The Effect of Social Network Use on EFL Learners' Second Language Achievement: An Investigation into their Attitudes

Farzaneh Khodabandeh[1]

Assistant Professor and Faculty Member, English Language Department, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: *The efforts were made in the present study to seek two objectives: determining the effect of Telegram as a social network on second language achievement of Iranian foreign language (EFL) learners, and exploring the EFL learner' attitude toward using Telegram for language learning purposes. To this end, 40 EFL learners were randomly selected and then divided into two groups of experimental and control. The experimental group did their exercises through Telegram as a collective language learning activity at home, while members of the control group did the exercises in their individualistic specific ways. After the treatment, the results of Independent-Samples t-test showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. The results of interview indicated that EFL learners mostly had never used any kind of social media in a collective manner for language learning. The findings of this study might have some implications for teachers to help them employ social media as an educational tool, for language learners to indicate the advantages of using social media for language learning, and for material developers to design activities in textbooks which need to be done through social media in a collective manner.*

Keywords: *Attitude, EFL learners L2 achievement, Social media, Technology, Telegram.*

Introduction

The growth in information and communication technologies and social media has brought about a major change in the realm of teaching and learning (Duggan, 2009). These technologies and social media have the advantage of being publicly available. Accordingly, researchers believe that integration of these technologies into language learning courses, combined with traditional methods, can enhance the overall learning progress of the students (Kromer & Kuntner, 2010). As Isisag (2012) states, technology and social media provide new opportunities to promote the quality of foreign language learning. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) or using smartphones for foreign language learning has drawn attention from language learners and teachers. MALL for the first time was introduced by Callan (1994) and from then onwards, many studies have focused on using mobile phones in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/ English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts (e.g., Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2006; McCarty, 2005; Belanger, 2005; Hsu, 2013; Stanley, 2006; Zhang, Song, & Burston, 2011). This issue is still the place of controversy. That is, some studies support MALL (e.g., Stockwell, 2010; Zhang et al, 2011), but some other studies reveal that it is not a very effective technique, or at least it is not more effective than traditional learning methods (e.g., Lu, 2008).

Many students spend many hours drowning in social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram. These applications were primarily published for general everyday-life purposes but they also can be manipulated to help students develop in their academic goals. Whether social media is favorable or unfavorable, many students utilize them on a daily basis. They continue to grow in popularity and they can become a vital part of education. Fewkes and McCabe (2012, p. 93) state that "social networking is second nature to our students". In the last decade, researchers have paid special attention to mobile-learning and sending messages via social networks for language learning and teaching (Begum, 2011). Owning mobile devices can have a significant role in applying mobile-learning among

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[1] Email: farzanehkhodabandeh13@gmail.com

learners (Corlett, Sharples, Chan & Bull, 2004; as cited in Begum, 2011) and mobile phones are widely used throughout the world (Green, 2007). Sending messages through social networks in these devices, like Telegram, provides an appropriate source for applying mobile-learning among students. On the other hand, language learning – especially English as the international language – has grown more and more important in "the global village" for people (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005). Houser, Thornton and Kluge (2002) believe that mobile devices can make the process of language learning more effective and flexible. Social networks can be employed to do educative actions for improving language learning. Picciano (2009) believes that social network activities should be integrated into classroom activities to support learners' development. Kabilan, and Abidin (2010) maintain that computer-mediated communication "has positive outcomes for teaching and learning of English" (p. 181) and "is one of the oldest yet still most valuable tool of network-based language teaching, as it puts learners in direct contact with others for authentic communication" (p. 181). Espinosa (2015) stated that "teachers have to find out where the students are, and work from there". In the current study, the researchers made attempts to determine the effect of Telegram for doing tasks on EFL learners' L2 achievement, and compare it with that of traditional common way of doing tasks. Two research questions will be specifically followed in the present study:

1. Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve L2 achievement (including speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar) of EFL learners?
2. What EFL learners' think of the effect of using social network on their L2 achievement?

