BJTEP

**AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT**

| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Social Media Usage and Its Impact on English Language Skill Development

Kaissi Nadia[1] and Ennam Abdelghanie[2],

[1]*Doctoral Researcher Laboratory of Literature, Arts and Pedagogical Engineering, Faculty of Languages, Letters and Arts; Ibn Tofail University (ITU); Kingdom of Morocco*
[2] *Permanent Full Professor of Media, Communication, Education, Translation, and Postcolonial Studies at the Department of English Studies; Faculty of Languages, Letters, and Arts; Ibn Tofail University (ITU); Kingdom of Morocco*
Corresponding Author: Kaissi Nadia , **E-mail**: nadia.kaissi@uit.ac.ma

| **ABSTRACT**

Social media has become a major communication tool, influencing the global connectivity of individuals. Its nature and pervasiveness have transformed communication, transcending all geographical boundaries. Social media has offered a new opportunity for informal language learning, allowing users to acquire and refine their language skills while actively practicing on these online platforms. This research paper examined the use of social media and its impact on the improvement of English language skills among undergraduate students in Morocco. The methodology conducted is based on a quantitative study, collecting numerical data through an online survey from undergraduate students from two public Moroccan universities. Using standardized metrics to measure usage patterns and frequency, and to explore perceived English skills improvements. The main result of this study reveals that social media takes a large part of daily activity in students' lives, in addition to the diversity of social media platforms, which offers a real opportunity for informal learning of language, as illustrated in the remarkable improvement of English skills, in particular listening, reading, speaking, and enriching their vocabulary reserve.

I. Introduction

Since the global COVID-19 crisis, perceptions of social media and the internet have evolved. Statistics show that globally, internet users have leveraged social media and internet platforms to utilize new digital communication tools. The use of social media platforms is increasing by 1% daily worldwide. These platforms enable individuals worldwide to connect in a global virtual environment; in other words, these new communication tools bring people from all over the world together, connecting them in a single, borderless virtual world (Venugeetha et al., 2022). Unlike traditional media, social media platforms utilize various forms of information to address a broad global audience. Interactions through diverse content and various communication methods occur at intervals during daily life activities and are not limited to a specific place or time. Additionally, social media usage patterns foster an emotional connection between users, thereby providing continuously updated information (Bengtsson et al., 2021). As a result of the rise of social media, new modes of interaction have emerged, replacing traditional forms of communication. Jassim et al. (2023) explained that communication on social media platforms has led to significant linguistic changes, such as the use of shortened sentences, acronyms, memes, and abbreviations, which constitute a new language for online conversations.

At present, the pervasiveness of social media has transformed how people connect, communicate, and exchange information and news. It has become a crucial means of communication, offering dynamic and instantaneous connectivity across the globe. Social media platforms have transformed communication norms, leading to the emergence of a new online language based on new

standards such as audiovisual content, abbreviations, acronyms, and memes. Evolving communication and language used online call for a deep comprehension of how these new norms affect language and offline communication (Anuashok et al., 2024).

Social media has significantly influenced social interaction forms as well as education. According to research conducted by Kottaparamban (2025), social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram created an important virtual learning environment beyond the traditional classroom. These online platforms provide instant interaction, virtual collaboration, fast connection, and a motivated learning community in real-time global discussion. This evolution provided a huge online platform for sharing knowledge, including all the forms of information like texts, images, and videos. In addition, social media facilitate communication and interaction between students and help meet their educational needs through various forms of communication and diverse content, which affect education and language learning.

A study conducted in China on a group of EFL students revealed a positive impact of social media and language learning application usage on their learning outcomes. Most participants expressed positive attitudes about the use of social media and learning language apps, particularly Baicizhan. They were satisfied with the opportunity provided by these two online learning platforms (social media and the app), which allowed them to learn new words, build effective connections with their teachers, and learn within a motivated environment on mobile devices. This experiment offered a supported learning method in addition to instructional materials such as textbooks or workbooks provided inside the classroom (Song & Xiong, 2023).

As a global learning platform, social media offers multimedia content, starting from textual content to authentic language materials, acting as a rich source for language acquisition and practice through different online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Individuals have a precious opportunity to experience real-life situations to practice the English language. Social media presents multimedia linguistic content with the possibility to share information, collaborate with others, and build a global network—a rich, powerful tool for informal language learning outside the formal learning settings (Manal et al., 2025).

