

# MEDIA CONSUMING BEHAVIORS AND PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH FACEBOOK AS A SECONDARY TEACHING/LEARNING RESOURCE FOR UNIVERSITY ENGLISH CURRICULUM

ผู้วิจัย

Chalermphong Tham-ngarn<sup>1</sup>

nong\_rmutl57@yahoo.co.th

## ABSTRACT

A rapidly growing body of research has accompanied the gradual rise of Facebook as a web tool on an educational sector. To address this issue, the researcher has conducted a study in order to find out whether this web tool is able to develop the teaching and learning process in accordance with students' learning strategies in the present time. Therefore, this research focuses on the relationship between the media consuming behaviors and the perspectives towards learning English through Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource for university English curriculum. The research participants were first year students at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai who enrolled in English for Communication course in the second semester of academic year 2014. There were a total of 80 student participants from 2 different sections. The research instrument was a questionnaire on media consuming behaviors and perspectives towards learning English through Facebook.

The research results revealed that a number of online material accessed online through smart phones has been increasing steadily. It also showed that the majority of participants surfed the Internet on daily basis for mainly social networks for approximately 4-6 hours between the hours of 5:00

PM -12:00 PM, while Facebook being the most popular of all social networks. Moreover, the research participants were in agreement that Facebook is the easiest web tool to access, and that its daily use helps to stimulate the learners' enthusiasm to learn and also increases the students' confidence in using English in public. In short, there is a direct correlation between the learners' media consuming behaviors and their perspectives towards learning English significantly through the use of Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource.

**Keywords :** Facebook, Media consuming behaviors, perspectives, learning English, a secondary teaching/learning resource

## Introduction

*A picture of students bowing their heads down and concentrating at the screens of their smartphones is commonly seen in school every day. The questions occur in mind "Are they doing their homework?" Or "Are they doing business?" The answers for all are "No", they are not doing any homework or doing business, on the contrary, they are surfing the Internet for fun instead of utilizing. So, that brings about the idea of this study.*

We live today in an increasingly hyper-interconnected world, a global society of communicative

<sup>1</sup> Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai

interaction and exchange that stimulates profound cultural transformations and realignments, a society largely defined by globalization and the arrival of new technologies. In essence, the changing global media landscape is shaping the socialization processes, values, and beliefs of young people, and influencing young people's decisions, in areas such as educational choice, employment and leisure (Mustaffa, 2011). Traditional teaching has been around for thousands of years, shaping the minds of so many scholars, workers and ordinary men and women. At a young age, a person is expected to attend a formal education, which involves a teacher and a set of students convening in a classroom. Through formal education using traditional teaching methods, students learn what they need to succeed in the real world. The advantage of obtaining an education in a classroom setting is that a student receives formal education and learns to focus on the subject at hand. A very typical feature of traditional methodology is teacher-centered where teachers serve as the source of knowledge while learners serve as passive receivers" (Kuzu, 2008). Teaching and learning is only done within a classroom. There are no more connections between a teacher and learners. Homework is secretly kept in the teacher's file cabinet after scoring instead of showing and comparing with the other student's work to see how precise it is. Furthermore, students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should possess strong content mastery, as well as the "Four Cs": critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (Van Roekel, 2012). Life today is exponentially more complicated and complex than it was 50 years ago. This is true for civic life as much as it is for work life. In the 21<sup>st</sup>

century, learners require levels of information and technological literacy that go far beyond the basic knowledge that was sufficient in the past (Van Roekel, 2012). While traditional teaching has been a tried-and-tested method, it also has some disadvantages, particularly today that technology has made learning better, more fun and interactive. (Arzel, 2012)

The school year is upon us. It is quite literally the time for teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and everyone else to begin spending the vast majority of their day at a school. Whether it is college, high school, middle school, or elementary levels, it is school time. That means teachers need to be up to speed and ready to rock the classroom. In order to do that, we thought it would be useful to know about the most popular teacher tools that we are hearing about (Dunn, 2013). In any case, these teacher tools are useful for a variety of reasons. Most save students and teachers time while some simply make it easier to connect with others.

