

Influence of Digital Social Media Platforms to Tertiary Students' English Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of digital social media platforms on the writing skills of fourth year BSEd English Language major students at Cebu Normal University. It also looked into how these platforms motivate students to increase their productivity and the extent to which social networking sites (SNS) aid in their English language proficiency.

This study was conducted at Cebu Normal University (Main Campus) in the first semester of the academic year 2024-2025. Forty (40) students and five (5) instructors were chosen as samples, respectively. During the data analysis process, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. The findings of the data revealed that digital social media platforms have several influence on tertiary students' writing abilities, with more beneficial effects than unfavorable ones. The results demonstrated that both students and professors were able to create group discussions in which they could share resources connected to the course, exchange ideas, and encourage their students to complete projects that would help them improve their writing skills. Nevertheless, the results confirmed that digital social media platforms do not have some detrimental effects. Students' formal writing is influenced by digital social media since they are now more accustomed to using short forms of words and using improper syntax and sentence structures. Findings revealed that students follow distinct writing trends on social media sites, which clearly deviate from standard English spelling. Students' writing is influenced by social media terminology in both positive and negative ways. When students collaborate in groups, the results are favorable. However, when respondents write on their own, the effect is adverse.

In addition, while there are advantages and disadvantages to using digital social media, students must appropriately encourage themselves to use social networking sites (SNS) in order to improve their English writing. Social Media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok have both positive and negative influence to tertiary students' writing skills. Moreover, these platforms have been shown to improve student-teacher engagement and learning motivation while promoting inclusive and flexible learning. Digital feedback and teamwork have also been shown to be significant in the writing learning process. Qualitative research demonstrates that students' writing abilities are improved by using digital social media platforms, which also increase writing quality, productivity, and active learning. The research highlights the significance of educational policies and methods that facilitate the full integration of digital technology in order to attain more effective and efficient higher education in the future, based on these findings.

Thus, it's critical to highlight how teachers may support their students in using social networking sites to enhance their writing abilities. Accordingly, this study proposes that both teachers and students can improve their English language skills if they use digital social media platforms appropriately.

Keywords: Digital social media platforms, writing skills, Social Networking Sites (SNS), digital technology, positive and negative influence.

[1] INTRODUCTION

Digital technology integration is increasingly being demanded in higher education in order to increase the efficacy of teaching and learning. Technology in education has been shown to improve information

access, learning flexibility, and innovative teaching strategies. People in the 20th century have changed significantly as a result of the development of digital social media. This new technology is very important since it gives students and teachers a new way to engage with one another. As a subset of all remote education, Anderson (2008) claims that online learning has always focused on giving students access to educational experiences that are, at the very least, more flexible in terms of time and location than campus-based instruction (p. 53). According to Arroyo (2012), "once social media was introduced, it enabled a new way for people, particularly the younger generation, to connect with one another, based on common interests, goals and even values."

Social media undoubtedly plays a significant part in the lives of many individuals by fostering interpersonal relationships. Students, who make up the younger generation, acquire and mimic a new style. Today's youth draw inspiration from the activities and hobbies of others on social media. It is common for younger generations to watch, copy, and learn from the behaviors of their elders. According to Bandura (1997), people pick up knowledge through modeling, imitation, and observation. Students frequently mimic their friends' or peers' netspeak language, and it is evident that the majority of people engage on social media platforms through writing. A single post now reaches millions.

Most people prefer textual communication these days, and social media makes it easy for them to communicate. Today's students and young people have ever-changing writing styles. Their academic writing is influenced by their sporadic communication on social media. In addition to writing, it has an impact on youngsters' relationships and familial ties.

Globalization has caused people to embrace new knowledge, lifestyles, languages, and technologies on a daily basis. These days, young people are heavily impacted by digital social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, and Google Plus. They believe their digital social media pursuits are current, and if they follow those trends, others would perceive them as intelligent. However, social media and digital platforms increasingly have an impact on young learners' language acquisition. Intentionally or unwittingly, young people are following the trend of language learning because they are now interacting with others most of the time through digital social media.

