

Using Social-Networking Sites in Learning English Language and Students' Self-Efficacy

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This paper aims to explore the academic students' purposes for using social-networking sites (SNSs) to enhance self-efficacy (SE) of learning English language. The SE is the appropriate theory that explains effectiveness of using SNSs on academic students' beliefs and performance positively. This study involves 286 participants from Umm AL-Qura University (UQU) in Mecca to answer a questionnaire. The results of the study show that there is no significant difference between male and female groups in familiarity with SNSs. The most important academic purpose of using SNSs item for students was to let them communicate with classmates on course topics and share ideas conveniently. There was a significant positive correlation between academic purposes (AP) for using SNSs and students' SE ($r = 0.256, p < 0.01$). Multiple regression analysis shows that AP do not have significant effect on students' SE ($\beta = 0.077, p > 0.05$). The results recommend that using SNSs in academic field with regulated learning environment may promote effective learning English language.

Keywords: social-networking sites (SNSs), self-efficacy (SE), learning English language, college students

Introduction

In the last decade, education took different styles than before, especially with worldwide technology and Internet revolution. The list of these styles which are becoming well-known, such as open-learning, distance-learning, e-learning, and social-networking sites (SNSs) (Churchill, Wong, Law, Salter, & Tai, 2009). One of these technological styles recognize under e-learning umbrella within computer mediated technologies system (Hodges, 2013).

In recent years, SNSs, such as Facebook, Twitter, My Space, I-talkie, etc. were considered as a fundamental tool for social interaction, communication, and sharing of information. Hence, many researchers in previous studies have shown the positive effects of using SNSs in higher education correlated well with students' self-efficacy (SE) (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011; Lai, Wang, & Lei, 2012; Kirmizi, 2015).

Additionally, researchers have proven that SNSs will be significant due to students' needs of social support from others as a source of SE (Kim, 2012; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Hodges, 2013). Social support can keep students' mental health as well as well-being and improve academic performance through expressing their feelings freely through new channels in learning English language, such as SNSs to establish friendships, online interactions, and acquire more knowledge and information (Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok, 2010; DeAndrea, Ellison, Larose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2011; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Kirmizi, 2015).

Literature Review

The existing studies on e-learning and its applications focused on providing students with different access to information from multiple resources, perceptions of using such SNSs from college students and faculty (Hodges, 2013; Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016). Likewise, other studies typically focused on impacts of SNSs on learning, such as association between college students' social networking behaviors and academic achievement, the relationship between SNS via Facebook and both social and academic learning outcomes (e.g., cognition, affection, and skill) through social academic integration (Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok, 2010), the relationship between SNSs' engagement on Facebook and learning outcomes, self-esteem, satisfaction with university's life, and performance proficiency (Yu et al., 2010).

Based on the theory on SE (Bandura, 1997), many researchers explained how to use SNSs technology may provide student's perceptions of college life via social observation and interaction (Arnold & Paulus, 2010; DeAndrea et al., 2011), academic SE, learning strategies, and feedback in the Web-based learning environment (Wang & Wu, 2008). Kim (2012) presented effective e-learning methods and strategies by activating technological media sources, psychological characteristics (interest, academic SE, and extraversion), and academic achievement.

Several studies have confirmed that SE have positive impacts if SNSs are used as a part of learning resources within traditional classes or as online methodology to supplement e-learning (Wang & Wu, 2008; G. Liu, Z. Liu, & Hwang, 2011; Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee, 2012; Kirmizi, 2015; Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016), especially in methods of learning English language (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; G. Liu, Z. Liu, & Hwang, 2011; Solak, 2015; Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016). In general, using SNSs technology encourage learning collaboration between foreign language learners in creative and active methods (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016).

The need to enhance students' SE during using SNSs technology as a resource of learning English language (Finamore, A. Hochanadel, C. Hochanadel, Millam, & Reinhardt, 2012), to provide suitable learning environment in higher education (Wu, Wang, Liu, Hu, & Hwang, 2012; Kirmizi, 2015), and to provide the basis for student's motivation, well-being, and personal success (Kim, 2012; Hodges, 2013) is discussed partially in previous studies.

