

IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AMONG ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

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Abstract

Social media plays a significant role in second language acquisition, offering both advantages and challenges for enhancing English proficiency. This study, “Impacts of social media on English language acquisition among English-Majored students” at private University in Can Tho, aimed to identify the benefits and challenges faced by English majors when using social media for language learning. A total of 146 students participated, with data collected through questionnaires and 15 students are selected randomly to the interview. Findings revealed various impacts, including access to multimedia resources, collaborative learning, and motivational engagement, as well as distractions, limitations in face-to-face interaction, and technological overdependence. The study concludes with practical implications and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: English language acquisition, English majors, language learning, social media.

TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA MẠNG XÃ HỘI ĐẾN VIỆC TIẾP NHẬN NGÔN NGỮ ANH TRONG SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt

Mạng xã hội đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc tiếp nhận ngôn ngữ thứ hai, mang lại cả lợi ích và thách thức cho việc nâng cao trình độ tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu “Tác động của Mạng xã hội đến việc tiếp nhận ngôn ngữ Anh trong sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh” tại Trường Đại học tư thục Cần Thơ, nhằm xác định những lợi ích và thách thức mà sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh gặp phải khi sử dụng mạng xã hội để học ngôn ngữ. Tổng cộng có 146 sinh viên tham gia, với dữ liệu được thu thập qua bảng hỏi và 15 bạn sinh viên được chọn ngẫu nhiên để trả lời phỏng vấn. Kết quả cho thấy nhiều tác động khác nhau, bao gồm khả năng tiếp cận tài nguyên đa phương tiện, học tập hợp tác và sự gắn kết động lực, cũng như các yếu tố gây phân tâm, hạn chế trong tương tác trực tiếp và sự phụ thuộc quá mức vào công nghệ. Nghiên cứu kết luận với các hàm ý thực tiễn và khuyến nghị cho nghiên cứu trong tương lai.

Từ khóa: mạng xã hội, tiếp nhận ngôn ngữ Anh, sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh, học ngôn ngữ.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

Over the past few years, the rise of social media has significantly transformed various aspects of life, including communication, knowledge exchange, and education. According to Statista (2023), there are approximately 4.95 billion social media users globally, illustrating its widespread influence. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Zalo, Instagram, and YouTube have evolved to support social, educational, and personal development. English has become an international language, facilitating cross-cultural communication. Social media not only serves recreational purposes but also educational ones, enabling users to access vast knowledge, especially in learning English. Compared to traditional methods, educators view social media as an effective tool for language acquisition. It promotes real-time interaction, collaboration, and feedback, while transcending geographical boundaries and providing diverse perspectives (Junco et al., 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The interactive nature of these platforms also enhances learner motivation (Prensky, 2010). However, social media has drawbacks in educational contexts. Excessive usage can detract from language proficiency, as constant notifications and unrelated content may distract students from academic work (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Additionally, overreliance on online interactions can hinder crucial face-to-face communication skills necessary for real-world scenarios (Hubbard, 2013; Thorne, 2016).

Given the increasing awareness of social media's influence on students' English proficiency, it is essential to explore appropriate ways to offer them assistance in using social networking sites efficiently as resources to increase their English language skills. For the aforementioned reasons, the researcher decided to carry out a study "*A Research on Impacts of Social Media on English Language Acquisition among English-Majored Students at Tay Do University*" to look at the positive and negative effects of social media usage on English language learning.

1.2. Research aims

The research aimed to investigate the impacts of social media on English-majored students at a private University in Can Tho regarding their pursuit

of English language proficiency. Theoretically, students were likely to identify the specific influences stemming from their social media usage in the acquisition of English language skills. Consequently, they can have heightened awareness of social media's role and discover proper and effective strategies to improve their English language acquisition.

1.3. The significance of the study

The primary goal of the study was to explore the effects of integrating social media into English language acquisition, with a specific focus on English-majored students at a private University in Can Tho. Through the findings, students would ultimately be capable of gaining deeper insight into how social media influences their academic knowledge in an attempt to elevate their English language learning. More significantly, this analysis is expected to be an invaluable resource for English teachers. Thanks to the results, lecturers can develop a comprehensive understanding of social media's impact on their students' English proficiency and, therefore, make appropriate alterations in their teaching techniques to create a more effective and personalised language learning environment.

2. Literature review

2.1. The theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on several key learning theories that help explain how social media influences English language acquisition among students. Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed rather than passively absorbed (Piaget, 1973). This view aligns with the study's focus on how social media platforms create interactive learning environments. These platforms enable English-majored students to engage in collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, allowing them to actively build their understanding of the English language. Additionally, Social Interaction Theory highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, suggesting that skills learned through cooperation can later be performed independently (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory illustrates how social media facilitates real-time communication, supporting the idea that collaborative practices can enhance language acquisition and help students develop their language skills through social

engagement. Moreover, Motivation Theory posits that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors drive learning, indicating that social media can significantly boost students' motivation and engagement in language learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is often driven by a desire for personal growth, while extrinsic motivation is linked to external rewards such as recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is particularly important for English-major students, as heightened motivation and engagement can lead to more effective language learning experiences, reinforcing the study's hypothesis that social media positively impacts English acquisition.

