THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL PRESENCE IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This study was carried out in order to reveal the effects of using social media on social presence in foreign language teaching. Facebook was used as a social media tool as part of the English lessons and 8th grade students who attended a private school in Istanbul participated in the study. The students in the experimental group used social media for their foreign language classes and the control group continued their technology supported foreign language education. Technology supported foreign language education was considered to be the education that involved learning management systems and technological tools that support face-to-face education. Mixed research design was used. For the quantitative part, data were collected with the social presence scale and for the qualitative part face-to-face interview with semi-structured interview technique took place. The quantitative data were analyzed by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, independent samples t-test and ANCOVA. For the qualitative part content analysis was used where knowledge building model was also considered. Based on the findings, it was concluded that students in the experimental group who had their classes with Facebook had higher social presence in their foreign language lessons.

Keywords: *Social media, Facebook, social presence, technology supported foreign language education, connectivism.*

YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİNDE SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMININ SOSYAL BURADALIK ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

Özet

Bu çalışma yabancı dil öğretiminde sosyal medya kullanımının sosyal buradalık üzerine etkisini ortaya koymak amacıyla yapılmıştır. İngilizce derslerinde Facebook sosyal medya aracı olarak kullanılmış ve 8. sınıf öğrencileri çalışmaya katılmıştır. Deney grubu yabancı dil derslerinde sosyal medyayı kullanırken kontrol grubu teknoloji destekli yabancı dil eğitimini sürdürmüştür. Bu çalışmada teknoloji destekli yabancı dil eğitimi öğrenme yönetim sistemlerini ve yüz yüze eğitimi destekleyen teknolojik araçları içermektedir. Karışık araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Nicel kısım için veriler memnuniyet anketi ve başarı testi ile toplanmıştır. Nitel kısım için yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ile yüz yüze görüşme tekniğinden yararlanılmıştır. Nicel veriler Kolmogorov-Smirnov testi, bağımsız örneklem t-testi ve ANCOVA kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bilgi oluşturma modelinin de dikkate alındığı nitel kısım için içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Deney grubunda derslerini Facebook ile alan öğrencilerin yabancı dil derslerinde daha yüksek sosyal farkındalık düzeylerine sahip oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sosyal medya, Facebook, sosyal buradalık, teknoloji destekli yabancı dil eğitimi, bağlantıcılık.*

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INTRODUCTION

Because of the economic and political changes, the necessity of knowing at least one foreign language and the teaching of foreign languages are gaining more and more importance day by day. In this context, the necessity of exploring different aspects of technological tools, which are constantly changing and developing, for language teaching is also of great importance. Today's learning environment requires teachers to find ways that would involve technology so that teachers would have better communication ways with their students in technology supported foreign language education. According to Siemens' connectivism theory (2005a, 2005b), learners achieve information, make it meaningful and internalize it. As Siemens proposes, in today's digital world learning occurs beyond storing and recalling information but it actually happens among individuals connected to each other which also happens through social networking.

Teachers make use of technology in order to enrich their students' access to different resources, find ways to communicate better and have information about social issues (Blattner &Fiori, 2009). At this point, it is significant to consider social presence. The term social presence has been first defined by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) and throughout history there has been no one description that researchers agreed on. In general, social presence can be defined as the degree to which an individual feels themselves to be real while communicating through media tools. Another possible definition of social presence is an individual's emotion, interaction, communication and identity in an online environment. It is also the evaluation of a student's degree of sense of belonging to a group (Tu & McIssac, 2002). Social media in education can be considered to be a tool that would help to reach the aims of the lessons while supporting students' social presence. The new use of technology and social media in this respect presents teachers an opportunity to form learning communities. Facebook can be considered to be a place where learning communities can be formed. It unites teachers and students in the same environment and supports collaboration in learning (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012). It can be said that when tools are used in a way to help and complete each other efficiently, the advantages of social media are paramount (Cross, 2006). While encouraging authentic and collaborative learning environments, Web 2.0 tools also provide students with the opportunity of checking their own learning and through this these tools support language learning skills (Motteram &Sharma, 2009). These tools also form environments that support socializing, cooperation, creativity and sharing which are considered to be crucial for learning environments. Furthermore, since the internet and social media is becoming an essential part of individuals' lives and taking more and more place there day by day, whether the use of social media in foreign language education has any impact on students' social presence should be considered with value for educational purposes.

