

University of Ahmed Draia- Adrar

Faculty of Letters and Languages



## **The Impact of Social media on EFL students' Writing skill in the Department of English at Ahmed Draia University of Adrar**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the  
master degree in linguistics and didactics

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## *I. Dedication*

*This Dissertation is dedicated to:*

*My dear parents, who have always been the main inspiration behind all my efforts and accomplishments; words cannot explain my gratitude for their support and love.*

*To my lovely sisters Iman and Noujoud who stood beside me in every moment in my life and supported me to become who I am now.*

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*Elham*

## *II. Dedication*

*Alhamdulillah*

*To whomever taught me a letter, a number;  
punctuation mark that made me able to accomplish  
this work with my dear mate.*

*Words won't be enough to express my gratitude and  
feelings for all.*

*May Allah praise you all Aljannah Inchaa Allah*

*Fethi*

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media allows people to communicate, share, and express themselves in their own way, and to make communication easier and faster, people resort to using informal language, slang, neologism, abbreviations, and violating rules of grammar. The majority of what people write on social media is not edited, moderated, or vetted to ensure proper use of the English language; this indicates that the language used in social media is different from formal English. This study attempts to seek the influence of social media on EFL students writing. For undertaking this piece of research, a survey was conducted to collect numerical data through the use of two methods, observation as a useful mean of investigating the way EFL students write on Facebook, and the second one a questionnaire was distributed to 61 students (BA and Master) at the department of English, University Ahmed Draia of Adrar.

The present research aims to study the phenomenon of text messages and investigate the impact of the language used in Social media on EFL students' writing skills. The researchers hypothesized that students prefer using the language of social media instead of using formal English language while communicating with each other, and also assumed that the use of this language may affect their academic writing.

**Keywords:** social media, social networking sites , negative impact, Faceook , Writing , EFL students

## ملخص

تسمح وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للأشخاص بالتواصل والمشاركة والتعبير عن أنفسهم بطريقتهم الخاصة ، ولجعل التواصل أسهل وأسرع ، يلجأ الأشخاص إلى استخدام لغة غير رسمية ، ولغة عامية ، ومختصرات ، وانتهاك القواعد اللغوية . اغلب ما يكتبه الناس على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لا يتم تحريره أو الإشراف عليه أو فحصه لضمان الاستخدام السليم للغة الإنجليزية ؛ يشير هذا إلى أن اللغة المستخدمة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تختلف عن اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية. تحاول هذه الدراسة البحث عن تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على كتابة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لإجراء هذا البحث ، تم استخدام طريقتين ، الملاحظة كوسيلة مفيدة للتحقق من الطريقة التي يكتب بها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على الفيسبوك ، واستبيان تم توزيعه على 61 طالباً (بكالوريوس) في قسم اللغة الانجليزية جامعة احمد دراية ادرار. يهدف البحث الحالي إلى دراسة ظاهرة الرسائل النصية ومعرفة تأثير اللغة المستخدمة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على مهارات الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. افترض الباحثون أن الطلاب يفضلون استخدام لغة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بدلاً من استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية أثناء التواصل مع بعضهم البعض ، وافترضوا أيضاً أن استخدام هذه اللغة قد يؤثر على كتاباتهم الأكاديمية.

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## Acronyms

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**SNSs:** Social Networking Sites

**LMD:** License Master Doctorate

**SM:** Social Media

**Fb:** Facebook

**MA:** Master

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## **General Introduction**

Writing is a very difficult and complex process that requires some important skills to make it clear. Since English become the language of globalization, most of the world's societies are using it on social networking sites including Algeria where English is the second foreign language taught in schools. It is noticed that students use social media to communicate with each other, but they use a language completely different from the formal English language , among them EFL students at Ahmed Draia University of Adrar.

### **Research Questions**

**For the purpose of this study, the following questions were formulated:**

- 1- What are the reasons that make students use the language of social media instead of formal English language?
- 2- What are the consequences of neglecting the use of Formal English language and resorting to use non standard English?

### **Hypotheses**

**From these research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:**

- 1- Students prefer to use the language of social media because it is easier and faster.
- 2- Students Forget how to write some words in their correct form and they neglect the rules of Formal English writing (Grammar ,punctuation , Capitalization...etc )

## **Aims of the Study**

This study is aimed to identify the influence of social media on English writing among university students. Specifically, this study investigates how social media may cause negative impact on students' writing skills.

## **Methodology Description**

The study was conducted by using qualitative research methods to explore EFL college students' writing behavior on the Facebook platform and understand the perspectives of students involved in using Facebook. The data collection methods were observation and questionnaire. Participants consisted of 61 students (Master and BA degree) .

## **Structure of the Study**

This dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter is divided into two parts. The first part entitled Writing, provides an overview of writing in general, its components, the stages of writing, and its necessity. The second part is concerned with the meaning of social media and its role. Furthermore, this chapter presents the research tools used in conducting the research, an analysis of the data collected, and a general discussion of the findings. Finally it provides some implications, recommendations ,delimitation and limitation.

***Chapter one: Writing and Social  
Media***

## **Part One: Writing**

### **Introduction:**

Writing is one of the most important and difficult language skills, as it is the basic skill in learning a language where the learner must make great efforts to reach a good level in language proficiency. Therefore, it must be learned and taught as a basic skill. The first chapter presents the writing skill in general providing its definition, components, stages, writing in EFL classroom as well as the importance of writing to the learners of EFL.

### **1. Definition of Writing:**

Writing is the process of transforming ideas and opinions into language, which requires a lot of mental effort and practice. According to White and Arndt (1991):

*“Writing is a process of thinking that requires intellectual effort, and it includes generating ideas, planning, setting goals, observing what has been written and what will be written as well as evaluating the use of language to express subtle meanings”.*

It means that writing consists of some stages that the writer has to go through in covering the letter. In a similar way, Byrne (1979) stated that writing is a difficult activity because it is neither natural nor spontaneous activity. Therefore, psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors are the three main obstacles that make writing a complex process for both language learners and native speakers.

### **2. Components of Writing**

Learning to write in English is not an easy task to accomplish; it should be limited to a



set of rules. According to Starkey (2004), to create an effective writing piece, the writer should take into consideration five elements to achieve which are: *organization*, *word choice*, *clarity*, *coherence*, and *mechanics*.

## **2.1. Organization:**

Organization means the arrangement of how sentences and paragraphs are presented. In the writing process, organization is the first thing that needs to be done. Ideas, information, and goals must be organized first before writing to form a complete plan around the target text or paragraph. Growet (1995) notes that the quality and value of a written text are based on the organizing ideas presented in the text, and to do so, the writer must use appropriate, relevant words. Similarly, Starkey (2004) say that " organization benefits readers to be able to see how the various points you put into your essay bring it together and how it supports your thesis."

## **2.2. Word Choice**

Nickelsen (2001) defines word choice as the use of specific and precise words that facilitate communication between writer and reader. For Starkey (2004), word choice displays the writer's style of selecting the lexical elements and structures in order to convey their message, he adds that connotation (the literal meaning of the word) and denotation (the implicit meaning of the word) are two important aspects that must be respected while choosing words.

