
Social Networking Technologies in Promoting Language Socialization: Yemeni EFL Teachers' Beliefs

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' views influence how they choose pedagogical methods and how they execute teaching practices in the classroom. An investigation of teachers' views regarding the notion of "language socialization" (LS) and how it may be used to enhance pedagogical application via the use of social networking technologies (SNTs) in a Yemeni EFL setting is the subject of this study. In this study, 30 EFL teachers participated in a survey. Five males were interviewed out of the total number of participants. The findings revealed that the vast majority of teachers had good associations with LS as a teaching method and positive reactions to the use of SNTs in the EFL classrooms even though most participants had never used SNTs in their own classrooms. Because of a lack of access to and training in the usage of SNTs, teachers have been prevented from integrating them into their classrooms when teaching English. This suggests that instructors recognize the important functions that SNTs play in improving students' language learning and socialization but that they lack first-hand experience and training in how to use them in their classrooms effectively. That there is a shortage of provision must be addressed as soon as possible to guarantee that Yemeni English as a foreign language teachers and their students have the chance to engage with new technologies in order to enhance their educational experiences critically.

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language isn't about learning how to use grammatical forms, but it includes learning how context is socially organized. The socialization of learners inside a target group's social activities benefits from social contact with community speakers (P. A. Duff, 2007). Duranti et al. (2011) stated that human activity is a central feature of learning, as it provides the pillars of action and reflection. Therefore, contextual exposure to the target language is very relevant for foreign language learners as it offers opportunities to communicate with target language speakers in daily contexts. However, in English as a foreign language classroom, the emphasis can sometimes be on language structure rather than use, notwithstanding the fact that pedagogical patterns favour socially-mediated approaches to teaching over form-focused drilling (Spada, 2007). This more recent change in perception of the crucial position that language socialization plays in language instruction has also contributed to a deeper appreciation of how social networking technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can improve the EFL classroom experience. It is impossible to deny that modern technologies have impacted many areas of life, including socioeconomics, politics, education, and personal relationships (Thurairaj et al., 2015). The field of education has seen considerable growth in the number of research studies that have been performed to determine the efficacy of these social networking technologies across a variety of disciplines. According to linguistic theory, the flood of language output on social networking technologies provides an abundance of opportunities for language learners to process language and receive input, as young users of social networking technologies spend more than half of

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their days using and interacting on these networks, which requires them to use and communicate with others using their language and communication skills (Slim & Hafedh, 2019). Studies conducted by Slim & Hafedh (2019), Thurairaj et al. (2015), as well as Kabilan et al. (2010) indicate that online conversations, whether orally or written, have displaced traditional face-to-face dialogues, resulting in significant changes in the users' daily language and repertoire of expression. Social networking tools, which are becoming more popular, have contributed to the improvement of students' overall language learning process.

In terms of specific language skills, a large number of studies have discovered that the usage of social networking platforms improves learners' grammatical complexity as well as their vocabulary acquisition and retention (Khan et al., 2016; Stevenson & Liu, 2010; Mills, 2011; Rennie & Morrison, 2013; and Al Jahrami, 2019) conducted an investigation on the impact of social networking platforms in the development of English vocabulary and discovered that they were important. Rennie & Morrison (2013) point out that the use of social networking technologies to acquire vocabulary has become a phenomenon, owing to the use of methods such as coining and compounding to create terms such as Blog+sphere, Snap+chat, and Face+book among others. Improved oral proficiency, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening, was also seen in longitudinal studies conducted by Chen (2013) and Lin (2012). Learners would need instructional supervision as well as customized activities that are properly organized, according to Lin (2012), in order to be able to utilize social networking technologies successfully to improve their language learning processes.

Language can also be learned in a social setting with the use of social networking tools. Foreign language learners must learn how to operate in various social interactions and situations, negotiate meanings, and participate in complicated spoken discourses since the primary goal of learning a language is to communicate successfully in diverse circumstances. When looking at it from the viewpoint of language socialization (LS), being an active member of a speech community is critical in learning the target language (TL) since it allows the cognitive process to be built socially via interaction (Vickers, 2007). Making the transition to becoming a member of the target community provides EFL learners with opportunities to participate in the sociocultural practices of that community, thereby allowing them to become socialized into the community's speech practices and thereby assisting them in using the TL effectively (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011).

