



Gender Differences in Using Social Media in Language and Literature Teaching in Multicultural Context

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i4.1083>

APA Citation: Casipit, D. O., Alamani, E. C., Pagay, J. B., Ravago, J. C., Reyes, M. M. & Tagasa G. C. (2022). Gender Differences in Using Social Media in Language and Literature Teaching in Multicultural Context. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. 4(4).52-65. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i4.1083>

Received:

18/10/2022

Accepted:

07/12/2022

Keywords:

Social media, language, literature, gender differences, and multicultural.

Abstract

This paper presents a systematic review of the literature on gender differences using social media to teach language and literature in multicultural contexts published in EBSCO, ERIC, Google Scholar, and SAGE databases. The articles reviewed were put on a grid to facilitate thematizing the data needed to answer the objectives. The findings of the study revealed a gender divide as regards the use of social media, such as females tend to utilize available social media platforms more than males in the case of teachers and show more positive responses to social media use in the classroom. Generally, social media proved to hone the language skills (e.g., writing, reading) and critical thinking skills of the learners, improve communicative competence, develop vocabulary, promote language learning inside and outside the classroom, increase individual and group motivation to learn and succeed, engage students in critical, creative, and collaborative participation in transforming the textual world into a dynamic online community, create meaningful connections for authentic language situations, and support various types of learning styles. Finally, the paper suggests further research on gender differences in social media usage in gender-sensitive teaching in language and literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of gender in teaching can be extrapolated in the context of gender differences that set binaries and stereotypical conceptions in aspects of pedagogy and its related underpinnings (Kollmayer et al., 2020). Many studies have been conducted relating gender differences to teaching. For one, Hartley and Sutton (2013) in Weis et al. (2013) compared girls and boys as regards motivation, ability, performance, and self-regulation, where they found that the former scored higher than boys. Similarly, Spinath et al. (2010), cited in the same reference, said girls fared at a higher level than boys regarding grades.

Recent studies have angled investigation on gender and social media, such as Karatsoli and Nathanail's (2020) study on the influence of social media on activity planning and travel arrangements of men and women; and Ali et al. (2021) and Alnjadat et al. (2019) social media usage and academic performance.

Social media or social networking sites are undeniably trending and most widely accessed in today's communication which has been correlated not only with gender and academic performance alone but also with language learning like what Laborda and Litzler (2017) opined that the adoption of social networks and Web 2.0 tools for language learning confirmed to be motivating, facilitated collaboration within groups when completing tasks, and made a clear distinction from conventional university language courses, which were frequently centred on the instructor and the syllabus contents. In addition, the students believed that having these tools would help them in their future careers as business professionals. This assertion is confirmed by Mubarak (2016), who emphasized that collaborative learning integrated into social media may aid in improving learning activities and, in turn, lead to the success of learning English as a second language. This goal was to increase students' communication abilities. His research has demonstrated that pupils' learning outcomes were significantly and favourably impacted by utilizing social media.

Social media's role, use, and potential in teaching and learning are measured as advantageous and fascinating. According to Nasta (2019), social network platforms give students and institutions numerous options to enhance teaching strategies. These networks allow for integrating social media plugins that facilitate connection and sharing. Online lessons on YouTube, distance learning courses from other universities through Skype, and a wealth of information shared on social media are all helpful to students. Facebook, Twitter, and blogs have been mainly used for collaborative writing; that is, social media has been seen to facilitate the writing process in collaborative tasks. Further, it allows the students to express ideas and improve literacy (Hughes & Morrison, 2014, Stewart, 2015; Ahmed et al., 2021).

The impact of social media on teaching language and literature can be brought to the forefront, fundamentally, as suggested. Notably, informal language learning via social media or networks offers a valuable supplementary or replacement venue for language practice and use (Stewart, 2015). The use of social media, including Facebook, YouTube, Skype, WhatsApp, Twitter, and blogs, is currently regarded as a common way for students to connect. Teachers are even embracing this trend. Not surprising that there is a growing interest in using social media in classroom teaching (Stewart, 2015).

Young people nowadays are referred to as "digital natives" since they are raised in a society where texting, tweeting, and laptops are commonplace. On average, they spend more than eight hours daily engaging with digital technology.

Thus, a language and literature teacher can use the modern learner's exposure to digital technology for academic profit by making sure that time on tasks on linguistic and literary analysis is increased pleasantly on today's latest gadgets like iPad, cell phones, and laptops which would ultimately result in the enhancement of their overall performance.

The researchers are interested in this study since this takes the view that gender inclusion in language and literature teaching in the new millennium has become a significant undertone and has expanded beyond the borders of the four corners of the classroom.

