

## **SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Even though there have been many empirical investigations reporting on the use of social media for learning a language in the classrooms, it has yet to receive complete acceptance from educators and the public. Hence, this study took a closer look at the importance and efficacy of the use of social media platforms in mastering the English language among undergraduates in Malaysia. A quantitative approach was employed in data collection. A set of questionnaires was administered and semi-structured interviews were carried out to elicit information. This study looks at how different social media platforms are used among (n=200) undergraduates from various public universities to learn the English language through social media and the extent to which social media helps in enhancing their academic performance. From the survey, it was found that among the different platforms used to learn, YouTube was the most preferred (47%) and that 42% of the students spent between 3 to 4 hours on social media daily. The results also showed that while many respondents somewhat agreed social media facilitates their English language learning; there was, at best, only a weak relationship between the grades they obtained for English and the time they spent learning through these online platforms ( $r=0.062$ ). The study concludes that social media platforms have much potential among undergraduates in learning the English language and their use as a pedagogical approach can improve students' learning outcomes in acquiring the English language. Suggestions are made on how social media can be used in the language classrooms and thus, further qualitative and longitudinal research is recommended to investigate further the impact of social media as a tool to improve the academic performance of students.

**Keywords:** Social media, Twitter, active learning, Youtube, academic performance

## **Introduction**

The English language has become one of the most important languages in the world and in fact, acts as a second language in many countries around the globe. Most people also use the English language as a medium of communication to converse with people around the globe (Kanpp & Meierkord, 2002, as cited in Dewey, 2007). Many universities and higher learning institutions in Malaysia use English as their medium of instruction. Furthermore, most of the subjects learned by the students here are also in English. This proves that the English language is widely used in higher learning institutions.

With the advancement of technology, social media has been a big influence on everybody nowadays. There are so many social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google Apps that operate as a medium for undergraduates to learn English if used wisely. According to Shih (2011), social media helps people to connect and build a good network with others as well as create a platform to expand the circle of friends all over the world. Hence, people can share all types of information and knowledge on online discussion boards or share status. Birch and Volkov (2007) strongly believe that learners can be encouraged to engage in discussion through online forums. This explains that social media gives bountiful benefits in learning the English language among undergraduates since they can contribute information and knowledge, and thus, increase their English language proficiency. On the other hand, Chun (2016) shared that learning English solely in the classroom, in an exam-oriented way results in intense pressure on students.

## **Social Media**

Currently, social media plays an important role in social communication as a platform to share knowledge and access information. It allows users to compare the information with other sources to ensure its accuracy (Pavlik, 2015 as cited in Ayaz, Faheem & Khan, 2016). Websites, online groups, and micro blogging have become resourceful platforms for users to exchange messages, thoughts, and concepts as well as to communicate with people around the globe as a way to expand social and professional networks (Mubarak, 2016).

As social media offers English language learners ways to enhance their English language skills; (writing, reading, and vocabulary), it plays an important role among the users (Ayaz, Faheem & Khan, 2016). Mingle and Adams (2015) expressed that cyberspace has become a reliable platform for learners to participate in academic and formal discussions at their own pace and availability where they share their ideas via written communication. This also gives time for learners to present their ideas in a more structured way.

Web-based discussions can add to the progress of students' insightful ability and critical thinking skills (Deng & Tavares, 2013 as cited in Mingle & Adams, 2015). Compared to face-to-face

interaction, learners have the liberty to voice their opinions, agreement, or disagreement in online discussions.

Language educators would be excited to use social media as a medium of learning with students (Apeanti & Danso, 2014 as cited in Mingle & Adams, 2015). The students would score better grades if they have a means of communicating with their instructors as well as a way to be engaged in online classes via social media (Mingle & Adams, 2015).

### ***Facebook***

Facebook is one of the common social media platforms where educators can share notes, assignments, online assessments, academic forums, academic teaching, and learning tools like videos, quotes, images, boards, and sample essays. Dhanya (2016) indicated that the endless benefits of using social media platforms are not merely for social gains but also academic enhancement. He also shared that the use of social media not only fosters good rapport among learners but also gives dynamics in classrooms by encouraging student attendance as well as enabling them to follow their course.