This article aims to utilize what the most academic purposes (AP) for using SNSs technology by Saudi students, as they prefer to enhance their SE of learning English language. More particularly, it seeks out:

1. To illustrate the AP of using SNSs by college Saudi students to learn English language;
2. To find the relationship between AP for using SNSs and students' SE;
3. To enhance using SNSs technology in learning English language to promote students' SE.

The study will answer following questions according to previous objectives:

1. For which AP do college students prefer to use SNSs?
2. What is the relationship between AP for using SNSs, and academic SE?
3. What are the effects of AP of using SNSs on students' academic SE?

Method

This study was carried out in Umm Al-Qura University (UQU). It included 286 participants—146 participants of them were females and 140 were males. All participants were volunteered students from English

Language Department from girl's UQU and boy's UQU in Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Over 90% of routine interaction with faculty or colleagues, whether they have SNSs group(s) for academic courses or not, they use English language in e-mail and mobile messages as they said.

The data was collected at the middle of summer semester in Saudi Arabia between the last week of June and third week of July in 2012. Firstly, participants were divided into groups each consists of 25-30 students. Five groups were chosen randomly from boys' UQU and six groups of similar size were from girls' UQU. Total time allotted for collection of data from each group was 25 minutes. The participants were given a full description of the procedures to answer the questionnaire components for the first five minutes of each session, and then, participants were asked to give their responses accurately and fill all parts of the questionnaire within next 20 minutes.

The tool used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire that was divided into two main parts: The first part was consists of general information that could be measured in semantic scale (e.g., gender, have an account on SNSs, checking account). The second part contained two factors involved different kinds of measurements, one of them was AP for using SNSs as independent variable, and the second factor was about academic SE as dependent variable. The measurements were taken on 5-point Likert-scale with endpoints ranging from 5 = "Strongly agree" to 1 = "Strongly disagree." The questionnaire items of the second part were adopted from previous studies, which have been validated and believed to be highly reliable in data collection.

The measures of AP for using SNSs were based on a combination of previous studies consists of four items adopted from Hung and Yuen (2010), two items from Wodzicki, Schwämmlein, and Moskaliuk (2011), and four items from Brady, Holcomb, and Smith (2010) with Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.90 to 0.92.

Examples of AP items: I think it is good to use SNSs academically, because they will be easy to share educational resources and they will encourage learner-centered activities.

Cronbach's alpha for academic reasons in current study was ($\alpha = 0.933$) for 10 items.

The measure of students' SE was derived from eight items adopted from motivated strategies for learning questionnaires (MSLQ) that developed by Bong (2001) and Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1991) and were reported in several studies (Bong, 2001; Joo, Bong, & Choi, 2000) with reliable scale was assessed ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Examples of ASE items: I believe I will receive excellent grades in my courses this semester and I expect to do well in my courses this semester.

Cronbach's alpha for academic SE in the current study was ($\alpha = 0.90$) for eight items. A whole Cronbach's alpha for all study factors was ($\alpha = 0.94$).

Results

The results of the study analyzed data by statistic package for social science (SPSS) version 0.19 for each part and factor of the study according to study objectives. The results of research arrangement organize as follows.

Descriptive Statistics

Students' responses to questions of the first part of the study indicate that most of male students have the good and excellent familiarity with using the SNSs regardless of whether they have academic group on it or not.

As shown in Table 1, an independent-sample *t*-test conducted to compare the means' scores of familiarity with using SNSs for males and females. There were no significant differences in scores for males (Mean = 3.02, standard deviation [*SD*] = 1.063) and females (Mean = 2.88, *SD* = 0.883) with *t* = 0.233.

Table 1

Measure of Familiarity With SNSs in Male and Female Students

Participants' gender	No.	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Male	140	3.02	1.063	
Female	146	2.88	0.883	0.233
Total	286	2.95	0.976	

The most famous SNSs usage by college students was Facebook in both male and female students as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Students' Personal Accounts on SNSs

	Frequency		Percent (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Facebook	68	124	48.6	84.9
Twitter	3	11	2.1	7.5
All of the previous	47	7	33.6	4.8
None of the previous	22	4	15.7	2.7
Total	140	146	100.0	100.0

Table 3

Trend of Checking Accounts on SNSs

	Frequency		Percent (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Once a day	36	38	25.7	26.0
One to five times per day	48	70	34.3	47.9
Six to 10 times per day	31	34	22.1	23.3
More than 10 times a day	3	0	2.1	0.0
Never	22	4	15.7	2.7
Total	140	146	100.0	100.0