Amid these assertions, the current study sought to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of language socialization in the context of learning a foreign language and the pedagogical implementation of language socialization through the use of social networking technologies in the context of Yemeni foreign language learning. With regard to language socialization, in particular, the study investigated EFL teachers' expectations and the potential use of social networking technologies in fostering language socialization in EFL classrooms.

1.1 *Language Socialization*

Because language learning is primarily aimed at communicating successfully in different contexts, foreign language learners need to learn how to function in different social interactions and environments, share meanings and engage in several, frequently complex, speeches (Kramsch, 1993). These activities may be achieved by engaging different interlocutors (e.g., teachers and students; students and target language speakers) to explain how a language functions within a specific group (Vickers, 2007). Individuals need to learn, repeat, and adapt their awareness and skills to reach unique language groups (Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). Language socialization reveals how participants socialize and use language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). Language socialization helps learners to consider how members of the target community use the target language by communication between speakers of that culture (Duranti et al., 2011). Educators and language pedagogy researchers emphasize the involvement of culture in language learning, emphasizing that language socialization entails developing syncretic linguistic and cultural practices as language learning is seen as cultural learning, where language and culture are conceived as connected phenomena that interact with each other in ways that connect culture at all levels (e.g., (P. Duff & Hornberger, 2008). As (Bennett et al., 2003) conclude, 'the individual studying language without culture risks being a fluent fool.' Cultural characteristics are considered valuable resources to promote foreign language learning.

1.2 *Teachers' Beliefs and Language Socialization*

It is not simple to characterize precisely what teachers' pedagogical values entail teaching principles, pedagogical and pragmatic skills, attitudes, and assumptions (Borg, 2015). Importantly, teachers' convictions are deemed a central element in teaching a language. They impact pedagogical practice because they control teachers' perceptions, practices, and actions (Lorduy et al., 2009). Moreover, the study has shown that EFL teachers' practice is influenced not only by their values, language abilities, credentials, and grammar expertise but also by their students' age; for example, teachers who taught adult learners preferred to teach grammar directly (Önal, 2018). According to Barcelos (2003), teachers sometimes teach the same way they were taught; in other words, their past learning experiences and values can influence their students' behaviors, encouragement, and learning techniques. Despite the reality that many FL teachers have switched from a grammar-based method to foreign language instruction in the past 25 years or so (Richards, 2005), some teachers have expanded the amount of specific grammar work done, relying more on textbook-based instruction and not immersive approaches to instruction (for example, Fareh, 2010). For example, in the Arabic-speaking world, like Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, much research has revealed that EFL teachers still prefer the Grammar Translation Method and use it to keep things simple and straightforward, encouraging students to use their mother tongue, particularly at the entrance stage, and helping teachers manage large classes of students (Al-Hamzi, 2020, & Aqel, 2013). As Alahmadi (2007) points out, the most popular pedagogical method in English language teaching in Arabic-speaking countries is where the instructor, as opposed to the learner, is the subject and guiding force in all pedagogical practices. Such an approach fails to promote meaning-in-interaction between students in settings where collaborative approaches to language learning are strongly promoted (Kurczek & Johnson, 2014). Students will not be able to build appropriate English language skills, and their involvement in the TL may be restricted to the classroom (Fayyaz & Omar, 2014). Besides, some EFL teachers are hesitant to teach TL culture because they feel that this might threaten local cultural values (Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2011). However, other EFL instructors advocate teaching both target and local cultures in the classroom language to fulfill students' need for a familiar cultural learning atmosphere while also improving their awareness of the variations between their own and the target community (Mahardika, 2018). It has been suggested that such bi-cultural methods help students prevent cultural misunderstandings while taking part in intercultural contact scenarios and create attitudes of transparency and empathy towards others (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013).

1.3 *Teachers' beliefs and the role of SNTs in promoting LS*

Teaching a language socialization-based methodology offers learners an insight into the target context and an awareness of how to properly utilize the target language. Yet this potential seems lacking in foreign language classrooms. Social networking technologies may play a crucial role in promoting learning and teaching the target language in foreign language contexts. They have interactive environments where English foreign language learners can communicate with English speakers worldwide (Căpeneacă, 2018). These immersive experiences build multi-lingual identities as learners share thoughts with several other users from different cultures (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013). Moreover, it has been seen that social networking technologies build language skills for learners, such as communicating with their teachers through online exercises or collaborating on tasks (Sánchez et al., 2014).

