

Facebook as a Platform for Using English Language Skills among the Indian Youth

Sharda Acharya & Seemita Mohanty

Abstract

Today Facebook undoubtedly is one of the preferred Social Networking Site (SNS) platforms used by millions of people worldwide. Facebook users often use its unique creative applications and in the process also make use of smart abbreviations and ingenious expressions for everyday interactions. It is quite apparent that in such type of electronic communication and user-oriented media it is imperative to understand casual written English, which often does not conform to the rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. It is generally being observed that repeated Facebook usage has the potential of providing the user new expressions of language through its various available features. Within the framework of such observations, this paper discusses the impact of Facebook on English language use of the youth in India. The study employed a survey design among young professionals, home-makers and graduate students, to fulfil the objectives. The results revealed a few surprising particulars. The key findings show that: i. as perceived by the youngsters themselves, by 'facebooking' there is mark deterioration in their English writing skills, ii. not many changes are seen in their day-to-day English language use despite their remaining abreast of the latest colloquial and casual English, and iii. Facebook is used by young people mainly for recreation purpose and any improvement that is seen in their English language skills is purely incidental.

Keywords: Social networking sites; Facebook; Casual English; Youth; Language learning

Introduction

For today's educated young population, Social Networking Sites (SNSs) form an integral part of their daily life. Kim et al. (2010) have explained social networking sites to be the websites that allow people to stay connected with other people in online communities. And that 'community' may be a network of offline friends, online acquaintances, etc. Cyberculture is woven onto their everyday repertoire of communication to such an extent

that even when they function in the real world they use the lingo that is used in the virtual world. These e-kids ('Blogger gangs' a worrying sign for e-kids in the real world, 2009), digital natives or netizens, are growing up with advanced technology, such as cell phones, i Pods, computers, internet, instant messaging, texting, social networking sites, computer and console video games and multimedia, integrated into their lives. Among the social networking sites, Facebook (FB) is the best social networking site at

present and the second most visited site in the world after Google (Fitzgerald, 2012). Facebook came into existence with Harvard University students Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes, launching a website called *thefacebook.com* to help students remain in touch, share photos and meet new people. Cassidy and Stutzman (2006) have said that FB has become the most popular SNS among college students and especially among young people in western countries (Godwin-Jones, 2010). It is joined as a recreational indulgence which is fun, late-night activity and a way to satisfy occasional boredom (Cohen, 2008). The question that arises here is if something that was conceived as a 'recreational indulgence' can be used for educational purposes.

Aydin (2012) has claimed that within educational research, FB is quickly emerging as a new educational environment although how it could be more efficiently used remains unanswered. Farkas (2007) says that SNSs allow people to communicate and build community online, facilitate syndication by sharing and reusing, capitalise others' knowledge and help learn easily. Ellison et al. (2007) have considered FB as a research context in order to determine whether offline social capital can be generated by online tools. Kim et al. (2010) have summed that SNSs serve as a new means for people to communicate with others, new source of collective knowledge other than the internet where one can get answers to essential questions (e.g. Any

recommendation for the best hotel in the town?), new source of entertainment, online directories of people and other miscellaneous usages. Thus, what is observed here is that most of the previous studies find FB to be useful, beyond the entertainment factor. In India too, young people, just like their counterparts in other parts of the world, treat FB as a virtual *adda* (a place for hanging-out with friends), where both entertainment and utility go hand in hand.

Today in India English holds primacy as a language of communication among the educated elite and as a language that can open up opportunities for upward social mobility in life. But it is widely seen that for young people it is more of *Hinglish*, *Bonglish*, and *Tamlish* etc. that is more in use during informal conversation than pure Queen's English. Dabrowska (2012) has elaborately stated the indigenised form of this variety of English where words are mostly taken from languages like Hindi/Bengali/Tamil etc., for e.g. *lakh*, *yaar*, *achcha*, etc. and used widely with conventional English words. He has also given a range of deviations that Indian FB users follow while communicating in English, for example, code-switching, culture-specific vocabulary ('*mashallah*, he has played well'), honorific and forms of address ('happy birthday *bhaiya*, *sirji*'), etc. Xu et al. (2012) say that Social Networking Sites usage patterns can be characterized by five main activities - posting, viewing, sharing, replying and playing, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Activities on Facebook

Activity	Description
Posting	Publishing information like photos or photo albums, videos, events, or just random thoughts using the enabling tools offered by SNS
Viewing	Browsing others' published information or profiles
Sharing	Sharing amusing, inspiring or valuable sources (posted by one person) with other SNS friends
Replying	Responding to others' comments, posted or shared pictures, videos and status
Playing	Playing social games embedded in SNS
All the activities mentioned above require the user to exercise basic language skills that could lead to passive language learning, without the user's active involvement in the learning process.	

