An Initial Study on the Effectiveness of Using Facebook Platform in Enhancing Vocabulary Knowledge of Learners in the New Normal
Case Study – Selected Field of Vocabularies

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Abstract

This initial approach is a sort of proposal for studying on the effectiveness of using Facebook Platform to enhance vocabulary knowledge of learners during the New Normal. The aim of this paper is to study the effectiveness of using Facebook Platform as a teaching aid in enhancing learners' vocabulary knowledge in the New Normal. There are two objectives in order to advocate the aim and they are: to identify the selected field of vocabulary knowledge of the learners through Facebook Platform and to explore the outcomes of the learners whether they can apply the selected field of vocabularies or not in their careers. As a sample case study, an initial approach to learning vocabularies through Facebook platform is designed as a lesson plan in accordance with teaching cycle theory proposed by the two different scholars: Casserley and Nunan. Based on three phases: (i) Identifying and Pre-test (ii) Facilitation and (iii) Post-test and assessment, twenty (20) learners are given 5 tasks for each phase. After the first phase, it can be found that there are 4 learners who are weak in the selected field of vocabularies, 10 for the fair and 6 for the strong. In the second phase, Facilitations are provided. After the last phase, the improvements of the learners come out and there is no weak learner, 9 for the fair and 11 for the strong. The percentage of the strong learners has increased 25% from 10% of the weak and 15% of the fair. It can be concluded that Facebook could be used as a supplementary learning platform to enhance vocabulary knowledge of learners because of its efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: The New Normal, Facebook platform, Vocabulary, Teaching cycle

Introduction

Language learning has transformed into something that happens out of classroom and not merely in the four walls of a classroom. Social networking becomes a pivotal role in education which includes young learners as well as adult learners. Nowadays, social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Instagram have gained surging popularity, particularly among young adults who use new technologies to create instant communities of practice (Castells, 2007). Facebook and other similar SNS have the potentials to become valuable resources that could be used for academic purposes (Hurt, Nicole E. and Camus, Melinda S, 2012), especially in the higher

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educational settings. Nowadays, especially during Covid-19 period, new ideas, technologies and other possible approaches are needed more than before.

The rise of online learning leads us to modify our teaching and learning processes. Today, the successes of online courses are gradually increasing. Authentic language learning tasks and activities via Facebook are significant, as they ease, facilitate and strengthen relationships and interactions between the members of a Facebook community.

Now, there are many possible future directions for the development and maintenance of the academic atmospheres in the normal situation. In doing so, the role of information communication technologies (ICTs) becomes more and more prominent. In this paper, the use of Social Media application (E.g Facebook) can be seen as useful tools for all facilitators and learners. Facebook has already been familiar with almost all of people and it is able to give some foundation knowledge in order to make shifts towards the other applications such as Twitter, Zoom, Microsoft Team, Google Classroom, etc.

In this paper, the case study is built on the selected field of vocabularies and the use of Facebook Platform. With the aid of that platform, teachers and learners can interact with each other through online situation for teaching and learning processes.

This study, in fact, is just a kind of proposal and it is merely a preliminary approach. It acts to facilitate and enhance vocabulary knowledge of the learners through the use of social media. Through this study, teachers as a facilitator of learning and learners are able to get some information and knowledge about how to use Facebook for language learning and other academic purposes.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to study the effectiveness of using Facebook Platform in enhancing vocabulary knowledge of learners in the new normal.
The two objectives are;

(1)   To identify the selected field of vocabularies knowledge of the learners through Facebook Platform and

(2)   To explore the outcomes of the learners whether they can apply the selected field of vocabularies or not in their respective careers.

Literature Review

Teaching and Learning Vocabularies through Social Media

The term social media can be referred to as web-based services that provide opportunity for individuals to form their own profile page and connect with people through mutual friends or even their preferred users. According to Faizi, Afia and Chiheb (2013) social media also brings

people with common interest together to share their moments, photos, videos and events. It is a platform for people to connect with one another regardless of age and time. Social media provides a huge amount of material on a wide range of subjects.