Review of Literature
Espinosa (2015) did a study on Facebook in EFL context to determine its potentiality for improving English learning, sought for ways for teachers to adopt it as an educational tool, and described its benefits, pitfalls and challenges. It was found that Facebook can be used by EFL teachers as a powerful instructional tool to engage students in language learning activities and develop their communicative competence. A study carried out by Jacqueline (2016) found that Facebook can be used as an educational tool in the teaching-learning process, allowing language learners to communicate and practice English without problems. Wasoh (2014) found that Facebook as a learning tool offers learners a convenient tool to engage in discussions with their teacher and classmates who have better language knowledge. In the context of Iran, Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) did a study and maintained that social networks have an indispensable part in improving second language learning. They concluded that social interaction achieved through social networks is a kind of stimulus for learners to communicate with others.

There were some studies in the related literature focusing just on one aspect of language learning. For instance, with regard to vocabulary learning, Cooney and Keogh (2007) found that mobile technologies can be positively used as a learning tool. A study by Ghaemi and Seyed Golshan (2017) indicated that SMS via social networks has a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Similarly, Alemi and Lari (2012), Lu (2008) and Zarei, Heidari Darani and Ameri-Golestan (2017) showed that EFL learners hold a positive attitude towards using social networks in vocabulary learning. In a study recently conducted by Khodabandeh, Alian, and Soleimani (2017) on the effect of MALL-based tasks on grammar learning, it was found that sharing tasks in virtual networks can exert positive effects on language learning and grammar learning in particular.

As this literature review indicated, many studies have been done seeking the positive and negative aspects of different social media for language learning. Khodabandeh et al. (2017) chose grammar and found that MALL exerted positive aspects on grammar learning. Some studies focusing on vocabulary (e.g., Zarei et al. 2017; Lu, 2008; Alemi & Lari, 2012; Ghaemi & Seyed Golshan, 2017) showed that using Telegram can improve language learners' vocabulary. From among different social media, some studies chose to specifically examine Telegram (e.g., Zarei et al. 2017; Ghaemi & Seyed Golshan, 2017) and finally achieved remarkable results showing this medium's potentiality for improving EFL learners' vocabulary. A number of studies (e.g., Espinosa, 2015; Jacqueline, 2016; Wasoh, 2014; Derakhshan &

Hasanabbasi, 2015) can be found which examined Facebook and reached more or less the same results. But none of these studies chose Telegram with its various facilities paying attention to all parts of language learning, that is, speaking, listening, writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary as well as exploring the attitudes of EFL learners in a qualitative manner. This study was an attempt to fill this gap in a way completely described in the next chapter.

Methodology
Subjects
The present study adopted a quasi-experimental research design in which two groups were compared on one variable (i.e., L2 achievement). After administration of a homogenizing test (i.e., Oxford Placement Test, see Appendix I) among 100 EFL leaners, 40 Iranian EFL participants at primary level of English proficiency were selected, aged from 18 to 28 years, learned English through *Interchange Series* in Isfahan city, and selected through random sampling. They were randomly divided into two groups (20 members each): one as the control and the other as the experimental. The current study was conducted in 2017 in Isfahan province, Iran.

Instruments
L2 Achievement Test
To camper EFL learners of the experimental group with those of the control group on their English language achievement, a suitable valid and reliable achievement test (see Appendix II) was selected from the materials of Interchange Series developed by Jack C. Richards (2005). These achievement tests, being well-known and proved as valid and reliable instruments for measuring the extent to which a specific language is learned during a specific time period, have been designed by the series' author and include different parts, i.e. listening comprehension, reading comprehension, grammar part, vocabulary part, writing tasks and conversation practice. Furthermore, this test was expert-viewed as well as was subjected to reliability analysis through running Cronbach's Alpha to allow researcher to be more certain about its validity and suitability for the present study. The results of Cronbach's Alpha consistency estimation turned out to be .83 considered to be a good level of reliability. Every unit comprises of four lessons, as well as, one achievement test usually given to students just after each unit completion as midterm test. These achievement tests include 30 questions to be answered and 50 points to be obtained. Regarding the fact that three units are taught in each term (16 sessions) in the language institute, the participants of both groups took three achievement tests plus one final test (100 points) and then were scored out of 250 points.

