.111	88.671						
16	0.472	1.966	90.637						
17	0.426	1.774	92.411						
18	0.378	1.573	93.984						
19	0.321	1.337	95.321						
20	0.276	1.152	96.473						
21	0.239	0.996	97.468						
22	0.226	0.941	98.409						
23	0.202	0.842	99.251						
24	0.180	0.749	100.000						

The examination of the scree plot graph in Figure 1 as well as of the factor analysis results in Table 3 reveal that the scale has a five-factor structure the eigenvalue of which is higher than 1. Principal component factor analysis and Varimax rotation was applied in order to identify the basic components (sub-dimensions) of the scale. Following Varimax rotation, the first, second, third, fourth and fifth factor included in the scale individually accounted for 17.31%, 16.54 %, 10.33 %, 7.78 % and 6.84 % of the total variance respectively with all five factors accounting for 58.79% thereof.

The examination of the factor loads in Table 4 reveal that scale items numbered 2,3,6,1,5 and 7 were grouped under Factor I and factor loads varied between 0.61 and 0.80. The second factor in the scale comprised questions numbered 19, 18, 17, 14, 13, 20, 12 and 9 with factor loads varying between 0.46 and 0.72. Factor loads pertaining to items numbered 21, 22, 23 and 24 however, varied between 0.48 and 0.82 and those items were grouped under the third factor. Scale items numbered 15,11 and 8 formed the fourth factor and they had factor loads varying between 0.43 and 0.56. Items numbered 16,10 and 4, the factor loads of which varied between 0.45 and 0.56 on the other hand formed the fifth factor.

**Table 4.**  
Factor loads by items

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V
Data2	0.802				
Data3	0.774				
Data6	0.751				
Data1	0.737				
Data5	0.656				
Data7	0.610				
Data19		0.718			
Data18		0.716			
Data17		0.695			
Data14		0.623			
Data13		0.583			
Data20		0.579			
Data12		0.534			
Data9		0.460			
Data21			0.819		
Data22			0.818		
Data23			0.778		
Data24			0.482		
Data15				0.829	
Data11				0.740	
Data8				0.433	
Data16					0.564
Data10					0.481
Data4					0.453

## 2.6. Data analysis

The SPSS 23 program as well as factor analysis and Cronbach Alpha test statistics were utilized for the quantitative data obtained in this study. The significance level in analyses was set as  $p < 0.5$ . The frequency (f) and percentage (%) were employed for the categorical



variables during the analysis of the data. During the analysis of the data obtained as a response to the social media attitude scale, however, the arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) were used.

### 3. Findings and interpretation

When the average age and standard deviation values ( $\bar{X}=19.40$ ,  $SD=2.44$ ) of the research group were analysed, it was found out that the average age for the students forming the sample group was 19. The distribution of students based on the variable of nationality revealed that 163 students (74.1 %) were Turkish and 57 students (25.9 %) were foreigners. As is evident from the results, it was observed that the majority of the students were Turkish. The analysis of the distribution of students based on the variable of gender revealed that 140 of the students (63.6%) were male and 80 of them (36.4%) were female.

The distribution of students based on the variable of education level, which was established by the preparatory school exam at the beginning of the new academic year was such that 159 students (72.3 %) were at beginner's level whereas 61 students (27.7 %) were at intermediate level. It can be said that the majority of the students were at beginner's level. The distribution of students based on the variable of accounts on social media environments revealed that 215 students (97.7 %) responded "Yes" and 5 students (2.3 %) responded No. As is evident from the results, it was observed that almost all the students had accounts on social media environments. The distribution of students based on the variable of having personal blogs/web pages revealed that 173 students (78.6 %) responded "No" and 47 students (21.4 %) responded "Yes". As is evident from the results, it was found out a large number of students did not have personal blogs or web pages.

The distribution of students based on the variable of easily accessible Internet connection revealed that 19 students (89.1%) responded "Yes" and 24 students (10.9%) responded "No". As is evident from the results, it was apparent that the vast majority of students had easily accessible Internet connection. The distribution of students based on the variable of e-mail addresses revealed that 218 students (99.1%) responded "Yes" and 2 students (0.9%) responded "No". As is evident from the results, it was observed that almost all the students had e-mail addresses. The distribution of students based on the variable of the device most widely used to connect to social media sites revealed that 191 students (86.8%) used smartphones, 17 students (7.7%) used laptop computers, 9 students (4.1%) used (normal) non-smartphones and 3 students (1.4%) used personal computers. As is evident from the results, it was ascertained that most of the students used mostly smartphones to connect to social media sites.

