Leveraging Social Media for Improved Writing in English as a Foreign Language

Rona Nur Azzahra[1], Hidayah Nor[2], Nida Mufidah[3]
[123] Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Corresponding Email: hidayahnor@uin-antasari.ac.id

Abstract. In the contemporary digital era, social media constitutes a significant and pervasive element of students' daily experiences, especially within the domain of foreign language acquisition. This qualitative narrative inquiry sought to comprehensively explore the nuanced effects of various social media applications on the writing abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students enrolled at Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari, Banjarmasin. This study focused on three English education students who were chosen because they actively use social media and are learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Researchers gathered information through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and narrative frameworks to understand their personal experiences. The data were analyzed using narrative analysis to find common themes and important insights. The results show that popular social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter help students improve their writing. Students gained more vocabulary, felt more confident expressing themselves in English, and saw real examples of English in different situations. Still, the study found some downsides, including students using more informal language, having fewer opportunities for face-to-face interaction, and spending too much time on their phones. The study concludes with teaching suggestions that offer ways to make the most of social media's benefits while reducing its negative effects in EFL writing classes.

Keywords: Social Media, English Writing, English as a Foreign Language, Digital Age

Introduction

Social media has had a significant impact on students' language acquisition, especially in writing. The growth of digital platforms like Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok has changed how students use English in daily life. Putri (2021) notes that these social media sites give learners direct access to real language, helping them pick up new words and writing styles more quickly. This shift is especially important for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, who often use these tools to build their skills outside the classroom. Sociocultural theory helps explain this trend by highlighting the importance of social interaction in language learning. By actively using authentic content and joining online communities, students can improve their language skills and gain cultural knowledge. Kusuma (2016) reported that more than half of Indonesians in each province, with 50% to 60% identified as frequent users, depend on social media and the internet. During the pandemic, social media usage in Indonesia increased rapidly as individuals relied on these platforms to disseminate local news and remain informed about global events. Social media affects students' writing skills in several ways. It introduces them to different words, sentence styles, and language patterns,

and gives them a space to express themselves freely (Handayani, 2020). These platforms help students interact in real situations and can support their writing development. Still, there are concerns that constant exposure to non-standard grammar, acronyms, and internet slang might harm their academic writing (Mustafa, 2022). Students who often write informally on social media may find it hard to switch to the formal style needed for academic work.

Writing skills are seen as a key part of learning a language. Being able to compose well is important for doing well in school and is a basic part of language proficiency (Purnamasari, 2022). To meet academic standards, students need to express their ideas clearly and organize them well. This requires a strong grasp of the language, its grammar, and good ways to structure their work. However, maintaining appropriate language standards in academic writing while balancing the advantages of social media-driven writing exposure presents a challenge (Juraeva & Yoqubjonova, 2025). The consequences of online environments on the compositional development of learners constitute the subject of multiple prior scholarly works. Specifically, Mustafa (2022) found that students who maintained active participation in virtual forums demonstrated superior mastery of syntactical coherence and sentence construction. Parrella (2021) reported that social media fosters creative writing by enabling students to experiment with various narrative forms. Handayani (2020), however, presented an opposing viewpoint, cautioning that students' frequent engagement with informal language online could lead to the manifestation of grammatical inaccuracies when they are required to produce formal written work.

It is essential to investigate the impact of social media on the writing skills of EFL students, as these platforms have become a crucial component of modern education. This research looks at how social media influences students' vocabulary, writing confidence, and grammar. It also considers students' views and experiences with using social media for learning at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. By understanding both the benefits and challenges, educators can find ways to help students improve their writing and avoid common problems. The results should help teachers use social media more effectively in EFL instruction

The three students in this study are English Education majors. They were selected because they are learning English as a foreign language and are also very active on social media. In their everyday lives, they spend a good amount of time on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube both for fun and for learning. They often watch English videos, follow language-learning accounts, and even join online discussions to practice their skills. Their habits and experiences give a real, authentic picture of how social media can become part of the process of learning English.