## **2.3. Clarity**

Clarity is one of the necessary criteria in the writing process. The purpose of writing a text or paragraph is to get an answer from the readers, so the writer should be clear and make their information easy to understand to convey their message. Starkey (2004) mentioned four

essential elements in facilitating and accurate writing:

- 1) Demystifying: The writer should avoid using vague words or phrases that may have different meanings to help the reader understand the goal easily.
- 2) Strong and subtle adjectives and adverbs: The writer must realize that strong adjectives and proverbs strongly influence the reader's point of view, so he must be selective when talking about correct adjectives, adverbs and words.
- 3) Conciseness, according to Starkey “There are two equally important ways to write more succinctly: getting rid of unnecessary words and phrases, using the active voice (as opposed to the passive voice) whenever possible.” (2004, p15).
- 4) Avoid unnecessary repetition: Repeating words, information and ideas can sometimes destroy the legibility of the written piece. Cited in Bouchikhi (2017).

## **2.4. Coherence**

Coherence makes the ideas linked together so that the reader can easily understand the content of the writing. In academic writing, all writing steps must be properly included, each in its natural place. Coherence is one of those necessary steps. As Murray and Hughes (2008, p. 185) observed that a good writer is the one who brings his ideas together as each idea is connected to the idea that precedes it with the idea that follows it. Coherence can create a logical progression in the text.

Bailey and Powell (2008: 38) stated that “the best way to defined coherence is to look at its opposite incoherent” Cited in Herizi 2019.

## **2.5. Mechanism**

The term “mechanics” refers to the appearance of words, how they are spelled and arranged on paper” (Kane, 2000; Bouchikhi,2017). Brooks and Penn (1970), Harmer (2004) agreed that: *Writing, like any other skill, has its “mechanical” components.* These include

grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. These things are the nuts and bolts of writing skills and should be emphasized at specific stages of learning to write in English.

### **2.5.1. Grammar**

Kennedy (2003, p. 1) defined grammar as " a set of rules or cognitive principles for combining words (and parts of words) to express specific concepts or ideas.". It is an important component of writing because it controls sentence structure through ground rules that lead to accurate and meaningful writing of texts. In fact, language learners need to know the different parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, and many more; If they know and understand how each of these parts work in a sentence, they will communicate their ideas more clearly. In this view Schmidt (1994) said that grammar instruction is essential for second language learners to achieve their educational and professional goals.

Authors like Watkins, Dillingham, Hears, and Brown (1991) agreed that anyone who uses language and puts words together to communicate ideas knows something about grammar. The word grammar refers to the often-unconscious principles that guide people as they use language. It can also refer to the formal study of the grammar system and its rules.

### **2.5.2 Capitalization**

Any paragraph or sentence must start with a capital letter in the first word and must be indented as well. These conventions appear to the reader if used correctly at the beginning of the paragraph (Bailey, 2011). Capitalization is very important in academic writing; The writer should be restricted by the rules of capitalization and should give it as much importance as it gives to other components in writing.

### **2.5.3 Punctuation**

Punctuation marks are one of the most important characteristics of writing as they make the meaning of writing clear. Bruthiaux (1993) asserts that “the importance of punctuation lies in the fact that they achieve clarity and effectiveness of writing. It also connects or separates groups of ideas and distinguishes what is important in the sentence from what is subordinate”. In the same view, Doran (1998) discusses the important role punctuation plays in understanding the meaning of a sentence or text. Doran's findings from his research confirm the idea that punctuation makes it easier to understand the meaning of written letters.

Stilman (1997) writes that punctuation, like any other mechanics, has two serviceable functions. First, they define how the different elements of the sentence relate to one another. Second, it guarantees the decoding of an understandable message.

Punctuation marks consist of different signs, each of them has its role and impact on the sentence. As Harmer (2007) stated, *there are well-established norms of punctuation, trespassing on these norms makes the piece of writing seem uncomfortable*.

### **3. The Stages of Writing**

The stages of writing differ from one linguist to another, and since writing is a process, there must be stages that the writer respects in developing his ideas and expressing them appropriately before presenting them to the reader. As Zemach and Rumisek (2003) said “*When we write, we do more than just put words together to make sentences. Good writers go through several steps to produce a piece of writing*”. Riordan and Polly (2002) declared that the aim of these stages is to create an effective, clear document that allows the public to act. They divide the writing stages into three general steps: pre-writing, writing and post-writing.

### **3.1 Pre writing**

Pre-writing is the first stage of the writing process where the writer brainstorm, research, gather ideas and outline them. Authors like Cullen, 2001; Blanchard and Root,2004; Oshima and Hogue, 2006; Savage and Shafiei , 2007 agreed that pre-writing is any activity that encourages writers to write. At this stage, the writer tries to organize data according to their priorities, choose the topic, what will say about it and what statements will be the first. Burns (1979), states that the writer has to take into consideration two concepts: the purpose of writing and the audience.

Pre writing consists of three main steps which are: Brainstorming, clustering and planning.

- **Brainstorming:**

Brainstorming is a method of gathering ideas about a topic. It simply means writing down every idea that comes to mind without giving any attention whether the ideas are good or not, useful or not. The writer later decides what to choose after collecting as many ideas as possible.

- 1. Clustering:**

The writer tries to construct ideas by resorting to the main idea in a logical way. This technique is known as clustering. Blanchard and Root (2004) consider clustering as "a visual method for generating ideas. It is a technique for showing connections between thoughts by using circles and lines." The goal of clustering is to collect lots of ideas on a very broad topic. At the end the writer can choose the ideas that fit the task.

- 2. Planning:**

The writer identifies the topic through planning. Lipson (2005) calls this stage

"planning" and adds that proper writing starts with correct planning. Therefore, it is the first stage in the writing process in which one can develop a plan, form a thesis, and organize the main ideas and details that support the thesis. Stark (2003) claims that planning is the most useful strategy; It serves as a guideline that makes the writer well organized. In the same view, Lipson (2005) said "good thesis writing starts with good planning."

### **3.2 Writing**

Writing is the second stage in the writing process. In the initial writing stage, students produce a rough draft of ideas created during the planning stage and arrange them later in the organizing stage. This stage requires students to coordinate ongoing knowledge requirements, such as: Combining planned ideas with new one, remember the purpose of the paper, use proper grammar. The writing stage consists of two main steps which are drafting and revising.

#### **3. Drafting:**

In the drafting process, the writer puts his thoughts into complete ideas, such as sentences and paragraphs. The writer organizes his thoughts in a way that allows the reader to understand his message by focusing on the ideas that should be included in the written piece. During drafting, the writer composes an introduction to the passage and make a conclusion to the material. At the end of this step of the writing process, the author will have completed a '*rough draft*'.

#### **4. Revising:**

In this step students review, modify, and reorganize their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by making the style and content relevant to the target audience. The goal of this stage is to improve the draft. The best way to evaluate writing is to revise. Brown

and Hood (1989, p.20) asserted that revising is the stage in which the writer includes and confirms that he has said what he wants to say in a clear and understandable way.

### **3.3 Post Writing**

Post writing is often known as editing. It is the final stage of the writing process. It is concerned with the most accurate spelling points, punctuation, grammar, and word choice, among other things. As Blanchard and Root (2004, p. 44) confirm that post writing means looking for and correcting mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation”.

## **4. The Importance of Writing**

Writing is a medium of communication based on a graphic representation of language. Through writing, we are able to transcribe and write our thoughts and express our feelings to enable others to know our opinions, attitudes and points of view. Chopin (2014) agreed on this point as he said that writing plays an important role in our lives. It is a "communication tool" for maintaining connections between people. The visual form of written language means that it provides ideas with a degree of permanence and enables meaning to be conveyed. Thus, writing reflects life-long learning.

