Teachers' Views on the Effect of Social Networking Applications on the Development of Turkish Language Skills as a Foreign Language

Sait ÇETİNDAĞ
International Burch University, Bosna and Herzegovina

Mustafa ARSLAN
International Black Sea University, Georgia

Abstract: The individual interests in new technologies have required the use of technological tools in foreign language learning. As prominent technological innovations, mobile phones have facilitated the use of social network applications in all walks of life. People can improve their foreign language skills through social networks in informal education. In this context, the question 'What is the effect of social networks on the development of an individual's foreign language skills?' constitutes the problem statement of this research. Within the framework of the qualitative research approach, the opinions of Turkish teachers were sought. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was forwarded via Google Forms to the teachers of Turkish as a foreign language in private and public institutions. Data were collected through the online questionnaire and analyzed in the SPSS statistics software. According to the results obtained, it has been understood that social networks contribute to developing basic language skills other than writing skills. Using social networks in non-formal education in teaching Turkish as a foreign language will contribute positively to developing daily language skills. In this context, teachers of Turkish as a foreign language should generate projects on how to improve their students' basic language skills through social networks.

Introduction

As the name suggests, social networks are virtual programs and applications that facilitate communication among people. Social networks used daily by millions of people are for a long time a matter of debate to what extent they are used in learning Turkish as a foreign language.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networks as "web-based services that allow creating an open or semi-open profile in a limited system, adding a list of other users with whom they have shared links, and viewing and visiting links and lists of links created by other users in the system".

Halitoğlu and Morallı's (2018) study "*Türkçe Okutmanlarının Görüşlerine Göre Sosyal Ağların Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğretimine Katkıları*"

(The Contribution of Social Networks to Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language as Viewed by Turkish Language Instructors) endeavored to reveal the contribution of Facebook, a popular social networking site, to teaching Turkish as a foreign language within the framework of the views of Turkish language instructors. 6 Turkish instructors – 3 female and 3 male – working in the Erciyes University Continuing Education Center for Teaching Turkish to Foreigners Program in the 2014-2015 academic year, participated in the study voluntarily. It was stated that differences in terms of seniority, gender and social network use of the instructors participating in the research diversified the research, while working at the same university provided ease of access. In the Facebook posts they uploaded to improve the language skills of the students, the instructors supported the students' listening skills with audio stories, speaking skills by performing a song the next day, and reading skills by

sharing interesting articles. It has been stated that the instructors interfered with the errors made in writing skills by giving immediate feedback occasionally. As a result of the analysis, it has been stated that social networks facilitate the transfer of culture, provide socialization, increase interaction, develop basic language skills and an attitude towards learning Turkish, have positive contributions in creating an extracurricular teaching environment, and also have adverse effects in some cases.

YouTube

Founded in 2005 by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim for sharing videos online, YouTube offers video viewing and production in many fields such as music, news, games, fashion and education, and seems to be the most downloaded social network application on Google Play with over 10 billion downloads (YouTube, 2021). Among the general features of the YouTube, an application that follows the mission of giving everyone a chance to be heard and to know the world, are

a- the most popular videos in many fields

b- producing or sharing video content freely through its mobile application

c- subscriptions for people's interests and

d- participating and delivering live broadcasts.

Looking at the usage statistics of YouTube, which provides video sharing in many areas, it is noticed that

a- it is the site with the most visitors after Google search engine

b- it has over 2 billion active users monthly

c- it has 1 billion hours of daily video views

d- it has 6.5 billion short-term viewing, and

e- it has a video upload rate of 500 hours per minute worldwide (Omnicore Agency, 2021).

YouTube, which contains millions of educational videos, provides a great opportunity for foreign language teachers and students through videos on foreign language teaching and methods, free or paid foreign language course videos, promotional videos about language, culture and daily life, and films with or without subtitles.