Theoretical Framework
Social Media

Junco et al. (2010) define social media as Internet sites, services, and behaviors that facilitate community formation, collaboration, participation, and sharing.This aligns with the perspectives of Andres (2010) and Ghulam et al. (2014), who view social media as a compilation of internet-based platforms. Based on the conceptual and technological basis of wed, this software supports user contributed content. According to Merriam Webster, social media is "electronic communication formats (such as online platforms and blogging) in which users establish online communities to communicate and interact, opinions, emails, and other tools (such as movies) in which users establish online communities to communicate and interact.

a) Instagram

It is commonly referred to as a tool that is compatible with Apple, Android, or Microsoft Phone gadget software and allows users to quickly take pictures of things, customize the picture they just took or other people's archived pictures, and save or send the pictures to their personal accounts Maruf (2017). Instagram, a program that allows users to quickly exchange images with friends via an online connection, draws its name from the phrases instantaneous and telegraph. Instagram has the advantage of having a user interface that everyone can access.

b) Twitter

Twitter was founded by Jack Dorsey on March 3, 2006, and went live in July of that year. Since its inception, Twitter has risen to become one of the top ten most visited websites on the internet, gaining the nickname "the brief text of the Internet.". Users who have not enrolled may only browse posts on Twitter; however, individuals who have registered can produce tweets utilizing online interaction, text messaging (SMS), or various cell phone software.

c) TikTok

TikTok has become the most popular app since the outbreak stated Sihotang (2021). Anyone can share what happens in this little video clip on social media with people they know as well as other Tiktok users. Tiktok encourages users' imaginations to develop into content producers, or Tiktokers, by providing a variety of musical services and allowing users to post original videos of performance, freestyle dancing, and other activities.

English as Foreign Language (EFL)

English-language learning in non-English-speaking countries is referred to as EFL. According to Johnson (2008), teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) entails training and studying the language in places where it is not the primary language. Simply said, EFL is the acquisition of English language fluency by learners residing in foreign-language situations. EFL refers to those who learn English in countries where English is not spoken, according to Yoko Iwai (2011). According to the data below, EFL is largely used by non-native English speakers, especially Indonesian learners who study English in Indonesia.

Writing Abilities

According to Tarigan (1985), writing is an indirect kind of language, and the structure of the communication is diametrically opposed to what may be said verbally. According to Harmer (2004), writing is a type of communication that allows people to express their ideas and emotions in writing. According to Yadegarfar (Galvin & Greenhow (2020), social media can increase EFL students' writing skills as well as their ability to focus on language and interaction patterns.

Writing skills are specific traits that enable authors to engage with the subject matter intellectually and articulate their thoughts in a perceptive way. Different linguistics have offered differing interpretations of what writing is. Writing is a crucial part of a larger action that primarily focuses on speaking, acting, or using a language claimed Harmer (2007). Writing competency, according to the preceding interpretation, is the capacity to convey ideas, feelings, and thoughts to others through written expression in a way that facilitates understanding for readers or other individuals.

Previous relevant studies

According to Putri (2021), social media greatly benefits students, especially when used by non-native English speakers, as it encourages them to continuously learn the language and acquire knowledge. The researcher found that people who use social media more frequently tend to write better than those who use it less frequently. This is because people may practice 20 writing and interacting with others from around the world by using social media.

Further studies suggest a positive correlation between increased social media use among students and their improved understanding of the differences in writing for academic or reputable publications versus social media platforms. Researchers found that students were simultaneously using more social media and texting more. Because it is likely that students continued to connect often via text and social media, it is hoped that this work was the focus of further research. Social media significantly affects everyone's daily life because respondents are more likely to use it to remain in touch with friends and family and when at home, especially in difficult situations. (Parrella, Leggette, & Redwine, 2021)

Mustafa, Khan, and Abbasi (2022), "Impact of Social Media on EFL Writing Learning," stated that the final analysis made clear a few elements that are essential for motivating students to use social media for English study whether or not they are in class. This could help identify systemic changes that are necessary to support EFL students who are learning how to use social media for extended periods of time.

Material and Method

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry approach to explore students' experiences using social media to enhance their writing. The research was conducted at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin.

Three EFL students who actively used Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter were purposively selected for this study. All participants were undergraduate students majoring in English education and actively using social media applications.

To understand individuals' life journeys, researchers often employ narrative research (Creswell et al., 2007). Josselson (2007) describes this as a method that collects and presents firsthand accounts of people's experiences. Narrative inquiry, specifically, is a method for gaining insight and knowledge from experience through direct and sustained interactions with chosen individuals. These interactions typically occur in a consistent setting or designated areas, involving a degree of immersion in their social contexts. Connelly and Clandinin (1990), referencing their 2000 work, observed that narrative forms are dynamic, shifting as collaborative efforts on written materials lead to the collection of more data, which helps identify the most significant aspects of the evolving story. Consequently, narrative inquiry is vital for this study to thoroughly explore the intricate details of each participant's experience.

