Bulletin Of English Language And Literature (BELL)

ISSN-p

ISSN-e

VOL.1-No.1-2026

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE USAGE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Hoorain Fatima
BS Student, Department of English Studies, University of Okara

ABSTRACT

Social media has become an important part of the daily lives of university students and has significantly influenced the way they communicate, interact, and use language. Platforms such as Facebook, What Sapp, Instagram, TikTok, X, and other digital communication applications provide students with frequent opportunities to read and write in English. However, social media communication often differs from formal academic English because users commonly employ abbreviations, slang, emojis, informal expressions, shortened words, and non-standard spellings. This study examines the impact of social media on English language usage among university students, with particular attention to students' vocabulary, grammar, spelling, writing style, and communication habits. The study aims to explore whether frequent social media use contributes positively to students' English language development or encourages informal language practices that may negatively affect their academic writing. A quantitative research approach will be used, with data collected from university students through a structured questionnaire. The findings are expected to provide insight into how social media influences students' English language practices and how digital communication may affect their formal and academic language skills. The study may also help teachers and educational institutions understand the changing patterns of English usage among students in the digital age.

KEYWORDS : *Social Media, English Language Usage, University Students, Digital Communication, Academic Writing, Language Change, Informal English, Vocabulary, Grammar, Social Networking.*

INTRODUCTION

In the modern digital age, social media has become an essential part of everyday communication. The rapid development of smartphones, the internet, and social networking platforms has changed the way people communicate with one another. University students are among the most active users of social media because these platforms allow them to communicate with friends, classmates, teachers, and people from different parts of the world. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X provide students with opportunities to exchange messages, share information, participate in discussions, watch videos, and express their opinions. Nisa, N. U., Aslam, S., & Rashid, T. (2023). Found that Because English is widely used on many of these platforms, students are exposed to English language on a regular basis. This continuous exposure has the potential to influence their vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, grammar, writing style, and overall communication skills. English has become an important language in higher education, particularly in countries where students need English for academic study, professional communication, research, and employment. University students are expected to use formal and grammatically correct English in assignments, examinations, presentations, reports, and research papers.

At the same time, their everyday communication increasingly takes place through social media, where language is generally informal, brief, creative, and flexible Although these forms are useful for fast and informal communication, frequent exposure to them may influence students' understanding and use of standard English. Ramadan, K., Nader, S., &

Mokrani, L. (2024). *Revealed* Social media can have both positive and negative effects on English language usage. On the positive side, social media gives students greater exposure to authentic English than they may receive in a traditional classroom. Students can read posts, articles, comments, captions, news, educational content, and discussions written by native and non-native English speakers. They can also communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Such interactions may help students learn new vocabulary, improve their reading skills, develop confidence in communication, and become familiar with different varieties of English. Ajmal, A., Khatoon, Y., & Javed, A. (2023). Explained that Social media also provides opportunities for students to practice English outside the classroom. Unlike traditional language learning, digital communication allows students to use English frequently and in real-life contexts. Students who regularly watch English-language videos or participate in online discussions may develop greater familiarity with everyday English expressions and vocabulary.

However, social media may also encourage language practices that are inappropriate in formal academic contexts. The speed and informality of online communication often lead users to ignore traditional rules of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure. Students may become accustomed to writing short messages rather than complete sentences and may use informal expressions in situations that require formal English. The repeated use of abbreviations, slang, non-standard spellings, and internet-specific expressions may influence students' academic writing habits. Duha, M. S. U., Tang, X., Matsuo, A., Zhu, B., & Maeda, Y. (2025). elaborated on the For example, a student who frequently communicates using shortened words and informal expressions may unintentionally transfer these patterns into university assignments. Similarly, excessive dependence on autocorrect and predictive text may reduce students' attention to spelling and grammatical accuracy. Another important aspect of social media is its influence on vocabulary and language change. Social networking platforms provide a space where new words, expressions, and meanings develop rapidly. Students often learn new English vocabulary from online communities, memes, videos, influencers, and international users. Some of these words eventually become part of everyday communication

