

Learner Perceptions in Using Social Media in Learning Writing

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Abstract: This research examines how English as a foreign language (EFL) students see social media for learning English, focusing on writing, intrinsic motivation, and self-directed study. Sixty students participated in the quantitative study by filling out a Likert-scale questionnaire. According to the results, most students think social media may help them learn a new language. Perceived benefits include enhanced writing abilities, increased drive, and the encouragement of independent study. Many who took the survey even saw social media as a possible substitute for more conventional forms of education. When it came to motivation and autonomous learning, there was the most significant degree of agreement. Some still think social media material is not rigorous enough for academic writing classes. A few pupils also brought up problems with digital literacy and a lack of contact with native speakers. Despite the promising future of social media in English as a foreign language (EFL) education, the study stresses the need for careful integration to supplement more traditional forms of instruction.

Keyword: *Learners Perception, Writing, Social Media*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become integral to modern life, especially for the younger generation, sometimes called digital natives. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have evolved into quite powerful tools for education, creativity, and communication rather than only means of amusement or social connection (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020; Salikin & Tahir, 2017; Yunus et al., 2019). Students interacting with a wide range of digital information, mainly in English, are spending more time online. The quick development of technology and the growing availability of the internet directly led to this. This exposure helps language acquisition to occur in a real and immersive environment. Specifically, social media offers unique opportunities for practicing and growing one-of-a-kind writing skills (Liu et al., 2024; Wijayatiningsih et al., 2021, 2022). Students create blog entries, subtitles, comments, and video scripts using written English in pertinent, real-world contexts (Ramalia, 2021; Tenaja & Oco, 2023). Traditional classroom settings emphasizing grammar drills and structured frameworks, but social media platforms promote spontaneous, innovative, and contextualized language use.

Furthermore, social media platforms enable users to engage with a broader audience, perhaps encompassing native speakers. It helps one understand various cultures and communicate successfully (Rinda et al., 2018; Sakkir et al., 2016). Students may copy real language use, get fast comments, and change their work to fit different audiences and purposes. Furthermore, the multimedia features of social media platforms, including images, videos, emoticons, and hashtags, support multimodal composition a necessary literacy ability for the twenty-first century. The majority of these investigations have concentrated on structured, instructor-led environments or focused primarily on general language acquisition. There remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the role of informal social media engagement in fostering writing proficiency among EFL learners, particularly in relation to self-directed and autonomous

learning practices. Moreover, although learner motivation is frequently highlighted as a key benefit of digital learning environments, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the specific influence of social media platforms on intrinsic motivation and autonomy in the context of writing skill development. Additionally, much of the existing scholarship has been conducted in non-Indonesian contexts, resulting in a lack of localized insights relevant to Indonesian EFL learners. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how Indonesian university students utilize social media to support their English writing development, with particular attention to the types of writing activities undertaken, the motivational factors involved, and the extent to which these platforms facilitate independent language learning.

Teachers and scholars should examine how social media may be purposefully included in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in improving writing abilities. This is due to the change in how young people connect and absorb knowledge. Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in how these sites could close the distance between informal online communication and official academic writing (Abdul Razak et al., 2013; Ramalia, 2021). By using their students' expertise regarding social media technology, teachers might be able to create more interesting, relevant, and student-centered learning environments. Based on some previous researchers, one of them is Chu et al. (2017) who examined the use of wikis to support collaborative writing among secondary school students in Hong Kong. Using Pworks, students worked on group writing tasks. Data from revision logs, questionnaires, and interviews showed that more collaborative edits led to higher writing quality. Students had a moderately optimistic view of the wiki's learning value. The study suggests that wikis can enhance group writing, but effective teaching strategies are needed to support their use.

Moreover, Yunus et al. (2019) discussed that 47 English as a Second Language (ESL) primary school students from rural Malaysia were asked to utilize social media to improve their writing abilities. According to the findings, most students had access to social media and considered it a valuable source of information for English language acquisition. It may help instructors integrate information and communication technology into their classes and boost the development of writing skills. According to the study's findings, incorporating social media into the classroom setting can eliminate barriers to learning and provide an atmosphere that is more stimulating and conducive to learning. Parrella et al. (2021) explored the students' spending on digital media, especially social media and texting, how well they thought they could write for the media and social media, and their self-assessment of media writing skills. The study evaluated students' self-assessed writing competence via the Media Writing Self-Perception (MWSP) scale, and their engagement with digital media was quantified using the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS).