### ***YouTube***

Online YouTube videos such as technology, entertainment, design (TED) talks focus on real speakers in a natural environment and appeal to many young viewers. Beare (2008) said YouTube samples are better than live shows as viewers can watch the videos of speakers repeatedly. Besides, they also give opportunities for students to create a network around the globe (Ybarra-Green, 2003). Beare also added that online videos and materials help learners to learn the English language or any other language. Ewing (2009 as cited in Essays, 2013) opined online videos and materials appear to be one of the best ways to watch and communicate with native speakers.

### ***Twitter***

Twitter is another well-known online social network that allows users to tweet; send, and read short character messages. Mubarak (2016) claimed that many learners and educators find Twitter as a useful way to keep in touch with each other. Aydin, Taşkıran, and Bozkurt (2016) found Twitter to be a useful educational instrument that heightens collaborative language learning especially reading and writing skills.

## **English Language Learning**

Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013b) justified that as the use of social media tools in the classroom has facilitated social communication and enhanced knowledge, academics and the public view it optimistically. Besides, the use of social media motivates students to connect themselves academically and creates a computer-generated community, which leads to better content learning by expanding their learning environment. In other words, social media integration expedites students' academic performance (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013a). Social media

assimilation upsurge the interaction among peers and instructors by increasing students' participation and collaborative learning (Olaleke, Iroju & Olajide, 2015). This introduces a common hub for learners to acquire the language outside the traditional classroom environment.

According to Mubarak (2016), many individuals have improved their second language by using their preferred modern gadgets to watch movies as well as videos. This gives learners opportunities to learn new vocabulary to enhance their language skills. Social media has created a platform for collaborative learning among students (Waleed Mugahed, Mohd Shahizan, & Lizawati Mi, 2015). They said that collaborative learning via social media helps to enrich the academic achievement of students. In New Zealand, social media is predominantly utilized for informal collaborative learning with peers to expedite education and social support (Penekham, 2014). In Japan, Facebook is used to help lower stress levels in the quest to improve language proficiency, especially among less proficient learners to ensure that the class is more comfortable for online discussion to motivate the learners to express ideas and justify their opinions (Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011). Briefly, social media supports and facilitates teaching and learning activities at the same time supplements the students' learning experience. Wang (2016) delivered a comprehensive picture of how WeChat facilitates language learning. It is not only used in language learning but also used for medical teaching and has proven to enthuse learners' inquisitiveness and exhilaration in learning by cultivating self-directed learning ability among medical students (Zeng et al. 2016) ). Given the benefits one can gain from the use of social media, hence, it is imperative to find the role of social media among Malaysian undergraduates in enhancing their English language performance.

### **Social media and ESL students**

Social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter enrich communication and theoretically encourage learners to explore language learning (Thurairaj, Roy, & Subaramaniam, 2012). Reinhardt and Zander (2011) suggest that using social media in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom expedites language learning. Social networks in academic settings could enhance communication skills between students and teachers; stimulate students' commitment, aid collaborative learning as well as promote academic relationships among peers (Gurcan, 2015). Thus, social media takes a significant role in the exchange of information by offering an opening for learners to continually stay connected and learn within academic environments.

### **Statement of the problem**

Despite empirical investigations reporting the reputation and integration of social media into second language learning classrooms, it has yet to receive complete acceptance from educators and the public (Mubarak, 2016). Not all social media platforms have the same or similar features. Chua, Fong, Goh, and Wong (2018) emphasized that social networks do not only connect people from around the world but also act as a medium for sharing information. A good example is Facebook which offers a feature called Pages. This feature empowers all to open a page to share

information, promote websites, links, and news (Chua, Fong, Goh & Wong, 2018). Some platforms of social media offer good information and features that can be used to learn English (Mubarak, 2016). Facebook is one of the most preferred social networks with more than 1.2 billion active users in 2014 (Chua, Fong, Goh & Wong, 2018). There are also many other social media platforms with different features and uses such as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and other programs (Chua, Fong, Goh & Wong, (2018). This research is aimed at studying the benefits of using social media as a platform to learn the English language and to investigate if the use of social media helps undergraduates to improve their English language learning through the following research questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of undergraduates on the role of social media in learning the English language?
- 2) To what extent does the use of social media correlate with their academic performance in the English language?