In summary, social media has multifaceted functions in informal online learning, acting as a learning platform through virtual communities, connection, and communication in real-world language acquisition. These online platforms promote informal language learning, assisting users to learn language in daily basic activities and strengthen their skills through practice outside the formal learning settings (Zhu, 2025).

The essence of this research paper is the growing popularity of social media use and its impact on language learning development. These platforms have transformed the concept of communication, ranging from traditional media to virtual global platforms that provide unique and powerful tools for communication and learning. Social media becomes a globally integrated way of interaction and communication that transcends geographic boundaries; it acts as a deeply integrated communication and learning platform in individuals' daily lives, with a global reach. Investigating usage patterns and perceived English language development (e.g., reading, listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary) can help to understand the impact of social media use on English language skills among Moroccan students. Few studies were conducted in the Moroccan context that investigate how social media platform usage can influence young people to learn and develop their English language in real-life contexts.

This study addresses this research gap by analyzing and describing how Moroccan students at the university level use social media to identify the relationship between social media usage and self-reported English language improvement. This paper characterizes the existing situation of social media usage patterns that assist their informal English language learning. The main focus is on how Moroccan students use social media and the English language to communicate and interact, and what improvement is observed in their learning outcomes.

The study is structured by the following research questions to build a thorough understanding of how social media platforms are integrated into Moroccan youth lives, with a focus on English language improvement.

Research questions

- ○ How often do users use social media in their daily lives?
- ○ How frequently do users use English to interact on social media?
- ○ What are the reasons for using social media?
- ○ What English skills are improved through social media usage?

II. Literature Review

Digital spaces have profoundly transformed how individuals communicate, access information, and use language. Social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, have marked a decisive turning point in communication methods and multimedia content. These new, visually driven platforms offer a different kind of satisfaction to young people who consume short-form content (mini-videos, reels, and advertisements) that presents diverse information in an engaging way. The proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the way individuals communicate, enabling new modes of interaction and providing access to platforms anywhere and at any time (Hang, 2024).

Moreover, social media platforms present visual content and new forms of connection, providing opportunities to communicate in different ways and stimulate learning via virtual environments beyond the traditional learning settings. A study conducted by Alenezi & Brinthaupt (2022) on social media use by Kuwaiti university students concludes that the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp assists the participants to stay in touch with their friends and family, to contact faculty members when they need help, and to enhance their collaborative learning. The study concludes that social media has the potential to encourage informal learning in different contexts more than formal learning.

Additionally, social media usage supplies tremendous opportunities to learn a language, especially the English language. It offers various online platforms for exchanging information, communicating, and creating content that meets users' needs and interests. A study examined 67% of participants from the Islamic University of Riau, who stated that social media platforms provide significant improvement regarding the English language, particularly vocabulary. In which offer important assistance for their learning through conversation, collaborative learning, and sharing information, in addition to the availability of knowledge on platforms that serve their learning needs (Ismail et al., 2019).

Social media platforms present a rich language learning global platform with a diverse content and variety of materials, in which informal learning on social media goes beyond entertainment and interaction to involve English language improvement and real-time interaction for a collaborative learning experience with peers, professors, or native speakers. Therefore social media offers a flexible and personalized experience for users, enabling different learning styles which provide a variety of learning preferences such as short clips, videos, texts, or images to learn language and gain knowledge. Informal language learning typically happens autonomously outside the structured classes. It is unorganized, and out-of-class learning processes occur through different activities (e.g., reading books, watching films, listening to music, navigating English language websites, social media, gaming, online interaction, etc.) that explain the potential of informal learning settings to learn language, especially social media platforms that provide real-life and offer authentic English language content, which stimulate learners to spend more time exposed to the English language on online platforms than in formal learning settings (Montagner, 2022).

