

# A study on 'Facebook' as a platform for learning English in Indian Context

Mr. Thomas A Mattappallil

Ms. Manasa Gowda

Assistant Professors, Department of Humanities,  
St. Claret College, Karnataka, Bangalore -560013

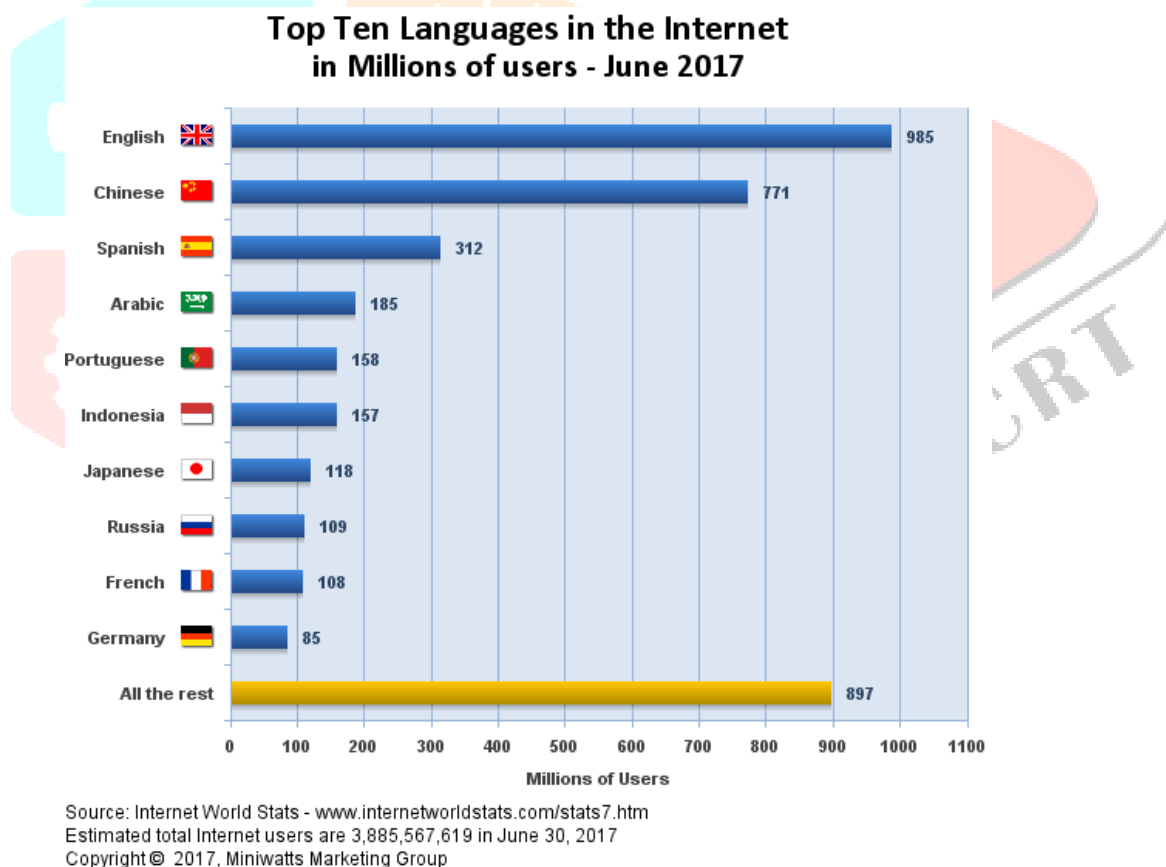
**Abstract:** English as a global language has created an effect in everyone's life. It plays a greater role in changing the history of world. In modern era and technology, English has become a networking language for people across the globe. The primary source of the research is Facebook. The objective of the paper is to discuss the importance of learning English language through various websites accessed through Facebook. The paper focuses on the problem of less proficiency of users in English language for networking in Facebook. The methodology of paper studies on different website pages to see how a user can improve basic skills like reading, writing, speaking and listening in English language. It emphasises the fact that a user can improve his or her language proficiency through the websites by making use of various function provided in it. The proficiency in English language helps the user to network to others in a smooth manner. These situations are seen in relevance with the Facebook users in India.