Since properties of learning environment may affect social presence (Ozonur, Yanpar-Yelken & Sancar-Tokmak, 2018) and social network sites hold the features like socialization and interaction within themselves, using social sites like Facebook can help to increase the interaction among students. In addition to this, by increasing the quality of participating in the teaching process teachers can generate more effective learning environments.

With the improvements in the internet, computer technology and social media tools, it has become easier to have an access to the studies carried out for the purpose of teaching a foreign language. There are various studies in the field of web 2.0 technologies as well as learning in K-12 environments. In a study conducted by National School Boards Association (2007), it was found out that the online sharings of students in social media covers both education and learning. That is to say, although they were designed for other purposes, social sites started to include some other areas especially in young people's lives including education. Karlin (2007) mentioned that 60 % of the students who used social network sites talked about education online and more than 50 % talked about either homework or some other works at school. Consequently, while teachers play an important role in their students' learning, they cannot make them learn by a magical touch but they can create learning environments which enable language acquisition (Corder,1981).

The Importance and Purpose of Research

It is now widely accepted in the literature that social media sites can be used in education because of their interactive nature which allows communication as well as cooperation. Social sites provide students with countless opportunities to improve themselves in terms of their own learning as well as the others'. This requires active and dynamic involvement of the students. Blake (2008) determined that web 2.0 tools contributed to the evolution of information by synthesizing the material and turning students into active owners or writers of authentic materials. According to research conducted on social media sites' use by university students, social sites increase communication while increasing participation and social communication and make learning process happen (Akgündüz, 2013). It is also argued that using social media in educational environments can help build more effective communication among students while providing teachers with an opportunity to know their students better (Grant, 2008). Therefore, it would be possible to say that this study might shed light on the use of social media for educational purposes investigating its use with younger, teenager, students focusing on social presence and foreign language lessons.   In the light of all the developments cited above, the aim of this study is to find out

whether using social media in foreign language lessons, in this study English, increases students' social presence and what students think about the effects of using social media in foreign language lessons.

The hypothesis that has been formed in line with the aims of the study is:

In foreign language lessons where social media is used, the social presence levels of students are higher compared to the ones whose foreign language lessons do not use social media.

As for the qualitative part the question is:

What are the opinions of students about the effects of the use of social media in foreign language lessons?

THE STUDY

The study aimed to find whether using social media in foreign language lessons, in this study English, increases students' social presence as well as finding the opinions of students about the effects of the use of social media on their social presence in foreign language lessons.

Study Group

The study group was comprised of a total of 80 8th grade students who attended a private school in Istanbul. Both the experimental group and the control group consisted of 40 primary school 8th grade students and followed the same curriculum. Experimental group classes had 21 boys and 19 girls and the control group had 23 boys and 17 girls. The quantitative part of the study was conducted according to the principles of quasi-experimental design since the classes were already formed. The teacher of the experimental group had 24 years of teaching experience and was working in the school the study was conducted for 12 years. The teacher of the control group had 21 years of teaching experience and was working in the school the study was conducted for 9 years.

