

Social Media Exposure and Grammar Proficiency of Elementary-Intermediate Students

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ABSTRACT

The widespread use of social media has resulted in its popularity as a teaching and learning platform. In this study, the relationship between the intermediate students' social media exposure and their grammar proficiency, particularly their spelling and use of punctuation marks, were determined. A descriptive-correlational design was used by the researchers and quantitative data were collected using modified instruments such as the social media exposure inventory and grammar proficiency test. The participants were 143 students from the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade of an elementary school located in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. Statistical tools such as mean, percentage, standard deviation, etc, and Pearson correlation were used. The researchers found that there is no significant relationship between students' extent of social media exposure and their grammar proficiency. However, it was also found that students' age has a low positive correlation with their grammar proficiency. Moreover, future studies may focus on the specific platforms used by other grade levels and their impact on grammar competence.

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, social media cannot be ignored. People frequently use it to promote events, discuss our activities, and view the instructors' class schedules. The majority of educational institutions search social media for instructional content that could be enhanced by technology. The use of social media is evidence that education, instructors, and students are all engaged in active learning. There are numerous educational resources on social networking available online (Sandanayake, 2019). Therefore, learning can proceed without difficulty. Social media as a tool for collaborative learning had a significant impact on the interactivity of students with their teachers and peers, as well as their shared knowledge online (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

On social media platforms, users can connect, leave comments on, and create their own content to share with their social network, other users, and the general public (Cohen, 2011). They are also suitable with PowerPoint, PDF, and all text, video, image, and audio files. Having these tools, platforms, and services, people with similar interests can communicate with each other. It is anticipated that the increasing use of social media in education will have an impact on how education is administered and carried out, particularly in terms of interacting with students or coworkers, publishing on walls, and obtaining the most recent information (Patel, 2016).

Social networking and interactive websites are located on the Internet. As a result of addiction and the demand for fast communication, new spelling norms have emerged that diverge significantly from formal, customary, and professional approaches to spelling words. According to a study conducted by Kolhar et al. (2021), students reported prolonged use of social networking sites for nonacademic purposes. Also, students frequently lose concentration while studying and prefer to spend their time on social media (Singh, 2021). As a result, the need for quick and accessible communication has increased the tendency for spelling errors, the use of abbreviations, and the inappropriate use of informal language.

In addition, people who use social networking sites, especially EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in the Philippines, don't pay attention to punctuation. Users now avoid using extra punctuation in both public and private communications and conversations. Today, it is more essential to be understood than to use correct punctuation and other linguistic conventions. Since people of various ages and professions use Facebook for a variety of reasons, it is a popular social networking site (Jha et al., 2016). Youth should consider punctuation in order to engage their audience more effectively. For the message to reach the greatest number of people, communication must be effective.

Evidently, the majority of students prefer to interact with others in public, formal learning environments, religious institutions, etc. However, it is alarming how quickly people are adopting these technological devices. According to a study by Abidin (2018), social media are the most popular innovation among young people and students worldwide due to its affordability and dependability.

Despite the various studies suggesting social media's impact on education, a positive trend is also noticeable. Most people agree that Facebook and Twitter, two of the most popular social networking sites, help students communicate and get involved. In the study of Murad et al. (2019), they found that Facebook has a positive effect on students' academic performance. This is due to the fact that they can readily communicate with one another, and able to gain and share research information. According to Malik et al. (2019), with various information shared, Twitter as a social network has the potential to improve academic engagement. Moreover, Gulzar et al. (2021) stated that students' use of social media is positively correlated with their creativity and academic engagement due to internal motivation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical framework includes published and recognized theories that will aid in developing the study. This framework presents specific theories related to students' exposure to social media and their level of grammar proficiency. The theories presented below serve as the basis for the current study.

The Connectivism Theory

The Connectivism Theory by Siemens (2004) highlights that knowledge is a series of interconnected webs derived from social interactions and experiences, digital observations (commercials, websites), and even organizations. This theory relates to the purpose of the study because it posits how people use different forms of technological platforms, such as social media, to build and search for knowledge as well as create "connections," which will help them strategize the acquisition and sharing of knowledge and experiences.

In this current study, it is hypothesized that the established connections in social media that contribute to students' learning and experience may affect their spelling and punctuation mark usage.