Semi-structured interviews and narrative frames were used to gather data. Additionally, students provided written reflections on the influence of social media on their writing skills. The first stage involved semi-structured interviews, which were carried out individually with each participant to gain an initial understanding of their social media practices and their perceived impact on writing development. The interviews were arranged at a time that suited both the participants and the researcher, and each conversation took place in a quiet setting to help everyone speak comfortably. Each interview lasted around 30–45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent so the discussions could be transcribed and analyzed accurately.

In the second stage, the participants were invited to complete a set of narrative frames. These guided story prompts encouraged them to describe their own experiences; particularly how social media has shaped their writing skills. The narrative frames helped the students organize their ideas while still allowing them to express their individual viewpoints. Participants were allotted sufficient time to reflect and compose detailed responses to encourage thoughtful and honest answers. In the third step, students' reflective writings were collected to obtain qualitative data regarding their thoughts and experiences.

Each participant composed a brief reflective essay detailing the impact of social media use on the development of their writing skills over time. This step not only provided qualitative insights but also served as a direct sample of their written English for further analysis. The reflective texts were gathered either electronically or in print, depending on what each participant felt most comfortable with.

Throughout all stages of the study, participants were reminded that their involvement

was entirely voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential. Emphasizing these ethical considerations helped create an atmosphere where participants felt safe to share their thoughts openly and honestly.

This study employs narrative analysis, which focuses on understanding how and why certain events or experiences occurred by examining individuals' stories. The analysis unfolds in three stages. The first stage, Telling, involves exploring the participant's story in depth through collaborative interviews. During this process, the researcher and participant work together to build shared meaning, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions or seek clarification when needed (Mishler, 1986).Participants in this research shared their experiences through interviews, with follow-up questions used to clarify meaning (2) Transcription, the data will be transcribed in a structured manner through small notes or audio recording, can start with a rough draft transcription to improve certain sentences. (Van Maanen, 1988). All interviews and narrative frames were transcribed from audio recordings and notes, beginning with rough drafts and refined for accuracy and (3) Reorganizing, this process aims to clarify, deepen, and categorize which data is important in the analysis. The researcher compiles and organizes the transcript based on the findings that emerge. (Mishler, 1991). Transcripts were reviewed repeatedly to identify key details, cluster related ideas, and develop core themes such as vocabulary growth, writing strategies, and motivation which were later illustrated with direct participant quotations. The entire process aims to analyze the transcript and summarize it in essential themes which are then presented in full as the result of narrative analysis.

Results and Discussion
Results
The Experiences of EFL Using social media that Influence Their Writing Abilities

Users of social media usually interact in English because no one there speaks Indonesian. R1 has successfully learned and used one English vocabulary term, albeit its meaning changes depending on the situation.

".... Since informal terms are shorter, straightforward, and briefer than formal ones, they are easier to understand. For instance, the word 'since' might signify 'because' in ordinary speech." (R1)

This demonstrates how interacting with everyday English on social media helps learners understand vocabulary flexibility in real-world situations, which in turn helps learners learn about linguistic diversity in writing. Additionally, R2 found that while social media was first utilized for entertainment, it eventually evolved into a learning tool.

"I found that social media greatly helped me with my work, interests, and education. I gain more experiences and information as a result." (R2)

The experience of R2 demonstrates how social media use opened up more avenues for learning new things about entertainment, work, and education.
Entertainment experiences: social media may be a terrific way to pass the time and pick up new skills.

Although most respondents stated that their primary reason for using social media was for fun, there were some benefits to using the app consistently. They claim to feel more secure when using social media since they can be themselves and enjoy writing freely about their views and opinions there. One of the participant's experiences:

"From enjoying reading (texts written by others) I can get to started to write and advance in terms of writing." (R2)

Finding native English speakers on social media is simple, and they can provide real-world examples of how to use these sites to engage with people, especially in the writing context. The participant R2 claimed that reading others' social media content served as a source of writing inspiration, indicating that the mere act of reading may be transformed into

active production through the practice and observation of fellow social media users. This observation supports the hypothesis that frequent visibility of English on digital platforms stimulates learner curiosity and encourages a higher volume of student writing.

Regular usage of social media during the epidemic also led to increases in communication and confidence, according to Participant 1 (R1):

"I've been able to speak English more effectively and have become more confident than other people who don't use social media. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been interacting less frequently and searching for other effective forms of communication, such as in social media." (R1)

R1's experience identified that he used social media regularly to make him more confident and improve his communication skills with others using English for those who do not use social media. This happened because during the pandemic, everyone had to choose online communication without face-to-face meetings, which made the use of English increase over time due to easy access to communication in any part of the world, both verbally and in reverse. This helped her practice English more actively, especially in writing and speaking.

