

TEACHING ENGLISH USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Wahyu Taufiq

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo
Jl. Mojopahit 666B Sidoarjo
Email: taufiq@umsida.ac.id

Abstract

It is reasonable that technology has already become part of people's daily life. The number of young learners who are literate with new technologies as new means of communication is growing. Therefore, the use of current Information Communication Technology (ICT) along with its internet and web-based tools in classroom and teaching learning activities becomes increasingly reasonable and demanding. Facebook is chosen for this teaching and learning design since some studies suggest that this ICT successfully encourage students to participate in education settings, and access information anytime and anywhere confidently with students' own ability. It is to maintain students' interest than a passive teacher directed learning experience. The main focus of this project is to design a Facebook based activities for additional task in the conventional class. Under an English subject for the first year, this paper presents the opportunity to use one of popular social network sites; Facebook for language teaching and learning design. The discussion is about the background of using available technology, particularly Facebook as an online social media in education, and then, it will be narrowed down into the use of this online social media for language teaching and teaching, particularly for ESL students. Intentionally, the discussion will be used as the basic idea for teaching design using online-based media in the classroom. Therefore, it presents the theoretical framework, the opportunity, and alternative implementation of Facebook as a teaching media with its activities.

Keywords: Facebook, Social Media, Teaching and Learning design

INTRODUCTION

It has been generally known that today, the digital age represents high demands to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. Practitioners in educational field are now under serious concern to be aware of recent technology to cope with the needs in the society (Selwyn, 2013). Now everyone has access to computers, mobile phones, and the internet and is already using them for the basic of life such shopping, paying taxes, or simply communicate. Understanding the fact that education as a means to prepare people to be more ready in the society, teachers consequently should be able to integrate them into the classroom (Chen, 2008).

According to Dudeney and Hockly (2007), the number of young learners who are literate with new technologies as new means of communication is growing. According to Lombardi and Oblinger (2007), Facebook has millions college-age students as the users, draw-

ing them into an online world where they spend countless hours browsing profiles, meeting new people, and exploring relationships. On the other hand, the condition also makes a remarkable pressure to communicate electronically (Nathan, 2005). It is now something common to see them communicate using mobile phone, email, or online social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. This fact makes educators should consider applying these popular sites to support learning. Consequently, this condition should be used as a consideration to integrate the technology among them. Therefore as it is further suggested, the use of current Information Communication Technology (ICT) along with its internet and web-based tools in classroom and teaching learning activities becomes increasingly reasonable and demanding.

It is reasonable that technology has already become part of people's daily life. One technology that offers a great

opportunity is internet with various web-based tools and social media sites, Facebook is one of them. It is founded in February, 2004 (Cowling, 2012). Since then, the number of its users is growing with most of them are youngsters. It has millions of members that a large number of them are students (Lombardi & Oblinger, 2007). In Australia for example, there are about 85 of the Facebook users are people by age between 18 to 35 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

It can be adopted and sitting side by side with so many previous innovations (Selwyn, 2011). By using available social networking, students, teachers and institution can keep connected freely and conveniently. Since either synchronous or asynchronous communication tools can be used as different enjoyment felt by different people (Fakhraie & Hewitt, 2010). This will support the idea of life-long learners, and develop a commitment to continued independent learning.

Some studies suggest that mobile technologies successfully encourage students to participate in education settings, and access information anytime and anywhere confidently with students' own ability. (Chaiprasurt, 2010). Some of the latest mobile phones for example are now commonly supported with extra communication tools, such as mobile instant messaging, video calling and social network providers like Facebook. Anyone indeed can use different kinds of sending and receiving information instead of SMS and phone calling variously. "By making online learning in-demand and more accessible, mobile users can become more engaged even while on the move" (Chaiprasurt, 2010). The construction and self direction of current students' online learning environment can also give users a sense

of ownership of their learning (Selwyn, 2009).

DISCUSTION

Facebook as a Teaching Media

Facebook is one example of technology in the form of social network site. It is available to the general public. Anyone with e-mail address may have access to the network. When a user registers for a Facebook account, he provides his name, sex, and date of birth. He then proceeds through the process of creating his own profile. This profile mostly contains basic information such as gender, relationship status political and religious preferences, contact information, work and education information. Every user has a personal *Wall* on which other users may give comments. The other options for interacting using Facebook are by sharing photos and videos, writing notes, posting links from certain website's pages, and more.

It is an online social site that has various tools and facilities which can be integrated to support learning design.

As one of the most popular online social networks, Facebook can be potentially used in the teaching and learning. Teaching in a higher education setting, the writer has never been intentionally using it to the class. However, he finds that Facebook has been commonly used by students and he considers that it might be a suitable tool to support learning. E-mail is a tool that the writer has been using to utilizing in order to integrate technology and education so far. The use of e-mail is able to support e3 (effective, efficient, and engaging) learning (Kim, 2008), so, Facebook might have the potency to support learning as well.

