

**Social Media Use and English Language Proficiency:
Perspective of A Dhaka-Based Private University Students**



Syeda Israth Rahman

ID: 171013049

Department of English and Humanities

Summer 2021

Social Media Use and English Language Proficiency: Perspective of A Dhaka-Based Private University Students

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of English and Humanities
University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
BA in English

Syeda Israth Rahman

ID:171013049

Thesis Supervisor: Sheikh Nahiyan

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. H. H.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Supervisor

Department of English and Humanities

DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

Syeda Israth Rahman

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ID: 171013049

Department of English and Humanities

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank the Almighty Allah for giving me the fortune to complete my dissertation with enough patience and courage. Without the blessing of the Almighty, I would not be able to complete my dissertation. I want to show my gratitude to my supervisor, Sheikh Nahiyan Sir, for always providing his valuable and insightful feedback, the support, and guidance that helped me improve my thesis paper. Initially, I was too scared to do a thesis, but my supervisor motivated me and helped me in every possible way. I am also thankful to the ULAB Department of English and Humanities for providing me with enormous opportunities and facilities throughout the journey. I am grateful to my family for always believing in me. Last but not least, I am thankful to all my batch mates, seniors, and juniors for helping me directly or indirectly for the previous four years' journey in ULAB.

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Abstract

Social media platforms play a significant role among people from all over the world. During the global pandemic, people, especially university students, are dependent on different social media websites for communication and education purposes. Therefore, social media platforms and the use of the English language by the students are interconnected. Intending to determine the use of social media and English language proficiency perspectives of Dhaka-based private university students in the Bangladeshi context, the researcher used a qualitative data collection method where fifteen students within the age group of 18-26 years old from Dhaka based private universities, were interviewed. The interviews have taken over phone calls and internet conferencing platforms.

In this research, the researcher particularly focused on three social networking sites (SNSs) that are prominent among university students; Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. The findings indicated that social media websites influence students so much in terms of learning and improving their reading and writing in English language proficiency. Additionally, the discussion from the findings also suggested, social networking sites (SNSs) can be a productive educational tool if the way of implementation of the English language can be organized and the instructors of university courses would maintain a rubric that encourages and motivates students to write more in the English language on social media platforms.

Key Words: Social networking sites, English language, Proficiency, University Students

Chapter One

Introduction

Technology is an essential part of our life as it introduces different types of innovations to make our lives easy. One of its many innovations is the social media platform which has grown to become one of the most prominent platforms for communication in recent times. Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms began their operations after 2005 and gained pace in the last ten years. Today, these platforms have become a channel to interact and connect with friends, family members and other users while also providing a medium of entertainment. The majority of social media users are teenagers and adults in their twenties and thirties. For them, this platform is also helping expand academic and general knowledge. All social media users are receiving worldwide information while participating in written and verbal communication. Through the use of languages, humans have expressed their emotions and interacted through the various languages they have. It is known that a language is a systematic form with both spoken and written symbols, which is a tool for communicating in a community. In this context, English is an international language, and one of the main languages used to communicate in social media. Hence, people worldwide use this language for different purposes apart from communication. The place where this study is contextualized, English is not the first language or mother tongue here. For Bangladeshi people, English is considered as their second language rather than a foreign language (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Across all levels of education, the English language is taught as an academic subject, however, at the university level, especially in all the private universities of Bangladesh, English is the language of instruction, education and assessment instead of Bangla. University students are encouraged to communicate with each other by using the English language

inside and outside the classroom and campus. The intention behind this is to help them improve their basic skills in the English language.

The connection between English learning and use and social media platforms is that it gives everyone a medium to practice the language. Today, many social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, instant messaging like WhatsApp and other platforms have shown enormous potential to help billions of people to achieve their vision (Bagui, 2016). As the enhancement of social media features has given more opportunities for communicating and learning, social media users can create, watch, and share different kinds of stuff that help them uplift their knowledge in anything effortlessly. In this context, the need to look at the role of social media use and English language improvement is a concern for this research.

1.1. Background of the study

Any learner aged eighteen or above is denoted as an adult learner. He or she is a mature student who is involved in learning procedures of various criteria where his or her experiences and beliefs play a crucial role. Hence, university students belong to this group and the participants of this study are all adult learners whose first language is not English. At the same time, English is their second language and they have learned it as an academic subject all their life to gain mastery over it. These ESL (English as a second language) adult students often require additional support and more opportunities to practice this language. Most university students belong to this group and they understand a text and participate in conversations where they are only required to use the English language only. Likewise, they are often seen doing the same on social media. They, as social media users, can access it through their personal computers and smartphone applications (Haque, 2018). Therefore, social media platform is a convenient and time-saving service on the internet only because of the opportunities and benefits it brings but also because of the way people

can interact in it, especially university students. Among many social networking sites (SNSs), Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram are the most commonly used social media websites of Bangladeshi undergraduate students. All of these sites are cross-platform for all types of computers and smartphones.

Aforementioned, the use of social media platforms and English language proficiency are simultaneously connected. All the communication on social networking sites occurs through the English language, different countries, cultures, people, and Bangladeshi users are comfortable with it. Hamad and Hassan (2019) note that social media is a “powerful tool” that brings both “positive” and “negative” impact to all undergraduate students, especially in terms of their English language proficiency, if these platforms are used for “pedagogical purposes” (as cited in Heng, 2020, p.5). Concerning this, Bangladeshi undergraduate students are familiar with social media use, especially to learn and improve their English proficiency. In addition to that, these websites are prominent for these university-going students as the communication medium on social media in the English language to learn the English language and develop proficiency in English. All language learners tend to learn a second language with the basic knowledge of their first language after a certain age (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

It is beneficial to the students or the users if they can have the opportunity to learn and practice the English language from various sources and places. On top of that, if their regular life conversation regarding education or other things happens in the English language, it would be effective for both communicators. Although using social platforms as an educational tool is a slow process in Bangladesh, this can be effective if the undergraduate students use the broad scope with serious action.

1.2. The objective of the study

This research aimed to determine the use of social media and English language proficiency perspectives of Dhaka-based private university students in the Bangladeshi context. The participants are final-year undergraduate students of a Dhaka-based private university. The researcher focused on three social platforms – namely, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram - commonly used among the students. As communication through text messages is frequent and time-saving, the researcher kept two basic English language skills in this study to provide a precise idea regarding using social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) for English language reading and writing proficiency.

