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## The Role of Feedback Comments on Online Posts in Learning English Vocabulary and Phrasal Expressions

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### Abstract

The study is an exploratory research which generally aims to generate a hypothesis regarding the efficacy of using feedback comments on social network for language learning purpose namely English vocabulary and phrasal expressions based on the university students' both perception and experience. Teaching and learning have been unceasingly and unwillingly restrained to input exposition in classes without having been considering tie strengthening with the outside, i.e., real world. As teaching and learning a foreign language has been understood as getting involved with the culture, there have always been challenges with the ways how one could have an access to. Additionally, due to social media several methods have been tried out to learn English language better and effectively but less or almost none has yet attended to the use of feedback comments to do so. Therefore, the present study tries to work on the gap and reveal out the role and the strength of using this method to learn or improve English language by getting an in –depth insight in the users' viewpoint. The study attempts to answer the following questions respectively, (i) what are the students' perception concerning the use of feedback comments for learning?, (ii) to what extent can feedback comments, from the students' perspectives, aid to learning English as a foreign language?, (iii) can feedback comments as well as posts on socials networks serve as a worthwhile academic platform for learning English language vocabulary and phrasal expressions?

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The study aims to gain insights regarding the efficacy of feedback comments on social networks in learning English vocabulary and phrasal expressions. In addition, it intends to unveil the extent to which the input exposition as feedback comments allows for learning English vocabulary and phrasal expressions. A mixed approach for seeking data is used, i.e., qualitative and quantitative. Thus, a structured questionnaire as well as an interview is administered to meet the aims of the study. University students in Kurdistan Region of Iraq at Salahaddin University- Erbil, College of Basic Education are target population of the study. The study concluded the followings, (i) the generation of an explorative hypothesis as *EFL vocabulary and phrasal expressions can be efficiently learned due to the interaction with posts and feedback comments on social networks*, (ii) having access to experiencing and interacting with so-called virtual authentic culture of English Language due to posts and feedback comments on social networks, (iii) recognizing posts and feedback comments as an extra unique method or technique for learning English Language vocabulary and phrasal expressions efficiently

**Keywords:** Feedback comments, vocabulary, phrasal expressions

دور تعليقات استجابة رجعية على المنشورات عبر الإنترنت في تعلم مفردات اللغة  
الإنجليزية والتعبيرات الاصطلاحية

روزكار جلال خضر

جامعة صلاح الدين

و

عثمان قادر عمر

جامعة صلاح الدين

**المخلص:** الدراسة عبارة عن بحث استكشافي تهدف عموماً إلى إنشاء فرضية تتعلق بفاعلية استخدام تعليقات استجابة رجعية على الشبكة الاجتماعية لغرض تعلم اللغة ، أي مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية والتعبيرات الاصطلاحية بناءً على إدراك طلاب الجامعة وخبرتهم. تحاول الدراسة الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية على التوالي، (1) ما هو تصور الطلاب فيما يتعلق باستخدام تعليقات استجابة رجعية للتعلم؟، (2) إلى أي مدى يمكن أن تساعد التعليقات ، من وجهة نظر الطلاب ، في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؟، (3) هل يمكن للتعليقات وكذلك المنشورات على شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي أن تكون بمثابة منصة أكاديمية جديرة بالاهتمام لتعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية والتعبيرات الاصطلاحية؟ تهدف الدراسة إلى اكتساب رؤى فيما يتعلق بفاعلية تعليقات استجابة رجعية على الشبكات الاجتماعية في تعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية والتعبيرات الاصطلاحية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يعتزم الكشف عن المدى الذي يسمح به عرض المدخلات كتعليقات ردود الفعل لتعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية و التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. يتم استخدام نهج مختلط للبحث عن البيانات ، أي النوعية والكمية. وبالتالي، يتم إجراء استبيان منظم بالإضافة إلى مقابلة لتلبية أهداف الدراسة. طلاب الجامعات في إقليم كردستان العراق في جامعة صلاح الدين - أربيل ، كلية تربية الأساسي هم المجتمع المستهدف للدراسة. خلصت الدراسة إلى ما يلي، (1) إنشاء فرضية استكشافية حيث

يمكن تعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والتعبيرات الاصطلاحية بكفاءة بسبب التفاعل مع المنشورات وتعليقات على الشبكات الاجتماعية ، (2) الوصول إلى التجربة والتفاعل معها- تسمى الثقافة الأصلية الافتراضية للغة الإنجليزية بسبب المنشورات والتعليقات على الشبكات الاجتماعية، (3) التعرف على المشاركات وتعليقات باعتبارها طريقة أو تقنية فريدة إضافية لتعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية وتعبيراتها اللغوية بكفاءة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** تعليقات الاستجابة الرجعية، المفردات ، التعبيرات الاصطلاحية.