Research into teachers' beliefs and practices showed that teachers' pedagogical beliefs could build obstacles in incorporating technology into the language classroom. Some EFL teachers also retain conventional teaching and learning values, relying more on linguistic type than the feature. Some findings have found that low-level technology usage in the classroom is correlated with teacher-centred approaches to pedagogy relative to high-level technology uses related to student-centred classroom activities (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).

Interview findings in the Yemeni sense revealed that specific social networking technology channels, such as Facebook and YouTube, are widely used and are commonly viewed as an effective medium to promote FL learning and teaching. For example, Skype and Edmodo were launched as resources for teaching English to Saudi students, providing learners with opportunities to encourage

small-group conversation, sense negotiation, and foster teacher-student interactions (Yunus et al., 2012). YouTube has also been used to enhance undergraduate students' output at the university level by developing engaging, collaborative online platforms that enable students to comment and evaluate the appropriate reading materials (Johns, 2003). Furthermore, WhatsApp is an efficient teaching tool for EFL and allows students to become independent learners and facilitate communication while practising their English (Al-Ahdal & Alqasham, 2020). In order to fill this gap, the current study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What English language teachers' views regarding language socialization in the Yemeni EFL context?
2. What are English language teachers' views on utilizing social networking technologies to facilitate language socialization in teaching English in the Yemeni EFL context?

2. Methods

2.1 Research context

This study was performed at Sana'a University in Yemen. In Yemen, all students must continue their education at university. These students have local experiences. Students need to study English intensively for 15 hours a week. Teachers teach students mostly. Their Classes last about 3 hours a day.

2.2 Participants

Between 2012 and 2013, around 30 to 45 years old EFL teachers were appointed. Patton (2015) indicated a purposeful sampling of participants in these classes and an understanding of EFL culture. Some EFL teachers in Yemen have been teaching for 1-25 years. All the participants came from different parts of the country. Three PhD's and two MA's were interviewed. They were trained between 10 and 25 years. However, no female participants demonstrated their desire to participate in this aspect of the inquiry.

2.3 Instruments

Mixed methods were chosen when both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) approaches were adopted. In order to facilitate data collection, an online survey (Appendix A) was utilized as a helpful tool for data collection over distances (Franklin, 2012). An analysis of previous related research (P. A. Duff, 2007; Duranti et al., 2011; Chang, 2014) was based on the survey design. The survey consists of three parts with 34 closed-questions 5-point Likert scales, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" to maintain records of the findings' coordination and validity. (Sánchez et al., 2014).

An open query was added at the end of the survey to allow participants to clarify their thoughts about LS and the use of SNTs to encourage it in EFL classes and allow answering using their terminology (Patton, 2015; Franklin, 2012)

The qualitative approach was also used. A semi-structured online interview was also conducted with five participants. Cleary et al. (2014) clarified that such studies' purpose was to understand teachers' experiences using language strategies and not compare any method. There were eight open-ended questions. The questions allowed respondents to answer more detailed and follow-up questions (Guest et al., 2013).

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The following results were disclosed: teachers' beliefs about LS, teachers' attitudes about the use of SNTs for promoting LS, and difficulties with SNTs. Survey data is presented in terms of frequency and percentage, and an interview is analyzed thematically.

The five selected men were interviewed. It was recorded and copied. Hatch (2002) indicated that in-depth interviews were conducted to determine the participants' opinions and fundamental problems. The interview was carried out in English language.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' beliefs about LS

Table 1 displays the findings of the first study question: What are EFL teachers' expectations regarding LS? Teachers also demonstrated apparent approval for several of the things linked to LS (Q1) (Appendix A) with constructive feedback (93.3 %). Teachers react positively to the query on the importance of the collective community conversation (Q2) (90 %). Interaction between instructor and student (Q3) was also unanimous, with most participants (93.3 %). Q4 (Interaction between students) also was replied positively (86.6 %).

These results show that teachers recognize the importance of collaboration and interaction and are willing to take on a leadership role by planning and engaging students in discourse activities (Swain, 2000; Dooly, 2008).