1.3. Central research questions

These research questions drove the current study that the researcher has tried to answer. They are:

1. What are students' experiences regarding the use of social media and their English language proficiency?
2. How do final year university students' views regarding the use of social media to learn English?
3. What are the scopes of using social media to improve university students' English language proficiency?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter reviews past studies related to social media websites and English language learning and their relevance for this study. In this literature review, the researcher highlighted social media as an English learning platform and its influence on English language proficiency. The researcher examined various literature available on different scholarly databases and selected those that seemed imperative to the study. In the first section, the researcher discusses existing research on the emergence of social media websites as a learning method, the positive influence of social media as an English learning tool, the language use of tertiary level students across social media and the negative influences, if any, of social media websites pertinent to English language teaching. Finally, the researcher has discussed existing research in Bangladesh related to this and established the research gap that validates this study.

2.1. The emergence of social media as a learning method

Social media websites or online social platforms have a crucial role today in everyone's lives. The features these platforms offer such as instant messaging, audio and video calls are easily accessible, convenient, and thus, time-saving compared to other forms of communication where individuals need to use different websites and applications for that. Although it is simple to use it is seen as a “complex communication tool that contains hundreds of unique features to fulfill one ultimate purpose for its users” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007 as cited in Heng, 2020, p. 1) and that is, to form meaningful human connections. Social media websites are a medium through which people share similar thoughts and ideas with other users who have different interests and backgrounds. It is also a convenient instrument for university-going students, mainly as they can informally

communicate. This is one of the reasons why social media websites are considered as “modern” and “attractive” means to communicate online by users of the internet (Heng, 2020, p. 3).

Additionally, social networking sites (SNSs) are commonly used as more efficient and valuable tools for locating, sharing, and disseminating health-related messages to the general public (Zhao & Zhang, 2017). They have importance in academia since they assist in distributing authentic language and fostering meaningful interplay beyond classrooms as their community-centered design. For example, the main component in writing exercises is the personal involvement of students to make the learning experience very valuable and make learning more relevant and enjoyable. The emergence of technology was not meant for education. However, their existence allowed for language classroom integration. In various studies on language learning, the appropriate use of technologies, namely computers or smartphones, was an essential topic to learn. In less than two decades, the Internet as a means of modern technology has significantly impacted the English language and dramatically changed it (Hamad & Abdullah, 2020). Students use different applications to keep linked with all kinds of news from the minor corner of the planet and are versatile and distinctive to their own needs. Hence, social media websites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram greatly influence the education of people as these platforms provide them with the chance to think and learn more about them and share them more widely (Gaytan, 2013).

2.2. The positive influence of social media as an English learning tool and proficiency

Multiple social media sites are used for communication today and it has become a place where people can interact to improve various skills they have. For instance, students can improve their English language proficiency as for many it is their official or second language. Hence,

through the medium of social media, student's English competency in reading, writing improves continually, even outside their classroom as well.

According to a quantitative study by Hamad & Abdullah (2020), social media websites have a significant role in developing students' vocabulary, grammar, and communication. The potential of social media for improving the language of study using a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube is common among undergraduate students. They pose various advantages which include enrichment of vocabulary, development of pronunciation, the practice of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning, and these lead to overall language skills improvement. Students who took part in such studies have noted that social media platforms have a favorable effect on foreign language acquisition. In addition, they can follow professional foreign language teachers and the various facilities provided through this platform to improve their English-speaking capabilities (Hamad & Abdullah, 2020). Some limitations of conventional teaching styles are noted after collaborating a new teaching style with traditional ones. For example, the traditional feedback of instructor technique has been proved inadequate, and peer input is motivated to better the student through social media. It can be more specific and valuable, and both the writer and commentator can benefit from addressing each other (Wichadee, 2013).

2.3. Social media websites and language Use

In the following sections, the case of different social media websites will be discussed in regards to the information reviewed from existing research.

2.3.1. The Case of Facebook

According to Klimova and Pikhart (2019), Facebook is the most popular social network site today with more than two billion users. Facebook has contributed to the development of

productive skills of the English language such as writing, which is often considered the least as well as the most challenging skill to master. The researchers reviewed articles available in scholarly databases, e.g. 27 articles in Scopus and 24 in the Web of Science, to justify the findings. The detailed analysis of these articles found in Klimova and Pikhart's study shows that Facebook helps students improve their writing skills in terms of EFL in the learning process through Facebook.

Subsequently, Facebook has been confirmed to give the learning process a new perspective by improving student participation and it may also provide new approaches to language learning procedures. Bayucan (2017) found out that Facebook itself provides for independent use, thus, it must be integrated into the assessment or allocation component of the lesson plan. The integration of Facebook in education is strongly suggested to all university students who can undertake cooperative autonomous learning. Moreover, college students can use Facebook to regulate each other. Jassim & Dzakiria (2019) have explored how Facebook can be an innovative teaching method to develop students' oral and written communication skills and the challenges and problems of this instructional perspective. The findings from these studies show that by using Facebook, user's interaction increases and they participate more actively in collaborative learning. Besides this, Facebook creates a place where students get the courage to ask and learn something because the platform is student-centered (Jassim & Dzakiria, 2019). The researchers used two hypotheses to identify the effectiveness of using the Facebook social platform. The constructivist theory and collaborating learning. The result shows that students do not feel comfortable using Facebook as a tool for improving the English language. Also, they are often irregular in any of the Facebook groups for learning. Regarding this, Rodliyah (2016) says that as everyone can read their writing and be assessed, thus, all students do not find it comfortable to develop their writing skills

equally. Additionally, Bagui (2016) investigated in his paper "Impact of Facebook on students writing skills" that more than half (59%) students agreed with the statement that Facebook motivates them to write on Facebook. However, 54% of students believe Facebook helps to develop their writing proficiency.