## **1. Introduction**

Over the past recent decade specifically, technology has turned into one of the most robust methods in delivering and meeting the needs of livelihood and prosperity in every aspects of life through which infinite numbers of vendors and customers have been persistently working and dealing with online transactions. Nowadays, social networks on their own have made it accessible for everyone to invest or make progress on a larger scale with any sort of business they ever own. Social networks have been evidently defined and recognized for their too many features they possess including, a platform that can enable the users – both the producers and consumers, via utilizing internet services to share knowledge for a purpose (Robbins and Singer, 2014). Furthermore, Social networks have deafened as a “group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61)”. Apparently, one way of such a promotion has been solely due to the role of feedback comments on social networks. Additionally, the role of advertising and online commercials especially on social networks played its vast parts in promoting business and educational enterprises and thus made it fairly effortless for both the vendors and customers reach out to their ends.

Feedback comment has been described as an activity or process of leaving one’s impressions by the users of social networks on any platform through either an open or limited- accessed form including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. (TouchWork , 2021). Additionally, it is worth much unveiling that feedback comments have not only served for upgrading and nurturing business but also improving languages learning and teaching, English Language, for instance.

The ways of learning English has witnessed enormous changes and paid significant attentions by both the scholars and learners. The ways have been formed by an integration process of combining diverse methods and/or approaches all for the sake of an easy access to learning outcomes. A couple of examples of mixed approaches are learner activation, autonomy, intercultural communication and integration of media and promotion of multilingualism (Funk,2010 cited in Funk, Gerlach, and Spaniel-Weise (eds.) 2017). Freedom of learning and learner autonomy have vastly impacted on the ways leaners have tried to learn English Language and similarly inspired them to approach language learning with further fun and in their immediate comfort zone this time. Surely, including the domains that have been substantially benefited are social networks, notably, the posts and reviewers comments on them. Thus, the study attempts to furthermore investigate into the issue and reveal the dominant sides of learning through posts and reviewers feedback comments on them.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Anankulladetch (2017) did a research entitled, 'The impact of social media on ESL students' learning performance' in the USA –Central California. The study aimed at identifying the students' ESL proficiency in classes impacted by the use of social media. The study was a quasi-experiment that included 37 students of 18 years of age and older from an adult school. SPSME – Student Perception towards Social Media in Education survey was adopted as the tool for the assessment purpose. The study findings served in favour of the presence of statistically significant difference between the mean score of control and experiment group. That is, students in experiment group have perceived greater change in academic performance owing to the manipulation of social media.

Al Jahromi (2020) conducted a research on EFL Bahrainis non- native students to find out the impacts of using social media on language learning process. The study has used a questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. For such a purpose, 330 subjects have been randomly selected on a two grouping classification basis; age and gender. The study has concluded that the use of social media has positively brought about changes in English language learning process. According to the findings, the most affected linguistic areas fall into reading and communication skills, writing style, and lexical variation.

A case study research has been conducted in UAE, 2020, to find out the influence of social network on improving English language learning skills. The study has used different tools to meet the objectives of its own as questionnaire, interview and tests. However, the study has been done to majorly investigate its hypotheses due to an experiment – Quasi experiment. Therefore, the study can be identified as one designed for multi-purposes, i.e., qualitative and quantitative experimental research. In conclusion, the study has reiterated both the effectiveness of using social networks in improving English language learning skills in general and the incentive power of social networks in the development of writing skill (Banniyasse, S. O. A., 2020).

Desta, M.A. et al., (2021) have done a research to explore the effects of social media usage on the medical students in Ethiopia. The researchers have designed a descriptive survey for gaining in-depth informative insights into the case. The study has been categorized as quantitative, i.e., numerical data analysis has been processed. It has been concluded that the use of social media has much benefited the students of medical science in improving their English language proficiency and it has also been found out that differences in gender, on the other hand, has done no difference at all in terms of their attitudes towards using social media for improving English.

