

GRAU D'ANGLÈS  
Treball de Fi de Grau

Using Social Networking Sites for  
Language Learning  
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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT D'ESTUDIS ANGLÉSOS I ALEMANYS  
2021

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank all those people who have, in one way or another, made this project possible. You have accompanied me during all these months and you have all contributed to the development of my thesis.

First of all, my TFG tutor, Marni Lynne Manegre. My greatest thanks for your patience in the face of my mental blocks, for being my guide and for supporting me at all times. Your dedication has been crucial not only in this project but also in my future career in the educational field. Your experience has awakened a motivation and curiosity in me that I want to continue to nurture.

My gratitude to the collaboration of the participants who made possible the realization of this TFG. For your dedication and time invested in the project. I will always appreciate what you have done.

I give special thanks to my partner for being there for me throughout this process of blocks, insecurities and hard work. You have been my greatest and best cheerleader.

## **Abstract**

In the era of the technological revolution, Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are part of the everyday lives of a large number of people. Social networks are a case in point. The use of the Internet in everyday life has become increasingly important for a society that feels the need to be socially connected. The use of social networks has been absorbed by people all over the world and today it is already part of a routine. In addition, with the rapid development of the world and technology, English learning has become more important. The consumption of technology and its good use, as well as the possibility it offers to connect users from any part of the world, has favoured its integration in the classroom in recent years. The study is aimed at analysing the impact and efficacy of social networking sites as a language-learning tool. An attempt has been made to answer what effect and success social networks have on language learning and, specifically, what effect the daily use of Twitter has on improving English-language skills in Spanish-speaking high school students. Respondent's tweets and perceptions of using Twitter for improving their English-language skills have been analyzed through a Likert scale questionnaire. The study revealed that students have improved writing and grammar skills. Some of them agree that they prefer online setting more than classroom environment for language learning.

**Keywords:** ESL, SNSs, social network, EFL, internet, language learning, education

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## 1. Introduction

Humans have the need to interact. For that reason, social networks have always existed. The truth is that social networks have existed for as long as human beings have existed. Since time immemorial, humans have come together to hunt, to share resources, to share knowledge, to defend common interests and to share new developments. That which has really changed has been the way of interacting within them and, above all, the speed at which information is transmitted. There is a sacralization of what is understood today by 'social networks' that makes this previous concept of *old* 'social networks' difficult to understand. It is clear that the emergence of the Internet has meant an advance in communication, but one must not forget that social networks are nothing more than a mere instrument and that the effectiveness of this instrument will depend solely on how and for what purpose they are used.

It was in the 1990s, characterized by the emergence of the web (www), that the idea of social networking also migrated to the virtual world. Prior to the 1990s, a social network was a network of individuals (such as friends, acquaintances, and co-workers) connected by interpersonal relationships. It was not until the 1990s that this term began to be used in relation to the online world.

Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their connections within the system (Alvarez, 2016). The terms 'social network sites' and 'social networking sites' are often used interchangeably. However, 'networking' provides more emphasis and scope.

Few people could have imagined that social networking sites would have such an impact as it does today. However, the desire to connect with other people from anywhere in the world has made people and organizations more and more immersed in social networks.

The development of the Internet, and in particular the World Wide Web, contributed to the creation of a new type of CALL: The Web-based CALL. This new type gives students the freedom to browse the websites that best suit their goals. Which means, and as Davies et al. stated (2013), that “it provides asynchronous communication channels.”

Users can communicate instantaneously, directly, inexpensively at any time in any place. In general, students seem to be more motivated if they have to explore their own materials, learning sources, applications and tools.

This thesis explores this division of CALL, specifically using social networking sites for language learning. The first section introduces the history of SNSs, then the types of SNSs are discussed followed by recent research in this area. Further, an experimental study is included that aims to put light on the presence of social networks within the field. For this purpose, the use of Twitter in the scope of language teaching and learning is examined, as well as the analysis of its effectiveness in the English language learning process.

## **1.1. Theoretical Framework**

### ***1.1.1. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)***

In recent years, several studies consider that a new era has begun: the Information Revolution (Drucker, 1999). The application of these technologies has generated a profound social transformation and has given way to what is currently known as the ‘Information Society’. This term is an expression of the current environment in which we live. An environment in which society is interconnected by technological innovations that allow interaction between users, which has completely revolutionized the way human beings interact.

All these changes have been transferred to the educational field. Within the educational field, one can consider the area of foreign language teaching as a pioneer in its use and application (Arnhein, 1994). This is what is known today as ‘Computer-Assisted Language Learning’ or ‘CALL’.

The term ‘CALL’ is currently used to refer to the area of work responsible for the development and use of technological applications for teaching and learning languages. The origins of CALL date back to the 1960s, although until the late 1970s CALL projects were limited to universities, which were the ones that had the appropriate informatic and technological programs to carry out the project (Flowerdew, 1996; Warshauer, 1996).

It is important to mention the PLATO project (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), a computer-based education system created by the University of Illinois in the 1960s. It had a huge library of programs for student use. The system used a special programming language called TUTOR to write education software. The programs followed up on each student so that they could identify each student’s strengths and weaknesses. In short, PLATO’s main objective was ‘to deliver cost-effective and computer-assisted instruction’. (Kinzer, 1986)

Gradually, and as a result of technological development, different types of CALL have appeared, such as ‘explorative CALL’, ‘multimedia CALL’, and ‘web-based CALL’. This thesis explores a division of ‘web-based CALL’ that uses social networking sites for language learning (Karpati, 2009).

### ***1.1.2. The History of Social Networking Sites***

This section discusses the history of various social network sites.

As previously mentioned, the arrival of the Internet generated a before and after in different civilizations, especially because it opened the way to a new way of communication between users who did not necessarily need to be physically close to each other. For example, with e-mail, web pages or forums. Interaction between people began to gain more and more strength, eliminating -among other things- many cultural or linguistic frontiers. The success of this technology lies fundamentally in the possibility of communicating in a totally immediate way, through virtual spaces, regardless of geographical location (Alvarez, 2016).

Strictly speaking, the Internet was created during the Cold War. Both sides craved power and that motivated the creation and emergence of numerous technological

advances. The US created the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), whose network allowed the exchange of information between institutions. A few years later, in the 1990s, the global Internet network was made public, and what is known today as the Internet emerged.