With the significant function of social media in teaching language and literature, this study intends to situate the context of gender differences and potentials in teaching language

and literature in multicultural contexts, and which among these are most efficacious that can be adapted in language and literature classroom settings in the Philippines and determines the types and uses of social media based on several published research in various databases. Thus, this paper intends to present a literature review to situate social media as a platform for determining gender differences and teaching language and literature.

1.2. Research Questions

Generally, this literature review aimed to determine the gender differences in using social media as a platform for language and literature teaching.

The following questions were targeted in the study:

1. What are the uses of social media in the teaching of:
 - 1.1 language
 - 1.2 literature
2. What are the gender differences in using social media in teaching language and literature?
3. What are the problems encountered, negative attitudes and influences in using social media in learning language and literature?

2. METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review method of scientific papers containing data on gender disparities in the use of social media in language and literature instruction in a multicultural setting resulting in a total of 101 documents published between 2008 to 2020 indexed in different internationally consulted databases. Scientific papers usually contain journal articles or manuscripts that represent original written work of scientific research or study, are peer-reviewed, and are often published in a periodical or journal. They can be cited; thus, they are reliable, easily accessible in libraries and often online, and there are defined techniques for locating a specific article. Moreover, there are citations in them. This indicates that the paper regularly cites earlier works that are pertinent to the topic at hand. A systematic literature review is a sort of secondary study, while the individual studies that make up a systematic review are referred to as main studies (Kitchenham, 2007). Finding, assessing, and analyzing all the research that is pertinent to a certain research question, area of study, or phenomenon of interest can be done using this technique.

This research essentially used exclusion and inclusion criteria in selecting appropriate and qualified research articles for analysis and this current study's primary data. At first, keywords like social media, social networking sites, types of social media, language teaching and learning, teaching literature, multicultural, and gender differences were encoded to look for research articles in various journals published online.

The research articles were then screened using the inclusion and exclusion criteria established for this study, which took into account the parameters of the research kind, outcomes or study findings, language, database, time frame, and structure. After checking that the research articles matched the requirements identified, the quality of the papers was further evaluated based on the criteria for the final papers to be included in the review:

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for the Selection of Scientific Papers

Parameters	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
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Type of Research	Published primary research in peer-reviewed journals and scientific papers	Reviews of books, articles, literary works, and policy documents
Results of the Study	Research articles or scientific papers that addressed the use of social media in teaching language and literature in multicultural contexts	Research articles or scientific papers that did not focus on social media in teaching language and literature in a multicultural context
Language	Research articles or scientific papers that used English as a medium of writing	Research articles or scientific papers that did not make use of English as a medium of writing
Database	EBSCO, ERIC, Google Scholar, and SAGE	Other databases
Time Frame	Research articles or scientific papers on social media in teaching language and literature in multicultural contexts published from 2008 to 2020	Research articles on social media in teaching language and literature in multicultural contexts not published from 2008 to 2020
Structure	Research articles or scientific papers have at least an introduction, methods, results/findings and discussions	Research articles or scientific papers with incomplete structures such as introduction, methods, results/findings and discussions

Then, in-depth, intensive and close reading was employed in evaluating the research articles' content to ensure the selection of the appropriate and needed details that would satisfy the objectives of this study. A repertory grid was utilized to plot the responses to the research questions posted. The data were thematically analyzed and coded according to areas of concern. Also, all the extracted bits of information from all the qualified research articles were consistently, thoroughly cited, and properly referenced since it is the researchers' responsibility to acknowledge all the sources needed in their research paper fully. Lastly, thematic grouping was done to ensure a relevant, coherent, and organized presentation of data which became the researchers' basis in laying out the conclusions and recommendations. Also, this technique was used to locate, categorize, arrange, and examine themes or patterns of meaning in a data set that relates to research objectives (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the diverse literature review that the authors analyzed, varied types and uses of social media in the teaching of language and literature from the different educational and multicultural settings, gender differences and its impact in using social media, problems encountered, negative attitudes and influence perceived by ESL learners in using social media in the teaching and learning of language and literature were identified:

3.1. Uses of Social Media

3.1.1. Teaching Language

a. Improve the language skills of the ESL learners

Most second language learners agree that learning English online with resources like Facebook, email, and computer media improves learning abilities (Derakhshan, 2015). Most of them emphasize the useful effects of social media on writing ability. For instance, they took pleasure in posting on social media (Waragai et al., 2014). To verify the effectiveness of Facebook use in students' writing development, Yu (2014) proposed that researchers test students' English writing skills and attitudes toward English writing before and after Facebook conversation.