## **3. Methodology and Data Collection**

This work is an exploratory study which tries to generate a hypothesis concerning the power of using social networks specifically the posts and feedback comments for improving English Language learning, namely, vocabulary and phrasal expressions. To meet the objectives of the study, a questionnaire and an interview have been designed and exposed to respondents to answer- (77) EFL major students from different grades at College of Basic Education- Salahaddin University-Hawler. The questionnaire has been initially piloted for the sake of reliability and practicality. The reliability value produced (0.711) which is said to be reliable. Likewise, necessary modifications were made on the basis of pilot test result. The below table illustrates the statistics of the reliability of the questionnaire.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.711	.726	10

On the other hand, face validity has been administered to check the validity of both tools, i.e., the questionnaire and the interview. Consequently, both tools have been confirmed valid according to the jurors' judgments. Jurors' names (1), specialization and affiliation are shown in the appendix 1.

**4. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

The analysis of reported data out of the respondents from both the questionnaire and the interview has been processed by using SPSS program.

**4.1. Questionnaire**

Descriptive Statistics Test has been applied to analyze the data out of the questionnaire, Likert Scale Questionnaire. So as to evidently report the findings out of the questionnaire and to be easily interpretable by the readers, a scale like that one below in the table has been designed.

**Table: The corresponding value scale of mean score interpretation**

Value	Range
Never	1.00-1.80
Rarely	1.90-2.60
Sometimes	2.70-3.40
Often	3.50-4.20
Always	4.30-5.00

The revealed findings in the table below disclose numerous worthwhile insights concerning the responses of the responders as follows:

<b>Table: Descriptive Statistics</b>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I use social network like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Blogs etc. for learning	73	1.00	5.00	3.8493	.84445
2. I view and read posts in English made by others.	73	1.00	5.00	3.8493	.93795

3. I go down through comment feeds on social media.	73	1.00	5.00	2.9726	1.10520
4. I also read comments in English made by other reviewers on the posts.	73	1.00	5.00	2.8904	1.02146
5. I leave comments in English on the posts I view or read.	73	1.00	5.00	2.5753	1.12938
6. I make written posts in English on social network.	73	1.00	5.00	2.7671	1.21930
7. I learn English words and/or phrases through reading posts.	73	1.00	5.00	3.9452	.97026
8. I learn English words and/or phrases through reading the other comments on different posts.	73	1.00	5.00	3.1233	1.26870

9. I reuse the words and/or phrases I learned from the comments or posts I view.	73	1.00	5.00	3.6164	1.11343
Valid N (listwise)	73				

The obtained mean score of the first item (**3.84**) has revealed that the responders *often* use social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc., for the purport of learning English Language. The findings gained from this item indicates that almost two thirds of the overall students participated in this study have longings towards learning English through one of the most cutting edge platforms of technology which is the use of social network.

Similarly, the gained mean score of the second item representing (3.84) points out that the responders not only use social networks alone but they often do a lot far more than this as well such as viewing and reading the posts in English made by other people on social networking platforms.

The mean score of item number three (**2.97**) indicates that the responders *sometimes* scroll or go down through the comments provided by other commenters on a post on social network.

Concerning the mean score of item number four which is (**2.89**), responders *sometimes* read the other comments made by other reviewers on social networks.

The mean score of the fifth item (2.57) shows that the responders rarely leave comments, i.e., write comments, in English on the posts they review. This finding apparently indicates that the students are not active enough about leaving comments on the posts they view.

They are mostly consumers rather than language producers.

The mean score of the sixth item (2.76) depicts that the responders rarely make written posts in English on social networks. Consequently, the students are believed to be less comfortable with or desirous regarding making posts in English. This is likely to be due to their own impressions concerning that sort of language demonstration they are possibly required to produce any correct and appropriate output both socially and culturally.

The mean score of the seventh item (3.94) reveals that the responders often learn English language words or phrases owing to reading posts in English. The mean score interpretation as often has a promising response to us that students can learn English vocabulary and expressions effectively and effortlessly through reading posts on social networks.