Despite these technological advances, there was still no tool or application that allowed Internet users to socialize with each other. That is when SixDegrees appeared. The site, created in 1997, is considered by many as the first modern social network, since it allows users to have a profile and add other participants in a format similar to what we know today. The site managed to have up to 3.5 million users by its peak, but the creation of other social networks that included improvements, made users lose interest in the site. Others, however, claim that Classmates.com was the first social network. It was created in 1995 by Randy Conrads, an American capital investor. The main objective of this social network was to virtually connect former colleges and university classmates. Thanks to this project, new social networks began to appear, which had similar purposes of wanting to bring together friends and acquaintances.

In 2003, Friendster is created to help users find partners. It had 3 million users by its peak, but was eventually closed due to the server not being able to handle the number of accesses. The same year LinkedIn is created. LinkedIn is a social network created to search, recommend, or offer work. Additionally, MySpace was created, which dethroned Friendster in a short period of time. Created by a marketing agency, this network was mainly dedicated to music and technology.

In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg creates Facebook with the purpose of connection students from Harvard University and the USA. It rose in popularity due to the growing development of the Internet and the ease of use of the application on mobile devices with a network connection (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012). Eventually, it overtook MySpace, which already had the highest user traffic on the Internet in 2009.

In 2005, YouTube was launched. YouTube is a video platform, which was acquired by Google in 2006 and it is one of the most important social networks today. The fascination that draws millions of people to the Internet in search of videos, music or movies can be summed up in the alignment of people's expectations; it gives users freedom to choose what to watch and does not require the viewer to participate or contribute.

The same year Twitter appears. Twitter was launched as a social network designed for microblogging. Today, the impact of this network is so strong that even the media devotes entire spaces to talk about the effect of a tweet, a trend, or special mention on the news of the moment. Currently, the network has about 340 million active users per month, and many attribute its success to the simplicity of its usage.

WhatsApp, the most famous instant messaging app, was created in 2009 by Jan Kowm. It was created with the aim of being an intelligent agenda, allowing the user to see what each person was doing at any given time, in order to know whether or not users could start a conversation. In 2014 the application was bought by Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of Facebook, and currently has more than 2 billion users.

In 2010 Instagram was born, which is an application that allows to share videos, photos and comments. This application differentiates from other applications due to the square shape of its' images, in honor of the Kodak Instamatic, and Polaroid. Together with Twitter, it was the pioneer social network in the popularization of hashtags, with the aim of making it easier for users to discover photographs of the same topic. It is a social network site focused on the new generations, who show their contacts what they are doing by using photographs. These photographs are placed in their feed or in their stories, which is a format that is defined by making public content that disappears after 24 hours.

One of the latest developments in social networks is Tik-Tok, a platform for creating and sharing videos. It emerged in late 2016 and in 2018 it merged with Musical.ly. The application owes its success to the creativity and humor of its videos and sounds, the ease of sharing and viralizing content, and the challenges, which provide a new form of interaction among the platform's users. Tik-Tok's distinct features and usage make it one of the social networks with the largest flow of young users. The obsession with the application of those born between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s has fueled its growth.

After reviewing the history of different social network sites, the next section will clarify the types of social media, as classified in categories.

### ***1.1.3. Types of Social Networking Sites***

If one takes into account that all human activity generates legal consequences, one can affirm that social networks are nothing more than social machines designed to fabricate

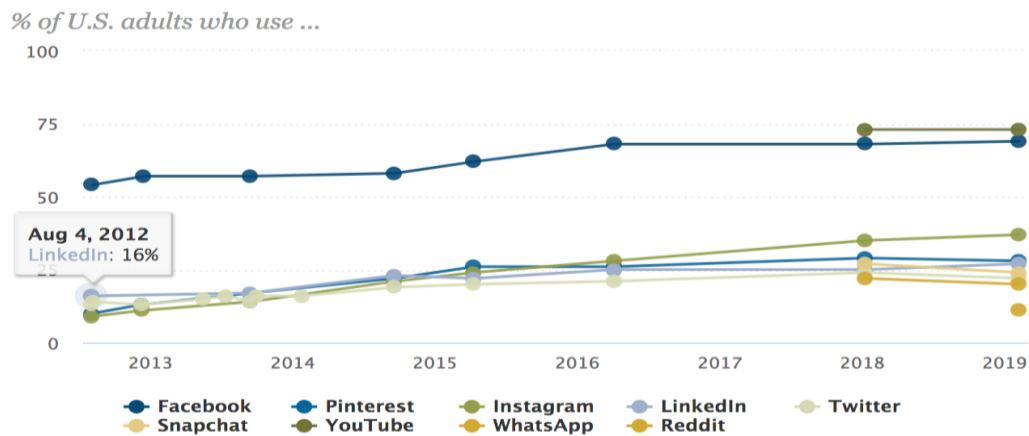
situations, relationships and conflicts with a multitude of legal effects. To this end, social networking sites can be classified into two categories: ‘horizontal social networks’ and ‘vertical social networks’ (Alvarez, 2016).

Horizontal social networks are aimed at the general public and do not have a specific theme. Their main objective is simply to encourage connections between people. Examples of this type of social network are Facebook and Twitter. Horizontal social networks serve whatever the user wants. The user can use them as they wish: chat and send private messages, see what contacts are published, watch entertainment videos, get information, participate in contests, follow influencers, contact a brand’s customer services, or, even make purchases. Its greatest advantage is that it brings together millions of people.

On the other hand, vertical social networks include all specialized social networks. The users of these networks have a common point and share or create content on the same topic. There are specialized social networks on professional, academic, photography, tourism, music, among others. The most popular vertical social networks are YouTube, FilmAffinity, IMDB and LinkedIn.

The main use of this type of social network is for the user to be where they need to be. From the user’s point of view, it is important to be in a social network that revolves around a topic that is of interests. From a brand’s perspective, it is important to reach the right audience.

Figure 1 below shows which social media platforms are most popular among adults in United States of America. In this figure you can see that Facebook and YouTube lead the ranking of the most used social networks. Instagram remains in third place, although it is gaining more users every day. Finally, in fourth and fifth place stands Twitter and LinkedIn (Chaffey, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Most popular social media platforms among adults in United States of America

#### *1.1.4. Advantages and Benefits of Social Networking Sites*

The use of social networks has been absorbed by people all over the world and today it is already part of a routine. They have a series of advantages or benefits, which allowed social networks to consolidate as one of the undisputed protagonists within the Internet.