2.3.2. The case of Instagram

One key characteristic of Instagram is that users can only upload photographs from a mobile phone or tablet directly, distinctive from similar social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Instagram prevents third-party users from abusing the area, assuring that all content comes from legitimate people and cannot download photographs via a PC. The potential of Instagram as a learning tool is easily accessible to sensible users. Thus, autonomous learning through Instagram is encouraged as learners regularly engage with the valuable content without a lecturer's supervision or guidance (Kelly, 2015). McBride (2009) says that Instagram's commonality among the younger generation might be seen as a preference because it can minimize the potential strain due to new technologies in learning exercises. In addition, Instagram is one of the most complementary platforms for learners as it helps boost users' productivity (Zarei & Rudravarapu, 2019). Instagram provides plenty of contextualized visual information that can be used in classes in English. These instructions are fundamental as they provide optical components that can be regarded as advantageous to graphic students.

Vie (2008) states that Instagram is a commonly used online networking outlet whereby young students efficiently utilize Instagram as a language training instrument. A quantitative study conducted by Zarei & Rudravarapu (2019) explores learners' perception of learning the English language through Instagram. The findings show the undergraduates of Malaysia are enjoying using Instagram as a tool for their development of the English language. It helps them to enhance their

grammar, vocabulary. Instagram allows them to correct their grammar as they think twice before posting anything for a correct grammatical sentence. Furthermore, Instagram can assist in developing a socially connected network of students in classrooms.

2.3.3. The case of WhatsApp

The perspectives of students overseas on the social platform- WhatsApp have been studied by many researchers. They highlighted students' attitudes in using WhatsApp to develop their skills in the English Language. The majority of the students said that WhatsApp plays a significant role as a learning and practicing tool. Several recommendations and suggestions have been mentioned to bring out all the possible ways for making it more like an educational tool than a communication tool.

The social media platform is known as 'WhatsApp' is considered an important communication platform between teacher and student and an ESL classroom learning tool. Students can do their work at a speedy pace. The definition given by apprenticeship.com provides ESL as an abbreviation of "English as a second language," and the ESL lesson is used to teach English to students speaking a language or mother language (Mistar & Embi, 2016). WhatsApp is now a new and handy platform for the instruction and teaching of educator staff wherever and at any time (Gon & Rawekar, 2017). Mistar and Embi (2016) describe WhatsApp as a learning tool and how it can help the students develop their learning and students' perceptions about WhatsApp as a learning tool. The participants of their study were pre-university students from Malaysia and it was found that WhatsApp is essential for students to develop their ESL learning as it helps them learn and use context differently and in a better way. Hence it is recommended that educational institutes should provide internet facilities for students to use this application at the campus so that they can make use of the platform. The findings also bring out students' opinions where they

shared, they feel more interested in learning English through WhatsApp because it helps them be confident and helps them reduce the shyness that happens in the classroom while expressing themselves in words. In the same context, to understand the effects on interaction in an Arabic language teaching course, a survey was conducted among the Arabic students where the results showed that the three different interactions developed by the WhatsApp platform are: student-content interaction (54%), student-student interaction (71%), and student-instructor interaction (42%) (Aburezeq & Ishtaiwa, 2013 as cited in Abumelha et al., 2018).

All these findings indicate that WhatsApp is a platform where ESL students can develop their vocabulary, word choice, writing, and communication in English as they connect the linguistic, grammatical objectives of the English language course (Alsaleem, 2014). There are different theories in English learning, such as incidental learning, active learning, community sharing, and learning communities. Incidental learning is unplanned learning; therefore, academic and non -educational activities occur among students. WhatsApp intended to make an online group where same course students can work together and learn and teach themselves. WhatsApp helps students stay positive while learning EFL as they remain within their known circles. It encourages them to participate more in different exercises without getting distracted by their mistakes.

2.4. The negative influence of social media as a learning tool and proficiency

Since social media plays a significant role among undergraduates, both positive and negative sides can affect the students who are trying to learn and develop their English language proficiency.

To begin with, social media websites can also be the cause of interruption in communication. On top of that, the increase of different slang and undermining language could be the threat of using social media as a learning instrument (Amin et al., 2020). Similarly, (Gafni &

Deri, 2012) defined, among many negative impacts of using social media, overspending on Facebook kills students' valuable time. However, Bujega suggested that parents or guardians teach them the differences between right and wrong while using Facebook or other social media instead of prohibiting them (as cited in Rodliyah, 2016). Fatimayin (2018) says social media language is different from the Standard English language we use every day in our conversation. She also mentioned that the standard English language is associated with grammatical rules, whereas any word is acceptable in social media if it makes meaning to the listeners.

Although most of the undergraduate respondents often used social media, they also described that the use of slang used in social media can hamper the English language skills of the graduates (Heng, 2020). Another issue in current literature about social media is that we were slow to show what we talked about. Social media postings have become more visual. For instance, people in England tend to showcase their everyday life on social media especially in the likes of visible platforms like Instagram and Snapchat. However, often there are no visual documents in publications about the topic. If we do not directly engage with this visual content, we may be accused adequately of 'missing the point' – or at least the content missing (Miller, 2016). Amin et al. (2020) explored the impact of social media in English language learning in Northern Iraq and found that social media plays a significant role in learning English, but a significant highlight was the most negative impact of social media. Like the unscholarly and ungrammatical contents, obscenities, general collaboration. In terms of communication, learning, and education in general, we have seen many changes in social media developments. In the past decades, social media's beneficial and harmful impact has altered many facets of society in Malaysia. The quantitative research among 150 undergraduate students figured out that social media's influence on undergraduates' grammatical skills is crucially driven by self-control. Participants who use self-

learning consider that social media can aid and enhance self grammatical skills and vice versa (Heng, 2020).

2.5. Perspectives of Bangladeshi students on social media

The perspectives of Bangladeshi students on social media such as Facebook were looked at in some studies. For instance, Rahman (2019), looked at learning occurring on this platform. Her study found that students feel Facebook could be more effective if they studied by keeping the phone away from their eyes. They feel as if it is an addiction towards Facebook. Additionally, in this study, students stated they might use Facebook for language training in better ways with adequate direction from facilitators. Moreover, nearly everyone claimed that Facebook peer review and group conversations are very beneficial. In a language study classroom, time can often be a considerable hurdle. Students can also learn after class with the assistance of Facebook. One can receive help through Facebook from their facilitators and colleagues whenever they wish. The researcher reviewed ten senior students to view their perspectives. It is recommended that language teachers for each semester establish a compulsory active Facebook group. All the relevant material connected to the course should be shared, and participation by every student is obligatory. Finally, for these exercises, the teacher should fix a grade. Finally, the facilitators should be thoroughly taught before this blending procedure is used to teach the students of Bangladesh. They can guide students more effectively if they are well trained.