Semi-structured Interview
Regarding the qualitative data collection, some questions were formulated in line with the objectives of the study. These interview questions were formulated under the professional supervision of the experts in the field to make sure about their suitability and validity.

Procedure
The present study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. In the first step, one of the language institutes in Isfahan city was contacted. The manager and EFL learners' consent was obtained. They were also assured that their information would be kept confidential and the surveys could be anonymously responded. In the second step, a proficiency test (was administered to almost 100 EFL learners from among which 40 learners with scores ± 1 standard deviation were randomly selected as the sample. They were randomly classified into two groups, i.e., the control and experimental groups.
The experimental group did the all types of exercises in Students' Book and Workbook through Telegram under the supervision of their teacher. These exercises were usually completed at home as assignments and these assignments were checked in the next session. The participants of the experimental group were required to make a Telegram Group and practiced the exercises in a collaborative manner every night at certain time in this group. The role of students was to help each other, share their answers, discuss answers in controversial situations, and come to teacher if needed. They recorded and sent voice messages or wrote texts sharing their answers and explaining the reasons why a certain answer was not correct or vice versa. All interactions were done in English. The role of

teacher was to supervise these interactions, interfere if something was going wrong, and do corrections. The students tried to use all potentialities and attractive features of Telegram application. They used to send stickers, animations, record voice, reply to a specific message, like, dislike, and so forth making the interactions attractive and pleasant to go on. On the other hand, the control group adopted a traditional way of doing the exercises. They practiced and completed the exercises at home. During and at the end of the term, both groups were supposed to take achievement tests and then were compared based on their scores. Besides, 20 participants were randomly selected to sit a semi-structured interview about their attitudes towards using Telegram for the purpose language learning. Using SPSS v22 as well as content analysis, the collected data were analyzed.

Data analysis
Data analyses were conducted using SPSS v22. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (i.e., Independent-Samples t-test) were utilized. To answer the first three research questions, descriptive statistics and Independent-Samples t-test were run. To answer the second research question which qualitative in nature, content analysis was applied.

Results
Descriptive statistics
The descriptive statistics with respect to the main variable of the study, i.e. L2 Achievement and its different parts is presented below.

Table (1): Descriptive statistics of L2 Achievement in Control Group

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Speaking	20	30.45	2.60	26	36
Listening	20	38.60	2.81	32	42
Reading	20	24.70	4.10	18	31
Writing	20	19.50	3.26	15	26
Vocabulary	20	23.10	4.48	17	32
Grammar	20	26.90	3.64	20	30
L2 Achievement	20	163.25	7.15	151	178

As shown in Table 1, in a sample of 20 respondents of the control group, the mean scores of speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and L2 achievement were found to be 30.45, 38.60, 24.70, 19.50, 23.10, 26.90, and 163.25 respectively.

Table (2): Descriptive statistics of L2 Achievement in Experimental Group

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Speaking	20	33.3	3.32	27	39
Listening	20	40.8	3.18	36	46
Reading	20	25.3	4.74	20	35
Writing	20	22.1	3.74	16	29
Vocabulary	20	27.6	4.69	18	35
Grammar	20	27.9	2.77	23	30
L2 Achievement	20	177.1	10.78	154	197

Based on Table 2, in a sample of 20 respondents of the experimental group, the mean scores of speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and L2 achievement came out to be 33.30, 40.85, 25.30, 22.10, 27.65, 27.90, and 177.10 respectively.

Normality
To check the variables' normal distribution with regard to both groups of the control and experimental, one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov was run the results of which are presented in Table 7 below.

Table (3): Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for Control Group

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Z	Sig
Speaking	20	30.45	2.60	.58	.88
Listening	20	38.60	2.81	1.07	.19
Reading	20	24.70	4.10	.55	.91
Writing	20	19.50	3.26	.79	.55
Vocabulary	20	23.10	4.48	.69	.72
Grammar	20	26.90	3.64	1.13	1.55
L2 Achievement	20	163.25	7.15	.71	.69

As shown in Table 3, scores of speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and L2 achievement in the control group are normally distributed.

