

THE RELATION OF L2 MOTIVATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA APPS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF USERS' EXPERIENCES

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Abstract:

This study explores the relationship between L2 motivation and the use of social media apps (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter) for language learning. Using a qualitative approach, interviews with students from a public university in Pakistan reveal that social media offers engaging learning opportunities through exposure to native speakers, interactive communities, and features like reels, captions, and memes. While participants acknowledged the motivational benefits of social media in language learning, they preferred face-to-face instruction and classroom settings for building confidence and fluency. The study concludes that social media can support language learning and enhance L2 motivation, with implications for educators and language technology developers.

Introduction

Language is purely human property. People use language to express their emotions and feelings through language. Language also helps to shape human thoughts. Thus, learning a second language influences the learner's way of thinking (Saqlain, 2021). According to Gardner, if a person learns a second language, it is entirely different from the learning a person does in school, for example, all the subjects he has studied in school. Learning another language is a foreign task (Gardner, 2001). The national language of Pakistan is Urdu but English has a very significant role in the educational, official, and even social environment (Coleman and Capstick, 2012).

In learning a second language, L2 Motivation is very important. According to Ellis, motivation is like an effort a person makes to learn a second language whether he does it for his own need or desire (Ellis, 2012). According to Gardner, a person becomes a motivated person when he has a desire to learn a second language and makes an effort to do it. He said if we want to see why a person is motivated to learn a language, we will see his desire to learn that language (Gardner, 2015). In today's world where technology has continued to develop at a faster rate, various aspects of learning languages have also undergone a major revolution and social media applications have been one of the most important social elements making this revolution. Since, Facebook, Instagram or other applications like Duolingo or Tandem are social platforms that create an environment for L2 learners to communicate, study, and practice. It provokes students to learn L2. This shift also brings questions about dissemination of motivation among learners since motivation is one of the key indicators, which determine success in language acquisition according to Dörnyei (2001).

The research tends to understand that how social media has influenced the motivation of L2 learners and to what extent social media has an impact on learning L2. This research uses the apps like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp to study the impact of these on motivation of the learners. The fact that social media, being an inherently social technology, permits actual social engagement, which boosts motivation (Thorne, 2003). For instance, real-life interaction

practice with first language speakers can provoke the students' desire to become integrated and even needed members of the English-speaking community, behind which learners will continue learning this language (Murray, 2016). Although the concept was seen to have improved learner motivation through social relations and support from peers, some learners may feel poor or unfocused (Rashid & Asghar, 2016). This knowledge is crucial for both educators using technology in language learning and application developers who design the platform for language acquisition. Using this qualitative approach, the study will seek to explore the L2 motivation of users concerning social media apps.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how social media apps affect learners' motivation in learning L2.
2. To determine whether social media apps have an impact on language usage and motivation in terms of the experiences of the learners.

Research Questions

1. How do social media apps affect learners' motivation towards learning L2?
2. How do social media apps have an impact on L2 learners in maintaining motivation according to the learners' perspective?

This Research aims to find how social media has affected L2 learners' motivation and how much media may help with L2 learning. Many scholars offered different definitions and theories about motivation.

A student's motivation plays a great role in acquiring the language. The students who have positive attitudes towards the language and who are highly motivated are able to acquire the language more easily than the students who are not motivated (Dornyei, 1998; Gardner, 2010; Shearin, 1994). Gardner is known to lay the foundation of motivation through his research. His research shows that motivation encourages learners to acquire a second language. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), the key component in learning a language is motivation and it is independent of the ability of the learner to learn a language. According to Gardner (1985), the motivation to learn L2 has a strong connection with efforts and desires and with that, he gives the idea of instrumental motivation, which means the learner's desire and effort to reach a particular goal, and integrative motivation, means learns the language to try to fit into a target community. These two are the essential factors for motivation in learners.

On the other hand, Dornyei gives his framework of motivation on three different levels. The first one is the language level, the second is the learning level and the third one is the learning situation level (Dornyei, 1994). Motivation plays a great role in the process of learning a second language, even a less bright but motivated student can learn language faster than a very bright student who is unmotivated. Teachers might also play a great role in establishing motivation in the learners (Reece & Walker, 1997).