The mean score of the eighth item (3.12) points out that the responders sometimes learn English vocabularies and phrases through the second reading attempt over the comments left by the reviewers of the post. Additionally, this insight ensures one that the comments of other reviewers can amuse the readers to read further and get further delved into the content of the post. Thus, such an activity seems to leave an impressive effect on the readers of posts to pursue a follow up inclination to the ideas and dissimilar beliefs of others.

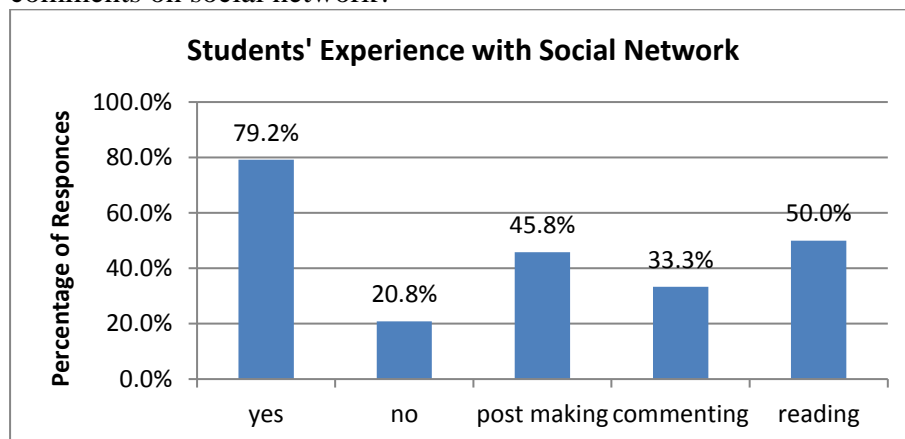
The mean score of the ninth item (3.61) shows that the responders often make use of the words they learn from the posts they view by using them in different contexts and situations again and again. This type of activity testifies that practice really makes perfect, that is, once they use them they can always remember them.

#### **4.2. Interview**

The received responses from the interview questions have been classified and distributed under some certain themes then the responses have been converted into codes for the purpose of the ease and accurate process by using statistical analysis, i.e., percentage value.

Below are detailed analyses in order (questions and their values depicted in percentages through bar charts) of the responses of the interviewees. As for question number one, more than three quarters  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the responders representing 79% have answered yes. This finding indicates that most of them read and make posts on social networks. Additionally, the further findings show that reading posts or comments of other reviewers are amongst the most highlighted actions the responders experience upon using social networks. The rest of the details are shown through the bar chart in numbers.

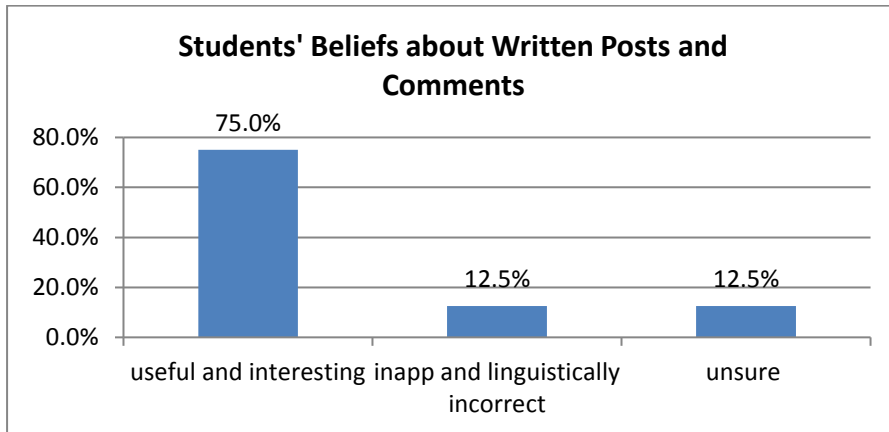
1. Do you have any experience with reading and making posts? How about comments on social network?



Students' beliefs about the posts and comments made in English are quite auspicious for having been considered useful and interesting based on the obtained finding as 75%. By contrast, two equal numbers as 12.5% have different beliefs regarding their views about the case; the former asserts that the posts and/or the comments are either inappropriate or linguistically incorrect, whilst the latter remains skeptical.