A significant influence of social media on informal English learning is translated into real-world language experience provided through authentic language input, instant global interaction, and a motivating virtual environment for active participation. Social media platforms offer various English language content, which boosts learners' learning English and develops their language skills. First, these platforms assist learners to improve their listening and speaking skills through the most used platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, with the focus on voice messages and videos, which allow learners to learn different dialects and accents that help them to be familiar with different styles people use to communicate in the English language. Secondly, exposure to authentic English language content on social media is considered an opportunity to practice reading and writing skills. The amount of written content, such as posts, comments, documents, and online group discussions, helps learners to build a vocabulary reservoir, learn English idioms, and practice grammatical construction. Therefore, the function of instant feedback on social media is an interesting mechanism provided on these platforms that reinforces confidence and promotes the language learning process through the immediate feedback provided on comments or posts replying with a correction, assistance, or suggestions in social media communities to display active participation, interaction, and collaborative learning. There is no denying that social media has a significant influence on informal learning, including English language acquisition that is not similar to formal educational settings (Zhu, 2025; Manal et al., 2025).

III. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative data collection based on a validated scale developed by Whiting & Williams (2013). This survey scale was adopted from the Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT) developed by Katz and Blumler in the 1970s. This theoretical framework is implemented to measure the pattern usage and motives behind social media use by Moroccan university students, emphasizing the reasons that motivate students to use social media platforms to realize desired achievements beyond the formal learning settings (Kasirye, 2021). The data was collected from 300 Moroccan students from two public Moroccan universities (Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, and University Mohammed V, Rabat). The survey was structured based on UGT to answer the research questions, designed on Qualtrics, and distributed via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and WhatsApp), and the questionnaire was composed of four sections: demographic profile, social media usage, purpose of use, and perceived English language improvement. The data collected were analyzed using the Qualtrics report tool to summarize and visualize the results for a descriptive analysis to measure the frequency and usage pattern of social media and discover perceived English language improvement due to the use of social media platforms.
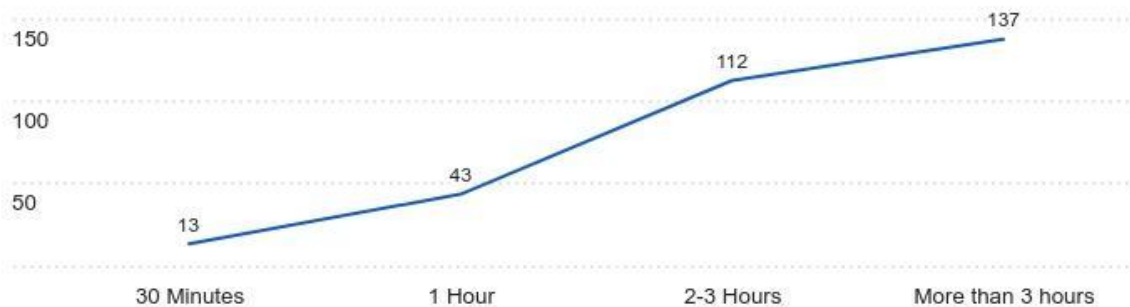
IV. Results

The study involved 300 university students selected based on their possession of accounts on social media and persuading their studies at the tertiary level. Participants were undergraduate students from two public universities in the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region of Morocco. To meet the target sample, active young students from higher education who are engaged on social media. The questionnaire was distributed via Facebook pages and WhatsApp chat groups; most participants were active users on social media, and 86% of the total were between 18 and 24 years old.
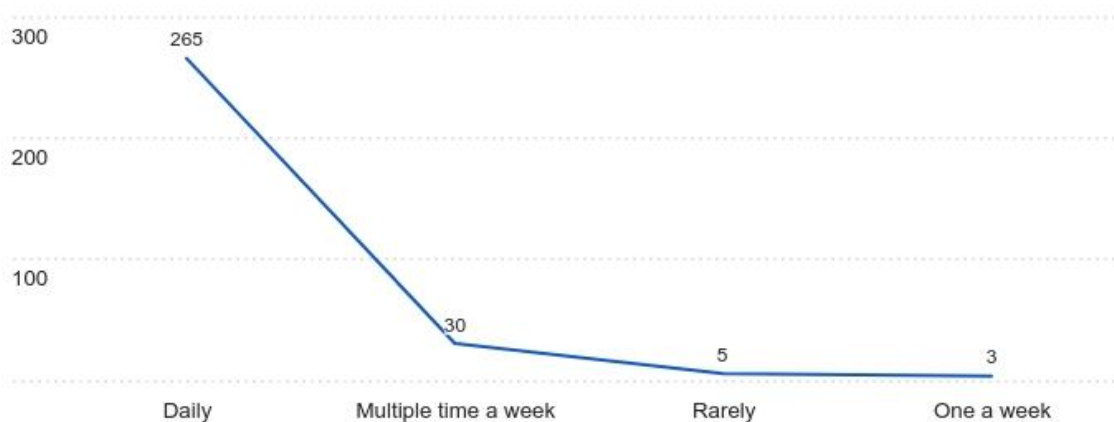
Figure 1