Table (4): Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for Experimental Group

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Z	Sig
Speaking	20	33.30	3.32	.65	.79
Listening	20	40.85	3.18	.91	.36
Reading	20	25.30	4.74	.63	.81
Writing	20	22.10	3.74	.51	.95
Vocabulary	20	27.65	4.69	.85	.45
Grammar	20	27.90	2.77	1.05	.16
L2 Achievement	20	177.10	10.78	.51	.95

According to Table 4, scores of speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and L2 achievement in the experimental group are normally distributed.

Inferential Statistics
Research Question One, Speaking Part
The first research question of the study is divided into seven parts. That is, the researcher is trying to find out whether using Telegram for doing language learning tasks improve Iranian EFL learners' scores of speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and finally the main variable L2 achievement. To this end and to answer this minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve speaking scores of EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples t-test was run.

Table (5): Group statistics for speaking part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Speaking	Control	20	30.45	2.60	.58
	Experimental	20	33.30	3.32	.74

As shown in Table 5, the mean scores of speaking for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 30.45 and 33.30, respectively, showing the outperformance of the experimental group which needs to be tested and confirmed through Independent-Samples t-test whose results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table (6): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for speaking part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Speaking	Equal variances assumed	2.15	.15	-3.01	38	.005	-2.85	.94
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.01	35.93	.005	-2.85	.94

According to Table 6, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding their speaking score, with the experimental group outperforming the control group ($p < .05$).

Research Question One, Listening Part

To answer the second minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve listening scores of EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples t-test was run.

Table (7): Group statistics for listening part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Listening	Control	20	38.60	2.81	.63
	Experimental	20	40.85	3.18	.71

As shown in Table 7, the mean scores of listening for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 38.60 and 40.85, respectively, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group which should be confirmed through Independent-Samples t-test whose results are shown in Table 12.

Table (8): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for listening part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Listening	Equal variances assumed	.63	.42	-2.36	38	.023	-2.25	.95
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.36	37.44	.023	-2.25	.95

According to Table 8, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding their listening score, with the experimental group outperforming the control group ($p < .05$).

Research Question One, Reading Comprehension Part

To answer the third minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve reading comprehension scores of EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples t-test was run.

Table (9): Group statistics for reading part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading	Control	20	24.70	4.10	.91
	Experimental	20	25.30	4.74	1.06

As shown in Table 9, the mean scores of reading comprehension for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 24.70 and 25.30, respectively, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group which this outperformance should be checked through Independent-Samples t-test whose results are presented in Table 10.

Table (10): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for reading part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Listening	Equal variances assumed	.27	.60	-.42	38	.67	-.60	1.40
	Equal variances not assumed			-.42	37.22	.67	-.60	1.40

According to Table 10, there is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding reading comprehension score ($p > .05$). Therefore, it cannot be concluded that using Telegram necessarily improves reading scores of EFL learners.

Research Question One, Writing Part

To answer the fourth minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve writing scores of EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples t-test was applied. The results of descriptive statistics and Independent-Samples t-test are indicated in Tables 11 and 12.

Table (11): Group statistics for writing part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Writing	Control	20	19.50	3.26	.73
	Experimental	20	22.10	3.74	.83

As shown in Table 11, the mean scores of writing for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 19.50 and 22.10, respectively, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group. This outperformance in descriptive statistics should be verified through Independent-Samples t-test the results of which are shown in Table 12.

Table (12): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for writing part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Writing	Equal variances assumed	.52	.47	-2.34	38	.025	-2.60	1.11
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.34	37.33	.025	-2.60	1.11

As shown in Table 12, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding writing score, with the experimental group outperforming the control group ($p < .05$). Thus, it is confirmed that using Telegram for doing language learning tasks improves writing scores of Iranian EFL learners.

Research Question One, Vocabulary Part

To answer the fifth minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve vocabulary scores of EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples t-test was run. The results of descriptive statistics and Independent-Samples t-test are indicated in Tables 13 and 14.

Table (13): Group statistics for vocabulary part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary	Control	20	23.10	4.48	1.00
	Experimental	20	27.65	4.69	1.04

As shown in Table 13, the mean scores of vocabulary for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 23.10 and 27.65, respectively, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group. This outperformance should be tested through Independent-Samples t-test the results of which are presented in Table 18 below.