Aside from that, social networking sites such as Youtube, Twitter and Instagram have been proven to develop EFL listening and writing, particularly among language learners (Alnujaidi, 2017). Moreover, it has the potential to promote collaborative writing, as supported by Alghasab (2016), who concluded from his study that Wiki is a helpful tool for encouraging peer scaffolding in the process of meaning negotiation and text production, which improves the overall learning process for ESL learners. In fact, using social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, and mobile devices improves English proficiency since these SNSs are accessible from anywhere in the world, allowing users to publish and share their ideas, feelings, news, and articles. Users frequently learn English using SNS because they are typically written in English (Thurairaj et al., 2015).

However, in the study of Bulut (2013), the syntax and punctuation of Turkish are impacted by social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Skype, YouTube, blogs, search engines, electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias, forums, dating sites, and social communication and sharing platforms, which affect Turkish's development in language and writing unity. It was also discovered that the usage of social media reduced reading habits. The latter group performed less in writing assignments than Indonesian students, taught with pictures instead of YouTube videos (Styati, 2016).

b. Enhance Vocabulary

According to Liu et al. (2014), social media has the potential to facilitate and support language learning. The information policies in social media collectively impact the text, ideas, and images posted on social media platforms and personal information such as name, address, and email (Walster, 2017). Indeed, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, WhatsApp, and others greatly impact how English vocabulary develops at the university level. Social media helps English language learners acquire new words and phrases and expand their vocabulary by allowing them to view images of objects through online media in addition to text (Khan et al., 2016).

c. Increase Individual and Group Motivation, Interest, and Enthusiasm to Learn and Succeed

The use of social media, such as Seesaw, leads to the development of lively educational environments where students show increased drive and enthusiasm for studying and work to

master the creation of various products and texts (Willis & Exley, 2018). Furthermore, social media for massive open online courses (MOOCs) provides students with lived experiences, including excitement and interest, innovative methods of instruction and learning, video style preference, learning techniques, learning motivation, and the requirement for direct communication (Cho & Byun, 2017).

Similar to the study of Wong et al. (2017), more learners enhanced their interest in sharing their out-of-school real-life experiences, significantly increasing the number of socially authentic artifacts. Students also showed much interest in cultural knowledge, and providing students with access to these references led to their interest and involvement in the texts to enhance (Wu & Marek, 2013).

On the one hand, social media can be considered a hub or repository of electronic portfolio content that students use in organizing, recording, and integrating program requirements, assignments, and achievements, as well as an easy way to organize information and monitor progress. Shams (2014) clarified that social media is a platform for motivation that gets students involved in group projects, which helps them learn the language more effectively. The students also thought the tools were essential for their future as business professionals. In contrast to the study of Ahmed and Hassan (2017), the students of King Khalid University use social media only for pleasure and recreation. They lack the motivation to utilize social media for language learning and primarily use Arabic due to their ineffective communication in English. Similarly, Malaysian students prefer to be engaged in academic Arabic language practice more frequently than engaging in social media practice (Ismail et al., 2017).

d. Engage Creative, Cooperative and Collaborative Learning and Participation in Transforming the Textual World into Dynamic Online Community

Social media use makes collaborative and cooperative language learning possible when performing and completing tasks and proves motivating, which is different from traditional university language courses and traditional pedagogy (Laborda & Litzler, 2017; Deacon et al., 2017). Mubarak (2016) supported this claim that to enhance students' communication skills, collaborative learning integrated into social media may promote learning activities that culminate in effective and successful English language learning to boost students' communication abilities. His research shows that using social media has a favourable and significant impact on students' knowledge, attitude, and learning attainment. A social media-augmented learning platform's collaborative learning processes are beneficial and conducive to good problem-solving, which results in successful adult language acquisition (Mondahl & Razmerita, 2014).

In fact, international communication, academic vocabulary development, peer cooperation, instructor assistance, opportunities to improve academic English and academic literacy, and peer support are all possible through collaborative academic projects on social networking sites (Dashtestani, 2018).

e. Create Meaningful Interactions and Connections for Authentic Language Situations

Incorporating various online tools to create spontaneous and contextualized writings with others actually encourages students to engage in more active student-teacher task engagement, which advances the level of their writing (Gomez, 2015). Likewise, LingoBee users could provide implicit support to one another in their learning process through their network and ideas of social networking (Legg et al., 2012). Additionally, learners are more eager to use English naturally in the context of the online environment and where they perceive that their social presence is less (Le et al., 2018). Further, social networking sites' sociability, multimodality, and mobility provide an authentic space for negotiating meaning through interaction, applying different language skills, developing intercultural understanding and sociopragmatic awareness, constructing multiple dynamic identities, and becoming content creators and socializing into L2 communities (Solmaz, 2017). Further, Al-Naibi et al. (2018) argue that students have positive opinions of utilizing Edmodo for language learning because it gives them access to a friendly, safe atmosphere where they can communicate with one another and generate ideas, and remark on different writings.