Without directly referring to academic tasks, the participants' stories show how their writing habits gradually changed through everyday social media activities—such as writing captions, comments, WhatsApp stories, tweets, and posts. Several participants indicated that exposure to their peers' writing motivated them to enhance their own work, as evidenced by R2's comments. Similarly, R1 reported that frequent use of English on digital platforms not only contributed to increased confidence in language use but also provided motivation to further develop their skills. Although these activities are informal, they seem to indirectly support academic writing by steadily strengthening overall writing skills.

One participant also noted that many people enjoy using social media because it makes it easier to connect with others across the world. Interactions on these platforms tend to feel more relaxed and friendly compared to face-to-face conversations, allowing people to chat with friends using a mix of informal expressions and vocabulary.

"Since Twitter is so widely used, it goes without reason that more individuals in the West or who speak English use it more than those who speak other languages. You must therefore write in English whether you like it or not, which makes it a good opportunity to improve your communication abilities in the language whenever a new word is introduced." (R1)

Because social media is so user-friendly, facilitates the exchange of new information and terminology from around the globe, and it can be used for casual social media contact. R1's noted that social media sites like Twitter promote English-language conversation in writing activity and provide fresh interaction to new words through everyday talks. The participants also noted that social media connects users globally, with English commonly serving as the primary language for communication.

Social media platforms that affect the writing skills of EFL students Instagram

R1 stated that she publishes photos or videos with a news description on Instagram, a social media platform that she uses to engage with a large number of people and express herself. In accordance with this, R2 and R3 claim that she uses Instagram, generally a maximum of than seven hours every single day. Additionally, she stated that she uses social media, mostly Instagram, for five to seven hours per day. One of the participant's experiences:

"I was given the task of creating a topography on a canvas and then uploading it on Instagram, and I improved my English more and had more confidence than other people who don't use social media for writing assignments on social media, like making captions, short texts on Instagram or on TikTok." (R1)

R1's comment shows how writing tasks on social media, such sharing infographics and writing captions or short texts on Instagram and TikTok, improved her confidence and improved her English, in contrast to others who do not utilize social media for similar purposes.
Tiktok

According to R1's experience, users are required to create and edit films on the subject matter using the Tiktok social media app. After that, she must create an illustration on the app and edit it in a very imaginative and engaging manner, and post it to WhatsApp. According to RI's experience, she composed content first, then used her creativity to edit it into a video featuring English content.

"We were asked to make several videos which contained predetermined English language material and then we had to edit them as creatively as possible, it's can be dancing or something else". (R1)

According to R1, artistic social media tasks like writing, editing, and producing English-language videos offer valuable opportunities for language practice.
Twitter

Twitter is the program that is most frequently discussed and mentioned in this study. According to one participant's perspective, the term "thread" describes writing continuously on Twitter as well as creating lengthy stories known as "AU" that might be used as novels. Each of these element's aids in the development of a writer. R2 offers a different perspective on her experiences on social media, including the following slang terms and vocabularies.

"I've been experiencing that I try to write fictional stories called AU (Alternative Universe) on Twitter. Because of that, I knew vocabularies, especially English slang words, and usually, it's used on Twitter. So, my fictional story doesn't get stuck on only one language." (R2).

"Social media, specifically Twitter, truly influences me to write in English because I can see how to write well, reach cool happens in text, and understand the joke because sometimes jokes don't make sense if the person can't write well. So, this inspires me to write in academic journals or theses in along with social media so that the writing outlined in the thesis becomes connected." (R3).

R2 utilized Twitter to write using words that were already familiar from reading fictional stories about alternate universes. This student has a strong desire to improve her writing skills through practicing composing fictitious stories. According to R3, Twitter helped her learn how to type more effectively, comprehend the event, and get ideas for academic journal writing. It provides strong support for her writing outline.

The Impact of Social Media towards EFL Student Writing's Ability Acquire more vocabulary

Looking at social media posts (such as tweets, narratives, and comments) from people who are native English speakers or from users from other nations does not leave participants feeling deficient in the scientific vocabulary that underpins their writing and creative thought. In fact, social media provides a significant avenue for participants to acquire new words.