Table (14): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for vocabulary part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Vocabulary	Equal variances assumed	.00	1.00	-3.13	38	.003	-4.55	1.45
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.13	37.92	.003	-4.55	1.45

As shown in Table 14, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding vocabulary score, with the experimental group outperforming the control group ($p < .05$). Thus, it is confirmed that using Telegram for doing language learning tasks improves vocabulary scores of EFL learners.

Research Question One, Grammar Part

To answer the sixth minor research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve grammar scores of Iranian EFL learners?), an Independent-Samples whose results are shown in Tables 15 and 16.

Table (15): Group statistics for grammar part

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Grammar	Control	20	26.90	3.64	.81
	Experimental	20	27.90	2.77	.61

As shown in Table 15, the mean scores of grammar for the control group and the experimental group were found to be 26.90 and 27.90, respectively, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group which this outperformance should be checked and verified through Independent-Samples t-test whose results are indicated in Table 16.

Table (16): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for grammar part

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
Grammar	Equal variances assumed	2.13	.15	-.97	38	.334	-1.00	1.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-.97	35.47	.335	-1.00	1.02

According to Table 16, there is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding grammar score (p > .05). Therefore, it is not confirmed that using Telegram improves grammar scores of EFL learners in the experimental group.

Research Question One, Major Variable: L2 Achievement

After testing the minor research questions, now it is the turn of first major research question (i.e., Does using Telegram as a social network for doing language learning tasks improve L2 achievement of EFL learners?). To do so, an Independent-Samples t-test was again run the results of which are indicated in Tables 17 and 18.

Table (17): Group statistics for L2 achievement

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
L2 Achievement	Control	20	163.25	7.15	1.60
	Experimental	20	177.10	10.78	2.41

As shown in Table 17, the mean scores of L2 achievement for the control and the experimental groups were respectively found to be 163.25 and 177.10, indicating the outperformance of the experimental group compared to the control group. But, this outperformance needs to be tested through Independent-Samples t-test whose results are presented in Table 18.

Table (18): The results of Independent-Samples t-test for L2 achievement

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.
L2 Achievement	Equal variances assumed	2.67	.11	-4.78	38	.00	-13.85	2.89
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.78	33.01	.00	-13.85	2.89

As shown in Table 18, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group regarding L2 achievement, with the experimental group outperforming the control group (p < .05). Thus, the first null hypothesis is rejected and it is confirmed that using Telegram for doing language learning tasks has a significant effect on improving the L2 achievement of EFL learners.

Research Question Two

Regarding the second research question (i.e., What Iranian EFL learners' think of the effect of using social network on their L2 achievement?), some interview questions were formulated (see Appendix III) and then 20 EFL learners were selected to sit an interview. Then, the interview data gathering was finished and the collected data was subjected to content analysis and frequency analysis.

The first interview questions were about whether EFL learners have ever used social media as a collective manner in their class to help them in their educational purposes, more specifically, English language learning. The results of content analysis were tabulated as follows (Table 19).

Table (19): The results of content analysis for the first interview question

Answers	Percentage %
No. It needs specific time which we don't have.	30 %
No. Social media has never been so popular like now.	24 %
No. It needs high extent of coordination among classmates.	36 %
Yes, but just me and my nearest classmate together	10 %

As presented in Table 19, the interviewees' most frequent answers to the first interview question centers around three key words: lack of time, lack of coordination, and recent popularity. That is, 90 percent of interviewees told they have never used any kind of social media in this collective manner for language learning. They thought (30%) using social media as a collective learning activity needs specific time to be devoted to the matter of language learning and it is something hard to achieve among students with different lifestyles and many other lessons to learn and tests to take either in high school or university. Other students (24%) thought that social media has recently grown this much and we should adapt ourselves to use as much as possible; however, we have not. There students (36%) who believed that the reason they did not employ social media was that it needed very much coordination among a group of language learners and hence it did not work for them. Also, there found some cases who told they had been using social media for language learning, they sent voice messages practicing conversation and chatted in English but not as a group activity, it had been something just between two close classmates.