Data collection tools

This study used explanatory mixed pattern in which quantitative data were collected and then qualitative data were gathered. For the quantitative part of the study, 5-point Likert social presence scale was used. There were three dimensions in the social presence scale itself. One of the sub-dimensions of the social presence scale was also called social presence which included the first nine items of the social presence scale itself which was used in this study. (Arbaugh, Cleveland-Innes; Diaz, Garrison, Ice, Richardson & Swan, 2008) Although the scale was translated into Turkish and its validity and reliability was worked on, considering the ages of the students, the scale was translated into Turkish again and its validity and reliability was thoroughly evaluated by different professionals both in English and in Turkish. A pilot study was also carried out with 49 students from 8th grades in a different school. Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.96 and KR-20 was found to be 0.86. For the qualitative part of the study, semi-structured interview was used. After the questions had been prepared by the researcher, they were examined by four different professionals in the field and a pilot interview was held with 3 students. The actual interview was conducted with 7 boys and 9 girls who volunteered to take part in the interview. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Content analysis was used. In examining students' interaction with each other in the discussions in Facebook, knowledge building model has also been used. Knowledge building model focuses on people's working in collaboration in order to increase the quality of their social togetherness and make it a better community (Zhang, Scardamalia, Reeve & Messina, 2009). Knowledge-building is only possible when all students actively participate in the discussions. In order to create the necessary conditions for knowledge building, it is essential to engage students with knowledge problems and make the classrooms places where students are encouraged to shape knowledge (Herrenkhol & Guerra, 1998; Cazden 1986).

Implementation

Before the implementation started the students had been given the social presence scale and asked to fill in. The same process was applied at the end of the implementation. The implementation process was carried on for 6 weeks. In addition to their technology supported foreign language education the students in the experimental group used social media for their foreign language lessons, English, while the control group on another campus of the same school continued their usual technology supported foreign language education. First, the students were informed about the study and asked to join the Facebook page created by the researcher. The students were then asked to actively share their ideas in the discussions which were prepared according to the topics of their English lessons stated in the curriculum. During the course of the experiment, the students were motivated and encouraged by their teacher. The discussion questions were given at the end of every week on Fridays and the questions were aligned with their weekly syllabus. Some of the questions were "In what ways can people benefit from a good education? How important is a university degree in order to succeed in life? Do you plan to go to university? Why/Why not? The researcher regularly observed the lessons and met the students in person.

Data analysis

For the quantitative part of the study, in order to find out whether parametric or non-parametric analysis techniques to be used in the study, Kolmogorov-Smirnow normality analysis is applied. Independent samples t- test was used to find out the difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their social presence. Since the experimental group was selected not in random but from an already formed 8th grade classes, the effects that could affect pre-test results were taken in control in both experimental and control groups. For this reason, ANCOVA was applied in order to find out whether there was a significant difference in the groups' post-tests and whether this result stemmed from the intervention itself. In the qualitative part of this study, content analysis which is a process that summarizes and determines the main ideas and messages in written documents gained (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) was used. As part of the first section of the content analysis, in order to code the data, they were divided into different meaningful sections and these sections were given different names. The students' real names were not used and given codes. K for girls, and E for boys was used, which are the first letters of sexes in Turkish. Then the data were coded in a general framework. The students' own expressions were also given place. In order to ensure reliability and to eliminate any wrongdoings resulting from the researcher, the data gained from the interview were first coded and after waiting for a week recoded and checked whether there were any differences. For the reasons of ensuring reliability, the data coded for the same category for both the same and different students were also compared by the researchers. In the second section themes were found out. There were three themes that would explain the codes in general. In order not to miss out any points regarding the coding and finding themes, the support of another researcher who was working in the field was referred to. The researcher and the other researcher worked together and checked and united the data again while re-checking the codes and themes. In examining students' interaction with each other in the discussions in Facebook, knowledge building model has also been used. With this, students' interactions with and among each other was also looked into. In the last section, both codes and themes were put into tables.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Results of Kolmogorov – Smirnov Test of the experimental group

Values		Social Presence Scale	
		Pre test	**Post test**
N		40	40
Normal Par.	$\bar{x}$	34,17	38,67
	ss	3,98	4,45
z		,584	,784
p		,885	,570

In order to find out whether experimental group social presence scale pre- and post- test values were normally distributed one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used. As can be seen on the table above, the results for social presence pre-test $(z=,584; p >,05)$; social presence post-test $(z=,784; p > ,05)$ show that there is no significant difference in the distribution of values in terms of normality.

