

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the study's background, statement of the research question, purpose, significance, scope and limitations, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

In the current digital era, technological advancements have revolutionized how humans communicate, learn, and seek entertainment. The rapid evolution of advanced smartphones and high-speed internet has hastened this shift, enabling social media users to access content anytime and anywhere¹. Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube play a crucial role in people's daily lives, shaping communication and information dissemination². Those platforms are widely used by students, enhancing their daily interaction and learning experience, and allowing them to connect with peers worldwide to share information and knowledge³. This situation also reflects the current behavior of university students, who use social media for entertainment and are increasingly exposed to content in multiple languages, especially English.

According to Statista (2024), in July 2024, there were 5.45 billion active internet users worldwide, and approximately 5.17 billion of them also used

¹ Babikir Eltigani Siddig, "Social Media in Teaching of Languages," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* 15, no. 12 (June 26, 2020): 72, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i12.12645>.

² Asrar Aspia Manurung et al., "Social Media Utilization in the Digital Era," *IJEMS: Indonesian Journal of Education and Mathematical Science* 4, no. 1 (2023): 36–39, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30596/ijems.v4i1.13394>.

³ I Gusti Agung Vony Purnama, "The Role of Social Media Toward EFL Students' Writing Skills," *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa* 10, no. 1 (2024): 58–65, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55637/jr.10.1.7184.58-65>.

social media⁴. Data Reportal (2024) highlights that 185.3 million people accessed the internet in Indonesia, and 139 million were active on social media⁵. Global Web Index further notes that among Indonesians, the 16–24-year-old demographic spends the most time on social media, averaging 3 hours and 11 minutes daily⁶. College students, as part of this age group, are in a position to be highly exposed to multilingual social media content. In this context, students in higher education, particularly English majors, are among the most frequent users who consume English-language content daily through various media platforms.

Prior to this research, informal discussions with some students revealed that many of them often find English content on social media, primarily through entertainment-based videos, memes, or brief captions of a non-academic nature. Nonetheless, Dewi (2022) states that social media serves as a means of communication and social interaction and can also be utilized as a resource to support students' learning process. Aside from its widespread use, social media platforms offer constant exposure to authentic English input in diverse contexts. It creates a unique and interactive learning environment conducive to language acquisition⁷. This aligns with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, that language

⁴ Ani Petrosyan, "Number of Internet and Social Media Users Worldwide as of July 2024(in Billions)," Statista, August 19, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>.

⁵ Simon Kemp, "The Time We Spend on Social Media," DataReportal, January 31, 2024, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-deep-dive-the-time-we-spend-on-social-media>.

⁶ Simon Kemp, "Digital 2024: Indonesia," DataReportal, February 21, 2024, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-indonesia>.

⁷ Yonghong Zhou, "Impacts of Social Media on Language Learning: A Review of Literature," in *Proceedings of the 2021 4th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2021)*, vol. 615 (Atlantis Press, 2021), 743–49, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211220.128>.

acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible input, which Krashen defines as " $i + 1$ "—where i represents a learner's existing language knowledge, and $+1$ represents slightly more advanced content that remains understandable. In this way, social media effectively provides college students with English input through posts, articles, conversations, etc. As students interact with more English content on social media, they are gradually exposed to new vocabulary, sentence structures, and expressions⁸, which may help them internalize natural language structures, ultimately enhancing writing proficiency.

Although university students have extensive access to various forms of English content on social media, not all types of exposure directly contribute to developing academic writing skills. Many students spend more time on entertainment content or informal communication, which lacks the structure and style of writing required in an educational context. It prompted this research into how exposure to English content on social media relates to students' writing skills in formal learning contexts, whether the influence is positive or the opposite, especially in academic writing.

To explore social media exposure in language acquisition, Slater's (2004) self-report measure framework offers a valuable approach by emphasizing the measurement of frequency, duration, and depth of engagement. These dimensions help assess how students' interactions with English content on social media, whether passive (e.g., reading posts) or active (e.g.,

⁸ Surendra Prasad Ghimire, "Secondary Students' Learning English through Social Media: A Case Study in Nepal," *International Journal of Research in Education and Science* 8, no. 3 (August 26, 2022): 529–44, <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.2758>.

commenting or sharing), contribute to language learning. In this study, Slater's framework is suitable for measuring media exposure because it captures learners' subjective experiences, perceptions, and engagement patterns with English content on social media. It invites them to reflect on how much exposure influences their writing practices, specifically through blog-based writing assignments. Through this approach, the data gathered reflects students' real experiences and interaction habits with social media and how these habits are directly linked to their writing skills⁹.