Social Learning Theory

According to McLeod (2023), Albert Bandura's social learning theory is another theory that supports this study. Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of observing, copying, and mimicking others' behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions. According to this theory, environmental and cognitive factors impact human learning and behavior. Individuals learn by interacting in their immediate surroundings, and in the context of this study, students will have a constant interaction of different possible means in this -- the virtual world, due to their long exposure on social media, including the extent of exposure. Bandura also underlined that both real and virtual communal connections affect the mind. Thus, it is an assumed claim that technologies such as social media play a role in shaping the life events, beliefs, values, and culture in today's communities.

Information Processing Theory

Information Processing Theory Information Processing Theory was developed by American psychologist George A. Miller in 1956. This theory explains how the mind receives a stimulus, processes it, stores it, locates it, and eventually responds to it. Information processing theory, as presented by Rao (2016), describes the process of information being received, processed, and stored in the human brain and how it is retrieved. In connection to the study, it explains the assumed claim by the researchers that stimuli, which are in the form of behavior, style, attitude, or culture of people in social media, can be exchanged and embodied by users with reactions and will eventually tie into strong interactions. In a similar context, users can learn what information they can gain from social media.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the students' grammar proficiency level and their profile variables.

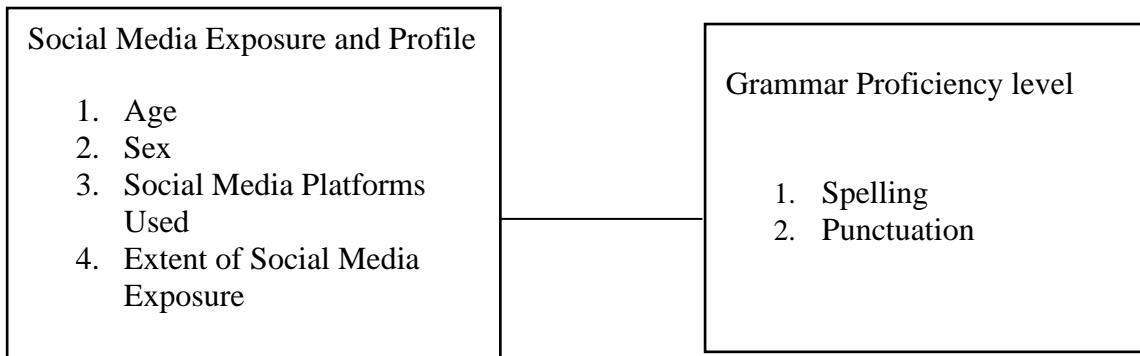


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive-correlational design to investigate the relationship between social media exposure and students' grammar proficiency in elementary- intermediate students in a laboratory school in Eastern Visayas. The intact class sampling method, or total population sampling technique, was used to determine the total number of respondents at the elementary-intermediate level. Grammar proficiency was assessed using a modified questionnaire that identified particular areas of difficulty. The questionnaire has been modified based on DepEd textbooks and worksheets by Miranda, B. (2008). *English for you and me*. Wise Publishing House, Inc. This assessment includes tasks that assess participants' abilities in terms of spelling and the use of punctuation marks. The survey questionnaire is divided into two sections: (1) The Social Media Exposure Inventory provides a summary of the participants' demographic profiles in terms of age, gender, social media platforms used, and extent of social media exposure. (2) The Grammar Proficiency Test for Elementary-Intermediate Students includes a 40-item grammar test, with 20 items for spelling and 20 items for punctuation marks, designed to ascertain the proficiency level of students.

The validity of the research instrument was established by inviting three experts in the fields of language, elementary education, and research in education. The tool used to validate the research instrument was a rating scale adapted from Waltz and Bausell (1983). After the content validation, the research adviser assessed the research instrument because it needed to incorporate the content validators' comments and recommendations. After checking the instrument, it was pilot tested with thirty students at the elementary-intermediate level in a public school in Leyte. To establish the instrument's reliability, Cronbach's alpha was applied to the internal consistency of each question on the modified questionnaire. The validated instrument was administered to the identified respondents.

The researchers asked permission from the supervisor of the laboratory school to conduct a survey. After the letter request for the data gathering had been approved, the researchers personally distributed copies of the informed consent form to the parents of the pupils. Then it was followed by giving the approved survey questionnaire to the respondents. The respondents in every grade level had a single session for data collection and test administration to allow sufficient time to complete the questionnaire and ensure the data and information acquired were reliable. The data from the survey was recorded for future reference and verification to ensure accuracy.