Another negative impact of social media has been studied by Islam (2018), where she highlighted the significant issues affecting Bangladeshi students' writing in the English language on social media. She investigated the effects of Facebook on students and the influential factors that made an error by the students. The research findings show that Facebook is not a good platform for English learning as there are many aspects of English language learning where students are

getting affected. There has been a lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, weakness in phrasing, and a lack of authentic writing. In the grammar incompetence case, it can be seen that in Bangladesh, students make syntactical errors most; they use Banglish while chatting for their comfort zone as it is their mother tongue. They use short forms like LOL, IDK, OMG, BG, and so on. Along with using short papers, the students use Bangla words in an English sentence as they do not have an appropriate vocabulary in their mind dictionary for that word. As a result, sometimes they do that in their classroom and academic writing subconsciously as well. Besides this, with blending languages (Bangla and English), the learners get affected negatively in both language skills.

Another adverse effect in language proficiency is that there is no controlling device where these errors can be located while chatting. As a result, students forget the following capitalization and other structures of proper sentences in academic writing. Hence, Facebook as a platform should be reconstructed as a communication medium and can be used as an educational place. But many issues are affecting student's English language proficiency. Students should use Facebook formally, positively, and advantageously (Islam, 2018).

2.6. Research gap

From the above review, the topic of social networking sites (SNSs) for language improvement is prominent among users, especially among university-going students for various purposes. Most of the users use social media as an entertainment and communication tool. However, social platforms can be used as educational tools too. From the studies conducted in the Bangladeshi context, it has been found that students have become accustomed to learning from classroom examinations, and they do not feel excited or curious to learn from other platforms. Regarding this, the researcher could not find any specific article or thesis in the Bangladeshi context which looked at the influence of social media on university students' English language

proficiency. The resources found were partially related to the topic of the study such as the positive and negative influence of social media on university students. This is an area where more exploration and required studies should be done. This significant research gap has influenced the researcher to look at foreign studies. To be particular about the research area, the researcher focused on three platforms that have been used mostly in Bangladesh among students. (Facebook, WhatsApp & Instagram).

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology that was followed to conduct this research. It contains brief information about the research design, procedure, sampling, data collection procedure, data analysis procedure and the obstacles faced by the researcher while conducting the study. Through interviews, the researcher tried to find out participants' experiences, opinions, and perspectives regarding three known social networking sites (SNSs) Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram on their English language proficiency. Concerning that, the following research aimed to find out the influence of social media on university students' English language proficiency in Bangladesh.

3.1. Research design

The research design is the plan or strategy for doing research. It includes all the processes of a research study starting from conceptualizing the problems to writing the research questions, the way in collecting the data, analyzing the data, and the later writing is the report (Creswell, 2007). This research follows the qualitative methodology, specifically, a narrative research design. This research approach has helped the researcher to understand the significance of social media platforms' role among university students. The researcher has taken individual interviews by following the qualitative data collection method. The responses from individual interviews can help the study to bring out more ways and aspects of using social media for developing English language proficiency. Additionally, it helps record different experiences and opportunities for the students as the interview questions were designed following the research questions driving this study. Due to these reasons, the qualitative method seemed suitable to the researcher. Also, the research questions driving this study are:

- 1.What are students' experiences regarding the use of social media and their English language proficiency?
- 2.How do final year university students' views regarding the use of social media to learn English?
- 3.What are the scopes of using social media to improve university students' English language proficiency?

3.2. Sampling

The motive of the qualitative data collection method is to find authentic and specific information for the research. Purposeful sampling has been used for qualitative data collection. In purposeful sampling, the individuals or groups that examine a site can be taken as participants as they can provide the necessary information for the research. (Creswell, 2012). The researcher chose fifteen Dhaka-based private university students studying in different departments to participate in this study.

3.3. Setting and participants

The eight participants who took part in this study were from the Department of English and humanities students, four from BBA, two from CSE, and one from MSJ. This information has been given in Table 1 below. It must be mentioned that this research has been conducted during the global pandemic. Due to this, the researcher could only conduct limited in-person interviews with the participants. Also, some of the participants were not comfortable going out of their homes to give the interviews. Hence, phone calls and internet conferencing platforms have been used to conduct interviews of participants who were unavailable to meet the researcher.

Name of Students	University	Department
1. Nora	University A	English and Humanities
2. Paramita	University A	English and Humanities
3. Arabi	University A	English and Humanities
4. Ahsan	University A	English and Humanities
5. Indira	University A	English and Humanities
6. Khan	University A	English and Humanities
7. Rahman	University A	English and Humanities
8. Syed	University A	English and Humanities
9. Norine	University A	Business School
10. Samira	University A	Business School
11. Mukherji	University A	Business School
12. Doris	University A	Business School
13. Afrin	University A	Computer Science and Engineering
14. Antara	University A	Computer Science and Engineering
15. Rozella	University A	Media Studies and Journalism

Table 1: Information regarding participants.

3.4. Instrumentation

The researcher used a set of open-ended questions to conduct the interviews. The questions were formulated by following the research questions guiding this study. In addition, some ideas were taken from Al Arif's (2019) study on EFL learners' use of social media for English language learning. It must also be mentioned that the interview questions were piloted by interviewing a single participant and taking feedback from them. Some questions were rephrased. The researcher set appointments with the participants, and the sessions were held at their convenient time. Afterward, the interviews were conducted in person and also using online platforms. Upon consent

and permission of the participants, the researcher recorded the conversations and took hand notes as well.

3.5. Data collection procedure

The data for this research was collected by taking individual interviews. Through the interviews, the researcher collected information that helped to understand participants' perspectives, experiences, and different influences of social platforms in their English language proficiency. During the interview, the researcher asked questions to the participants individually. There was a total of 24 questions that were used. The participants took some time to think before answering any question as it helped them to provide an authentic experience and observation. First, two questions are brief as these questions helped participants to become familiar with the topic of the interview. The rest of the questions are open-ended questions. The participants gave elaborate answers. Within the open-ended question-answers, the participants were asked to mention their perception, experiences, challenges and suggestions regarding the use of social networking sites (SNS) as learning and improving the English language proficiency.

