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RESEARCH ARTICLE



## SOCIAL NETWORKING: A DOMINANT COMMUNICATIVE TREND OF LINGUISTIC VARIATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Digital communication discourse has mainly centered upon the linguistic characteristics of emails, on-line chatting and social networking focusing on the formal and informal features involved in communication. This paper presents a new insight into the study of digitalized communication and its variants by analyzing a fairly recent genre of computer-mediated communication, comments posted on the new social networking websites. The paper highlights the linguistic variations of social networking sites in different countries with a special reference to comments posted on Face book. It converses the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) through Face book. And also few constructive techniques such as Dragon fly effect have been dealt for effective use of messaging.

Key words: Social Media, Face Book, Linguistic Variations, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Dragon Fly Effect.

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### INTRODUCTION

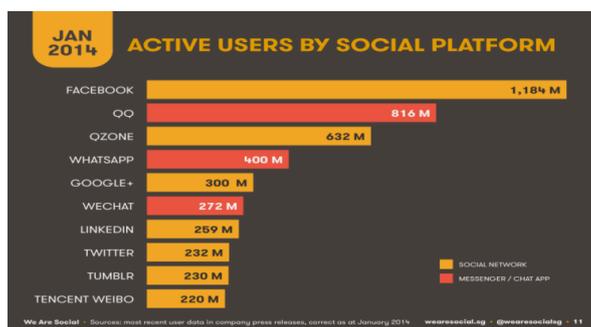
In the last few years, information and communication technologies have evolved rapidly and have created new forms of discourses. In the field of English for Academic or Special Purposes, some stylistic protocols have been developed so as to use this means of communication proficiently with an adequate level of formality in business, academic or personal emails. In the specific field of English for Academic Purposes, little attention has been devoted to the impact of the new genres developed by the Internet. The need to examine the changes that the new online genres imply for academic literacy practices is posed by Hyland & Hamp-Lyons (2002 p.1-12).

In the recent years, social media has evolved from just being a basic tool for collaborative creation and the sharing of content to becoming an important part of the present media landscape (Weinberg, 2009). The growth of Web 2.0 has allowed many services to be created that facilitate collaboration in the World Wide Web. They are defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile ... articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections" (Boyd & Ellison 2008, p.211). The study of the linguistics of Facebook is especially interesting due to its novelty, widespread use and the importance it is gaining in everyday life.

### Emergence of Face Book

Created in 2004 "as a cross between a tool for meeting new people and a platform for networking with people you already know" (Baron 2008, p.84), Face book has its origins in the University of Harvard (Boyd, 2008). Most scholars have analyzed the use of Face book from a sociological or pragmatic approach identifying the sense of community in the relationship between participants in social networking (Ellison et al. 2007; Baron 2008; Papacharissi 2011; Yus 2011).

It has also been studied as a platform to enhance learning. In research about the use of this site as a teaching tool, Blattner & Fiori (2009, p.24) point out that participants on the social networking website Face book use more colloquial language in their speech acts and the tool "exposes learners to language varieties [...] that language departments and textbooks cannot match". Globally, Face book still dominates, with over 1,184 million active users worldwide - by the end of January 2014.

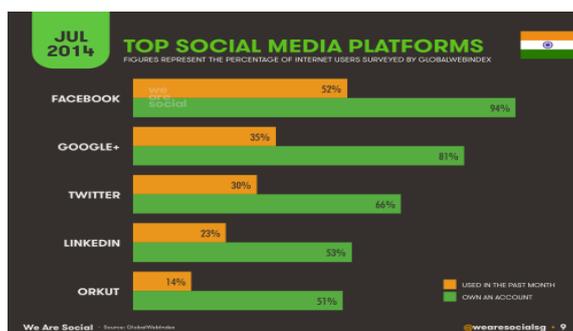


Source: <http://wearesocial.net/blog/2014/01>.

Recently, Face book has undergone a spectacular increase in users. Face book itself estimates that more than 800 million people are active users in January 2012 and its use is increasing all over the world.

### Social Media in India

A recent study on social media in India by says that India has 243.2 million internet users and 106 m active social media users.



Source: [www.business2community.com/world-news/india](http://www.business2community.com/world-news/india)

The research says that, India takes up 3<sup>rd</sup> position in using Face book, it is the most accessed website with 97% of users using it followed by Google+ and LinkedIn. 84% of Social Media users (among Active Internet users) are "Young Men" in India; they contribute about 35% to the overall urban social networking base of 58 million. Only top universities are using Face book as an academic tool. By referring to the data, it is prudent to use this platform for spreading the academic process and pedagogy in an effective manner.

