
The Impact of Social Media on ESL Students' Writing Skills: A Case Study of Uzbekistan State World Languages University

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Annotation *In recent years, social media has become an integral part of students' everyday lives, influencing learning behaviors and communication patterns. This study investigates the impact of digital platforms on the development of writing skills among ESL students at Uzbekistan State World Languages University. As well as, using a quantitative approach through a three-stage survey (preparatory, implementation, and analytical), the research analyzes the experiences of 26 third- and fourth-year students. The findings reveal that while Telegram is the dominant educational tool (65.4%), its pedagogical potential remains only moderately realized. The study confirms that students favor a blended model where digital interaction complements traditional instruction. Key challenges identified include the "infiltration" of informal patterns into academic writing and a prioritization of speed over accuracy. Moreover, the research concludes that purposeful integration of social media can significantly enhance motivation and vocabulary, provided that structured teacher scaffolding and clear assessment criteria are in place.*

Keywords *Social media, writing skills, ESL, Telegram, blended learning, motivation, academic writing, Uzbekistan*

Ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning ESL talabarlari yozish ko'nikmalariga ta'siri: O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti misolida

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Annotatsiya *So'nggi yillarda ijtimoiy tarmoqlar talabarlarning kundalik hayotining ajralmas qismiga aylanib, o'rganish xulq-atvori va muloqot shakllariga kuchli ta'sir ko'rsatmoqda. Ushbu tadqiqot O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti ESL (ingliz tili ikkinchi til sifatida) yo'nalishi talabalarining yozish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda raqamli platformalarning ta'sirini o'rganadi. Uch bosqichli so'rovnoma (tayyorgarlik, amalga oshirish va tahliliy) orqali miqdoriy yondashuvdan foydalangan holda, tadqiqot 26 nafar uchinchi va to'rtinchi kurs talabalarining tajribasini tahlil qiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, Telegram asosiy ta'lim vositasi (65,4%) bo'lsa-da, uning pedagogik salohiyati hali ham o'rtacha darajada qolmoqda. Tadqiqot shuni tasdiqlaydiki, talabalar raqamli o'zaro aloqa an'anaviy o'qitishni to'ldiradigan gibridd (blended) modelni ma'qul ko'radilar. Aniqlangan asosiy muammolar qatoriga akademik yozishga norasmiy uslublarning "shizib kirishi" va aniqlikdan ko'ra tezlikka ustunlik berish kiradi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning maqsadli integratsiyasi, agar o'qituvchi tomonidan tizimli ko'rsatmalar va aniq baholash mezonlari ishlab chiqilsa, motivatsiya va lug'at boyligini sezilarli darajada*

oshirishi mumkin. Shuningdek, tadqiqot yakunida raqamli ta'lim muhitini samarali tashkil etish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalar ishlab chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar *Ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, yozish ko'nikmalari, ESL (ingliz tili ikkinchi til sifatida), Telegram, gibrid ta'lim (blended learning), motivatsiya, akademik yozuv, O'zbekiston*

Влияние социальных сетей на навыки письма студентов ESL: на примере Узбекского государственного университета мировых языков

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Аннотация *В последние годы социальные сети стали неотъемлемой частью повседневной жизни студентов, влияя на их учебное поведение и модели общения. Данное исследование изучает влияние цифровых платформ на развитие навыков письма у студентов ESL (английский как второй язык) в Узбекском государственном университете мировых языков. Используя количественный подход посредством трехэтапного опроса (подготовительный, практический и аналитический), авторы анализируют академический опыт 26 студентов третьего и четвертого курсов. Результаты показывают, что, хотя Telegram является доминирующим образовательным инструментом (65,4%), его педагогический потенциал реализуется лишь умеренно. Исследование подтверждает, что студенты отдают предпочтение смешанной модели обучения, в которой цифровое взаимодействие дополняет традиционные методы. Основные выявленные проблемы включают «проникновение» неформальных стилей в академическое письмо и приоритет скорости над точностью. В данном исследовании делается вывод о том, что целенаправленная интеграция социальных сетей может значительно повысить учебную мотивацию и расширить словарный запас будущих специалистов при обязательном условии наличия структурированной поддержки со стороны преподавателя и внедрения четких критериев академической оценки результатов.*