Furthermore, Multimodal Learning Theory further supports this research by asserting that utilizing various communication formats enhances meaning-making and caters to diverse learning styles through platforms of texts, video, and images (Kress, 2003). This theory is crucial for understanding how social media can offer rich, varied content that enhances both meaning-making and language practice. Finally, Cognitive Load Theory suggests that the amount of information processed can affect learning outcomes. Social media has the potential to either increase cognitive load through an overload of information or facilitate language acquisition by providing focused content (Sweller, 1988). This aspect is particularly relevant, as it highlights that while social media can support language learning, it may also overwhelm students with excessive information.

In summary, this theoretical framework not only supports the study but also provides a comprehensive lens for analyzing the various impacts of social media on English language acquisition. It guides the research in understanding both the benefits and potential challenges of using social media as a learning tool.

2.2. Social media and its importance

Social media is a key innovation that enables real-time communication and relationship maintenance across various boundaries. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define it as Internet-based applications for user-generated content and collaboration, while Evans (2014) highlights its role in knowledge exchange. In education, social media fosters engagement and collaboration among learners (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Anderson, 2016). It significantly influences

communication, particularly among youth, with platforms like Facebook and Instagram democratizing information sharing. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) note its positive impact on student engagement, and educators use platforms like YouTube to provide customized instructional content (West, Moore, & Barry, 2015). In fact, this associative approach not only fosters community but also encourages active participation and critical thinking skills. Besides, social media offers teachers innovative ways to deliver content and engage students outside the classroom. Generally, social media has eventually become an integral part of modern life. Its impacts continue to evolve firmly, forming the way we perceive and connect with the world around us.

2.3. English language acquisition and its importance

"English Language Acquisition" (ELA) has multiple interpretations. Lie (2007) affirms English's global significance, especially in Vietnam, where it is taught as a second language. Richards and Schmidt (2013) describe ELA as developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through structured and informal learning. The objective of mastering English is to enable individuals to efficiently communicate and interact in English-speaking contexts, thereby promoting their integration into society, academic success, career advancement, and cultural exchange. ELA is crucial in a globalized world, as English is a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003). English learning programs may adopt numerous approaches, methodologies, and target proficiency levels, catering to the assorted requirements and backgrounds of language learners.

Proficiency enhances employability (Byram & Feng, 2006) and is vital for higher education. Nguyen and Huynh (2015) emphasize its role in lifelong learning and personal development, fostering cognitive growth and global citizenship. English fluency strengthened cognitive abilities, critical thinking skills, and creativity while also bolstering self-confidence, contributing to individuals' overall intellectual progress. English language acquisition places significant emphasis on the need to comprehend diverse dimensions of language learning. These explicit definitions view it as a principal component of individuals' lives, impacting their personal and

professional growth. Through learning English, individuals broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of the world, and cultivate a sense of global citizenship - all essential components of personal fulfillment. In conclusion, as for the above-discussed values, learning English is recognised as a key factor not only in upgrading individuals' personal and professional lives but also in widening countries' socioeconomic advancement.

2.4. Relationship between social media and English acquisition

In the era of technology, the integration of social media into educational settings has fundamentally transformed the landscape of language learning, particularly in the realm of English proficiency. The relationship between digital media and English language acquisition is dynamic and multifaceted, encompassing language learning, practice, and learners' interactions. The integration of social media in education has transformed language learning. Platforms like Facebook and YouTube provide informal language use opportunities (Lam, 2014; Aljumah & Hussin, 2015). Huang and Hsieh (2013) note that online resources offer personalized learning experiences, while Prensky (2009) warns that non-standard English can hinder formal skill development. English learners gravitate toward using shortened forms of language for simple and quick communication on networking sites. Additionally, excessive use of social media may contribute to feelings of social isolation and reduced face-to-face interaction, potentially affecting learners' motivation and overall learning efficacy (Wang et al., 2011). To sum up, using social media carefully in learning English can help improve language skills and also deal with any problems that might come up. As technology changes, social media will keep affecting how we learn languages, offering even more chances for people around the world to become better at English.

2.5. Positive impacts of social media on English acquisition

Social media enhances English learning through multimedia resources and collaborative opportunities. Kessler (2018) indicates that these platforms allow practice across language skills and provide immediate access to diverse learning materials. Social media is a vital part of daily life for young people, especially

college students. It provides access to free resources like articles, videos, and podcasts, helping students become more fluent with real-life language use. These platforms are effective for learning English, benefiting both students and teachers. They allow learners to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing while improving vocabulary and grammar anytime and anywhere. Today, finding new words and phrases is easier than ever, creating a rich learning environment that enhances language skills naturally alongside traditional methods. Kaboocha and Elyas (2018) highlight YouTube's effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition, while Fahdin (2021) points to TikTok's role in improving fluency. All in all, by offering access to diverse academic resources and content aligned with learners' capability levels and goals, learners can leverage these positive aspects to facilitate meaningful linguistic proficiency enhancement in the digital age.