One of the activities can be tied up with the possibility to upload pictures and videos. The uploaded pictures and

videos can be used as the media to make discussion and comparison. Students can be also be assigned to make their own pictures and video and publish it on the Facebook class. By making discussion and comparison actively, students will involve in learning and giving real contribution. Therefore, it is likely to maintain students' interest than a passive teacher directed learning experience (Killen, 1998).

Some challenges also appear when there is issue of privacy among the students as well as the teachers (Loving and Ochoa, 2011) particularly when sharing as equals. There are some fears about using Facebook in education particularly when students are afraid that their information on Facebook could negatively influence the teachers' perceptions and teachers are anxious that they will lose their aura of professionalism (Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2009). Sometimes, the activity of sharing information is not only laying when the class managed, but also extend to a long term relationship (Lampe et al., 2011). The common value to these concerns is one example of conflict between traditional social norms and new technologies that sometimes exceed the norms of politeness.

Furthermore, it is found that some teachers tend to not change their teaching style and approach much even new promising technology in education is introduced (Ming , Hall, , Azman, & Joyes 2010). For example, when the use of Facebook to support learning is called new, the teachers tend to avoid it and use the conventional ways.

Even there are some fears about using Facebook as learning and teaching media between students and educators (Matthews, 2012), it is argued that Facebook is still potentially useful for promoting effective online learning (Madge et.al, 2009). The privacy reason

mainly becomes the problem. Students' information on Facebook could negatively influence the teachers' perceptions and it may influence the teacher's professionalism (Teclehaimanot & Hickman 2009). However, as proposed by Madge et.al (2009), by using appropriate design, teacher can manage the class to make interaction between students to share information and build connections.

Since this technology is equipped with bulletin boards, instant messaging, email, and the ability to post videos and pictures, students can collaborate within the system to share information. Therefore, Facebook indirectly creates a learning community, which potentially can be used as the virtual class of a learning design. Ideally through Facebook, students can familiarize themselves with the other learners in the community as well as collaborate with the other members of group to learn and conduct some projects in an online environment. The condition may support pedagogical concerns in generic employability skills such as communication, discussion and teamwork.

To ensure that Facebook is appropriately managed in the classroom, some strategies should be made in order to measure and address the right benefit from the goal objected. Fewkes and McCabe (2012) argues that some issues related to teachers who use Facebook as the teaching media is that they are not sufficiently prepared for using the system such as not being able to monitor students' responses or engage properly with Facebook for class use. As such, there should be evaluation and another preparation made for the future teaching design.

Teaching-Learning Design On Pedagogical Strategies Facebook

The main focus of this project is to design a Facebook page for additional task in the conventional class. In this case, the writer is using one topic from the syllabus available at the institution where he works as a teaching staff. Under an English subject for the first year students, the project is proposed to be implemented to first year students studying at English Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia.

Related to the use of online media technology particularly Facebook in the class, the college does not conduct a total online class. What the writer proposes here is additional activities to blend traditional face-to-face meeting with online activities.

Topic Focus And Suitability To The Context

Based on the syllabus, the ability to make English descriptive writing is one of basic skills needed by those whose major is English. Further, students will get involved in making discussion and comparison actively. Here, they will involve in learning and giving real contribution. Therefore, it is likely to maintain students' interest than a passive teacher directed learning experience (Killen, 1998). Additionally, critical thinking is also contributed when students analyze the content, both given by teacher and the classmates, expressing the ideas through the page, and think purposefully (Killen, 1998).

On successful completion of this activity, students will be able to develop the skills beyond the intended project, and use the Internet as a source of information to develop research skills. In addition, ideally they will develop a commitment to continued independent learning.

The tasks build bonds between students that keep them connected academically via email notifications of group postings of wall postings and pictures files. Once Facebook member is part of a Group, a variety of options are possible for sharing views, ideas, topics, and engaging in virtual cyber discussions. In addition, any group member has the ability to contact other classmates in a variety of ways through the group application, or by using the Message application to write on their wall or to send a private email.

Facebook was chosen because it enables students to interact and enrich their knowledge in an interesting way, anytime and anywhere. Moreover, Facebook is equipped with bulletin boards, instant messaging, email, and the ability to post videos and pictures. Also, Facebook has opened up development of friendly-used pages, which can further enhancement the educational functions of Facebook (Munoz & Towner 2009).

Learners can connect with other students via Facebook tools, indirectly creating a learning community which is a crucial component of learner's education (Baker 1999). Facebook helps educators (teachers) connect with their students about assignments, advising, useful links, and samples of work outside of the classroom environment.