### **Significance of the study**

This study will benefit educators to encourage their students to use social media platforms to learn English. Most students have devices that allow them to access various English language learning methods at their convenience. Social media can also be useful for educators in selecting the best platforms to teach the English language. They can adapt to current technology to teach and help them to improve their English language to complement the lessons they share in class.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative approach. The primary data source used in this study was through survey questionnaire which was adapted from Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin, (2010) and Mubarak, (2016) to tailor to elicit information from 200 first-year undergraduates from three public higher learning institutions located in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Participants were selected through random sampling. The age of the participants ranged from 19-23 years. The questionnaires were distributed to three selected institutions (Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaya & Universiti Putra Malaysia) via Google forms. This process took about one month for the undergraduates to complete and submit their responses.

The questionnaire consists of three parts: Part I is related to the demographic profile of the undergraduates' sample, Part II is related to students' perceptions in learning the English language through social media while Part III attempted to assess how social media helps to enhance undergraduates' academic performance. On the whole, the questionnaire was aimed at obtaining information about undergraduates' perceptions and attitudes towards using social media in ESL classrooms.

Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were undertaken to elicit information about the effectiveness of social media in learning the English language. Five participants (three female undergraduates from Universiti Teknologi MARA and two male undergraduates from University Malaya) were selected randomly to respond to semi-structured interviews to substantiate survey data. These participants responded to the invitation via WhatsApp text to indicate their agreement to be a part of a semi-structured interview. Upon obtaining the participants' consent, the researchers conducted the semi-structured interviews in a place and a time agreed upon by participants.

Data from the survey were analyzed using simple frequency and percentile. All strongly agree and agree responses were categorized as "agree" while strongly disagree and disagree responses were categorized as "disagree". Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was used to investigate if the respondents considered social media as a beneficial means to support their English language learning and to determine the relationship between the total time spent using social media and their academic performance in English. The responses from the semi-structured interviews were then verbatim to triangulate quantitative findings.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the Vygotskian sociocultural approach (1978) which underlines that language and social interaction play a crucial role in human development, and serves as cultural practices that can lead to the structuring of knowledge shared by members of the community. Learners' virtual connections with their peers and professionals around the globe can create plenty of opportunities for a socio-cultural language exchange (Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Harrison, 2013). Social media generates favorable opportunities to learn through observation, where students can witness others, construe their behaviors, and regulate their styles of interacting in the social media platform. This study associates the use of social media platforms to learn and acquire new knowledge in the English language. This construction of knowledge is learned through active participation; it is built and constructed by each learner in interaction with social media. Vygotsky (1978) examines how the individual's participation in social interactions affects his/her individual's linguistic, cultural, and intellectual development. He points out that language is acquired via discovery, observation, and using it in social interactions when the learners are actively involved in the learning process in which the learners continually construct meaning (Piaget, 1963; cited in Cox, 2008). Therefore, the experience of students using social media context to enhance language learning is an integral part of this study.

### **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

A total of 200 undergraduates from three public higher learning institutions in Klang valley, Malaysia participated in this study. The respondents were 43% males while the rest were females. Among the respondents, the highest percentage (33%) obtained the grade of A in the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (the Malaysian Certificate of Education, is the equivalent to the O- level examination). English subject while in MUET, 38% obtained Band 4. Only 2% scored the



grades C and D in SPM. As for Malaysian University, English Test (MUET, a prerequisite test in applying for admissions into all public universities and colleges in Malaysia) Band 2 and Band 6 were obtained by 2% of the respondents. Table 1 summarizes data relating to the different social media platforms used by the students. Table 1 indicates that undergraduates' favorite social media for English learning is YouTube (M=3.60, SD=1.24). They also used Twitter (M=3.41, SD=2.43) and Facebook (M=1.92, SD=1.21). There was no significant difference in the mean scores between genders in terms of the three prevalent social media for English learning was found. It is noted that female undergraduates accessing YouTube were marginally higher than male undergraduates while the Facebook platform was preferred by female undergraduates to males. On average, males preferred Twitter more than female students.