Social Media Usage

Note. The survey items read as follows: Time spent on social media per day, and how often students use social media platforms? The first result in the figure above presents students' social media usage in their daily routine, which illustrates the significant role social media played in individuals' lives, in particular students. These participants are active users on social media platforms, which form a large part of their daily lives.

Figure 2

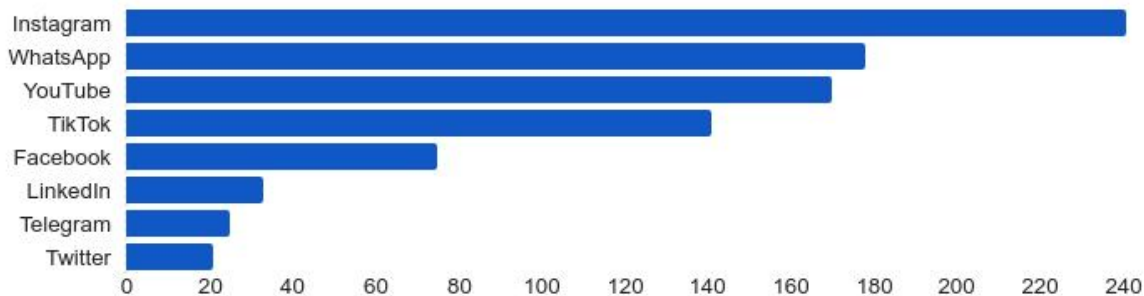Most Used Social Media Platforms

The most used platforms

Figure 2 shows that the top social media platforms used among university students are Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook, which illustrates the preferences of users for these platforms and the richness of the content that attracts students' attention.

Figure 3

Motives to Use Social Media
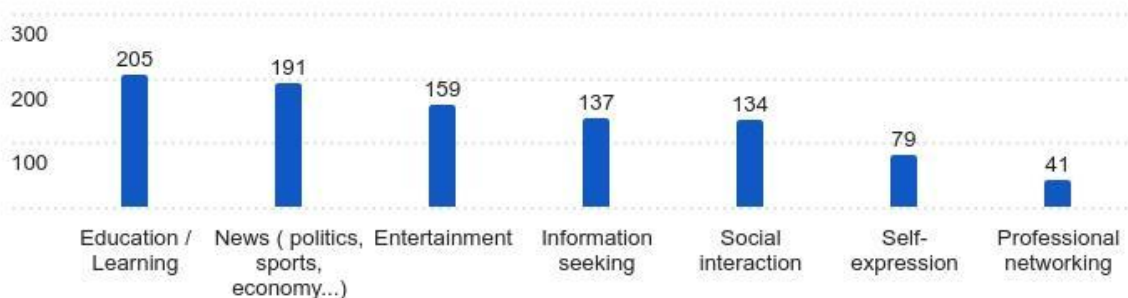

Purposes to use social media.

Figure 3 presents the reason-driven usage of social media that leads to different preferences regarding platform use based on students' needs and desired outcome to be achieved. The most common purposes for which students use social media are as follows: education, news, entertainment, information seeking, and social interaction. The result explains that participants have different motives to use social media platforms according to their needs beyond the passive scrolling.