Marshall McLuhan (2003) stated, "all media exist to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values" (p.199) in his book, *The Book of Probes*. The media actually has a big influence on people's daily activities, behaviors, and responses. Although digital social media is altering the way that people communicate, it has a significant impact on people's lives in many ways by broadening our social network and opening up new possibilities through online connections. Young people today frequently use Google Plus, Skype, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook, Twitter, and so on. Due to the widespread use of smartphones and the widespread use of texting, students may communicate with their friends, both with and without family members. People are learning new languages through their conversations on social media as they have the opportunity to meet people from different countries. Nowadays, eighty percent (80%) of teenagers use social media, and they communicate on these platforms using a variety of languages, such as Netspeak and excessive usage of slang and acronyms. There is no denying that our social lives in the actual world have changed in certain ways. Thus, despite the fact that language learning is a very promising reality, some parents are concerned about their children's future.

Chopra (2013) emphasized, "it's slightly less in your face, but the Internet is also shifting the words we use to speak to one another, not just the way we choose to communicate. Our obsession with the Internet even influences the simple act of talking out loud, in real life. Certain acronyms, neologisms, and abbreviations have infiltrated everyday speech."

The younger generation uses certain well-known expressions on digital social media, such as LOL (for "laugh out loud"), which have evolved into original terms. Its meaning surpasses that of their initial abbreviation. LOL is now used as a punctuation mark to add a joking or upbeat tone in communications. Literal laughing is not usually indicated by it. Inadvertently, the youth are learning these languages even if they are using it informally with their pals. They also use it in their official

writing. These days, this kind of text shorthand is evolving into its own language. Because of this, people are formally speaking such languages in public.

Adoption of social technologies has been comparatively simple due to its versatility, usefulness, and simplicity. According to some scholars, writing influences grammar, spelling, and traditional writing (Siraj & Ullah, 2007). According to a Jackson City Patriot and Jamie Perkins study, social networking does not promote proper grammatical usage. Twitter, for instance, only lets users publish 140-character tweets, which frequently leads to fragments and run-on sentences. According to Perkins (2014), "writing with a character limit shortens the attention span, which has an impact on everyday expressions. "Poor word choice results from this. Students frequently utilize acronyms to simplify information for assignments, tests, quizzes, and essays. Shorter forms of writing are being used everywhere, most notably at Cebu Normal University. People can access social networking networks through the internet and internet-capable devices, such as iPads, laptops, desktop computers, and cellphones.

In conclusion, the use of digital social media platforms in conjunction with technology-enhanced language learning has the potential to revolutionize the paradigm of English language instruction. The purpose of this research is to add to the body of knowledge by methodically investigating how digital social media platforms influence the writing skills of fourth year BSEd English Language major students at Cebu Normal University and how it motivates students to increase their productivity and the extent to which social networking sites (SNS) aid in their English language proficiency.

[2] LITERATURE REVIEW

It is clear from the many studies that social media has attracted a lot of interest because of its impact on language use. Scholars have examined a number of topics, including how communication patterns have changed over time, how language has changed, and how these platforms have enabled the creation of new forms of expression. The results shed important light on how social media influences our language usage.

The complex connection between social media and writing styles has been the subject of numerous research. They have studied how people's writing and communication styles are influenced by the distinctive features of social media platforms, like immediacy and brevity. In addition to the influence of platform-specific standards on users' writing habits, researchers have emphasized the popularity of informal and succinct writing styles.

Understanding the shifts in language use requires investigating how social media affects spelling, grammar, and punctuation. According to research, people frequently employ unusual spellings, irregular capitalization, and punctuation errors as a result of social media communication's condensed format. These results help to clarify how people's use of social media can affect their ability to follow formal writing rules.

Social media's impact on expression and terminology has drawn the attention of scholars. Social media platforms have contributed to the growth and diversity of language by introducing new words, phrases, and colloquial idioms. Furthermore, people's self-expression has been influenced by the usage of hashtags, memes, and viral trends, which have made it possible for contextualized and creative communication.

These days, social networking sites (SNS) are widely used by young people worldwide. Individuals can create their own profiles on social networking sites and communicate with people worldwide. As stated in social networking websites, according to Allassiri et al. (2014), offer an interactive platform that lets users connect with one another, build social relationships, and exchange knowledge and information about their own experiences and activities real life.