According to Dornyei (2009), motivation not only provides the driving force to learn a second language, but it also helps the learner to get through the difficult and long process of learning the language. Even if the person has a great ability to learn the language, he still needs

motivation to have success in language learning. Dornyei proposed the L2 Motivation self-system which describes the construction of motivation in the learners. This consists of three factors that are, Ideal L2 self, ought to self, and L2 learning experience. Ideal L2 self means to have the motivation to learn the second language to become competent. Ought to self means the competency one believes that one should possess. L2 learning experience means the experiences of learners

during language learning (Dornyei, 2009).

Facebook

Social Media can be a useful learning aid (Castrillo, 2013; Mitchell, 2012). However, there still are multiple investigations that discuss the educational possibilities of social media. Cerda and Planas (2011) affirmed that social apps such as Facebook are helpful since they engage students in interaction, discussions activities, work in groups, particularly, students who are reluctant in face-to-face participation. Some people think that Social Media is able to enhance students learning environment and enable them to interact and communicate which might lead to increased learning. Wang and Vasquez (2014) analyzed that how Facebook can be used to learn language for ESL learners, specifically Chinese ESL learners' quantity and quality of written language performance as used in the social media. The authors stated a difference between the treatment group using Facebook and the control, with more quantity of writing but not quality. They, therefore, suggested that Facebook be used for non-classroom related assignments with a view that the learners may enhance their writing abilities. Facebook's use has also been subject to a number of qualitative studies in an EFL learning environment. Ekoc (2014) developed a Facebook page with the purpose of understanding the engagement of the pre-intermediate students while using the social tool for academic learning, with emphasis on their willingness to relate and to reply to inquiries provided by other group members or the teacher. This study found high levels of variability between students, some of whom asked and responded to questions more than others. This made the researchers recommend the use of Facebook because it offers an additional source of input and enhances students' communication skills.

Twitter

Several studies have also confirmed the functions of Twitter in L2 learning, for example Borau et al., 2009, and Hattem 2013 provided the literature on it in an ESL learning environment and concluded that, the Twitter is useful due to availability, contact ability and interconnectedness which helps in making the students feel that they are part of a community of L2 speakers and they can construct their own identities and interact for meaning making outside the context of classroom learning. According to Borau et al. (2009), students had a positive perception of Twitter in terms of its academic benefits, which included improving their communicative, sociolinguistic, and cultural competence. On the other hand, it is also commonly known that sharing content on Twitter will boost its audience's proficiency in language, including grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, Hattem (2013) concluded that incorporating Twitter into an English grammar course has several positive benefits, such as assisting students in focusing on the targeted grammatical aspects, enhancing their ability to retain information for a long time, and encouraging joyful learning, and improve Grammar content knowledge as well as facilitating their learning process. Furthermore, it was found that when using Twitter as a tool in teaching a foreign language the practice improves language not only in a formal context but also in the informal context.

TikTok

David, Claire Kim, et al (2023) determined the effectiveness on TikTok and Facebook for teaching and learning English between junior high school teachers and students in Angeles city

after shift towards home school by pandemic. The completion also evaluates the success of the strategies in enhancing on the development of good vocabulary and language skills in the process as it looks at the general gadget and time management. In the same vein, Korkmaz and Kucuk (2023) also stressed on the relevance of TikTok for teaching words and involving students pointing to the same spotlight that these platforms create more engaging learning atmosphere. Thus, a quantitative descriptive-comparative research approach shows quite different pictures of their roles in language acquisition and calls for further research with more platforms and a larger number of respondents.

Instagram

Aloraini (2018) studied how Saudi students utilized Instagram as a tool for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) thus serving as an inspiration for the study. Many English, as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia share language tutorials on platforms like Instagram, such as explaining expressions. This study examined two different lesson formats, one emphasizing grammar and the other vocabulary, with the goal of determining how these lessons affected students' involvement and the feedback they got from peers and teachers. According to the quantitative study, students usually generated output after lessons. Alharbi (2022) noted from a study that actual use of Instagram led to enhanced students' participation and interest in learning English as L2 especially writing and speaking.

WeChat

The study by Zhang, Liu and Liu (2021) was conducted with the purpose of its authors to investigate the impact of multimodal writing on the EFL learners' vocabulary growth. 70 students were selected, 35 for the experimental group, who had to use WeChat to help them with Tweet- Based Writing, and 35 for the control group. At 7 weeks, indices of improvement have been detected in the EG in terms of vocabulary use and in actual learning of new vocabulary. While from the questionnaires and interviews most learners reported that multimodal writing was fun and helpful to enhance their vocabulary repertoire, it was not found to be significantly different from the traditional mode of writing. Likewise in 2021, Li, Fan, Wang and Lu on the impact of the WeChat based English language vocabulary learning found out that their test scores reduced after using the program as compared with the test scores they had before using the program.