Table 2. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the control group

Values		Social Presence Scale	
		Pre test	**Post test**
N		40	40
Normal Par.	$\bar{x}$	33,15	32,83
	ss	4,85	5,14
z		,831	,704
p		,495	,704

In order to find out whether control group social presence scale pre- and post- test values were normally distributed one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used. As can be seen on the table above, the results for social presence pre-test $(z=,831; p>,05$; social presence post- test $(z=,704; p >,05)$ show that there is no significant difference in the distribution of values in terms of normality.

Table 3. Results of the comparison of pre-tests of experimental and control groups

Point	Groups	N	x̄	ss	Sh x̄	t Test		
						t	Sd	p
Social Presence Pre test	Experimental	40	34,17	3,98	,62	1,03	75	,518
	Control	40	33,15	4,85	,76			

As can be seen in the table above, as a result of the independent groups t-test applied to find out whether there was a significant difference between experimental and control groups' social presence scale pre-test points, it was found out that the difference between the groups' arithmetic mean for social presence was not significant with ($t=1,03; p <,05$)

Table 4. Comparison of experimental group's pre and post-tests

Points	Groups	N	x̄	ss	Sh x̄	t Test		
						t	Sd	p
Social Presence Pre- test Post- test	Pre test	40	34,17	3,98	,62	-5,29	39	,000
	Post test	40	38,67	4,45	,76			

As can be seen in the table, in order to find out whether there was a significant difference between experimental group's pre-test and post-test results paired samples t-test was applied. The results for arithmetic mean for social presence were found to be significant with ($t=-5,29; p < ,05$) This difference was for post-tests which meant after the treatment the experimental group's social presence level increased significantly.

Table 5. Comparison of control group's pre and post-test points

Points	Groups	N	x̄	ss	Sh x̄	t Test		
						t	Sd	p
Social Presence Pre test- Post test	Pre test	40	33,15	4,86	,77	1,41	39	,166
	Post test	40	32,82	5,15	,81			

As can be seen in the table, in order to find out whether there was a significant difference between control group's pre-test and post-test results paired samples t-test was applied. The results for arithmetic mean for social presence were not found to be significant with ($t=1,41; p <,05$)

Table 6. Comparison of experimental and control groups' post-tests

Points	Groups	N	x̄	ss	Sh x̄	t Test		
						t	Sd	p
Social Presence Post test	Experimental	40	38,67	4,46	,71	5,43	78	,000
	Control	40	32,82	5,16	,81			

As can be seen in the table, in order to find out whether there was a significant difference between experimental and control groups' social presence scale post-test points, independent samples t-test was applied. The results for arithmetic mean for social presence were found to be significant with ($t=5,43; p < ,05$).The arithmetic mean of experimental group was significantly higher than the control group.

This was a quasi-experimental study aiming to find out whether independent variable had any effect or not. The analyses used and presented above showed that differences between experimental and control groups were significant. However, since it may be possible that the differences between experimental and control groups stemmed from pre-test points' effects on post-test points, it was decided to control pre-test points by applying ANCOVA in order to gain more valid and accurate results. According to Büyüköztürk (2006), by using linear regression method covariance analysis would eliminate the external effects which could not be controlled by the design of the study and makes it possible to find the treatment's real effect. For this reason, one factor covariance analysis, ANCOVA, which accepts pre-test as the common variable used to check and control the differences between the post-tests. One of the main advantages of this test was that it reduces any possible bias stemming from the differences between groups at the beginning of the experiments.