Writing is a critical skill for academic success and professional communication. According to Dewi et al. (2022), the ability to write well in English is essential, as it enables students to express their ideas, thoughts, emotions, and feelings to others through written form. Writing skills are multifaceted, involving components like content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, all essential for effective communication¹⁰. For EFL students, achieving competence in writing is often more difficult than in other language skills due to the complex combination of linguistic, cognitive, and structural demands¹¹. In this context, blogging provides a space for students to practice academic writing skills and express their emotions and personal views

⁹ Peter Neijens et al., *Measuring Exposure and Attention to Media and Communication*, Amsterdam University Press (Amsterdam University Press, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.17610809>.

¹⁰ Asmita Ghosh and Subir Sen, "Relationship between Different Components of English Writing Skill," *International Journal of Research and Review* 10, no. 10 (November 1, 2023): 463–71, <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20231058>.

¹¹ Silvia Husna and Fitrawati, "An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Discussion Text at English Education Study Program in Universitas Negeri Padang," *Journal of English Language Teaching* 9, no. 3 (September 2, 2020): 572–79, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v9i3.109339>.

more freely, making their writing more meaningful and relevant to their life experiences.

However, many students struggle to apply their English knowledge to effective writing. These challenges often arise from various factors, including difficulties in exploring ideas, lack of access to partners who can provide corrections or feedback on their writing¹², and errors in written messages that can lead to misunderstanding¹³. Additionally, some learners experience a lack of confidence due to their limited linguistic proficiency¹⁴, which further hinders their ability to express themselves effectively in both academic and real-world contexts, ultimately affecting their overall language development. This issue is especially prominent at non-native English-speaking institutions, where students are expected to write in English across various disciplines despite having limited formal exposure to the language outside of class. Given these barriers, there is a need to investigate whether frequent exposure to English on social media truly enhances writing skills or if students remain passive consumers of content without meaningful output.

In response to these challenges, researchers and educators have increasingly focused on external factors, such as media exposure, shaping students' language development. Recent studies indicate a correlation between writing proficiency and media exposure, suggesting that exposure to authentic,

¹² Aprilia Elok Puspita Dewi, "The Use of Social Media in Learning English Writing," *EDUCASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran* 7, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 15–24, <https://doi.org/10.21462/educasia.v7i1.67>.

¹³ Purnama, "The Role of Social Media Toward EFL Students' Writing Skills."

¹⁴ Zhou, "Impacts of Social Media on Language Learning: A Review of Literature."

informal English content can enhance writing abilities. For instance, Esman et al. (2021), found a significant positive relationship between social media use and English writing proficiency in their study of high school students in the Philippines¹⁵. Similarly, Dewi et al. (2022) also found that Indonesian English Department students use social media to improve their writing skills, benefiting from exposure to diverse language structures and writing styles¹⁶. This aligns with the findings of Sari et al. (2019), whose study on English education students revealed a significant correlation between social media use and academic writing mastery, reinforcing the idea that digital platforms can complement formal writing instruction¹⁷. Collectively, these studies underscore the potential of social media as a dynamic medium for fostering writing proficiency across diverse educational contexts.

However, unlike previous studies broadly discussing social media use, this research explicitly highlights exposure to English-language content on social media and its correlation with students' writing proficiency, particularly in independent writing assignments. In this study, students were also assigned to write and upload their work independently to personal blogs as part of their learning process. This approach allows researchers to observe how informal,

¹⁵ Esterline Nograles Esman, Dennis V. Madrigal, and Chona G. Mascuñana, "Social Media Exposure and English Writing Proficiency of Grade 11 Students in a Philippine Public High School," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 20 (June 8, 2021): 212–32, <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v20i1.3001>.