"The English vocabulary on social media uses slang, a language of abbreviations, which I sometimes just found out about. I improve by learning new words, their usage, and abbreviations." (R2)

"I improve by learning new words, their usage, and abbreviations, for example: ASAP, TBH, ANW. I read a lot of English and then look up the meaning." (R2)

On social media, users are regularly faced with slang words and acronyms that they have only learnt through frequent usage, claims R2. Furthermore, R2 provided specific examples of abbreviations they encountered and described how reading aided in their comprehension. R2's observations indicate that consistent use of digital media platforms

contributed to the expansion of vocabulary, particularly through the acquisition of common acronyms and informal terms prevalent in online English communication.

R2 explains that she focuses on fully understanding the meaning of target phrases in her translation work, no matter if they come from general sources or from content created by peers. She feels that there are great examples out there to assist her in the writing process.

"I became more accustomed to combining languages for facts because my reading is done in English, the social media I use is also in English, and my friends there don't communicate in pure Indonesian. I read bilingual writing on Twitter and start writing by modeling other authors.". (R2)

Most social media users come from various countries that require them to communicate in English. This can be a support and assistance for EFL students. Through this process, they can follow and learn from the way other users write.
A place where individuals are more at ease with their identities.

R1 & R2 claimed that because she interacted with English speakers in a light-hearted and casual manner on social media, it increased their confidence.

"Compared to others who don't use social media, I improved my English there and gained more confidence in utilizing it." (R1)

"I'm more confident when I communicate on social media since I know a lot of English from there and don't have to worry about grammar. That doesn't mean I ignore it, however." (R2)

As long as the other person recognized that, she could talk without worrying too much about structure or grammar. R2 underlined that she felt more comfortable speaking on social media.
Regular smartphone use coupled with a strong sense of independence

R1 emphasized the negative consequences of social media use, such as the encouragement of individuality.

"Writing too much and staring at your phone too much instead of engaging in actual social interaction makes you anti-social and less likely to socialize with others. For instance, a lot of young people these days would rather talk than get phone calls. You will become more and more dependent on people or cellphones as an EFL learner. Thus, a large sum of money is used to purchase quotas." (R1)

This is predicated on R1's assertion that she was certain that using a phone excessively would make one antisocial with others and that purchasing metered internet requires a significant financial investment.
Grammar errors that are becoming more prevalent in casual writing

The experiences of the participants further clarified the majority of social media users utilize informal or non-standard language (slang words).

"The bad thing, i have an ungrammatical English writing." (R2)

"I just found out about. I excel by finding out words, usage, abbreviations, for example ASAP, TBH, ANW, so I read a lot of English, then find out the meaning" (R2)

R3 said that she had ever experienced guilt for failing by correcting the text's improper grammar. She believed there was a challenge and lesson to writing well on Twitter because she wrote there frequently. If her writing is inaccurate, she would feel embarrassed.

"The bad things of social media for my English writing are I remembered the first time I saw the written text but I can't correct the grammar by myself so that I rarely type caption by English (just too afraid to do wrong." (R3)

If individuals on Twitter don't write frequently or don't reply to my writing in a way that aligns with my writing, then there is something obviously wrong with my writing, in my

perspective. Making sure everything is stated correctly in terms of grammar is the method to go about doing this. I don't tweet with Twitter because of this hesitation." (R3)

Social media requires users to be able to distinguish between good and bad writing. This can be a challenge for EFL students, as they may use inappropriate English and encounter examples of poor writing there.

Discussion

The Experiences of EFL Using social media that Influence Their Writing Abilities Experiences with Unconscious Learning, particularly in writing skill.

The integration of social media innovations has been shown to improve writing and literacy development, enhance participation in learning, and foster contribution (Zheng, 2013). These digital materials can strengthen the connection between educators and learners, cultivating a "communication" culture in educational settings (Williams, 2012). Participants in this study consistently reported a unique impact of social media on their writing abilities, noting increased proficiency the more they viewed and read the writings of other users. This points to a kind of unconscious learning. Through regular exposure to real language use on social media whether in captions, comments, or replies, the participants seemed to absorb English naturally, without deliberately trying to study it. This observation is consistent with ideas from implicit language acquisition, which suggest that people can pick up language patterns simply by being exposed to them, rather than through direct instruction. This approach is very different from traditional classroom teaching, which usually focuses on teaching grammar rules and memorizing vocabulary. The fact that participants understood certain expressions before using them shows a clear difference from formal teaching methods, where understanding usually comes after lessons and practice.
Social media made it easier for them to communicate with English-speaking and foreign users.