Statistical Treatment

The researchers analyzed the gathered data from the respondents through a variety of statistical methods. First, the frequency count and percentage were applied to describe the profile variables of the respondents in terms of sex and social media platforms used. While the age and extent of social media exposure were represented by utilizing the mean and standard deviation.

In analyzing the grammar proficiency level of the students in terms of spelling and use of punctuation marks, the mean and standard deviation were also used in this study. Meanwhile, the researchers used Pearson's correlation analysis to determine the significant relationship between the student's grammar proficiency and their profile variables in terms of age and extent of social media exposure. Additionally, eta correlation was used to identify the strength of association between students' grammar proficiency and their profile variables in terms of sex and social media platform used.

Moreover, the interpretation of the proficiency level of the students is based on Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 31s. 2020 as described in the table below:

Table 1. DepEd-based Rating

Description	Rating
Beginning	74% and below
Developing	75-79%
Approaching Proficiency	80-84%
Proficient	85-89%
Excellent	90-99%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age

Age (in Years)	Frequency	Percent
9	22	15.40
10	48	33.60
11	46	32.20
12	27	18.90
Total	143	100.00
Overall mean of age:	10.55	
Standard Deviation:	0.485	

Table 2 illustrates the respondents' age (n=143). The respondents' ages are between 9 and 12 with a mean age of 10.55 and a standard deviation of 0.485. The most respondents are aging 10 (n=48) and aging 11 (n=46) with a percentage of 33.60% and 32.20% respectively. Moreover, those aged 9 years have the least respondents with 22 or 15.40%.

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	44.10
Female	80	55.90
Total	143	100.00

Table 3 shows the respondents' sex (n=143). There are more females who responded with a population of 80 or 55.90%. Moreover, males who responded in the research compose the remaining 44.10% or 63 respondents.

Table 4. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Social Media Platforms Used

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Rank
YouTube	136	1
Facebook	111	2.5
TikTok	111	2.5
Google+	88	4
Pinterest	60	5
Instagram	47	6
Snapchat	38	7
Twitter	28	8
Wattpad	16	9
WhatsApp	4	10

Table 4 indicates the social media platforms used by the respondents. Rank 1 is taken by YouTube with 136 respondents using it. There are two social media apps that are in rank 2.5 which are Facebook and TikTok with 111 respondent-users. Google+, Pinterest and Instagram rank 4th, 5th and 6th respectively. The last 4 are Snapchat, Twitter, Wattpad and WhatsApp.

Table 5. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Extent of Social Media Exposure

Social Media Platform Used	Extent of Social Media Exposure (Mean Hour)	Standard Deviation
Facebook	1.81	1.404
Twitter	1.43	0.690
Instagram	1.38	0.739
YouTube	2.29	1.726
TikTok	2.70	1.682
Snapchat	1.16	0.547
WhatsApp	1.00	0
Pinterest	1.37	0.863
Google+	1.58	1.058
Wattpad	1.38	0.719
Overall mean for the Extent of Social Media Exposure	8.43	3.23

Table 5 indicated the extent on which respondents use the social media apps. It is taken from those who replied at an average of all responses per day.

It shows that TikTok, YouTube and Facebook top the first 3 places with mean hour usage of 2.70 (SD=1.682), 2.29 (SD=1.726) and 1.81 (SD=1.404) respectively. On the other hand, WhatsApp, Pinterest and Snapchat were the last 3. All responses on the extent of the use of social media shows that the time allotted for the use of the specified social media is close to the respected mean hour. Moreover, the overall mean for the extent of social media exposure is 8.43, with a standard deviation of 3.23

Nearly two to three hours per day are claimed to be spent on social media in the study conducted by Rahman et al. (2020), which is comparable to this survey conducted in the Philippines. In their study, based on the statements "I am always discovering new things online, and I have no idea how time passes," they found that the majority of students admitted to being dependent on social media and unable to control their usage. This indicated that the content of social media kept students engaged and had an effect on their daily life.

Moreover, according to a *Statista* (2023) poll, internet users in the Philippines spent an average of 9.14 hours using various devices to access the internet during the third quarter of 2022. On average, users dedicate 3.43 hours per day to social media, which is lower than the highest average mean hours of social media usage in this category.

Grammar Proficiency Level

This source defines "grammatical competency" as an in-depth understanding of how language functions. The term "proficiency" was developed to eliminate the ambiguity produced by the discrepancy between performance and competence. Taylor (1988) defines proficiency as the "capacity to apply competence," whereas performance is defined as "the application of proficiency.