Table 7. Descriptive Values of Post-tests

Groups	$\bar{x}$	ss	N
Experimental	38,67	4,45	40
Control	32,82	5,14	40

As can be seen in the table, the results for arithmetic mean of social presence post tests were found to be $\bar{x}$=38,67; ss=4,45; arithmetic mean of control group $\bar{x}$=32,82; ss=5,14. On the other hand, it was shown with Kolmogorov Smirnov analysis that the data were distributed normally. As a result of Levene analysis, it was found that variances were not homogeneous (L_F=12,05; p <,05). Since the data were distributed normally, it was concluded that the data answered the requirements of the criteria and further analyses were applied.

Table 8. Results of the Covariance Analysis of Post-tests

Variance Source	Total squares	sd	Mean squares	F	p	η^2
Model	1424,295	2	712,147	51,310	,000	,571
Prestest (Reg)	739,845	1	739,845	53,306	,000	,409
Groups	521,027	1	521,027	57,54	,000	,328
Error	1068,705	77	13,879			
Total	104738,00	80				

The mean points of post-tests corrected according to the pre-test shown to be higher in experimental group compared to the control group. When Eta square (η^2) values were examined, it was seen that being in different process groups explained 20% of variability independently of the pretest points.

However, it was seen that pre-test points being an important predictor of post-test points (F=53,306; p <,05) and explained40.9% of the variances in post-test points on its own. Pretest points and group variables together explained the variances in post-test with 53% and ANCOVA model that describes this is significant (F=51,310; p <,05). After this process multi-comparison analyses were applied and for this reason LSD test was done and it was concluded that the difference was for the experimental group.

In order to find out students' opinions about the effects of the use of social media in foreign language lessons in the qualitative part of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. After the intervention of 6 weeks with the experimental group, 16 students were volunteered to take part in the interview. Data gathered from the interview were brought together in codes first and then themes that would cover these codes were formed. The opinions of students about the impact of using social media in foreign language classrooms on students' social presence were examined in detail and the themes which were found by using content analysis were as follows: communication, getting closer, self-confidence. The table showing both the codes and themes are given below.

Table 9. Codes and Themes

CODE	FREQUENCY	THEME
Easy communication	10	
More communication	10	Communication
Exchange of ideas	9	
Cooperation	6	
Total	35	
Knowing better	6	
Chatting at school	6	
Chatting outside school	4	Getting closer
Meeting after school	4	
Sharing	3	
Total	23	
Realizing ability	9	
Realizing that better than others	7	
Getting experience	3	Self-confidence
Total	19	

Communication is one of the themes that was formed from the interviews. The students expressed that they could communicate easily and more compared to their time before the intervention. Exchange of ideas and cooperation during the discussions are the ideas especially mentioned by the students. Students justified this by expressing that using Facebook for their lessons made them feel comfortable and since they could get a permission from their parents to have an access to Facebook, they could easily reach their friends and this was reflected on their socialization. One of the students (K2): "I couldn't be sure what was going on at the beginning but later on I wanted to talk to my friends more there. There were people I wouldn't even say hello properly before but then I realized that they weren't like that. I've even started seeing them. Finding out about their ideas was useful for me. I would never think that I would work on something together with E4"

Another theme that came up in the interviews was getting closer. Students expressed that they benefited from using Facebook in their foreign language classrooms in different ways. One of the examples they gave included that they found out more about each other by sharing what they have done in Facebook in class discussions. They also signified that their ideas about each other changed and they got closer. One of the students, E1, said "It was all very useful for me. I mean very useful. I got some ideas about my friends. I mean I found out everything about them like what they do after class, socialization and everything. Talking about my ideas on a given topic helped me to get closer with them. And the lessons were also better".