Social media tools are also recognized as effective instruments for increasing students' attention, as supported by Yustika (2020), Vinnie (2021), Tohara (2021), and Tiffany (2019). These platforms can motivate students in language learning in a similar way they have engaged millions globally. Participants' experiences show that being exposed to a wide range of words and expressions online has a strong impact on how people learn language. Many learners said they picked up the meanings of new phrases by using social media every day, often coming across terms that are not taught in formal classes. This way of learning is quite different from traditional vocabulary study, which usually relies on memorizing lists or reading set texts. The fast-paced, interactive, and varied content on social media seems to keep learners' attention better than more traditional educational materials. Consequently, vocabulary acquisition becomes more accessible and engaging, facilitating more natural language learning. Social media may provide significant experiential opportunities for enjoyment and relaxation, but it also offers a potent avenue for users to acquire new competencies.

Beyond its pedagogical utility, social media serves as a significant source of recreation and diversion, offering a dual benefit that encompasses both leisure activities and skill acquisition. Notably, participants who reported higher familiarity with these networking platforms compared to their counterparts identified novel avenues for interpersonal communication facilitated by these digital tools. Consequently, they reported increased enjoyment and motivation to participate in diverse learning activities. Whiting and Williams (2013) identified reading comments as a particularly fascinating feature of social networking. Exposure to a wide range of content on social media—from technology and gaming to politics, humor, and personal development—suggests that entertainment plays a direct role in drawing learners into engaging with language. Social media is useful for both learning and leisure. It

provides entertainment and helps people gain new skills. Participants who were more familiar with these platforms discovered new ways to communicate with others through digital tools.

The participants' accounts also revealed the critical benefit of social media in enabling seamless contact with both native English speakers and diverse international users. For the EFL student population, this engagement created practical and relevant opportunities to utilize and refine their English skills. Through conversations with people from different backgrounds, they were able to pick up a large number of new vocabulary items. The constant availability of English on these digital platforms enhanced the accessibility of the language for daily use among the participants. Such observations are in concurrence with the research of Chotipaktanasook (2016), which indicated that learners engaging with diverse media tend to accelerate their acquisition of foreign-language lexicon with greater ease. The primary explanation is that social media delivers timely and appealing materials that users are instinctively drawn toward and find pleasurable. Furthermore, (Arif, 2019) supports that exposing learners to a wider variety of social media material can enhance their English competence, thereby motivating continuous improvement in foreign languages. This contrasts sharply with classroom-bound interactions, which are often simulated and limited to the teacher and classmates, highlighting social media's role in providing genuine, spontaneous communicative practice.

The Impact of Social Media towards EFL Student Writing's Ability Acquire more vocabulary

Participants consistently shared that platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter) played a meaningful role in helping them strengthen their English skills, especially when it came to learning new vocabulary. One participant, for example, mentioned gaining a substantial amount of new words particularly informal expressions through their habit of writing fiction stories in different languages. The collaborative nature of social media, where other users' assistance aids in comprehending written texts and acquiring new words, was highly beneficial. A key advantage highlighted was gaining new terminology and colloquialisms rarely taught in classroom instruction. The present observation is empirically supported by the research of Dhanya (2016), who demonstrated that the diverse functions of digital platforms are effective in enhancing the communication skills of students. This stands in contrast to more traditional vocabulary learning, which typically emphasizes formal, academic terms. Participants acknowledged continued reliance on dictionaries or Google Translate for clarifications. However, they consistently reported that acquiring informal vocabulary through authentic social media interactions felt more natural and was easier to retain than memorizing isolated lexical lists.

Participants uniformly agreed that digital platforms provide verifiable, real-world examples of English usage across various communication contexts. By reading and interacting with comments, captions, tweets, and posts, learners are able to see how English is used in real situations and pick up new language patterns along the way. This exposure models how they might interact with other social media users, inspiring them to try or replicate these authentic examples to improve their communication skills, especially in writing (Razak and Alakrash, 2019). Yaqin (2020) further supports that incorporating social media into foreign language training can significantly increase students' motivation and excitement. Participants uniformly concurred that digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter) supply verifiable, real-world instances of English usage spanning various communication contexts. One participant, for example, mentioned gaining a substantial number of new words, particularly informal expressions, through their habit of writing fiction stories in different languages.