The distribution of students based on the variable of knowledge level on social media environments and tools revealed that 115 students (52.3%) responded "Good", 63 students (28.6%) responded "Very Good", 38 students (17.3%) responded "Average" and 4 students (1.8%) responded "Not Good". As is evident from the results, it was observed that nearly half of the students had a good level of knowledge on social media environments and tools. The distribution of students based on the variable of the overall place of access to the Internet and social media revealed that 161 students (73.2%) responded "Home", 49 students (22.3%) responded "Other", 8 students (3.6%) responded "School" and 2 students (0.9%) responded "Internet café". As is evident from the results, it was found out that a large number of students accessed the Internet and social media in their homes.

The distribution of students based on the variable of frequency of use of social media environments revealed that 187 students (85%) responded Every Day, 14 students (6.4%) responded 3-5 Days A Week, 9 students (4.1%) responded 1-2 Days A Week, 7 students (3.2%) responded Never and 3 students responded (1.4%) Other. As is evident from the results, it was observed that most of the students used social media environments every day.

The distribution of students based on the variable of time spent online revealed that 56 students (25.5%) responded 1-2 hours, 50 students (22.7%) responded 30 min - 1 hour, 52 students

(23.6%) responded more than 4 hours, 43 students (19.5%) responded 3-4 hours and 19 students responded (8.6%) less than 30 minutes. As is evident from the results, it was apparent that that nearly half of the students spent 30min-2 hours online. When the social media applications used most frequently by the students were examined, it was seen that of the students forming the sample group 60 students (27.3%) chose Facebook, 64 students (29.1%) chose Other, 52 students (23.6%) chose Youtube, 21 students (9.5%) chose Twitter, 8 students (3.6%) chose Wikipedia and 3 students (1.4%) chose Tumblr, as their first priority. It was further observed that of the students forming the sample group, 70 students (31.8 %) chose Youtube, 63 students (28.6%) chose Facebook, 34 students (15.5%) chose Twitter, 23 students (10.5%) chose Other, 7 students (3.2%) chose Wikipedia and 6 students (2.7%) chose Tumblr, as their second priority. It was lastly identified that of the students forming the sample group, 60 students (27.3%) chose Youtube, 48 students (21.8%) chose Twitter, 47 students (21.4%) chose Facebook, 31 students (14.1%) chose Other, 18 students (8.2%) chose Wikipedia and 6 students (2.7%) chose Tumblr, as their third priority. As is evident from the results, of the social media applications, the most widely used applications selected as the participants' first priority has been Facebook and Other followed by Youtube and Twitter. The level of use of other social media applications was rather low. The averages and standard deviation values for the attitude of students towards social media in learning English are given in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

Averages and standard deviation (sd) values for the attitude of students towards social media in learning English

<b>Social Media;</b>	$\bar{X}$	SS
1. Improves my English language speaking skills	4.15	.874
2. Improves my English language listening skills	4.24	.712
3. Improves my reading and writing skills	4.15	.801
4. Adds to my culture	4.15	.880
5. Is needed for me to learn a foreign language	4.06	.917
6. Contributes to my English language learning process	4.19	.817
7. Enhances my vocabulary	4.25	.848
8. Enables me to acquire and share new information in cultures the common language of which is English	4.22	.764
9. Enables me to make friends who speak English.	4.14	.952
10. Enables me to communicate with my friends in English	4.17	1.615
11. Eases life for me through sharing of academic knowledge (assignments, projects etc.) in English language	3.99	.971
12. Is influential in my following current developments in English language.	3.90	.958
<b>Social media sites/ in social media sites;</b>		
13. Enable me to exchange ideas on areas of interest in English language	4.04	.897
14. Writing in English allows me to express myself positively	4.08	.933
15. Contribute to the improvement of my foreign language by listening to music in English	4.30	.987
16. Enable me to improve my foreign language by watching TV programmes, series, movies and videos in English language.	4.43	.753
17. Enable me to access to information in English language	4.32	.794

18. Enable me to make research in English language thus improving my foreign language	4.25	.761
19. Enable me to access to newspapers and magazines in English language thus improving my foreign language	4.08	.912
20. Help me find words that I do not know in English language	4.39	.791
21. I like following my English teachers	3.90	1.072
22. I like my English teachers to follow what I write	3.90	1.049
23. My English teachers' following me makes me feel precious	3.95	1.060
24. Spending a lot of time decreases my level of achievement	3.15	1.397

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the students gave the response “*I totally agree*” to the expressions “*Social media sites enable me to improve my foreign language by watching TV programmes, series, movies and videos in English language*”, “*Social media sites enable me to access to information in English language*” and “*Social media sites help me find words that I do not know in English language*” ( $4.21 \leq \bar{X} \leq 5.00$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that they are using social media sites not only to chat with their friends or share video or pictures but also to improve English as a foreign language. It can also be argued that their foreign language is improved as a result of their accessing information in English. Finally, it can be put forth that their vocabulary is also improving through social media sites.