Theoretical premise and research overview

The Big-Five Theory/Five-Factor Model (Goldberg, 1990) is a model that identifies the five most basic traits of personality, namely, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The beauty of the model lies

in the fact that almost any personality trait that we name is related to one of these five factors (Coon & Mitterer, 2007). Therefore, knowing where a person stands on the 'Big Five' personality factors would help us in understanding, and thereby predicting his or her behaviour (Arthur & Doverspike, 2001). In this particular study, however, the concern is not on a personality but in incorporating these personality traits into a group of people towards assessing their behaviour and motivation while using FB. Openness to experience is a personality factor associated with trying out new methods of communication, or using an SNS to seek out new and novel experiences (Butt & Phillips, 2008). This shows that individuals scoring high on this factor spend more time on FB or similar sites. Conscientiousness reflects the degree to which an individual is organized, diligent and scrupulous; therefore, those high on it are more likely to avoid CMC tools which may lead them to procrastination or distraction from their daily tasks (Butt & Phillips, 2008; Swickert et al., 2002). People who are low in extraversion, the quality that reflects sociability and experience of positive emotions, are more inclined towards using technology such as an SNS to satiate their communicative needs (Amichai-Hamburger et. al., 2002). People who have the tendency to be trusting, sympathetic and co-operative may be considered to have the fourth trait, agreeableness. A low score on agreeableness indicates that they lack social graces that make their company desirable. This leads to less offline friendships and hence less friends to add in SNSs (Landers & Lounsbury, 2006).

Butt and Phillips (2008, as cited in Ross et al., 2009) have suggested that, to avoid loneliness, people high on neuroticism use the internet on a much higher scale as compared to normal individuals.

Typical FB users can be categorised under one of the five dimensional traits of personality in accordance to the Big-Five Theory/Five-Factor Model. Thus, the Big Five Theory implicates that people who use SNSs share the above mentioned traits of personalities which determines their frequency of 'facebooking'. This definitely helps us to understand the personality traits that motivate individuals to spend more number of hours on FB. The assumption here is that people who spend more time on SNSs are exposed more to the applications and features of such sites, where English is the general lingua franca. Krashen (2004) is of the view that Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) 'may be the most powerful educational tool in language education'. It serves to increase literacy and to develop vocabulary, which subsequently lead to better writing skills. Here, the reader is under no compulsion to develop language skills while reading a text, rather involuntary learning happens while under self-supervision she is engaged in a pleasurable task. Communicating on SNSs can be categorised as a form of FVR, as the perceived outcome is similar to that of reading comics or light romances. As observed by Wu (2010), Krashen's Input Hypothesis, developed from an earlier theory, the Monitor Model, argues that language learners can develop their second language knowledge in two different ways: acquisition and learning. Acquisition refers to acquiring the language through

exposure which occurs subconsciously by participating in some natural communication. Here, we see natural communication is taking place by facebooking or by using similar such sites.

Blankenship (2011) has described the impacts of social media on higher education in the form of interconnected "literacies", which includes attention, participation, collaboration, network awareness and critical consumption. Along with improving all the above mentioned literacies, we also intend to observe the subtle as well as the most apparent consuetude by which the English language is being affected through 'facebooking'. As students spend significant period of time using FB, it definitely makes sense to study its influence on their English language skills. The scope of communicating through a language occurs while 'posting', 'sharing' and 'replying.' On the other hand, 'viewing and playing games' keeps users at the receiving end. In all these activities we come across varied range of expressions of communication, that involves both productive and receptive skills, the basic skills of any language that aid the process of new language learning. As is well known, learners generally 'begin with receptive understanding of new items and then later move on to productive use.' (www.teachingenglish.org.uk › ... › Teaching knowledge database)