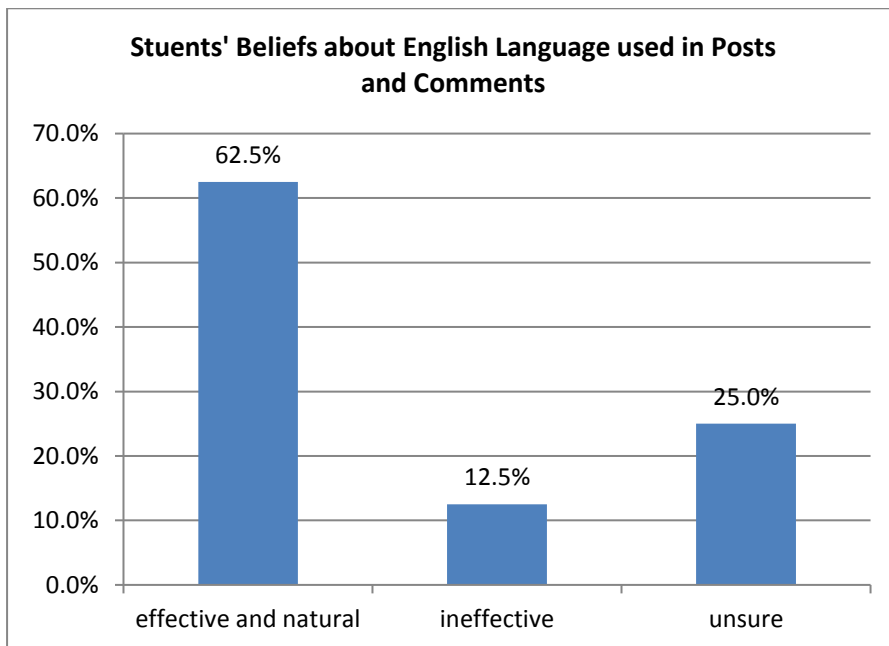
2. What do you think about written posts in English made on social network? How about reviewer's comments?





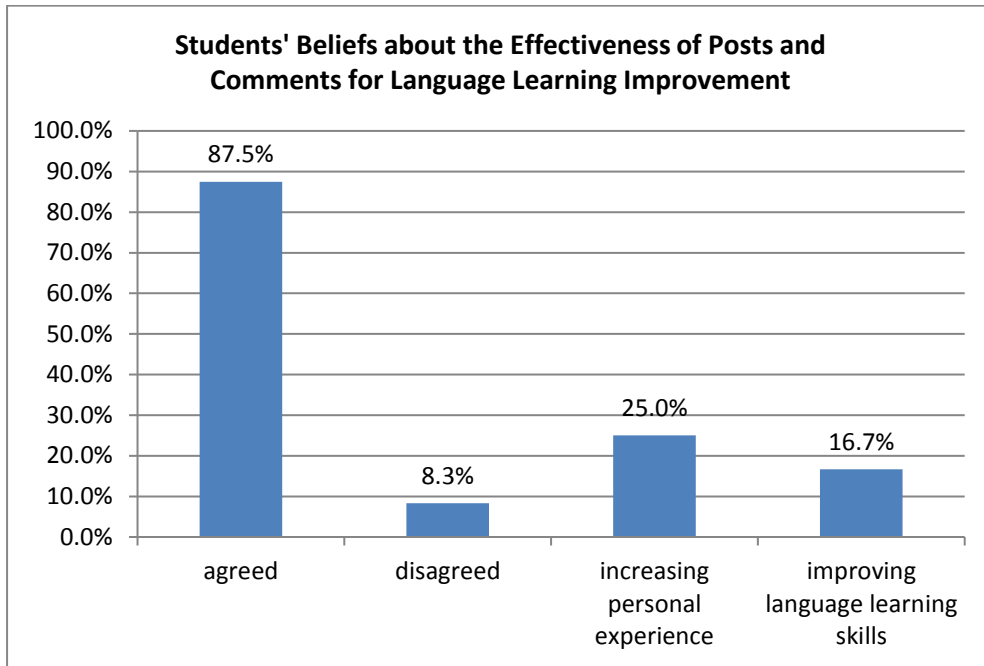
In regard to question three, more than half of the responders 62.5% assume that the language used in posts and comments sound authentic and effective. In the meantime, a quarter of them stay neutral concerning the case.