Table 6. Students' Grammar Proficiency Level

Grammar Category	Mean	Proficiency Rate	Description	Standard Deviation
Spelling (n=20)	16.73	83.65%	Approaching Proficiency	3.014
Use of Punctuation Marks (n=20)	11.69	58.45%	Beginning	3.759
Grammar Proficiency (n=40)	28.42	71.05%	Beginning	5.779

Table 6 depicts the respondents' grammar proficiency level (n=143). With a total score of n=20, the respondents get a mean score of 16.73 for spelling which is at 83.65% proficiency level, described as approaching proficiency. The result has a standard deviation of 3.014 which means that the scores are close to

the mean. This implies that many of the respondents score within “Developing” to “Advanced” levels in terms of spelling.

On the other hand, with a lower result, the mean score on the use of punctuation (n=20) is 11.69 or 58.45% which means beginning. The standard deviation is 3.7590 which means that the respondents’ scores are spread out or distributed far away from mean. This implies that respondents in general score within “Beginning” to “Developing” levels in terms of using punctuation marks.

In combination, the mean score of the respondents in grammar proficiency is 28.4 (n=40) or 71.05% which means beginning. It has a standard deviation of 5.779. This tells us that the scores are distributed at a wider spread away from the mean. Therefore, most respondents score within Beginning to Developing in terms of grammar proficiency.

Relationship Between Students’ Profile Variables and Grammar Proficiency (Spelling and Use of Punctuation Marks)

The table below summarizes the results after the data treatment on the relationship of spelling and use of punctuation marks scores to the profile variables of the students. The first column shows the four components of profiles categorized by the researchers which are: age, sex, social media platform used, and the extent of social media exposure by the chosen respondents with their corresponding statistical treatment method. The second column shows the Correlation Coefficient value (Pearson r and ETA). The third column shows its interpretation. The fourth column shows the p-value, and the last column is its interpretation

Table 7. Relationship Between Students’ Spelling and Their Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.249	Low Positive Correlation	0.000	Significant
Sex	0.031	Small Effect	0.037	Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.064	Medium Effect	0.335	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	0.09	Negligible	0.286	Not Significant

Table 7 shows the relationship between the respondents’ spelling test result and their profile (age, sex, social media platforms and extent of social media exposure). The result shows a low positive correlation (r=0.249) about the spelling test in terms of their age with a p-value of 0.000 which is significant. It is indicative that there is enough evidence to show that age

correlates with the result of their spelling test as it supports age maturity. This implies that the older the respondents, the higher is the score achieved.

With regards to sex, the result indicates that sex has a small effect at eta-square of 0.031 with a p-value of 0.037 which is significant. There is enough evidence that sex correlates with spelling but to a small effect. This implies that the respondents' sex has made a difference in terms of the spelling score.

In terms of the use of social media, it has a medium effect at eta square 0.064 which has a p-value of 0.335 which is not significant. This implies that much more evidence is needed to showcase that the use of social media identified made an medium effect on spelling.

On the profile of extent of social media used, there is a negligible relationship of spelling with a coefficient of ($r=0.09$) and a p-value of 0.286 which is not significant. This implies that this is a basis for further analysis needed to showcase the relationship between spelling and extent of the use of social media.

Table 8. Relationship Between Students' Use of Punctuation Marks and their Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.389	Low Positive correlation	0.003	Significant
Sex	0.012	Small Effect	0.192	Not Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.053	Small Effect	0.484	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	0.044	Negligible	0.601	Not Significant

Table 8 indicates the relationship between the respondents' use of punctuation test results and their profile (age, sex, social media platforms and extent of social media exposure). The results show a low positive correlation ($r=0.389$) about the use of punctuation mark tests in terms of the respondents' age with a p-value of 0.003 which is significant. It is indicative that there is enough evidence to show that age correlates with the result of their use of punctuation as it supports age maturity. This implies that the older the respondents, the higher the score they got in the punctuation test.

In terms of the respondents' sex, there is a small effect at an eta square of 0.012 on the use of punctuation marks with a p-value of 0.192 which is not significant. This implies that there is little effect of sex to the result of their test using the punctuation mark.

Moreover, the kind of social media used by the respondents has also a small effect on the score in the use of punctuation marks with an eta square of 0.053 with a p-value of 0.484 which is not significant. There is a need to show

more evidence further as the kind of social media use has only a small effect on their use of punctuation mark test scores.