Keywords: *Facebook, Language, Proficiency and networking.*

The origin of English as a language was established in 4<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the invasion of Germanic tribes and Roman Empire. Later, English language spread to the world through various forms. In earlier stage, it spread through the colonization of British to its colonies. The invention of various media, the origin of various genres like poems, short stories, drama and essays of great authors made English as a language popular in the world. In this modern world of technology, all languages are used for networking in social networking sites like Facebook, whats up, Instagram, google plus, blogging, gmail and other latest forms. Facebook as a social networking website was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg along with his college friends. Facebook has other companies like Facebook payments, Atlas, Instagram LLC, Onavo, Oculus, Whats App, Masquerade and Crowd Tangle (Wikipedia). Facebook can be accessed through desktops, laptops, tablet computers, smartphones. In global context, it became a successful social networking site because English language has become the medium for communication. Most of the users have an account expect in the case of people in a very remote area. In these days, it is highly questionable whether Facebook is only for networking with a person in English language. The study discusses that most of them try to communicate in English. The people who try to communicate to their friends, family members, colleagues in their mother tongue write their mother tongue in the English version. English as language was established along with the British rule in India.

Later, it helped India as a country to advance in all fields in a global scenario. Like we received, adopted and followed English language in our life, every Indian started creating their accounts in Facebook. The Indian users exposed themselves to the world through various news shared from another part of the world in Facebook. In the initial stages, we shared news, photos and considered in a casual manner. Indian users were unaware of certain facts like learning English language through Facebook.

Networking is communication of one or two people with a purpose. An individual needs the right words to communicate with a person at home, workplace in formal and casual manner. When we communicate with a person, we understand the individual's attitude, personality and behaviour. In the present world, we can see the usage of English for networking is high as compared with other languages. According to the internet world statics report, it is given as 984,703,501 internet users are using English as their main language to network in Facebook till June, 2017.



We network with everyone in English language because of its global impact. Today, the socialisation of people is high through social networking sites like Facebook. In Asia, we can find that India has 241,000,000 Facebook users till June 30, 2017 (Internet World stats). This shows that most Indians use English as a

language to network in Facebook. The significance of learning English through websites by Indians is less in Facebook (Robert 99). Indians are poor in vocabulary. Vocabulary is important in networking in Facebook to understand the situations, problems of a person. For this, we need to know the function of certain usages in English language as well. At times, we can forget or deviate from the usages, function of English language. Especially, people in India have taken everything in granted that they use English to message by Anglicizing their mother tongue. In Indian context, people follow the same messaging habits in school, colleges and at workplace.

The learner's interest is more significant and relevant in learning English language and using it for networking in Facebook. At times, the user's proficiency is questioned here due to the ignorance of English language. The ignorance of the users in English networking can be found in the areas like Misused vocabulary, tenses, singular/plural nouns, punctuations (commas and periods), pronouns, possessive pronouns, articles, prepositions, verbs nouns/adjectives, capital letters, infinitive/gerund, superlatives, and Misspelled words (Annabelle 614). These errors or mistakes in the user's English language can be improved by accessing to various websites like BBC Learning English, British council.in, English Grammar.org through Facebook. These are the popular websites which help the user to improve his proficiency in English language.

In British council.in website, the user can improve his or her fluency, accuracy and confidence in English through an interactive online course for six – weeks. It is a combination of both live online classes and online activities. It helps the learner to enhance his English networking skills in Facebook in flexible and interactive manner by connecting with the real- life situations. The online courses are available to adult learners of 18 years old (British council.in). The benefits of this course are the user can have an interaction with the teacher, improve pronunciation, speaking, grammar, vocabulary through live interaction, online activities and videos. When the users access this website through Facebook, user becomes a learner at that point. Networking makes a person to play a dual role in the form of learner and user. This course gives feedback and guidance in improving their language. Even certain recognized certificate courses are provided by the employers across the world. The course format can be found in the website which will lead the user to know more about the courses. The British council website also provides the option of library according to the interest of the users. The user can access the library for free trial as well as paid. They have the facility of accessing to digital library where we can get electronic books and audio of book and articles. Even, this website provides the opportunity for the people to check their level of proficiency in English language by attending IELTS exam. The people in India can avail this website if they are interested to study abroad by attending this IELTS Exam.