3. Do you think that the English used in feedback comments and posts sound real and native, i.e., effective and natural?



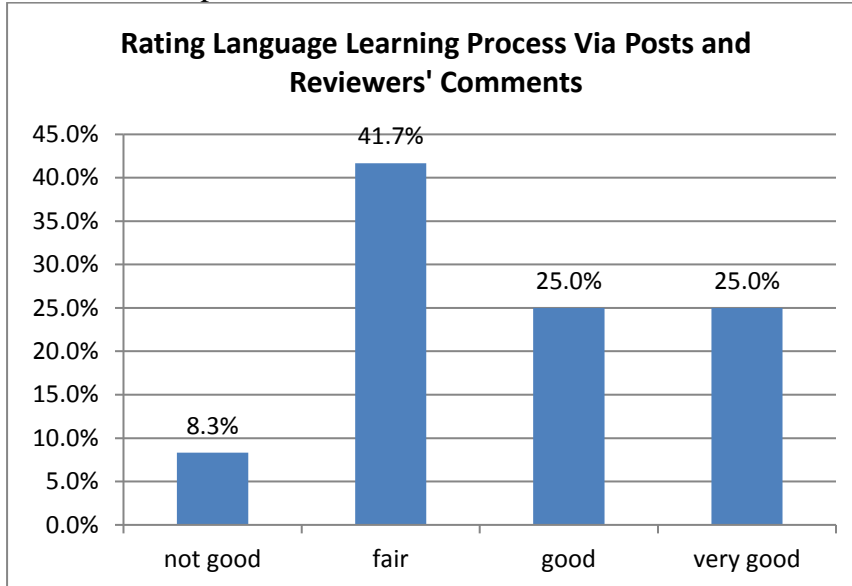
Having done in favor of the question, the responders nearly fully 87.5% believe that interacting with posts and comments on social networks are not only enabling learners to learn English language effectively, but they are also speeding up the process twice than the normal rate. Including the ways of improvement, only a few of them could ever answer. Their responses were as follows; 25% of them think that the interaction with posts and comments increases the learners' personal experience as well, whereas 16.7% think that the interaction improves language learning skills.

4. Do you think interacting with the feedback comments and written posts on social media can improve and speed up one's vocabulary learning process? If yes, how?



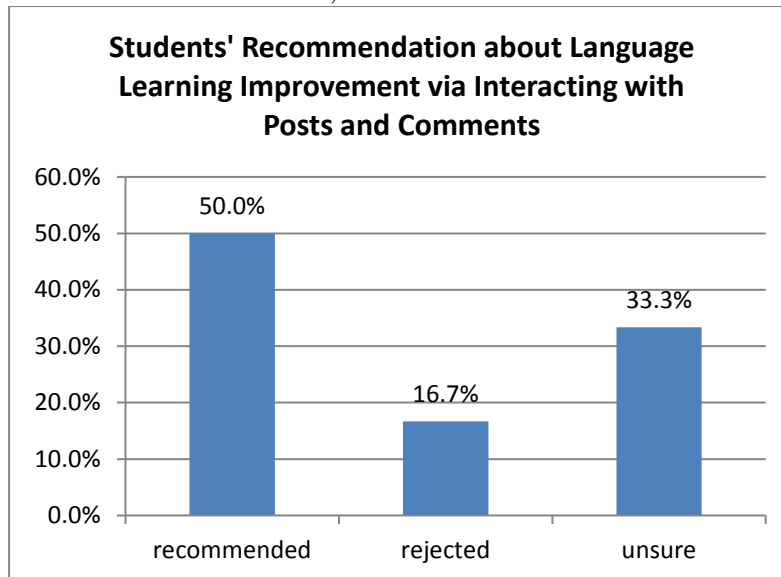
With reference to question five, almost half of the responders 41.7% rated as *fair* the process of learning vocabulary and expressions via posts and comments on social networks. Besides, two equal numbers as 25% rated the process differently as *good* and *very good* respectively.

5. How do you rate vocabulary learning process via interacting with feedback comments and posts on social network?



Last but not least, the students have expressed dissimilar standpoints regarding learning via posts and feedback comments in spite of recording several favorable findings before about the process. Yet, only half of the responders 50% are truly supporting the process by recommending the students to learn English language vocabulary and expressions through posts and comments. In the meantime, 33.3 % of the responders are opting to show no affiliation to either answer as yes or no. As for the reason of recommendation, no additional response whatsoever was recorded.