2.5.1. Collaborative learning

Integrating social media fosters communication and collaboration among language learners in a student-centered environment. Networking sites provide immersive language exchange opportunities, allowing learners to connect with fluent English speakers worldwide. This enriches their experience and supports language acquisition. Social media fosters collaboration among learners, enhancing engagement and communication. Platforms like Facebook and Reddit create spaces for language exchange, enriching the learning experience (Islam, 2022). Cerda and Planas (2011) emphasize the benefits of online discussions for ELLs, enabling them to participate more comfortably in language learning communities. Real-time interactions create an engaging environment for improving language skills, exposing learners to various accents, slang, and regional differences. Additionally, it enhances vocabulary and conversational English in both formal and informal contexts, crucial for effective language learning and cultural awareness. In summary, social media empowers learners to engage actively and collaboratively, enhancing their English language skills and promoting lifelong learning.

2.5.2. Motivational engagement

Social media positively impacts learners' achievement, motivation, and performance by creating

a low-pressure environment that reduces anxiety and encourages mistakes as growth opportunities (Celik et al., 2014). Features like comment sections and discussion forums promote collaboration and interaction without fear of judgment, boosting self-confidence and inspiring creativity in language use. Connecting across geographical boundaries fosters accountability and support, enhancing motivation to engage with the academic community. Mai (2021) noted that young learners find online platforms more engaging than traditional methods, and allowing autonomy in project topics increases intrinsic motivation. Additionally, observing peers' progress can inspire competition in language acquisition, while shared experiences within online communities foster accountability and commitment (Islam, 2022). Gamification elements, such as quizzes and challenges, make language practice enjoyable, reducing anxiety and promoting a natural learning experience. The competitive aspect of gamification encourages friendly rivalry, celebrates achievements, and motivates individuals to outperform each other, thus adding an extra layer of motivation. Besides, the factor of fun inherent in gamification reduces the anxiety typically associated with language acquisition, facilitating a more natural language learning process as learners feel less inhibited about making mistakes and more inclined to experiment with the language. All things considered, by transforming language practice into an interactive and enjoyable experience, social media boosts learners' motivation to dedicate more time to upgrading their English, empowers them to strive toward their goals, and significantly enhances their language proficiency.

2.6. Negative impacts of social media on English acquisition

2.6.1. Distraction and time consumption

Social media can distract language learners, leading them to spend more time on entertainment than on English learning. Its addictive nature results in learners becoming engrossed in scrolling feeds and watching videos, wasting valuable study time. Research indicates that constant availability contributes to fragmented attention spans (Junco & Cotten, 2012). Tariq et al. (2012) identified social media as a significant distraction for students, disrupting their academic focus. The addictive

nature of social media, with its endless content and notifications, can make it hard for learners to focus on their English studies. Students might plan to check their accounts for just a few minutes but often end up scrolling through feeds, watching videos, and chatting about unrelated topics for hours. This wastes valuable time and hinders their progress in English, reducing productivity. As a result, social media poses a big challenge for English learners. Therefore, they need to create strategies to manage their social media use and prioritize their language learning goals.

2.6.2. Limitations of face-to-face interaction

The absence of face-to-face interaction emerged as a downside of social media in English language learning. When learning through social media, learners may miss out on the benefits of face-to-face communication and interaction with native speakers. In traditional language learning environments, learners engage in meaningful real-world conversations, allowing them to practice authentic language, negotiate meaning, and adapt their language use based on contextual cues. The lack of in-person engagement is a drawback of social media in language learning. Kramsch (2009) noted that learners miss out on the nuances of real-life conversation, which is crucial for developing communication skills. The shift to online learning limits opportunities for authentic interactions and can impair literacy skills, as learners adopt informal texting habits that may hinder formal language use (Mphahlele & Mashamaite, 2005). The shift toward online language learning through social media has reduced chances for direct interpersonal interaction, resulting in the loss of communication skills development in diverse linguistic and cultural settings such as non-verbal cues, active listening, and interpersonal understanding. This deficiency may have long-term implications for students as they enter professional and social contexts that demand effective in-person communication. Thorne (2016) emphasized that this deficiency could have long-term implications for effective in-person communication. Ultimately, limited regular face-to-face interactions are absolutely said to be a huge challenge for EFL/ESL learners since they may be anxious to keep pace with people when they converse in real life. Balanced approaches that incorporate both online and offline learning experiences should be implemented to prevent those hindrances.

2.6.3. *Technological overdependence*

Many learners become too reliant on digital tools for language resources, ignoring other educational options. This overdependence can weaken important skills like creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. While social media is a convenient tool for language learning, overreliance can lead to passive learning (Junco, 2012). Chapelle (2001) warned that learners may expect technology to provide all necessary resources, which can diminish critical engagement with course materials. Learners might prioritize convenience over thorough research, leading to superficial understanding. Selwyn (2016) highlighted the difficulty in assessing the quality of user-generated content, which can result in misinformation and hinder language acquisition. This can lead to misinformation and biased views, which hinder language learning and critical thinking. Moreover, the ease of access to social media may cause learners to focus on quantity over quality, making it harder to find accurate resources. To address this issue, we need thoughtful approaches that help learners achieve their goals while managing their reliance on technology. In summary, addressing the challenges posed by social media in language learning requires balanced strategies that promote active engagement and critical thinking while leveraging the benefits of digital platforms.

