RESEARCH PAPER

Developing Functional English Vocabulary of the Students of Computer Sciences through Facebook at University of Kotli AJ&K

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ABSTRACT

Application of innovative teaching techniques and methods has been in regular use to develop vocabulary of English language learners around the globe. In Pakistan, the learners are taught English by using traditional teaching methodologies. Major objective of the current study is to develop functional vocabulary of the students through the use of English podcasts shared on Facebook. In this respect, 20 students from the department of Computer Sciences at University of Kotli AJK were selected as sample. Pre-test strategy was used to determine the existing level of the students in terms of vocabulary. The students engaged themselves to gather the required vocabulary as advised and were tested by giving them the conversational dialogues on every 6th day during the whole month. The data was collected as a result of 05 post-tests which were marked and graded. The data were analyzed through simple statistical tools. The results of the study showed that in every test the students improved gradually and their marks increased approximately up to 20% in 30 days than the pre-test results. The study recommends to use Facebook as well as other social media platforms to improve their functional vocabulary.

Introduction

Functional vocabulary for effective use of any language is of greater significance. In the same way, attention to motivate the university students towards productive use of social media apps is also the need of the hour. Moreover, replacing traditional teaching methodologies with innovative ones is also of greater importance. As it is concerned to effective use of functional vocabulary, the students face grave problems to communicate in English language with their existing vocabulary. Connected to it, are various factors affecting their performance. One of them is related to misunderstanding at policy level because in Pakistan, irrespective of studying English from nursery to higher education, the students remain incompetent because English at all these levels is treated as a subject not as a language which is a serious drawback of the policy. Moreover, the teachers trained in English language teaching are not appointed in the schools, colleges and even in universities because they are not available. At one side, there are no proper training centers available to train the teachers in English language nor it is easy in the country like Pakistan entangled in economic crunch to establish English language training centers to train and appoint specialist teachers to teach English in the institutions. There is another issue related to influence of local culture where the parents do provide android phones to their children but neither at institution level nor at the home, proper utilization of these mobiles is given anywhere particularly on rational basis. Either the students are criticized that they are wasting their time on mobiles or they are horrified the negative consequences of the use of mobiles. As they have these gadgets in their hands, and the negative treatment of using mobiles is continuously they are receiving from outside, it compels them to find different entertainment sites and watch secretly. Positive and productive use of mobile phone is not

taught to them, so they ultimately remain unable to have positive use of these mobiles. In addition, current teaching methodologies are so poor that the students cannot become the effective and smart users of English language. For this purpose, the current study was conducted to cater the phenomenon under consideration.

Literature Review

Facebook is such a source that permits its users to link, interact, and figure friendships with other users, who can also get involved with several societies and communities and share resources and information within user-created networks (Muzaffar, Yaseen, Safdar, 2020; Gonzales & Vodicka, 2010). Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, and there were about 2.23 billion monthly active users as of 30 June 2018. According to Global Media Insight, 2018, the number of Facebook users in Saudi Arabia only was about 22 million which is about 66% of the whole Saudi population.

Apart from this, if whole social media sites are brought to focus, it is evident that its journey of growing and changing is still in continuity. Social media, now a days is not limited to emails and other similar means of communication rather it goes beyond it and includes avatars in online chat rooms and other virtual world (Muzaffar, Chohdhry, & Afzal, 2019). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) state that social media is referred to the collections of web-based and mobile applications and services to participate in online activities. Dewing (2010) defined social media as the users have the ability to build their personal profiles, that help developing communication with others allowing them to send and receive the instant messages. Moreover, according to Burke (2013), the users share and post content in different formats such as text, images, music, and videos etc. on social networking sites and this is done by the users to interact with other people to build relationship to become the part of a new social media community. Cohn (2011) adopted the similar line as was taken by Burke (2013 and added his version that online social media networks help building connections which later on continues towards expansion of relationship.