In conclusion, researches done in the years suggests a strong correlation between L2 learners' motivation and the social media apps they use. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, WeChat, and others have features that can foster positive learning communities and enhance communication. As the field of education continues to advance, using these tools into language learning could prove beneficial in finding efficient methods of boosting motivation and enhancing language learning outcomes.

Research Methodology

This Research aims to find how social media has affected L2 learners' motivation in L2 learning. The method that is used to carry out this research is Qualitative. According to Brink (1993), the qualitative method has no calculation, statistical data, and numerical values. This research will employ the qualitative approach because the interviews of students are analyzed in this research. Moreover, this method will be used where a problem has to be highlighted and examined (Creswell

and Poth 2016). The researcher employs descriptive qualitative research methodology. “A descriptive qualitative research approach focuses on evaluating a phenomenon's traits and features in order to better comprehend it” (Regoniel, 2023). When we have an intention to get a further insight of the topic that had been studied earlier but from different perspective we use this type of research. Descriptive qualitative research refers to the exploration of the qualities of a phenomena, it deals with the characteristic of a phenomena instead of dealing with the causes or processes that led to them, or the effects that comes with the phenomena.

Sampling technique

Students were selected using random sampling from BS English students of a public university. This strategy was chosen to minimize the effect of researcher bias and ensure every student was given equal opportunity of being chosen. Seven participants were chosen at random out of the list of all the BS English students. To enhance the perspective of the viewpoints presented regarding the correlation of L2 motivation and social media apps, the participants included students of different ages, both genders, and different language proficiency.

Data Collection

Data was obtained through semi- structured interviews hence allowing diverse and elaborate responses. Therefore to minimize interference, the interview was carried out in a quite environment. Each interview that took around 10 minutes consisted of a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' experiences, attitudes, and reasons for L2 learning and social media usage. The interviews included probing of the students to get the answers of the research questions.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid rise in the use of social media has changed the way people communicate, interact with others, and learn new languages. Social media apps are very accessible to students, allowing them to interact more with native speakers.

Many researchers have studied how social media apps help students learn a second language. Some have even worked on a single app to see how people learn language through social media. However, very little research has been done on the impact of social media apps on L2 learning Motivation. This research deals with the impact of social media usage on L2 Motivation. In this age when social media apps have become an integral part of life, it is important to see whether they motivate users to learn a second language or if users just learn it unconsciously. The study aims to determine whether social media gives Motivation to users or not and what specific features on the apps gives them the motivation to learn L2

Codes and Respondent Themes

No.	Area	Respondent Themes
1.	Social media apps for L2 learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent use of Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, Facebook and YouTube. • Apps help to access news, grammar, slangs and language learning channels • L2 exposure through reels, memes and comments
2.	Social media and L2 motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps enhances motivation • Seeing native speakers, especially influencers and celebrities. • Social media gives learning content more than motivation.
3.	L2 motivation since using social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps increase engagement with L2 vocabulary and content. • Motivation grows for most of users but few see it for understanding and entertainment.
4.	Motivation from groups and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with communities boost L2 motivation. • Find motivation from WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram groups • Communities help to interact with native speakers and boost motivation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a few, groups are more of the information sources than motivation tool.
5.	Specific features for L2 motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube videos, Instagram reels, twitter posts and Tiktok captions. • Visual content e.g. memes and reels
6.	Interaction with native speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with native speakers gives L2 learning motivation • Desire to improve vocabulary and fluency to communicate with them • Accents also gives motivation
7.	Social media vs. Traditional classroom methods for L2 motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person and classroom interactions give more motivation • Social media apps are supportive tools • Social media is involuntarily learning exposure.
8.	Personal experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debates, Podcasts, Interaction with influencers, celebrities and native speakers.

1. Social media apps for L2 learning

All the participants in the study pointed out that a number of social media platforms are useful in L2 acquisition. Most often, young people cited the use of applications such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. These platforms offer different content delivery methods such as news, grammar lesson, slang, and whoever information.