Werry (1996) says that communicators have developed short cuts for expressing words, phrases, and emotions as well as textual and graphical pragmatic devices. And Varnhagen et al. (2009) have

remarked that these short cuts and pragmatic devices have become so ubiquitous in electronic communication that they are being collected in dictionaries (e.g., Jansen, 2003; Shoeman & Shoeman, 2007; <http://www.netlingo.com>; <http://www.urbandictionary.com>). They might have gained popularity because typing complete expressions is a slower process and more error prone than speaking, as suggested by Herring (1999, 2003). Varnhagen et al. (2009) have cited that, though researchers, teachers, media and parents consider incorrect language deviations to be detrimental and improper, (e.g., <http://www.oxfordlearning.com/letstalk/texting-vs-writing-the-problem-with-instant-messag/>; Lee, 2002); some researchers (e.g., Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Merchant, 2001; Spatafora, 2008; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2006) suggest that this phenomenon simply represents contemporary slang, a process in the evolution of the English language. To add to it, Sternberg, Kaplan, & Borck (2007) say that this new language may benefit students in terms of encouraging creativity in written expression and increasing literacy. Table 2 gives a range of instances on the same.

Table 2: Shortcuts

Authors	Instances
Clark & Araki (2011)	Abbreviations (Nite, sayin, gr8, lol, iirc, etc), Emoticons(<3)
Varnhagen et al. (2009)	Word Combination (Wanna, Gonna), Shortcuts (U, 2day, etc.)

Crystal (2006)	Abbreviated words (<g>, <vbg>, <gd&r> etc.), Compound words (M o u s e c l i c k , mousepad), Prefixes (@-Home, V-chat), Blends (etailing, bugzilla, infonet, etc), Bicapitalization (ScienceDirect, AltaVista, etc.) and many others.
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The question that arises here is, 'with this sizable internet language corpus, is English language and learning getting affected?' Crystal (2006) talks of language development to be of two kinds; first that affects the nature of language use within an individual speech community and the second that gives rise to different languages altogether. In addition to the internet-spawned neologisms which are widely learnt and used by the netizens, interestingly there is a scope to learn the standardised language even through social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace.

According to Krashen (1988), language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drills. It requires meaningful interactions in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low

anxiety situations, containing messages that learners really want to hear. Connecting to other English learners by joining groups and pages like *The English Guru*, *Livemocha*, etc., posting status messages on a myriad of topics, captioning against photos, gaming, passing memes, etc., open the gateway of access to the variegated nuances of English language skills.

Thus, we see that though a number of studies have been conducted taking into account FB and its features and applications for language learning in the worldwide context, no significant study has been made to explore the possibility of language enhancement through the use of Facebook in the Indian context.

Present study

In India too, a majority of the young people have accounts in Facebook.com. Definitely it has arrested their attention for being entertaining and for enhancing connectivity with people round the globe. Taking into account the general features of FB, the objectives of the study were:

- 1) To probe the use of language corrective resources such as dictionary, thesaurus, online search engines, etc. by young people while 'facebooking', and
- 2) To examine the changes if any, as perceived by them, in their language use, after 'facebooking.'

Methodology

Sample

The study consisted of 111 respondents sourced from various parts of the country. However, their responses were screened on the basis of completeness, rational scoring and adherence to scale, and finally 105 responses (94.59%) were considered for further analysis. Amongst the 105 respondents, 54 (51.42%) were male and 51 (48.57%) were female, with their average age being 26.49 years. Around 51% of the respondents were students, 38% were freshly employed in service, 5% in business and 6% of them were home-makers. Out of the 105 respondents, 27 (25.71%) were married and 78 (74.28%) were unmarried. All the respondents were selected through purposive non-random sampling technique. They were graduate students, freshly employed professionals and young home-makers from different parts of the country accessed personally, and through emails.

Survey instrument

A questionnaire of English Language Use in Facebook was developed by the researchers themselves as given in Appendix 1. It assessed the impact of Facebook on English language use of the youth in India. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items rated on a 4-point Likert type rating scale i.e. always, occasionally, rare and never. The two items, 17 and 20 in this scale were negatively phrased. Hence, their scoring was done in the reverse order. The survey instrument was sent to a carefully

selected sample of experts on statistical techniques and they all reported back with the judgement that the face-validity of the questionnaire was satisfactory for the study at hand.