Table 1. Teachers' beliefs regarding the elements of language socialization. (n=30)

Q	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q5		Q6	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	0	0	1	3.3	0	0	1	3.3	2	6.7	1	3.3
D	1	3.3	0	0	1	3.3	1	3.3	2	6.7	3	10
N	1	3.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	7	23.3
A	10	33.3	13	43.3	10	33.3	16	53.3	18	60	16	53
SA	18	60	14	46.7	18	60	10	33.3	7	23.3	3	10
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100

Notes: SD: Strongly disagree, D: Disagree, N: Neutral, A: Agree, SA: Strongly agree

The two data sources (survey and interview) also showed the value of teaching foreign language learners the target language culture (Q6).

This research addresses teachers' perceptions of second language learning. All the teachers (100%) said that teaching the target culture was crucial learning. They thought the process would allow learners to be exposed to the target culture norms, understand how the language could be used appropriately in real contexts, and learn how to establish appropriate communication between two cultures. Since Khalid is a well-qualified teacher, he explained the reasons teachers need to emphasize the culture.

"Yemeni students need to understand the acceptable target culture. To use language appropriately, they need to be exposed to the culture they will be talking in (Extract 1).

The participant emphasized the significance of learning the living language and culture. He further added, *"When I visited different districts in Yemen, I used some terms from classical Arabic that are no longer used in society, so I was not understood"* (Extract 2).

Given the views that some instructors, some also believe that material should be chosen to fulfill learners' desires and value their cultures. Mohammed noticed: *"Teachers get to choose when teaching culture because what is acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in others"* (Extract 3).

Responses regarding "being a member of the target group as a language acquisition process" (Q8) show that 60.72% of the participants agree with this assertion. In one of the interviews, the speaker (Ahmed) believes that students should join the target community to learn how to use the language accurately. The interviewee explained: *"In Arabic cultures, numerous words translate to 'cat,' for example, Herr, Kett, and Bess, and this example demonstrates the teacher's awareness of the target culture and its overall understanding of English's contextual aspects (Extract 3).* The data support earlier work on the importance of integrating culture in the development of learners' linguistic repertoires (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Taha, 2014).

3.2 EFL teachers' views of the use of SNTs for LS promotion

This section reports findings of EFL teachers' perceptions of using SNTs for promoting LS. Over 86% of respondents said they are familiar with the leading SNT platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. When asked about the use of SNTs in classes, 63.3% said they didn't use them; they

only used them for personal use. Less than a quarter of the participants (16.6%) used SNTs for teaching purposes. This is an indication of the disconnect between technology and education.

Teachers' answers to questions concerning the significance of using SNTs in teaching English in the Yemeni sense are shown in Table 2. For Q3 (Social networking technologies assist FL learners in gaining exposure to authentic language conditions by interacting with native speakers), the maximum percentage of agreements in this table was published, which obtained 83.3% of the reactions. Q4 answers (Social networking technologies are great for collaborative learning) and Q5 (Social networking technologies offer immersive learning). The respondents' consensus produced nearly identical outcomes: About 70 % for Q4 and 76.6% for Q5. Compared with other alternatives, firmly disagree and disagree choices earned the lowest amount of selections. Only one respondent (3.3%) strongly disagreed with Q3 and two with Q5. However, two respondents disagreed with both Q3 and Q4.

Table 2. Teachers' beliefs about SNTs' position in language learning (n=30)

Q	Q3		Q4		Q5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	1	3.3	0	0	2	6.7
D	2	6.7	2	6.7	0	0
N	2	6.7	7	23.3	5	16.7
A	17	56.7	14	46.7	13	43.3
SA	8	26.7	7	23.3	10	33.3
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100

Table 3 shows teachers' beliefs regarding the role of SNTs in fostering social contact. For Q7 (the opportunity that EFL learners have is to interact with native speakers through social networking technologies), the maximum percentage (70 %) of the agreement was recorded, followed by the 66.6% Q6 agreement (Social networking technologies are used to maintain cultural competence). For Q8 (social networking platforms allow students to interact with each other within the target community), agreement rates have decreased (60%), and ten respondents were drawn by neutral answers (33.3%).

Table 3. Teachers' beliefs about the roles of social SNTs in fostering social engagement (n=30)

Q	Q6		Q7		Q8	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	2	6.7	1	3.3	1	3.3
D	2	6.7	2	6.7	1	3.3
N	6	20	6	20	10	33.3
A	16	53.3	13	43.3	12	40
SA	4	13.3	8	26.7	6	20
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100

These findings showed that most teachers had favorable opinions in foreign language classrooms on social networking technology usage. Most of them have advocated promoting language socialization to encourage collaborative and engaging learning opportunities to supply learners with exposure to authentic contexts.

