Roles and Rationale of Using English on social media

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Abstract: *Many people utilize social media as one of the instruments in information and communication technology to communicate ideas in regular communications. The current study identified Tribhuvan University students at various levels who used social media to increase their English language skills. Since this study aimed to gather specific information about social media usage in developing English language competency from the perspective of college students, a survey research design was used. The responses' results demonstrated that social media (SM) platforms play various roles in enhancing EFL learners' English comprehension. Most respondents fervently concurred that using social media significantly contributes to developing English ability.*
Keywords: *Social media, English language learning, College students, Communication, ICT tools*

Introduction

Social media is constantly changing the way people live in different aspects. Nowadays, various social media platforms affect communication, information delivery, knowledge exchange, commerce, education, and all aspects of life (Rieger and Christoph, 2018). With the vast spread of various social networking sites on the Internet, researchers from different fields have started to direct their attention and shed more light on the importance and impact of social media on various aspects of life, including social and educational aspects.

Since the last decade, it has become common to use information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching-learning, and so has it in language learning. With regards to English as a foreign language, ICT has opened the doors for the learners of English so that they can collaborate with native English-speaking people through online media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and video calling apps like Skype and WhatsApp, which are the most popular instruments of ICT (Annamalia, 2017). ICT is one type of online media; it is an after-effect of innovation development. Additionally, it works like an apparatus that permits individuals to make relations with one another. Most individuals and students all over the planet use web-based media because of its advancement. The students of colleges generally utilize online media in different circumstances of their daily life (Arif, 2019).

For information and communication, people use online media or social media as a tool. People of any age or status use social media as it is one of the most famous platforms. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) assert that online media platforms are a gathering of web applications that permit the formation of different substances on the planet. Indeed, numerous types of online media are available worldwide, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and so forth. Moreover, it is not difficult to pursue these types of web-based media freely. Because of this reason, the vast majority utilize these web-based media. Individuals, particularly students, frequently use these web-based media since they amuse them. Chou (2014) points out that online media have a few attributes: intuitiveness, stage quality, and

information-sharing system. Along these lines, through web-based media, understudies can do many things. Most of the students know how to update their knowledge about classroom materials quicker through web-based media compared to other media like paper-based materials. Karim and Hasan(2020) concluded in their study that many learners are satisfied with the online learning mode.

In the EFL setting, utilizing online media gives a few occasions to build up understudies' English language abilities. It cannot be ignored that English is one of the dialects generally utilized in web-based media because English is known as a global dialect used everywhere to impart to one another. In Nepal, English is utilized by individuals, particularly understudies, as an unknown dialect. They generally learn English in schools and colleges as an accessible subject. The English- learning students utilize their cell phones with online media platforms to impart one another. They accept that mobile learning can encourage them to know it whenever at any place (Ayuningtyas, 2018). There is neither a problem for them nor any negative insight in utilizing ICT to teach English.

Statement of the Problem

The development of web use in Nepal is quick. The web is utilized not only in urban areas but also in towns and villages. These days, the web turns into a significant need for Nepalese individuals. A significant part of Nepal's advanced populace connects to the web through cell phones. With this backdrop, it becomes pertinent to study the competencies to use social media by college students of Kathmandu in Nepal. Thus, several studies have been conducted taking into social media. Its features and applications for English language learning worldwide, significant studies still need to be made to explore the possibility of language enhancement through social media in Nepal. These research questions are essential for the study: (1) What are the reasons for using the English language on social media? (2) What are the purposes of using English on social media?

Objectives of the Study

In Nepal, too, most young people have accounts on social media. It has arrested their attention for being entertaining and enhancing connectivity with people around the globe. The college students of Tribhuvan University are using this social media for learning purposes also. Taking into account the general features of social media, the objectives of the study were: 1) To identify the rationale for using English on social media. 2) To describe the roles of using the English language on social media.

The Implication of the Study

The research implies that using social media in a foreign language like English may require skill in a place where the native language is not English. The results and findings of the investigation may provide some insights into how teachers could exploit the various functions of social media to teach English.

College teachers may be benefited from this study, who can motivate the students to use different ICT tools to engage them in using social media to enhance their English language skills.