Tribble (1996), Hyland (2003) and Benjamin (2013) agreed that writing plays a dynamic role in learning English as a foreign language for many reasons. Writing encourages students to focus on the precise use of language and, since they think as they write, it will provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts in their minds. Hamer (2004) notes that many linguists value writing and mention its importance in EFL classes. Writing was seen as merely a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right. They also recognize the importance of writing as a vital skill for foreign language speakers and learners.

## **5. Writing in EFL Classroom**

### **5.1. Academic Writing**

Academic writing is a formal writing that is used in schools, universities, colleges and so on. It can be used in writing essays, reports, texts, books, articles...etc. It is important for any piece of academic writing to be clear, understandable, and concise, and to be presented in a certain order by ensuring coherence and cohesion among its subsections (Akin, 2009, p. 69-72, Herizi, 2019). In the same view, Gillet, Hammond & Martala (2009, p. 88) stated that *“In academic writing, it is necessary to produce logically organized ideas with well-researched and verified points and to consider different opinions”*.

### **5.2 Approaches of Teaching Writing in EFL Classroom**

#### **5.2.1 Product Approach**

Product writing is an approach of teaching writing that focuses on students' final production. Silva (1990, p.11-17) stated that the product approach is used in order to highlight the form and syntax, which means that this approach focuses on the linguistic knowledge through style and cohesive ties. The main interest of this approach is the mastery of linguistic features; It considers language as a process of habit formation that is, students responded to a stimulus provided by a teacher.

#### **5.2.2 Process Approach**

The process approach emerged at the end of the 1960s as a reaction to the product approach; It gives attention to the way of writing rather than the final product which means that the process approach treats writing as creative work that takes time. In the writing process, the teacher does not have to give the student a topic to write; all he has to do is receiving the final work for correction without interfering with the writing process itself. Tribble (1966, p. 160) describes the process approach as a mean of creativity and as mean of improving writing in the sense that learners have to go through different stages for the



purpose of producing a piece of writing, this helps them to draw on their own cognitive abilities and start writing with 15 creative ways rather than imitating a model.

## **Conclusion**

Writing is a very wide and complex skill with a specific skills and techniques that made it very difficult to achieve especially for EFL learners. Learning how to write is a challenge for EFL learners because it requires a more precise formation of ideas through words. In fact, writing is one of the four core skills that are highlighted in language learning and teaching. This chapter provided a general definition of writing and shed light on its three important stages (Pre writing, writing and post writing). This chapter also gave a general view about writing in EFL classroom.

## **Part Two: The Impact of Social Media on EFL Students Writing**

### **Introduction**

The 21st century is considered as the beginning of technological innovations which generally interfered in social practices, especially linguistically. The younger generations, generally, and EFL students, precisely, are the ones caught in this rapid change and that reflected on their academic writing. Subsequently, it is very crucial to determine the impact of social media on the academic writing performance of EFL students.

This chapter is specifically introduced to present social media and the most important elements related to it, starting by the concept of social media, then moving to social media categories, and focusing on social networking sites as the most crucial type. This chapter also covers the use of social media in Algeria, and highlights the most popular platforms within those interactive social websites (SNSs) in Algeria as a particular case. Also, it provides some widely used abbreviations among EFL students. Finally, an attempt to clarify the impact of social networking sites on students' writing.

### **1. Definition of Social Media/ Social Networking Sites:**

Social media generally refers to the means by which individuals engage information and concepts. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) & Page et al(2014) agreed that social media is an umbrella term for internet-based sites and services that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, facilitate and encourage social connections between people.

Nowadays, social media is very important in our lives, because it has become a common tool for communication after the traditional methods (radio, TV, news), that had one way, which is to display news and information, while social networking sites have two

methods: sending and receiving.

## **2. Categories of Social Media:**

According to Cann Dimitriou and Hooley in their booklet "Social Media: A guide for researchers" there are three social media services classified according to their roles.

The first category is a variety of **Collaboration Services** because they can be used for multiple purposes. For example, Wikipedia or Wikis is a site where anyone can collect, add, or edit content using a Web browser. Social news platforms like News vine and Reddit fall under this category and allow everyone who signs up for their services to share the news.

The second category is called **Multimedia Networks** (Multimedia services), such as video sharing sites like YouTube and Vimeo which are often linked to entertainment services, including streaming platforms like Twitch which allows users to broadcast live content from their computers.

The last category is **Called Communication**, which provides opportunities for people to keep in touch and maintain relationships, communicate with each other, share their feelings and thoughts, and exchange information and different cultures around the world by using services like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Those services are called **social networking sites** (SNSs).

## **3. Social Networking Sites (SNSs)**

Social networking sites are a web-based service that enables individuals to create personal profiles, view user connections, search and navigate. Social networking sites offers platforms that allow users to connect with others, establish social relationships, and share information and ideas about their real-life experiences, as Germu & Halse (2012) said that social networking sites provides a positive platform for people to identify themselves accurately, establish new relationships and preserve old ones.

There are different kinds of social networking like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, E-

mail and Instagram are the most popular social media platforms, and each platform has its own features.

**Facebook:** is a social networking platform that permits people to speak and interact with family and friends over the web. It had been founded by Mark Zuckerberg while he was a student at Harvard University. Facebook was initially designed for students with the aim of facilitating social interaction between them, and now it becomes one of the largest social networking sites.

**Twitter:** was founded in 2006 and used to communicate, receive news and follow prominent celebrities. It is undoubtedly one of the most popular social networking sites available today with 100 million daily active users and 500 million tweets sent daily.

**Myspace:** It was founded by Tom Anderson and Chris DeWolfe in July 2003 as an online community for people to interact and share their journals, images, music, and interests with their friends.

**Email:** short for “electronic mail,” Margret (2005) defined Email as “the telecommunication exchange of computer-stored messages”. Along with the internet, it is one of the most commonly used features of the internet. E-mail helps users to send and receive messages to anyone in the world who has an email address. (Christenson, 2014; Herizi, 2019 ).

**Instagram:** is a mobile-only social media site that focuses on the photo and video sharing. The users of this platform can create, edit, and post visual content for their followers to like, comment on, and share.

#### **4. The Use of Social Media in Algeria:**

Social media has been utilized in so many different ways throughout the years, especially social networking tools that are “among the most dominant on the Web today. These services bring people together with common interests, experiences, and activities; allowing people to share their commonalities” (Bonk, 2009, p. 329). In fact, Algeria is known to be one of the

heavy users of social media, specifically Facebook, and this is observed especially among youth and EFL students who need these platforms for their studies and to communicate with people from all over the world. (Cited in Bouchikhi and Bouanani, 2017). The results are presented in the following table:

**Table 1: Algerian social media statistics from January 2021-2022.**

SNSs	Social Media usage with %
Facebook	80.91%
YouTube	14.98%
Twitter	2.09%
Pinterest	0.93%
Instagram	0.86%

<https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/algeria>

### **Common Abbreviations Used by Algerians While Texting:**

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Their meaning</b>
SLM	Salam
B1	Bien
DMG	Dommmage
Prq	Pour quoi
TKT	Ne t'inquiètes pas
Mdr	Mort de rire
Bcp	Beaucoup
Nn	Non

Hmd	Alhmdulilaah
Cv	Çava
SLT	Salut
SVP	S''ilvous plait
STP	S''ilte plait
Je rev	je reviens
Psk	Parceque
Ctt	C'est tout
Bjr	Bonjour
Dcr	D'accord

**Table 2: Common Abbreviations used by Algerians while texting**

## **5. The Impact of SNSs on Academic Writing**

The use of social networking sites among students has become a common thing nowadays, as students use social media for communicating with others or using it as a useful way to learn English. Social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and many others have helped learners of English indirectly as English is widely used on social media. However, their use of these sites may negatively affect their academic writing.