Figure 4
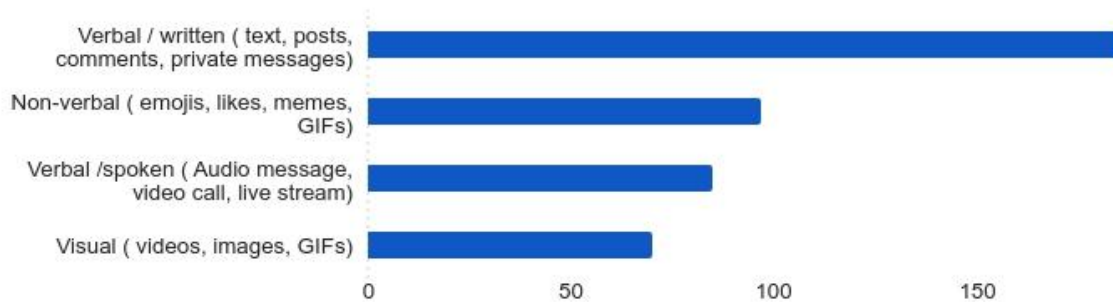Type of Interaction Students Have on Social Media

Figure 4 presents data regarding the type of interaction students use to communicate and interact with the content provided on social media platforms. It illustrates that participants preferred to use verbal interaction in the form of written communication. Also, non-verbal ways that characterize short forms of interaction that need only seconds to use. In the third place is the verbal communication way, in particular spoken communication, which offers audiovisual interaction that gives a real-life experience for users.
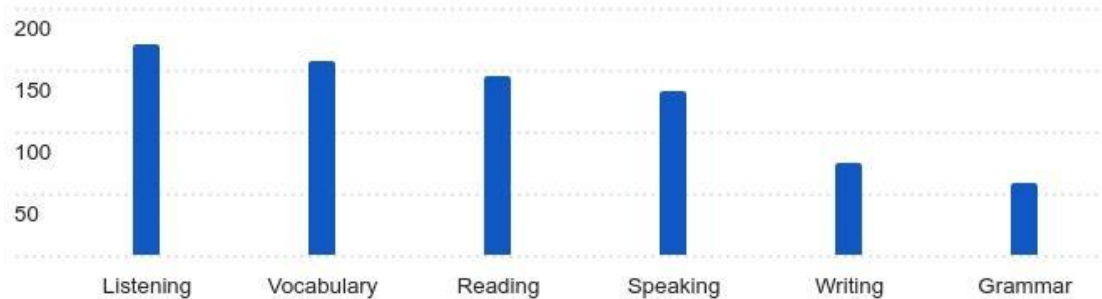
Figure 5
Reported English Skills Improvement

Figure 5 shows the extent social media influences learning the English language. The result presents the most reported English skills enhanced through the use of social media among university students, which are listening, vocabulary, reading, and speaking. It explained that social media usage can lead to reinforcing the language input and assisting users to acquire language and vocabulary to enrich their language knowledge in order to realize desired outcomes.

VI. Discussion

The findings revealed that social media plays a vital role in individuals' daily lives and has become a significant way of communication among youth. Illustrated the amount of time spent on social media and the active practice patterns of students with the rate of being online on these platforms more than three hours per day. This supports the idea that social media became a crucial communication tool for people that led to increased usage of these platforms on a daily basis (Venugeetha et al., 2022). The study results also revealed that the use of social media and preferences for some platforms stem from personal reasons for enjoyment, seeking information, social interaction, or self-expression, which depends on the motives driven by the use of specific platforms that satisfy the users' needs. This finding supports the key observation by Kasirye (2021). Linguistic changes were also found in terms of communication practices through different interaction types such as verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication conducted by participants. As emphasized by Jassim et al. (2023), social media use contributes to linguistic changes by adopting new online language utilized on platforms for interaction and communication purposes, such as comments, posts, acronyms, and audiovisual messages. Therefore, social media has a real impact on communication, creating new forms of interaction that affect the language spoken or used on social media platforms, which goes in line with the study conclusion conducted by Alenezi & Brinthaupt (2022). In addition, the analysis of the results indicates that social media use can improve English language learning and offer a language acquisition potential for students, reflecting other opportunities that exist outside

the formal learning settings to learn and improve English language. Students reported that social media use impacted their English skills in terms of improving listening, learning vocabulary, reading, and speaking skills, in which the most perceived English skills improved due to social media platform usage. These findings align with previous studies. To sum up, the statistical analysis found a significant impact of social media on communication skills in terms of using various interaction types and assisting to improve English language skills through the content and social media communication styles provided on platforms (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook).

