

Undergraduates' Perceptions on The Effectiveness of Social Media Assisted Language Learning in Arabic Learning:

MHM. Shukry¹, AL. Abdur Rahman² and U. Israth³

No.40, Weliyaya, Maho, Sri Lanka¹, Mohideen Masjid Rd, Maradana, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka²,
Nugagahagedara, Narammala, Sri Lanka³
Shukry.sheen@gmail.com¹, ar9029524@gmail.com², israth117@gmail.com³

Abstract : This research aims to determine the perceptions of the undergraduates of Arabic Language towards the use of social media in teaching Arabic language and determine social media often used by students to help in the process of learning Arabic language due to the fact that social media contains a lot of materials for language learning and distance learning is considered compulsory at the universities after Covid-19 disease spread across Sri Lanka. This study uses quantitative research method because this study focusses on undergraduates' perceptions towards mobile as their assistant for learning Arabic language. The subject of the study are 84 undergraduates of Arabic Language Department of Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The results of the study show that social media can be used as a tool for Arabic language learning, improving students' skills, and helping them better interact with lecturers and classmates.

Key words: Social media, Undergraduates' perceptions, Arabic Language Learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Mobile Assisted Language Learning

Introduction

Social media is something that every individual must own nowadays, because social media as a means of communication that can dominate social status and communication boundaries, such as distance to meet each other, economic restrictions to visit, and the inflexibility of talks during direct interaction. Its easy use set off social media adjacent people's daily lives.

Social media is a new media. In the beginning, communication was only conducted in one direction, then advanced into a two-way interaction. One-way communication is also described as old media, such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines while new media extends to way to interact such as the internet (Watie, 2016).

Social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube can support language teachers and learners in foreign language learning process. Through Facebook, second language learners can find groups that discuss the content of the target language they want to master. Likewise,

YouTube, which provides foreign language learning content videos can be used as great as possible by language learners.

The emersion of social media in the field of second language learning rises altered perceptions among students. Some students may argue that social media can help positively in enhancing language learning, while others may limit social media only as social networking. However, learning activity became more comfortable and more independent with mobile phones (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2019:131).

Literature Review

The contribution of electronic technology in second language learning has been around since the 1960's. when the computer was invented, the term, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was used by language scholars, which means learning language with the help of computer applications. According to Lee (2004), computer use in second language learning can enhance learner training through practical work, motivate students to achieve more, encourage closer interaction between teachers and learners, become authentic sources and expand general overview.

Based on the computer learning, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) emerged as a tool that can be used by lecturers to explore learner capabilities (Hasibuan, 2018). CMC can be used by mentors and language pupils to improve skills even listening, reading, writing and speaking. For instance, Email, electronic bulletin, group chat, Edmodo etc. are kinds of CMC that can be used for language learning and teaching process.

In 1990s, mobile phones were used in language learning as a part of Computer Assisted Language Learning. Therefore, the term, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) appeared. The intrusion of web 2.0 such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc enables users to interact to one another in distance effectively. When mobile phones were developed to use social media (web 2.0), social media learning was introduced. But, the term Social Media Assisted Language Learning was introduced first by MAM. Sameem. He (2018) expressed social media assisted language learning is effective and recommended to use it in English Language Learning.

Because of social media advantages, Social Media Assisted Language Learning (SMALL) has emerged, which is widely used to develop foreign language learning. Because all information can be shared quickly, SMALL is considered to be easier to use and more practical. Mason

(2006) asserts that social media plays a significant role in high-quality education by fostering learner creative thinking in a social setting.

Besides, students' attitude towards the use of social media for learning purpose in Al-Baha University showed that the students had positive attitude towards social media on their English language learning (Salih & Elsaid, 2018). Furthermore, Reinhardt (2018) states that social media is a collaborative and intercultural tool that triggers students' learner autonomy in language learning. Also, incorporating social media into learners' language learning activities provides them self-confidence and motivation (Jabbari et al., 2015).

According to Sari & Hasibuan, (2019), They examined social media use in Arabic language education students at the State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The findings indicated that social media can be used as a tool for Arabic language learning, improving students' skills and allowing them to interact more effectively with lecturers and classmates.