Two of the best advantages are the *instantaneousness* and the *massiveness* that social networks allow. They work in real time, hence the information or files shared can be viewed by any user of the network immediately regardless of geographical distance. In addition, they also break cultural barriers since they reach a large number of people globally (Chenzi et al., 2012).

The following are more beneficial rather than advantageous. Nowadays it is possible to learn using social networks. Due to the advantages mentioned before, social networks have become a channel to learn, entertain, and inform. They work as a means to viralize certain information, so depending on the interests of the user, he or she can learn, be entertained, or be informed. The other great benefit is finding employment through social networks. There are networks, such as LinkedIn, that allow users to make their job profile public. Companies create profiles from which they offer job opportunities that interested users can apply.

### ***1.1.5. Disadvantages and Risks of Social Networking Sites***

Social networks can be considered the main characters in this context, due to their huge worldwide support. In the end, being able to communicate in real time with anyone in the world, for any purpose, sounds like a revolution. However, the improper use of such media can bring both risks and disadvantages.

According to a study published in 2017 in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, continued use of social media is associated with increased perception of social isolation. In order to curb this isolation, an application for better management of social networks called Hootsuite has been created. In addition, social networking sites are believed to be directly related to reduced user productivity. Having to be aware of notifications, information and fake news makes the user lose focus of what he/she is doing.

Another of the risks present on the Internet and social networks is infoxication. Paying attention in the age of information overload is difficult. There is an overload of content that makes it difficult to pay attention and go deeper into a topic. The worst consequence is that it prevents users from advancing towards their objectives due to information saturation (Primack et al., 2017).

Privacy is one of the largest problems within the Internet and social networks. Nowadays, most people enjoy to share their lives on social networks, ranging from sports activities and delicious food to achievements and special moments. Usually, these publications are shared with the user's family network, friends and sometimes even followers for strengthening bonds. Once the information or content is shared on the Internet it automatically ceases to be private and uncontrollable. Absolutely everybody can see that content. Thus, personal data belonging to the user's own privacy should never be published, as it alters the security of the user and the people around him/her (Kahn, 2001).

As for risks involving a legal crime, there are scams with fake discount coupons and supposed prizes, fake profiles demanding money, fake packages, surveys, donations and business opportunities, among others, aiming to financially defraud the user or to collect data to impersonate the user's identity.

### ***1.1.6. Current Status of Social Networking Sites***

#### *1.1.6.1. Parler controversy*

In mid-January 2021, the application Parler made headlines around the world.

Parler is a microblogging application very similar to Twitter. On it, users can share opinions and interact with other users from a computer or smartphone. Its creators claim that it is the platform for freedom of expression, although since its creation the application has been especially popular among member of the far-right (Munn, 2021). In fact, it is known for the amount of islamophobic, anti-semitic and anti-feminist content. For this reason, Parler was very well received by Donald Trump's followers, who claimed to find more freedom than on other platforms, such as Twitter or Facebook.

Parler was one of the platforms used to plant the assault on Capitol Hill last January 6, 2021. Twitter permanently shut down Donald Trump's account for inciting violence against those responsible for the attack, thus all of Donald Trump's followers and he himself decided to switch to Parler. The application benefited from Twitter's decision, as it became, for a short time, one of the most downloaded apps in the App Store. Shortly thereafter, several tech companies decided to turn their backs on the app. They justified their decision by claiming that the lack of moderation on the platform posed a real threat to the security of the United States, but Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of the United States of America states that platforms are not responsible for the content that is hosted or removed. This law enables the growth of social networks as it protects them of potential users' lawsuits.

### *1.1.6.2. Cambridge Analytica*

In 2018, U.S. newspapers revealed a corruption scandal involving the companies Cambridge Analytica and Facebook.

Cambridge Analytica, founded in 2013, was a company expert in analysing data and developing communication campaigns with a methodology based on data points. Experts claim that by analysing the likes that users leave on social networks, certain computer programs can learn about an individual. These data points allowed the company to know the user's personality traits to know what drove their decision making. In other words, in the same way that there is personalized advertising on the Internet, there are also messages or images that aim to determine the user's vote.

Cambridge Analytica's portfolio included Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and the Leave.EU campaign, in favour of Brexit. The consultancy prompted the creation of a Facebook quiz known as "This is your real life", taking advantage of the platform's poor privacy conditions. In this way, Cambridge Analytica bought the data of Facebook users to answer questions about the political positions of users with a supposed vocation of academic analysis. However, this served to create voter profiles and personalize content and ads for users.

Since then, the consulting agency has repeatedly denied that the data was used to favor the election of Donald Trump. On the other hand, Facebook acknowledges that fraudulent use of user data was made.

### *1.1.7. Social Networking Sites for Language Learning*

Social networks have opened a new paradigm in the educational model (Ab Mann et al., 2012; Alvarez, 2016; Blattner & Lomicka, 2012; Chenzi et al., 2012; Kern, 2006; Mills, 2011). There has been much debate about whether it is convenient to include it in the classroom and train the students, or if one should go for a more protective and restrictive model that would teach the students to prevent abuses and other types of action of dubious morality.

When social networks are used in the classroom to learn languages, students have to take into account their lack of protection in social networking sites (Chenzi et al., 2012). Students are exposed to a series of dangers if the appropriate precautions are not taken to avoid cases of grooming or cyberbullying. Grooming involves befriending a minor for the purpose of sexual abuse by an adult, while cyberbullying is the psychological abuse among equals through the Internet, cell phones or online videogames. All the information that is published and counted on social networks is in a public domain, hence other people have Access to that information and can use it for criminal purposes.

Instantaneousness, as mentioned above, can become a dependency, a distraction, and an addiction. Instantaneousness of the communication in social networks can generate in the student a need of an immediate answer, and this is something that must be avoided. Everybody receives hundreds of notifications on social networks daily, and this makes it possible to fall into the trap of always remaining connected to them. Researchers propose that teachers present an Anonymous survey to the students, where the latter should mark the number of hours per day they spend on social networking sites. In this way, teachers can detect possible cases of addiction to social networks within the classroom, and they can take actions of awareness and training on the subject (Wankel, 2021).

Also related to instantaneousness, social networks can be distracting, especially if used excessively. Any excessive use can harm one's normal life, rest, and consequently will also negatively influence one's academic performance.

Naturally, the way we communicate since the appearance and constant use of social networks has affected conventional human relationships. Social media should not reduce the communication and interaction between students in the classroom. However, if the students make excessive use of it and dedicate too many hours to social media, this will logically affect the human relationships students have with other people in their environment (Meylani et al., 2015; Tulaboev & Oxley, 2012).

