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SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A WAY OF LINGUISTIC SOCIALIZATION

In our modern society, we are witnesses to global changes that occur everywhere and cover all areas of life. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the necessity to develop and actively implement new ways of working, and at the same time speeded the adoption of digital technologies not only in the workplace but also for studying and even with the aim to communicate. People from all around the world have become more involved in the process of digitalization. Due to such circumstances, when a great number of universities in different countries offered students to attend online lectures, ESL students got an awesome opportunity. They were able to establish contacts with other students – native speakers, who studied similar disciplines and willingly suggested to help deal with some courses placed on different online platforms. It has become obvious that at that moment we have become a big close-knit family. Through new links with different students’ communities, with the advent of free online libraries, ESL students managed to become familiar with some peculiarities of life, culture, and history of different countries. Thus, it has enriched them with both new knowledge and experience. They were able to get their fair share of language practice.

The extensive use of social networks for sharing various information with other people also had a great impact and continues to affect the process of linguistic socialization. Nowadays, the challenge for ESL students is to develop language skills to the level required for interacting with local people and being conscious of differences in cultural background.

Schieffelin and Ochs accessed a key aspect of language socialization as the development of communicative competence, which involves acquiring

proficiency in the use of a given language (or languages) as well as the culturally based knowledge that one needs in order to use language in culturally intelligible, socially appropriate ways [2].

The process of language socialization plays a crucial role in learning a foreign language because it provides ESL students with the opportunity to observe how the language they have learned is used in a range of settings by people for whom it is a native language, and to facilitate the development of the dominant language's thinking for speaking.

Kathleen C. Riley in her work [3] defined the ways and means and models of language socialization. She named three closely related principles, which give us an understanding of how exactly language socialization occurs. "First is the notion that language socialization must be studied as a form of apprenticeship across the lifespan rather than as a form of computer programming that occurs only in early childhood. Secondly, language socialization is understood to be an interactive or dialogic process that nonetheless operates within structural constraints. Third, the language socialization paradigm assumes that language and culture are multiple, heterogeneous, and ever-transforming targets being acquired over a range of variable social and cultural contexts".

Through a wide variety of digital technologies that can support learning and teaching across many contexts, social networks play not the latest role in learning a foreign language. Their use is effective for ESL students because in this way they are able to adopt appropriate forms of sociality and acquire linguistic behavior through the language.

Mazman, S. G., & Usuel, Y. K. explain that "within the context of the network society, SNSs can be considered as spontaneous contexts with some potentialities for informal learning to take root because they are open to participation and learner self-control and allow people to share information and interact with one another in a dynamic environment of flexible interconnections" [1].

Today Social networks are very popular, especially among the young generation because due to digital social networking (DSN) sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Instagram, Pinterest, and many others millions of users worldwide have been united. It is a source of information and communication technology that has changed the way people communicate, interact, and affected human lifestyle and psyche across the world. ESL teachers should encourage students to use them to get more language practice.

A survey was conducted among 48 students of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" with the aim to explore the opinions of ESL students on social networking

capabilities that can improve their language skills and help immerse them in the natural language environment while answering the questionnaire.

The first question of the survey concerned the level of ESL students' satisfaction with their general experience using social networks as an approach to linguistic socialization. Analyzing students' responses, we concluded that the majority (52%) are very satisfied and use different social networks on a daily basis. It seems to be one of the main recourses for them to practice language and be immersed in foreign cultures. (Figure 1).

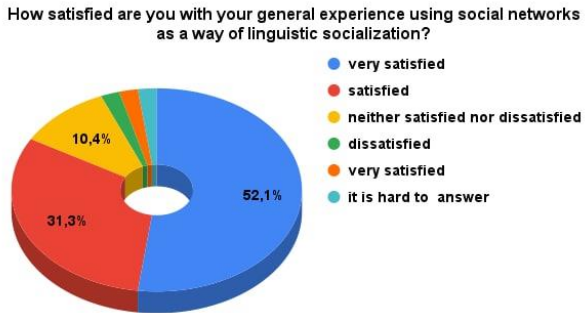


Figure 1

In addition to this, most students (46%) admitted that the use of social networks helps them better communicate with people around the world and establish new relations (Figure 2).

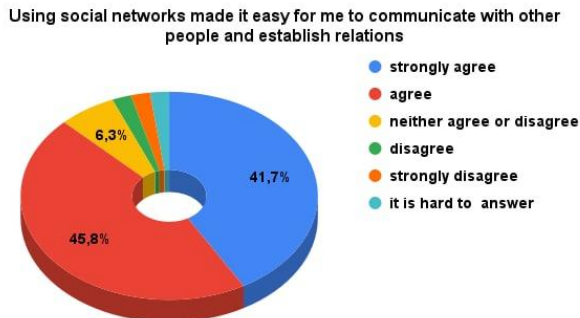


Figure 2

Moreover, only 10% of responders are not sure about the effectiveness of electronic social spaces for the process of acquisition and development of the second language. Taking into account this data, we are sure that social networks are a productive way to foster second language learning and overcome a language barrier. (Figure 3).

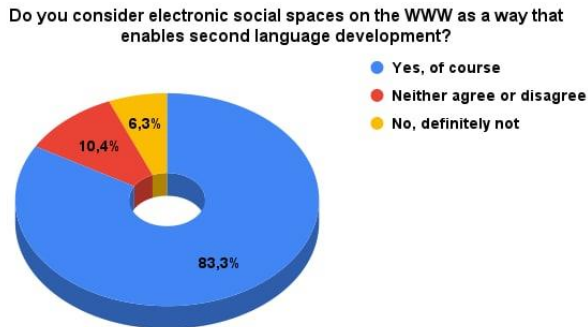


Figure 3

The responses to other questions determined the preferences of ESL students for online contacts (52%) to offline ones while practicing a second language. Probably, they feel more confident if they do not need to have direct contact with native speakers. However, it shows that ESL teachers should encourage students to be active participants in a communicative process. Thus, they can learn the cultural practices, attitudes; ways of thinking and feeling, and behaving that are embodied in the interactional environment in which they are immersed. The majority of students (83%) strongly agree that will recommend to their groupmates or friends to use social networks for further second language acquisition.

The questionnaire results showed that the majority of respondents realized the importance of using social networks to communicate with other people and establish relations.

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