### Effectual Messaging

By the above study it is inferred that social media especially Face book is the major platform to share the communication. The new scenario has drastically changed the way of communication. Today, text messages, voice messages use of instant messenger emails and online video phones are very very common phenomena.

Interaction through the Internet tools has redefined communication. The entire paradigm of social media has altered the basic rules of communication, especially between business and their audiences. The one-way communication methods have been replaced by a more robust multidimensional communication model. The users have assimilated with the new genre, yet precautions should be at the prime while making a tête-à-tête.

### Chat Sessions

Chat on social media is an inevitable communicative trend more than ever in the professional and business environments even personal chats are very common trend. The key aspect of this trendy genre is that, chatting personal or professional should be terse and prompt. It brings to the fore the intentions and expertise as well. It works much better if the speaker is lively and anticipatory as chat is always an off-the-cuff conversation. In a professional chat the range of questions should be thematic and selective. Shel Holtz ( 2007, p.116-119) makes a point that, "if every question looks like a slam dunk to the audience, the entire chat will seem like a whitewash and a waste of time, and few employees will want to participate again next time."

The comments posted on Face book are characterized as asynchronous, that is, the mode of communication where the author and the reader are online at different times (Yus 2011). In contrast to synchronous communication, asynchronicity allows selective message construction (Duthler 2006), authors are able to plan, review and control their texts more than in synchronous media like chats. Consequently, asynchronous online communication would allow a more formal style.

The chat remarks or comments can be retrieved and to get the archive so they can be re-readable what was said. It is important to assess the sort of communication that was held and see that it was a useful chat and make sure that the chat should always be candid.

### The Dragonfly Effect – *How ideas take flight*



It is a model that taps concepts from social media, marketing strategy, and consumer psychology to help people achieve a single, concrete goal. It is named after the only insect that can move swiftly in any direction, and even hover, when its four wings are moving in harmony. The four "wings" of the model—Focus, Grab Attention, Engage, and Take Action—work together to help readers produce the change they seek, and that desired change can take many forms: social good, employee morale, or customer loyalty, among many others. Social media campaigns with the biggest success rate are those that have a very sharp focus and this often gives you an opportunity to increase the leverage to large-scale causes.

A Colombian engineer who used Face book to organize a protest against the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Obama's grassroots campaign, the micro lending site Kiva illustrate their formula F+GET: "Focus, Grab Attention, Engage, Take Action" during their successful campaigns. This "Dragonfly Effect," named for the insect's ability to move in any direction when its four wings work together. For effectual messaging Dragon fly effect can be applied for the constructive access of the audience.(www.dragonflyeffect.com)

### Linguistic styles

The language in Social Media networks such as Face book or Twitter is quite informal and direct and sarcastic some times while commenting political issues. In a recent research study based on the corpus collected during 2009 -10 comprizing 300 comments posted to the official face book sites of various universities, phatic communication in the form of greetings and farewell formulae have been analyzed. In this quantitative study, the corpus has been analysed following a scale ranging from "very formal" greetings and farewells to "very informal", using the criteria shown in Table 1( Pérez-Sabater *et al.* 2012).

### Analysis of Formality Degree

Scale	Punctuation
Very formal	1.0
Formal	0.8
Informal	0.4
Very informal	0.1
No greetings / Fare well	0

Source: Pérez-Sabater et al. 2012.

The greetings beginning with *Dear Mr/Dr* + second name are considered very formal, *Dear* + first name formal, *Hello* + name informal and *Hi*, *Hey* or a name very informal. Similarly, sign-offs like *Yours sincerely* are rated as very formal, *Regards* or *Best wishes* informal and *Cheers*, *Bye* very informal. (Biber et al. 2002).

### CONCLUSION

Face book has made it a place for everything: its primary aim to be a platform to keep in touch with friends has grown to incorporate other uses. The on-line writing, the new genre has redefined the linguistic formality. From the result of this study it can be posited that the tendency towards informality, a long tradition in on-line communication may be invalid. On the other hand, the main problem with online genres is the fact that the discursive traits of a genre should be conventionalized so that users can identify a genre at first sight and save time and effort of processing for effectual messaging.

The innovative force of Further studies on the linguistics of social networking websites are needed to address the issues this article has given rise to. More studies of participants' interaction in online environments would be needed to determine other reasons for the behavior such as cultural transfer and global relationships.

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