A study by Bicen, Sadikoglu, and Sadikoglu (2015) showed that the use of SNSs has an effect on foreign language learning. However, a study by Abbasova (2016) and Kasuma (2017) found that writing skill is negatively affected when using social media.

### **5.1 Positive Impact**

Among the advantages of social networking sites is that it helps students learn new vocabulary and expose them to the most recent style of word use. In addition, social media

provides students with the usage of words in an authentic real-life situation. The use of social media also provides positive effects such as pronunciation improvement and vocabulary enlargement resulting from the use of social media (Abbasova, 2016).

Social networking sites also encourage language acquisition by using English to discuss different topics, correct academic articles, or participate in learning groups, where students correct each other's mistakes. There are many pages available on social networking sites whose content and the main objective is to teach English by spreading common mistakes that students might make, teaching new vocabulary with an explanation of its meaning as well as teaching grammar which means that social media are utilized as a learning tool. As Derakshan & Hasanabbasi (2015) state that social media is a place where students share and discuss their academic materials. Studies conducted by researchers found Facebook has greatly impacted second language learning.

## **5.2 Negative Impact:**

Social media is not a suitable environment for formal teaching and learning activities (Kabilan et al. 2010. Shih, 2011). The English used in social media is not entirely correct and differs from that used in academic writing, this may lead to creating students' habit of using short forms and informal writing (white, 2009).

The learners' use of internet slang such as LOL (laugh out loud) and the employment of informal contractions which are short forms of words that people use when speaking casually such as "gonna", whatcha, gimme, will affect their academic writing negatively. As Swan (2017) states that social media has gathered a lot of complaints regarding the negative impact on students' grammar use and spelling.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of social media has resulted a significant change in

people's daily lives where social networking sites played the main role in this transformation. This chapter introduces the concept of social media and social networking sites, it also presents the types of social media and shedding light on social networking sites as the most significant type. The chapter has discussed the most popular social platforms used in Algeria. In addition; it provided some common examples of informal writings which are inappropriate in class, and both positive and negative effects of social media on students, and how does texting and using a lot of abbreviations affect their academic performance.

Social media has a great influence on students' academic writing, especially in language accuracy. The majority of students aren't aware of the newly developed language which they are using to interact with each other's may influence their academic writing process. As a result, several studies, including this research paper, have been conducted in order to investigate the impact of the social media language on students' academic writing.

The following chapter will present the methodology followed in this research with the purpose of developing and analyzing the data that was collected from the different tools that have been used along the research period.



***Chapter two:  
The practical Part***

## **Introduction**

The scope of this chapter aims to investigate how social media language affects learners' academic writing performance. Both of the method and process used to conduct this research will be detailed in this chapter.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an explanation of the research design. It describes the research methodology, research instruments, and the participants (community sample) of this research work. The second section is the statistical analysis of the data and discussion of the findings. The third section of this chapter provides a general discussion of the results, and suggests some implications.

The focus of this research work is to primarily study the impact of social media on the academic performance of students. The study will comprise at the department of English in University of Ahmad Draia of Adrar.

### **Section One: Research Methodology and Design.**

#### **Research Design**

This research study is conducted to investigate how social media language may affect negatively or positively the EFL learners' academic writing performance at Adrar University. To achieve the aim of this study, we used the quantitative qualitative approach to collect reliable data by means of the students' questionnaire, observation of students' daily conversations on some social media platforms. The aim of the survey is to find out why students tend to use informal English text messages (abbreviations, acronyms...) instead of formal one. On the other hand, to find out if this language used in social networking sites affects their writing.

#### **Research Instruments**

Quantitative and qualitative instruments were used in data collection. The first method is a questionnaire. It contained 17 questions directed to English language students (master and LMD) at Ahmed Draia university of Adrar.

The second method is observation; this tool was used to observe how Department

of Arts and English language students of Adrar university communicate with each other on social networking sites. Facebook was used to collect data as it is the most used among students. The goal of this tool is to reveal the language used between students while communication.

## **Research Participants**

Both in the questionnaire and the observation, the participants were (61) English students of LMD and Master degree because they have already studied English for seven years before university both in the middle and secondary education levels, and they have studied written expression as a module for 3 years at the University. Their knowledge of the language makes them mindful of grammar rules, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The total number of the participants is 61 students.

## **Research Setting**

The research took place in the Department of Arts and English language of Adrar University during the academic year 2021/2022. It was conducted during the period from the beginning of April to the end of the month.

## **Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This section is concerned with data analysis, and discussion of the results. The purpose of the data analysis is to determine the impact of social media on EFL students' academic writing performance by highlighting students' errors when writing formal essays.

#### **1.1 Analysis of Students' Facebook Messages:**

While observing the way English students communicate on Facebook, different things can be distinguished. For example, the use of abbreviations and making grammatical and spelling errors. The following pictures contain some messages that were taken from students' Facebook groups:

#### **Picture n°1:**

- Use of letter to represent words: r (are), u (you)
- Acronym and shortening: univ (university)
- Non-standard spelling/orthography: Thku (Thank you), Ppl (People)

Abdessalam

Ppl who r there in univ. Would u confirm if we study now or not?  
Thku.



**Picture n°2:**

- Acronym and shortening: PPT (Power point)
- Use of letter to represent words: u (you)

Amel

slm ,someone to send me the ethic's ppt if u have it

JAN 26 AT 4:47 PM

**Picture n°3:**

- Use of letter to represent words: u (you)
- Letter/number homophone: 4 (for)
- Non-standard spelling/orthography: ov (of)

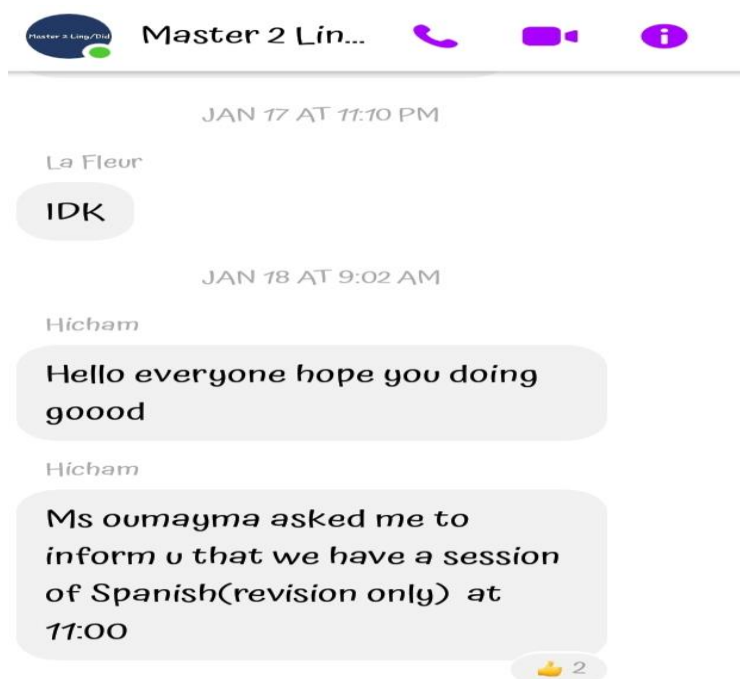
Thank u  
I wish all the best 4 all ov u



MAR 16 AT 5:38 AM

**Picture n°4:**

- Abbreviations: IDK (I do not know)
- Use of letter to represent words: u (you)
- Non-standard spelling/orthography: goood (good)
- Capitalization: Ms oumayma(Omayma)



From the observation taken from students' messages, it was noted that students often use a mixture of English abbreviations and their native dialect. Adding to that, many errors were noted. These errors were divided into several types: abbreviations, grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

- In terms of abbreviations, it was noted that most of students prefer to write words in short forms , and this does not apply only to well-known English abbreviations, but also they resort to creating their own abbreviations: IDK (I do not know).
- As for grammatical errors, it was noticed that the students did not pay attention to whether they were correct or not.
- Students use punctuation marks incorrectly and completely different, where they use exclamation mark instead of question mark when asking questions or repeating the exclamation marks to indicate the extent of surprise...etc.