## **1.2. Objectives of this study**

At the educational level, web 2.0 tools allow student participation and require students' involvement, which allows new learning opportunities. Web 2.0 also has negative aspects, which one must bear in mind in order to minimize its influence on any activity students carry out, such as unreliable sources and excess of information. However, its use in education attracts the attention of students because it allows microblogging and the realization of e-activities through the use of hashtags, keeping them motivated.

According to a study carried out by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Universitat Ramon Llull, 87% of ESO students recognize that they use the Internet to surf social networks. In this context, it is worth reflecting on the application of web 2.0 tools in the classroom. This assumption resulted in two hypotheses and two research questions in relation to the current study:

### *Hypothesis 1.*

The use of 2.0 web tools such as blogs and social networks encourages autonomous learning, while increasing the motivation of the language learner.

### *Hypothesis 2.*

The use of web 2.0 tools develops language learning out of the class, especially writing skills.

### *Research Question 1.*

What is the impact and efficacy of SNSs for language learning?

### *Research Question 2.*

What effect does the daily use of Twitter have on improving English language skills in Spanish-speaking high school students?

Thus, to examine whether the use of Web 2.0 tools fosters autonomous learning, enhances student motivation and develops writing skills out of the class, an experiment was conducted with students of English as a second language in a private language

academy, who were asked to use Twitter to read and write tweets in English. Due to examine the hypothesis, a 12-item Likert Scale was analysed for each participant.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. *Participants*

Five (5) participants were selected for this project who belonged to the age group of 14- to 17-years. They consisted of four (4) females and one male studying in the Catalan public education system. They live in Tarragona and they are all students of a private after school academy. In there, they are grouped by their English language level (A2). Each of the participants study English as a foreign language and were raised bilingual Spanish-Catalan.

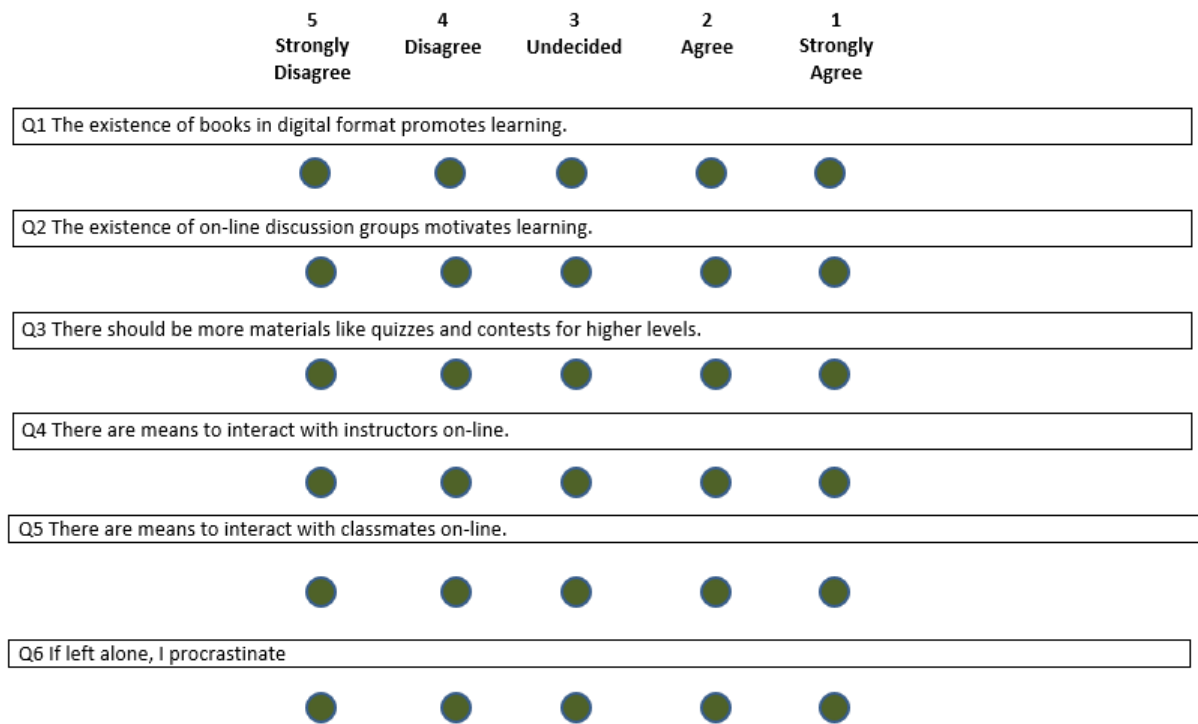
All participants aim to improve their level of English and learn new, contextualized and real content. In the future they want to work in fields that require the English language and want to learn expressions that are not usually taught in textbooks.

### 2.2. *Materials*

Participants were asked to use the social networking site Twitter. They were asked to do so using any device, such as computer or the participants' mobile phones. Then, a 12-item Likert Scale questionnaire was used that was developed to measure and analyse the motivation, attitude and reaction towards Twitter for language learning.