Ключевые слова *Социальные сети, навыки письма, ESL (английский как второй язык), Telegram, смешанное обучение, мотивация, академическое письмо, Узбекистан*

Introduction

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of students' everyday lives, influencing not only communication patterns but also learning behaviors. From an educational perspective, social media platforms

such as blogs, discussion forums, microblogging tools, and social networking sites provide a rich environment for language practice, especially in the development of writing skills. Their interactive nature, accessibility, and multimodal features create

new opportunities for meaningful written communication beyond the traditional classroom setting. Greenhow argues that social media doesn't just "help" writing; it creates New Literacies. Her research suggests that these platforms allow students to practice "digital citizenship" and "rhetorical flexibility". "Students are often more aware of their audience on social media than in a classroom. Because they are writing for peers or a public audience, they often put more thought into the "message" and "impact" of their words, even if the "grammar" is informal" (Christine Greenhow & Gleason, 2012). Other researchers have tracked how social media-driven shorthand (acronyms, lack of punctuation, and "textese") affects formal schooling. For example, there is a documented "infiltration" of informal patterns into academic essays. O'Keeffe found that because students log on at least once a day, the habit of "speed over accuracy" becomes the default mode, making the transition back to formal grammar difficult without explicit "switching" training (Bovill, 2010); O'Keeffe et al., 2011). One of the key educational potentials of social media lies in its ability to provide authentic writing contexts. Unlike traditional writing tasks that are often limited to teacher-student interaction, social media-based activities allow students to write for a real audience. This sense of audience awareness encourages learners to be more attentive to clarity, coherence, and accuracy in their writing. For example, writing posts on a class blog or participating in online discussions requires students to express ideas clearly and respond to others' opinions, thereby fostering purposeful writing. One research indicates that when students write on social media, they transition from "writing for a grade" to writing for a community". Galvin and Greenhow found that social media platforms serve as "authentic learning spaces" where students feel their voice has real-world relevance (Sarah Galvin & Christine Greenhow, 2019; Padgett & Curwood (2016). Students develop a stronger sense of authorship and ownership over their

work because they are managing a public or semi-public digital identity, which motivates them to refine their message more than a standard private essay would. Another important advantage is the flexibility of social media platforms. They can be integrated into writing activities in various ways, including collaborative writing projects, reflective journals, peer feedback tasks, and creative writing exercises. Teachers can design assignments where students co-author texts using shared online spaces, comment on each other's work, or revise drafts based on feedback received through social media tools. Such integration supports the process-oriented approach to writing, emphasizing planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Barrot's 2021 research specifically looked at the "flipped classroom" model using social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram) to address student stress (Jessie, Barrot, 2021). Moreover, social media promotes learner autonomy and engagement. Students are often more motivated to write on platforms they are already familiar with, which reduces anxiety and increases participation. The informal atmosphere of social media can help students overcome fear of making mistakes, allowing them to experiment with language and gradually improve their writing proficiency. At the same time, teachers can guide learners to transition from informal writing styles to more academic forms by setting clear objectives and criteria. The use of social media in writing instruction has significant psychological and pedagogical implications. From a psychological perspective, social media-based writing activities can positively affect students' motivation, confidence, and attitudes toward writing. The immediate feedback provided by peers and teachers through comments, likes, or reactions creates a sense of recognition and support, which can enhance students' self-esteem and willingness to write. "Social media use can be positively related to academic engagement through intrinsic motivation. It enhances interest in

academia by providing easily available materials and connecting students with peers in the same field" (Al-Rahmi et al., 2018/2021; Tahir & Suriaman, 2015). Tahir and Suriaman (2015) found that using social media for specific tasks, like narrative writing, makes students significantly more motivated to complete assignments compared to traditional pen-and-paper methods. Social interaction is another crucial psychological factor. Writing through social media is inherently social, as it involves communication, collaboration, and dialogue. This aligns with social constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize that knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. When students engage in discussions, respond to comments, or collaborate on written tasks, they actively negotiate meaning and refine their ideas, leading to deeper learning. From a pedagogical standpoint, social media supports student-centered learning. Teachers take on the role of facilitators rather than sole evaluators, guiding students through writing tasks while encouraging peer interaction and self-assessment. This shift promotes critical thinking and responsibility for learning. Additionally, social media allows for differentiated instruction, as students can work at their own pace and choose topics that match their interests and proficiency levels.

