

## The Role of Social Media Toward EFL Students' Writing Skills

I Gusti Agung Vony Purnama

Information System Study Program, ITB STIKOM Bali

Email: [vony.purnama@gmail.com](mailto:vony.purnama@gmail.com)

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**Abstract-** The landscape of higher education in Indonesia underscores the significance of English proficiency for academic advancement. Traditionally, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction heavily relied on face-to-face classroom interactions guided by lecturers. However, the emergence of information technology has revolutionized learning paradigms, offering EFL students diverse opportunities beyond conventional classroom boundaries. This study investigates the pivotal role of social media platforms in enhancing the writing skills of EFL students. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were collected from 54 participants enrolled in English III classes in 2021, focusing on English writing. Quantitative data and specific examples were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed a resoundingly positive response from students regarding the efficacy of social media in improving their writing skills. Furthermore, the study elucidated various benefits derived from social media use, including enhanced writing proficiency, expanded English vocabulary, and overall effectiveness as a supplementary learning tool. Thus, it is evident that social media harbors immense potential as a complementary platform for bolstering English writing skills, particularly for EFL students, offering a modern approach to language education.

**Keywords:** EFL students; Social media; English writing; Writing instruction; Digital learning platforms.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology nowadays gives positive and negative impacts on society. The positive impact of technology can help to develop some important sectors. One of the important sectors is education. Technology and education can develop together and give a positive influence on the students. The Internet is the most popular information technology in the world at this time. Through the Internet, education development particularly in the part of teaching and learning process can be done easily. The Internet gives us so many platforms that can be used as the device to develop the learning process. One of the s which is very popular is social media. The social media platform is used by almost all people around the

world, from younger to older people. This platform can be used by students to meet and communicate with other students around the world and to share information, knowledge, etc. It is usually easier to communicate by writing a message to the person for the first time. Therefore, this is very important to write English correctly to avoid the wrong information and misunderstanding.

In this era of social media, people are very busy with their gadgets all the time. Based on the preliminary observation, students spent most of their time on their gadgets and social media applications. They are very rare to open the subject material unless they are in the meeting of the subject, in this case, English subject. Moreover, some people now are more

comfortable communicating through this media without seeing or meeting each other physically. Given that students only get writing practice in the classroom, Kiuahara, Graham, and Hawken (2009) claim that social media plays a major role in language acquisition as well as the development of writing abilities. Since the topic of discussion is communication, using language is crucial, especially when meeting and interacting with individuals from around the globe.

Learning to write is the most challenging of the four abilities required for studying English, especially for EFL (English for Foreign Learners) students. According to Gonye et al. (2012), children must develop systematic and well-ordered thinking skills because writing is a complex activity. These skills will ultimately determine how they behave. Hagemann (2003) defines conventions as the use of formal written English, encompassing proper language, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling as well as sentence construction and structure. Writing is described as one method of expressing language through words, symbols, or letters. Writing, according to Grenville (2001:5), is the process of beginning with an intriguing opening phrase, moving on to some incredibly fascinating material in the middle, and then pulling everything together at the conclusion. In communicating on social media, it is better to start with a written message. Since this skill is very difficult to be mastered, errors usually happen in writing a message, and this can cause a misunderstanding situation. The social media platform is considered can be used to help EFL students practice their writing skills because, on this platform, many people from all around the world share their interesting things, experiences, their point of view, and important information. Students can write a message, comment, and chat with other users on this platform and that can be a part of learning how to communicate through writing. This way can be an alternative to the learning process in writing and increase their confidence.

Social media is very popular at this moment. The younger generation, particularly college students, virtually exclusively uses social media for leisure. Social media is one type of ICT, according to Liu (2010), and it is a product of technological advancement. Sari (2017: 5) defines social media as an online platform that enables people to engage, collaborate, share, communicate, and create virtual social bonds in

addition to allowing users to represent themselves. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social media as an assortment of web-based tools that enable the worldwide creation of varied material. According to Chou (2014), social media has a few features like quality of platform, mechanism for information sharing, and interaction. In actuality, social media is special because it allows users to expand their social network, meet new people, and have meaningful interactions with complete strangers, claim Boyd & Ellison (2007).