6. Do you personally recommend learning English in general and vocabulary in particular through interacting with written posts and feedback comments in English on social network? If not, for what reason?



On the basis of the overall results derived from both the questionnaire and the interview, several trustworthy points can be briefed.

1. Students have shown desirable feelings towards the interaction with feedback comments for learning. The findings evidently see the claim above academically trustworthy since most of the students sided with the interaction with feedback comments for learning English as a foreign language. This point can be serving as the intended response to research question number one.

2. Most of the students assert that feedback comments can certainly support the process of learning English language namely vocabulary and phrasal expressions, by presenting the users various techniques to do so. For instance, speeding up the process is considered one of the promoted techniques that interaction with feedback comments can bring about. This point can form the marked response of research question number two.

3. Last but not least, it can be inferred that English vocabulary and phrasal expressions can be literally learned and practiced due to the interaction with social networks, i.e., posts and feedback comments. However, the endeavor is less likely to serve as an academic platform as a whole since some of the students remained skeptical about whether or not feedback comments can fit with academic demands. To conclude, the following hypothesis can be generated as the fundamental part of the study's purpose; *EFL vocabulary and phrasal expressions can be efficiently learned due to the interaction with posts and feedback comments on social networks.* (Alternative Hypothesis)

## **5. Conclusion**

This exploratory study has resulted in the generation of an explorative hypothesis as; EFL vocabulary and phrasal expressions can be efficiently learned due to the interaction with posts and feedback comments on social networks. This hypothesis can, thenceforward, be serving as a theory and a basis for further analysis, investigation and testing by other researchers.

As teaching and learning a foreign language has been understood as getting involved with the culture, there have always been challenges with the ways how one could

have an access to. Thanks to the interaction with feedback comment, EFL students can, thus, have access to experiencing brilliant chances towards interacting with the so-called virtual authentic culture of the target language, English Language. Nonetheless, learners, based on the obtained findings, will be able to deal with the natural target language vocabulary and its expressions effectively by repeatedly practicing what they will learn in unison.

Due to social media several methods have been tried out to learn English language better and effectively but less or almost none has yet attended to the interaction with feedback comments to do so. It has been concluded out of the study that interacting with posts and feedback comments on social networks can be serving as an extra unique method for learning English Language vocabulary and phrasal expressions. It has been found out that this method is not only enabling learners to learn English language effectively, but also speeding up the process twice the normal rate, i.e., this can ensure us that the method can be considered extremely helpful and increasingly attractive as it can be pretty much innovative as well in bringing about the learners to practice and adhere to this novel way of teaching and learning.

EFL Students have argued for the potential role of feedback comments for learning English vocabulary and phrases. Apparently, two thirds of them have been standing with the interaction with social networks, in general, to learn English Language and feedback comments, in particular.

A far more natural and authentic language variety will be acquired through interaction with posts and feedback comments on social network. However, this activity may sometimes lead to an overlapping situation between the academic and social language. Yet, the latter is most likely to be the students' top of the list demand for their everyday life necessities.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is fully recommend that EFL students and learners practice and interact with posts and feedback comments on social networks during and post class activities since the language used in them sounds pretty real and natural and is rooted in contextualized variety of language skills and aspects such as competence and performance, real use of language, communication and interaction. In addition, teachers of various modules at university such as communication- oral and written, conversation, language and culture, translation, contrastive studies, etc., can most extensively implement the theory through integrating the platform into educational spectrum.

It is also most likely that feedback comments and post can serve as an academic platform as well especially if it is integrated in academic institutions and used on a regular basis by the students.

As a theory was built, researchers are highly motivated to conduct researches on it so that they can come up with further pedagogical potentials in the hope of integrating them into teaching and learning slots.

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## 8. Appendix

**Table (1):** Juror Identities

No.	Juror Name	Specialization	Affiliation
1	Prof. Dr. Ayad Hamid Mahmood	Linguistics	University of Diyala
2	Prof. Dr. Himdad AbdulQahar Muhammad	Linguistics	Salahaddin University
3	Prof. Dr. Hussein Ali Ahmed Gargary	Applied Linguistics	Nawroz University
4	Asst. Prof. Dr. Dilakhshan Yusuf Othman	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University
5	Asst. Prof. Dr. Qismat Muhammad Hussein	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University