During the interviews students mentioned self-confidence in various ways. Students mentioned that discussions they joined using Facebook increased their self-confidence. They said that they were not so sure about their foreign language level and that is why they hesitated whether to join the discussions or not. However, after the intervention had started, they saw that their friends also made mistakes like them and this helped them to gain their self-confidence. Student K4: "My English level was not so good because I studied at a state school before. That is why I did not want to write and share on Facebook. I was shy because of this. Then as I started to write and saw that no one really cared about my coming from a state school and my English level being bad I started to participate in the lessons more. Realizing that I could do it made me feel relaxed. I got my confidence." Another student who talked about Facebook having a great impact on both her self-confidence and socialization said "I was already using Facebook but this year I could not because of the exam. Writing and sharing our ideas in an environment where there are people who can present their ideas like me and who can also make translations like me increased my self-confidence".

It was noticed during the implementation process that lessons did not take place in their conventional structure and students were encouraged to participate in the discussions actively. In the observations during the intervention period students joined the lessons eagerly as well as the discussions in Facebook while sharing their ideas in the class. By joining in the discussions, as suggested in the knowledge building model, they took responsibility of their own learning as well as their friends'.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out the effects of social media on social presence in teaching a foreign language. The idea that social media can change the dynamics of classroom environment and has the potential to support communication and learning is widely accepted in the field ((Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Luke, 2006; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds 2007; Akbari, Naderi, Jan-Simons & Pilot, 2016).

According to the results of the study, the experimental group which used social media in their foreign language lessons had higher social presence and communication, getting closer and self-confidence were the themes that came along with the results. The results of the study were parallel to some other studies in the field. (Richardson & Swan, 2003; Lowenthal & Dunlop, 2011; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Garrison, 2011; Borup, West & Graham, 2011; Marchand & Gutierrez, 2011; Hollis, 2014; Hostetter & Busch 2006; Hackman & Walker, 1990; Leh, 2001; Tu & McIsaac ,2002; Boston, Diaz, Gibson, Ice, Richardson & Swan, 2009; Lehman & Conceição, 2010; Wang, 2010; Ke 2010; Yamada & Akahori, 2007). When the data for social presence were analyzed before the intervention, it was seen that there was not a significant difference and therefore it was concluded that their social presence levels were equal. When the data were analyzed after the intervention, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the social presence points of experimental and control groups. This study is not without its limits. The number of participants and the length of the study are the main limitations of this research. Yet, there is also a concern about the use of social media in education suggesting the negative effects of social media on academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Junco, 2012). However, based on the findings of this study, it seems safe to say that social media has many features which could be used to improve the educational processes and foreign language lessons that use social media is an efficient way in teaching and increases students' social presence. It also feels safe to say that in an educational environment formed by using social media, both