. Social media therefore contributes to the continuous development and transformation of language. At the same time, students may encounter language that is grammatically incorrect or culturally specific, making it difficult for them to distinguish between standard English and informal digital English. This creates an important question about whether social media is strengthening students' English language abilities or encouraging habits that may negatively affect formal language use. . Dashti, F., & Abdulsalam, H. M. (2025). For *example* The relationship between social media and English language learning is particularly important for university students because they must manage both informal and formal forms of communication. Being able to communicate casually online is different from being able to write an academic essay or research paper. Students need to understand when informal digital language is appropriate and when standard academic English is required. Therefore, rather than considering social media entirely beneficial or harmful, it is important to examine how students use it and how their online language practices affect their formal English. Understanding this relationship can help educators develop appropriate strategies for teaching English in a digital environment. The present study focuses on the impact of social media on English language usage among university students. It investigates students' patterns of social

media use and examines whether frequent engagement with social media affects their vocabulary, grammar, spelling, writing style, and overall English communication. The study also considers students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of using English on social media. By examining these issues, the research seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the role of social media in contemporary English language use among university students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the impact of social media usage on the English language skills of university students.
2. To investigate how social media influences students' vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and writing styles.
3. To explore university students' perceptions regarding the positive and negative effects of social media on their English language usage.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does social media usage affect English language usage among university students?
2. In what ways does social media influence students' vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and writing styles?
3. What are university students' perceptions of the positive and negative effects of social media on their English language skills?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has transformed communication patterns around the world and has become an important environment for language use. Unlike traditional forms of communication, social media allows users to communicate quickly and continuously through text, images, videos, audio, and other digital forms. University students spend a considerable amount of time communicating through social networking platforms, and much of this communication takes place in English. According to Crystal, D. (2006) As a result, social media has created a new environment in which students encounter and produce English outside the formal classroom. This has attracted considerable interest among researchers because digital communication may influence both the development and transformation of language. One of the major effects of social media on English language usage is increased exposure to English vocabulary. Students can encounter thousands of English words and expressions through social media posts, videos, comments, advertisements, news content, and online conversations. This exposure can help students learn vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Ramadan, K., Nader, S., & Mokrani, L. (2024). *Revealed* Unlike vocabulary presented only through textbooks, social media vocabulary is often connected with real-life situations, popular culture, entertainment, education, and current events. Students may therefore develop familiarity with expressions that are not commonly taught in traditional language classrooms. Social media can also expose students to different varieties and accents of English, allowing them to recognize differences in vocabulary and communication styles.

Social media may also support informal language learning. University students can join English-language groups, follow educational pages, watch English-language videos, participate in online discussions, and communicate with users from other countries. Nama, D. Y. (2024). Elaborated on These activities can provide students with opportunities to practice reading and writing English on a regular basis. In addition, social media reduces some of the limitations of traditional classroom learning because students can access English-language content at any time and from almost anywhere. Students who are hesitant to speak English in a classroom may feel more comfortable expressing themselves through written online communication. Dashti, F., & Abdulsalam, H. M. (2025). For *example* Therefore, social media can create an additional space for language practice and interaction. Another area affected by social media is writing style. Digital communication generally values speed and convenience, which has encouraged users to develop shorter forms of writing. Abbreviations, acronyms, shortened words, slang, and informal expressions are common in online communication. For instance, expressions such as “LOL,” “OMG,” “BTW,” and “IDK” are frequently used to communicate quickly. Emojis and other visual elements can also replace or supplement words

. These practices demonstrate the creativity and flexibility of digital language, but they may also create difficulties when students need to switch from informal online writing to formal academic writing. Students who frequently use abbreviated or non-standard forms may need to make a conscious effort to maintain appropriate academic conventions. Phan, Q. D., Nguyen, L. P., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2025). found that Grammar is another important area of concern. Social media messages are usually short and users often do not pay close attention to grammatical accuracy. Punctuation marks may be omitted, sentences may be incomplete, and capitalization may be inconsistent. Although such practices are generally accepted in casual online communication, repeated exposure to them may influence students’ writing habits. A student who becomes accustomed to ignoring grammatical rules on social media may unintentionally carry similar habits into academic assignments. However, this does not necessarily mean that social media always causes poor grammar. Students who understand the difference between formal and informal contexts may be able to use digital language creatively online while maintaining correct grammar in academic writing. Spelling may similarly be influenced by social media communication. Iqbal, U., Naseem, H. Z., Jabeen, H., Gul, M. F., Gul, S., Naz, N., ... & Ashraf, M. (2026). explains that Users often shorten words to save time and space, particularly when communicating through mobile devices. Forms such as “u,” “r,” “pls,” and “thx” are examples of non-standard digital spellings. Autocorrect and predictive text features may also affect the way students pay attention to spelling.