With over 1,300 million active users, Facebook is changing the way hundreds of millions of people relate to one another and share information around 30 billion pieces of content per month (Wilson, 2012). What does that mean? It means it is a great way to figure out what your middle school ex is doing now or hear about the exploits of your college friends' kids. Because your friends post news and other tidbits they find around the Web, Facebook is also a great filter for the approximately 500 billion gigabytes of information floating around the Internet (Sundem, 2015). In short, Facebook is fun -- and useful -- because so many people and so much information are there.

Realizing the growing popularity and benefits of Facebook among users in utilizing social networking sites, it is not surprising that the educators are beginning to view this network as a valid mechanism to reach audiences, including youths. It would be interesting to observe if university students are able to improve their English through this new way of communication since an increasing number of university students have turned into avid users of Facebook, who login frequently (Steinfeld, 2008).

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL) is one of Thailand's leading Universities in the area of vocational learning. The University develops students on an international quality level of education, capable of using scientific and technological concepts in their professions. RMUTL accomplishes this through a hands-on learning system. English language is one of the targets the University aims to develop for handling the upcoming of AEC. English for communication is a subject in which thousands of students enroll every semester. The researcher, as a lecturer in the Western Language Division, is researching and seeking modern ways of teaching English to increase the students' learning ability and knowledge. Finding a large number of Facebook users among the university students, Facebook was, therefore, adopted as a web tool for assisting in teaching some parts of lessons. As a result of these findings, I find it necessary to carry out further research in this field; seeking new alternatives in utilizing this amazing opportunity to help students increase their learning experiences in class as well as during their own time away from the university.

### The aims of the study

The aims of this study were to investigate the usage of Facebook of students and also to find out which Facebook tools the participants preferred. The study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

- How do university students utilize media and technology in their everyday lives?
- What are the students' perspectives towards learning and practicing English through Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource besides their university classes?
- Is Facebook appropriate to be a secondary teaching/learning resource for university English curriculum?

### Research Methodology

What are teachers in the 21st century looking for in order to be better teachers? How do teachers create further bridges to assist their students both in and out of class? And what should be an efficient teaching strategy for the next generation of learners? These questions need to be answered and solutions must be sought.

To understand and be aware of what is going on around the learners in terms of social media is pretty crucial if the teachers are to use such media to help students. When the world of technology moves forward in such a rapid pace, the world of teaching must try to keep up, and if possible, even move faster and anticipate further changes, to deal with these new challenges. To achieve these goals, modern means and channels must be adopted.

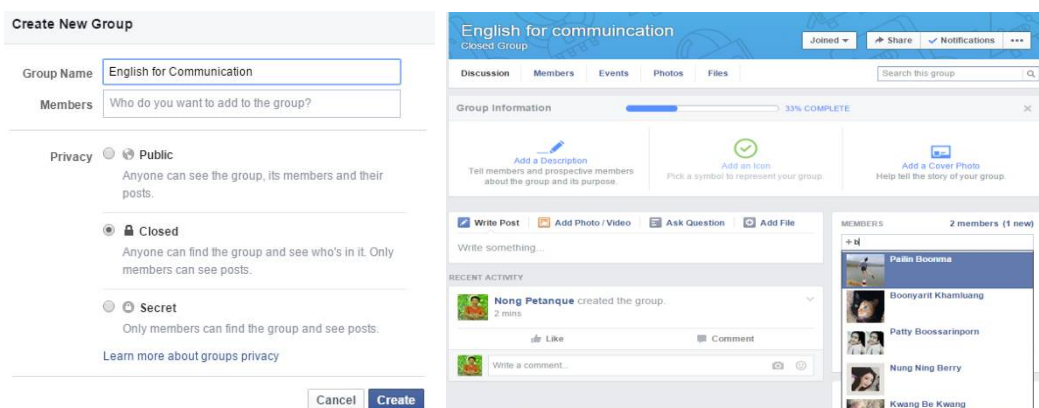
## Populations

This study is carried out at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL), which is the leading hands-on university situated in the Northern part of Thailand. A quantitative survey study exploring students' media consuming behaviors and perspectives towards learning English through Facebook is conducted after the teaching and learning process is completed.