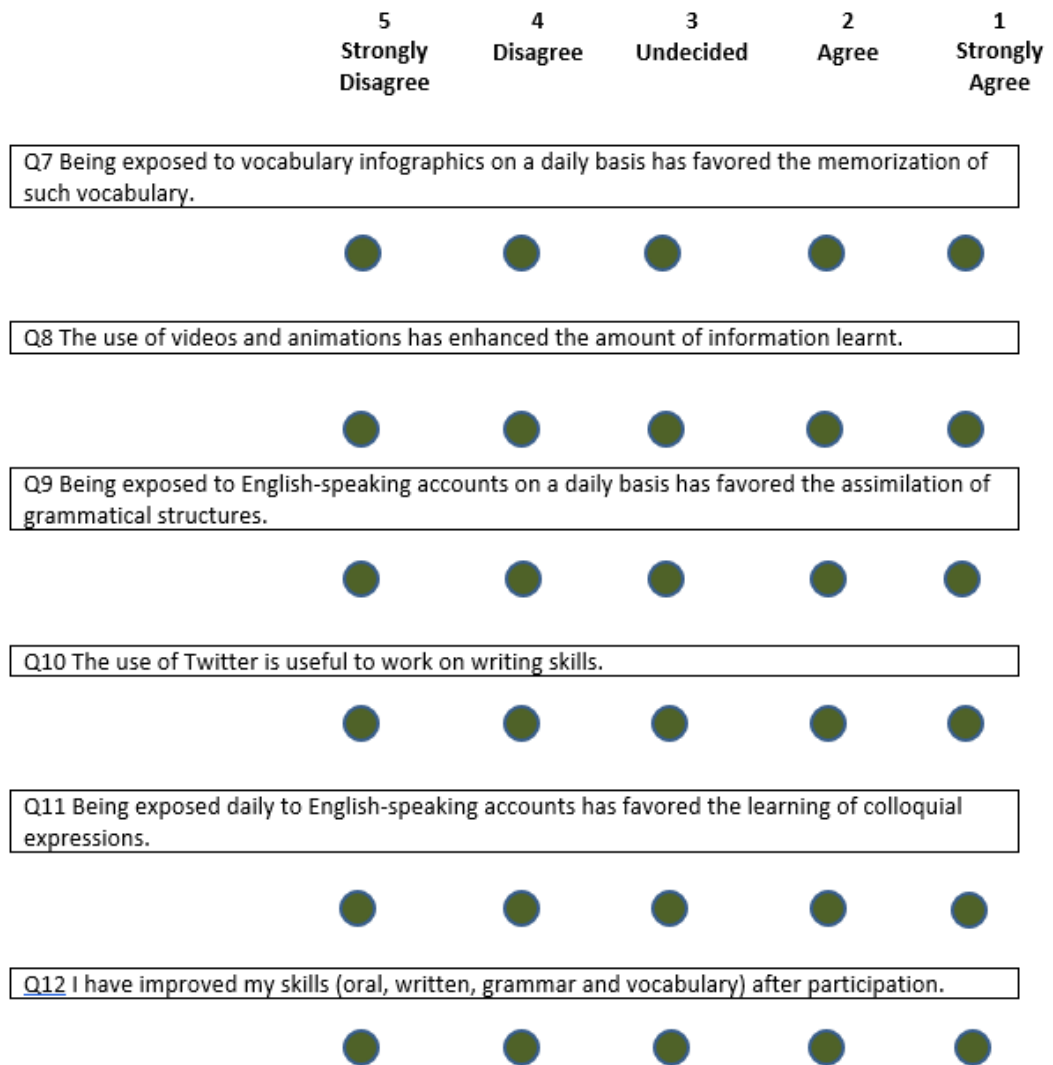
In the questionnaire, participants were asked to score from *1 to 5* the statements.

Figure 2 shows six items of the Likert Scale questionnaire used to justify the first hypothesis about the use of web 2.0 tools such as blogs and social networks to encourage autonomous learning, to increase the motivation of the student, and to develop writing skills. This questionnaire was also used to answer the first research question about the impact and efficacy of social networking sites for language learning. Questions were focused on web 2.0 tools. Participants were asked to rate the statements from *1 to 5* based on their degree of satisfaction with the social network for the purposes of the study.



**Figure 2.** *Likert Scale, questions 1-6*

Figure 3 below shows 6 items of the Likert Scale questionnaire used to answer the second research question about the effect of daily use of Twitter has on improving English language skills in Spanish-speaking high school and private academy after school students. Questions were focused on the use of the platform for improving the language skills. Again, participants were asked to score according their satisfaction for the objectives of the study.



**Figure 3.** Likert scale, questions 7-12

### 2.3. Procedure

The data collection was mainly done through interviews with participants and observation and comparison of the results of the tweets and questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered approximately two weeks after the first week of April. It was assumed that participants would have had enough experience with the materials they were using.

Two weeks before the start of the experiment on April 1st, a list of five accounts sharing English-language content was provided and the participants were asked to follow them. The participants were exposed for four weeks to these accounts on Twitter, which post infographics on English grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as tricks for remembering the information from these infographics. For two days a week, the participants were asked to tweet twice every day under the hashtag #TGNLearnsEnglish. The topic was of their choice. However, participants were recommended to read and write about current news available in the ‘explore’ section.

After being exposed to the use of Twitter for four weeks, the participants were asked to answer a 12-item Likert scale. The purpose of this survey was to measure the respondent’s perceptions and opinion about the use of Twitter as a tool for improving their English language skills.

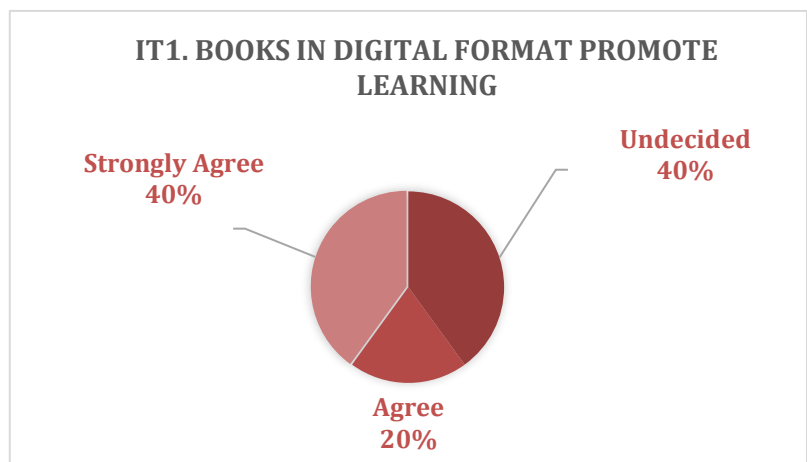
### 3. RESULTS

The results of the questionnaire from questions 1 to 6 are given in Table 1. The results indicate that the responses differed according to their degree of satisfaction with web 2.0 tools and the situations described in the statements on language learning.