Social media use in the context of EFL offers some chances for students to improve their English language proficiency (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019). Connolly (2011) asserts that social media is incredibly advantageous for children since it gives them a forum to interact with their peers, teachers, and schools while also sharing their original ideas. Currently, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are widely used social media platforms that are popular worldwide and have a large proportion of university students among their user base. As such, they could be used as mobile learning tools to enhance language acquisition (Gettman & Cortijo, 2015).

Mounim Lakhali carried out a study in 2022 titled "The Role of Social Media in Developing English Language Writing Skills: Moulay Ismail University as a Case Study". This article was published in the International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences in May and June of 2022. The goal of this study is to ascertain how university students' use of social media affects their capacity to write in English as well as how EFL students view the usefulness and worth of social media. This investigation also examined any potential associations between these variables. The study's findings demonstrate the significance of social media for the improvement of EFL university students' writing abilities (Lakhali, 2022).

In 2019, Tubagus Zam Zam Al Arif conducted a follow-up study titled "The Use of Social Media for English Language Learning: An Exploratory Study of EFL University Students." The purpose of this study is to investigate how Jambi University's English Study Program students use social media to acquire language skills. The results showed that while students utilize a variety of social media sites, Facebook and Instagram are the most popular ones. As a result, the students used social media more frequently for learning objectives unrelated to English language training. They did, however,

express favorable opinions on the application of social media to English language instruction. The kids think that using social media is crucial to getting better at speaking English. Additionally, it encourages students to use social media to enhance their proficiency in the English language (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019).

Social media is becoming an important instrument in the larger language learning context, providing opportunities for creative teaching methods. In today's classroom, it is essential to comprehend how it affects the writing abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The study "Students' Perception on Social Media in Writing Class at STKIP Muhammadiyah Rappang, Indonesia" by Sakkir, Rahman, and Salija (2016) provides insight into the real-world applications of social media integration in the classroom.

This research delves into students' attitudes towards utilizing social media platforms for English learning within a higher education setting in Indonesia. The results show that students have a strong desire to include social media in their writing classes. However, difficulties including big class sizes, inadequate internet usage instruction, and inadequate facilities could prevent it from being implemented successfully (Sakkir et al., 2016). These difficulties show how crucial it is to take care of the pedagogical support and infrastructure in order to optimize the advantages of incorporating social media into EFL classes. Therefore, creating techniques that effectively use social media in language learning situations requires an awareness of the subtleties of students' perceptions as well as the practical problems they experience.

In light of the aforementioned phenomena and research, it is fascinating to look into how EFL students use social media, what it means to them, and how they might use that influence to improve their writing abilities. This study therefore has two objectives. The first goal was to determine how social media might help students improve their writing abilities, and the second was to identify how social media could help students write better.

## II. METHODS

The study employs a descriptive research design, chosen for its aptness in illuminating the phenomenon of social media's impact on EFL students' writing skills. Nassaji (2015) asserts that in language learning contexts, qualitative

descriptive research is often favored. Moreover, this approach aligns with the study's objective of portraying the characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. Nevertheless, providing a succinct rationale for selecting this design over others would enhance readers' comprehension of the research methodology.

The study focuses on elucidating the development and validation process of a self-made questionnaire utilized to gather data from students enrolled in English III during the Odd semester of 2022-2023. A total of 54 students participated in filling out the questionnaire, selected purposefully by the researcher to ensure their ability to offer comprehensive insights into the research inquiries. Drawing from Creswell's (2014) perspective on purposive sampling, this approach was adopted to facilitate a deeper understanding of the research issues. The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert Scale, encompassing options ranging from "Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted alongside the questionnaire to enrich the dataset. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomena. Furthermore, the study emphasizes transparency in data analysis by elucidating how themes were derived from interview transcripts and integrated with quantitative findings. This methodological transparency enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the study outcomes, reinforcing the reliability of the data collected through the questionnaire.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Role of the Social Media in Enhancing the Students' Writing Skills.