3.6 Data analysis procedure

After completing the interview sessions with participants, the researcher followed the e-book named: "Program development and evaluation" process; the recorded data were transcribed and the hand notes were typed in the MS (Microsoft) Word file. Afterward, the transcribed data, electronic hand notes and recorded data were saved in a unique identifier/identification (ID) folder so that the researcher can keep track of all the necessary information and find out the data quickly when needed. In addition, the researcher used "Automatic Call Recorder" software for recording data that has taken over phone calls. For video conferencing, Google meet was used, and it was being recorded using Google's meet recording software as well (Taylor & Renner, 2003).

3.6. Obstacles encountered

There are some challenges that the researcher encountered while collecting data for this research. Due to the pandemic, the researcher had a limited sample size, as mentioned earlier, for data collection. Some participants could not provide precise answers; therefore, the researcher had to ask and explain questions multiple times. Additionally, the data collection setting changed several times due to the participants' inconvenience amidst this pandemic.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

This chapter comprises the analysis of collected data from participants' responses to the open-ended questions for the qualitative research. The researcher used a narrative research design to analyze the data. In narrative research, it is stated that "the inquirer often studies a single individual" and focuses on the "experiences of one or more individuals" (McCarthy, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2012, p. 507). For analyzing the data, the researcher followed some steps that helped to keep chronology amidst the responses from the interview questions. Firstly, the researcher listened to the recordings of the interviews multiple times to collect the information needed for the study. The individual participants' responses to all the open-ended questions have focused on understanding the connectivity among different questions. Lastly, categorize the information in the qualitative analysis way where the interview questions can be converted into different themes and sub-themes that provide specific and relevant ideas for the research findings. Therefore, the researcher aligned the twenty-four interview questions under three different themes based on the questionnaires' responses. These themes have been found by following the research questions as well as the findings from the literature review.

4.1. Students experience of social media use and relationship to their current

English language proficiency

In this section, the participants shared their experiences regarding their use of social media and its limitations while using it for English language proficiency.

4.1.1. Students experience on social media and using the English language

The university students, in terms of using the English language while communicating through social media among university-going students, mentioned that they use the English

language in their everyday conversations on social media with friends and family. They were asked whether they share any status on social media platforms in the English language or if they do check grammar and vocabulary before posting. All participants except one shared their status on social media. They mentioned checking their grammar and vocabulary before posting anything on social media platforms, as many people can see and read. Afrin stated that "I use both Bangla and English in my status updates on social media. Sometimes my status is incompletely Bangla, sometimes completely English, and sometimes a mixture of both languages. I always check my grammar before posting any status update or commenting." Another participant mentioned that she checked her grammar and sentence structure with the help of the Grammarly App before posting anything on social media. The anecdotes from these two participants, thus, show that university students are well-aware to use proper English in social media, though that experience is more leaning towards using Bangla and English interchangeably.

4.1.2. Social media and limitation of their English use

Social media has positive sides that motivate users to write more English; it also has some obstacles. To understand this in detail, participants were asked to share their blocks while writing in the English language. A group of participants said they face many problems finding an appropriate sentence in a context. Either they make mistakes for the lack of grammar competence, or they cannot put the correct vocabulary in a sentence. Paramita specified that "When I write something on social media, I always face difficulties in where to start from and how to write it sequentially." However, Khan, another participant added that he does not have to worry much about grammatical mistakes while writing anything on social media as there is an auto-correction option. Contrary to these two participants' experiences, one participant mentioned that there is no obstacle in writing on social media platforms in the English language. A very unlikely barrier

compared to other participants has been added by two participants. They responded as they stopped writing something in English as social media is a public place where people can make fun of them if they make any mistakes in writing.

Additionally, the challenges in writing on social media are, as most of them feel challenged to express their thoughts in English. One short-form of a word has different meanings, and as a result, if the word turns out as the wrong word in a context, it becomes an embarrassing and unmanageable situation. Few of the participants viewed, "thoughts and ideas can be expressed in more detail in Bangla than English as it is considered a second and foreign language". Participants from the interviews shared their different reasons for writing in the English language on social media as well. A group of people mentioned that English is an international language and people of the entire world depend on this language. Almost all the users or acquaintances of them understand anything in this language. A group of nine participants responded, their educational background is the cause of writing anything on social platforms in English. They are more comfortable writing in the English language instead of Bangla. Two of the participants added they do not want to misinterpret any content; therefore, they intend to write in English rather than Banglish (a mixture of Bangla and English). Rahman added, "I express myself more by using the English language." He did not mention the reason, but it seems like the English medium background is his reason for writing in English. On the contrary, few participants believe they write in the English language in social media to keep their standard of writing as a smart one in the view of others while updating specific posts or comments. Lastly, one participant said she writes in English to keep a good image in friends' eyes.

Hence, the shared experiences of the majority of participants are denoting, the lack of English language competence is one of the primary reasons for them not being able to open

themselves up via writing in the English language. However, they try to write in English to keep a good impression in others' eyes.

4.2. Students' views and opinions regarding the use of social media and improvement of English language proficiency

In this section, participants shared their perspectives and opinions on social media in English language proficiency.

4.2.1. Students' views regarding the use of social media to improve their English language proficiency

The participants were asked to express their exploration on social websites such as Facebook or Instagram to improve English language proficiency and the activities that helped them to enrich their proficiency. The majority of the participants said that Facebook helps them in multiple sectors to enhance their English proficiency. Arabi mentioned, "Posting something on Facebook improves my English a lot. I check the grammar and vocabulary very closely and prefer to use words that are more relatable to people." By following different kinds of pages, they get to know different speeches, and subtitles on videos help them develop their English. One of the participants from DEH named Indira shared, she has been following some pages related to literature and linguistics where she found eye-catching famous lines vocabulary with both contextual and dictionary meaning. Thus, this helps her to enhance her proficiency in writing. A group of participants responded. Facebook groups help them to improve their English language, as they are obedient to post and comment on their academic groups for educational purposes.

Arabi specified that because "I believe that language develops very quickly through practice, and that's when we do various posts on Facebook in English. And when we talk to someone in English in Facebook's private message, our language improves through practice."