Data collection

The respondents were requested to respond to the questionnaire by indicating their level of perception for each item on the four-point Likert type scale. Data was collected individually from each respondent of the sample. Before administering the questionnaire, the investigators personally met some of the subjects and built a good rapport with them. They were then asked to respond to the questionnaire honestly and the rest were asked to respond by sending emails. The survey was conducted during December 2012.

Data analysis

Different types of statistical techniques are available which can be sorted out for statistical treatment, keeping in view the nature and objectives of the research problem. Factor analysis was found to be the best suited statistical technique for analysing the data in the study. It is because the construct validity of a questionnaire can be tested with factor analysis (Bornstedt, 1977; Ratray & Jones, 2007). If a questionnaire has construct validity, all items together represent the underlying construct well. Therefore, one's total score on the twenty items in the questionnaire adequately represents whether the user's language skills are improving/deteriorating with the use of facebook.

Factor analysis

The useful responses were tested to examine the validity and reliability of the scale to obtain a quantitative and statistically proven identification of the responses. A factor analysis of responses was performed using SPSS 18.0. The factor analysis used the principal component extraction method followed by varimax rotation. In the first application, the number of variables was reduced from 20 to 19 for low score. Item 17 representing "I feel inadequate when I see friends using better English on Facebook" was dropped for further analysis as it got loaded less than 0.5. In the second application, these 19 variables were classified under 6 dimensions based on their factor-loading scores (Appendix 2). Item 17 that failed to get loaded more than 0.5 (threshold) was not considered for further analysis. The percentage of total variance explained was found to be 64.772%, which is an acceptable value for the principal component varimax rotated factor-loading procedure (Johnson and Wichern, 2002). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the scale. The value of alpha for all dimensions was 0.812, which was well above the acceptable value of 0.70 for demonstrating internal consistency of the established scale (Nunnally, 1988). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO > 0.6) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.05$) statistics were used to test empirically whether the data were likely to factor well (Bikker and Thompson, 2006; Kaiser, 1974). The value of KMO was found to be 0.804; hence it was concluded that the matrix did not suffer from multicollinearity or singularity. The

result of Bartlett’s test of sphericity showed that it was highly significant (sig. = 0.000), which indicated that the factor analysis was correct and suitable for testing multidimensionality (Othman and Owen, 2001). Therefore, the statistical tests showed that the dimensions of instruments were likely to factor well and the questionnaire was multidimensional.

The instrument consisted of 19 variables that were classified under 6 dimensions, namely, Learning new English expressions and words; Dictionary use; Ability to understand and use social

media acronyms and abbreviations; Identifying errors in writing; Round the clock login and English Medium of communication (Table 3). Table 4 shows the percentage of variation explained by factor analysis with varimax rotation. Learning new English expressions and words happens to be the most important factor whereas English medium of communication is the least important factor. Dictionary use, ability to understand and use social media acronyms and abbreviations, identifying errors in writing, and round the clock FB login are arranged sequentially as per their significance.

Table 3: Dimensions of facebook impact on English language of Indian youth

Factor (Dimensions)	Variable	Variable No.
Learning new English expressions and words	I take note of new stylish expressions of communication on Facebook for future use.	V5
	Along with entertainment I learn new words simultaneously, while playing games in Facebook.	V 10
	I ‘share’ quotations/proverbs from friends’ wall which I refer back later on for use in communication.	V 11
	I can now use many new English words in my day to day life that I learnt after using Facebook.	V 13
	I browse certain pages, being a member of one /some groups in Facebook that teach good usage of the English language.	V 14
	I try to write good English because it can impress friends on Facebook.	V 16
	I browse certain links as I am a member of one/some Facebook communities which share latest reviews and recommendations regarding books. (E.g. English novels, classics, non-fiction, etc.)	V 18
	My English language skills are improving by participating in Facebook.	V 19
Dictionary Use	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing status updates in Facebook.	V4
	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing comments on friends’ posts on Facebook.	V6
	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing messages to friends on Facebook.	V 12
	I feel inadequate when I see friends using better English on Facebook.	V 17
Ability to understand and use social media acronyms and abbreviations	I can identify and use most of the abbreviations used in the site. (E.g. lol, rofl, btw, brb, etc.)	V7
	I prefer using stylish abbreviations rather than correct English, because it’s cool. (E.g. thx for thanks, plz for please)	V8
	I often use a portmanteau of the words from Hindi and English to get my ideas communicated. (E.g. Brunch= Breakfast+Lunch, Chillax=Chill+Relax)	V 15
Identifying errors in writing	I take care that I don’t commit any grammatical, spelling or semantic error when I post a status, comment, message or chat on Facebook.	V3
	My English language skills are deteriorating by participating in Facebook.	V 20
Round the clock FB login	I am always online on Facebook.	V1
English Medium of Communication	My language on Facebook is English.	V2
	I use a thesaurus to use synonyms of the commonly used words.	V9