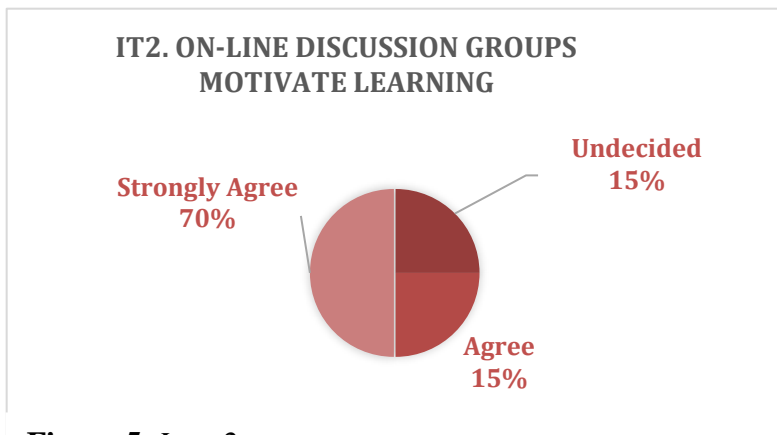
**Table 1.** Results of 12-item Likert Scale questionnaire, questions 1-6

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The existence of books in digital format promotes learning.	0	0	2	1	2
2. The existence of on-line discussion groups motivates learning.	0	0	1	1	3
3. There should be more materials like quizzes and contests for higher levels.	0	0	0	2	3
4. There are means to interact with instructors on-line.	0	0	1	2	2
5. There are means to interact with classmates on-line.	0	0	0	0	5
6. If left alone, I procrastinate.	0	2	1	1	1

As seen in the results of Item 1 (Figure 4) two of the participants were undecided about books in digital format promoting learning, one participant agreed and two strongly agreed.

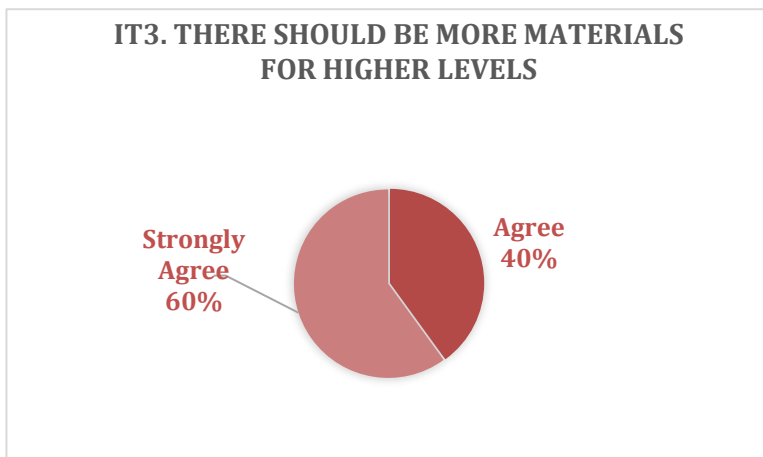


**Figure 4.** Item 1



**Figure 5. Item 2**

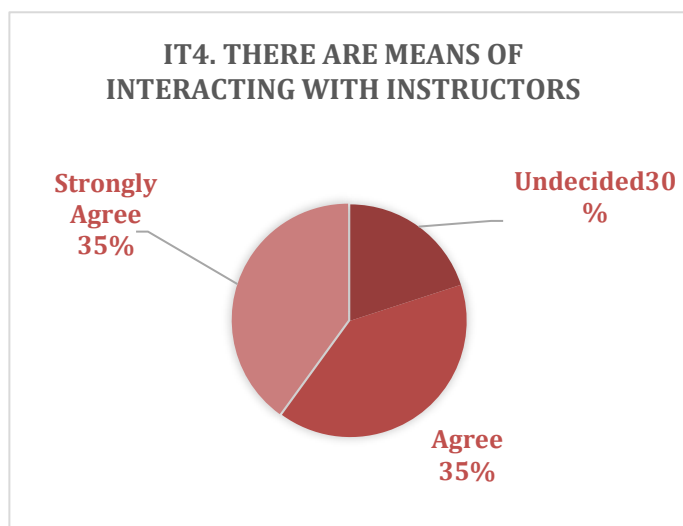
According to three participants the existence of on-line discussion groups strongly motivates learning, while one participant agreed and another one was undecided (Figure 5).



**Figure 6. Item 3**

As illustrated in the results of Item 3 (Figure 6), three participants strongly believe that there should be more materials such as quizzes and contests for higher levels, while two participants simply agreed.

Regarding interaction, the results in Item 4 show that two of the participants strongly believe that there are means of interacting with instructors, two more participants believe that there are facilities but not enough, and one participant was undecided. Regarding interaction between classmates, all 5 participants strongly agreed that there were means to carry out such interaction.



**Figure 7. Item 4**



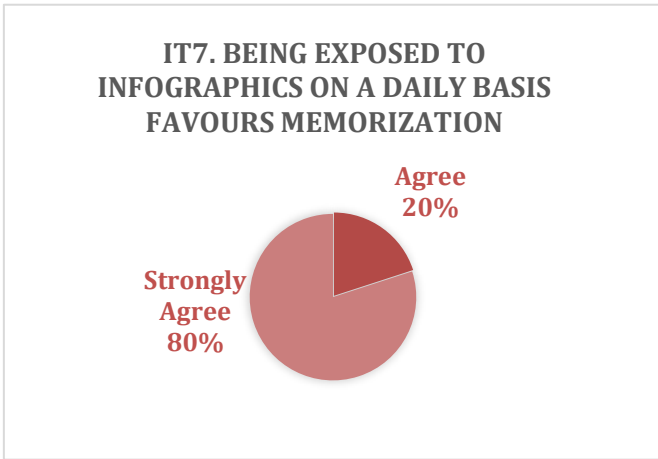
**Figure 8.** *Item 6*

Finally, in Item 6 (Figure 8) participants were asked if they would procrastinate if left alone. The results show that two participants did not agree. One participant was undecided, one agreed and another one strongly related herself in the statement.

The results of the questionnaire from questions 7 to 12 are given in Table 2. The results indicate that, again, the answers varied in terms of their degree of satisfaction towards the situations described in the statements on Twitter as a tool for language learning.