Similarly, Doris and Afrin believed that the Instagram platform helps them to enrich their vocabulary, their writing structure getting improved as "picture with content" in Instagram gives them more interest to learn willingly. Three of the participants responded that Instagram is a place where they can see different content with an eye-catching image, making them more curious to read the content in the caption part. Eventually, it develops their reading as well as writing proficiency. On the other hand, Norine and Rozella disagreed with other participants as they believe Instagram cannot be a place where people can learn something as they think people are interested in the picture. Hence people do not always read the full caption beneath the image. The same opinion was shared by Khan, Rahman, Nora, and Doris, where they added that the use of the hashtag “#” trends in Instagram makes them indifferent to opening the caption and reading. Similar to the case of Instagram, two participants say that Facebook is just a communication tool that can barely help develop undegraded students' reading or writing. Lastly, Mukherji mentioned that he does not have any Instagram handle as there is no productivity except seeing someone else photos with #hashtag.

The participants were asked their preferable social media platform for learning the English language and the particular reason for using this platform. Among fifteen participants, the majority of participants discoursed that they prefer Facebook, social media for learning the English language. Facebook is a comprehensive platform to explore and to get information on any topic of anyone's interest. Rozella, one of the participants said that Facebook is a place where many people can gather together from many countries where the English language is the most appropriate language to communicate with them. Communication through the English language helps to learn more. Samira added, "I prefer Facebook as I can practice my writing and reading skills by communicating in the English language. Because of theory, watching the video, everything learns new rules or ideas. But if you can't practice, everything is in vain”.

On the other hand, Syed and Antara mentioned, Instagram is their preferred platform for English language learning. One participant said, "Instagram is a place where different people share their perspective and experience regarding different topics that give the reader different content to learn the new structure of writing and give different ideas. That is why I prefer Instagram more than any other platform for learning English precisely." Lastly, Samira mentioned a different view of learning the English language through social media. She said, "I don't prefer any of the social platforms for learning the language. It is better to watch movies/series to improve language, as it is both enjoyable and easy to learn."

As the participants were from a private university and all are final-year university students, they consider English as their second language. Ahsan described her perspective as, "I must consider English as a second language. It is certainly a foreign language. But I will consider it a second language because we need English for communication with multinational companies or people from different countries. If you know this language, you can easily communicate with any other country and the people of that country in English after Bangla." A similar answer regarding the consideration of English as a second language is that all of the participants said they have to speak English every day with different people, mostly inside their university for academic purposes.

Among fifteen participants, all of the participants except one, have similar perspectives on writing in the English language on social media to improve academic writing skills. They highlighted some beneficial factors of reading and writing on social media for improving academic writing as well. One participant said, "Yes, because Reading or writing not only in social media but anywhere we do this, we come across new words or any synonyms for the words we know." Additionally, Rahman added, new words on people's status or comments that help to learn more

and read new materials in English helps to be aware of writing correct sentences automatically. On the contrary, Nora expressed a different perspective and said, "Writing in English or reading English content on social media does not help to improve academic writing skills in that way. Because social media and academic platforms are two completely different places, developing academic content on social media platforms."

4.2.2. Students' opinions regarding use of social media and improvement of English language proficiency

As all participants shared their different social media for communication, learning, and improving their English language proficiency, whether they correct anyone's grammar mistake or anyone from their friends does that. A group of participants considered it is offensive to anyone if another person corrects any error in anyone's post comment that denotes their incompetence of grammar in their post where other friends of them can see that. Therefore, they do not correct their friends for any grammatical mistakes in their positions. Instead of that, they inform their close friends in a private message. However, two of the participants mentioned that they directly comment on their friends' comments if there are any mistakes in their writing.

Similar to the previous point of view, they do not have any friends who directly mention their mistakes in their post comments rather than some of their friends send a message and inform them.

Most of the participants shared that they communicate with their teacher on social media and the medium of communication is the English language as it seems formal and comfortable. A few participants noted that they use Bangla and English languages while communicating with a teacher. Paramita added, "In terms of Facebook, I also use Bangla language in the comment box

While communicating with a teacher." Lastly, one participant mentioned, she never had any conversation with her teacher on social media.

The new trend of "Banglish" (mixture of Bangla and English) among university-going students is prevalent nowadays. All of the participants stated that the use of "Banglish" while writing on social media is straightforward and does not take much time. Nevertheless, most of the participants expressed the impact of writing in "Banglish" on social media. The grammar, tenses, punctuations, and vocabularies of the English language are used correctly. It does not make any sense sometimes. The use of Bangla and English together hamper communication and English proficiency too. Rahman further said, "When the word Banglish is used, neither English nor Bengali two is practiced properly."

In contrast to previous statements, Khan believed, "writing in "Banglish", even if it looks like an English word, the words are in Bengali. Which may later become worse for the language." On the other hand, one participant said, "There is a lot of vocabulary we use in our regular life. For that reason, students used "Banglish." Still, in my opinion, it should not affect a person for English language proficiency." Rozella stated that "the use of the "Banglish" language does not affect the upper intermediate level students' proficiency. Still, it might be harmful to the beginner's level students."

While the participants shared their opinions regarding the university course instructor's role in developing students' English skills through social media, all the participants said it could be a great initiative to motivate students to write in the English language more. The instructors can make Facebook and WhatsApp private groups to express their thoughts and ideas on different topics. Antara mentioned, "They can use it if it is used in a structured way. It might work as an easy way to grasp a huge number of students to develop English." Norine added, "My instructors already

use social media platforms for letting students update about their work. Moreover, making WhatsApp groups for expressing our opinion, Facebook pages to provide certain links to follow our course is very beneficial for students to develop the skill." However, social media is convenient, and everyone can get access quickly as well. The concepts shared by the participants denote that the implementation of private groups on social media monitoring by course instructors could be an excellent initiative for university-going students.

4.3. Students' opinions regarding scopes of social media to improve English language proficiency

In this section, participants shared the opportunities that social media has given them to practice English and improve their English skills.

4.3.1. Social media as a medium to practice English

The participants were asked about the estimated time they were generally active on social media platforms. Most participants mentioned that they spend above six to 8 hours on social media to communicate with friends and family and be informed about online classes and course-related matters as all of them have had online courses for the last four semesters. One participant mentioned, "I am supposed to be active on social media almost the whole day every day except the time I sleep. I need to be active because of any probable updates of the courses I am currently doing that use social media platforms to keep us informed about the work we need to do. Apart from this, I use social media as an entertainment platform." All of the participants shared their primarily used social media tools, Facebook and WhatsApp. Speaking of Facebook, the participants were asked about Facebook/WhatsApp as a practice tool outside the classroom since everything is conducted through online technology. Among fifteen participants, nine of them

responded that Facebook could not be a place for practicing and learning the English language as the academic writing pattern. On Facebook, writing is different.