It was observed that the students gave the response “*I agree*” to the expressions “*Social media improves my English language speaking skills*”, “*Social media contributes to my English language learning process*” and “*Social media enables me to communicate with my friends in English*” ( $3.41 \leq \bar{X} \leq 4.20$ ). Accordingly, it was ascertained that students improved their English by chatting with people from foreign countries and social media contributed to English courses at school.

Furthermore, the students gave the response “*I neither agree nor disagree*” to the expression “*Spending a lot of time in social media sites decreases my level of achievement*” ( $2.60 \leq \bar{X} \leq 3.40$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that students’ spending considerable amount of time in social media sites is not influential in their achievement in English language.

As no significant difference was found out ( $p > .05$ ) consequent to the independent t-test which was conducted, it was ascertained that the attitude of the students towards social media in learning English was at the level of “*I agree*” irrespective of gender or having social media accounts or web pages. Also, since no meaningful difference was found out ( $p > .05$ ) in terms of the variable of the frequency of students’ using social media environments and the time spent online as a result of the one-way Anova test which was conducted, it was discovered anew that the attitude of the students towards social media in learning English was at the level of “*I agree*” irrespective of the frequency of using social media environments and the time spent online.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is the age of technology, social media is a notion which took masses by storm. Presently, social media has replaced the conventional media owing to its features like easing communication and being fast, reliable, up-to-date and easily updatable. Social media is a means used consistently especially by the new generation of students. There is a wide range of social media applications the number of which increases day by day. Such applications serve many purposes like sharing of knowledge and skills, communication, announcement of activities, chat and making friends. Most of these activities are also used in the field of education. In the present day, social media has become a preferred educational tool as it eliminates the boundary between time and space and facilitates access to information.

Education is a process which continues at every stage of life. Most recently, especially with the advancements in technology, it has become easier to be oriented towards educational activities. The decreases in costs, ease of access to information and shortening of distances brought about by social sharing networks have also caused educational systems to change. Therefore, many features of social media applications also provide a favourable environment for their use in educational contexts. While the use of social media applications for educational purposes has proved to be beneficial, it also brings certain problems along with it. In that connection, this research aims to establish the effect of social media usage on academic success as well as the attitude of students towards social media.

When the demographical characteristics of the students participating in the study were analysed, it was seen that three fourths of the sample which was subject to consideration comprised Turkish and one fourth of it comprised foreign students whereas more than half of the preparatory school students were male and the rest were female participants. It is noteworthy that almost all of the participating students had social media accounts. As for the students' having personal blogs/web pages, it was ascertained that only one fourth had personal blogs/web pages. It was identified that a large number of students had easily accessible Internet connections. It was also observed that almost all the students had e-mail addresses. The students mostly preferred smartphones as the device to connect to social media sites. It was further discovered that half of the students had a good level of knowledge regarding social media environments. It was observed that around three fourths of the students generally accessed the Internet and social media at home. It was also ascertained that a large number of students used social media environments every day. As for the time spent online, it was observed that half of the students spent between 30 minutes-2 hours online. While Balaman and Karatas (2012) expressed that their students spent 1-2 hours of their time on social media, Vural and Bat (2010) found out that each day students spent 1-3 hours using social media applications on the average.

The social media application used most widely by the students was Facebook followed by Youtube and Twitter. Deniz (2012), identified that a large majority of the students in the sample group were Facebook users in social media. Iscioglu (2012) who reached similar results in his research on the most widely used social media, put forth that Facebook was the most preferred application with its rising number of users. Atalay (2014) on the other hand, expressed in his study on social media that Twitter was the second most widely used application after Facebook. On the other hand, in a field study made by Hazar (2011) on social media addiction, it was discovered that a large number of students used the Facebook followed by Youtube and Twitter. Contrary to these findings, Karaduman and Kurt (2010) stated in their study that Twitter was not the second most widely used application.

It was found out that students forming the sample group improved their foreign language by watching TV programmes, series, movies and videos, accessed to information in English and found about English words which they did not know thanks to social media sites. In addition, it was observed that social media improved English speaking skills of students, contributed to their learning of English language and enabled them to communicate with their friends in English. It was further ascertained that their spending a lot of time on social media sites did not decrease their level of achievement in learning English. Yet, the study made by Koç and Karabatak (2011) revealed that students who spent too much time on social networks had lower grade point averages.

Since it was found out that the attitude of the students towards social media in learning English was positive independent of gender, having a social media account and web page, the frequency of using social media environments and the time spent online; academic studies with respect to learning English as based on social media can be made.

The extensive use of social media by the students suggests that they should be directed to participate in various educative seminars in order to use social media applications more consciously for educational purposes. Also, the students should be informed of the functions of social media and encouraged to use it creatively for purposes of research. Furthermore,

researches should be made for more efficient use of social media in the field of education. Training sessions on social media usage should also be held in order to promote its use for educational purposes. Information on educational resources in English language should be shared on social media and such resources should be made available for more people.

## 5. References

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