Table 4: Percentage of variation explained by factor analysis and their order of significance

Dimensions	Percentage of commonality variance explained	Ranking of factors arranged sequentially
Learning new English expressions and words	19.819	1
Dictionary Use	14.389	2
Ability to understand social media acronyms and abbreviations	9.531	3
Identifying errors in writing	8.152	4
Round the clock login	6.651	5
English Medium of Communication	6.231	6

Average scoring value for each of the items

The maximum score that any item could take was 04 and the minimum score was 01. Figure 1 below shows the mean score for the responses of each of the items in the questionnaire, taken from the 105 respondents.

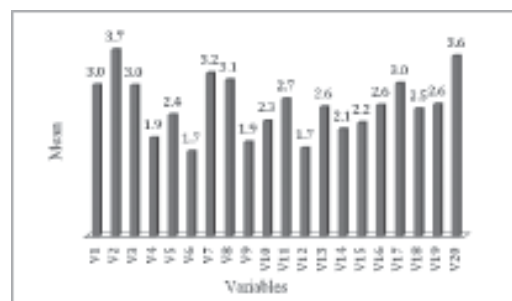


Fig 1: Mean score of each of the variables in the questionnaire

Results and discussion

First, we discuss the results in relation to both objectives 1 (To probe the use of language corrective resources such as dictionary, thesaurus, online search engines, etc. by young people while

'facebooking.') and 2 (To examine the changes if any, as perceived by them, in their language use, after 'facebooking'). Then we discuss the results with regard to the items related to each objective separately.

V1 (I am always online on FB) and V2 (My language on FB is English) are variables significant for both the research objectives. The former involves the implication of Krashen's FVR theory. The more one is exposed to the resource; there is more possibility of its effect on language use. And the latter refers to the language of communication, i.e. predominantly English, which implies that the user is getting exposed to the language on a regular basis.

Discussion on items corresponding to objective 1

V4 (I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing status updates on FB) and V9 (I use a thesaurus to use synonyms of the commonly used words) have the same score i.e. 1.9 which is lower than 50% of the mean score; and

V6 (I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing comments on friends' posts on FB) and V12 (I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing messages to friends on FB) have the same low score i.e. 1.7. The implication of these scores is that dictionary and thesaurus use is low in popularity among the youth.

V14 (I browse certain pages, being a member of one / some groups on FB that teach good usage of the English language) has a low score of 2.1. This shows that learning English through different FB pages or sites is less interesting for the youth than learning from books or any other similar sources.

V18 (I browse certain links as I am a member of one/some FB communities which share latest reviews and recommendations regarding books (E.g. English novels, classics, non-fiction, etc) scored 2.5 which is slightly more than 50%. It shows that the youth are not much interested to know about books and their citations from unconventional sites. Rather they probably prefer Google books or other such authentic sources.

V19 (My English language skills are improving by participating on FB) score is 2.6 which is more than 50% of the mean score. This means that consciously or subconsciously learning of the language skills are taking place though any marked improvement is yet to be ascertained.

Discussion on items corresponding to objective 2

V3 (I take care that I don't commit any grammatical, spelling or semantic error

when I post a status, comment, message or chat on FB) has its mean score 3.0 which is 75% of the total score. This can be interpreted as that the young people realise the importance of error-free language structure while writing. They understand the difference between correct and incorrect expressions of the Standard English.

V5 (I take note of new stylish expressions of communication on FB for future use) has 2.4 score. This shows that they care to remember and note down the new and seemingly stylish, expressions in English for future use, even though as is generally seen, some of the expressions could be potentially incorrect.