For example, one user said

"For L2, I often use Twitter and YouTube. I read the news from different posts on Twitter. There is a lot of international news on Twitter. And there are tweets in English on Twitter. And there are a lot of YouTube channels which are very good for learning English. There is a lot of grammar work, everything is on YouTube. And I have joined some accounts on Facebook where English

discussions are done. And there is a lot of conversation in English. So I mostly use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube"

2. Social media and L2 motivation

The study established that learning motivation in L2 is boosted by social media through the use of real life involvement. People who sourced information from native speakers, those who frequently post information often these influencers and celebrities formed the basis of where learners sourced their information from. I could see these figures using L2 with ease and that also boosted the morale of the participants to do the same.

For example,

"Yes of course, because there are many influencers over there on internet. So when I see them and they are speaking definitely very good English. So it motivates me a lot to speak English, so I can also speak English like them. So it motivates me."

3. L2 motivation since using social media

A majority of participants pointed out that the extent of their interaction with L2 content and vocabulary had risen slightly since joining the social media. This was only possible to gain in situations and contexts that were not easily possible in the conventional classroom.

For example,

"I spend half of the time on the internet. So internet motivates me to speak English, to learn English"

4. Motivation from groups and communities

Group and community in social media have been found vital for increasing the motivation of the second language learning. The WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram compel their users to join specific interest groups so as to relate to peers as well as native speakers.

For example,

"Groups and communities, yes. They can motivate. For example, WhatsApp community group and Instagram or Facebook groups. When you engage with the community, you are motivated to learn L2"

5. Specific features for L2 motivation

Some aspects of social media apps required further examination because they were deemed the most beneficial for keeping motivation levels high. This includes Reels on Instagram, captions on Tik Tok, videos on YouTube, tweets on Twitter among others. These features gives short, fun lessons that make learning a language more possible.

One user clarified the importance of captions,

"So as far as we talk about the features. So you know, captions, there are many captions. As you scroll through TikTok, you watch many Reels. There are many motivational stories, there are many Reels they have made. So that can make you learn more English, new words"

Another user said,

"Apart from Instagram videos, there are also comments. There is also a community development in comments. Yes. And on WhatsApp, your communication skills are enhanced through AI. You can talk to it"

6. Interaction with native speakers

The growth of vocabulary complexity and fluency was found to be influenced by social media interactions with native speakers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Some of the participants' desire about the course was to be able to imitate native speakers' accent and fluency.

For example,

"Yes, that's the one thing that I believe motivates you. For example, if you are on Instagram and you are making friends with international people. Maybe it can help you learn English more and better. It will help you get motivation to learn English. Communication with native speakers. Maybe you feel embarrassed that you don't know English well. So, that embarrassment may motivate you to learn".

7. Social media vs. Traditional classroom methods for L2 motivation

While social media was recognized as being a helpful tool for inadvertent learning, the majority of participants identified that categorized motivation by conventional course approaches was more effective. Teacher and peer contact was considered better for L2 learning due to reasons that related to the mode of learning.

For instance, one student stated:

"From social media, I learn a lot. Like new words. But the main confidence comes when you actually communicate with the people. Because on social media, you're not communicating. You can write with the help of chat GPT. But you're not communicating"

8. Personal experiences

Interviewees volunteered specific life instances which they considered to have influenced their L2 learning motivation in a good way by social media.

For example, a student share his personal experience as,

"Like watching shorts from YouTube. A celebrity from Bollywood that is now also a celebrity in Hollywood, Priyanka Chopra. The way she speaks and the way she utters words motivates me to learn that language. And the other celebrity that Shraddha sometimes, I used to watch them both on YouTube. And they both are good in speaking English. And it motivates me to learn English language"

Conclusion

The present research used a qualitative research approach to unravel the link between L2 motivation and social media use to capture an underlying understanding of how students interact with social media networks for language learning. As highlighted in the study, social media provide exposure to other people's use of real language and social interactions through the features of the sites. In regard to what participants discussed as rationales for learning the second language, they mentioned the use of social media as an informal learning context that complements classroom learning taking place on apps like Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. One learner completely disagrees that social gives motivation to learn in any way. Two of the interviewees are in the view that social media somehow gives them motivation. While five people agrees that they get motivation to learn L2 from social media apps

The results of the qualitative analysis highlighted the importance of context and individual variability for learners' experiences and motivational effects. The study further showed that students acquired practice in use of language, developed richness of language, and the ability to develop confidence while interacting with others in linguistic and cultural diversity through the

use of social media. This study will present the possibility of incorporating social media into the strategies for learning languages and supports the use of this tool as a supplement to conventional learning practices.

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