According to Gremu and Halse (2012), "social networking sites offer a favorable platform for individuals to express themselves, establish new relationships, and maintain old relationships."

Moreover, Quader (2014) emphasized, "people can now access important information and the trendy online culture to learn about things that were unknown to them before, as well as new values and symbols for communication developed for learning in an online environment that gives rise to new cultural cues." People can exchange ideas and information with one another, which also helps them learn more about the world and life, claim Asad et al. (2012). Additionally, according to Asad et al. (2012), social networking sites have progressively gotten more social networking sites have a lot of ramifications for the field of education and have an effect on parents, teachers, administrators, and students alike because they are ingrained in the way many people act, think, and react to one another today (p. 499).

In contrast to a classroom setting, people feel more comfortable communicating or discussing anything they want on social networking sites (SNS), according to Quader (2014). He adds that while some students find it difficult to talk or interact in a traditional classroom, they feel more at ease discussing topics on social networking sites (SNS), which also helps them learn. These sites have gained popularity as more and more people turn to SNS to share their daily experiences with friends virtually rather than in person. As stated by Asad et al. (2012), "SNSs give students a forum to learn and interact outside of the traditional classroom, so they are also encouraged to use the materials not just for academic purposes but also for everyday use" (p. 500). According to numerous studies, including Quader (2014), there is a positive correlation between a student's use of social networking sites and their academic achievement. Students who use social networking sites have higher grades and higher scores on reading skills tests. Additionally, he says that students and professors are increasingly connected on social networking sites (SNSs), and occasionally they discuss academic subjects and produce fresh information that aids in their knowledge growth. Additionally, he claims that individuals learn about new developments in an interactive setting with greater freedom of expression. less formal than any classroom setting.

Asad et al. (2012) assert that when students' social learning outcomes are improved, their academic learning outcomes may also improve (p. 501). Moreover, Gremu & Halse, (2012) stated, "students are however, keen to use SNSs for academic purposes and this presents an opportunity to engage them to learn informally by seeking, exploring and testing ideas own social network.

Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and other digital social media platforms are "all having a far more profound impact on education than the traditional word-filled web page." Eastment (2007). Teenagers and young adults have particularly embraced these sites as a means of connecting with their peers, exchanging information, redefining their identities, and showcasing their social lives, according to Boyd (2007). Flad (2010) asserts that since teens now own cell phones, which allow them to access social networking sites all day long, communication is instantaneous. According to Livingstone (2008), having a friend on an SNS enables a person to communicate in a number of ways, including sending private and public messages, playing online games, leaving comments on uploaded photos, sharing favorite music or movies, replying to journal entries, and much more. Ellis (1985) analyzed a number of studies and theoretical approaches to the topic and came to the conclusion that input and interaction have an impact on second language acquisition, despite Krashen's (1981) claim that comprehensible input is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for language acquisition.

In order to help students develop new information, a teacher tries to comprehend their prior knowledge, including any misconceptions they may have (Anderson, 2008, p. 47). According to Harwood & Blackstone (2012), teachers can demonstrate their interest in their students' Facebook learning by merely like a link that a student has shared, leaving a supportive comment on a post, or bringing up an intriguing debate that has taken place on the page during class. Additionally, they claim that SNS show pupils that their class teacher is aware of what is going on online, is interested in it, and values their participation. Harwood and Blackstone (2012) assert that this type of assistance is crucial in encouraging the less self-assured students to feel engaged in the conversation. Furthermore, as the instructor is participating in the conversation, the student is conscious of their writing. They do not

want their writing to have any errors. Additionally, students are motivated to write more creatively since they are aware that their teacher is watching them and will either respond to or enjoy their creative comments if they are insightful (ibid). The social development theory of Vygotsky (1978) supports learning environments where students actively participate in their education. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that in order to accomplish this, the conventional roles of the teacher and the learner should be changed to allow the teacher to work in tandem with the students to help them generate meaning. Since online chat is a novel form of communication, we might anticipate that participants' language use may change as a result, according to Greenfield (1972).