For these purposes, 80 undergraduate students at RMUTL from two different classrooms are randomly chosen to participate in the survey. There were 54 females and 26 males who are from various majors. Both classes are taught in English which are “English for Communication”, with the same teaching and learning process.

Firstly, groups of student participants are chosen by purposive sampling method. Then, the objectives of the subject and the teaching/learning styles are explained clearly. The teaching/learning process is delivered to all student participants according to the lesson plans until it is done. Facebook has been adopted to use as a web tool assisting throughout the all lessons. A group page on Facebook is created and developed from everyone's participation. Later, all students are invited to be members in the groups and they must follow the instructions weekly posted on the page which are related to the lessons learnt in classes. Time to participate is limited. Each assignment is evaluated and commented by the instructor and group members can also give comments and share opinions openly.

After the teaching/learning process is completely finished, the student participants are asked to do a survey. Finally, the data will be collected and analyzed to meet the aims of the study.



## Research instrument

Research instrument is a questionnaire divided into 2 parts;

- 1) The media and technology consuming behaviors
- 2) The perspectives towards learning through Facebook.

## Data Analysis

The questionnaire is designed in accordance with the research objectives. It was then examined by three experts in terms of the appropriateness of content. Pearson product moment correlation was used to measure validity. The content validity score is at 0.82 which is ranked in high level and proper to be used in the research. The questionnaire is completed after the lessons.

The data are collected from the research instrument and observation. The data obtained are analyzed to find mean and standard deviation. The findings are described as both quantitative and qualitative report.

## Findings and discussions

The media consuming behaviors are related to the perspectives towards learning English through Facebook which can dramatically increase the learning outcome.

*How do university students utilize media and technology in their everyday lives?*

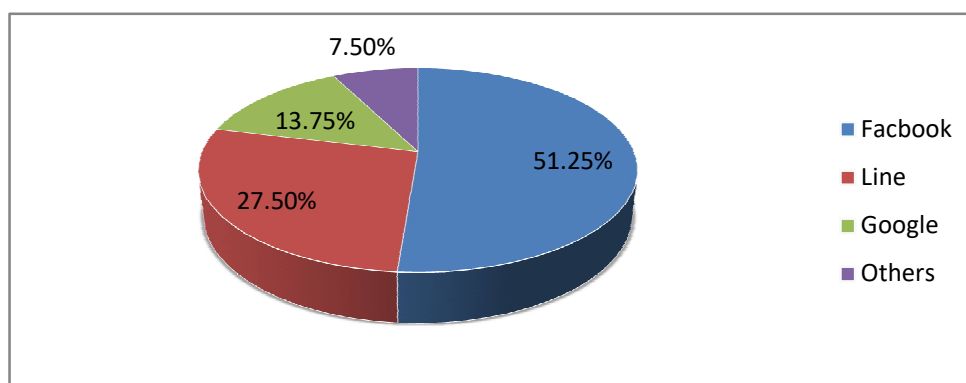


Figure 1: Students' most frequent access websites

A number of learners accessing the Internet through a smartphone steadily increase every day. Nowadays, smartphones have the ability to satisfy most Internet users' needs. The percentage of Internet pages viewed by mobile devices has begun to double yearly. These statistics are not seen by experts as a short term trend either. According to many professionals of the field, it is predicted that in 2015 mobile Internet usage will overtake desktop Internet usage worldwide (Global Mobile Statistics, 2015).