On top of that, all of the participants use it as a communication tool. They do not focus on any content of Facebook with that much interest and importance as they give inside the classroom. Syed, Nora, Khan, Rahman, and Paramita have mentioned that they consider Facebook as a commonplace for practicing and learning the English language outside the classroom. One participant mentioned, "As I am using it as a platform for regularly practicing my English. I believe it to be a strong platform to improve one's English."

Additionally, a group of participants shared their opinion regarding the significance of private and public groups of WhatsApp and Facebook. Private groups of social platforms encourage participants more to practice the English language as there only remains a specific group of people who share the same type of thoughts, interests. Therefore, they feel more comfortable and motivated while writing anything in that particular group. One participant said, "private groups give them more privacy and fearless expression of thoughts than the public group. A public group often leads them to fear and shame as making mistakes makes them feel inferior." Another student added, "Mistakes on public groups demoralize students whereas private groups or WhatsApp have no bullying from outside." Moreover, privacy matters most for the students because they do not want others to know their level of English proficiency. Lastly, one participant said, "Both private and public groups can encourage students."

4.3.2. Social media to improve overall English language skills

Social media websites like Facebook and WhatsApp can motivate ESL (English as a second language) students to engage with it more to improve their English language skills. The participants shared their opinion based on their experiences. All participants said different

Facebook groups based on various exciting topics helped students develop their English language skills. One of the participants said, "The pages that I follow based on English literature or linguistics (as I am from the English department) provide a handful of images and posts of famous eye-catching lines, vocabulary with both contextual and dictionary meaning. There are certain videos and talks regarding motivational speech, and all these help improve my English language skill." Simultaneously, other participants added, posting something on any social media platform helps to improve writing skills as she checks grammar, vocabulary, and spelling very closely."

Moreover, there are few pages and groups where people appreciate writing their thoughts in a line. These little things motivate students to write more in the English language. To represent a line beautifully, students need to practice well. Thus, students can use this activity as their motivation and improve their reading and writing skills more through social media like Facebook.

On the contrary, WhatsApp has no page or picture with content-related features. Students can use it as an educational tool for developing English language proficiency in multiple ways. Students can create a group where people with similar interests and educational backgrounds can share their writing in English. Five participants shared that educational institutions and course instructors can make groups of teachers and students where students are bound to answer any question. On top of that, reading other students' writing helps to correct sentence structure and enrich vocabulary. Indira shared a different opinion, "I think WhatsApp cannot be used more as an educational tool than communication. As we see, teachers give us WhatsApp numbers to communicate. Yes, we can use the WhatsApp group for practicing English or group study. But I think it's not so useful as an educational tool." Lastly, one participant said that none of the social media platforms could be beneficial practical tools for English language learning and improving in the classroom. From the point of view of participants, it can be concluded that every participant

has different thoughts regarding using social media for English language learning and improvement. However, the majority of the participants have considered that social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram can be beneficial tools for practicing different English language skills.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the interpretation of the findings from the open-ended questions based on the research topic, "Influence of social media communication in English language proficiency." The answers from the participants are non-identical from one to another as the experiences and perspectives towards improving English language proficiency on social networking sites are different. Hence, the result gathered from the data analysis chapter will be justified based on these studies.

5.1. Summary of the findings

5.1.1. Students experience on social media and using the English language

From the different experiences regarding the use of social media of participants, it can be denoted that the university-going students are well connected to social media through messaging to others, giving status on their wall, and so on. All of them are very conscious and careful with their use of the English language while writing anything on social networking sites. The competence of grammar and vocabulary is essential to them. Therefore, most of them admitted they take some time before posting, and some of them use Grammarly App to make sure their language is error-free.

5.1.2. Social media and limitations of their English use

Along with the positive sides of social media, some negative aspects of social media inhibit students to write in the English language. The educational background of students is one of the reasons that limit them while using social media websites. The students who have an English medium background do not feel any complications while writing anything in English on social media except the fact that it can be misunderstood when a short-form is used which may have

multiple meanings. Additionally, the students from Bangla medium feel uncomfortable for the lack of enough grammar and vocabulary knowledge, which indicates the incompetence of English proficiency is the reason for students writing in the English language on social networking sites. As a result, they use Bangla instead of the English language. Moreover, the feeling of being judged by others in a public place is another limitation on social media for using the English language.

5.1.3. Students' views regarding the use of social media to improve their English language proficiency

Different social media websites work differently for everyone. As English is a medium to communicate and learn inside the classroom, campus, and social media, students mostly intended to learn English through Facebook and Instagram platforms. Different pages on Facebook and Instagram build more interest to learn by watching or reading the content of pages. However, few students believe that social media platforms cannot be a place where they can improve their English language proficiency because the academic writing structure is very formal unlike the writing style and word choices of social media sites writing.

5.1.4. Students' opinions regarding use of social media and improvement of English language proficiency

Students recommended that it would be great if they have private discussion groups of their academic courses on Facebook and WhatsApp. It will help them to communicate with each other and practice and learn course-related assessments through the English language. Therefore, they will be more motivated to write and read in more context in English.

5.1.5. Social media as a medium to practice English

Although practicing a language over the internet cannot be a temporary solution, but due to the onset of the global pandemic, it has become the new normal. Regarding this, students

mentioned that they have to be active on social media for approximately half of a day. Even though they primarily consider social networking sites as an entertainment and communication tool, but they realize that grammar competence can be improved by communicating with teachers and other countries' people in the English language.

To develop English proficiency, they opined that the use of Banglish (mixture of Bangla with English) needs to be reduced.

5.1.6. Social media to improve overall English language skills

Despite considering social media as a communication tool more than an educational tool, the findings from data indicate that the four basic skills of a language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are improving among undergraduate students through social media platforms. If the students use the language while communicating with others and listening to or watching something in the English language while keeping the thought of learning something, it would be beneficial for them not to understand or improve in English. Still, it would be helpful for undergraduate students by developing their competence in English language skills and many more sectors. It helps them to uplift their knowledge in every sector of education.