Students make many spelling errors, either intentionally as an attempt to abbreviate them, or unintentionally. Non-standard spelling and using letter to

represent words: good (good),u (you). As well as ,Letter/number homophone: 4 (for).

- Capitalization, most of students do not give importance to capital letters and this does not concern capitalizing the first letter at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs, but even to proper nouns: Ms oumayma(Omayma).

## 1.2 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was presented to the English language MA and LMD students. It was distributed to males and females of different ages. The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions (open questions, questions with multiple choices, closed questions). Analysis of the retrieved questionnaires provided the following answers:

### Questions n°1: Student's Level

The first question was about learner's degree. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire were master students.

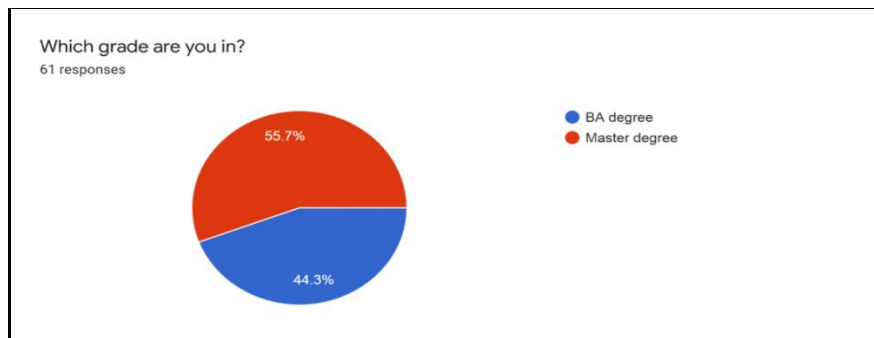
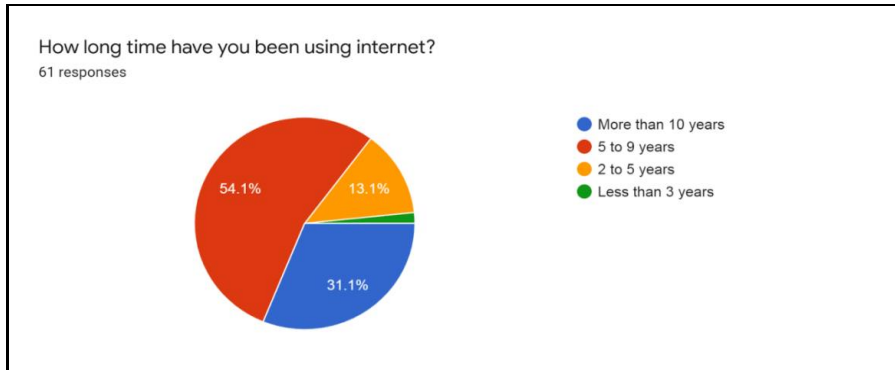


Figure 1: Students' level

The participants of this questionnaire were divided as follows:  
34 students (55.7%) in master degree and 27 students (44.3%) in BA degree.

### Question n°2: How long have you been using internet?

This question was designed to reveal the average usage of internet by students, also if they familiar and the use of it?

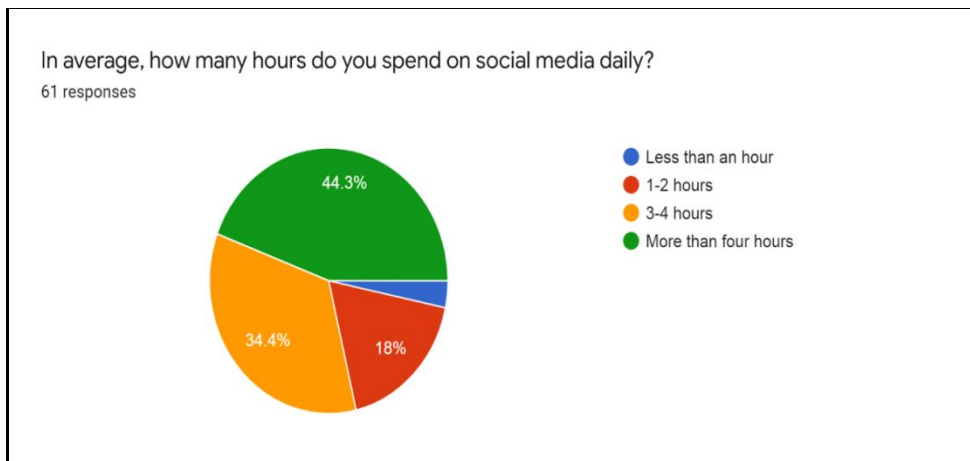


**Figure 2: The Average Usage of Internet by Students**

Figure (2) shows that 18 students (31.1%) answered "More than ten years", and there's 31 students (54.1%) said 5 to 9 years, while 8 students (13.1%) said 2 to 5 years, and 4 students answered less than 3 years.

**Question n°3: How many hours do you spend on social media?** (Multiple choices were allowed).

The aim of this question is to check the usage frequency of social media by students; also, to check to what extent students are addicted to it.



**Figure 3: Time Spent on Social Media**

The results showed that the majority of students, representing a total of 26 students (44.3%), spend more than 4 hours on social media, while 20 students (34.4%) answered about three to four hours. 10 students (18%) spend their time on social media from one to two hours and two students (3.3%) spend only less than an hour.

**Question n°4: What social networking sites do you use mostly?** (Multiple choices were

allowed)

This question was open as the students were given the freedom to answer. This question aims to reveal for the most type of social network site they prefer using.

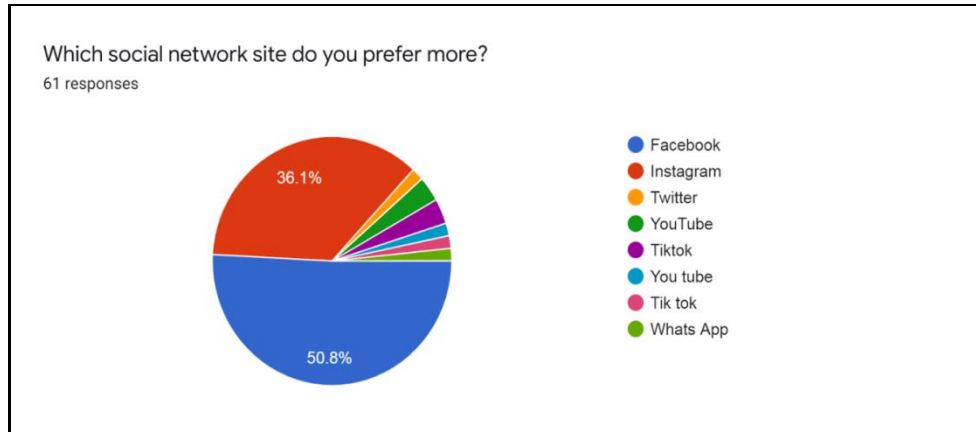


Figure 4: Students' Favorite Social Media Sites

According to the results, 30 students the majority of them (50.8%) prefer Facebook, then 22 students use Instagram with a percentage of (36.1%), and the rest (13.1%) was subdivided among the rest of SNSs like YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, and twitter.