The academic studies about YouTube expresses that the application makes learning fun, helps students understand the subjects better and increases the level of success (Alp and Kaleci, 2018), improves listening, speaking, pronunciation and memorization skills (Jalaluddin 2016; Nofrika, 2019), and facilitates learning and teaching foreign languages (Brook, 2011).

Facebook

Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 for communicating and exchanging information among people (Facebook, 2021). Facebook, the second most downloaded social media application with over 5 billion downloads on Google Play (Google, 2021), has 2.18 billion active users (We Are Social Ltd. 2021)

Among many features of Facebook are:

a) status updates

b) sharing photos and videos

c) making public and private posts

d) adding likes or comments to posts

e) creating groups among friends

f) creating events

g) real-time chatting

h) playing online games

i) delivering and attending live broadcasts

j) sharing stories, and

k) being a free application.

In studies on the contribution of Facebook to education, it has been found it improves learning vocabulary in the target language (Guvendir and Gezgin, 2015), contributes positively to learning a subject (Koç and Ayik, 2017), increases the level of social awareness among students in language lessons (Elverici and Karadeniz, 2018), contributes to the teaching of vocabulary indirectly or directly (Aslan, 2016), provides cooperation and material sharing among students, positively affects student-teacher interaction (Acar and Yenmis, 2014), and conveys the cultural or political characteristics the respective countries want to highlight before large audiences (Çömlekçi, 2019).

Instagram

Founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010, Instagram was incorporated into Facebook in 2012. Instagram (Google, 2021), which has over 1 billion downloads on Google Play, has 1.22 billion active members (We Are Social Ltd. 2021).

Among Instagram's general features are

- sharing photos or videos,

- adding likes or comments to posts,

- creating friendship groups,

- following users based on fields of interest,

- sharing stories with 24-hour validity,

- following and communicating with people around the world,

- attending and delivering live broadcasts,

- uploading long videos thanks to the IGTV feature, and

- making posts public or visible to followers only (Instagram from Facebook, 2021).

In studies conducted to examine the effects of Instagram, a popular social communication tool, on foreign language education, it has been found that Instagram has a positive effect on students' language learning (Erarslan, 2019). It improves students' listening skills, motivates students (Khalitova and Gimaletdinova, 2016; Mansor and Abd Rahim, 2017), improves writing skills notwithstanding some challenges, and increases students' motivation (Anggraeni, 2017). It has also been found that Instagram provides a new method and positive contribution to language learning, improves vocabulary (Lailiyah and Setiyaningsih, 2020), and contributes positively to verbal communication skills (Çakmak, 2020).

Twitter

Founded in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Twitter is a popular social media application that allows everyone to instantly know what is happening around the world and to freely express their ideas about any subject with short messages. Twitter has over 1 billion downloads on Google Play (Google, 2021) and 353.1 million active users (We Are Social Ltd., 2021). Twitter, which initially enabled instant messaging with 140 characters only, later removed this limitation.

Among Twitter's general features are:

- being free-of-cost,

- learning and commenting on current events worldwide,

- following users or creating followers based on their interests,

- attending and delivering live broadcasts,

- sharing photos or videos,

- learning the top 10 discussed topics in the world via the TT (Trending Topic) feature,

- Sharing a liked message via the RT (Retweet) feature,

- Private messaging between members via the DM (Direct Message) feature,
- Creating or following a topic via hashtags (#), a labelling feature.

Studies conducted on the effects of Twitter, an application that facilitates instant agenda setting and commentary on events, on foreign language education, it has been found that Twitter messages positively affect the language learning process (Taskiran et al., 2018), improve writing skills (Ekinci, 2017), create communication opportunities in the target language and encourage social harmony (Fewell, 2014), and facilitate the use of language in a comfortable setting in different walks of life (Antenos, 2009).

Method

Research Method

In this study, the interview method was used within the framework of the qualitative research approach. The reason for using the interview method is the functionality of the interview method in identifying and understanding the views of the Turkish teachers participating in this research. Because "experiences, attitudes, thoughts, intentions, comments, mental perceptions and reactions can be understood through interviewing" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, pp. 148).