**Table 1: The Use of Social Media for English Language learning**

	<b>Female (N=115) Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Male (N=85) Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Overall (N= 200) Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	3.63	1.29	3.58	1.2	3.60	1.24
<b>Twitter</b>	3.12	1.21	3.62	1.22	3.41	2.43
<b>Facebook</b>	2.63	1.6	1.21	0.82	1.92	1.21

## **Results and discussion**

*Research question 1: What are the perceptions of undergraduates on the role of social media in learning the English language?*

### ***Social media in learning the English language***

The results are presented in Table 2. Social media has a lot of functions to help undergraduates in improving their English language. This includes providing sufficient practice in speaking, writing, and reading in English. It is believed that the features of social media can help undergraduates to learn English in many ways just by accessing the items through the Internet.

93% of the respondents agreed that social media enhance their communication skills while the remaining 7% disagreed with the statement. This concurs with Khan, Ayaz, and Faheem (2016) who said social media is beneficial in communication and sharing knowledge. Furthermore, 79% revealed that social media enhanced their writing skills and 21% of the respondents disagreed with the item. 92% stated that social media enhanced their reading skill while on the contrary 8% disagreed with the statement. It is proven that social media had a prevailing role in English language learning as it gave a lot of opportunities to learners to improve English writing and reading skills as well as also improve students' vocabulary (Khan, Ayaz, & Faheem, 2016).

Table 2: Undergraduates’ perceptions in learning English on social media

	Items	DISAGREE (%)	AGREE (%)	MEAN	SD
1	Social media enhances my English communication skills.	7	93	4.06	1.06
2	Social media enhances my English writing	21	79	3.97	1.06
3	Social media enhances my English reading	8	92	3.67	1.21
4	The features of social media stimulate my learning interest.	12	88	4.15	0.88
5	My interaction with teammates is enhanced through social media platform.	15	85	3.62	1.2
6	Social media develops a more positive attitude towards learning English as a second language.	11	89	4.25	0.82
7	Social media website makes me more confident in communicating with others in English	7	93	4.06	1.06
8	I believe that using an online instant messaging system through social media with native speakers helps me practice the English language.	7	93	3.25	1.3
9	I take my studies more seriously when learning through social media.	25	75	3.25	1.3
10	I can learn English grammar and structures through peer/friend feedback on social media.	20	80	3.56	1.2

Moreover, 88% of the respondents agreed that the features of the social media stimulated their learning interest and 12% disagreed with the item. 85% of the respondents also agreed that their interaction with teammates was enhanced through social media platforms while the remaining 15% disagreed with the statement. 89% also stated that social media helped them develop a more positive attitude towards learning English as a second language compared to 11% of the respondents. 93% also revealed that social media websites made them comfortable interacting with others in English while 7% disagreed with the item. Besides, 93% of the respondents agreed that using online instant messaging through social media with English speakers helped them practice the English language and the remaining 7% disagreed with the statement. Through such interactions between the native users of English and non-native users, a “neo-apprenticeship style learning” can occur where they can practice speaking in English (Gannon-Leary & Fontainha, 2007, as cited in Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010).