However, focus of this study is different as it does not have concern to see the way communication networks are developed on social media platforms rather its emphasis is on examining how functional vocabulary can be developed through these platforms. In this respect, relevant key words were used in different databases to search out the studies conducted on the development of vocabulary through social media platforms between the period, January 2014 to December 2018. During this study, limited number of scholarly articles were found as the field of social media research is new one and it is also rapidly changing. Likewise, Golonka et al. (2014) evaluated over 350 studies published up to 2012, but they did not find any studies on the use of social media platforms for language learning. However, the authors came across some related studies (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012; Khany & Monfared, 2013; McDermott, 2013; Warschauer, 2002; Zourou, 2012). In this respect, some studies were conducted to find out the efficacy of social media platforms to enhance student motivation and engagement (Al-Tamimi, Al-Khawaldeh, Natsheh, & Harazneh, 2018; Al Mubarak, 2017; Indari & Putri, 2018).

Ventura and Martín-Monje (2016) discovered that the utilization of SMPs has aided students in making progress toward their vocabulary acquisition. Based on the available data, SMPs may prove to be useful educational materials and instruments. Sabater and Fleta (2015) in their study explored that using Twitter has enhanced vocabulary of the students. Similar study was conducted by Alqunayeer (2016) to examine the impact of teaching through Twitter to build English vocabulary and they found positive results. A study to evaluate the use of Facebook to improve vocabulary of the students found that when the students interacted and socialized with their fellow students on Facebook found that Facebook might be an effective tool to motivate and enhance their engagement, interaction and confidence. (Kabilan & Zahar, 2016). Guvendir and Gezgin (2015) examined the impact of Facebook game on students' vocabulary development found significantly positive

outcomes. On the other hand, Monica-Ariana and Anamaria-Mirabela (2014) limited their study on Facebook in Romania, and they found no significant differences who were exposed to learn vocabulary through Facebook. Al Mubarak (2017) conducted the study to investigate the perceptions of the students regarding the use of Facebook and found highly positive results. Alharthi, Bown & Pullen (2020) conducted their study to assess the social media impact on language learning and vocabulary development and found significantly positive results.

Material and Methods

To cater the rapidly changing social media use in lives of the students and inclusion of innovative teaching methodologies to probe the challenges of the 21st century, the current study was conducted in order to investigate the use of Facebook to enhance the functional vocabulary of Computer Science students at University of Kotli AJ&K. In order to know the extent to which the students spend their time on social media platforms particularly on Facebook sharing the posts of different people and organizations, a class survey was conducted. It was found that the students used maximum of their time on Facebook. Keeping in view the matter, the current study was conducted to improve the functional vocabulary of the learners shifting their attention towards the productive use of Facebook. For this purpose, 20 students were selected randomly as sample of the study. Pre-test strategy was used to determine the existing level of their competence. Further, they were trained to collect English language vocabulary based on daily life conversations and then use it in the written class room assignments. The students collected the vocabulary from Facebook sites, discussed with each other, refined it and finally they submitted to the concerned instructor. On 6th day of the month, a topic for writing in the form of conversational dialogue in the class room was assigned to the students where they could use the assembled vocabulary. Their conversational dialogues were checked and marked. The study continued up to one month and the researchers collected the data five times which was analyzed by using simple statistical tools. The study found gradual and positive increase in terms of using functional vocabulary in the performance of the students.

Table 1
Pre-test (Dialogues)

Student	Personal introduction	Mobile conversation	Weather	Time & Arrivals	upcoming terminal exam	Total	%age
1	10	6	8	7	6	37	37
2	9	5	7	8	10	39	39
3	13	8	9	10	11	51	51
4	6	6	5	8	9	34	34
5	12	8	7	5	8	40	40
6	11	5	7	6	6	35	35
7	8	8	6	9	7	38	38
8	10	5	8	6	6	37	37
9	8	10	7	12	6	43	43
10	7	8	6	4	10	35	35
11	15	12	5	7	8	47	47
12	12	12	6	8	7	45	45
13	10	8	6	6	11	41	41
14	9	9	8	8	8	42	42
15	10	10	8	7	10	45	45
16	8	6	9	10	5	38	38
17	11	3	9	8	9	40	40
18	10	10	7	5	6	38	38
19	6	9	7	8	11	41	41
20	9	9	8	10	8	44	44

Table 1 shows the performance of the selected sample in their pre-test results. In this respect, few important things are brought under consideration. Out of 20 students, lowest marks were obtained by one student such as 34 and the highest marks obtained were

51. Remaining 18 students fall between 34 and 51 marks which shows that the sample is reliable for the current study. Moreover, the difference between the lowest marks and highest marks obtained was 17. Dividing 17 on 2 gives the result of 8. Adding 8 to the lowest marks gives 42 and subtracting 8 from the highest gives 43. Keeping in view this point, it was found that 13 students obtained marks close to lower marks including 35,35,37,37,38,38,38,39,40,40,41,41, and 42. On the other hand, 05 students with marks 43,44,45,45, and 47 were found close to 51 which indicates the reliability of the selected sample. In addition, marks percentage between 34% and 51% shows that performance of Computer Science students needs more improvement.