Sample and Population

The population of this research consists of all who teach Turkish as a foreign language in Turkey and abroad. While determining the sample, maximum diversity and easily accessible case samples (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) were used from purposive sampling methods. Vis-à-vis the participants of this study; 18,3% (33 participants) are from the educationists

working in Turkey, 11.1% (20 participants) from Iraq, 9.4% (17 participants) from Kazakhstan, 6.1% (11 participants) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 5% (9 participants) from Albania, 4.4% (8 participants) from Kenya, 3.9% (7 participants) from Russian Federation, 3.3% (6 participants) from Germany, Georgia, Egypt and Romania, 2.8% (5 participants) from Poland and England, 1.7% (3 participants) from Kyrgyzstan, Sweden, Austria and Nigeria, 1.1% (2 participants) from Norway, Serbia, the United States, Belarus, Belgium, Mozambique, Ethiopia and South Africa, and 0.6% (1 participant) from Syria, Greece, Somalia, Montenegro, Morocco, Azerbaijan, the Philippines, France, Australia, Malawi, Moldova, Bangladesh and Tanzania.

Data Collection Tools

A Google Forms-based survey was the data collection tool in the research. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to implement the interview method. An interview form was presented to the pre-test group of 10 teachers, both to determine the level of clarity of the questions and to reflect different opinions. In line with the data obtained from this preliminary interview, the interview form was given its final shape.

The data were collected through a questionnaire prepared on the Google Forms. The interview questions were created by the researcher by studying the respective literature. After the formation of the interview questions, expert opinion was solicited. The questionnaire was given its final form by making a preliminary application. After collecting the e-mail information of the teachers of Turkish as a foreign language, the questionnaire was forwarded to the participants. The first part contains the demographic information. The second part is about the ideas of the

teachers of Turkish as a foreign language about the mobile applications they use in the classroom. This part consists of questions on which mobile applications the participants prefer to improve their students' language skills. In the third part, similar to the second part, questions were asked on using social networks.

Findings and Discussion

The Effect of Social Networking Applications on Students' Language Learning

The effect of social networking applications (SNA) like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube on language learning has been evaluated and assessed through answers given by the participants to the questionnaire items like "It increases students' interest in Turkish", "It accelerates students' learning of Turkish", "It facilitates the introduction of culture", "It improves the language skills of students", "It enables students to find a setting where they can speak Turkish" and "It provides daily life information to students".

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications affect students' interest in Turkish, it has been observed that 57,8% of the participants stated 'I agree', 18,3% stated 'I have no idea', 13,3% stated 'I don't agree', 5,6% stated 'I strongly agree' and 5% stated 'I strongly disagree'. According to these results, 63.4% of the participants stated that social networking applications increase students' interest in Turkish.

Table 1

Social Networking Applications Influence Students' Interest in Turkish

SNA Increase Students' Interest in Turkish.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree.	9	5,0	5,0
I disagree.	24	13,3	18,3
I have no idea.	33	18,3	36,7
I agree,	104	57,8	94,4
I strongly agree.	10	5,6	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Table 2

Social Networking Applications Accelerate Students' Learning of Turkish

SNA Accelerate Students' Turkish Learning	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree.	1	0,6	0,6
I disagree.	35	19,4	20,0
I have no idea.	33	18,3	38,3
I agree,	100	55,6	93,9
I strongly agree.	11	6,1	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications accelerates students' Turkish learning, it has been observed that 55,6% of the participants stated 'I agree', 18,3% stated 'I have no idea', 19,4% stated 'I don't agree', 6,1% stated 'I strongly agree' and 0,6% stated 'I strongly disagree'. In this context, 61.7% of the participants believe that social networking applications accelerate students' Turkish learning.