75% of the respondents concurred that their learning attitude became more serious through learning on social media though 25% contradicted this statement. Lastly, a total of 80% of the respondents agreed that they were able to learn English grammar and structures through peer assessment on social media. In the semi-structured interview, the majority of the responses were positive towards the use of social media in improving their English language performance. An undergraduate shared:

*“In the initial stage, I used to have several spelling errors and misused sentence structures. After, sometime, I made fewer English language*



*mistakes in writing my comments via FB. I began to be more fluent. I could give comments without worrying of being wrong”.*

Another said;

*“I gained better skills in conversation and my comments are more accurate and meaningful. I could choose the appropriate words that conveyed the right meaning. I am confident posting meaningful and clear messages.”*

Social media facilitates the English learners to learn new words and vocabulary easier compared to book reading and other text materials (Khan, Ayaz, Faheem, 2016). Moreover, this study revealed that undergraduates are aware of the use of social media in facilitating English language learning. Social media expedites English learning among students through sharing, listening, and producing English Language materials on social media (Mubarak, 2016). Designing a proper learning atmosphere is the prime contribution of social media in the learning environment (Wang & Vasquez, 2012, as cited in Mubarak, 2016).

The mean value of the analysis indicates that positive attitude (M=4.25), stimulation learning (M=4.15), increase confidence (M=4.06), and enhancing communication (M=4.06), seemed to supersede the benefits. This indicates that although the use of social media brings about a lot of general benefits to learners, it is pivotal in learning English as a second language as many of them lack the positive attitude and enthusiasm when forced to learn in the traditional classroom that focuses on one-way communication. To sum up, the majority of the undergraduates have a similar perception towards social media where they agreed that social media facilitates their English language learning in many ways such as improving their communication, writing, reading skills, and also their grammar and vocabulary of English. Social media allows people to create, share, and download English materials as a method of digital interaction (Gonzalez, 2012, as cited in Mubarak, 2016, p.118). This proves that social media provides many benefits especially in facilitating their English language learning. Mubarak (2016) shared that social media assists to expand students’ motivation and academic writing (White, 2009). This means that academic performance in the English subject is affected by the use of social media as a learning instrument to learn the English language.

**Research question 2** will be discussed in the next section: To what extent does the use of social media correlate with their academic performance in the English language?

### ***Social Media & Academic Performance***

This section discusses how the use of social media correlates with the students’ academic performance in English. Social media offers a lot of benefits and helps in many ways for the students to learn English. Social media can also be considered as a platform to create a good study environment and also a safe and less intimidating space for undergraduates to practice the

language in an informal context (Samano, 2014). Table 3 shows social media's impact on academic performance in English. The results for each statement are presented in percentages.

Generally, it was found that 70% agreed that social media influenced their academic performance positively, while 30% did not agree with the item. Moreover, 73% of the undergraduates agreed that social media helped their spelling when writing in the examination and 27% of them were on the contrary where they said that social media did not help their spelling when writing their examination. A study done by Shih (2010) revealed that online learning and instruction bring constructive effects on language learning and academic writing especially when students are keen to learn and are skilled users of Internet-based tools and applications.

Besides, 68% agreed that their grades improved when they participated in social media while the balance 22% disagreed with the statement stated. Meanwhile, when being asked if social media could be used for educational purposes, 92% of the undergraduates agreed with the item but only 8% of them did not agree. A total of 87% of undergraduates agreed they used materials obtained from social media to complement the topics discussed in class, though 13% contradicted the item stated. To complete their assignments or homework, social media could be one of the alternatives for the students to share materials with their friends via their favorite social media channels (Li, 2017). The data is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Social Media Impact on Academic Performance

	<b>Items</b>	<b>DISAGREE %</b>	<b>UN-CERTAIN</b>	<b>AGREE %</b>
1	Social media influence my academic performance positively	30	-	70
2	Social media helped my spelling when writing Examination	27	-	73
3	My grades improve when I participate in social media	32	-	68
4	Social media can be used for educational purposes	8	-	92
5	I spend a lot of time participating on social media than reading my books	18	-	82
6	Addiction to social media is not a problematic issue that affects my academic life	41	-	59
7	The use of social media affects my vocabulary knowledge	14	-	86

The results also revealed that 82% of undergraduates spent a considerable of time using social media than reading books, and only 18% read more books rather than spend a lot of time participating on social media. Meanwhile, 59% also agreed that addiction to social media was not an issue that affected their academic performance. However, 41 % of the undergraduates disagreed with the item. This can be proved by (Hamid, Waycott, Kurnia & Chang, 2015; Li, 2017) where they stated that social media helped the students with their communication and encouraged swift sharing among users.