5.2. Discussion and limitation

The above summary of the findings indicates that Bangladesh university-going students think their social media use does influence their English language proficiency. In fact, they do find social networking sites (SNSs) to be beneficial for their overall English language improvement. They have noted that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, their social media use has increased tremendously. Compared to pre-pandemic times, they are using the platforms for both entertainment and academic purpose more significantly.

The primary findings of the study are that university students in Bangladesh do have the intention of using social media platforms to improve their English. This is reflective of the findings of Zhao and Zhang's study (2017) who mentioned that social media use can be made more efficient and valuable if its users share information for overall improvement.

As it is a technological phenomenon, social media platforms provide the opportunity to appropriately use technologies for self-development and growth. Bangladeshi university students are aware of this and they shared that in this study. This is reflective of Hamad & Abdullah's findings (2020) who found that social media does impact English language development significantly. Amin et al. (2020) noted that reducing the use of informal language can help university students to use social media for the improvement of their formal language. In this study, students mentioned that the use of Banglish by mixing Bangla and English should be reduced significantly. Even if the language of social media is different, but the exposure and use of the platform for developing and practicing academic English can improve their overall communicative ability in English. This is reflective of Fatimayin's study (2018) as students agreed that standard English language use is the ultimate goal that they have for future success. The findings of this study simultaneously answer the research questions that drove this study. The students' experience that has been found in the use of social media has directly influenced their overall English language proficiency, especially in pandemic times. The final-year university students view social media as an important tool for improving English language proficiency and they think that teachers can make better use of the platform to help the students improve. Therefore, the scopes of using social media to improve university students' English language proficiency are immense, as the findings of this study reflect.

However, the limitation of this study is that it was conducted on a limited scale on selected participants from a single university in Bangladesh. Hence, to increase the validity of this study, in the future, the study can be expanded by collecting qualitative data using other methods and triangulating it. Also, the sample size can be increased with the setting of the study expanded to include other private universities as well.

5.3. Conclusion

The research focused on undergraduate students' experiences and the effects of using social networking sites on their overall English language proficiency at a private university in Bangladesh. Social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are beneficial places for developing English language proficiency. The right amount of social media content facilitates combining, learning, and improving skills in the shortest possible time.

Even though all students do not find social media platforms as mediums through which they can learn, practice, or improve their proficiency in English but they do consider social networking sites (SNSs) to be useful for language learning and educational purposes. In other words, it has a positive influence and benefits university students to improve their English language skills. At the same, the students opined that some of their friends and peers mix and switch codes while using SNSs. They mainly do so they consider it as a communication tool only. These students also shared the errors that occur in the written language of such a group of university students on social media can be avoided by taking some appropriate steps such as being aware of what they write, checking it before posting so that they can edit it, etc. As mentioned above, educational institutions and course instructors can play a significant role in using social media websites as an educational tool by using this platform appropriately. If this is done, then it is understood that students can be more encouraged and gain confidence to share their knowledge

and express it through a higher English language proficiency. Finally, it can be stated that the pandemic has allowed everyone involved in English language learning and teaching to use SNSs for multiple purposes other than networking socially. Hence, in the future, a study that can determine the appropriate strategies to maximize the use of social networking websites for English language learning in Bangladesh can be conducted.

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Appendix A: Sample Q/A

Here is the following open-ended questions list:

Question No 1:

What is the estimated time that you are active in the social media platform every day? What do you primarily use it for?

Interviewer Responses:

I am supposed to be active in social media almost the whole day every day except the time I sleep. It is because I need to be active because of any probable updates of my courses I am currently doing that uses social media platforms as well in order to keep us informed about the works we need to do. Apart from this, I use social media as an entertainment platform.

Question No 2:

Do you use English language when you communicate with friends/ other people on social media?

Interviewer Responses:

I use both English and Bangla language in order to communicate with anyone in social media. It depends on whom I am talking to, the language the other person is comfortable to express and sometimes it also depends on my mood since I am a bilingual and I am comfortable communicating in both languages.

Question No 3:

Do you give status update/post comments in English on social media? Do you check the grammar and vocabulary of your status update/post before posting it on social media?

Interviewer Responses:

I use both Bangla and English in my status updates in social media. Sometimes my status are in completely Bangla, sometimes completely English and sometimes it's a mixture of both language. I always check my grammar before posting any status update or commenting.

Question No 4:

Do you have friends who correct any grammatical mistake/error in your posts?

Interviewer Responses:

There are very few friends who rarely does make corrections if I have any mistakes but most of the time no one corrects my mistake. It is again me who edits and make corrections to my sentence if I feel the sentence wrong afterword's.

Question No 5:

Do you correct any of your friend's grammatical mistake/error on social media?

Interviewer Responses:

Yes! Most of the time I try making corrections on my friends' posts especially my closed ones.

Question No 6:

Do you communicate with your teacher on social media? If you do, what language do you use to communicate with them?

Interviewer Responses:

Yes, I communicate with my teachers on social media and I most of the time use English language in order to keep a formal communication with them. Again, in terms of Facebook, I also use Bangla language in the comment box While communicating with a teacher.

Question No 7:

Do you think your use of social media platforms helps improve your English language skills? Share your opinion.

Interviewer Responses:

Yes, I believe it improves my English language skills. Because I am being able to express my thoughts on a platform and use words according to that, which further acts as a practice for English.

Question No 8:

Which social media platform do you prefer for learning the English language? Why do you prefer this particular platform more than others?

Interviewer Responses:

I use Facebook more often compared to the other platforms. I find it as a very broad platform to explore and to get information about the topic of my interests. Also, it is easier to use.

Appendix B: List of the participant

Name of Students	University	Department
1. Nora	University A	English and Humanities
2. Paramita	University A	English and Humanities
3. Arabi	University A	English and Humanities
4. Ahsan	University A	English and Humanities
5. Indira	University A	English and Humanities
6. Khan	University A	English and Humanities
7. Rahman	University A	English and Humanities
8. Syed	University A	English and Humanities
9. Norine	University A	Business School
10. Samira	University A	Business School
11. Mukherji	University A	Business School
12. Doris	University A	Business School
13. Afrin	University A	Computer Science and Engineering
14. Antara	University A	Computer Science and Engineering
15. Rozella	University A	Media Studies and Journalism