2.7. Related Studies

There has been growing interest in using social media for English language acquisition among EFL/ESL learners, leading to several studies that examine its impacts and learners' attitudes toward its educational utility. Saeed (2021) explored the effects of social media on English learners in Sargodha, finding that it significantly improved vocabulary and language skills; however, the prevalence of informal language and slang negatively impacted academic writing. Similarly, Desta et al. (2021) investigated social media use among medical students in Ethiopia and found that it enhances English skills and fosters communication, with no gender differences in attitudes toward its use. In Bahrain, Al Jahromi (2020) conducted a survey on social media's impact on English learning, revealing that it positively influences lexical variation and communication skills, while factors like gender and age also play

a role in these outcomes. Nguyen (2023) examined the integration of social media in English teaching at a Vietnamese university, noting that although both teachers and students primarily use social media for non-academic purposes, they recognize its potential as an educational tool. However, issues such as distractions and reliance on online sources were highlighted. Despite these insights, there remains a gap in focused research on the effects of social media on English acquisition among English majors at a private University in Can Tho. To address this gap, the study "Impacts of Social Media on English Language Acquisition among English-Majored Students" in a private university was conducted.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study involved 146 English majors at a private University in Can Tho who completed a questionnaire assessing their views on the impacts of social media in English language acquisition. Following this, 15 randomly selected students were interviewed to enhance the precision and objectivity of the findings. The mixed-method approach is very effective for studying how social media affects English language learning among English-majored students for several reasons. First, it combines numbers from surveys with personal stories from interviews, giving a complete understanding of how social media influences language learning. The surveys can show trends and patterns, while the interviews provide deeper context. It captures a wide range of experiences and gives a fuller picture of social media's impact. Additionally, this approach lets researchers explore complex factors that influence language learning, such as social and emotional aspects, which might be missed in a single-method study. It also allows researchers to change their methods based on early findings, making the study more relevant. Overall, this approach combines the strengths of both methods, making it a great choice for this research.

3.2. Research questions

The research purpose was to address the two following questions:

- How does social media influence ELA among English-majored students at a private University in Can Tho?

- What specific impacts on ELA are these students experiencing due to their engagement with social media platforms?

3.3. Research hypothesis

Based on the experiences and feedback from English-major students at a private University in Can Tho, it was hypothesized that increased engagement with social media positively correlates with improved English language skills among students, as this enhanced interaction provides a dynamic platform for authentic language practice. Students who actively utilize social media for language learning will demonstrate higher levels of motivation and engagement compared to their peers who do not. However, excessive use of informal language on social media negatively impacts students' formal writing skills, leading to a reliance on casual language that may hinder the development of structured and precise writing necessary for academic success. Therefore, while social media can be a valuable tool for language acquisition, a balanced approach is essential to mitigate its potential drawbacks.

3.4. Research participants

The research involved 146 English majors from course 15,16,17,18 (the year from 2023-2027) at a private University in Can Tho, including 47 males and 99 females aged 18 to 24. All participants are native Vietnamese speakers, with English as their foreign language. Most have studied English for at least 8 years and they are familiar with social media, which they use in their language learning. They were chosen for their English proficiency and active engagement with social media, making them an ideal research population for examining online language acquisition techniques.

3.5. Instruments

This research employed both the questionnaire and the interview as essential instruments. As Daniel (2016) pointed out, utilising statistical data for research descriptions and analysis not only reduces the researcher's workload but also allows the collection of massive amounts of information from a large sample of individuals. Beyond that, McNamara (1999) emphasised the interview's supplementary function, which effectively uncovers the underlying backstories of participants' experiences. The employment of these two research methodologies facilitates the exploration of social media's upsides and downsides in relation to English language acquisition.

3.5.1. Questionnaire

The research is believed to be incomplete with the absence of the questionnaire. This significant instrument was entirely developed from the literature review. It occupied a total of 9 questions and 28 statements related to students' perceptions about the impact of social media on their English learning were designed on the basis of the five-degree scales including strongly agree (5), agree (4), no idea (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). In this part, students were required to tick the number next to each statement provided in the answer sheets

3.5.2. Interview

The interview, alongside the questionnaire, is a key component of the research methodology. It included three questions aimed at gathering students' perspectives on the pros and cons of social media in English language acquisition. The first question sought participants' views on social media's role in education. The second focused on the impacts they have experienced while learning English. The final question encouraged interviewees to discuss specific factors that contribute to their success or challenges in using social media for language learning.

4. Results

This section presented the research's final outcomes, which were examined by analyzing the data amassed from all participants as outlined in the preceding chapter. The findings consisted of two parts, namely the results derived from the questionnaire and those from the interview.

4.1. Results from the questionnaire

Thanks to the questionnaire, a great deal of valuable and trustworthy information was categorised into six sections, embracing students' background and their attitude toward English language acquisition, participants' perspectives on social media, the relationship between social media and English language acquisition, positive and negative impacts of social media on English language acquisition.

4.1.1. Students' background and their attitude toward English language acquisition

The living environment significantly impacts English majors' learning at Tay Do University, with 62% from rural areas and 38% from urban settings. Rural students often use traditional methods and are less familiar with social media, leading to varied

proficiency levels due to different access to technology and English exposure. This demographic distribution underscores the distinct backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of these learners. Despite each student maintaining their own learning methods, those from rural areas predominantly rely on traditional techniques and materials and are not as familiar with the integration of social media into language learning. Consequently, their varying levels of access to technology and exposure to English outside the classroom resulted in different levels of English proficiency. For them, the absence of these opportunities has posed unique challenges and benefits.