Furthermore, there is a negligible relationship between the extent of social media exposure with a coefficient of ($r=0.044$) and a p-value of 0.601 which is not significant. This implies that there is a need to show more evidence to show that the extent of the use of social media has negligible relationship on the punctuation test.

Relationship between Grammar Proficiency and the Profile Variables

The summary of the data is stated below. The table below summarizes the results from statistical treatment of data using Pearson r and p-value strategies. The first column shows the four components of profiles categorized by the researchers which are: age, sex, social media platform used, and the extent of social media exposure by the chosen respondents with their corresponding statistical treatment method. The second column shows the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value. The third column shows its interpretation. The fourth column shows the p-value and the last column is its interpretation. This computation is for each of the variables to overall grammar proficiency which is composed of spelling score mean and punctuation score mean.

Table 9. Relationship Between Students' Grammar Proficiency and their Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	P-value	Interpretation
Age	0.383	Low Positive correlation	0.000	Significant
Sex	0.026	Small Effect	0.053	Not Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.072	Medium Effect	0.248	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	0.076	Negligible	0.370	Not Significant

Table 9 shows the relationship between the respondents' grammar proficiency test results and their profile (age, sex, social media platforms and extent of social media exposure). The results indicate a low positive correlation ($r=0.383$) about the use of punctuation mark tests in terms of the respondents' age with a p-value of 0.000 which is significant. It is indicative that there is enough evidence to show that age correlates with the result of their grammar proficiency score as it supports age maturity. This implies that the older the respondents, the higher the score they get.

On the profile of sex, there is a small effect at an Eta coefficient of 0.026 on grammar proficiency with a p-value of 0.053 which is not significant (this is

almost significant). This implies that there is little effect of sex on the result of their test using the grammar proficiency.

The kind of social media used by the respondents has also a medium effect on the score in their grammar proficiency test in general with an Eta coefficient of 0.072 with a p-value of 0.248 which is not significant. There is a need to show more evidence further as the kind of social media use has a medium effect on their grammar proficiency test.

On the other hand, there is a negligible relationship between the extent of social media exposure with a coefficient of 0.076 with a p-value of 0.370 which is not significant. This implies that there is a need to show more evidence to show that the extent of the use of social media has negligible relationship on their grammar proficiency test.

This study's conclusions, which are grounded on the Filipino context, differ from some foreign studies. In the study of Ramamuthie and Aziz (2022), they found that students' writing skills have increased dramatically as a result of using digital tools. The pupils were able to create phrases that were grammatically correct, including the proper use of punctuation and spelling.

Additionally, Al-Jarrah et al. (2019) stated that despite borrowing vocabulary-building books from the library, university-level students found social media more useful than books and other text resources. Students can improve their English writing abilities by utilizing social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and WhatsApp. Using online tools, students can view photographs of objects and compose texts. It is evident that students primarily utilize social media for educational purposes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, students spend the majority of their leisure time on different social media platforms. It implies that social media is becoming a major part of students' daily routine and gradually taking over their lives. However, they do not necessarily affect their grammar proficiency level as it shown by the results of this study.

The findings of the study have some implications to the teaching and learning process. Developing teaching strategies that integrate the use of social media with educational content can be explored, considering that elementary pupils are highly exposed to these technologies. Also, teachers can encourage students to communicate with other social media users in English to improve their speaking and writing skills. Liking and following contents that provide informational texts can add more knowledge and challenge students' grammar competence. In education, the results imply that schools can find a way to use social media to support or sustain the objectives of the educational system.

Furthermore, parents have a major role in guiding their children's use of phones and computers, as the researchers found that students spend a lot of time on different social media platforms and should limit the hours spent browsing the internet so they can use their leisure time for other activities. This implies that they have the primary influence on their children's behavior and attitude by controlling their use of social media.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are provided.

1. Since the results show that social media has no significant correlation to spelling and punctuation use, it is recommended to use social media that can further enhance writing skills and styles.
2. The study is limited to the relationship of social media to grammar proficiency, specifically on spelling and use of punctuation marks. It is recommended for future researchers to experiment on two sets of respondents who use specific platforms that share textual information and test their grammar competence.
3. It is also recommended to test other grammar components in connection with social media exposure.
4. Lastly, the researchers also recommend conducting another study that tends to examine the significant difference between social media exposure and grammar proficiency.

FURTHER STUDY

This study covered the average time spent by students using different social media platforms, and it was found that there is no significant relationship between their extent of social media exposure and their grammar proficiency level. Future studies may focus on a specific platform used by other grade levels and its impact on their grammar competence.

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