All in all, writing is among the most important abilities needed for learning a new language. Clear concept expression, strong argument development, and grammatical, lexical, and mechanical mastery depend on writing ability. Nevertheless, because of little exposure to numerous writing styles, poor vocabulary, and lack of confidence, many Indonesian students find it challenging to write well in English. Traditional classroom environments often lack the chances for pupils to participate in important, innovative, and frequent writing assignments. One of the primary challenges in English language education for Indonesian students is finding effective, engaging, and accessible strategies to enhance their writing proficiency. Considering the pervasive use of social media among students, this study explores whether social media platforms can serve as useful tools to complement conventional classroom instruction in developing writing skills. Recent studies suggest that when integrated appropriately, digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp can foster student engagement, encourage authentic writing practice, and support collaborative learning (Ahmad & Jusoh, 2021; Fitriani et al., 2023). Leveraging technologies that students are already familiar with may bridge the gap between informal digital communication and formal academic writing, offering a more relevant and motivating context for language development. Given the extensive usage of social media among students, this study investigates whether social media platforms could be useful tools or

complements conventional teaching in improving writing skills. These platforms offer opportunities for learners to practice writing in contextually relevant and socially interactive ways, aligning with Vygotsky's view of learning as a socially mediated activity.

Vygotsky's theory (1978) emphasizes that learning is inherently a social process, facilitated through interaction with others and mediated by cultural tools. Therefore, the use of social media in this study is not only examined as a pedagogical tool for enhancing writing proficiency but also as a medium that potentially fosters greater learner motivation and self-directed learning. Complementing this perspective, Self-Determination Theory provides a motivational framework for understanding how learners engage with digital platforms. Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that intrinsic motivation flourishes when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These theoretical lenses guide both the formulation of research questions and the interpretation of findings so that this research underpinned by two key theoretical frameworks offering insight into how digital platforms can support language development in EFL contexts.

Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate the development of students' English writing proficiency through the use of electronic social media platforms. Specifically, it aims to assess the extent to which these platforms contribute to the enhancement of writing skills, identify the types of writing tasks students commonly engage in on social media, and explore the underlying motivations and perceptions that influence learners' use of these platforms in the context of English language learning. The study also seeks to examine students' attitudes and behaviors toward the integration of social media into their learning practices, with a particular focus on its role in supporting and facilitating the improvement of English writing competencies.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design following the guidelines outlined by (Cresswell, 2014; Cresswell & Plano, 2018), who describe quantitative research as a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables through the collection of numerical data and statistical analysis and using a descriptive survey method which included calculating frequencies and percentages to identify trends and patterns in the respondents' answers. It emphasizes on using quantitative approaches to describe phenomena and interpret the responses of large groups. This research approach was selected to obtain a broad understanding of social media usage among higher students and how it relates to their engagement in English writing activities inside and outside the classroom.

Methods of collection data in this research were structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. This instrument was designed to gather responses from individuals who actively use social media, particularly in the context of learning English. A total of 60 respondents participated voluntarily in the survey, providing data on their social media usage habits, preferred platforms, and perceptions of how these platforms contribute to the development of their English listening skills.

For data analysis, this study employed descriptive statistical techniques to interpret the responses obtained from the Likert-scale questionnaire. These measures provided a comprehensive overview of students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of social media in learning English writing. The mean scores were used to determine the central tendency of responses, indicating the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Frequencies and percentages helped identify patterns and the overall distribution of responses across different demographic groups. The analysis aimed to reveal general trends in learners' engagement with social media for writing, while also highlighting specific areas of motivation, self-direction, and skill enhancement.

To strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the research findings, this study employed methodological triangulation, which included both expert judgment and cross-referencing with previous empirical studies. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire instrument was evaluated by subject matter experts in the fields of applied linguistics and EFL instruction to

ensure the content validity, clarity, and relevance of the survey items. Their feedback informed revisions to the instrument, contributing to more accurate data collection. In addition, the interpretation of quantitative results was triangulated with findings from several related studies on the use of social media in language learning (e.g., Yunus et al., 2019; Ahmad & Jusoh, 2021; Tenaja & Oco, 2023), providing theoretical and empirical grounding for the conclusions drawn. This triangulated approach not only improved the credibility of the study but also enabled a more nuanced and contextually informed understanding of how social media can support English writing development among EFL learners.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaires were sent to carry out this research using Google Forms, and the findings were analysed. According to the survey findings, which included sixty participants, 61.7% of the respondents were female, while 38.3% were male. The conclusions that may be drawn from Table 1 using the presented indications are as follows.