**Question n°5: Do you use formal English in Facebook/Instagram/Twitter... ?**

This question aims to know if students use formal English when connecting or prefer informal English.

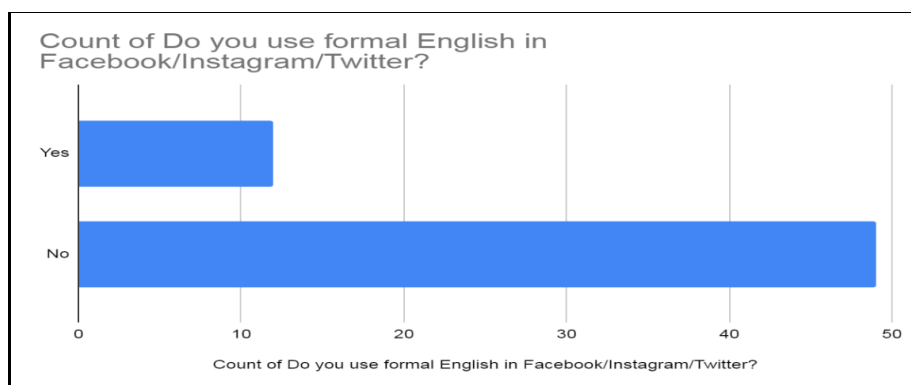


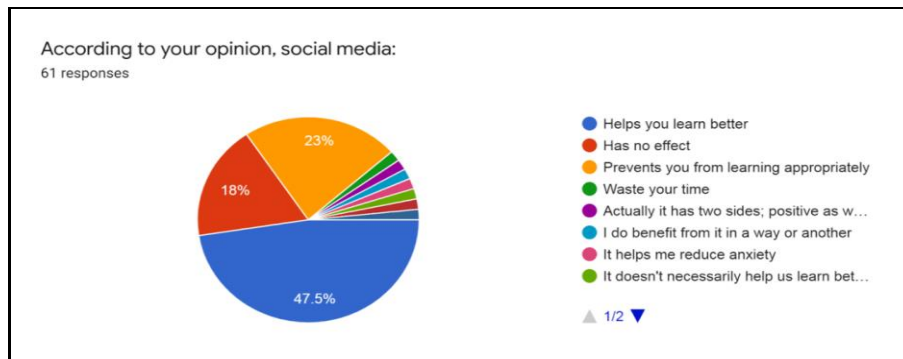
Figure 5: Students' Usage of Formal English in SNSs

According to students answers 48 one of them (80.3%) said NO they don't use formal English and only 12 students (19.7%) answered Yes.



**Question n°6:According to your opinion, social media:**

- ✓ Helps you learn better.
- ✓ Has no effect.
- ✓ Prevents you from learning English appropriately.



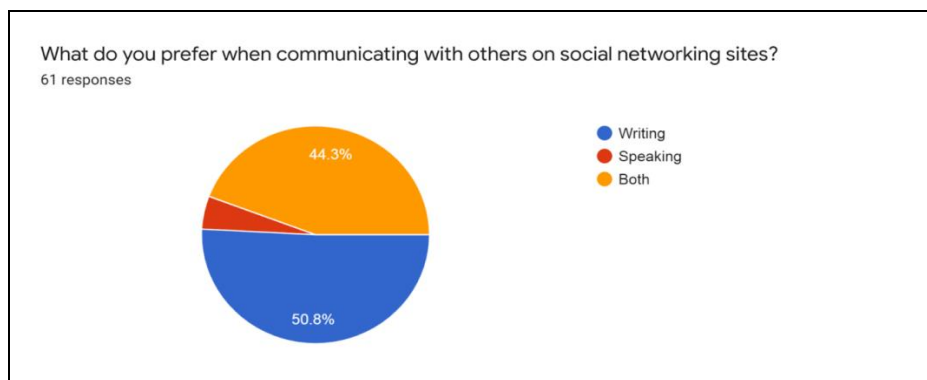
**Figure 6: Students' opinion on social media**

Learners' opinion according to their answer shows that 28 students (47.5%) of them believe that social media helps them to learn English better. 14 students (23%) declared that social media prevents them from learning appropriately and 10 students (18%) stated that social media has no effect. Other learners added:

- Actually, it has two sides; positive as well as negative side, sometimes it helps and is a beneficial tool the other times it's a waste of time.
- It doesn't necessarily help us learn better but we learn new things everyday through social media.
- In fact, social media has a huge impact on our learning and it can be both negative and positive way.

**Question n°7:What do you prefer when communicating in SNSs?**

This was provided with three choices either writing or reading or both. The question is to show the common methods used by students while interacting with each other.

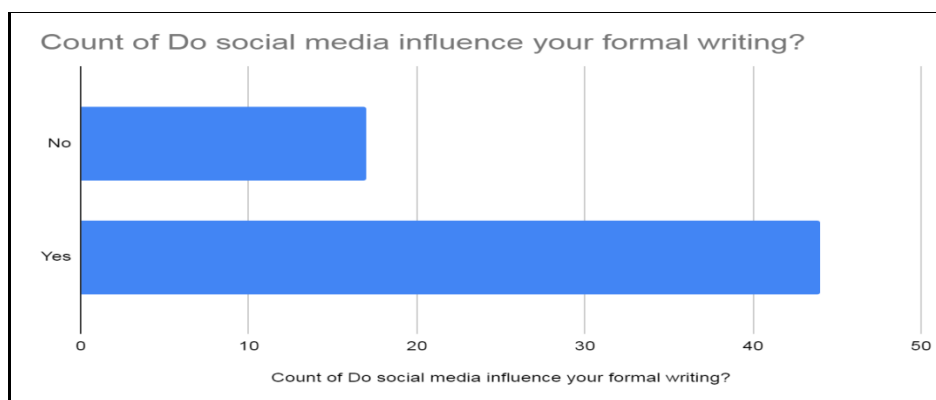


**Figure 7: The Skills Students use to Communicate with Others on SM**

Results reveal that (50.8%) of the participants choose writing, while (44.3%) choose both, and the rest with an amount of (4.9%) answered speaking.

**Question n°8: Do social media influence your formal writing?**

Participants were asked to what extent the language used in social networking sites might affect their writing and the question was optional. The aim of this question is to confirm or deny the effectiveness of social media on students' formal writing.



**Figure 8: The Influence Of Social Media On Students' Formal Writing**

Figure (8) indicates that 44 of students (72, 1%) claim that social media affect their writing skill development and 17 students (27,9%) argue that social media do not affect their writing skill.

**Question n°9:** Students who chose YES to the previous question were asked to describe whether social media influence their formal writing in a positive or negative way. Most of the answers were as follows:

If yes describe whether it is positive or negative?