Students can therefore turn to any of these tools for further explanations or clarifications. It helps learners to access information and to have control over their learning. They also get to choose on the type of materials they wish to access to learn. Currently, the most popular of these social media is Facebook. The wide range of use suggested is one of the main reasons why this study focuses on how students actually make use of the features on social media for learning purposes.

Vocabulary learning is said to be one of the most important parts of language learning and it is often seen as an important tool for second language learning. It is also supported by Fareh Alqahtani (2015) who believes vocabulary learning is an integral part of language pedagogy and it is an indispensable part of language learning.

Teaching Cycle

Among the various types of teaching cycle, the teaching cycle by Casserley (2015) is an ongoing learning process for the continuous improvement of a teaching program.

The 5 stages of teaching cycle are as follows:

1. Identify Needs

This is the initial stage where the teaching cycle starts. This step consists of research based on training need analysis where the teacher needs to identify the knowledge gap, special learning needs of the students and reflect individual differences. Using the collected information, they develop a plan to manage any learning difficulties and highlight the learning objectives. Although this is usually described as the first stage in the teaching cycle but it should be a continued action throughout the learning journey.

2. Plan and Design

Planning starts with what the teaching aims to accomplish, whereas, designing consists of all the planned objectives and ways to achieve them. These objectives may include whether teaching would be conducted in a classroom setting or out of classroom. It further includes designing a good lesson with the use of session plans, schemes of work and creating a variety of different resources. We structure what we want to address, which includes determining, when and which information is presented, when to conduct learning activities and when to make assessments.

Designing includes planning the flow of information, assessment and other learning activities to give the whole process a logical pattern that builds up on the previous session.

Additionally, as a teacher, we could ask ourselves the following questions to get a better understanding of the elements of this phase:

- Numbers of attendees for the training
- Planning the time required for delivering the knowledge

3. Deliver (Facilitation)

After the extensive planning and design, this phase caters to conducting the sessions. At times, they have to deliver the lesson along with maintaining the session's decorum. Delivering the lesson requires planning, practice experience and facilitation skills with different learning styles and individual learning needs of the students. Delivering knowledge must incorporate use of multiple resources, address to minimum core requirements, and encourage student independence and group work. An effective training program allows the attendees to participate actively in the learning process and to practice their new skills and knowledge. Teachers must have clear aims and objectives for each lesson.

4. Assess

Delivering the required knowledge is a teacher's area of expertise. Simply conduct assessments, quizzes and tests for learners can be used to measure their level of knowledge and progression. These formative and summative assessments gauge the learner's ability to receive and retain knowledge. These assessments must be planned in the 2nd stage along with the course content. It is recommended to record the progress and achievements as per the requirements of the internal and external awarding bodies. The assessments must reflect the course content to make the learning process more effective.

5. Evaluate

Evaluating the overall sessions clarify if the teacher has accomplished the planned objectives. The effectiveness can be measured through taking student feedback about the training. It highlights the areas of improvement for the teacher to take care of for the upcoming sessions. The student feedback helps the teacher in measuring the effectiveness of course content, methods of delivery, assessment strategies and the learner's satisfaction. The feedback must contain developmental and positive comments to keep the students motivated to work better.

Research Methodology

Participants and Context

In this initial study, the lesson plans for facilitating selected field of vocabularies through Facebook platform is based on the theory of teaching cycle. And, there are 20 learners whom are randomly selected and their average ages are at 18 and most of them are from Lashio University and generally they are at elementary level.

In the processes of language teaching and learning, there are lots of phases and areas. Among the various aspects of teaching and learning English language, only facilitating vocabulary is selected. However, it is difficult to cover the whole processes of vocabularies. Therefore, the selected field of vocabularies is chosen to be more specific and effective approach. Vocabularies about hotel, restaurant, food and drink are studied as a sample approach in this paper.

Design and Procedures

In this paper, the study is on the modification of teaching cycle proposed by the two different scholars: Casserley and Nunan. It is based on three phases: (i) Identifying and Pre-test (ii) Facilitation and (iii) Post-test and assessment. In each phase, there are five tasks. The time allocation for every task is 10 to 20 minutes. For all phases, the duration is within 2 weeks. All these data were collected in December 2020.