The results of the students' questionnaire about using social media to study the English language—particularly writing—were covered and addressed in this chapter. There were 8 questions on the questionnaire, however, only 5 questions emphasized enhancing the writing skill and the student's motivation. The following tables represent the finding of this study.

**Table 1. Social media is useful to learn writing in English language**

| No. | Scale          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1   | Agree          | 36        | 66.7           |
| 2   | Strongly Agree | 15        | 27.8           |

|              |                   |           |            |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 3            | Disagree          | 2         | 3.7        |
| 4            | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.8        |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b> |

The above question of the questionnaire is "Social Media is useful to learn writing in the English language". According to the table, the highest percentage was "Agree" with 66.7%, then it was followed by the scale of "Strongly Agree" with 27.8%. The next place was "Disagree" with 3.7%, and the last was "Strongly Disagree" with 1.8%.

**Table 2. Student can get a motivation to learn English writing through social media**

| No.          | Scale             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1            | Agree             | 36        | 66.7           |
| 2            | Strongly Agree    | 12        | 22.2           |
| 3            | Disagree          | 5         | 9.3            |
| 4            | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.8            |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The above question of the questionnaire is "Student can get a motivation to learn English writing through social media". The highest response was positive because the scale of "Agree" got 66.7% responses. Then, the second place was the scale of "Strongly Agree" with 22.2%. Next, it was followed by a "Disagree" scale with 9.3%. The last response with 1.8% was for the scale of "Strongly Disagree".

**Table 3. Student can improve their English writing skill using social media**

| No.          | Scale             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1            | Agree             | 33        | 61.1           |
| 2            | Strongly Agree    | 17        | 31.5           |
| 3            | Disagree          | 3         | 5.6            |
| 4            | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.8            |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The above question of the questionnaire is "Student can improve their English writing skill using social media". There were 33 respondents who "Agree" with this statement and the percentage was 61.1%. Then, it was followed by "Strongly Agree" which was chosen by 17 students and the percentage is 31.5%. The 'Strongly Disagree' scale was lower than the 'Disagree' which was 1.8% and 5.6%.

**Table 4. Student can learn English vocabularies from the use of social media**

| No.          | Scale             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1            | Agree             | 26        | 48.2           |
| 2            | Strongly Agree    | 26        | 48.2           |
| 3            | Disagree          | 1         | 1.8            |
| 4            | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.8            |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The above question of the questionnaire is "Student can learn English vocabulary from the use of social media". According to the above table, the percentage between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" is equal to 48.2%. It has also happened to the "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" responses. They have an equal percentage as well. The percentage was 1.8%.

**Table 5. Students can improve their writing skill by emailing or chatting with English speakers on social media**

| No.          | Scale             | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1            | Agree             | 30        | 55.6           |
| 2            | Strongly Agree    | 20        | 37             |
| 3            | Disagree          | 3         | 5.6            |
| 4            | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 1.8            |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>54</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The above question of the questionnaire is "Students can improve their writing skills by emailing or chatting with English speakers on social media". There were 55.6% of respondents "Agree" with this statement, and this was the highest percentage. Then, it was followed by "Strongly Agree" with 37%, "Disagree" with 5.6%, and the last was "Strongly Disagree" with 1.8% responses.

The purpose of this study is to discover the role of social media in enhancing students' writing skills. The instrument was the questionnaire that was presented in the form of frequency and percentage. Four scales were used to measure the responses. The scales were Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Based on the findings, the scale of Agree always had the highest percentage among

the other three scales.

On the first question of the questionnaire, there were more than half participants agreed with Social media is useful to learn English writing. Social media platforms allow users to conduct such a conversation with other users, share some information by posting it on the wall, or even enable users to create web content. In sharing some information, users need to write on the wall regarding the information that they want to share. Writing the caption of the sharing information could be challenging for the users. The caption must be easy to understand and interesting at the same time. Therefore, social media is useful to learn English writing, since the students can read the caption of other users particularly in English, then automatically they also can start practicing writing on their wall as well.