35 responses

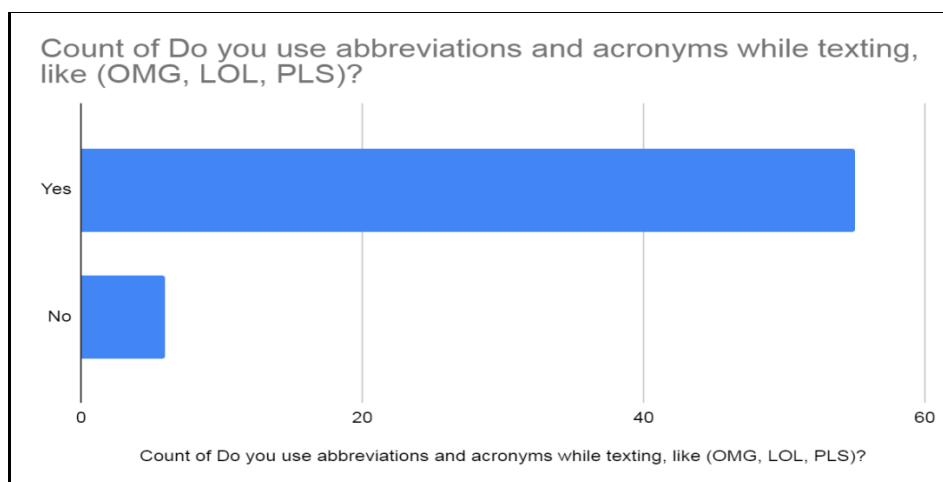
Both
Positive of course
Sometimes positively and sometimes negatively
It has both positive and negative impacts.
NEGATIVE
Social media helps to learn to fast but it has negative effect on academic writing
negative and positive
Both sides
Negative

**Figure 9: The effect of social media on students' writing**

Counting the answers of the 44 students who claimed that social media affects their writing, 17 of them stated that social media affect it negatively, and 15 stated that it affects it positively while 12 stated that it has effect them on both sides positively and negatively.

**Question n°10:** Do you use abbreviation such as “lol” “OMG” while texting?

The purpose of this question is to know the number of students use abbreviations and short forms while texting.



**Figure 10: Students' Use of Abbreviations**

Unsurprisingly, 55 students' answers were positive forming a proportion of (90%), while the 6 students' answer were negative. As shown in graph above.

**Question n°11: Why do you use abbreviations?**

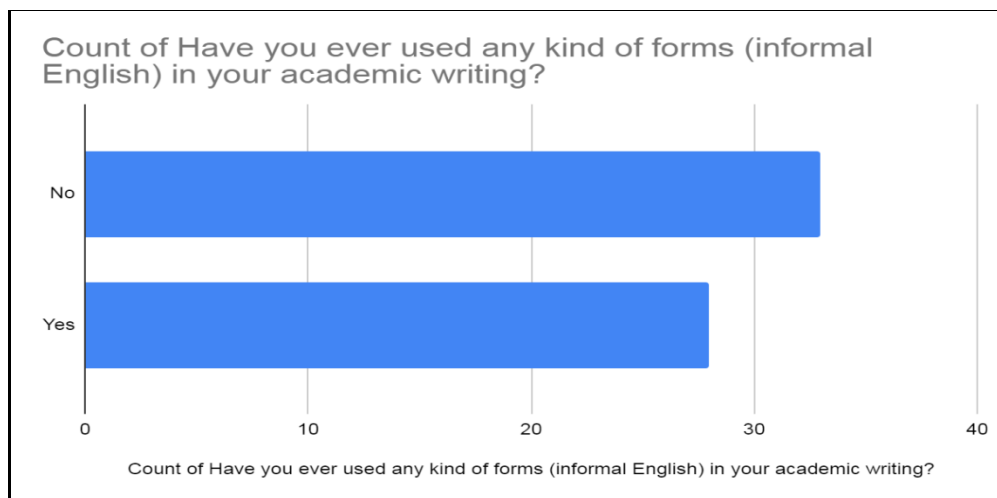
Participants were asked this question to know the reason why they use abbreviations and short forms while sending text messages. The question was open which means they were free to answer. Most of the answers pivot around the following:

- Because they are easier to use.
- It's easy to write acronyms, we gain time, as long as they are understood by all.
- Easier to communicate and trendy.
- Because I feel lazy writing the whole word!
- It is sometimes boring to write whole words or sentences and it is a habit to write faster.

According to the answers mentioned above; most of the students justified the excessive usage of abbreviation by gaining time, while others said that abbreviations are much easier to be used. Some students claimed that they forget the form of the word. Also, there were some interesting answers as the student who justified the use of abbreviations by his laziness write the whole word! Another student added that it starts to become a habit for some of them.

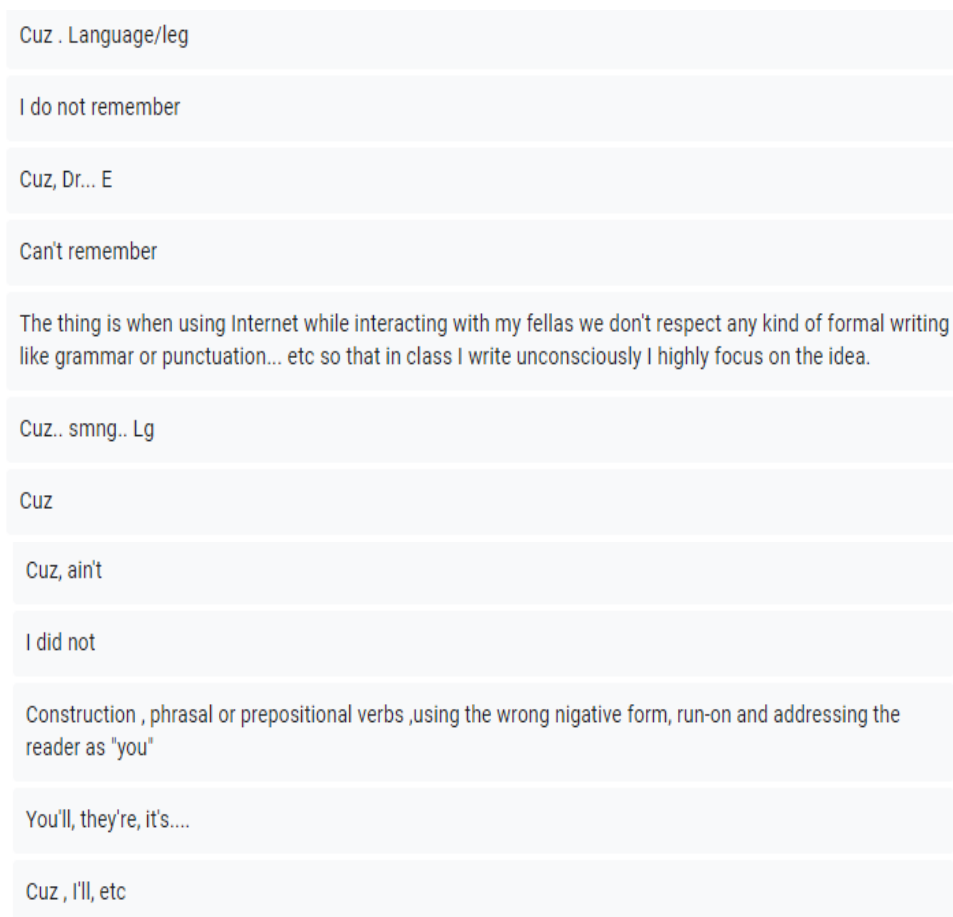
**Question n°12: Have you ever used any kind of forms (informal English) in your academic writing?**

The question is to show the negative impact of social media language on students' academic writing performance.