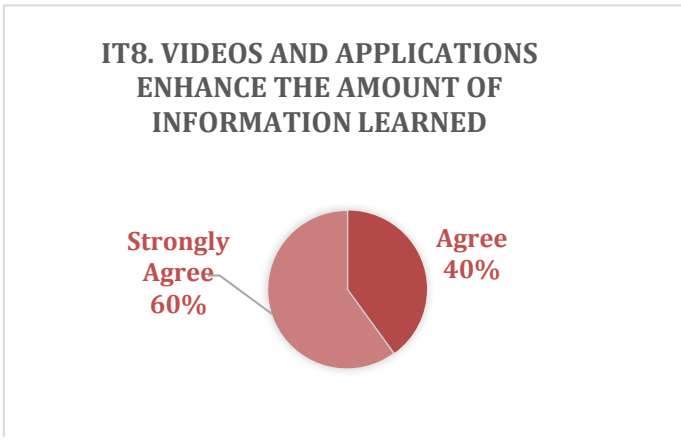
**Table 2.** *Results of 12-item Likert Scale questionnaire, questions 7-12*

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
7. Being exposed to vocabulary infographics on a daily basis favours the memorization of such vocabulary.	0	0	0	1	4
8. The use of videos and animations has enhanced the amount of information learnt.	0	0	0	2	3
9. Being exposed to English-speaking accounts on a daily basis favours the assimilation of grammatical structures.	0	0	0	1	4
10. The use of Twitter is useful to work on writing skills.	0	0	0	0	5
11. Being exposed daily to English-speaking accounts favours the learning of colloquial expressions.	0	0	1	1	3
12. I have improved my skills after participation.	0	0	0	1	4



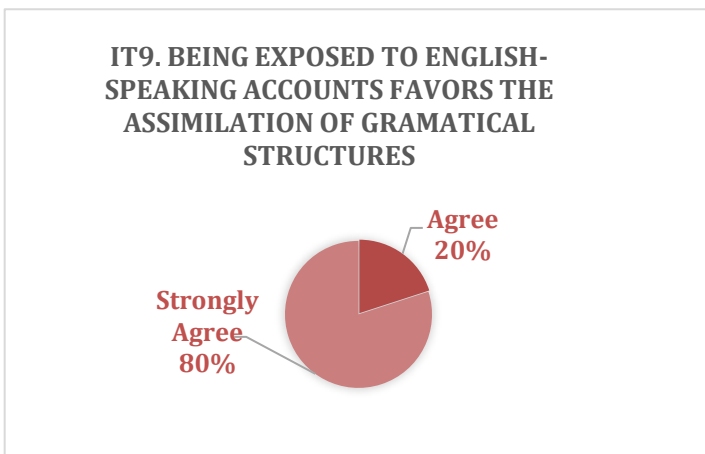
**Figure 9.** *Item 7*

The results of Item 7 (Figure 9) shows that only one of the participants agreed on the effectiveness of infographics in memorizing new vocabulary, while four strongly agreed with the statement. According to three people, videos and animations in the application enhance the amount of information learned (Item 8), while 2 people merely agreed



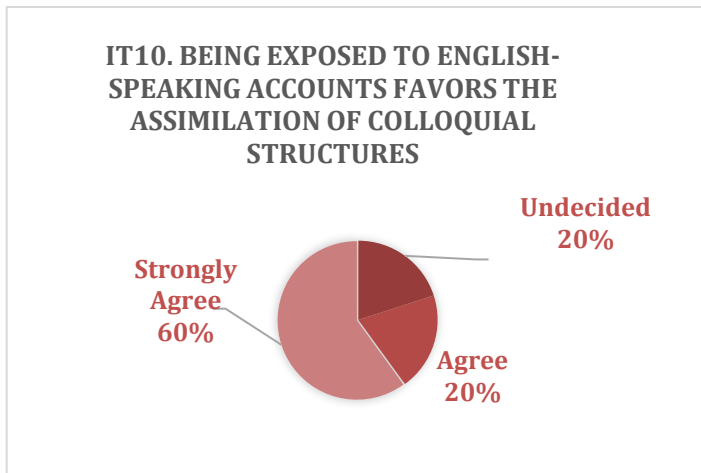
**Figure 10.** *Item 8*

The results of Item 9 (Figure 11) show that four participants strongly agreed on the assimilation of grammatical structures by being exposed to English-speaking accounts on a daily basis, while one participant agreed that being exposed to



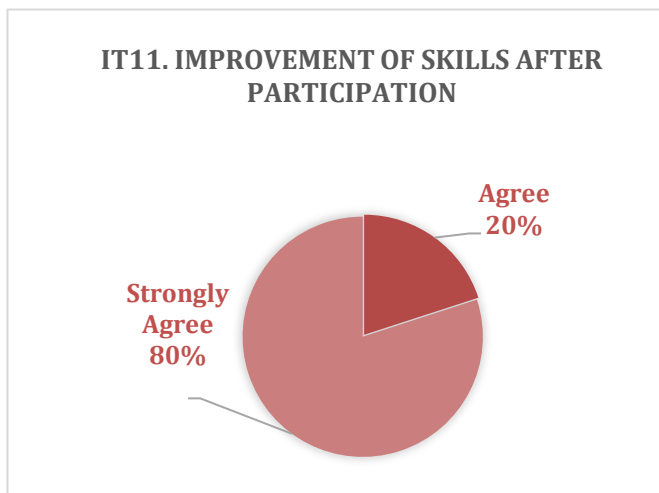
**Figure 11.** *Item 9*

English-speaking accounts on a daily basis is not enough to assimilate grammatical structures. Regarding colloquial expressions, one of the participants was undecided, another participant agreed and the remaining three participants strongly agreed that Twitter helps to learn and assimilate such structures (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** *Item 10*

When asked whether microblogging on Twitter improved writing skills (Item 11), all five participants strongly agreed with the statement. However, the results of Item 12 below (Figure 13) show that only four participants strongly agreed that they had improved their English language skills and abilities after the study, while one person agreed on having improved the skills, but not as much as he/she expected.



**Figure 13.** *Item 12*

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Although the data should be evaluated with caution so as not to draw hasty conclusions, the results of the study reinforced the two hypotheses put forward at the beginning of the research: (1) The use of 2.0 web tools such as blogs and social networks encourages autonomous learning, while increasing the motivation of the language learner, and (2) The use of web 2.0 tools develops language learning out of the class, especially writing skills.

The aim of this study was to find out first of all the impact and effectiveness of SNSs for language learning. The answers given to items 1-6 of the questionnaire (Table 1) indicate that books in digital format and motivational groups motivate and promote learning. However, it is shown that there is a lack of materials such as quizzes and contests for more advanced levels, which becomes a stumbling block in the learning process.