The second question was whether students can get a motivation to learn English writing through social media. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the percentage of agree scale for this question was also more than half of the participants. Many interesting information can be found and created on the social media platforms. This fact seems can motivate the students in learning writing from this platform. Reading or seeing other users' captions can motivate the students to do the same thing on their own social media accounts. An interesting caption in the form of a video particularly can interact with other users to become followers. Having many followers can give benefit, in this case, can motivate them to write more interesting captions to share some important information, moreover, can influence the followers as well.

The third question was whether the student can improve their English writing skill using social media. There were also more than half participants who agree with the statement. By having the motivation to write more on social media, it will be automatically improving the student's writing skills. The improvement can be achieved by doing the writing activities regularly. The other important thing is they feel comfortable and enjoy the process of writing on this platform without worrying about making any mistakes. Keeping the motivation to practice writing, is the key to get a better improvement.

The fourth question was whether students can learn English vocabulary from the use of social media. For this question, the percentage of agree and strongly agree scales are similar. The result proves that there are many English

vocabularies found while the participants use social media. Knowing many vocabularies is very important in improving the writing skill. In writing, the use of vocabulary is very necessary to allow the writer to formulate more interesting sentences. Pleasant writing usually consists of various vocabularies to avoid the repetition of the same words in one sentence. The ability in using alternate terms can make the writing more readable for the readers. This automatically can add value to the writing.

The fifth question was whether students can improve their writing skills by emailing or chatting with English speakers on social media. There were more than half students agreed with this statement. Students can practice writing by sending emails to their friends overseas or chatting with them. This is very simple and can be done using a mobile phone. Therefore, this is considered effective yet efficient for the students to be able to improve their writing skills wherever they are.

In conformity with the results, most of the EFL students as the participants in this study agree that the use of social media to learn English writing is useful for them. They also can learn vocabulary on social media since the use of various vocabulary in writing is very important. They also can add their motivation in learning writing through social media by chatting or writing an email in English with foreign people or native speakers. That activity considered can naturally improve their ability in writing because they enjoyed doing that activity.

On the other hand, few students disagree and strongly disagree with the questions of the questionnaire. It seems that they use social media for other purposes, therefore they felt that it is not useful for learning and improving their writing skill.

However, it can be concluded that there were positive responses perceived by the respondents regarding the role of social media in enhancing writing skills, particularly in motivating, practicing, and as a media in learning English writing.

## **2. The Benefit of Social Media Toward the Students' Writing Ability**

The second purpose of this study was to discover the benefit of social media on the student's writing ability. Some examples of the students' interview transcription were presented in the form of the following table using thematic analysis. There were ten students as the

respondents in the interview. They were also the same students that filled out the questionnaire.

Table 1. Theme of the Interview Transcription

| No. | Theme                     | Examples of the Students' Interview Transcription   |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 1   | Improve Writing Skill     | Social media helps a lot in my English writing.<br>(Respondent 5)   |
| 2   | Enrich English Vocabulary | By learning English on social media, I can get some new vocabulary that is commonly used by people for daily communication.<br>(Respondent 9) |
| 3   | Effectiveness             | More flexible you can learn anything, and where you at.<br>(Respondent 1)   |

The above table has presented the theme of the interview transcription. Based on the data analysis, it was found that there were three themes regarding the benefit of social media on the students' writing ability. They were 'Improve writing skill', 'Effectiveness', and 'Enrich English vocabulary'.

The first theme was 'Improving writing skills. It seems that the participants felt that social media is beneficial in improving their writing skills. It is helpful when they want to write a caption on social media such as Instagram. It also helped them to start online chatting and discussing with the user from other countries using English. This was based on the participants' comments for instance.