One dimension that distinguishes written from spoken language is explicitness. Written language is more explicit, whereas spoken language is more implicit because it uses both verbal and nonverbal contexts to complete its messages (Greenfield, 1972).

Bunce (2010) asserts that "computer-mediated communication provides conditions for language use in which language acquisition processes, via exposure, production, and collaboration, are thought to occur." Through collaborative discourse, pushed output, corrective feedback, and interactional change, he explains, such interaction is believed to promote intelligible input. According to Kern (1995), it helps the pupil feel less anxious, enable them to participate, and enhance their language production. SNS is widely used by students, lowering anxiety and boosting motivation and engagement. According to research by Pellettieri (2000), Toyoda and Harrison (2002), when students are conscious of their position in digital social media, they produce output that is pushed towards target-like language, self-correction, and revision of meaning and form.

Bunce (2010) also added that face-to-face oral engagement is more successful for language acquisition than chatroom interaction because "slow typing can considerably hinder language production, negotiation, collaboration, and therefore noticing." One significant feature of online chat rooms is their intrinsic visual nature. Both written and spoken language elements can be seen in chat interactions (Freiermuth, 2002). Herring (1996) claims that conversations occur via the written word (typing). reading text on a computer and typing words on a keyboard), but similar to spoken language, especially spontaneous speech, it is typically shorter, less full, grammatically basic, and frequently inaccurate (both typographical and grammatical). sentences. "They practice their command of communication conventions and instruments, some of which are not suitable for an online learning environment," according to Anderson (2008) (p. 48). As a result, 80% of the utterances in the released log data were five words or less, according to Crystal (2001). Copulas, subject pronouns, and articles are thus omitted by chat users, according to Hezili (2010)'s research. the substitution of misspelled words and spellings for common language terms and nouns is a serious concern that is impeding children's and students' capacity to communicate successfully in the proper written medium whether composing academic papers, essays, drafts, or other literary prose.

For students, the shift from writing on social media to academic writing poses particular difficulties. It can be intimidating to get used to academic discourse's formal tone, structure, and expectations. It might be difficult for students to modify their writing style, increase their vocabulary, and formulate logical arguments in their academic writing.

Social media and academic writing differ greatly in terms of formality and tone. A more formal and objective approach is required for academic writing, whereas social media promotes informal and conversational language. Pupils must learn how to express themselves clearly and precisely, use the proper tone, and follow academic speech norms.

Student proficiency in grammar, spelling, and punctuation may suffer as a result of social media's widespread influence. Social media communication is brief and casual, which can encourage negligence or a disregard for standard writing rules. In order to improve their language mechanics, students need to be aware of these possible hazards.

Multiple tactics can be used to lessen the influence of social media on academic writing. As a first step, students should actively read academic materials to become acquainted with the styles and norms common in their field of study. Second, there should be clear teaching of academic writing concepts like sentence construction, paragraph construction, and citation styles. Finally, students can improve their abilities and close the gap between academic writing and social media by receiving regular feedback on their writing assignments and practice.

Since the emergence of social media, the use of acronyms, abbreviations, and emoticons has become more common. These succinct and visual components have become essential to online discussions because they enable users to express ideas, concepts, and feelings succinctly. Social media's impact on language usage is shown in the way these components are incorporated into writing styles.

Slang and colloquial language have become more common due to social media sites. In online discussions, users frequently use slang terminology, dialectal variations, and colloquial idioms. Because these platforms are informal, users are encouraged to communicate in a way that is similar to spoken language, making it harder to distinguish between oral and written communication.

Social media sites' word and character restrictions influence how people craft their messages. Conciseness and brevity in writing result from users having to squeeze their ideas and thoughts into a small amount of space. In the context of social media, these limitations have an impact on paragraph arrangement, sentence constructions, and the general flow of written communication.

Sentence structure and paragraph arrangement have been significantly impacted by the distinctive elements of social media platforms, such as status updates, tweets, and captions. In order to effectively communicate information, users frequently use lists, bullet points, and line breaks in their succinct and fragmented words. Social media platforms' impact on the structure and display of written information is reflected in these writing habits.