The second interview question was about whether the interviewees agree with using social media for educational purposes, especially language learning. The results of content analysis were tabulated as follows (Table 20).

Table (20): The results of content analysis for the second interview question

Answers	Percentage %
Yes, it is good in any form.	33%
Yes, but not as a class activity, just in small groups.	53%
No, I'm good with the old learning style of my own.	14%

Based on the results of Table 20, 86 percent of the participants agreed with using social media for language learning purposes. Some of the interviewees (33%) believed that using social media like Telegram would have positive effects, no matter its form, whereas some others (53%) told it would be more effective if it is used in the form small groups of two or three, for those language learners with more or less the same lifestyle, or those close to each other. Interestingly, there were cases (14%) who believed in old ways of language learning.

The third interview question centered on the advantages of using social media, especially Telegram, for language learners. The results of content analysis are presented in Table 21.

Table (21): The results of content analysis for the third interview question

Answers	Percentage %
Learning at any time and in anywhere	13%
More convenience in learning	18%
Group learning	20%
More accessible	16%
Different facilities (voice messages, video messages, …)	22%
More enjoyable learning	11%

As can be seen in Table 21, many reasons for and many advantages of using social media especially Telegram have been mentioned by our interviewees. They believed that Telegram and other similar

social media applications makes it possible for language learners to learn at any time and in anywhere (13%) and provide more convenience in learning (18%). They thought that one of the most important advantages of social media is providing an opportunity for group learning (20%). Besides, a considerable reason for using social media was reported to be the different facilities provided by these applications (22%) like sending texts quickly, sending voice and video messages, reply to a certain message, creating groups and channels, using robots, etc. Learning through social media applications like Telegram was reported to be more enjoyable (11%) and more accessible (16%).

The fourth and last interview question was about the disadvantages of using social media for language learning. The results of content analysis are indicated in Table 22.

Table (22): The results of content analysis for the fourth interview question

Answers	Percentage %
The possibility of being interrupted by non-educational matters	43%
High extent of coordination	34%
Professionally educational supervision	23%

As presented in Table 22, some disadvantages have also been reported with regard to using social media applications for language learning purposes. Our EFL learners told that they had been frequently interrupted by urgent personal matters while they were in the group and practicing (43%) which might act as a debilitative factor. It was also reported that doing virtual group learning activities like this need high extent of coordination and commitment among group members (34%) which is often hard to achieve. Finally, they stated that the interactions between group members need to be educationally supervised for checking possible mistakes or errors on the part of language learners (23%), while teachers sometimes do not have enough time to do so.

Discussion

The first research question of the study sought to investigate the differences between the experimental and control groups regarding L2 achievement. The results of Independent-Samples t-test showed significant differences between the experimental and control groups regarding (1) speaking score, (2) listening score, (3) writing score, (4) vocabulary scores, and totally (5) L2 achievement. In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control group with respect to the aforementioned variables. Regarding reading comprehension and grammar scores, however, no differences were found. It was hence verified that using Telegram has had a significant effect on improving the EFL learners' L2 achievement. This language learning outperformance of the learners who use social media has also been found in a number of studies. This finding is in line with those of Espinosa (2015) who found that Facebook can act as a powerful instructional tool to engage students in language learning activities and develop their communicative competence. This social media was found to have the potentiality to create an online community for language learners to practice their language through chats with other learners and native speakers around the world.

In the same vein, Jacqueline (2016) found that Facebook can act as an educational tool in the teaching-learning process, allowing language learners to communicate and practice without problems. Besides, Wasoh (2014) found that Facebook provides learners with a convenient tool to engage in discussions with their teacher and classmates who have better language knowledge. Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) found that social networks have an indispensable part in improving second language learning, have a positive effect on language learning out of the classes, and can improve students' language skills, especially writing skill. With regard to the effect of virtual networks on grammar learning, Khodabandeh et al. (2017) found that sharing tasks in virtual networks can exert positive effects on language learning in general and grammar learning in particular. Alemi and Lari (2012) also found that using social media has a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Similarly, Lu (2008) in a study showed the significant effect of social networks on vocabulary learning processes. Ghaemi and Seyed Golshan (2017) explored the impact of Telegram on teaching English vocabulary in EFL context of Iran. Their study indicated Telegram had a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Telegram was also found (Zarei et al., 2017) to have significant effects on advanced EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge in the context of Iran.