In EnglishGrammar.org website, the Facebook user can improve his or her proficiency in English language. The learner can use this website to improve their skills in grammar. This website tries to cover the topics related

to grammar like Adjectives , Adverbs, Business Writing, Commas, Conjunctions, Creative Writing, Difference, Essay Writing, Exercises, Interjections, Learning, Lessons, Nouns, Prepositions, Pronouns, Proofreading , Punctuation, Quiz, Spelling, Style Guide, Teaching, Terms, Verbs, Words, Writing, Quiz (In EnglishGrammar.org). It has the option for checking our grammar using online tools like online grammar checker and online word counter. Online word counter checks the number of words we used to write an essay, paragraphs and articles. These aspects of the English written language enable you to improve your writing skills in both personal and formal communications. This website has the basic exercises and lessons for understanding the meaning of verbs, nouns and correct apostrophe placement, conjunctions, syntax optimization and creative writing techniques. At the same time, people can download lessons and videos or which can be accessed in the Facebook itself. According to the report, it is found that 964 people shared videos, chapters, lessons in the Facebook (EnglishGrammar.org). On the other side we can see there are 706,890 people are accessing this website in the Facebook. The people who are using this website are also trying to get the help of their guides. It becomes the part of the learner to stay in touch with his guide for clarifying their doubts. The same website is also providing and expects the learner to join their community to learn on a regular basis. In this community, we can post new articles and receive messages in the inbox by linking our email address. It will make the learner alert by getting regular updates from the website through facebook.

The next popular website accessed by the users in the Facebook is BBC learning English for networking in English as well as and improve their proficiency. This website was started in 1943 and it focuses on the development of learning English in different manners. In Indian context, people can learn English through various stages which are given in the website. English networking at workplace can be connected with the Indian people. English at work is part of the website which enhances the English communication in the office. It casts the video of characters and a friendly narrator and help in getting a job also. The English we speak is another area where it focuses on the latest English words and phrases. It is presented in the form of a three minute video. The people in Indian context can learn these words and phrases for everyday conversation and we can surprise and impress our parents, teachers, friends, colleagues with amazing phrases and words. India is diverse with the problem of mother tongue influence. In that case, it is necessary for people to neutralise their accents and speak English without any hindrances. The learner or user can improve his accent and tone by listening to the pronunciation videos which comes under the page named The sounds of English in the BBC learning English website.

BBC learning English is also providing a workshop to improve our English pronunciation. It is accessible in the Facebook for the learners. The time period of this workshop is for thirty weeks. This workshop also aims at making the learner a better listener and fluent speaker in the Indian scenario. In Indian context, we

know that Indians are not native speakers of English Language. Sometimes when we network in Facebook, we find difficult to get vocabulary used for daily use. In this we BBC Learning English are providing us with a series of discussions on various topics and new vocabulary in the form of a six - minute video. This enables the Indian users to improve their proficiency in English networking in Facebook. Another way of becoming proficient in English language and networking is watching drama from BBC learning English. In the present situation, Indian people have an interest towards watching drama in various languages. This can be done people who are less proficient in English language. In this case, Indian users can improve their listening skills in English language by imitating the way in which they speak. This can help us in networking with an international friend. When this page is accessed in Facebook, the learner can bookmark so that the learners get follow up in the Facebook. The paper identifies that the audio version of these dramas help the learners to progress in their listening skill.

All these websites encourage independent learning and group learning for improving their English networking skills. The courses, exercises, sources and notes, video available from websites through Facebook help the users in networking in a creative manner with more constructive ideas. Virtual learning helps the users in learning English language in a convenient manner. English networking in Facebook can also be done with the help of blogging. A person once he reaches a stage where he feels that he is proficient, he can start writing articles in blog. The link can be send to the Facebook like the same manner in which website is accessed. In these days, even in Indian context, people use to share their views, ideas and opinions in their blog. It will definitely enhance the writing skill of a person in English language. It is an advance stage of a learner who can network in English. The English as a networking language in Facebook can educate people by also connecting with various newspapers, magazines which gives as all kind of information. Even the historical information given in English newspapers can be read by the user and increase their proficiency in English language. When we are confident about our proficiency in English as networking Language in Facebook, we can also start a group where we can share information Quotes, Travelogues to other people. It helps in creating an identity for ourselves in Facebook.