The pedagogical use of Facebook for this study is created on private Facebook Page and messenger of facilitator. All the participants are on the page as members and they can interact with the facilitator through messenger or comment. All the exercises and tasks which are based on English vocabulary in use 3rd and 4th edition: Elementary and Pre-intermediate levels pressed by Cambridge University are provided as posts on the page such as pictures, photos and sometimes short video clips or live broadcasting by the facilitator are also supported when and where necessary. At the end of all tasks, all learners have discussion section in which facilitator and learners can interact to each other so as to give constructive alignments among them.

The results of pre-test and post-test are graded and the learners are grouped with grading methods for individual or group work. In the first and last phases, mark limitation of each and every exercise is 10 marks. If the learner gets below 5 marks, it means weak. If the learner has 5-7 marks, it is fair. And if the learner wins 8-10 marks, it means strong. Grading method is 1for weak, 2 for fair and 3 for strong. Learners are also described in code (L) in the data interpretation.

No.	Weak (Below 50%)	Fair (50%-75%)	Strong (Above 75%)
1.	1	2	3

Case Study

In the case study, an initial approach to learning vocabularies through Facebook platform is designed as a sample lesson plan in accordance with the functions of teaching cycle.

Data Collection

In the data process, only one sample task for each phase has been described and the required data is collected by means of these tasks. In each phase, the various types of question format are provided such as: *Choose the correct words/Complete the sentences/Matching/Odd-one-out and so on* to be more effective.

(i)   Identifying and Pre-test: Sample Task No (1)

No.	Type of Task	Teaching Aids	Theme Vocabulary	Duration	Marks	Period
1.	Finding Nouns Test (1)	Picture	Structure of Restaurant	5-10 min	10	1
	Discussion (Optional)			2 min		

(ii)   **Facilitation: Sample Task No (2).**

No.	Type of Task	Teaching Aids	Theme Vocabulary	Duration	Marks	Period
1.	Memorizing & Understanding Vocabulary	Pictures	Food & Drink	10-15 min	-	6
	Discussion (Optional)			2 min		

(iii)   **Post-test and Assessment: Sample Task No (3).**

No.	Type of Task	Teaching Aids	Theme Vocabulary	Duration	Marks	Period
1.	Choose/Complete/ Write the name of Food & Drink	Picture	Food & Drink	10-20 min	10	11
	Discussion (Optional)			2 min		

Findings and Discussion

The case study is built on the sample analysis of enhancing learners' knowledge in the selected field of vocabulary with the aid of Facebook platform. When the case study has been analyzed by three phases: (i) Identifying and Pre-test (ii) facilitation and (iii) Post-test and assessment, the gap between the first and the last phases are described as grading scores.

The Facebook platform presents itself as a meaningful atmosphere and context for the learners to learn new vocabulary and eventually enhance their vocabulary knowledge, and use, practice and reinforce the new words correctly and authentically. In doing so, the sample case study is able to deal with the learners and the target plans.

In the main findings, all the outcomes are shown in figures. In addition, the percentage of the results is also described as pie charts.
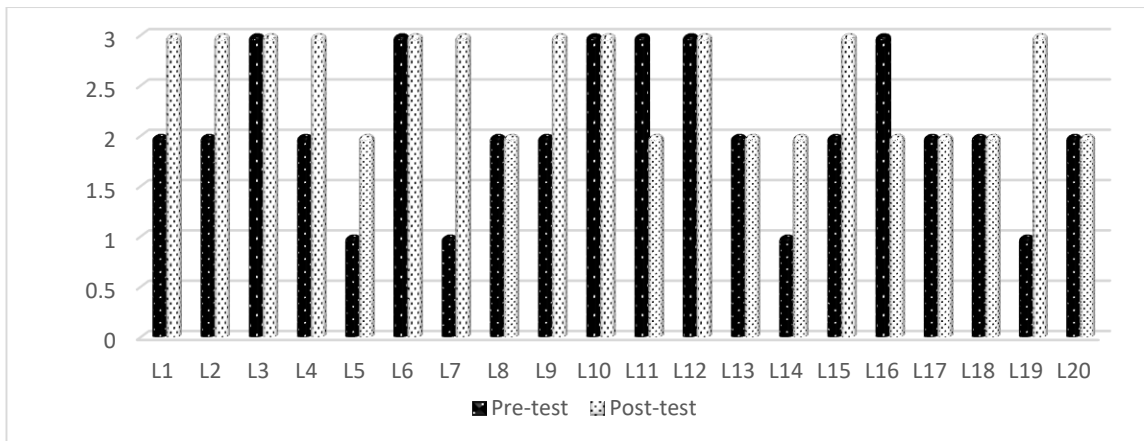
Figure (1): Grading Scores of Pre-test and Post-test