New terms and phrases are now introduced and made more widely known thanks to social media sites. Viral memes, trendy words, and hashtags all aid in the development and growth of vocabulary. Social media's dynamic character makes it a great place for language innovation, encouraging the creation of fresh terms that capture the always shifting online trends and popular culture.

Scholarly research has examined the impact of social media on sentence structure and grammar norms. In social media writing, researchers have seen departures from standard grammar rules, such as sentence fragments, unusual word order, and the merging of several languages. The distinct communication dynamics and limitations present in social media platforms are reflected in these language variances.

Social media communication is informal, which affects how formal language is used. Social media platforms frequently place a premium on authenticity, spontaneity, and informality, which might cause users to deviate from formal language norms. Traditional ideas of professional writing may be challenged by users' use of colloquial language, informal register, and non-standard grammar.

Language use on social media is greatly influenced by hashtags, memes, and viral trends. By facilitating content discovery and classification, hashtags encourage linguistic innovation and trend-driven conversation. A major factor in the spread of comedy and cultural allusions are memes, which frequently combine text and visuals. Memes, hashtags, and viral trends all use vocabulary that is unique to social media-driven communication.

Social media can be used as a tool for engagement and genuine conversation in language learning courses. Teachers can encourage language practice, group writing, and cross-cultural interaction by utilizing social media sites. Students can improve their writing abilities while navigating the digital world by implementing pertinent and intentional social media exercises.

Teachers of languages should use focused instructional methods to address how social media affects writing styles. This entails educating students on the distinctions between academic writing and social

media, stressing the value of audience and purpose, and giving clear guidance on how to modify writing style for various situations. Teachers can enable students to make thoughtful decisions in their writing by encouraging critical thinking and metacognitive abilities.

Gaining digital literacy is essential for responsible participation and efficient communication in a social media-dominated world. Digital literacy training should be incorporated into language education to help students assess material critically, behave responsibly online, and communicate effectively on a variety of digital platforms. This all-encompassing method preserves language proficiency while preparing students to interact with social media in a sensible manner.

In the study of Matalines & Guardaquivel (2023), findings revealed that the positive influences of social media on students' writing are ease of learning material, cooperative learning, exposure to basic skills in writing, and motivation to write correctly. However, the negative influences of social media on students' writing are casual writing and plagiarism. Moreover, the opportunities of social media for students' writing are promoting self-directed learning, providing a collaborative environment, and aiding in instruction.

Teachers, parents, and students must work together to support good writing. Students should actively look for ways to get better, parents can encourage writing development at home, and teachers can offer direction and criticism. This teamwork creates a nurturing atmosphere that honors writing abilities, stimulates creativity, and assists students in finding a balance between their ability to express themselves on social media and their academic writing proficiency.

[3] OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of digital social media platforms on the writing skills of fourth year BSEd English Language major students at Cebu Normal University and how it motivates students to increase their productivity and the extent to which social networking sites (SNS) aid in their English language proficiency.

[4] METHODOLOGY

The research survey was done at Cebu Normal University (Main Campus) in the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025. There were qualitative and quantitative questions for forty (40) students and five (5) teachers. Quantitative-qualitative research was utilized using the descriptive survey method. The survey was conducted in the classroom for the students' respondents. Additionally, the researcher also interviewed the instructors. The majority of the interviews took place in the English instructors' cubicle in the faculty room. However, due to certain constraints, several interviews were conducted on the Google Classroom. A survey questionnaire was utilized as a tool to gather information from the students. As the data was being gathered, the teachers were interviewed. This was accomplished by creating a semi-structured interview questionnaire. With their consent, the teachers' interviews were also recorded using a mobile phone.

Students were given questionnaires to complete in order to gather a significant amount of the data from their answers. However, due to scheduling issues and time restrictions, part of the data was gathered via email. Face-to-face interviews were used to gather the teachers' responses, however because of their hectic schedules, some of the interviews were conducted on the Google Classroom.

The raw data were first counted using a tally. The charts and percentage calculations were later done using Microsoft Excel. Statistical treatment was used to determine simple percentages, ranking and weighted mean formula to statistically describe the data.