A place where individuals are more at ease with their identities

All participants expressed feeling more at ease and secure in freely and quickly exchanging news and expressing themselves due to social media. This environment potentially allows students who might otherwise be disengaged to create their own educational opportunities through collaboration, communication, creation, and interaction with other social media users. One participant (R1) specifically felt that their English had improved and they were more comfortable speaking it, highlighting independent learning, increased confidence, proactive opportunity recognition, and the freedom to discuss and study with others. Studies by Alakrash (2021) and Abd. Rozak and Krish (2021) found that students who are motivated generally view learning more positively, and many who use social media and digital tools say they feel happier while doing so. This is quite different from the atmosphere of formal classroom participation, which can sometimes create anxiety especially when students worry about making mistakes. Social media, on the other hand, tends to feel less judgmental. Because of this, it can help lower students' affective filters and create a sense of psychological comfort that supports language practice and allows them to express their identities more freely.

Regular smartphone use coupled with a strong sense of independence

Although social media has many positives, the link to smartphone and mobile usage adds a complicated element. Higher usage of social media is associated with extended use of smartphones, leading many users to avoid daily life tasks and opt for chatting via their cell phones. One participant (R1) commented that overuse of the phone may result in social anxiety and avoidance. This "presence-absence" (Jarvenpaa & Lang, 2005) or "engagement disengagement" (Jarvenpaa & Lang, 2006) points to the way that mobile phone users get so absorbed in their device usage that they forget completely about talk with those who are physically present (Casey, 2012). Fortunatti (2002) also discusses this as "not having" in the context of changes or modifications of social looks that emerge in certain uses of smartphone. This raises an important drawback not often discussed in researches merely referring to L2 learning advantages.

The widespread use of smartphones and social media is in contrast to conventional learning resources, behavioral changes may occur that support digital autonomy and independence, but could impair face-to-face social development with a potential effect on general well-being. This goes against the collaborative learning rallying cry of social constructivism, and provides a conundrum for educators and learners.

Grammar errors that are becoming more prevalent in casual writing

One of the major limitations to using social media for EFL writing instruction is that many postings on Twitter and Facebook are filled with jargon and unstructured language. Not only does social media favor easy communication with lots of people, it also introduces language usage that can interfere with their written work. One (R1) even admitted finding it difficult to proofread her own work for grammatical errors, which in turn created fear of making mistakes and led to a refusal to write in English. Swan (2017) actively condemns social media in ruination of students' language and syntax. This is in stark contradiction to the advantages of learning vocabulary and encountering authentic input mentioned above.

Although digital platforms offer valuable avenues for informal linguistic practice and lexical expansion, they simultaneously expose learners to the pervasive use of non-standard grammar, abbreviations, and vernacular language. For EFL students, this discrepancy presents a distinct challenge: they must adeptly manage the transition from casual digital communication to the higher expectations of academic writing, where precision and a formal register are mandatory. This scenario highlights the need for explicit pedagogical intervention that helps students recognize and apply these differing language usages across various contexts, where an issue that is often underrepresented in research focused solely on the benefits of digital literacy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the complex yet consequential role of social media in shaping EFL students' written communication skills. Participation in digital storytelling and interaction on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X provides learners with valuable exposure to diverse linguistic input, expanded vocabulary, and increased confidence in written English. These environments also encourage creativity and linguistic experimentation. However, the prevalence of informal online language, such as slang, idioms, and abbreviated forms, continues to hinder students' ability to meet academic writing standards. Many learners struggle to shift from digitally mediated informality to the precision and objectivity required in scholarly contexts. These findings point to the need for pedagogical strategies that integrate structured digital tasks with explicit instruction in formal writing conventions. Such an approach can help students leverage the benefits of social media while strengthening their academic literacy. Although this study has certain limitations, it suggests clear directions for further research on the interplay between digital environments and EFL writing development. Especially the limited number of participants, so it cannot describe it generally and broadly, therefore further research can study more participants, institutions, schools, or diverse groups, and can use a quantitative research approach. This recommendation can provide a richer overview of the influence of social media on EFL students' writing skills; thus, the results of future research are expected to provide greater and stronger insights and contributions to the development of learning in this digital era.

References

Aeni. (2022). Use of Tiktok Application on Studentss' Behavior in UIN KH.Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/cya46.

Alakrash, H. M., & Abdul Razak, N. (2021). Technology-based language learning: Investigation of digital technology and digital literacy. *Sustainability, 13*(21), 12304. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112304.

Barkhuizen, G. R. (2008). Narrative frames for investigating the experiences of language teachers. *ELSEVIER Science Direct*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.02.002.