V7 (I can identify and use most of the abbreviations used in the site (e.g. lol, rofl, btw, brb, etc.) and V8 (I prefer using stylish abbreviations rather than correct English, because it's cool (E.g. thx for thanks, plz for please)) have the scores 3.2 and 3.1 respectively. This explains that the youth are considerably using short-cuts, abbreviations, acronyms, etc. to express their ideas. Perhaps this also is a way to sound cool and fashionable and be in tune with the present times. So, they deliberately use them despite the fact that these expressions are incorrect deviations of English words.

V10 (Along with entertainment I learn new words simultaneously, while playing games in FB) has a score of 2.3. Names of different animal/bird species are known, certain action words are seen for the first time. In this way gaming may be used as a language learning device. But at the same time it is worthwhile to

note here that these words and phrases are probably not much used in conversational English in India.

V11 (I 'share' quotations/proverbs from friends' wall which I refer back later on for use in communication) has a score 2.7 which shows that the users care to remember quotes and proverbial expressions to be used in their FB communication.

V13 (I can now use many new English words in my day to day life that I learnt after using FB) has a score of 2.6. This shows that the respondents are of the opinion that using FB has assisted them in increasing their existing vocabulary repository. However, this repository might include both correct and incorrect expressions from the English language, in terms of spelling or semantics.

V15 (I often use a portmanteau of the words from Hindi and English to get my ideas communicated (E.g. Brunch=Breakfast+Lunch, Chillax=Chill+Relax)) and V16 (I try to write good English because it can impress friends on FB) have scores 2.2 and 2.6 respectively. This means they might not have a huge stock of portmanteau words, however more than 50% of the people use them. 'Good English' might mean to them both lexically correct English as well as casual English, which might be marked by incorrectness, but sound cool and trendy.

The last item V20 (My English language skills are deteriorating by participating in FB) has 3.6 score which is the highest of all. The scoring of this dimension is apparently in contradiction to some of

the preceding dimensions given in the questionnaire. The interpretation could be that the users are perfectly aware of the fact that the kind of sentence structures, including grammar, spellings and shortcuts that they frequently use while facebooking are not Standard English. Therefore, adopting these communication methods is just a convenient way of communicating that saves time and energy.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that FB is used by young people mainly for recreation and any improvement that is perceived in their English language skills is purely incidental. FB could be considered basically to be just another form of entertainment instead of being called educational. Contrary to generally held notions, language corrective resources like dictionary and thesaurus are not widely in use while 'facebooking'. Not many changes are also seen in their day-to-day English language use despite their remaining well-informed of the latest colloquial and casual English. Yet, at the same time, vocabulary development is one area where marked improvement is being perceived among the young users of FB. In addition, the results also indicate that young people possibly prefer books and other English as a Foreign Language/ English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) sites on the internet to improve their communication skills in English. One marked contradiction that was observed in the results was the general perception among the young FB users of the deterioration in their language use after

using FB for social networking. In continuation to the interpretation given above we can conclude that FB is a popular social networking medium of the time, with people more interested in connecting to friends and acquaintances and knowing and sharing what's happening in their lives. Communicating with friends and family becomes the key and improving English language skills takes the back stage. Rather, using casual English with no guidelines of accuracy becomes the agenda. This is even perceived to be boosting the style quotient of the users and thence the popularity of the site. Hence, for the Indian youth, using fancy sounding words while 'facebooking' could just be a form of exhibiting their style statement while making use of the new expressions in the English language, rather than anything related to improving their language skills. Yet at the same time a high score for Item 3 (I take care that I don't commit any grammatical, spelling or semantic error when I post a status, comment, message or chat on FB), indicates that no matter how much they wish to appear 'cool', somewhere or other their school training on grammar and spelling lies inherent within their writing and speaking.

Thus, we see that the present study conforms to the earlier study (Lomicka, 2012) which observes that FB offers numerous technological applications supporting a varied range of features and practices integrating several modes of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) such as self-presentation, and one-to-one or one-to-many written exchanges. In addition, CMC has also been found to have the following

advantages over traditional mediums; it amplifies students' attention to linguistic form (Warschauer, 1997), increases written L2 production (Kern, 1995), and provides a less stressful environment for L2 practice (Chun, 1994) and a more equitable and non-threatening forum for L2 discussions (Warschauer, 1996, 1997). The present study also validates these views, in the context of Indian youth and FB.

