

The Smiling and the Frowning Face of the Facebook

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Abstract: Men and women, young and old, literate and illiterate are all engaged in a way or another with the face book. They spend most of their time either chatting or browsing contributions on their pages, exchanging expressions of congrats, gratitude or inquiries. This study is meant to investigate the advantages and the disadvantages of the face book. To this end a survey was made on a group of face book users chosen randomly comprising different ages, attitudes and levels of education. The tools of the study were: a question about the advantages and disadvantages of the face book published on the researcher's page and open interviews with another group of face book users. The responses of the subjects were analyzed and classified under different subtitles. The results of the survey showed that the advantages of the face book are much more than the disadvantages. The study concludes with recommendations about the wise and responsible use of the face book.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites, especially Facebook, are an integral part of everyday lifestyle of contemporary life of the adults as well as older groups. They use it to see each other's latest pictures, write on each other's 'walls', confirm friends and communicate, exchange condolences and congratulations, give appointments, announce jobs and even interview candidates and form groups that are designed to support discussions on defined topics. Some people spend more than six hours a day on the face book and for some others it has become sort of addiction. For many, who are away from their families for a whole year or more like the researcher, the face book is used to know families' news day by day if not hour by hour. De Veliers (2010) asked if this powerful, pull-force tool can be used meaningfully in an academic context to support true learning. This question was investigated by many including the researcher who proved through research that face book can be used successfully for teaching the four skills through a medium that is preferred by students away from the stress and the boredom associated to the traditional classrooms (Mahmoud, 2014).

II. PROBLEM

The researcher has noticed that almost four in five of people use the face book for many different reasons. He has also noticed that some of them are happy with it and they enjoy the maximum benefits whereas others are suffering on the social and family level. The researcher feels that he assumes responsibility for informing people about the wise and beneficial ways of using the face book away from losing friends and looking silly among family members. He thought that showing the advantages and disadvantages will make people aware of the dangers that may result from the unwise use of the face book and probably avoid them.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Means of communication and social networks, where communication is established, are rapidly increasing. They become a part of people's daily life, mostly teenagers and adults. This draws researchers and educators' attention and encourages them to investigate this addiction for educational and social purposes. They found in this medium a healthy and accepted channel to convey useful messages and add motivation to the teaching/ learning process.

A. Advantages of the Facebook

1. Facebook for Education

Students in all levels got bored of the traditional classroom; teachers, white boards and even the media that start to get into our classrooms can't compete with the social network sites outside the classroom. The Face book, the Instagram are among the means students like very much or even are addicted to, so teachers must invest this situation and insert their teaching materials in them in a smart way so that students learn indirectly. In order to integrate face book in the EFL classroom De Veliers (2010) used an academic group that was established as an optional discussion forum for students taking a postgraduate course in e-Learning in 2009 at the University of South Africa. Learning and insight were enhanced by these discussions and the students benefitted by contact with fellow students. VanDoorn, et al (2013) pointed out that social networking offers teachers and learners exciting opportunities to communicate. Web 2.0 and its synchronous communications platforms provide new avenues for teachers to deliver curriculum and facilitate learning. Further, they provide new avenues for students to engage and intensify their own learning. Being able to chat in real-time with a teacher, usually via face-to-face discussions, is something that many students studying in on-campus mode take for granted, and is something that distance or off-campus students are generally unable to experience. Sancheza et al (2014) examined the possibility of integrating face book into teaching. To do this the structural equation model designed by Mazman and Usluel (2010) cited in (Sancheza et al (2014)) was used to identify the factors that motivate students to use face book for educational purposes. The results showed that Social Influence is the most important factor in predicting the adoption of Facebook. Bani-Hani et al (2014) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of Jordanian EFL students' at Irbid University College-Al-Balqa' Applied University towards utilizing Facebook

groups in teaching writing. It also seeks to investigate the role these groups play in enhancing the writing performance level and brainstorm ideas at the pre-writing stage. Findings revealed that Facebook groups can be effective in teaching EFL writing. Furthermore, results illustrated that students can develop their vocabulary by being exposed to fellow group members' posts, in addition to checking for misspelled words. Mahmoud, (2012) investigated the effect of email and face book on foundation year students achievement in EFL writing at King Abdulaziz University. The findings revealed that integrating email and face book in teaching has positively affected students' achievement in writing. The results also showed that foundation year students at KAU have positive attitudes towards these two social network sites (SNS).