Learners can use Facebook to contact classmates about questions regarding class assignments or examinations as well as collaborate on assignments and group projects in an online environment. Building on the face to face, teacher student relationship, social networks allow students to quick look teachers profiles containing personal information, interests, background, and friends, which can enhance student motivation, affective

learning, and classroom climate (Mazer et al 2007).

Motivation is a key factor to interact in an online-learning context, by creating social relations between learners and teacher. The research conducted by Munoz and Towner (2009) suggested that educators (teachers) post pod costs, websites, and videos on Facebook, and using Google Scholar, link students to study guides. power point, assignments, and tutorials. Teachers can contact students via Facebook by many convenient ways by sending messages, posting comments on "the wall" or chatting with students during virtual room hours.

The rationale for choosing a Facebook is its easy navigation structure, allowing learners to bring out meaningful interaction synchronously or asynchronously with speakers of different languages and to access an incredible amount of valuable and authentic information on a variety of topics (Blattner & Fiori 2009). For example, an activity can be developed in the language classroom on tasks which provide opportunities for student to actually practice communication. And this activity can be accomplished via Facebook. So, English department students can easily join groups who interact in the target language and observe written exchanges between the members on the wall or in the discussion forums. By increasing learner's involvement through communication and community, educators (teachers) can shape their courses towards a variety of learning styles.

This activities support some heuristics. First, it is to boost the use of technologies to maintain motivation in e-learning class. Encouragement of motivation by boosting the use of daily used technologies like Facebook is exceedingly essential. As supported by

Coccea (2006, p414) one of the main factors in proceeding online learning successfully is the motivation itself. Regarding the reality of a long-distance learning that students tend to have lack interaction because of their physical separation from teacher and peers (Bai 2003, p174), maintaining students' motivation trough Facebook is appropriately promising and applicable. Second, it is to use social networking sites to keep connecting. By using available social networking, students, teachers and institution can keep the connection freely and conveniently. Asynchronous communication tools can be used as different enjoyment felt by different people. This will support the idea of life-long learners, and develop a commitment to continued independent learning.

Roles of Teachers And Learners

Basically the teacher's role is to provide clear instructions since Facebook itself can stand alone as a learning tool. This activity requires the teacher to manage the students to introduce themselves and frequently check that learners are posting introduction or comments and doing their activity. Also, exchange knowledge with its learners, and help guide the virtual class in the engagement of the material and encouragement to learners where needed. Moreover, teachers list of official information such as the place and time of the online chat, office hours, email address, announcements, and can post documents and discussion topics. It also important from teacher's to make sure that all the learners have the connection to the Internet; therefore, learners can achieve the goals of the project. Lastly, teacher gives feedback and comments about students' participation and their projects.

In this activity students are supposed to follow the online guides. The students' role will determine the successfulness of the activities. Technically, they will check the Facebook site regularly to see the least comments or participation and making discussion by exchanging their knowledge, sharing their ideas with the rest of the class and interacting with the links suggested from the teacher. Moreover, students will work in a group of two or three to upload the photos of topic or name of place they are going to discuss and compose the descriptive writing.

Activities

The use of Facebook page in this design is to practice students' English skill in descriptive writing. The activities are initiated by the teacher providing general initial information about the project, which then followed by making notes about the assignment, publishing task wall, posting a picture, managing group discussion and conducting individual assessment. Ideally, all of these activities are responded actively by the students.

a. Basic Information Session

Initially, the students are prompted to open and to read the "info" page on the Facebook, specifically on the "Basic Information" session. It contains information about the subject as well as the general information about the project. Some of them are about the name of the class, department and some general rules. At glance, there is also some information related to some pages that need to be accessed and how to work with them. Students are expected to interact in this online learning activity both in class and group pages. On this account, the interaction between students and the teacher can be done through the wall

or chat-inbox that might suit the needs.

Alternatively, teacher and students may also conduct the synchronous conference using other tool such as Skype or Yahoo messenger. Students are able to arrange additional consultation via telephone, online chat, email or face-to-face meeting with the teacher

Before going further, it is advised that the students are familiar with the content. If they want to know more about Facebook and how to use it, there is a link provided in the link feature. Also, if they concern about their privacy, it is advised that they make another Facebook account before deciding to join the page.

b. Note Session

The note session is made in order to publish specific information, for example about what to do with the task. In this project, which is about descriptive writing, teacher publishes a note about the initial information which then being discuss in the wall section.

Additionally, a set of rules is also mentioned in this page. The rules are related to the tasks and about what may or may not to do during online activity.

Here are some basic rules for all users.