To conclude, we can say that even though the results do not explicitly reveal any distinct advantages of FB for the English teachers, it still has the potential to be used for devising new methods and strategies whereby they can add it as a teaching/learning tool in the language classroom. Some of the methods that can be adopted by English language teachers towards practicing the basic language skills are the following:

1. Good quality status updates by people on Facebook can be used as tools for further discussion among students.
2. Students may be given the challenging task of coming up with better thoughts and ideas on the topics concerned.
3. Links such as Book Riots, Word Porn, etc. may be sent to students, and encouraged to learn five new words and explain those in the classroom. This could be a fun-filled activity.
4. Downloading pictures/quotes etc. to be produced in the classroom to encourage students to write their own interpretations of the pictures/quotations etc.

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Questionnaire of English language use in facebook

No.	Statements	Ratings and scores			
1.	I am always online on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
2.	My language on Facebook is English.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
3.	I take care that I don't commit any grammatical, spelling or semantic error when I post a status, comment, message or chat on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
4.	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing status updates on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
5.	I take note of new stylish expressions of communication on Facebook for future use.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
6.	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing comments on friends' posts on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
7.	I can identify and use most of the abbreviations used in the site. (E.g. lol, rofl, btw, brb, etc.)	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
8.	I prefer using stylish abbreviations rather than correct English, because it's cool. (E.g. thx for thanks, plz for please)	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
9.	I use a thesaurus to use synonyms of the commonly used words.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
10.	Along with entertainment I learn new words simultaneously, while playing games on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
11.	I 'share' quotations/proverbs from friends' wall which I refer back later on for use in communication.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
12.	I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing messages to friends on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
13.	I can now use many new English words in my day to day life that I learnt after using Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
14.	I browse certain pages, being a member of one /some groups on Facebook that teach good usage of the English language.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
15.	I often use a portmanteau of the words from Hindi and English to get my ideas communicated. (E.g. Brunch=Breakfast+Lunch, Chillax=Chill+Relax)	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
16.	I try to write good English because it can impress friends on Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
17.	I feel inadequate when I see friends using better English on Facebook.	Never(1)	Rarely(2)	Occasionally(3)	Always(4)
18.	I browse certain links as I am a member of one/some Facebook communities which share latest reviews and recommendations regarding books. (E.g. English novels, classics, non-fiction, etc.)	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
19.	My English language skills are improving by participating in Facebook.	Always(4)	Occasionally(3)	Rarely(2)	Never(1)
20.	My English language skills are deteriorating by participating in Facebook.	Never(1)	Rarely(2)	Occasionally(3)	Always(4)

APPENDIX 2

Factor-loading scores

Variables	Var. no.	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
I take note of new stylish expressions of communication on Facebook for future use.	V5	0.552					
Along with entertainment I have learnt new words simultaneously, while playing games on Facebook.	V10	0.609					
I 'share' quotations/proverbs from friends' wall which I refer back later on for use in communication.	V11	0.598					
I can now use many new English words in my day to day life that I learnt after using Facebook.	V13	0.766					
I browse certain pages, being a member of one /some groups in Facebook that teach good usage of the English language.	V14	0.794					
I try to write good English because it can impress friends.	V16	0.575					
I browse certain links as I am a member of one/some Facebook communities which share latest reviews and recommendations regarding books. (E.g. English novels, classics, non-fiction, etc.)	V18	0.678					
My English language skills are improving by participating in Facebook.	V19	0.74					
I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing status updates on Facebook.	V4		0.85				
I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing comments on friends' posts on Facebook.	V6		0.833				
I refer to a dictionary to use good vocabulary while writing messages to friends on Facebook.	V12		0.698				
I can identify and use most of the abbreviations used in the site. (E.g. lol, rofl, btw, brb, etc.)	V7			0.752			
I prefer using stylish abbreviations rather than correct English, because it's cool. (E.g. thx for thanks, plz for please)	V8			0.505			
I often use a portmanteau of the words from Hindi and English to get my ideas communicated. (E.g. Brunch= Breakfast+Lunch, Chillax=Chill+Relax)	V15			0.82			
I take care that I don't commit any grammatical, spelling or semantic error when I post a status, comment, message or chat on Facebook.	V3				0.656		
My English language skills are deteriorating by participating in Facebook.	V20				0.668		
I am always online on Facebook.	V1					0.824	
My language on Facebook is English.	V2						0.827
I use a thesaurus to use synonyms of the commonly used words.	V9						0.587