teachers and students can share their ideas with each other to a great extent. Not only Facebook but also social networking sites like MySpace, Hi5 and Cyworld enable their users to form groups or enable them to join groups and this way users can interact with others who have similar interests with them (Kwon & Wen, 2010). Yet, people can gather around certain ideas or ambitions through social networking sites while making new connections and restructuring the existing ones (Alkan & Bardakçı, 2017). As suggested in the connectivism theory where social learning is integrated with social media, students can connect to educational contexts and conceptualize 'learning' in a meaningful way through interacting and collecting information from others. While adding to class discussions by supplying more apparent identities, social websites ensure connection among users at the very single level and with that they can host different learning styles within and also outside the class (Akgündüz, 2013). In the interviews using social media in foreign language classes were reflected on students' opinions as communication, getting closer and self-confidence. It is true that using social media in educational environments requires more research and as mentioned before this study has its limits. However, this study should still be considered important with its elaboration in using social media for educational purposes as well as its trial to display the potential benefits of using these tools for academic purposes. The results of the study that indicate students' rising communication coincide with the study conducted by Keleş & Demirel (2011). In their study it was concluded that a lesson carried out with Facebook support increased communication among students. In students' opinions social media supported classes enhanced learning and in addition to this lessons' being more enjoyable affected students' consideration of lessons positively. According to Smith (2009), educational institutions should reflect the world we live in, which is getting more sociable. When the place and degree of social media in students' daily life is considered, educational places' need to give importance to social media becomes clearer. Hargreaves (2002) expressed that web, in terms of education, supports change and its sustainability. When users connect to the social and professional web through internet, they are also connected to each other through interaction, relationship and shared information which in time turns into a professional support (Hargreaves, 2002). In a study about using Facebook in education, it was seen that Facebook improved the communication among students and enabled students to adapt to the environment (Madge, Meek, Wellens & Hooley, 2009). Students' positive opinions on the use of social media in education are also parallel to the other studies in the field. (Silius, Miilumaki, Huhtamaki, Tebest, Merianinen & Pohjolainen, 2010; Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008; Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie & Rothwell, 2007; Kikuchi &Otsuka, 2008). Having highlighted the limits of this study and the need for more research, it can be said that by using social media, students can improve themselves in an enriched learning environment. This way of interaction is expected to increase students' social presence and enhance student communities in general which would in turn come back with more efficient learning experiences.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Teachers have always sought for ways to reach their students and to communicate well with their students (Hodges, 2011).   It is known that the new generation is more involved in technology and use technological tools to a great extent. There are many educational institutions which value technological tools students use and make their use compulsory (Lenhart, Purcell & Smith, 2010). In today's world learning happens through connection of individuals and among them. Connectivism studies the effects of technology on people and getting information and according to Siemens (2005a, 2005b) learners achieve the information and after making it meaningful they internalize it. This meaningful connection only happens through interaction between different information sources, joining groups with mutual interests and social sites. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know this technology and use it for their students' benefit.

One of the definitions of social networking sites which are web-based services is a group where individuals get together for a particular purpose or interact with each other according to their mutual interests (Staples, 2009). Social media can be defined as online tools which allow social interactions like sharing and discussion in the internet. According to Mayfield (2010), social media consists of web sites and is the platform where big groups share information and form social and professional links. In this study, the place where students discuss their ideas in their learning communities is Facebook.

To find whether using social media in foreign language lessons, in this study English, increases students' social presence as well as finding the opinions of students about the effects of the use of social media in their foreign language lessons explanatory mixed pattern was used. Therefore, the hypotheses were based on the idea that the social presence levels of students are higher when social media is used as part of the foreign language lessons.

8th grade students who attended a private school in Istanbul participated in the study. The implementation process was carried on for 6 weeks. In addition to their technology supported foreign language education, the experimental group used social media for their foreign language lessons, English, while the control group on another campus of the same school continued their usual technology supported foreign language education. Technology supported foreign language education was considered to be the education that involved learning management systems and technological tools that support face-to-face education. During the implementation period, the students were asked to subscribe to the Facebook page created by the researcher from their own Facebook accounts and were then asked to actively share their ideas in the discussions which were prepared according to the topics of their English lessons stated in the curriculum. For the quantitative part, data were collected with the social presence scale. For the qualitative part face-to-face interview with semi-structured interview technique took place. The quantitative data were analysed by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, independent samples t-test and ANCOVA. For the qualitative part content analysis was used where knowledge building model was also considered. Based on the findings, it was concluded that students in the experimental group who had their classes with Facebook had higher social presence in their foreign language lessons.

The results of the study are in line with many studies (Ellison, 2008; Akgündüz, 2013; Brick, 2011; Bosch; 2009) There is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. It can be said that using social media in foreign language classes have a positive impact on students' social presence. Using social media does not require extra pre-knowledge and there are other people using social media in students' environment. It allows peer teaching, supports learning with educational games and multimedia and through this you can reconstruct the process which are advantageous (Kalafat & Göktaş, 2011).

Considering students' use of internet, by using social networking in teaching a foreign language a more effective communication which would lead to higher social presence levels can be achieved. Social networks with their features they held within themselves make it easier for students to communicate with their teachers and content and with collaborative learning they support students' researching, probing and problem-solving skills as well (Özmen, Aküzüm, Sünkür ve Baysal, 2011).