1. Respecting the rights of others
2. Treating all property with respect
3. Taking responsibility for learning and behaviour
4. Taking part in the activities

5. Suggested to make one account of Facebook which is different from the ordinary one. Additional rules will be made based on further agreement

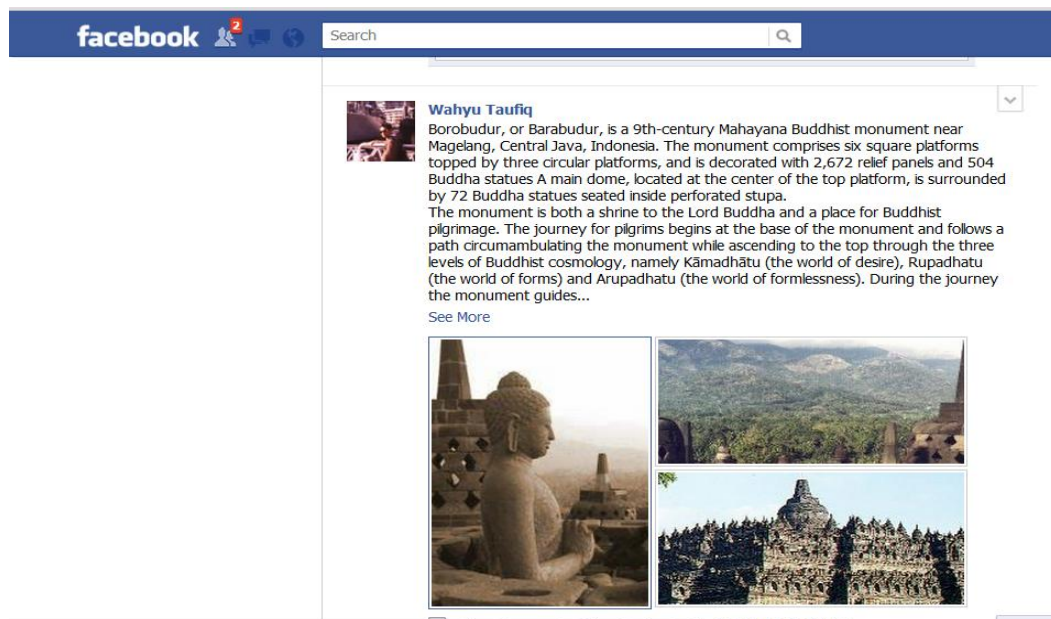
c. Wall Session

The wall is the main part of this account since this is going to be checked

regularly by the students. Therefore, teacher will post any information related to the activities here, such as showing what to do, managing the activities, and directing information when there is something to be clarified. Also, students will use this as the discussion forum that can be accessed by the whole class. Students post a question for example, and then the other students including the teacher will respond it.

d. Posting A Picture Session

In this session, students can post their final project both in group and individual. The picture will be used as a supporting tool to help reader understanding the descriptive writing. After each submission of the pictures and writing, other students are advised to give respond about the content, for example by giving additional information or clarification.



e. Group Discussion Session

Group discussion session is provided by the teacher to facilitate the students. They are provided with a kind of private space for them to make discussion about their project in specific page, which cannot be accessed by other students but the teacher. The teacher can access the page since he is the admin of the page. Further, the discussion will be used by the teacher to observe the active participation all of members in the group task. It is important to ensure that there will be no student relies on the others to finish the task or one students dominates in the activities, which is usually becoming the main issue in the group work.

To simplify to group distribution, the teacher lets students to choose their member and click the link based on their group number. The total time needed for group work is one week.

f. Individual Task Session

After doing the group work, another week is needed to finish the individual assignment. Every students need to compare two projects that have been done by his own group and others. This activity is not only intended to make sure that student has involved actively in the group work but also to ensure that they dig more information about the other students' project. It is good to build the students' academic skill in finding useful resources related to their project.

The wall and message-inbox facilities are still actively used in this session.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students will be graded according to both group and individual activities and products. The teacher will be looking for evidence that the students:

1. Identify appropriate articles and literatures for reference.
2. Include a clear description, which is supported with interesting pictures.
3. Write legibility, with focus on spelling, grammar and proofreading
4. Accurately reference sources
5. A good subject understanding through their comments or chatting or discussion or emails.
6. Considered a range of points of view including those in the course posted.
7. Participated actively and constructively in online conferencing.

At the end of the activity, students will be asked to give feedback or their opinions on the activity of using Facebook learning and peer learning approaches. This feedback can assist the teacher to improve the activities in order to enhance both the learning environment and student learning progression.

PROPOSED FUTURE PROJECT

In the future, more intensive studies are needed to ensure the use of Facebook in education is safe and effective. Since it offers good features and also free, it should be a good start to implement the use of technology to all education institutions.

Additionally, this kind of media may also be used for other activities such as speaking and reading classes. For

example, students can upload videos to make presentation. The other students can respond the video and share their opinion in such way so the discussion can be conducted in fun way.

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