Table 4

Number of Academic Group(s) on SNSs

	Frequency		Percent (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
One group	57	45	40.7	30.8
Two groups	13	51	9.3	34.9
Three groups and more	0	15	0.0	10.3
None	70	35	50.0	24.0
Total	140	146	100.0	100.0

As presented in Table 3, checking of accounts from one to five times per day ranged higher in male participants' responses ranged 34.3%, while 47.9% of female participants' responses. In addition, as shown in

Table 4, the number of academic group on SNSs, there are 50.0% of male participants have any SNS groups for academic course, 40.7% have one academic group on SNSs, and 9.3% have two academic groups on SNSs. While female participants' responses show that 34.9% have two academic groups on SNSs, 30.8% have one academic group on SNSs, 10.3% have three groups on SNSs, and only 24.0% have any academic groups on SNSs.

Table 5

AP for Using SNSs

Items	Mean	SD
I think it is good to use SNSs academically, because:		
They will let me communicate with classmates about course topics and share ideas conveniently.	4.13	0.864
They will be easy to share educational resources.	4.12	0.888
They will be easy to keep in touch with my advisor (academic teacher) if I have any question about the course.	4.08	0.950
They will allow me to express my thoughts and opinion clearly.	4.03	0.911
They will let me to exchange course materials in easier way.	4.02	0.919
They will provide collaborative learning courses topics.	3.98	0.921
They will allow me to discuss the related courses topics and ideas deeply.	3.98	0.955
They will encourage learner-centered activities.	3.93	0.944
They will be more effective communication than traditional face-to-face meeting.	3.87	1.026
They will give me a good chance to prepare for test or exam.	3.80	1.026

Students' Purposes of Using SNSs

To identify the academic purposes of using SNSs by college students, descriptive analysis was conducted. As seen from the mean scores for all 10 items in Table 5, the most important AP items for students were above Mean = 4.00 as following:

1. Using SNSs academically would let them communicate with classmates about course topics and share ideas conveniently (Mean = 4.13);
2. Being easy to share educational resources (Mean = 4.12);
3. Keeping in touch with their advisor (academic teacher) if they have any question about the course (Mean = 4.08);
4. Allowing them to express their thoughts and opinions clearly (Mean = 4.03).

The Relationship Between AP of Using SNSs and SE

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationship between AP and students' SE. There was a significant positive correlation between AP for using SNSs and academic SE ($r = 0.256$, $p < 0.01$), that is, the higher levels of AP of using SNSs are associated with the higher levels of the students' SE as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

The Relationships Between Two Factors

Factors	1	2
1. AP	1	
2. Students' academic SE	0.256**	1

Note. ** $p > 0.01$.

The Effects of AP of Using SNSs on Students' SE

Multiple regression analysis showed AP of using SNSs explained 13.6% of students' academic SE ($F = 19.925, p < 0.001$), as shown in Table 7. In addition, t -test results for the significance of regression coefficients illustrated that the effect of AP of using SNSs do not have significant predictor on students' SE ($\beta = 0.077, p > 0.05$).

Table 7

Model Summary of Multiple Regressions

Predictors	β	β	p	R	R^2	F	p
AP	0.056	0.077	0.271	0.351	0.123	19.925***	0.000

Note. *** $p < 0.001$.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the relation between academic students' purposes of using SNSs and their SE in learning English contexts. The results are presented in two sections. The first section is the descriptive data are presented, which include the students' gender, familiarity, and time uses of SNSs. The second section is divided into two factors.

First factor discusses if SNSs can function as an online learning environment that facilitates English language based on suppositions by Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010), this means SNSs may have positive impacts on the aspects of: (a) students' communication by English language with faculty and colleagues; and (b) sharing course materials, educational resources, preparing for exam, and expressing courses topics. According to English language department at UQU, faculty is required to communicate with students only in English language, including all kind of contacts, writing, and speaking. So, this method is encouraging students to be more confident and motivated in learning English contexts.

The second factor discusses if SNSs can posit as useful and enjoyable environment, acculturation, and socialization. According to Yu et al.'s (2010) hypothesis that expresses interacting with peers on SNSs to strength the ties between social support and sense of belonging through many facets:

1. finding same group to share hobbies, knowledge, personal interests with, and meet new or old people;
2. expressing individuality and creativity;
3. interacting with others from the same and different culture(s).