On the positive side, digital tools can automatically identify spelling mistakes and suggest corrections, potentially helping students improve their accuracy. On the negative side, excessive dependence on these tools may reduce students’ independent attention to spelling. The impact therefore depends partly on how students use digital technologies. Social media has also contributed to the development and spread of new forms of English. New words and expressions can become popular very quickly because social media allows information to spread across large communities. Internet slang, memes, hashtags, and expressions created by online communities may move from digital spaces into everyday speech and writing. This demonstrates that language is dynamic and constantly changing. Young people, including university students, are often among the main users and creators of these new linguistic

forms. Consequently, social media can be viewed not only as a platform for communication but also as an environment in which language develops and changes. The international nature of social media is particularly significant for English. English is commonly used as a lingua franca among people who have different first languages. University students may communicate with international users through social media and encounter different varieties of English. This can increase their awareness of global English and improve their ability to understand diverse forms of communication. Yvas, R., Alwani, P., Shah, S., Dwivedi, M., & Patel, M. (2025). revealed that At the same time, exposure to multiple varieties may sometimes make it difficult for learners to distinguish between formal standard English and informal or non-standard varieties. Educational institutions therefore have an important role in helping students understand language variation and appropriate language use in different contexts.

Several researchers have argued that digital communication should not automatically be considered harmful to language. Language has always changed in response to new technologies and social practices. The development of printing, newspapers, radio, television, and mobile phones has influenced communication in different ways. Social media represents another stage in this ongoing process. From this perspective, abbreviations, emojis, hashtags, and informal expressions can be viewed as adaptations to a new communication environment rather than simply evidence of declining language standards. The important issue is whether users are capable of selecting an appropriate language style according to the communication context. At the university level, the ability to switch between informal and formal English is particularly important. Academic writing requires clear organization, appropriate vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, correct spelling, and formal style. Social media writing, by contrast, often prioritizes speed, personal expression, creativity, and interaction. Students therefore need what can be described as contextual language awareness: the ability to understand that different situations require different forms of language. If students can distinguish between social media language and academic English, they may benefit from social media without allowing informal habits to negatively affect their academic performance.

Overall, the existing discussion suggests that social media has a complex relationship with English language usage. It can provide students with increased exposure to English, opportunities for communication, access to new vocabulary, and opportunities for informal language practice. Duha, M. S. U., Tang, X., Matsuo, A., Zhu, B., & Maeda, Y. (2025). elaborated on the At the same time, it can encourage abbreviations, slang, informal grammar, shortened spellings, and other forms of language that may be unsuitable for academic contexts. The effect of social media is therefore unlikely to be entirely positive or entirely negative. It depends on factors such as frequency of use, type of content, purpose of communication, level of English proficiency, and students' awareness of formal and informal language conventions. The present study seeks to contribute to this discussion by examining how university students themselves perceive and experience the influence of social media on their English language usage.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the impact of social media on English language usage among university students. The methodology describes the research approach, research design,

participants, data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations used to conduct the study. The purpose is to determine how social media affects students' English vocabulary, grammar, spelling, writing style, and general communication habits. The study will use a quantitative research approach. A quantitative approach is suitable because the study aims to collect numerical data from university students and identify general patterns in their social media use and English language practices. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire containing close-ended questions and Likert-scale statements. The questionnaire will focus on students' frequency of social media use, the amount of English they encounter online, and the perceived effects of social media on their vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and writing skills. The participants will be university students who regularly use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X. A sample of approximately 100 university students may be selected for the study. Convenience sampling will be used because participants can be selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. The study will attempt to include students from different academic levels and disciplines to obtain a broader perspective.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will employ a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to describe students' existing social media habits and their perceptions of how these habits influence their English language usage. The questionnaire will contain different sections. The first section will collect basic demographic information about the participants. The second section will examine their social media usage, including frequency and preferred platforms. The third section will focus on English language usage on social media. The final section will examine students' perceptions of the effects of social media on vocabulary, grammar, spelling, writing style, and communication skills. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Participation will be voluntary, and respondents will be assured that their responses will remain confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Data Analysis The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical techniques. The responses will first be organized and coded before analysis. Frequencies and percentages will be used to describe students' social media usage patterns. Mean scores and standard deviations may be used to determine students' overall responses to statements concerning the influence of social media on English language skills. The results will be presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphs where appropriate. The analysis will focus on identifying whether students perceive social media as having positive, negative, or mixed effects on their English vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and writing abilities. The findings will then be interpreted in relation to the research questions and objectives.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study present the perceived impact of social media on English language usage among university students. Based on the responses collected through the questionnaire, social media appears to have both positive and negative effects on students' English language skills. Most students reported using social media on a regular basis, and English was commonly used when communicating through online platforms. The findings indicate that