Table 3

Social Networking Apps Facilitate the Promotion of Culture

SNA Facilitate the Promotion of Culture.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree.	1	0,6	0,6
I disagree.	12	6,7	7,2
I have no idea.	18	10,0	17,2
I agree,	116	64,4	81,7
I strongly agree.	33	18,3	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications facilitate the promotion of culture, it has been observed that 64,4% of the participants stated 'I agree', 10% stated 'I have no idea', 6,7% stated 'I don't agree', 18,3% stated 'I strongly agree' and 0,6% stated 'I strongly disagree'. According to the results obtained, 82.7% of the participants stated that social networking applications (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) facilitate the promotion of culture.

Table 4

Social Networking Applications Improve Students' Language Skills

SNA Improve Students' Language Skills.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree.	1	0,6	0,6
I disagree.	33	18,3	18,9
I have no idea.	25	13,9	32,8
I agree.	102	56,7	89,4
I strongly agree.	19	10,6	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the teachers whether social networking applications improve students' language skills, it has been observed that 56,7% of the participants stated 'I agree', 18,3% stated 'I disagree', 13,9% stated 'I have no idea', 10,6% stated 'I strongly agree' and 0,6% stated 'I strongly disagree'. 67.3% of the participants opined that social networking applications improve students' language skills.

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications provide the students a conducive environment in which they can speak Turkish, it has been observed that 60,6% of the participants stated 'I agree', 14,4% 'I strongly agree', 12,2% stated 'I have no idea', 11,1% stated 'I disagree' and 1,7% stated 'I strongly disagree'. According to this result, 75% of the participants stated that social networking applications provide students with a conducive environment where they can speak Turkish.

Table 5

Social Networking Applications Provide Students a Conducive Environment Where They Can Speak Turkish

SNA enables students to have a conducive environment.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree.	3	1,7	1,7
I disagree.	20	11,1	12,8
I have no idea.	22	12,2	25,0
I agree.	109	60,6	85,6
I strongly agree.	26	14,4	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Table 6

Social Networking Applications Give Students Information About Daily Life

SNA Give Students Information About Daily Life.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	2	1,1	1,1
I disagree	18	10,0	11,1
I have no idea	26	14,4	25,6
I agree	113	62,8	88,3
I strongly agree	21	11,7	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participating teachers whether social networking applications (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.) give students information about daily life, it has been observed that 62,8% of the participants stated 'I agree', 14,4% stated 'I have no idea', 11,7% stated 'I strongly agree', 10% stated 'I disagree' and 1,1% stated 'I strongly disagree'. 74.5% of the participants opined that social networking applications provide information about daily life to students.

Effect of Social Networking Applications on Students' Language Skills

The effect of social networking applications on students' "speaking and pronunciation", "listening and comprehension", "reading", "writing" and "vocabulary learning" skills have been examined and evaluated according to the responses given by the participants.

Table 7

Social Networking Applications Have Positive Effect on Students' Speaking and Pronunciation

SNA Have Positive Effect on Students' Speaking and Pronunciation.	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	13	7,2	7,2
I disagree	28	15,6	22,8
I have no idea	63	35,0	57,8
I agree	55	30,6	88,3
I strongly agree	21	11,7	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications affect students' speaking and pronunciation, it has been observed that 35% of the participants stated 'I have no idea', 30,6% stated 'I agree', 15,6% stated 'I disagree', 11,7% stated 'I strongly agree' and 7,2% stated 'I strongly disagree'. According to the findings, 42.3% of the participants stated that social networking applications have a positive effect on students' speaking and pronunciation, while 35% did not express an opinion. When the indecisive are not considered, the majority of the participants opine that social networking applications have a positive effect on students' speaking and pronunciation.