On the other hand, microblogging provides an opportunity for an interactive experience and the social construction of knowledge among pre-service teachers and which students interact with each other and with the content of the books to transform ideas, thoughts, and information into co-constructed knowledge (Dixon et al., 2018).

f. Use Social Media as an English Language Teaching Tool for English as a Foreign Language Classes

Allam and Elyas (2016) express strong convictions about the educational values and advantages of using social media in EFL classes in the Saudi setting. In fact, Instagram promotes learning the language for Arab learners who decline complicated and long information and like simpler and shorter explanations related to the English language (Alghamdi, 2018).

Meanwhile, YouTube and Google+ were preferred by university students from Ecuador and Spain because of their accessibility and flexibility in developing their listening, reading, and comprehension abilities in English (Villafuerte & Romero, 2017).

g. Develop Independent Learning, Self-Direction and Self-Confidence

Being current and self-directed, social media aids second language learners in accelerating their learning. Students with experience have identified innovative ways to use social media to support and connect with other learners and advance their learning (Jones, 2015). Alnujaidi (2017) asserts that it has been demonstrated that using social networking sites like YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram helps people gain confidence. Additionally, Edmodo has been demonstrated to be a useful tool for students to use independently and collectively to promote and grow their self-directed learning (Khodary, 2017). On the other hand, Pimpare and Fast (2008) demonstrated that a blog is a beneficial tool in any professor's toolbox for managing course materials and students' tasks. In addition, ESL students are encouraged to organize their thoughts, engage in discussion, and take more responsibility for their own learning.

h. Promote Metacognitive and Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence

For Balcikanli (2015), social networking effectively promotes metacognitive awareness, specifically reflective practice in teacher education.

Some claim that more cultural competence helps students appreciate literature and increase their willingness to engage in cross-cultural dialogue, while others recognize that the insights students gained from the talks boost their foreign cultural competence (Wu & Marek, 2013). Additionally, ESL students who are co-creating writings in an asynchronous, cross-cultural communication process become conscious of the importance of cultural components in their works (Carrasco, 2018). In using Facebook posts as supplemental learning resources for a French university course in Taiwan, the Taiwanese students develop their reading and writing abilities and their understanding of French culture (Montoneri, 2017).

3.1.2. Teaching Literature

Web-based applications that examined the significance of digital tools were identified in recent studies as being notably ideal for teaching literature.

a. Use as an effective medium in learning literary genre

Abu and Omar (2017) claim that Facebook can be effective in learning novels because the learners can broaden their knowledge of that literary genre and easily grasp its meaning. They pointed out that learning via Facebook helps to develop the students' teamwork skills, create a richer learning environment, and achieve better learning results. While in the study of Bhliwayo (2015), she stated that eight variables were taken into account when using social media to teach advanced English poetry in the Gweru district of Zimbabwe. These were Email, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, teacher's attitude, competence and innovation, and classroom behaviour. She claimed that the attitude and competence of the teacher are major challenges to teach poetry; however, social media could improve the performance of the ESL learners in English poetry.

b. Provide communicative environment and support for promoting the teaching and learning literature and second language

Blogs are created as a communicative tool for teachers and students that encourages participation in group discussions as well as the creation of original works and experiences that they can then impart to others.

The pre-teachers in a children's literature course blogged on a social networking site as a kind of literature response and emphasized the significance of learning the role, social media's use and opportunity for promoting literature for teaching and learning (Hutchison & Wang, 2012). Students' notion of learning literature changed through discussing it in an innovative way that showed in their blogs. Moreover, they mentioned that blogging is a new writing postmodern conception of literature that supports second language teaching and assists students to widen their view in modern literature (Jokinen & Vaarala, 2015).

c. Develop students' motivation and creativity in exploring the realms of poetic and narrative literary text

Twitter has established itself as "an experimental medium through which users explore poetic and narrative content's creative regions, albeit in 140 characters." Simply said, Twitter fiction gives authors the chance to create and share their stories with others without having to spend a fortune on publication, promotion, and advertising (Sharaqi, 2016). Students treat literary text as living and personally and socially relevant artifacts when they use crafting a traditional literary analysis essay, fanfiction practices, and the microblogging tool Twitter embedded in collaborative and multimodal practices (McWilliams et al., 2011). Short poems with rigorous forms, like haiku or tanka, make them suitable for the Twitter platform. Teachers might assign students to follow one or two of these people, pick a favourite poem, and share their selection with their peers. Then, the students must create their poems within a set deadline once the teacher tweets a theme to the class, and they can vote on the best ones utilizing the Twitter or a Twitter polling tool (Mork, 2009).