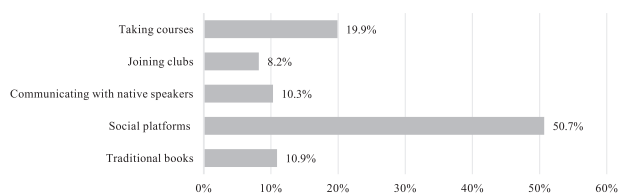


Figure 1. Participants' methods of improving English

Referring to Figure 1, a significant majority of students, 50.7%, preferred using "social platforms" as their primary method for enhancing their English skills. It was followed by 19.9% who opted for "taking courses," indicating a heavy reliance on structured learning environments. In addition, the proportion of "traditional books" and "communicating with native speakers" was about the same figure, at 10.9% and 10.3%, respectively, showing a moderate preference for conventional learning materials and practical language use. Finally, 8.2% of participants selected "joining clubs" for language improvement, suggesting that social and interactive settings were still appreciated, though less commonly employed compared to other strategies.

4.1.2. Participants' perspectives on social media

a. Participants' preferred platforms for English language acquisition

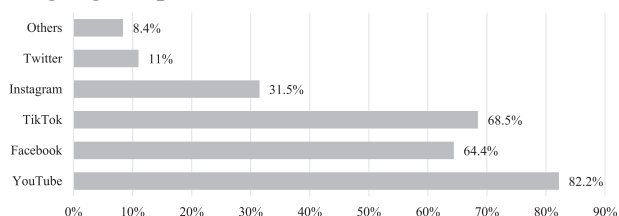


Figure 2. Commonly used platforms for learning English

The results indicated that YouTube was the most popular platform, with 82.2% of students utilising

it for their language learning needs. TikTok came in second with 68.5% demonstrating its growing influence as an educational tool. Facebook was also widely used, with 64.4% of participants leveraging it for English learning. Not only that, 31.5% of learners chose Instagram, suggesting moderate popularity for visual and social content in language acquisition. However, Twitter was less favored, with only 11% of respondents using it for this purpose. Only a small percentage of students, 8.4%, diversified their resources by utilising other platforms, such as Whatsapp, TedTalk, or apps like Elsa and Duolingo.

b. Participants' frequency of social media usage in English learning process

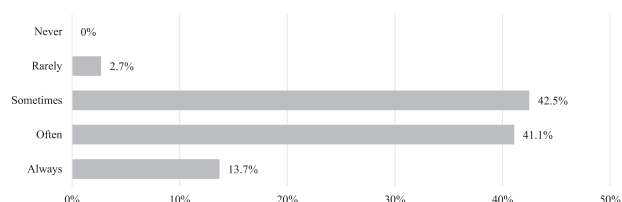


Figure 3. Frequency of integrating social media into English learning

As can be observed from Figure 4, there are varied levels of students' engagement with social media for English learning. Notably, 42.5% sometimes incorporated social media for this reason, while 41.1% often did so, highlighting a high overall frequency of use. Plus, 20 in the sum of 146 (13.7%) participants always relied on media platforms for acquiring English, underscoring its importance as a consistent learning tool for a substantial minority. Conversely, a mere 2.7% of respondents affirmed that they rarely employed social networking sites for English improvement, and none reported never using them. The learners' responses to this question led to the conclusion that social media was a prevalent and frequently used resource for English language acquisition among students.

c. Participants' English skills improved through social media

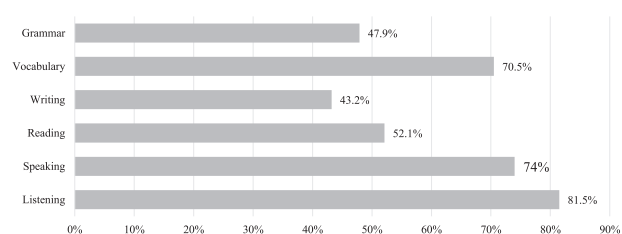


Figure 4. Commonly improved English skills through social media

Looking at Figure 10, it is evident that the highest proportion of participants, 81.5% reported “listening” as the skill with the most improvement. “Speaking” followed closely, with 74% noting enhancements. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that approximately 70.5% of respondents experienced gains in “vocabulary,” significantly boosted by social media use. “Reading” and “grammar” skills saw moderate increases, with 52.1% and 47.9% of students, respectively, indicating progress. Finally,

“writing” skills were the least commonly improved, with 43.2% of respondents acknowledging benefits. These results suggest that social media is particularly effective in fostering listening, speaking, and vocabulary skills while offering valuable, though less prominent, support for reading, grammar, and writing skills in English learners.

4.1.3. The relationship between social media and English language acquisition

Table 1. The relationship between social media and English language acquisition

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. The extensive use of English on social media platforms makes them valuable tools for learning the language.	34.3%	52.7%	12.3%	0.7%	0%
11. Social media helps you to discover new English learning approaches and resources.	34.9%	52.7%	11%	0%	1.4%
12. Social media provides you with valuable opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom.	39.7%	50%	8.9%	1.4%	0%
13. Social media platforms positively influence your English language learning journey.	30.8%	53.4%	14.4%	1.4%	0%

Table 1 reflects English students’ attitudes toward social media’s impact on English proficiency. For statement 10, over 85% agreed that online platforms facilitate language learning, with only 0.7% disagreeing and 12.3% neutral. Statement 11 saw similar results, with 85% believing social media enhances their English skills through engaging techniques. Disagreement was low at 1.4%, while 11% were neutral. Regarding statement 12, nearly 90% affirmed the value of social platforms for improving English skills, with 1.4% disapproving and 8.9% neutral. For statement 13, 84.2% approved the benefits of social media for English learning, with 1.4% disagreeing and 14.4% hesitant. Overall, these findings indicate that most students recognize social media as a crucial tool for English language acquisition and their academic success.