Table 8

Social Networking Applications Have Positive Effects on Students' Listening and Comprehension Skills

SNA's Effects on Students' Listening and Comprehension Skills	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	11	6,1	6,1
I disagree	20	11,1	17,2
I have no idea	48	26,7	43,9
I agree	69	38,3	82,2
I strongly agree	32	17,8	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Table 9

Social Networking Applications Have a Positive Effect on Students' Reading Skills

SNA's Effect on Students' Reading Skills	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	13	7,2	7,2
I disagree	31	17,2	24,4
I have no idea	51	28,3	52,8
I agree	58	32,2	85,0
I strongly agree	27	15,0	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications affect students' listening and comprehension skills, it has been observed that 38,3% of the participants stated 'I agree', 26,7% stated 'I have no idea', 17,8% stated 'I strongly agree', 11,1% stated 'I disagree' and 6,1% stated 'I strongly disagree'. According to the results obtained, 56.1% of the participants stated that social networking applications affect students' listening and comprehension.

Having asked the participating teachers whether social networking applications have any effect on students' reading skills, it has been observed that 32,2% of the participants stated 'I agree', 28,3% stated 'I have no idea', 17,2% stated 'I disagree', 15% stated 'I strongly agree' and 7,2% stated 'I strongly disagree'. When those who stated 'I have no idea' are not considered, 47.2% of the participants, who make up the majority, stated that social networking applications have a positive effect on students' reading skills.

Having asked the participants whether social networking applications (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.) have any effect on students' writing skills, it has been observed that 31,1% of the participants stated 'I have no idea', 28,3 stated 'I disagree', 20% stated 'I agree', 12,8% stated 'I strongly disagree' and 7,8% stated 'I strongly agree'. According to this result, 41.1% of the participants, who constitute the majority, stated that social networking applications do not affect the level of students' writing skills.

Table 10

Social Networking Applications Have a Positive Effect on Students' Writing Proficiency

SNA's Effect on Writing Proficiency	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	23	12,8	12,8
I disagree	51	28,3	41,1
I have no idea	56	31,1	72,2
I agree	36	20,0	92,2
I strongly agree	14	7,8	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Table 11

Social Networking Applications Have a Positive Effect on Students' Vocabulary Learning Skills

SNA's Effect on Vocabulary Learning Skills	f	%	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I strongly disagree	3	1,7	1,7
I disagree	10	5,6	7,2
I have no idea	44	24,4	31,7
I agree	64	35,6	67,2
I strongly agree	59	32,8	100,0
Total	180	100,0	

Having asked the participating teachers whether social networking applications affect the level of students' vocabulary learning skills, it has been observed that 35,6% of the participants stated 'I agree', 32,8% stated 'I strongly agree', 24,4% stated 'I have no idea', 5,6% stated 'I disagree' and 1,7% stated 'I strongly disagree'. Accordingly, 68.4% of the participants stated that social networking applications have a positive effect on students' vocabulary learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Approximately 64% of the participants in the research stated that social networking applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube have a positive effect on students' curiosity and interest in learning Turkish.

According to the results obtained (62%), social network applications accelerate students' Turkish learning.

It has been observed the participants share the view that social networking applications facilitate the promotion of culture (83%).

It has been found that approximately 68% of the participants believe social networking applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube affect the development of students' language skills.

Another finding of this study (%65) indicates the effect social networking applications have on providing students a conducive environment for speaking Turkish.

It has been found that social networking applications have an effect on informing students about daily life (%75).

76% of the participants stated that social networking applications have a positive effect on students' speaking and pronunciation.

According to another result (56%), social networking applications have a positive effect on students' listening and comprehension levels.

Again, it has been found that 47% of the participants believed social networking applications affect the reading skills of students and the rest, except for the indecisive (28.3%), do not believe in this effect.

Social networking applications seem to have little effect on students' writing skills (28%).

It has been found that the effect of social networking applications on students' vocabulary learning levels is 69%.

In non-formal education, social networks can be used in teaching and learning Turkish as a foreign language.

Today, the perpetual connections forged between people and technology can be directed to foreign language learning. In this way, time lost on browsing social networks can be transformed into a gain.

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Corresponding Author Contact Information:

Author Name: Sait Çetindağ

Department: Turkish Language and Literature

Faculty: Faculty of Education and Humanities

University, Country: International Burch University, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Email: saitcetindag@gmail.com