¹⁶ Aprilia Elok Puspita Dewi, Umar Fauzan, and Nadia Nadia, "The Use of Social Media in Learning English Writing of Indonesian English Department Students," *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics* 7, no. 1 (April 30, 2022): 245–53, <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v7i1.882>.

¹⁷ Rizky T Sari, Rita Hayati, and Lingga A Suganda, "The Correlation between the Use of Social Media and Academic Writing Mastery of the English Education Students," *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 6, no. 2 (December 11, 2019): 320–33, <https://doi.org/10.19109/ejpp.v6i2.3699>.

personal digital exposure experiences interact with students' formal learning outcomes. By focusing on a higher education level and a distinct academic context, this study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature while providing deeper insights into the relationship between students' engagement with English-language social media content and their writing skills.

B. Statement of Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the formulated research problem is “Is there a positive or negative correlation between the frequency of exposure to English-language content on social media platforms and students' written English proficiency at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung?”

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on the research question above, the study's objective is to know the correlation between the frequency of exposure to English-language content on social media platforms and students' written English proficiency at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

D. Formulation of Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the research can be formulated as follows:

H₀: There is no significant positive or negative correlation between the frequency of exposure to English-language content on social media platforms and students' written English proficiency.

H₁: There is a significant positive or negative correlation between the frequency of exposure to English-language content on social media platforms and students' written English proficiency.

E. Significance of the Research

This study is expected to provide valuable insights into the correlation between social media exposure to English-language content and students' written English proficiency. The findings can be useful for different stakeholders:

1. To Teachers:

It can be helpful for English teachers who want to use technology, especially the Internet and social media, as a learning medium.

2. To Students:

The findings may offer students new and engaging experiences in learning English through the integration of social media and online content.

3. To Future Researchers:

Contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a foundation for future research on the impact of social media on language learning, particularly in the context of English writing proficiency.

F. Scope and Limitations of The Research

This study examines the correlation between social media exposure to English-language content and the written English proficiency of students, specifically within the context of college learners. The research is limited to UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung students, particularly those enrolled in the English Education Department, including those who have participated in creative writing courses using blogs as a learning medium. While this targeted approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between digital

engagement and writing skills, the study's small sample size may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population.

G. The Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher explains the operational definition of key terms in this research below.

1. Correlation

The term correlation refers to a relationship that exists between phenomena or things or between mathematical or statistical variables, which tend to vary, be associated, relate, or occur together in ways that would not be expected or predicted by chance alone¹⁸. In this study, correlation refers to the statistical relationship between two variables: the extent of social media exposure to English-language content and the level of students' written English proficiency.

2. Social Media Exposure

Social media exposure refers to how much individuals engage with content on social media, including activities like seeing, watching, and reading messages. It is usually measured by frequency, duration, and the level of attention it gets from the audience¹⁹.

3. English-Language Content

English-language content encompasses any form of media that is

¹⁸ Haldun Akoglu, "User's Guide to Correlation Coefficients," *Turkish Journal of Emergency Medicine* 18, no. 3 (September 1, 2018): 91–93, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tjem.2018.08.001>.

¹⁹ Ali Rashed Ibraheam Almohesh and Jinan Abdulaziz Hamad Altamimi, "Wow, I Cannot Stop: A Concentration on Vocabulary Learning via Instagram and Its Effects on Informal Digital Learning of English, Technostress, and on-Line Engagement," *BMC Psychology* 12, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01503-w>.

presented in English. This includes written posts, captions, articles, educational videos, entertainment media, and audio content available on social media platforms. The study focuses on content that is primarily in English and relevant to general use, excluding content specifically designed for formal academic instruction.

4. Written English Proficiency

Written English proficiency refers to the capability of students to produce English writing that is clear, coherent, and grammatically accurate. According to Brown (2001), writing involves translating thoughts into written words, refining, organizing, and coherently arranging ideas²⁰. This proficiency was assessed using a short writing test that evaluates grammar, vocabulary usage, coherence, and overall clarity²¹.

²⁰ H. D. Brown, *Teaching by Principles; an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, 2nd edition (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001).

²¹ Annisa Raudatus Sa'adah, "Writing Skill in Teaching English: An Overview," *EDUCASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.21462/educasia.v5i1.41>.