VII. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the impact of social media usage on English language skills improvement among university undergraduate students, in addition exploring the usage frequency of social media on a daily basis, and the most used platforms. The results indicate an important impact of social media on students' English language outcomes in terms of improving certain language skills such as listening, vocabulary, reading, and speaking. Hence, participants use various social media communication styles like comments, posts, GIFs, likes, and audio messages to interact and connect with both content and other social media users; which explains their preferences regarding using some platforms rather than others. The study also presents the potential of social media providing a lot of motives to use platforms that display variety of content in which support users learning, offer diversity of information, and different communication styles, leads to develop English language skills; however, can affect the use of language in formal context due to use of shortened sentences like comments and acronyms. Generally, findings revealed a significant awareness among participants regarding their purposes to use social media such as social connection, entertainment, education, information, etc. These findings support the idea that social media users are active practitioners, selecting platforms based on personal needs like connection, learning, self-expression, and professional networking; demonstrating that users precise their movies to use social media platforms, beyond passive scrolling. To conclude, social media platforms offer opportunities to develop English language skills and satisfy diverse needs that many users seek to achieve.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

[1] Alenezi, W., & Brinthaupt, T. M. (2022). The Use of Social Media as a Tool for Learning: Perspectives of Students in the Faculty of Education at Kuwait University. *Contemporary Educational Technology, 14*(1), ep340. https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/11476

[2] Anuashok, A., Gupta, V., Tyagi, T., Agarwal, T., Reddy, R., Rout, A., & Center for Management Studies, Jain University. (2024). A study on the impact of social media on modern communication. In Center for Management Studies, Jain University, *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)* (Vol. 6, Issue 2, pp. 1–3). https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2024/2/15980.pdf

[3] Bengtsson, S., & Johansson, S. (2022). The Meanings of Social Media Use in Everyday Life: Filling Empty Slots, Everyday Transformations, and Mood Management. Social Media + Society, 8(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221130292

[4] Dhingra, Manish and Mudgal, Rakesh K., Historical Evolution of Social Media: An Overview (March 15, 2019). International Conference on Advances in Engineering Science Management & Technology (ICAESMT) - 2019, Uttaranchal University, Dehradun, India, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3395665 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3395665

[5] Hang L (2024) The Impact of Social Media on Modern Communication: Evolution and Future Prospects. Global Media Journal, 22:72.

[6] Ismail, S., Ahmad, M., Zaim, M., Mukhaiyar, Gistituati, N., Islamic University of Riau, & State University of Padang. (2019). The Use social media as a tool in language learning: Students perspective. *J-SHMIC*.

[7] Jassim, Hamza. (2023). THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION. 13. 2347-7180.

[8] Kasirye, F. (2021). The Importance of Needs in Uses and Gratification Theory.

[9] Kottaparamban, M. (2025). Social Media: Theory & Praxis Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Linguistic Changes in English Language. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)*, *23*(1). https://doi.org/10.57239/pjlss-2025-23.1.005

[10] Manal, M., Ibrahim, H., Badour, M., & Al-Muqaisib, N. (2025). Social Media as a Tool for Informal English Language Learning: Opportunities and Challenges. Print) International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research, 13, 127–136. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15237325

[11] Montagner, A. (2022). Informal language learning: an investigation of students' preferences. In F. C. Dalziel, Università degli Studi di Padova, & Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari, Università Degli Studi Di Padova [Thesis]. https://thesis.unipd.it/retrieve/e0d70c72-b597-441d-a8d6-99ce53240c23/Montagner_Alice.pdf

[12] Sim, Tam. (2012). Informal language learning setting: Technology or social interaction?. Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology. 11.

[13] Song, B., & Xiong, D. (2023). A comparative study of the effects of social media and language learning apps on learners' vocabulary performance. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 1–12. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-023-09871-z

[14] Venugeetha Y, Ranjeet Rathod and Rishabh Kumar, " Social Networking Sites in Daily Life: Benefits and Threats", In: Saroj Hiranwal and Garima Mathur (eds), Artificial Intelligence and Communication Technologies, SCRS, India, 2022, pp. 51-64. https://doi.org/10.52458/978-81-955020-5-9-5

[15] Whiting, Anita & Williams, David. (2013). Why people use social media: A uses and gratifications approach. Qualitative Market Research. 16. 10.1108/QMR-06-2013-0041.

[16] Zhu, W. (2025). The Role of Social Media in Informal English Learning: A Case Study of Language Learning Communities. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*.