According to the survey, the majority of learners daily surf the Internet for social network for 4-6 hours during 5.00 pm -12.00 pm. As can be seen in figure 1, Facebook has become the most frequent webpage among the population (51.25%) which the total number of monthly active Facebook users around the world are 1,300,000,000 (Statistic Brain, 2015). The second and the third places are Line (27.5%) and Google (13.75) respectively. The rest surveyed webpages include Twitter, Youtube, Pantip, Yahoo, Hotmail, Sanook, and Instagram (7.5%) which some of them are completely ignored for the first access. It was observed that 29% use Facebook at home and 22% use Facebook via mobile phones without any place restriction. (Bicen, 2011)

*What are the students' perspectives towards learning and practicing English through Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource besides their university classes?*

Table 1: Students' perspectives towards learning and practicing English through Facebook

Topics for consideration	Levels of perspectives (Mean/5 scores)	Standard Deviation
1. Facebook is the easiest web tool to access.	4.41	0.60
2. Learning English through Facebook encourages learners to have more curiosity.	3.80	0.68
3. Learning English through Facebook helps learners be more confident in using English in public.	3.73	0.86
4. Assignments on Facebook are reasonable.	4.20	0.75
5. Duration to submit an assignment on Facebook is adequate.	4.05	0.72
6. Group work on Facebook is done from all hands.	3.92	0.77
7. Observing others' assignments presented through Facebook helps improve our assignment.	4.16	0.70
8. Getting comments from peers helps improve our works.	4.13	0.65
9. Learning through Facebook is too complicated.	2.58	1.05
10. Learning through Facebook depresses learners.	2.90	1.07

According to the results illustrated, the overall perspectives towards learning English through Facebook are clearly in the positive direction in terms of the students' view.

#### *Positive findings*

The learners feel comfortable with learning English through Facebook and submitting their assignments on Facebook since it is very easy and convenient for students to use. Most of them are curious to learn and more confident to produce the language in public. When the direction is launched, everybody acknowledges at the same time and eagerly responses to it within the provided time. The duration to submit an assignment on Facebook depends upon how tough of the work is. Some assignments need group participation. The surveyed outcome indicates the learners are willing to do both individual and group work. In addition, the learners are satisfied with seeing others' assignments and peers' comments presented through Facebook as they realize how

precise their classmates' works are as well as how much they have to pay more attention in the future assignments. These indicate that Facebook is presented to all learners and most of them are satisfied learning and practicing on it. The outcomes show that the learners regularly access and pay attention in the instructions assigned by the lecturer. Lastly, they absorb the ways of teaching process and are able to complete the tasks given.

#### *Negative findings*

On the other hand, not many members agree that Facebook is too complicated in use and leads some users feel depressed. That means they may be confused on how to use Facebook for study since 80% of general students actually spend their

time on the Internet for entertainment (Electronic Data Base CMU, 2012). In addition, the process of utilizing Facebook as a secondary resource besides their university classes needs further improvement.

***Is Facebook appropriate to be a secondary teaching/learning resource for university English curriculum?***

It is found that learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require more active and challenging ways of teaching and learning things including English language. Facebook provides a wide range of opportunities for all purposes to satisfy the users' needs, including those who seek to use it for educational purposes. One of the important aspects is that teachers and students don't actually have to be 'friends' on Facebook. Instead, teachers can create a 'group' and invite students to join the group by email. This creates a space where students and teachers can collaborate on Facebook, without granting any access to their personal profiles or embarrassing pictures (Curtis, 2014). In the group page with closed status, the members feel more comfortable and relaxed; therefore, participations and collaborations are regularly performed. Some play a leader role, responding early to a post, after which the others follow. Mistakes about the language use often appear, however, the teacher does not correct every mistake. On the contrary, the teacher gives encouraging comments and chooses an appropriate mistake to be fixed (some comments also come from other members). After receiving comments from the teacher or other members, learners are curious to know how many scores they get and what to be improved next. Most of the members regularly follow and respond to the directions, just a few of them are late and ignore, so the teacher must

continually monitor the page and give a warning to those who lose the connection.

To utilize Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource for university English curriculum, it adds a tough job for a teacher as he/she has to be alert in following social network and updating their world knowledge all the time. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile dedication for developing the educational quality.