Next, 86% of the respondents agreed the use of social media affects their vocabulary knowledge and it would improve the undergraduates' English understanding while 14% disagreed with both

statements. Meanwhile, 79% said group discussions on social media returned good results as far as their academics were concerned and 21% did not agree with the statement. Based on the study done by Shih (2010, p. 841), it has been proved that “students were able to improve their organization, grammar, and structure, content, vocabulary, and spelling” by using social media.

Most of the undergraduates agreed that social media assisted them in their academic performance in the English language specifically. They also added that social media did not lower or give a negative impact on them but facilitated their learning and improved their performance in English. Koivuniemi (2012) stressed that using social media in learning English is beneficial to improve English Language skills and indicated one’s vocabulary range broadened when spending more time on English websites.

Social media can be very beneficial and provides a positive impact on language learning if it is used wisely. Research question 1 showed the use of social media at the stage of learning orientation has greatly assisted the undergraduates regarding learning English effectively and improve their delivery of the message as well as the content. Besides motivating and triggering the interests of students, social media also assist students to improve their comprehension, presenting interesting information. This can be proven by looking at the statements in the questionnaire saying that social media developed a more positive attitude towards learning English as a second language. This got the highest score from the respondents. Besides, we also found that the undergraduates agreed social media gives an impact on their academic performance especially on the item that stated social media can be used for educational purposes. The majority of them agreed with the statement.

For further investigation, the data in Part C was analyzed by using SPSS software to investigate the relationship between the social media impact on academic performance and total time spent using social media daily. We compared the academic performance in English with the time spent because we would like to see the impact of social media on the undergraduates’ academic performance specifically and how well it would help them to perform regardless of the times they spent on social media, did it help them to improve their English language or not. In SPSS, we used the Pearson Correlation Coefficient test to study the relationship mentioned above.

Table 4: Total time spent on Social media daily

<b>Time Spent</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1 -2 hours	17
3 - 4 hours	42
5 - 6 hours	20
More than 6 hours	21

Table 4 shows the total time spent by respondents using social media in daily life. The highest percentage 42% spent between three to four hours on social media in their daily life. Next, about 21% of total respondents spent more than six hours on social media. This is followed by the

respondents who spent five to six hours on social media (20%) and 17% of the respondents spent between one to two hours online. The related data is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship between Academic Performance and Time Spent on Social Media

		Academic_Performance Academic performance in the English Language	Total time spent using social media daily
<b>Academic performance in the English Language</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.115
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.253
	N	200	200
<b>Time spent On social media daily</b>	Pearson Correlation	.115	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.253	
	N	200	200

The correlation of social media impact on academic performance and the total time spent using social media daily shows a positive relationship. However, the strength of the correlation shows a weak relationship among them with a significance of 0.115. This means that the total time spent using social media is significant but it does not give a big impact on the academic performance in English. This can be proven by the results obtained through the questionnaire in the demographic profile where most of the students admitted they spent lots of time on social media but still most of them agreed it does not affect their academic performance which shows a positive sign that the undergraduates learn and make use of the social media on a positive side. Research done by Mubarak (2016, p. 125) has proven that “students’ knowledge; attitude and learning attainment were positively affected by the usage of social media”.

Many undergraduates somehow agreed that social media facilitated their English language learning. The majority of the undergraduates stated that social media enhanced their reading, writing, and communication skills. They also revealed that features of social media stimulated their learning interest. Furthermore, undergraduates also felt that social media helped them in building their confidence to interact using the English language with others. Despite helping them in developing a positive attitude towards learning English, they also revealed that they were able to grasp English grammar and structure through peer evaluation via social media. Two participants shared in the semi-structured interview that social media assisted them greatly and their fluency had progressively developed as the undergraduates actively engaged in social media communication. It is also signifying that undergraduates enriched their confidence gradually over time as they communicated through interaction on social media, Facebook, and Twitter. However, there were some negative responses as well. One response was