Methodology

The study was based on quantitative data. This research was based on descriptive research design because it is a fact-finding investigation with adequate interpretation in the context of academic research. For this purpose, statistical tools have been applied. This study was based on primary data. The data sources used in the study were from different colleges affiliated with Tribhuvan University. The collected data were processed and tabulated according to the need of the study.

Research Instruments.

A structured questionnaire was used for this investigation as the research instrument to gather the respondents' perspectives about their access to technology, their competencies with social media, their usage of social media, and the applicability of English. Hard-copy questionnaires were distributed and collected within a precise time—one hundred percent return of the questionnaire from different colleges.

Sample Size

The investigation covered 116 undergraduate students from various colleges in the Kathmandu Valley who studied English as a foreign language since the students' mother tongue is not English. All the respondents were selected through a purposive non-random sampling technique.

Limitations

This study, like other studies, has some limitations. The study sample only covered 116 college students of the Tribhuvan University of the Kathmandu Valley. Because of this limitation, the research might need to mirror the actual conditions of the undergraduates of Kathmandu properly. The study explored social media's role in general learning English. This research was based on only five social media platforms.

Results and Findings

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of each Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	51	44.0
Female	65	56.0
Total	116	100.0

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

Table 1 displays the result of the demographic depiction of the population in this investigation. As far as the gender of the demographic profile of the respondents is concerned, Table 1 reveals that 56% of respondents were girls, whereas 44% were boys.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics of each level of education*

Level	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	58	50.0
Master's degree	27	23.3
MPhil	31	26.7
Total	116	100.0

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

Regarding the courses, 50% of respondents were from Bachelor's degree level, 23.3% were from Master's Degree, and 26.7% % of students were from Master of Philosophy.

Table 3: *Cronbach's Alpha test*

Component of Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized item	No. of items
Familiarity	.729	.731	2
Rationale	.430	.430	4
Roles	.530	.526	10

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

The Cronbach's Alpha test was performed, resulting in 0.729 on familiarity, 0.430 on Rationale, and 0.530 on roles nearest to 1, indicating internal consistency of all the questionnaire components. This means the result is viable to interpret.

Table 4: *Usage of ICT tools by research participants*

ICT tools		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Computer, Smartphone	98	84.5	84.5	84.5
	Tablet	18	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

The answer to the first question, i.e., "What ICT tools do you use to access social media?" is provided in Table 4, along with the findings. It is shown in Table 4 that 15.5% of students have access to a tablet.

Table 5: *Usage of social media by research participants*

Social Media		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	All	58	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Youtube	38	32.8	32.8	82.8
	Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Youtube, WhatsApp	15	12.9	12.9	95.7
	Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

The answer to the second question, "Which social media do you use" has been discussed in Table 5.12.9% of respondents use WhatsApp and 4.3% use Twitter.

Table 6: *The respondents' familiarity with the use of social media.*

S.No	Questions	Not applicable	Weak	Moderate	Good	Very good
1	How much capable are you of using social media?	-	2.6%	15.5%	55.2%	26.7%
2	To what extent do you feel comfortable using English on social media?	-	4.3%	18%	48.3%	29.3%

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

The answer to the third question, item no. 1, "How capable are you of using social media?" has been discussed. Table 6 above shows that 55.2% were good, and 26.7% were very good at using social media. The answer to the item no. 2, "To what extent do you feel comfortable using English on social media?" has been discussed. 77.6% felt comfortable while using social media.

Table 7: *The respondents' Rationale for using the English language on social media*

S. No	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I use English on social media because it is required according to the current trend.	4.3%	12.1%	14.7%	52.6%	16.4%
2	I use the English language in social media because most of the ICT tools and software are in English.	4.3%	6.9%	6.9%	46.6%	35.3%
3	I use the English language because it is more familiar to me.	1.7%	11.2%	16.4%	41.4%	29.3%
4	I use English on social media because of peer pressure.	22.4%	50.0%	9.5%	15.5%	2.6%

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

Findings on the fourth question of respondents' rationale for using the English language on social media are shown in Table 7. The answer first item, "I use English on social media because it is required according to the current trend", has been discussed. 52.6 % agreed with item no. 1. The second item, "I use the English language in social media because most of the ICT tools and software are in English". 46.6% agreed to item no 2. The third item, "I use the English language because it is more familiar to me." 41.4% of students decided on item no. 3. The fourth item ", I use English on social media because of peer pressure." 50% of respondents disagreed the item no. 4.