In the figure (1), the grading scores for pre-test in blue color and post-test in red color of the learners are shown. After identifying to prepare the tasks for the learners (L) through pre-test, the scores of the learners (L5, L7, L14 and L19) are Grade 1 in weak situation. The scores of the learners (L1, L2, L4, L8, L9, L13, L15, L17, L18 and L20) are Grade 2 at fair point and the rest learners (L3, L6, L10, L11, L12 and L16) are Grade 3 in strong score. After the facilitation, the scores of the weak learners (L5, L7, L14 and L19) have increased into next grades. The learners (L5 and L14) have achieved Grade 2 and (L7 and L19) have reached Grade 3. The learners (L11 and L16) have fallen into Grade 2. The learners (L3, L6, L10 and L12) are still at Grade 3.
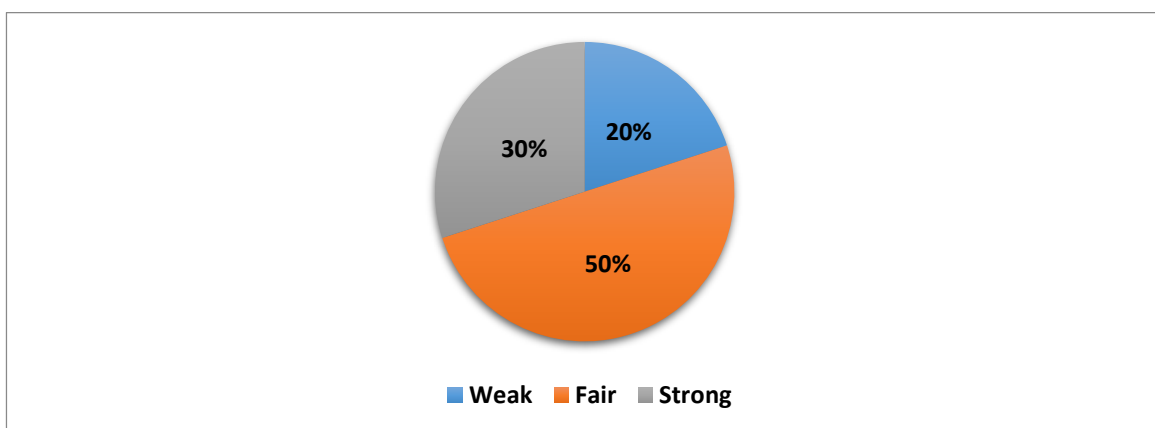

Figure (2): Percentage of the learners' Score in the Pre-test

According to the figure (2), there are 4 weak learners in the first phase and the percentage of these learners is 20%. Meanwhile, 10 fair learners can be found and its percentage is 50%. The rest 6 are strong learners and the percentage is 30%. In this stage, the majority amount is fair learners.
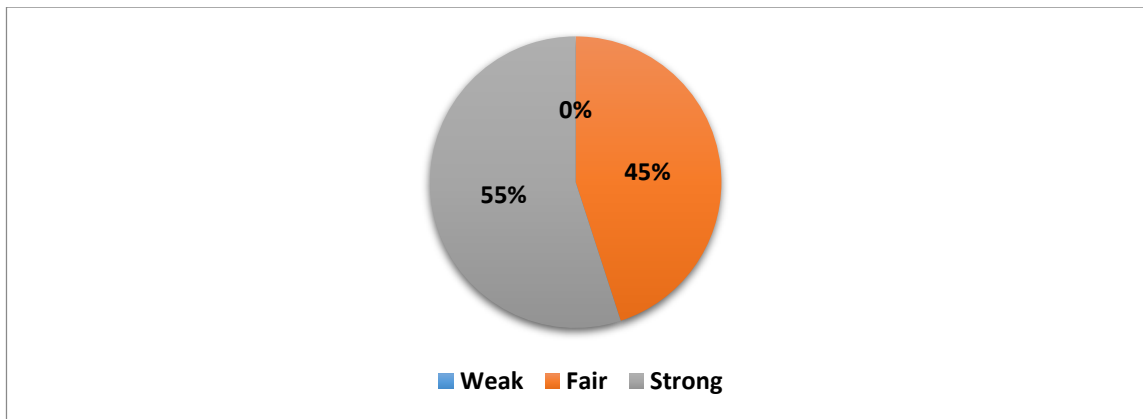
Figure (3): Percentage of the learners' Score in the Post-test