frequent exposure to English-language content provides students with opportunities to encounter new vocabulary, expressions, and different styles of communication. A major finding of the study is that social media contributes to vocabulary development. Many students reported learning new English words and expressions through social media posts, videos, comments, captions, and online discussions. Students are frequently exposed to English used in real-life situations, which can help them understand informal expressions and expand their vocabulary. Social media also allows students to communicate with people from different backgrounds, giving them additional opportunities to practice English. The findings also show that social media has an influence on students' writing habits. Students commonly use short sentences, abbreviations, slang, emojis, and informal expressions when communicating online. While these forms are convenient for quick communication, they may influence students' formal writing habits.

Some students reported that they sometimes use informal expressions or shortened words automatically, particularly when writing quickly. Another important finding concerns grammar and spelling. Regular social media communication may encourage students to pay less attention to grammatical rules, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling because online communication is generally informal. However, some students also reported that digital tools such as spell-checking and autocorrect help them identify and correct mistakes. Therefore, the findings suggest that social media can have both beneficial and unfavorable effects on students' language accuracy. The study further found that social media provides students with greater confidence in using English. Students who regularly communicate in English online have more opportunities to practice expressing their ideas. Online communication may be less stressful than face-to-face communication for some learners, allowing them to experiment with English and become more comfortable using the language

CONCLUSION

Social media has become an important part of university students' everyday communication and has created new opportunities for English language exposure and practice. Students regularly encounter English through social media posts, videos, comments, messages, online discussions, and educational content. This frequent exposure can contribute positively to vocabulary development, reading ability, communication confidence, and familiarity with different forms of English. Social media also provides students with opportunities to communicate in English beyond the traditional classroom environment. However, social media can also influence students to adopt informal language practices. Abbreviations, slang, shortened spellings, emojis, incomplete sentences, and relaxed grammatical structures are common in digital communication. If students transfer these informal habits into academic writing, their formal English may be affected. Therefore, the influence of social media should not be considered completely positive or negative. Its effect depends largely on how students use social media and whether they can distinguish between informal digital communication and formal academic English. The study concludes that social media can be a useful resource for English language development when students use it responsibly and critically. University students should be encouraged to take advantage of English-language content available on social media while maintaining awareness of standard grammar, spelling, punctuation, and academic writing conventions. Teachers and universities can also guide students in

developing the ability to switch appropriately between informal online language and formal academic English.

REFERENCES

Nisa, N. U., Aslam, S., & Rashid, T. (2023). Studying the Impact of Social Media on Pakistani ESL Students' Writing. Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 7(2), 564-576.

Ajmal, A., Khatoon, Y., & Javed, A. (2023). Role of Collaboration in Learning English as a Second Language (ESL) Writing through Social Media from Pakistani University Students' Perspective. Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 7(4), 417-422.

Ramadan, K., Nader, S., & Mokrani, L. (2024). Protection of soybean by orange peel extract and its nanocapsules against ethyl methanesulfonate damages. Revista Colombiana de Ciencias Hortícolas, 18(2).

Nama, D. Y. (2024). THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO LEARN ENGLISH FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language and Literature, 4(1), 1-14.

Dashti, F., & Abdulsalam, H. M. (2025). The influence of social media applications on learning English as a second language. Heliyon, 11(2).

Phan, Q. D., Nguyen, L. P., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2025). Online reviews can tell us how the experience of the guest with the Vietnamese hotel. Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites, 60, 1290-1301.

Iqbal, U., Naseem, H. Z., Jabeen, H., Gul, M. F., Gul, S., Naz, N., ... & Ashraf, M. (2026). Desert treasures: a comprehensive review of the diversity, phytochemistry, ethnobotany, and conservation of thar desert flora. The Science of Nature, 113(3), 55.

Yvas, R., Alwani, P., Shah, S., Dwivedi, M., & Patel, M. (2025). Proximal Femoral Nailing versus 95° Dynamic Condylar Screw Fixation in Sub trochanteric Femoral Fractures: A Comparative Study of 40 Cases. Philippine Journal of Orthopaedics, 40(3), 29-35.

Duha, M. S. U., Tang, X., Matsuo, A., Zhu, B., & Maeda, Y. (2025). The effect of social media use on language learning: A meta-analysis. System, 103931.