4.1.4. The positive impacts of social media on English language acquisition

This section was vital to the research, as it aimed to provide deeper insights into the impact of social media on English language acquisition among English-major students. Markedly, the section was categorised into two main parts, each containing three subparts that corresponded to the content of the literature review (Chapter 2). Positive impacts of social media on English language acquisition. According to the given statistics from the survey, students have been deriving substantial benefits from using social

media for English language learning, as evidenced by the remarkably high percentages associated with the impacts listed in the questionnaire. Initially, impacts related to “multimedia resources” were considered the most beneficial, accounting for 86% of the agreement. The second place went to “motivational engagement” with 81.8%. Finally, the “collaborative learning” rate was lower, at 79.2%. The researcher is expected to expound on each category of positive impact discussed in the next three sub-sections.

a. Multimedia Resources

Table 2 elaborates on social media’s impacts relevant to multimedia resources with four statements. Starting with statement 14, 89% of participants approved of social media’s effectiveness in providing diverse language materials, while 8.9% were hesitant and 2.1% disapproved. For statement 15, only 2.8% objected, and 13.7% were neutral, but 83.5% recognized the value of multimedia content in enhancing language learning. In statements 16 and 17, 84.2% agreed with statement 16, while 13% were unsure, and 2.8% disagreed, indicating appreciation for guidance from online language influencers. For statement 17, 87.6% agreed that varied language exposure enhances comprehension, with 10.3% uncertain and 2.1% disagreeing. Overall, English majors perceive social media as a significant contributor to their language skill development through access to diverse and authentic multimedia resources.

Table 2. Impacts regarding multimedia resources

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14. Social media gives you access to many real English materials like articles, videos, and podcasts.	43.8%	45.2%	8.9%	0.7%	1.4%
15. Engaging with multimedia content on social media helps strengthen your language learning through sight and sound.	32.8%	50.7%	13.7%	2.1%	0.7%
16. You follow language teachers and influencers on social media for useful learning tips and resources.	35.6%	48.6%	13%	1.4%	1.4%
17. Listening to different accents and styles improves your listening and speaking skills.	43.8%	43.8%	10.3%	0%	2.1%

*b. Collaborative Learning***Table 3. Impacts relevant to collaborative learning**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18. You take part in online discussions and forums to learn from others.	28.7%	45.2%	20.5%	2.8%	2.8%
19. Interacting with different language users on social media helps you grow your vocabulary.	34.9%	47.9%	13%	2.8%	1.4%
20. Getting helpful feedback from peers and teachers on social media supports your learning.	32.2%	49.3%	15%	0.7%	2.8%
21. You join language learning groups on social media to practice using English in conversations.	29.4%	49.3%	15%	3.5%	2.8%

For statement 18 in Table 3, nearly 74% of respondents agreed that digital communities enhance language learning through peer interaction, while 20.5% were neutral, and 5.6% disagreed. In statement 19, only 4.2% disagreed, citing difficulties in expanding their vocabulary through online interactions. Conversely, 82.8% agreed, and 13% were neutral. Regarding the next two statements, over 80%

confirmed that constructive feedback improved their English proficiency, while 3.5% disapproved and 15% were unsure. For the final statement, 78.7% agreed that online learning communities benefit conversational skills, with 15% neutral and 6.3% disagreeing. To sum up, these findings indicate that collaborative and interactive learning via social media significantly enhances students' English language acquisition.

*c. Motivational Engagement***Table 4. Impacts on motivational engagement**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22. Seeing others' achievements on social media motivates you to work harder on your English.	33.5%	50%	11.6%	2.8%	2.1%
23. Social media gives you a relaxed space to practice English without feeling embarrassed or anxious.	34.2%	46.5%	12.3%	4.2%	2.8%
24. You enjoy gamified learning on social media because it makes studying more fun.	39.7%	45.9%	11.6%	0%	2.8%
25. Language challenges and competitions on social media make you excited to improve your English skills.	29.4%	48.6%	16.4%	3.5%	2.1%

Analyzing Table 4, it was clear that students had varied perspectives on the impacts of motivational engagement. In statement 22, about 83.5% of participants agreed that encouragement from others'

achievements improved their language skills, while 11.6% were unsure and 4.9% disagreed. For statement 23, 80.7% felt more comfortable practicing English online, with 7% disagreeing and 12.3% neutral. In

statement 24, only 2.8% objected to gamified language platforms, while over 85% agreed, and 11.6% were undecided. Regarding statement 25, 78% claimed that online challenges boosted their enthusiasm for improving English, with 16.4% neutral and 5.6% opposing. In short, these findings suggest that motivational engagement is crucial for enhancing English proficiency, highlighting the effectiveness of social media-based language learning strategies.