2. Facebook for socializing

Facebook in addition to other network sites promotes social relations among relatives and friends regardless of the long distances between them. In fact it provides great convenience for couples to interact with each other's social networks making it a wavelike net of friendships; this in turn creates more chances of socializing and job or business opportunities. Facebook can also help in reviving old friendships and maintaining new ones. On the other hand, the face book can be a source of jealousy and anxiety; that is while looking at others' achievements and celebrities, this may arouse a feeling of envy and inconvenience. Furthermore, the excessive use of Facebook can harm your relationships through constant partner monitoring. Facebook can have both positive and negative effects on relationships, but it all depends on what type of person you are and how you use the social networking sites. (Seidman, 2015)

B. Disadvantages of the Facebook

Very few people wrote formally about the disadvantages of face book. Those who mentioned drawbacks admitted that they came from personal

experiences that can't be generalized. Some people noticed change in their profile information while they were not logged in. The biggest disadvantage is that one can be easily addicted to face book; once you get connected with your friends, you will realize how frequently you open face book. Bolton, (2015) mentioned a result of a study by Leif Denti in which participants in the study reported that they felt ill because they were not able to check up on their face book account. It also affects students and employees productivity if they access their face book accounts while at work, said Bolton who also mentioned that studies conducted at Ohio State University indicated that Facebook users studied between one and five hours a week while non-users typically spent 11 hours or more studying. Studies by a professor of psychology at California State University indicate that the overuse of social networking sites such as Facebook can lead to inconsiderate behavior. Since Facebook makes it easy to find and connect with people from the past, it can also place a strain on relationships. A survey conducted by a UK divorce website revealed that Facebook proved to be a reason for divorce. Seeing a partner talking to someone on Facebook with whom she had a previous relationship can cause anxiety and

insecurity. People might also turn to Facebook when they are in fights or disagreements with their partners. This can lead to dirty laundry being aired in public through inappropriate comments or status updates posted in anger. Couples that break up can also use Facebook as a platform to get back at their ex-partners, which can jeopardize future relationships.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out at King Abdulaziz University/Jeddah/KSA in 2016. It was a qualitative study that used a survey question and an open interview. The survey question of the study: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of the face book?" was posted on the researcher's wall to be answered by a group of respondents (literate/ illiterate, married/single, between 15 and 45 years old). The mature answers were classified and tabulated by name, advantages and disadvantages. These filtered data appear in the results of the study. In addition, fifteen face book users randomly selected outside the first sample were interviewed about their attitudes towards face book. Their opinions were also summarized in the results of the study.

V. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A. The Survey Results

This table shows the advantages and disadvantages of the face book from the points of view of the respondents in the survey.

Respondents	Advantages	Respondents	Disadvantages
Asma, Jalal, Bakr, Fawzi, Nour, Mohammad	It is good if used only to convey important messages.	Asma	It is a waste of time if used for long hours.
Khadem,	It is good if there is a good intention behind using it.	Khadem	It is bad if there is a bad intention behind using it.
Jalal	It is an excellent way to find very old friends in different parts of the world	Bakr,	Many people talk nonsense and don't have clear opinion.
Jalal	It helps you Keep in touch with current friends.	Bakr,	It causes many disturbances and misunderstanding

			because of disagreement on certain points.
Jalal	It is a fast and cheap means of communication	Mahmoud	Some traditional people think a female offering friendship on face book wants an illegal relation or if a female likes a contribution, she likes the person himself.
Abd Alsalam	A very good educational channel away from the traditional classroom and lecturing	Abd Alsalam	As an educational means, it lacks direct monitoring, follow up and body language and facial expressions necessary for understanding.
Abdulaziz	The face book is a good medium for choosing friends through their logic and contributions	Al-Hosni	The face book was a reason behind destroying many relations between wives and their husbands
Abo-Rami	We know about members of our village and people we know day by day	Abdulaziz	Many wives tell the marriage secrets on face book which will certainly cause troubles to the future life of the family.
Rehab	I got married through face book	Abdulaziz	Many husbands have doubts about their wives using face book and having illegal friendships.
Ghadeer	Know the news you are interested in about others.	Ghadeer	Sometimes I forget myself with face book and don't do my school assignments
Sara	You may have very good friends you have never seen	Sara	Some young males go under females' names and break into females privacies
Ayman	Engineers may exchange experience and consultation through the face book	Ayman	It is bad when used as a platform for war and enmity and war
Firas	To exchange recipes of preparing some dishes.	Firas	To show others what you had at breakfast or lunch or any other occasions