[5] FINDINGS

Based on the findings revealed in the study, majority of the students use Facebook as their preferred social networking site and typically spend five hours on it. Students utilize social networking sites for both academic and non-academic purposes, according to the data. Students at the tertiary level can create group discussions by connecting with their teachers and friends on social networking sites (SNS)

and exchanging ideas, views, can easily communicate with all students by sharing course-related documents, information, and assignments. However, social networking sites have several disadvantages. On social networking sites, students write in brief when chatting with friends, posting status updates, or leaving comments. This is reflected in their formal writing, such as in assignments, exam scripts, or presentations. Digital social media, on the other hand, encourages students at the tertiary level to work on their English since, according to the data, students are very careful about their status updates because they want to seem as perfectionists on the social networking site. As a result of their attempts to write with good syntax, spelling, and sentence structure, they are inspired to further their English language proficiency. The results further demonstrate how social media helps students become better writers and speakers because they can pick up new words, idioms, and phrases from their friends on social networking sites, which they can then utilize in their formal writing (assignments, exam scripts), as well as in their speaking (presentations). Their answers suggest that digital social media has an impact on the writing skills of university students.

Nonetheless, in recent years, instructors have also been SNS users. Teachers have incorporated social networking sites into their teaching strategies, according to the research's findings. Teachers at several colleges now use social networking sites (SNS) to share course materials with their students and to inform them of impending events or projects. As per the results, teachers claim that social networking sites can occasionally affect their students' writing skills. The educator claims that although social networking sites (SNS) offer opportunities to enhance the English language, it is up to the students to inspire themselves to study new material. This includes learning new vocabulary, developing their writing skills, and becoming more proficient writers.

However, there are also some disadvantages, such as the fact that they occasionally utilize short form in their formal writing and presentations and that, as a result of social networking, there are fewer literary works produced every day. According to the educators, reading their writings is tedious. According to the study's findings, teachers believe that there are both good and negative effects on students' writing. On social networking sites, students write about their assignments, coursework, course materials, and any other course-related issue. They also usually attempt to write in perfect English since they know their teacher will either monitor them or engage in the conversation. They do not want to make any mistakes because it also affects their reputation. So they also try to write or speak correctly when they talk about everyone in their class. According to the teachers, social networking sites also assist students in developing their writing skills.

Findings revealed that students follow distinct writing trends on social media sites, which clearly deviate from standard English spelling. Students' writing is influenced by social media terminology in both positive and negative ways. When students collaborate in groups, the results are favorable. However, when respondents write on their own, the effect is adverse.

In addition, while there are advantages and disadvantages to using digital social media platforms, students must appropriately encourage themselves to use social networking sites (SNS) in order to improve their English writing. Social Media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Tiktok have both positive and negative influence to tertiary students' writing skills. Moreover, these platforms have been shown to improve student-teacher engagement and learning motivation while promoting inclusive and flexible learning. Digital feedback and teamwork have also been shown to be significant in the writing learning process. Qualitative research demonstrates that students' writing abilities are improved by using digital social media platforms, which also increase writing quality, productivity, and active learning. The research highlights the significance of educational policies and methods that facilitate the full integration of digital technology in order to attain more effective and efficient higher education in the future, based on these findings.

[6] CONCLUSION

Digital social networking sites have been crucial in creating a bridge between people, allowing them to

communicate on a shared platform. Maintaining contact with a large number of people can be facilitated by social networking platforms. Tertiary students have embraced this new form of communication in order to stay in touch with their friends and interact with their peers. Due to the widespread use of social networking sites, communication between students and teachers is changing quickly.

Social media's influence on student writing is indicative of the greater implications of communication in the digital era. It emphasizes how important critical thinking, flexibility, and strong writing abilities are for navigating a variety of online forums and having meaningful conversations.

Thus, it's critical to highlight how teachers may support their students in using social networking sites to enhance their writing abilities. Accordingly, this study proposes that both teachers and students can improve their English language skills if they use digital social media platforms appropriately.

To sum up, social media offers indisputable advantages and chances for self-expression, but it's important to weigh these against any potential costs. We can enable students to capitalize on the advantages of social media while preserving the quality of their academic writing by fostering critical awareness, encouraging good writing techniques, and fostering digital literacy.

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