Analysing the above literature review, the researcher tends to know the effectiveness of social media among the undergraduates of Sri Lanka in Arabic Language Learning. No one has conducted a study on this yet in Sri Lankan context.

Methodology

This study used quantitative research method. The subject of the study were 84 first-year Arabic Language Department students at Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The instrument used in this study was questionnaire which was delivered by google form via Whatsapp groups to all the first-year students. Among them, the researcher was able to collect 84 responses from about 170. The questionnaire which contains 15 questions was derived from the research belongs to Sari & Hasibuan, (2019). These 15 questions were analysed and uploaded to table format which is easier to view.

Findings and Discussion

The discussion focuses on the students' perceptions of using social media in the Arabic learning process which is presented in percentage tables, and is described in order to determine what their perceptions of social media are and what type of social media they typically use for their Arabic learning activities. The findings of this study are as follows:

Table 34: I have social media account such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp etc.

	Respondents	Percentage
Yes, I have	74	88.1%
No, I don't	10	11.9%

From table 1 above, it seems that 88.1 percent of respondents have social media account and they use it in their daily life whereas 11.9 percent do not have an account.

Table 35: I believe that social media can be used in Arabic learning.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	78	92.9%
Disagree	06	7.1%
Not Sure	00	0%

Table 2 above has shown that 92.9 % respondents agree that social media can be used in Arabic learning, while 7.1 % are not sure that social media can be used to learn Arabic.

Table 36: I use social media for enhancing my Arabic language skills

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	78	92.9%
Disagree	06	7.1%
Not Sure	00	0%

Table 3 shows that 92.9 % respondents used social media for enhancing their skill in Arabic, but 7.1 % do not agree that social media can enhance their Arabic skill.

Table 37: Social media can provide positive results for improving my Arabic language

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	74	88.1%
Disagree	06	7.1%
Not Sure	04	4.8%

Table 4 shows that social media can provide positive results for 88.1 % respondents while 7.1 % respondents disagree. In addition, 4.8 % respondents are not sure about it.

Table 38: Social media has changed my perspective on learning Arabic

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	52	61.9%
Disagree	22	26.2%
Not Sure	10	11.9%

In table 5 above, 61.9 % respondents agreed that social media has changed their perspective on learning Arabic, they agreed that Arabic learning not only be learned in the classroom, but also can be acquired through this modern technology. While 26.2 % do not agree that social media has changed their perspective, and 11.9 % are not sure about it.

Table 39: Social media makes Arabic learning process became more fun and interesting

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	44	52.4%
Disagree	32	38.1%
Not Sure	08	9.5%

Table 6 shows that 52.4 % respondents agreed that social media made their process in Arabic learning became more fun and interesting whereas 38.1 % do not agree on it. Additionally, 9.5 % are not sure about both Arabic learning or social interaction that make them fun.

Table 40: Social media (YouTube, Facebook, WA group, Instagram) provides contents of Arabic

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	64	76.2%
Disagree	08	9.5%
Not Sure	12	14.3%

In table 7, it has been shown that from table above, 76.2 % respondents said that social media make available of contents of Arabic learning for reading, listening, speaking. While 9.5 %

could not find the contents of Arabic on social media, and 14.3 % are not sure about that they include contents of Arabic or not.

Table 41: Social media helps improve Arabic communication with lecturers and classmate

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	62	73.8%
Disagree	18	21.4%
Not Sure	04	4.8%

It has been shown in table 8, that 73.8 % respondents make use of social media for improving their communication in Arabic language with lectures and classmates. 21.4 % respondents disagreed that social media can help them in communication while 4.8 % are not sure about it.

Table 42: Social media helps me become autonomy learner (self-taught learner)

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	50	59.5%
Disagree	28	33.3%
Not Sure	06	7.1%

Table 9 shows that 59.5 % respondents specified that social media help them became autonomy learner. 33.3 % respondents did not agree and 7.1 % respondents are not sure whether the contents of social media explain the Arabic well or they still need lecturers' explanation.

Table 43: Social media helps me get a lot of information about Arabic contents

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	74	88.1%
Disagree	10	11.9%
Not Sure	00	0%

Table 10 shows that 88.1 % respondents stated that they received a lot of information about Arabic contents from social media, and 11.9 % disagreed, and they might have got from the other resources.