Regarding the attitude, it was found that the participants had positive attitude toward using Telegram for vocabulary learning purposes. This outperformance of language learners who used Telegram compared to those who did not, might be justified by Khazaie and Dastjerdi (2011). They believed we should apply technology in the realm of teaching and learning vocabulary in particular, and teaching and learning skills and sub-skills in general. This finding echoes those of Levy and Kennedy (2005) who concluded that mobile phones have many advantages in the field of learning. It helps them improve their literacy and numeric skills and distinguish their current abilities. It also supports independent and collaborative learning, and helps students recognize their difficulty areas.

This finding might also be explained with regard to the fact that Telegram provides many facilities which the old individualistic way of learning languages and doing the exercises at home do not have. The members of the experimental group used send voice messages, video messages and text messages, most probably helping with their speaking, listening and writing skills. It should not be forgotten that they were corrected by a supervisor whenever any mistakes were happening. But the members of the control group did their homework and exercises in an individualistic manner, with no opportunity to be corrected within a group learning activity. They did not interact with each other, no texting, no voicing and no sending video messages, which make their weaker performances seem reasonable. On the other hand, the members of the experimental group experienced group learning. They mostly stated that learning through Telegram came out to be fun and enjoyable. It seems that they had more convenience in learning. But, language learning and doing the assigned exercises individualistically at home with no technology-based facilities probably did not help the control group members very much with their learning efficiency. It should also be remembered that those language learners who sat an interview believed that by using Telegram they could learn at any time and in anywhere, had more convenience in learning, experienced group learning, used different facilities like sending voice messages and video messages, and also experienced more enjoyable learning.

Conclusion
Different factors affect EFL learners' L2 achievement. Technology is regarded to be one of those factors having the potentiality to be used for achieving language learning purposes and improving English learning. This study sought to determine the effect of a social media application, born by technology, recently grown popular named Telegram. It was found that using Telegram had positive effects on L2 achievement of EFL learners. These results yielded evidences verifying the positive effect of using Telegram on learners' L2 achievement. In the light of the findings which are well supported by the current related literature, this study recommends effective use of Telegram, as a collective language learning activity, in language teaching and learning. These findings might have implications for EFL teachers and EFL learners as well as developers of English materials and texts.

Implications of the Study
1. As this study found the positive effect of using Telegram for promoting L2 achievement, its findings might be valuable for teachers to help them employ social media as an educational tool to improve their students' English.
2. With regard the fact language learners hold a positive attitude towards using social media for learning English, the findings of the present study might present some implications for language learners.
3. As the present study revealed the outperformance of those using social media for language learning compared with those not using, the findings might have implications for material developers to design and include some activities in the textbooks which need to be done through using social media in a collective manner.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study
Although serious attempts were made in the current study to overcome limitations, it still suffers from some limitation. One of the main one was about the insufficient extent of control on the part of researcher over the presentence and commitment of language learners during language learning practices through Telegram. It was hard to make sure that all the participants were present doing the exercises and

participating as required. The main delimitation was the evaluations made. The students were given 4 quizzes, three normative and one summative. The evaluations contained all aspects of language learning: speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar.

Suggestion for Further Studies
Based on the findings revealed in the present research, some suggestion for following-up research can be made:

1. The present study can be replicated with a correlational design, using large number of participants and quantitative procedures in the process of data collection.
2. This study can be replicated with participants collected through one of the random sampling strategies so that generalizations based on the findings can be made with more certainty.
3. The present study can be replicated using individual-difference variables, such as personality types, styles, beliefs, and critical thinking to investigate the attitude and tendency of language learners with different characteristics towards using social media use for language learning purposes.
4. The participants of this study were at primary level of English proficiency. It is recommended to investigate EFL learners' L2 achievement in other proficiency levels.

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