4.1.5. The negative impacts of social media on English language acquisition

The figures revealed that students have been facing significant hurdles when employing social media for English language acquisition, as shown

a. Distraction and time consumption

Table 5. Impacts concerning distraction and time consumption

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26. Social media is easy to use, making it tempting to switch between studying English and relaxing, which slows down your learning.	28.7%	45.2%	19.1%	2.8%	4.2%
27. Taking frequent breaks to check social media interrupts my English study and reduces how much I get done.	34.9%	50.7%	9.5%	2.8%	2.1%
28. The endless scrolling makes you waste time, causing you to forget about studying English.	34.9%	48.6%	9.5%	2.8%	4.2%
29. Constant notifications distract you and make it harder to learn effectively.	30.7%	51.3%	11%	4.2%	2.8%

Relation to Table 5, which included impacts related to distraction and time consumption. This table involved four statements. Statement 26 revealed that about 73.9% of participants felt social media hinders their English improvement due to its convenience, while 19.1% were unsure and 7% disagreed. In statement 27, 85.6% agreed that checking social media during study breaks reduces productivity, with only 4.9% disagreeing and 9.5% uncertain.

b. Limitations of Face-to-Face Interaction

Table 6. Impacts related to limitations of face-to-face interaction

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30. Without non-verbal cues in online chats, it's harder to understand English meanings.	27.4%	44.5%	17.8%	8.2%	2.1%
31. Focusing on written communication limits your practice in speaking English.	32.2%	45.9%	13.7%	5.6%	2.8%
32. Relying on online chats can lower your confidence and skills in real-life English.	29.4%	42.5%	16.4%	8.2%	3.5%
33. The casual nature of social media makes it harder to practice formal English for work or school.	25.3%	45.2%	21.2%	4.8%	3.5%

by the concerning percentages related to the impacts outlined in the questionnaire. Among the issues listed, “distraction and time consumption” was considered the most problematic, with 81.3% agreement. This was followed by “technological overdependence,” at 74.8%. Lastly, “limitations of face-to-face interaction” was perceived as slightly less severe 73.1%, although it remains a major concern.

In the upcoming sub-sections, the researcher will offer a more extensive elaboration on each of these three types of problems. This in-depth analysis would allow for a comprehensive understanding of the negative impacts of social media on the acquisition of English language skills.

For statement 28, 83.5% believed that the addictive nature of social media scrolling detracts from focused English study, while 9.5% were neutral and 7% disagreed. Finally, over 80% agreed that constant social media notifications disrupt language learning, with 11% (16) neutral and 7% opposing. Overall, these findings suggest that distractions and time consumption from social media significantly hinder learners' progress in English language acquisition.

This part highlighted the limitations of face-to-face interaction in English learning through four statements. In statement 30, 71.9% of respondents noted frequently misunderstanding English nuances due to a lack of non-verbal communication, while 17.8% were unsure and 10.3% disagreed. Statement 31 revealed that 78.1% felt the absence of direct interaction limits fluency and conversational skills. In

c. Technological overdependence

statement 32, 71.9% expressed concern that reliance on digital interactions could harm their confidence and proficiency, with 11.7% disagreeing. Lastly, 70.5% agreed that the informal nature of social media restricts proficiency in formal English. Overall, these findings suggest that limited real-life communication significantly hinders students’ ability to comprehend and use English effectively in real-world contexts.

Table 7. Impacts in technological overdependence

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34. Social media can lead to social isolation and less exposure to different language situations.	24.7%	48.6%	16.4%	7.5%	2.8%
35. Using social media may encourage passive learning instead of actively seeking out language learning.	24%	51.3%	15.8%	6.8%	2.1%
36. Passively consuming information on social media can hurt the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills for learning languages.	21.2%	50.7%	17.1%	6.2%	4.8%
37. Misinformation on social media can weaken the language learning process.	21.9%	56.8%	13%	4.8%	3.5%

Table 7 highlighted four drawbacks of technological overdependence in language development. First, 75% of respondents agreed that social media promotes social isolation and limits exposure to diverse languages, negatively impacting language growth. Additionally, 75.3% felt that students tend to prefer passive learning, which may hinder the development of active language skills. Furthermore, 71.9% agreed that passive engagement on social media can weaken cognitive skills essential for language learning. Lastly, 78.7% noted that the prevalence of unverified information on social media undermines the quality of language acquisition. Overall, while social media can offer benefits for language education, excessive use may harm crucial learning aspects, highlighting the need for balanced strategies.

4.2. Results from the interview

The researcher conducted interviews with 15 randomly selected English majors to evaluate the impact of social media on language learning, following a preliminary questionnaire. In response to the first question, *(Do you find social media difficult or easy to apply in English language acquisition?)* 66.7% found social media “easy” to use, while 12% found it “difficult” indicating varying levels of digital literacy, 20% had no idea. For the second question, “What impacts do you frequently encounter while employing

social media in your English learning progress?”, 40% appreciated access to multimedia resources, but 24% expressed concerns about overdependence on technology. Distractions were a significant issue, with 26.7% struggling to focus due to non-academic content, and 6.6 % noted limitations on in-person interactions and financial costs. Regarding the third question, *(What is the main positive and negative factor influencing your successful utilization of social media for English language learning?)* 20% cited network issues and in-person limitations as negatives. While distraction was the main challenge (36%), 33.3% valued collaborative learning and 13.3% confirmed the time management.