The study figures out that these websites are capable of training people to express rightly in social situations, using right vocabulary, appropriate grammar, enhancing listening skills and accents, building good rapport and mutual understanding and having a social etiquette in learning different cultures across the world through Facebook in English language. The study analysed and found that wordcounter.net, Grammarcheck.net are also capable of training people to learn this language. The website named Englishlearnsite.com provides the option of downloading materials for their studies. The paper found that the websites which are accessed in Facebook as part of English as a networking language plays five major roles as tutor, tool, ways to explore language,

medium and learning environment. These factors are important in English as a networking language in Facebook for the Indian people. The paper found that English as a networking language helps the literature students to access to their English literature communities and also learn technical terms and identify it with the literary terms based on the meaning. The paper has looked at the analytical data which help the people in sustaining their networking through Facebook using English Language. There is a scope of doing another study on the technical terms used in English language for networking. It can be done in relation with shopping websites like Flipkart, Amazon, EBay, and Olx. This paper can have a scope for further research to find out the statistical data of users accessing English learning websites in Facebook in relevance with English as a networking language.

Networking makes a person to play a dual role in the form of learner and user.

### Works Cited

AbuSa'aleek, A. O. (2016). Students' Perceptions of English Language Learning In The Facebook Context. *Teaching English with Technology*, 15(4), 60-75. Unaizah: Qassim, Qassim University. October 17, 2017.

Al-Saleem, Dr. Basmah Issa Tlelan. (2011) Language and Identity in Social Net Working Sites: *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(19), 1-6. October 22, 2017.

Ariana, S. M., & Mirabela, P. A. (n.d.). The Impact of Social Media On Vocabulary Learning Case Study Facebook: *Journal of Economic Literature*. October 17, 2017.

Ateeq Ahmad. (2011). Rising of Social Network Websites in India Overview - *International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security*. 11(2), 155-158. Jhunjhunu: Rajasthan. Singhania University. October 22, 2017.

Baruah, T. D. (2012). Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study: *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(5), 1-10. Guwahati: Assam. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. October 22, 2017.

Bdaiwi, Sahima Abdulsalam. (2017). Facebook- Assisted Communication in EFL Learning: A Case Study of UHD Students of English: *ISSN*, 3(3), 1-6. Sulaimaniyah, Iraq. University of Human Development. October 17, 2017.

Drama. (1943). October 22, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>.

English at work. (1943). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>. October 22, 2017.

English Grammar.org. (2017). <https://www.englishgrammar.org/>. October 19, 2017.

English literature.(2017). October 17, 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English\\_literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_literature).

Facebook. (2017). October 17, 2017, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>

Ghani, M. B., Persediaan, P. P., & A. (2015).Using Facebook in Teaching and Learning English.*ICLLCE*. October 17, 2017.

Islam, Mohammad Nurul.(2011). Independent English Learning through the Internet - *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2 (5), 1080-1085. Saudi Arabia, University of King Khalid. October 17, 2017.

Internetworldstats. (2003). <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>.October 22, 2017.

Kajornboon, Dr. Annabel Bhamani. The Effect of Using Social Networking Assisted Interaction between Peer and Teacher in English Language Learning.611- 619.Chulalongkorn: Thailand. UniversityLanguage Institute, Thailand. October 14, 2017.

Klerk, S. D. (2010). The importance of networking as a management skill. October 22, 2017.

Pronunciation. (1943).<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>.October 22, 2017.

Chartrand Robert. (2012). Social networking for language learners: Creating meaningful output with Web 2.0 tools. *Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal*,4(1), 97-101. October 14, 2017.

Six minute English. (1943). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>,October 22, 2017.

The English we speak. (1943). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>,October 22, 2017.

Words in the News. (1943). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>,October 22, 2017.

Welcome to the British Council in India. (1993). from <https://www.britishcouncil.in/>.October 22, 2017.