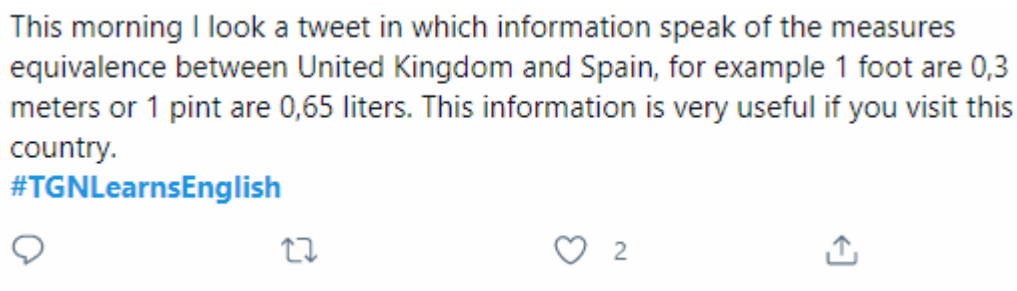
Regarding the facilities for on-line interaction with instructors, it is shown that there are means for such interaction. However, there are many more facilities for interacting with classmates on-line.

Procrastination is a common practice among students and no clear result has been achieved on this issue. Item 6 indicates that there are participants who do not procrastinate if they are unsupervised, while there are others who do procrastinate if they are not supervised by someone. It is then posited that social networks and procrastination are not correlated, and that procrastination depends on the nature of the participant.

The second objective of this study was to find out the effect of daily Twitter use on improving the English language skills of Spanish-speaking high school students. The answers given to items 7-12 of the questionnaire (Table 1) indicate positive results of the use of Twitter as a possible tool for language learning. It is not a statistically significant result due to lack of participants, but it shows that daily exposure to English-speaking accounts on Twitter can reinforce, favour or increase the memorization of vocabulary, the assimilation of grammatical structures and the learning of colloquial expressions.

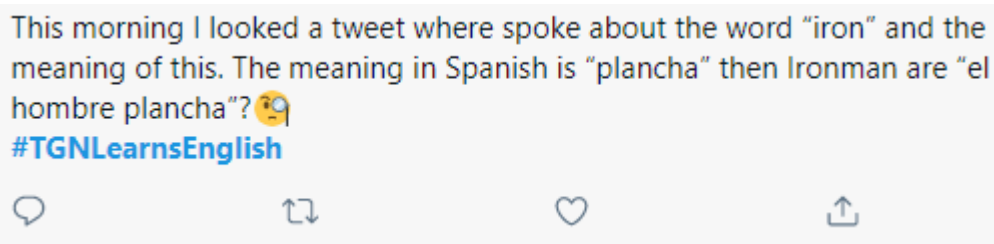
Regarding the impact and success of the platform in improving written expression, the results were highly positive. In the tweet generation phase, it was shown that (1) the number of grammatical and structural errors had been reduced with respect to the first tweets, and (2) the participants used vocabulary acquired during the study. The application is shown to be effective for improving written expression and for the acquisition of new vocabulary and expressions.

Figure 14 shows the first tweet from one of the participants. Verb conjugation errors are visible in the verbs "look" and "speak". Figure 15 shows a tweet made halfway through the study. An improvement in verb tense conjugation is appreciated. One of the participants' last tweets can be seen in Figure 16. In addition to improving verb conjugation and grammatical sentence structure, she has learned and assimilated new vocabulary, as well as including it in the sentence itself.



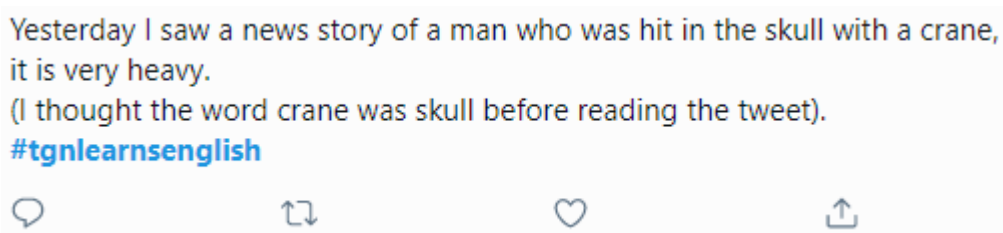
This morning I look a tweet in which information speak of the measures equivalence between United Kingdom and Spain, for example 1 foot are 0,3 meters or 1 pint are 0,65 liters. This information is very useful if you visit this country.  
[#TGNLearnsEnglish](#)

**Figure 14.** *First tweet from one of the participants*



This morning I looked a tweet where spoke about the word "iron" and the meaning of this. The meaning in Spanish is "plancha" then Ironman are "el hombre plancha"? 🤔  
[#TGNLearnsEnglish](#)

**Figure 15.** *Tweet from the same participant in the middle of the study*



Yesterday I saw a news story of a man who was hit in the skull with a crane, it is very heavy.  
(I thought the word crane was skull before reading the tweet).  
[#tgnlearnsenglish](#)

**Figure 15.** *Tweet from the same participant at the end of the study*

Finally, it is concluded that the platform has been effective for the core of this study: to know if the social network improves the language skills of the participants.

#### ***4.1. Limitations of the study***

This section discusses the limitations of the current research and suggests possible directions for future research.

While the study was aimed at students aged 14 to 17, the initial assumption was to include younger students of English as a second language in the study. However, the nature of the study and time limitations played a role, and younger students eventually declined the participation in the study. The sample of students eventually obtained was adequate, but having fewer participants resulted in fewer or less varied results.

Another limitation of the study was the inconsistency of some of the participants in the tweet generation phase. There were weeks in which some participants did not remember to write the tweets. When analysing and comparing the tweets, the lack of these tweets complicated and could have distorted the results of the study to some extent.

As for the materials used, having to use Twitter has not been to the liking of some of the participants' parents. They finally understood that it was all due to a study and accepted the students' participation in it.

## 5. CONCLUSION

With web 2.0 tools and their interactive and social features, language learning and acquisition can be more engaging and motivating. It has also been shown that didactic procedures supported by technology can be more interesting than traditional methodologies. Web 2.0 tools help students to develop other important skills, such as problem solving and autonomy, which are crucial skills in modern world. It is clear that technology has gained its place in education, but as it continues to evolve, so must its function in the educational field. Its sudden rise in today's modern world should be a strong reason to motivate and encourage educators to explore the pedagogical properties of using web 2.0 tools in the classroom.

Regarding Twitter, it is demonstrated that the platform can be used as a very effective resource to improve the learning of a foreign language, in this case English. The motivation of students to write in a foreign language is greatly enhanced, due to the obligatory briefness of the tweets, which is 140 characters maximum. This has resulted in greater involvement in the development of the study. In addition, with an appropriate methodology, students' written expression can be improved. After the study has been carried out, Twitter is perceived by the majority of participants as a tool that effectively promotes their learning of the foreign language.

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