In the figure (3), there is no weak learner in the last phase and the percentage is 0%. Meanwhile, 9 fair learners can be found and its percentage is 45%. The rest 11 are strong learners and the percentage is 55%.

After that, it can be found that the improvements of the learners come out in the last phase. The percentage of the strong learners has increased 25% from 10% of weak and 15% of fair learners and it has become the majority of the learners. It means that second and last phases are able to support for enhancing the learners' knowledge in the selected field of vocabulary. However, the scores of the learners (L11 and L16) have decreased in the last phase and it is also another finding. It leads the teaching cycle to go again.

This case study is just initial and sample approach to enhancing the learners' knowledge in the selected field of vocabularies. In actual and ground situation, like this teaching, learning and enhancing processes are still needed till to reach the highest expected outcomes. Therefore, more remedial or treatment facilitation for some learners like (L11 and L16) is carried on through ongoing process. In this sample case study, the summing up discussion by video chatting has upgraded some weak learners into the fair and fair learners into the strong.

The time limitation of the case study can give both some strengths and weaknesses for the approach. As some strength, the teacher and the learners have great opportunities for specific and effective studying within the limited time frame. For the weakness, some learners have encountered some problems in trying to follow the whole tasks in the limited time allocation. However, most learners are able to stay with the sample tasks and it means that the case study is able to give some aids to some extent for enhancing the learners' knowledge in the selected field of vocabularies through Facebook platform.

Another finding is that the sample case study through Facebook platform is a bit challenging because of few times of face-to-face situation, lack of closed monitoring to the learners by the teacher like in a real classroom and weak interactions among the facilitator and the learners on Facebook platform such as unstable internet connection, costs, no response or comment and needs of devices. Furthermore, poor of

ICT Literacy skills causes some complications and efforts to the sample case study. The three digital literacy skills—information, media, and ICT literacy—are continually evolving, and they are all essential to managing our ever-expanding tool sets of media and communications technologies in the education system. The ambience of Facebook, which is relaxed and focused more on the social dimensions of interaction and of a community, means that the learners, particularly those who are introvert, with low self-esteem and lack language proficiency, would be able to learn language aspects within the community of practice (i.e. Facebook Platform) quite successfully without embarrassing themselves, without pressure but with motivation and confidence (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Based on the sample case study, the learners can be persuaded to keep going towards the further learning using social media sites (SNS), especially, during the pandemic time of Covid-19.

Conclusion

Currently, the online learning leads us to remote our teaching and learning processes. In this initial study, the specific area is on enhancing selected fields of English vocabularies through Facebook platform. It is also a kind of proposal to enhancing learners' vocabulary knowledge through the use of social media. Moreover, interactions between learners-facilitator and between learners-learners in the Facebook have created a platform of the learners and motivated their interest to interact, discuss, communicate and share/exchange ideas, views and opinions with each other. Thus, it can be concluded that Facebook could be used as a supplementary learning environment or educational tools; with effective and engaging activities.

To sum up, though the outcomes of this study are strengthening, there are still a few limitations that need to be considered. Foremost, in terms of the time frame of the study, it was conducted for only two weeks. But, being an initial approach and a sample study, this paper is only able to cover for few aspects of teaching and learning about vocabulary. Therefore, more various fields of language teaching and other academic areas can be explored by aids of SNS (e.g. Facebook). In fact, this study is just a preliminary step.

Acknowledgements

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