Dhanya, G. (2016). *Influence of social media on English language learning*. *Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL), 3*(1), 105–110. https://joell.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/INFLUENCE-OF-SOCIAL-MEDIA.pdf.

Fortunati. (2002). The mobile phone: Towards new categories and social relations. Information, Communication & Society. *Leopoldina Fortunatti*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180208538803.

Galvin, S., & Greenhow, C. (2020). *Social media and English language learning: A review of literature and implications for practice*. *Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange*, 13(1), 25–38. https://doi.org/10.18785/jetde.1301.02.

Gray, M. G. (2019). *Education Research (Competencies for Analysis and Applications).* United States of America: Pearson Education Inc.

Handayani, R. D. (2020). The use of social media for learning English. *Prominent Journal*. *3*(2), 313-321.https://doi.org/10.24176/pro.v3i2.5381.

Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2010). *The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades*. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(2), 119–132. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00387.x.

Juraeva, G. N., & Yoqubjonova, D. U. (2025). *DILS The Impact of Social Media on Language Proficiency and Writing Skills in Uzbekistan*. 5(2), 20–26. https://publisher.uthm.edu.my/periodicals/index.php/dils/article/view/21812

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interview Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication .

Lang, J. &. (2010). Friend or Foe? The Ambivalent Relationship between Mobile Technology and its Users. *In:* Sørensen, C., Yoo, Y., Lyytinen, K., DeGross, J.I. (eds) *Designing*

Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-Technical Issues and Challenges. IFIP — The International Federation for Information Processing, vol 185. Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-28918-6_5.

Lenggono. (2019). *Teacher's Questioning Technique in EFL Class. Teacher Training and Educational Faculty.* Retrieved from Thesis, Muhammadiyah University of Porwokerto: https://repository.ump.ac.id/10245/.

Muhayyang, S. M. (2021). Instagram as Media to Foster EFL Students' English Writing Skill. *Journal of English Language Learning*. https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v8i2.22588.

Mustafa, G. K. (2022). Impact of social media on EFL writing learning. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*. https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-I)1.

Parrella, J. a. (2021). Measuring The Correlation between Digital Media Usage and Students' Perceived Writing Ability: Are They Related? *Research Learning Technology*. https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v29.2506.

Patil, R. &. (2016). Use Social Media in Education: Positive and Negative impact for Student. *International Journal of Recent and Innovation trend in Computing and Communication*. https://doi.org/10.17762/ijritcc.v4i1.1727.

Purnamasari R, A. T. (2022). The Implication of Using Media During Pandemic on Indonesia Citizen's English Writing Skil. *Journal of English Language Learning*. http://dx.doi.org/10.31949/jell.v6i2.3630.

Purwanto A., F. K. (2023). The Benefits of Using Social Media in the Learning Process of Students in the Digital Literacy Era and the Education 4.0 Era. *Journal of Information System and Management*. https://doi.org/10.4444/jisma.v2i2.296.

Putri, M. T. (2021). An Analysis Of Social Media Toward Students' Writing Ability At English Study Program In Islamic University Of Riau. https://repository.uir.ac.id/id/eprint/11506

Rianto, H. A. (2021). *Membaca Komentar di Media Sosial Sebagai Hiburan*. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.20885/cantrik.vol1.iss1.art3.

Safitri. (n.d.). *Student's Perceptions of The Use of Social Media for Learning English.* Retrieved from Skripsi, Syarief Hidayatullah Islamic State University: https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/54725/1/Muetia%20Safitri_FITK_Watermark.pdf.

Sari R. T, H. R. (2019). The Correlation between the Use of Social Media and Academic Writing Mastery of the English Education Students. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/267946309.pdf.

Turkle, S. (2011). The Tethered Self: Technology Reinvents Intimacy and Solitude. In *Continuing higher education review*, 75, 28-31. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ967807.

Wahyudin. (2022). The Influence of Social Media on Academic Writing Student Study Time Management. http://pustakailmu.id/index.php/pustakailmu/article/view/321.

Williams, R. T. (2022). *An overview of social media in education*. In *Current Overview on Science and Technology Research* (Vol. 7, hlm. 49–55). BP International. https://doi.org/10.9734/BPI/COSTR/v7/4525A.

Zainal Z, R. (2020). Social Media its Influence on Vocabulary and Language Learning: Case Study. *European Jurnal of Education studies*. http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v7i11.3331.

Zheng, B., Yim, S., & Warschauer, M. (2018). *Social media in the writing classroom and beyond*. In *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (hlm. 1–5). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0555.

EMPTY PAGE