However, the pedagogical use of social media also requires careful planning. Teachers must establish clear guidelines to ensure that writing activities remain educationally focused. Issues such as distraction, inappropriate language use, and uneven participation should be addressed through well-structured tasks and monitoring. When used effectively, social media can create a supportive learning environment that balances freedom of expression with academic rigor. The research is based on the assumption that the purposeful and methodologically guided integration of social media into writing instruction can enhance students' writing skills. It is

hypothesized that social-media-based activities increase learners' motivation, participation, and frequency of writing practice, while also supporting vocabulary development, peer interaction, and feedback-based revision. It is further assumed that the most effective results can be achieved when social media are combined with traditional writing instruction in a balanced way.

Methods

The research employed comparative, analytical, descriptive, quantitative, and questionnaire-based methods. Comparative and analytical methods were used to examine traditional and social-media-based writing activities, while descriptive and interpretative approaches helped explain their educational role and effectiveness. In the empirical part, a questionnaire survey was conducted, and the collected data were processed through quantitative analysis, percentage-based calculation, and generalization of the results. The experimental part of the present research was carried out at Uzbekistan State World Languages University with the participation of third- and fourth-year students. In total, 26 respondents took part in the questionnaire survey. The empirical work was organized to identify how students perceive the role of social media in the development of writing skills and to determine which digital practices are considered the most useful in academic writing instruction. Since the central aim of the dissertation is to reveal the advantages of social media in enhancing students' writing skills, the questionnaire was designed as an instrument for diagnosing students' digital habits, attitudes toward social media-based writing, and their self-reported development in such areas as vocabulary, motivation, peer interaction, critical thinking, and adaptation of writing style.

The organization of the experimental work included **three main stages**.

- *The first stage* was preparatory and diagnostic. At this stage, the target group was identified, the questionnaire was

designed, and the main variables of the study were determined. The instrument included demographic questions and questions related to students' social media use, followed by core items focusing on the educational impact of social media on writing.

- *The second stage* was data collection and implementation, during which the questionnaire was administered to the selected students.
- *The third stage* was analytical and interpretative, when the collected data were systematized, the responses were quantified, and the dominant tendencies were interpreted in relation to the dissertation topic. Thus, the experimental work was not limited to collecting opinions; it was intended to reveal meaningful patterns that could inform practical recommendations for writing instruction.

Results and Discussions

The respondent profile provides useful insight into the context of the study. The survey data show that the sample was predominantly female: 25 respondents (96.2%) were female and 1 respondent (3.8%) was male. Most respondents belonged to the 19-21 age group, with age 21 forming the largest group among valid entries. Social media use was already well established in the respondents' daily routines. 42.3% reported spending 3-4 hours a day on social media, 30.8% spent 1-2 hours, 15.4% spent more than 4 hours, and only 11.5% used social media for less than one hour a day. This distribution indicates that the selected students were already active users of digital communication platforms, which made them an appropriate group for examining the educational potential of social media in writing development.

The data also show that social media were already used for academic purposes by a substantial proportion of the respondents. 53.8% stated that they often used social media for academic tasks, while 42.3% reported

sometimes using them in this way. Only 3.8% indicated that they never used social media for academic purposes. In terms of platform preference, Telegram emerged as the dominant tool for educational use, with 65.4% of responses referring to it directly, while Instagram and several other digital tools appeared only occasionally. This result is significant because it demonstrates that in the local context Telegram has become the central social-media-based learning environment, especially for sharing materials, exchanging information, and participating in communication related to study tasks.