Maram	I like it when somebody writes a piece of advice for the public	Maram	I don't like it when somebody writes bad things about others
Mariam	Facebook helps me pass time and enjoy myself	Mariam	Facebook makes my husband angry
Adam	You send your congrats and condolences	Adam	If you are not even in socializing, you create enemies

B. The Interview Results

The respondents of the interview were fifteen male and female face book users. Their age varies between eighteen and forty five. Most of them were very enthusiastic to talk about the advantages of the face book and how it helps them get familiar with the news of their friends and families especially those who live away from their families. Skaker who is 35 said, “ *I know the everyday news of my family; what they eat, who visits them and who they visit, I even used to settle arguments among my little brothers.*” Fadi who is now a teacher in a private school in Jeddah/KSA said that he got his job when his friends wrote to him and he answered back through face book. He also arranged a telephone interview with the private school management. Mona who is now a mother of three said that she used to write her daily thoughts on face book when a young man of 25 informed her that he admired her thoughts. That man is currently he husband. When asked if the face book is a loss of time for them, the majority said that they only use it at specific times of the day based on agreements with their families or friends. Huda, Monter and Helda said that they feel they have missed something very important when for a certain reason they don't use the face book. Mr. Nadeem, the oldest of the respondents, is always the first to post the news of good and bad occasions; who got married, promoted, finished his higher studies or

passed away. On the other hand, few of the respondents especially females said that the face book was a reason behind much trouble inside their families. Fatima, Ola, Sara and Najah said that they were about to get divorced because they got addicted to the extent that they start to ignore some house chores related to their kids and husbands. Some others were involved into troubles with their families and their husbands because they were engaged in innocent friendships with males which is considered wrong in the Arabic and Islamic cultures.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the mentioned above about face book, it is obvious that Facebook can be a very helpful educational tool (Sancheza et al (2014), (Espinosa, 2015)). The social network sites have created an unlimited world of teaching and learning opportunities that are no longer confined to the traditional classroom. Therefore, EFL teachers need to be creative and up-to-date with the current technology including the face book in order to meet students' interests and preferences. Furthermore, the face book is currently a very effective tool for social communication where the majority of people can't call it a day without spending not less than two hours in the least cases browsing, chatting, commenting or playing games. This was very clear in the responses of the

interviewees through their answers about the advantages and disadvantages of the face book. The same way the face book has a smiling face through education and social relations, it also has a very vicious and frowning face if used carelessly and unwisely; someone may end up losing his friends, his job, his relations, his wife or husband. Moreover, the face book may destroy families and very close friendships. In order to avoid this dramatic end, face book users must be wise enough to get the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of this precious social network site.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Facebook can be an effective tool for communication if not overused, abused and misused. The overuse of the face book will consume the time dedicated for your study if you are a student and your productivity if you work in any managerial or field work. Save a specific period of time according to the nature of your work in order to see comments on your posts or any new invitations or to exchange an important chat with somebody. The abuse of the face book will undermine and spoil the bright and the smiling face of this social network site. When you use it to exchange bad words with others, to talk about very private things, to get involved in byzantine disputes or to brag about achievements and life welfare, you are abusing it. You misuse the face book when you post your photos or videos when you are seen in very informal situations like dancing or drinking in a very compromising situation. These photos or videos will stay long in the net and may affect your future social or career positions. You also misuse face book when you post what you are eating or how you feel several times; your friends might mistake you for an attention-grabbing, lazy and good-for-nothing person. The last piece of advice is not to use auto log in on your mobile or laptop as these gadgets can be stolen which leads to compromising your own privacy.

VIII. REFERENCES

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