Table 1

No	Indicator	SD	D	SA	A	Mean
1	Social media supports non-native English learners.	-	3(5%)	44(73,3%)	13(21,7)	2.86
2	Students use social media to improve English writing.	2(3.3%)	3(5%)	10(16,7%)	45(75%)	2.79
3	Social media can replace English textbooks.	-	1(1,7%)	42(70%)	17(28,3%)	2.94
4	EFL materials are easy to find and share online.	-	5(8.3%)	21(35%)	34 (56.7%)	2.54
5	Social media helps develop writing skills.	5(8,3%)	7(11.7%)	33(55%)	15(25%)	2.43
6	Social media increases student's motivation.	-	-	48(80%)	12(20%)	3.67
7	Students write better through social media use.	1(1,7%)	4(6.7%)	39(65%)	16(26.7%)	3.02
8	Students learn English independently via social media.	3(5%)	9(15%)	21(35%)	27(45%)	3.73
9	Students improve <u>communication by</u>	10(16,7%)	8(13.3%)	27(45%)	15(25%)	3.15

	chatting with native speakers.					
10	Online tools keep students more engaged in English classes.	-	2(3.3%)	49(81.7%)	9(15%)	2.91

Table 1 scrutinizes that most respondents had a positive impression of social media as a valuable means of assisting in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). A substantial majority of students (73.3% agree, 21.7% strongly agree) believe that social media benefits students who are not native English speakers. It is represented in a mean score of 2.86, which is noteworthy. It demonstrates a widespread agreement that digital media provide advantageous exposure to the English language. Seventy-five percent students agree that they use social media to improve their writing abilities, but sixteen-point seven percent agree. The result is mean score of 2.79, which is somewhat lower than previous one, indicating that although social media is seen as a valuable supplement for writing practices, the usefulness of this supplement is believed to vary.

The finding that 98.3% of respondents feel that social media has the potential to replace traditional English textbooks is very remarkable. Seventy percent of respondents agree with this statement, and 28.3% percent of respondents strongly agree with it. This finding has the highest mean score of 2.94 among the items. The fact that this is happening may indicate a shift in inclination toward learning through digital, interactive, and real time information rather than through static textbook.

When it comes to the accessibility of materials, the majority of respondents believe that it is simpler to locate and exchange English as a Foreign Language (EFL) resources online (35% agree, 56.7% strongly agree). However, the mean score of 2.54 indicates that this convenience is acknowledged but not overwhelmingly supported. However, despite the optimistic outlook, there are still some misgivings. A significant fraction of students (20%) disagrees or strongly disagree with the statement that social media helps to enhance writing abilities. This results in a mean score of 2.43, which is lower than the 55% of students who agree with the statement.

One possible interpretation is that there is a perceived gap between the demands of formal academic writing and casual digital communication. Conversely, the motivating influence of social media is highly affirmed, meaning that eighty per cent of respondents agree and twenty percent strongly agree, giving this item the highest mean score of 3.67. A similar statement is expressed by students, who feel that writing improves due to social media usage (65% agree, 26.7% strongly agree), with a mean score of 3.02. The highest mean score overall was achieved by independent learning using social media. The highest mean score was achieved by independent learning using social media, which received a score of 3.73. Eighty percent of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement with this statement. The platform's directed language acquisition that focuses by this most respondents (45% agree, 25% strongly agree) situation. Most respondents (45% agree, 25% strongly agree) believe that conversing with native speaker is valuable. In conclusion, 81.7% of students agree that the use of online tools in English classrooms increases engagement, which demonstrates that incorporating digital technology. It has a beneficial impact on the dynamics of the classroom. The findings, taken as a whole, provide more evidence of the multidimensional usefulness of social media in facilitating English language acquisition.

Moreover, the outcomes of this study show that students have a generally positive attitude toward using social media to promote EFL learning. According to the research, students see social media as a helpful tool for improving their English language skills, notably in writing, motivation, and independent study. These findings are consistent with other earlier research that has emphasized the educational potential of social media in language teaching.

To begin, the high percentage of students who think that social media benefits non-native English learners (mean = 2.86) is consistent with social media provides a relevant framework for real language exposure and engagement. Nama, (2024) and Sabila & Dewi, (2024) which stressed that social media provides a relevant framework for real language exposure and engagement. Their research discovered that networks such as Facebook and Twitter expose learners to various linguistic inputs, improving comprehension and vocabulary learning. It is consistent with our findings, in which most students reported utilizing social media to improve their writing (mean = 2.79). However, only a small proportion strongly agreed.

Interestingly, the assumption that social media can replace traditional English textbooks (mean = 2.94) corresponds to a change in learning preferences toward more dynamic and interactive information. It is consistent with Mustafa et al. (2022) and Parrella et al. (2021) suggested that today's learners prefer digital and multimodal forms of communication because they are more engaging and accessible than traditional printed materials. However, such optimism should be tempered by prudence, as social media may not provide formal grammar teaching or academic writing rules, as textbooks typically provide.

The significance of social media in increasing motivation and encouraging autonomous learning was substantiated in this study, with the highest mean scores obtained in both categories (3.67 and 3.73, respectively). This conclusion is consistent with Tenaja & Oco, (2023) and Tomas & Dulin (2021) stated that social media platforms increase learner autonomy by allowing students to access learning resources anytime and from any location, giving them more control over the learning process. Similarly, Sakkir et al (2016); Yunus et al., 2019) found that social networking technologies improve student engagement and self-confidence, particularly through collaborative and peer-supported learning.