Table 44: Social media makes me interact well with my lecturers and classmates

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	70	83.3%
Disagree	10	11.9%
Not Sure	04	4.8%

Table 11 shows that 83.3 % respondents emphasised that social media can be used for interacting with lectures and classmate better than face to face whereas 11.9 % disagreed about that, and 4.8 % were not sure that they can take the benefit of social media for interaction.

Table 45: Social media has negative impact on my concentration in learning Arabic

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	50	59.5%
Disagree	28	33.3%
Not Sure	06	7.1%

Table 12 shows that 59.5 % agreed that social media distracted their concentration and 33.3 % disagreed as 7.1 % were not sure about the statement.

Table 46: I did not find the benefit in learning Arabic by social media

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	36	42.9%
Disagree	36	42.9%
Not Sure	12	14.3%

Table 13 shows that 42.9 % respondents expressed that they found the benefit of using social media in Arabic learning whereas the same percent disagreed. 14.3 % were not sure about the benefits.

Table 47: Social media is more time consuming for me in social interaction than Arabic learning

	Respondents	Percentage
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Agree	64	76.2%
Disagree	10	11.9%
Not Sure	10	11.9%

ஐவ ராயள ளாழறடு டை வயடிடந 14இ வாயவ 76.2 மூ சநளிழுனெநவெள ளவயவநன வாயவ ளழஉயைட அநனயை ளை அழசந வகைந உழுளெரஅபை டை ளழஉயைட டைவநசயஉவழைடு வாயடு டநயசடுபை யுசயடிதைஇ டிரவ 11.9 மூ சநளிழுனெநவெள னனையசநந யனெ னழ டெவ அயமந ளரசந யடிழரவ வாயவ வாநல உயடு ரளந ளழஉயைட அநனயை கழச டநயசடுபை அழசந வாயடு வாநல ரளந வை கழச ிசனையவந டைவநசயஉவழைடு.

Table 48: I prefer to use this social media for learning Arabic (you may choose more than one)

	Respondents	Percentage
Facebook	46	19%
YouTube	74	31%
Whatsapp	72	30%
Instagram	12	5%
Twitter	12	5%
Telegram	20	9%
Other	2	1%

It has shown in table 15, that many students use YouTube and Whatsapp for their Arabic learning. It is 74 and 72 students respectively, and then Facebook is used by 46 students. Telegram is used by 20 whereas Instagram and Twitter are used by 12 students. Other social media applications are used by 2 students only.

The following points can be summarized based on the results of the questionnaire of undergraduates' perceptions of learning Arabic on social media, which are presented in the form of the tables above:

- i. Majority of the undergraduates have social media account. Even though the rest of the respondents do not have social media account, they may use social media without an account.

- ii. Social media is likely used by the respondents in learning Arabic: in improving language skills, providing satisfying learning outcomes, making learning more fun and interesting, improving Arabic communication skills, making them interact better around learning.
- iii. Social media is likely to change their perspectives on learning Arabic. Therefore, traditionally learned Arabic language might be learned technology-based.
- iv. Though social media works as a tool in the process of learning Arabic, it provides Arabic learning content that helps to improve their Arabic language skills.
- v. By using social media, students become independent learners. It does not mean that they do not need lecturers in the learning process, but rather make them more independent in hunt for additional knowledge in addition to the knowledge they obtain during lecture session.
- vi. Besides the mentioned benefits, the use of social media in learning Arabic is also likely to distract the concentration of students.
- vii. Social media that is often used by students in learning Arabic are YouTube, Whatsapp and Facebook respectively whereas other social media such as Telegram, Twitter, Instagram and other application were used lesser than the above three social media applications by the respondents.
- viii. Although many students argue that SMALL was beneficial to their learning, some limit their use of mobile technologies in learning because they interfere with their concentration.

Conclusion

After receiving responses from students about their perspective on learning Arabic using social media, the results showed that they had a positive outlook on SMALL, on average 36 people from 84 respondents stated that social media had many benefits in learning Arabic. Those who have a negative view of social media as a tool for learning Arabic, argue that social media disrupts their concentration in the learning process and spends a lot of their time. Also, the researcher considers that the follow up and in-depth study about using mobile in Arabic learning is needed for furthermore.

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