Table 2
Post-test (Dialogues)

Student	Personal introduction	Mobile conversation	Weather	Time & Arrivals	upcoming terminal exam	Pre-test	Pre-test & Post-test difference
1	16	12	12	8	8	37	56-37=19%
2	15	12	10	10	13	39	60-39=21%
3	17	13	14	13	14	51	71-51=20%
4	11	12	11	14	13	34	61-34=27%
5	16	13	14	10	16	40	69-40=19%
6	17	12	15	13	11	35	68-35=23%
7	16	15	14	15	16	38	76-38=38%
8	17	14	16	12	13	37	72-37=35%
9	12	14	14	12	12	43	64-43=21%
10	13	12	11	10	12	35	58-35=23%
11	18	16	12	10	11	47	67-47=20%
12	15	16	11	14	15	45	71-45=26%
13	16	17	13	12	16	41	74-41=33%
14	15	14	12	8	15	42	64-42=22%
15	14	12	12	10	16	45	64-45=19%
16	16	13	11	11	10	38	61-38=23%
17	17	9	12	14	12	40	64-40=24%
18	15	11	16	10	11	38	63-38=25%
19	11	13	10	10	15	41	59-41=18%
20	16	14	10	15	9	44	64-44=20%

Table No. 2 presents post-test results of Computer Science in comparison to pre-test results. In this regard, significant improvement was found in the results of the students after the students got treatment by using Facebook for developing the functional vocabulary. Performance difference between pre-test and post-test begins with 20 marks and 38 marks increase in post-test. Four students obtained additional marks below 20, three students obtained additional marks above 30 and thirteen students obtained additional marks between 20 and 30.

Results and Discussion

The study was conducted to investigate the impact of using Facebook sites to improve functional vocabulary of the students of Computer Science at University of Kotli Azad Jammu and Kashmir. In this respect, 20 students were selected randomly to pass them through to collect functional vocabulary from Facebook sites on the given topic. For this purpose, pre-test strategy was used to determine the performance level of the students. Later on they were trained by the panel of three research experts on the way they would assemble required vocabulary. First topic given to them was 'Personal Introduction in dialogic format', second one was 'Dialogue on Mobile Conversation', third one was 'Dialogue on Weather', fourth one was 'Dialogue on Time and Arrivals', and last one was 'Dialogue on Upcoming Terminal Examination'. The students gathered the vocabulary and had time to time visits with instructors. On every 6th day, they used to come to the experimental site and appeared in the test. In this way, they were tested five times on the similar number of topics. Every test had 20 marks which were combined at the end in the form of post-test. The difference was marked between pre-test results and post-test results. Significant

improvement was noted in the results of the students. 19% increase was found in the post-test results of the students from their pre-test results. Similarly, 20% increase in post-test results was found in performance of three students. Two students showed 21% additional performance in their post-test results whereas 18%, 22%, 24%, 25%, 26%, and 27% increase was observed in the marks of each student's post-test results. 23% increase in marks of three students was found in post-test results. However, 33%, 35%, and 38% increase in marks of each of three students was observed in post-test results. Thus, overall performance of the students trained through Facebook to collect functional vocabulary on certain topics is significant.

Conclusion

The study concludes that use of social media platforms particularly Facebook had great impact on the development of functional vocabulary which was found in their post-test results. The students of present era need smart functional vocabulary instead of traditional bookish vocabulary which is of no use now. Innovative ways are used to teach vocabulary such as English language learning with the help of film stars and globally recognized personalities where they speak up a sentence or few sentences, and the hosts pick up certain words or language structures and use them in an interesting way. This technique not only get the attention of the viewers, it saves their time and enrich them with new words and structures to use in daily life conversations and written dialogues.

Recommendations

Like Facebook, other social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, etc. may be used to improve the functional vocabulary of the students. In this way, English language can be improved at one side and on the other, their time may be utilized positively in learning process.

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