The results of this study demonstrate that learners generally perceive social media as an effective tool for enhancing English writing skills, increasing motivation, and fostering autonomous learning. These findings align with constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that language acquisition is most effective when it occurs through authentic, socially mediated experiences. Social media provides learners with real-world contexts in which they can engage with broader audiences, participate in meaning-making activities, and receive immediate feedback, thereby reinforcing their writing development in a naturalistic setting.

In parallel, the findings also support Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), particularly in relation to the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The use of social media empowers students to take control of their learning, practice writing in self-directed ways, and interact with peers, all of which contribute to increased intrinsic motivation. These theoretical interpretations are corroborated by studies in recent JELL publications. For instance, Syachsalsabillah and Hamid (2023) found that English education students showed positive perceptions and increased motivation when using Instagram to improve descriptive writing, highlighting the platform's role in supporting engagement and creativity. Likewise, Purnamasari and Abas (2022) observed that the widespread use of social media during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly contributed to the enrichment of Indonesian users' English vocabulary and language awareness. Further, Evelina, Syahid, and Widiastuty (2023) demonstrated that digital tools, such as vocabulary learning web pages, enhanced EFL students' independent learning and content retention.

These studies collectively support the notion that integrating familiar digital tools into language learning not only enhances writing performance but also promotes learner-centered instruction and self-regulated learning, particularly in EFL contexts. Thus, the findings of the present research reinforce the pedagogical value of social media when applied thoughtfully alongside formal writing instruction. Finally, the conclusion that this study explained that social media improves EFL students' writing, motivation, and independence. Most students saw the benefits of utilizing social media to study English outside of class, seeing it as a viable substitute for textbooks. Interactive social media helps learners to find real information, engage with others, including native speakers, and study language skills at their speed and interest. These findings demonstrate how social media may convert English learning settings into learner-centered and adaptable ones.

Limited perceptions moderate the overall good view. Some were worried about the academic level and organization of social media language content. Students like its casual and conversational writing style, but few consider it suitable for academic writing. Students' digital proficiency, uneven access to native speaker interactions, and learning preferences also affect social media use. These diverse viewpoints propose balancing social media use with regulated instructional practices to optimize educational gains. online tools boost classroom engagement (mean = 2.91) supports the findings of Abdul Razak et al., (2019); Rinda et al. (2018) who discovered that incorporating social media into EFL classes considerably improves student involvement and enjoyment. They research how well sites like blogs and YouTube could transform passive learning into active knowledge creation.

Taken together, the results of this study lend credence to the growing amount of research that recognizes social media as a new way to teach English as a foreign language. Teachers, however, should be cognizant of the limitations of informal platforms and consider combining them with more structured methods of instruction to boost student achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study explained that social media improves EFL students' writing, motivation, and independence. Most students saw the benefits of utilizing social media to study English outside of class, seeing it as a viable substitute for textbooks. Interactive social media helps learners to find real information, engage with others, including native speakers, and study language skills at their speed and interest. These findings demonstrate how social media may convert English learning settings into learner-centered and adaptable ones. Limited perceptions moderate the overall good view. Some were worried about the academic level and organization of social media language content. Students like its casual and conversational writing style, but few consider it suitable for academic writing. Students' digital proficiency, uneven access to native speaker interactions, and learning preferences also affect social media use. These diverse viewpoints propose balancing social media use with regulated instructional practices to optimize educational gains.

This study also offer several pedagogical implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, particularly in higher education settings. First, the positive learner perceptions of social media suggest that these platforms can serve as effective supplementary tools to enhance writing skills, motivation, and learner autonomy. Instructors can leverage familiar social media environments such as Instagram or WhatsApp to design interactive writing tasks that are contextual, collaborative, and personally meaningful. Integrating these platforms into writing instruction aligns with constructivist and self-determination principles, supporting student-centered learning and intrinsic engagement. Furthermore, the accessibility and

flexibility of social media can help bridge the gap between informal digital communication and formal academic writing. Educators are encouraged to scaffold these activities with clear learning objectives and feedback mechanisms to ensure that students develop not only fluency but also accuracy and academic writing conventions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research employed a quantitative design using a self-reported questionnaire, which may be subject to response bias and cannot fully capture the depth of learners' experiences or actual writing improvement. Second, the sample size was limited to 60 EFL students from a specific educational context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, the study focused primarily on students' perceptions rather than performance outcomes, meaning it does not provide empirical evidence of measurable writing progress resulting from social media use. Lastly, the study did not explore how variables such as digital literacy levels, frequency of social media use, or access to technology may have influenced learner responses. Future research is recommended to adopt mixed-methods approaches, include performance-based writing assessments, and examine diverse learner populations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of social media's impact on EFL writing development.

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