Twitter furthermore demonstrated to be a fun and motivating method of teaching literature in the intermediate foreign language classroom (Steckenbiller, 2016).

3.2. Gender differences in using social media in the teaching of language and literature

Various studies reveal a gender divide in the use of social media as a learning tool. In fact, surveying 2,605 university students, Mohoriy et al. (2015) found that females use social media for their academic endeavors more than male students. However, when it comes to sharing and creating academic material with colleagues and acquaintances, males are more "generous" than females (Torun, 2020).

On the other hand, the research conducted by Alqarni and Alqarni (2020) reports the findings of an investigation regarding the utilization of social media learning tools to improve instruction in the English language. In this study, 18 English language professors from a Saudi Arabian institution participated in interviews for the research. According to the findings, the majority of the respondents support the application of social media technology in English language instruction; however, female instructors were more inclined than male instructors to employ social media learning tools.

Meanwhile, the study of Kasuma (2017) explored the perception of college students in using Facebook to learn English. The participants of this research include 622 university students and the data was gathered through a survey. The findings of this study revealed that the students' "engagement" with Facebook provides an avenue for them to learn the English language. It also revealed that in terms of gender differences, "female students show more positive perceptions than males" (189) in terms of learning the English language (i.e., vocabulary and sentence structure) through their Facebook engagement. However, in Saudi university context, YouTube website was the most commonly used social networking site by male students while majority of female students did not use any social networking sites or social media for learning English (AlShoaibi & Shukri, 2017).

Although both males and females have a positive attitude toward using social media in

teaching, female instructors and students were more likely to utilize social media to teach or learn (Alzamil, 2020; Alqarni & Alqarni, 2020; Kasuma, 2017; Mahdi & Al-Dera, 2013).

4. CONCLUSION

Social media has become essential in today's education. The innovation and advancement of social media/networking sites have boosted the further application of technology in our generation today. From the varied research conducted, the most notable social media types used in language and literature teaching and learning (formal/informal) are Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. These social media and other types (e.g., YouTube, WhatsApp, Skype, etc.) have proven to be beneficial in language learning and understanding of the literary text as they are more appealing and stimulating for learners to employ the target language, and reduce learners' anxiety and authority of the teacher. Indeed, social media has proven to help hone the language skills (e.g., writing, reading) and critical thinking skills of the learner, improving communicative competence, developing vocabulary, promoting language learning both within and outside of the classroom, increasing individual and group motivation to learn and succeed, engaging critical, creative and collaborative participation in transforming the textual world into a dynamic online community, creating meaningful connections for authentic language situations, supporting various types of learning styles, and promoting language acquisition to a great extent. Therefore, social media must be employed in the classroom to teach language and literature in a multicultural milieu and not merely used for entertainment or means of communication. The varied types of social media may also be adapted in a multicultural language and literature classroom settings in the Philippines since most researchers have proven the efficacy and efficiency of these social media when implemented in teaching language and literature in a multicultural context. Moreover, since females are more perceptive and receptive on the use of social media, language teachers can explore the use of another application that will increase the inclination of male students to social media.

4.1.Recommendations

Based on the discussion and findings of this study, recommendations are stipulated as follows:

1. Accessing social media must be a welcome idea in the classroom. Teachers can encourage students to be engaging and participative by way of maximizing social media mileage for learning purposes.
2. Language and literature teachers can integrate social media in language and literature classes and create authentic communication, build social relationships, and promote a dynamic teaching-learning process.
3. School administrators must support the use of social media and relevant technology in the classroom. Considerations can be given to factors such as age, motivation, teaching context, professional ranking, among others that influence teachers to include social media as an academic tool.

4. The government through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should provide educational software and programs in academic institutions that include social media platforms to enhance the teaching and learning process.
5. Teachers' competence, attitudes, and literacy in using technologies and social media should be strengthened to promote efficacy and efficiency in teaching language and literature through social media platforms.
6. Findings of this study can serve as an aid for English teachers to empower their learners in their language skills and linguistic and literary competence.
7. Further research needs to be carried out in the area of modern tools and techniques, including the factors that develop other learning skills such as listening via social networks.
8. Gender statistics and profiling of social media users in the context of teaching and learning can be a promising endeavor in view that research should be working towards gender equality.

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