**Conclusion**

Facebook claims that students and teachers can productively co-exist and interact on the social network, and even claims that it is a vital tool for teaching and learning in the 21st century (Curtis, 2014). This study also supports this claim. The research conducted at university shows that the students are increasingly involved with media and technology, using devices such as smartphones and tablets. The students are quite eager to learn English by using Facebook as a supplementary learning resource, where they can join a study group, share ideas, and study with fellow students. The undeniable trend is that there is an ever increasing use of Facebook by all sectors of the general public, especially by university students, thus the education sector must also take advantages of this great free resource for educational purposes. Almost all students in an institute have Face book accounts and its constant use is an important part of their daily lives. Adopting Facebook as an educational process brings about an out-of-class opportunity for students, and it also provides a modern channel for sharing and learning a foreign language. The closer English is to the students' daily life, the more fluent their English will be.

In short, Facebook has become the most frequently visited web page for students at the present time, so it would be a tremendously beneficial tool for teachers to use to connect with their students and to help them develop their English proficiency as much as possible.

### Suggestions

1) As Facebook provides individuals with a way of maintaining and strengthening social ties, which can be beneficial in both social and academic settings,

future studies should concentrate on integrating Facebook into education and teaching, which is important in students' everyday working lives.

2) Instructors who are willing to utilize Facebook as a secondary teaching/learning resource besides the English lessons should develop themselves in all aspects especially teaching strategies and always broaden knowledge on the Internet world.

### References

- Curtis, Sophie. (2014). **Does Facebook Really Have a Place in the Classroom?** Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/10926105/Does-Facebook-really-have-a-place-in-the-classroom.html>
- Dunn, Jeff. (2013). **The 10 Most Popular Teacher Tools Being Used This Year.** Retrieved from <http://edudemic.com>
- Huseyin, Bicen. (2011). **Social network sites usage habits of undergraduate students : case study of facebook.** *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 28 943 – 947. Retrieved from [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)
- Judge, Simon. (2015). **Global mobile statistics.** Retrieved from <http://www.smartphonemarketresearch.com>.
- Kuzu, Abdullah. (2008). **Views of pre-service teachers on blog Use for instruction and social Interaction.** *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education-TOJDE* July 2007 Volume: 8 Number: 3 Article: 2. Eric. 21 Mar 2008. Retrieved from [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/34/eb/47.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/34/eb/47.pdf)
- Madge, Clare. (2009). **Facebook, social integration and informal learning at University: 'It is more for socialising and talking to friends about work than for actually doing work'.** Department of Geography, University of Leicester, Leicester.
- Muhammad KamarulKabilan. (2010). **Facebook: An online environment for learning of english in institutions of higher education?** School of Educational Studies, UniversitiSains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. *Internet and Higher Education* 13 (2010) 179–187.
- Mustaffa, Normah. (2011). **Diffusion of Innovations: the adoption of facebook among youth in malaysia.** UniversitiKebangsaan Malaysia.



Pianpikul, Nopporn. (2012). **Does facebook pull student's GPA down?** Electronic Data Base. Chiang Mai University. Retrieved from <http://library.cmu.ac.th>

Statistic Brain. (2015). **Facebook statistics**. Research institute. Retrieved from <http://www.statisticbrain.com/facebook-statistics>.

Steinfeld, Charles. (2008). **Social capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis**. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology 29 (2008) 434-445. Retrieved from [https://msu.edu/~nellison/Steinfeld\\_Ellison\\_Lampe\(2008\).pdf](https://msu.edu/~nellison/Steinfeld_Ellison_Lampe(2008).pdf)

Sundem, Garth. (2015). **How to use facebook**. Retrieved from <http://computer.howstuffworks.com>

Van Roekel, Dennis. (2012). **Preparing 21<sup>st</sup> century students for a global society**. National education association.

Wilson, Robert E. (2012). **A Review of facebook research in the social sciences**. Washington University.