The findings in descriptive statistics part of this study are represented as following. The familiarity with using SNSs findings indicates that most of undergraduate students have a good background of using SNSs. Similar kind of trend is also reported by (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016). As for the popularity of SNSs, findings showed that female students prefer to use Facebook more than male as reported in most of the previous studies (Kabilan et al., 2010; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Sereetrakul, 2013). Among male and female in checking their SNSs accounts ranged between one to 10 times daily, the findings here reinforce the results of previous studies (e.g., Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Miller, Parsons, & Lifer, 2010). According to preceding studies (Arnold & Paulus, 2010, Hung & Yuen, 2010; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Lin & Lu, 2011) in method of learning English language through SNSs, current findings are in correlation with them. More than half of participants have SNSs group(s) for academic courses that indicate the awareness of academic faculty around the world to enhance using SNSs as a creative electronic method to

encourage learners to learn, and according to Cahyono and Mutiaraningrum (2016) and Kirmizi (2015), this practice motivated them to continue their learning and increase their SE.

The findings explored the role of using SNSs academically on students' SE in interacting with faculty outside classroom, connect with classmates, provide knowledge of feedback, academic performance, and exchange courses information (Hung & Yuen, 2010; DeAndrea et al., 2011; Kirmizi, 2015). The study results indicated that academic students' purposes of using SNSs was not influential on students' SE which corresponding previous study in Thailand (Sereetrakul, 2013). This results open doors for the future studies to involve faculty and students in arranging SNSs environments for better results.

In contrast, students' responses positively agreed toward using SNSs academically. The overall findings of this research indicated that participants had over-whelmingly positive response toward AP of using SNSs to communicate with classmates about course topics and share ideas conveniently and use educational resources easily. These findings are recognized by many researchers and academics (Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Hung & Yuen, 2010, Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2016). That means it will open a new door for methods and styles of learning, particularly in learning English language. Using SNSs will enhance the opportunity for students to overcome the barriers of the classroom, and social interaction that can lead to additional learning opportunities and enhance participation in the face-to-face classroom. These results are in correspondence with Alebaikan and Troudi (2010). Therefore, researcher uses higher education participants to explore the students' responses toward using SNSs technology for creating a positive learning community and healthy environment for enhancing students' SE and learning English language through SNSs while they are checking their accounts.

Conclusions

There are many reasons that explain these results. Firstly, most of the scholars agreed that youth use SNSs technology for supporting emotions, to feel free and to improve their social life. These findings are almost correspondent to the results of recent studies (Lin & Lu, 2011; Wodzicki, Schwämmlein, & Moskaliuk, 2011). In addition, there are many proofs that college students use SNSs technology for getting a positive effect of socialization at universities and social learning outcomes (Lin & Lu, 2011; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Wodzicki, Schwämmlein, & Moskaliuk, 2011). Secondly, using SNSs is still limited for specific purposes in higher education, such as discussing courses related topics with students, sharing educational resources, and asking questions, because there are limited regulated learning environments to blend SNSs as a part of e-learning or traditional classes. Thirdly, there is a generation gap between some faculty who are not proficient in SNSs and youths. It will be more efficient use SNSs academically on students' SE, if faculty try to use and share SNSs with their students. Finally, Saudi students are welcoming to use SNSs with face-to-face traditional meeting with others especially with faculty and colleagues as shown in results. This needs to increase the faculty awareness to be more familiar with SNSs, and share the networking generation in their common socio-media. From that point, educators can direct the negative effects of using SNSs to positive effects.

Depending on this research, future works might examine the relationships between using SNSs, academic SE, and academic achievements, and help students to use SNSs effectively in their academic careers through respected social connections to give them informational and other resources they need to be more successful and well-being. Furthermore, it can be implied in e-learning as a part of teaching tools inside and outside the English Language classroom. Therefore, it may show significant effect of AP on college students' SE in future

works. Finally, applying the use of SNSs technology in regulated learning environment correlated with measuring students' SE as a teaching program will contribute to understanding on other aspects of using the SNSs technology needs and students' SE in educational field. In particular, implementing SNSs as a resource of methods of learning English language at higher education levels will improve students' skills and make English learning more enjoyable.

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