The responses to the main questionnaire items reveal a generally positive but mostly moderate evaluation of the role of social media in writing development. For example, 84.6% of respondents stated that social media writing contributed to their vocabulary development to a moderate extent, while only 3.8% chose the high level. Social media also had a moderate influence on writing motivation, as 73.1% selected the moderate level for the item concerning motivation to write (table 3.1.1). A similar pattern can be observed in writing frequency, participation in online discussions, peer feedback, collaborative online activities, critical thinking, and adaptation of writing style: in all these areas, the majority of answers clustered around the moderate level. This suggests that social media already play a meaningful role in students' writing experience, but their pedagogical potential has not yet been fully realized.

A particularly important result concerns the perception of a combined traditional and digital approach. 73.1% of respondents evaluated the combination of traditional writing exercises and digital writing approaches as moderately effective, while 15.4% rated it highly effective, and only 11.5% considered it of low effectiveness. This finding is highly relevant for the dissertation because it confirms that students do not necessarily view social media as a replacement for traditional writing

instruction. Rather, they tend to support a blended model in which formal classroom

writing and social-media-based interaction complement one another.

Item	Low	Moderate	High
Contribution to vocabulary development	3 (11.5%)	22 (84.6%)	1 (3.8%)
Monitoring grammar and spelling online	9 (34.6%)	11 (42.3%)	6 (23.1%)
Increase in motivation to write	5 (19.2%)	19 (73.1%)	2 (7.7%)
Frequency of writing due to social media interaction	6 (23.1%)	17 (65.4%)	3 (11.5%)
Enhancement of participation in writing tasks	6 (23.1%)	17 (65.4%)	3 (11.5%)
Helpfulness of peer feedback	5 (19.2%)	17 (65.4%)	4 (15.4%)
Collaborative online activities and writing skills	6 (23.1%)	17 (65.4%)	3 (11.5%)
Development of critical thinking in writing	6 (23.1%)	16 (61.5%)	4 (15.4%)
Adaptation of writing style to formal/informal contexts	6 (23.1%)	18 (69.2%)	2 (7.7%)
Effectiveness of combining traditional and digital writing	3 (11.5%)	19 (73.1%)	4 (15.4%)

Table 1. *Students' Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media on Writing Development*

Overall, the experimental work demonstrates that the students of Uzbekistan State World Languages University are already immersed in social media environments, use these platforms for academic tasks with noticeable regularity, and recognize their value for writing-related development. At the same time, the predominance of moderate responses indicates that these tools are not yet being used to their fullest pedagogical capacity. This conclusion naturally leads to the identification of problems encountered during the experiment and to the search for practical ways to overcome them.

Conclusion and Limitations

The experimental part of the research, conducted among third- and fourth-year students of Uzbekistan State World Languages University, demonstrated that social media are already embedded in students' educational experience and are used with noticeable frequency for academic purposes. The findings showed that Telegram occupies a central place among educational platforms and that most respondents perceive the contribution of social media to writing development in moderately positive terms. These results confirm that social

media have already entered the instructional space, even if their role remains only partially systematized. The analysis of questionnaire responses also revealed that the strongest contribution of social media lies in increasing motivation, supporting regular written interaction, and creating opportunities for participation and peer response. At the same time, the predominance of moderate responses indicated that the full pedagogical capacity of social media has not yet been realized. In particular, grammar monitoring, deep critical engagement, and fully effective collaboration remain areas that require more structured support.

The study identified several problems that reduce the effectiveness of social-media-based writing instruction: insufficiently structured use of platforms, informal language habits, limited participation in online discussions, narrow dependence on Telegram, and uneven quality of peer feedback. These problems show that the educational effect of social media cannot be taken for granted. It must be deliberately constructed through clear learning objectives, teacher scaffolding, and appropriate assessment criteria.

At the same time, the empirical results point to strong prospects for future development. The most promising direction is the integration of traditional writing instruction with platform-specific social media tasks, especially discussion-based writing, reflective writing, caption writing, collaborative drafting, and guided peer review. Such an approach would allow students to benefit from the authenticity and immediacy of digital environments without losing the structural discipline of academic writing.

In conclusion, the development of students' writing skills through social media is both realistic and pedagogically promising in the local higher education context. The findings support the view that social media should not replace traditional instruction, but should be integrated into it in a balanced, purposeful, and methodologically sound way. This conclusion strengthens the overall argument of the dissertation that social media, when properly managed, can become an effective tool for enhancing students' writing competence.

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