*“... no doubt social media allows us to exchange our knowledge and chat with our friends but mostly our friends do not comment or correct our English. So, sometimes we continue making the same errors”*

Another said,

*“It takes a lot of time. I want to just check something online but was side-tracked when my friends started chatting with me; I got immersed and end up spending a lot of time”.*

Undergraduates also agreed that social media can be a useful educational tool to bring about a positive change in their academic performance. Although some of them spent quite a lot of time on social media, their grades still improved. They were positive that addiction to social media is not a problematic issue that affected their academic life. The undergraduates using social media to obtain materials to complement academic discussions in class and group obtained good results. Furthermore, they also believed the use of social media improved their English understanding and their vocabulary knowledge. Social media was also able to help with their spelling when writing in their examination.

### **Implications of the study**

Since educators are the frontrunners in the teaching of the English language, it seems best to keep themselves in the know of all these technologies and social media. Having language teachers who are social media-adept will be of great advantage in teaching and guiding language learners. Once we know what sites the learners prefer, and knowing how to make use of these media in language teaching are things to consider when educating today's undergraduates.

Also, each social platform provides numerous advantages in the educational process of learning a language. Hence, when educators decide to use social media in the classroom, they need to know which social media platforms can support and improve their students' learning outcomes and which tools they can use with students to help them acquire the English language.

In dealing with the pitfalls of social media in English language learning, it is suggested that the learners would need to be educated to choose the right kind of media and activate their filters to distinguish between what is fake and real information, what are wholesome and not, and what are unscholarly or ungrammatical and sound language texts.

In dealing with the drawbacks of social media in English language learning, it is suggested that learners would need to be educated in selecting the right kind of media and activate their filters to distinguish between what is fake and real information, and what are ungrammatical or unsound ideas and factual data.

## **Recommendations of the study**

The findings of this study are important to the existing literature on using social media as a major platform in learning the English language. The results obtained from the students' responses have shown that social media plays a crucial role in stimulating students' interest in learning the language as well as enriching their language skills. To obtain a comprehensive finding/knowledge on the use of social media in learning the English language, it would be useful to gather information from educators and language instructors. This aspect has not been widely researched or overlooked (Annamalai, 2018). In addition, more research is needed to investigate the use of social media in language classrooms as an approach to teach English. More longitudinal and qualitative studies need to be carried out to establish the correlation between the use of social media in the classroom and the implication in helping students to perform better academically.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, social media is an important platform for learning English among undergraduates. It is increasingly becoming common for undergraduates to use social media platforms to communicate as well as to retrieve information related to their studies and assignments and these respondents have realized this potential. This reflects the benefit of undergraduates accessing social media platforms for academic benefits which in return enhances their mastery of the English language. In learning English, social media has offered opportunities for learners to share information, create conversations and develop their ability in conveying any information.

Social media facilitates undergraduates to learn English and improve their vocabulary. Undergraduates have to operate over subject knowledge and deconstruct the known subject to understand its internal dynamics, structures, and logic. They also appeared to be enthused to learn more from various websites anytime as they can access any information and knowledge spontaneously from anywhere. Moreover, they can ask questions to have feedback from others from different parts of the world and compare their opinions too. Such opportunities and avenues via social media gradually expedite the acquiring of new words and vocabulary aptly as well as arousing the interest of undergraduates towards the English language learning without boredom. This also encourages undergraduates to consolidate their experiences and acclimatize them to their environments by assimilating as advocated by Piaget (1963, cited in Cox 2008). Thus, this creates a platform for learners to add new information to what they already know. The students also said that social media is a powerful tool especially for learning the English language. This is agreed by Mubarak (2016) who believed that the use of social media in education is mainly to improve the standard of teaching and learning. In a nutshell, this study shows that social media gives a positive impact on learning English. Undergraduates' time invested in using social media for academic purposes has certainly heightened the quality of their English language competencies. Social media too can help educators by providing additional academic and research materials to support their work with students.



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