Table 8: *The roles of using the English language on social media*

S. No	Questions	YES	NO
1	I develop my English writing skill by writing posts on social media.	51.7%	48.3%
2	I enhance my speaking fluency using social media.	59.5%	40.5%
3	I improve my English language competency through social media.	63.8%	36.2%
4	I consult the dictionary before posting anything on social media.	56.9%	43.1%
5	I can confidently correct my friends' English grammar mistakes on social media.	53.4%	46.6%
6	I watch or listen to movies, songs, and documentaries in English.	76.7%	23.3%
7	I improve my academic performance by the use of social media in the English language.	63.8%	36.2%
8	I improve my global market competency by using English in social media.	56.9%	43.1%
9	I promote my small businesses through social media by using the English language.	39.7%	60.3%
10	I feel more confident while using English on social media.	79.3%	20.7%

Source: Researcher's calculation with SPSSV25

Based on Table 8, findings in the above table showed that 51.7% of students developed their English writing skills by writing posts on social media. The study also revealed that 59.5% of respondents enhanced their speaking fluency using social media. 63.8% of respondents improved their English language competency through social media. Also, 56.9% of students consulted the dictionary before posting anything on social media. The study also uncovered that 53.4% of respondents can confidently correct their friend's English grammar mistakes on social media. 76.7% of respondents watched or listened to movies, songs, and documentaries in English. 63.8% of students improved their academic performance using social media in English. 56.9% of respondents improved their global market competency by using English in social media. Only 39.7% of students used English to promote their small businesses through social media. 79.3% of students felt more confident while using English on social media.

Discussion

The results and findings above were from the feedback gathered through questionnaires by 116 college students across Kathmandu of the Tribhuvan University affiliated colleges. The questions of this quantitative study are enumerated and discussed one by one.

Question 1: Which ICT tools do you use to access social media?

Regarding the above question, it was found that all respondents have access to smartphones and computers, and few of them use tablets. This shows that tablet is unpopular among students because most work can be done using a computer or smartphone. This finding indicated that almost all the students had proper access to ICT, which is an effective tool in the present era of the modern education system.

Question 2: Which social media do you use?

The results and findings showed that the students are most competent in using Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and Youtube, the most popular social media app in the world today. They are expected to be suitable mobile apps that could benefit their learning needs in the twenty-first century. The students could engage themselves using these apps, allowing them to operate their various functions in linking and inter-changing with others in a group through sharing and conversation.

Question 3: What is the respondent's familiarity with social media?

Concerning familiarity with social media usage, most respondents reported that they could use social media and felt comfortable using English on social media. This shows that many students are aware of digitalization. Social media has become popular among students. They are using these amazing tools in a better way.

Question 4: What are the respondents' rationale for using the English language on social media?

Students use social media for different purposes. According to the findings, Social media is trending. Many people use it in English, especially in countries like Nepal. In Nepal, many ICT tools and software are available in English. Students are familiar with it. This shows that students consciously or unconsciously learn English while using social media. The English language is a global language, and they need it. The findings show that they do not use it due to peer pressure. English has become their preferred language due to its wide coverage.

Question 5: What are the roles of using the English language on social media?

Regarding the purpose of using English while using social media, the findings indicate that the respondents develop their English writing skills by writing social media posts and enhancing their speaking fluency using social media. Social media helps them improve their skills in English. The study found that they consult a dictionary before posting anything on social media. Using English on social media has improved their academic performance, global market competency and confidence in using this language. However, the findings showed that it does not promote their small business. Hence, it is suggested that the positive impacts of various social media platforms might enhance their English language skills and help college students improve their all-around personality.

Conclusion

The current investigation aimed to identify the role of social media among the students of Tribhuvan University in learning the English language. In the study, all the popular social media platforms in Kathmandu were considered, and it was investigated whether college-goers know English using social media. A remarkable finding is that most university students think they learn English using social media

platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter and Facebook. Moreover, the student's attitude toward social media platforms as pedagogical tools is encouraging and positive. They also feel that social media is one of the best ways to practice English. To sum up, it is propounded that social media has a significant role in learning English, where the student's mother tongue is not English. The outcome of this study recommends that the learners must be motivated to engage themselves to use social media in English to master this language and improve their English proficiency.

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