The findings on using social media for learning English reveal mixed experiences. Ten participants found it easy to use, with Participant 1 stating, *“It’s an interesting way to practice English on the social media! Practicing with others boosts my confidence and improve my English skills as well.”* This interaction not only helps with learning but also creates a sense of community among learners. However, five participants faced challenges, particularly with informal language. Participant 3 noted, *“It’s difficult at times; informal language confused me, I have to check the dictionary or google to find the meaning”* showing that slang and casual language can be confusing.

Many participants praised the positive impacts, such as community support and access to diverse content, with Participant 4 saying, *“The community support is amazing. I often ask for difficult tasks, I think collaborative learning will be better if we use social media to learn English”*. However, distractions and information overload were common concerns, as Participant 8 mentioned, *“I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the amount of content or platforms. Too much information, I don’t know how to choose it, and when I see something new, I often get distracted”*. Participant 9 noted, *“I always waste time on irrelevant posts, whenever I get online, I spend at least one or two hours reading miscellaneous news”* suggesting that these inconsistencies can lead to confusion and hurt the learning experience. Participant 12 identified key factors for success, including connecting with native speakers for immediate feedback, which Participant 15 described as social media is invaluable. *“There’s just too much content on social media. It overwhelms me, and I end up spending too much time scrolling instead of focusing on meaningful learning. I don’t trust the social media can improve my language learning”*.

In conclusion, while social media offers great chances for learning English, it also has challenges. It’s easy to use and has a supportive community, which helps keep language learners motivated. However, they need to deal with distractions and the quality of the content. As participants pointed out, finding a balance between using the benefits of social media and managing its downsides is important for successful language learning. Future research could look at ways to make social media better for English learners, focusing on filtering content and increasing engagement.

4.3. Discussion

Examining social media’s impacts on English language acquisition among English-major students was of essence to the entire research. The findings revealed that learners experienced both positive and negative effects while using social media resources for English learning. To clarify such impacts, they would be reviewed separately as follows with the positive side, three main benefits were identified.

First, multimedia resources were seen as highly beneficial because of their engaging and flexible learning experience catering to diverse learning

styles, allowing students to enhance their English proficiency through varied materials, including audiovisual content and interactive exercises. Second, students had a tendency to participate in collaborative learning opportunities, fostering a supportive environment and global learning communities. Third, motivational engagement, facilitated by the interactive and gamified features of social media platforms, contributed to boosting language learners’ enthusiasm and commitment, helping them maintain consistent practice and achieve their language learning goals.

When it came to the negative side, three notable drawbacks were also observed. Distraction and time consumption emerged as the most significant issues due to the ceaseless temptation and notifications from digital platforms. Next, technological overdependence prevented most of the learners from developing critical thinking skills and led to an overuse of online language. Ultimately, students reported that the limitations of face-to-face interaction impeded the development of fluency and conversational skills in real-world situations.

Additionally, the theoretical framework for understanding how social media affects learning English includes several key ideas about how people learn. Constructivist Learning Theory shows that knowledge is built through interaction and engagement, which is evident in social media platforms that support group learning. These platforms encourage students to take part in discussions and activities, helping them improve their understanding of English and strengthen their language skills. Social Interaction Theory highlights the importance of social connections in learning, showing that skills learned through working together can later be used independently. This is especially true in social media, where real-time communication helps enhance language learning. Motivation Theory points out that social media can boost both internal and external motivation, encouraging students to grow personally and gain recognition from others. Multimodal Learning Theory supports this by showing that different types of content like visual, reading, auditory, writing, and kinesthetic for catering to various learning styles, making students’ learning experience richer. However, Cognitive Load Theory also reminds us of the challenges, as too much

information on social media can either help students focus or overwhelm them. Overall, this framework offers a clear view of the many benefits and challenges of using social media for learning English, helping teachers and students find better ways to improve their language skills.

To sum up, despite pros and cons, the majority of the students preferred learning English through social media, showing an overall positive impact. However, the effective use of social media for language acquisition requires a balanced approach. Learners must adopt healthy habits and strategies to maximise the benefits while addressing its downsides, ensuring social media serves as a powerful complement to traditional language learning methods for a more holistic and effective process.

5. Conclusions

English plays a crucial role in our globalized society, with about a quarter of the world's population speaking it. It serves as a gateway to opportunities in education, the economy, tourism, and technology. However, EFL/ESL learners, particularly at a private University in Can Tho, Vietnam, face significant challenges in mastering the language. Fortunately, social media has emerged as a vital tool, making English learning more accessible and engaging. This research highlighted both the positive and negative impacts of social media on English acquisition. While it offers multimedia content, collaborative forums, and gamification that enhance language skills, it also presents issues such as distractions and time consumption. To mitigate these challenges, students should adopt self-regulation strategies and seek more in-person interactions. Overall, with intentional use, social media can significantly enhance English learning experiences for students.

Participants should view social media as a supplementary tool for their English learning. This study provides insights into its multifaceted impacts, helping students recognise both the benefits and drawbacks, which can lead to more effective learning strategies. Future research should involve larger sample sizes for broader insights and could include non-English majors' or teachers' perspectives on social media's impacts. Researchers are encouraged to build on this study's findings to develop new hypotheses or explore distinct research areas.

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