The results relevant to the second research question are recorded in this section: What are EFL teachers' opinions regarding the use of SNTs for LS promotion? Data from the interview also revealed that teachers supported the use of SNTs by LS to facilitate FL learning. Mohammed said, for example, "I usually invite my students to join my group to help them use and learn English and gain input in their production" (Extract 4).

While Ali shared Abdulwahid, he has also claimed that SNTs may have a socially detrimental effect on teachers' privacy and status, saying, "The more you learn about TL through SNS, for example, the more you practice and communicate, the more you understand" (Extract 5).

These results indicate that SNTs display exposure and practice in TL contexts while also being used as a method to support LS (Clark & Gruba, 2010; Reinhardt & Zander, 2011).

3.3 Difficulties in implementing SNTs

This section raises several obstacles that have stopped teachers from incorporating SNTs into their classrooms while teaching English (table 4). The 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' alternatives did not receive any responses. A total of 10 (33.3%) out of a total of 30 participants claimed social networking technology was not their focus in English teaching (Q10), while 9 (30%) stated restricting the time they required to utilize the social networking technology in their classrooms (Q11). Table 4 indicates a sharp increase in the preference for 'disagreement' and 'neutral' alternatives about the perceived danger presented by SNTs to teachers' private lives (Q12) and students (Q13). For instance, in Q12, only 11 participants (43.3%) got supportive opinions, 10 participants (33.4%) showed opposition, and seven participants (23.3%) were neutral. For Q13, eleven out of thirty participants (36.7%) chose both approval and opposition, and eight (26.7%) registered neutral answers.

Table 4. Difficulties of Utilizing SNTS (n=30)

Q	Q10		Q11		Q12		Q13	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	3	10	4	13.3	2	6.7	0	0
D	7	23.3	6	20	8	26.7	11	36.7
N	4	13.3	5	16.7	7	23.3	8	26.7
A	10	33.3	9	30	7	23.3	11	36.7
SA	6	20	6	20	6	20	0	0
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100

This section raises several obstacles that have hindered teachers from incorporating SNTs into their English language classrooms. In the interview results, related expectations were apparent. While it is essential to mention that teachers have embraced the use of SNTs in the classroom to select suitable English language content and to monitor and document student learning, some interviewees have claimed that they are against using SNTs because they would discourage learners who can use them for social activities, including getting in contact with peers, or that they won't let them in. As Khalid commented: "For example, the use of SNTs challenges teacher status in the foreign language setting, learners will post inappropriate comments in their language about their teachers" (Extract 6).

This result is consistent with a prior study among undergraduates on the use of SNTs, which showed that they used them for fun and talking with their peers (Ha & Shin, 2014). The interview results have addressed other issues, including overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of computer literacy for teachers, and a lack of facilities (e.g., reliable Internet access and computer labs). In short, the findings regarding the obstacles and uses of SNTs in English classrooms in Yemeni higher education settings are close to those observed in related previous studies: lack of education technology, insufficient classroom time, overcrowded classrooms, and unavailability of facilities (Ahmed, 2018; Alkindi & Al-Suqri, 2013).

4. Conclusion

LS is well supported by EFL teachers in Yemen, according to our research into their views of LS and how it may be promoted via SNTs in the Yemeni educational setting. Teachers believed that SNTs might be a useful tool for promoting LS in EFL learning and teaching in general. Because of a lack of experience and understanding about how to alter their pedagogical methods, the majority of the teachers were acquainted with their usage but did not incorporate them into their teaching practices.

Considering the plethora of potential benefits of adopting an LS approach into EFL pedagogy, as well as the increasing use of and reliance on SNTs in the global professional and academic marketplace, Yemeni EFL teachers must experiment with innovative pedagogical tools if they are to keep up with their international EFL teaching counterparts. It is clear from this study that further research, such as direct observation of EFL instructors' classroom experiences with SNTs, in combination with innovative methods to higher education teacher training and provision of digitally networked classrooms, is urgently needed. In addition, it will be essential to obtain insights into students' experiences of learning with SNTs and their perceptions of the SNTs themselves. Such research and training will guarantee that Yemeni EFL teachers are provided with professional development

opportunities directly related to their pedagogical practices, thus enabling them to critically assess how SNTs may be used successfully in their EFL classrooms in the future.

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