'I think social media helps me a lot, because yea I can improve my writing skills also when I'm trying to communicate with the others.' (Respondent 7)

'Yes, I do think that social media helps a lot' (Respondent 4)

'Yes, social media has helped me in learning to writing in English.' (Respondent 6)

'Yes, of course, because on social media there are lots of features to help us learn.' (Respondent 8)

'Yes. Learning English writing make I can

communicate with my friends from other countries when I'am still in LITHAN course.' (Respondent 9)

The second theme was enriching English Vocabulary. In language learning, particularly for EFL students that were the participants in this interview, the use of vocabulary plays an important role in communication, particularly in writing. Therefore, it is very significant to have a grip on vocabulary. This can be seen from the participants' comments for instance.

'That's for sure because on average, the content I see mostly comes from abroad, so it helps me with vocabulary.' (Respondent 6)

'Yes, I do. It will 100% increase your knowledge of words.' (Participant 4)

'Yes By learning English on social media, I can get some new vocabulary that is commonly used by people for daily communication.' (Participant 9)

'Yes it can. Because there's some post on TikTok or Instagram that discuss about it.' (Respondent 7)

'I think it can, because on social media there is a lot of vocabulary that is displayed and there is also a lot of informative content about it.' (Respondent 8)

The third theme was Effectiveness. Social media can be accessed at anytime, anywhere, and is very flexible. Moreover, it takes a low cost just to buy an internet connection. Students also can access it for free in public places that provide free wifi. Therefore, it considers effective because the students can open social media in their free time to learn English writing and vocabulary wherever they are. Besides that, many free English learning applications on social media can add to the students' knowledge in terms of English writing. There were some participants' comments regarding this theme for instance.

'Social media has their technique to increase the user interest, the algorithm will bring the user better experience. So if you are looking for a English media, social media will give you a hundred or maybe a thousand related post about English learn media, make it easier to learn English precisely.' (Respondent 4)

'Learn to develop themselves through the people they meet online, as they interact and receive feedback from one another and communication at a very low cost.' (Respondent 7)

'Lots of interesting content that we can explore to learn English. Besides being full of pictures and colours, using social media is also

very easy and practical. So, we don't need to open a thick book just to learn English.' (Respondent 2)

'You can access them anywhere and anytime that you want.' (Respondent 5)

'There is a lot of the advantages like we can easily learn English anywhere and anytime, and also the best thing is we can perform it to other people like when we communicate with them in social media.' (Respondent 3)

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

In conformity with the first aim of this study, which is to find the role of social media in enhancing the students' writing, it can be concluded that there was a positive perception of the respondents regarding the use of social media in enhancing the students' writing skills. The finding shows that the scale of agree has the highest percentage. It considered that the students felt that there was an improvement in their writing skills using social media particularly to enlarge their knowledge on the use of vocabularies in writing. Through this social media application, they can communicate with other people all over the world by using English writing, and naturally, this can be a positive motivation for them to use English in their communication by chatting or writing an email.

The research aimed to explore the impact of social media usage on students' writing abilities. Through thematic analysis of interview transcriptions, three prominent themes emerged: "improving writing skills," "enriching English writing," and "effectiveness." These findings underscore the potential benefits of integrating social media into educational practices. By enhancing writing skills and enriching English proficiency, students are better equipped to navigate the demands of the modern workforce. Moreover, the effectiveness of utilizing social media platforms as educational tools signifies a promising avenue for educators and policymakers to consider. Embracing these insights can facilitate the development of tailored strategies to prepare students for future professional endeavors. Thus, addressing the practical implications of these findings holds significant relevance for educators and policymakers alike, offering insights into optimizing educational approaches to meet the evolving needs of students in the digital age. This study is very limited, therefore, it is hoped that there will be advanced research in the same area can be done in the future. This is very helpful for

teachers in teaching and learning the process of English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, future research could also explore the effectiveness of integrating social media-based writing tasks into EFL curricula. Investigating the design of such tasks, their alignment with learning objectives, and their impact on students' motivation and engagement could provide practical insights for language educators.

Scholars can further our grasp of the intricate connections between social media and EFL writing skills by tackling these study avenues in the future. Additionally, researchers can support the continuous improvement of pedagogical methods in EFL instruction by verifying hypotheses developed from the current study and delving deeper into particular variables.

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