**Figure 11: Students Usage Of Non-Standard English In Their Academic Writing**

**Question n°13:** Linked to the last question, the students who answered " YES'' were asked to give some examples of informal English they have used in their academic writing. Most of their answers were as follows:



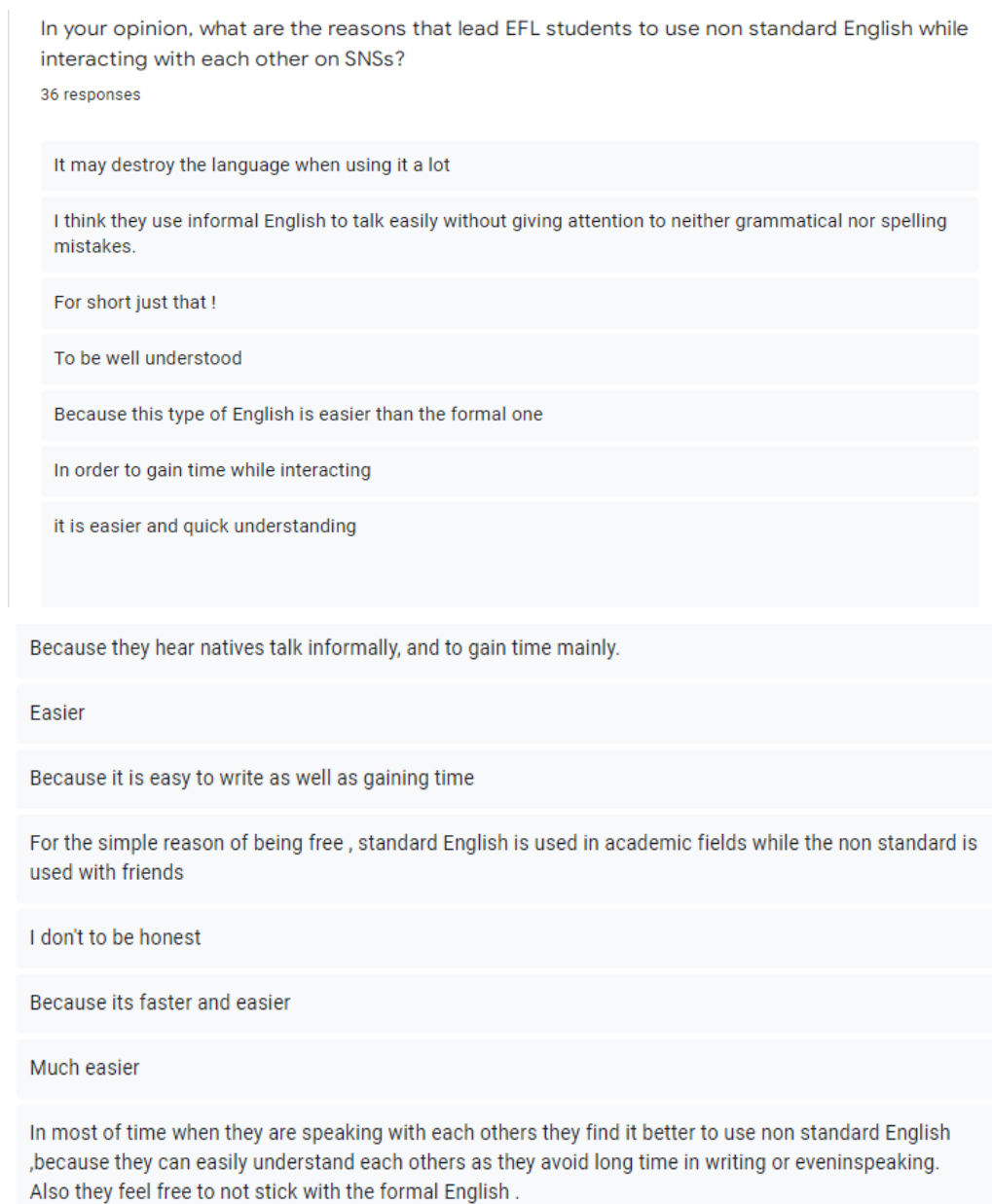
**Figure 12: Examples of Informal English Students Used in Their Academic Writing**

The results of figure12 show that (54.1%) meaning 33 of students answered "NO". they didn't use any kind of informal English in their academic writing; they are aware of the negative effect of this chat language in their writing. However, 28 of students with a percentage of (45.9%) said " YES''; it is a high percentage. Hence, this issue should not be disregarded before the situation worsen further.

Figure 13 provide some examples of informal writing used by the participants in their academic writing.

**Question n°14 :What are the reasons that led EFL students to use nonstandard English while interacting with each other on SNSs?**

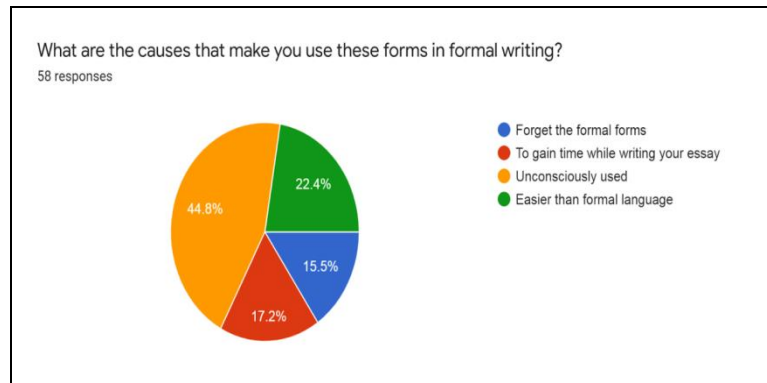
In this question students were asked to indicate the reasons why do they use non-Standard English while interact with each other on SNSs and most of their answers were as follows:



**Figure 13: Reasons of Using Non-Standard English in SNSs**

### **Question n°15: Why do you use these abbreviations in your formal writing?**

This question was asked to reveal the causes that make them use those forms in formal writing so that to extract the negative influence of social media language on student's academic writing performance.

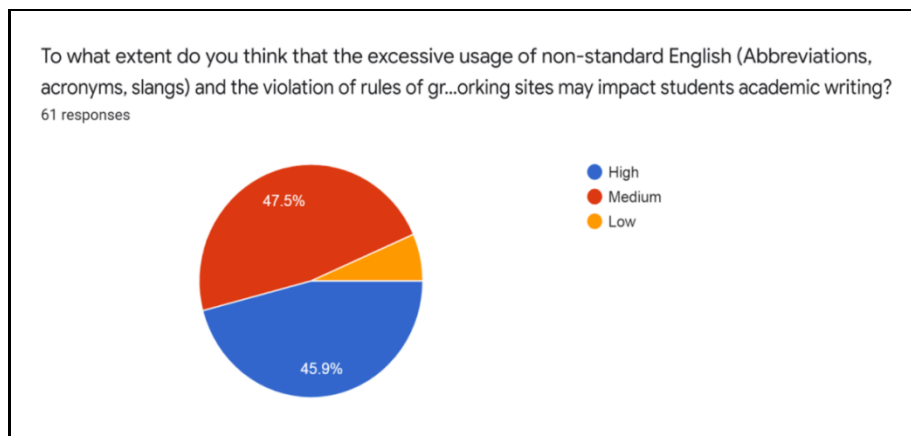


**Figure 14: The Reasons behind Students Using Abbreviations in their Formal Writing**

In figure 14, 26 of students(44.8%)claimed that the use is unconsciously done. However, 14 students (22.4%)said they use abbreviations and informal English because it's easier than formal language, while 10 students (17.2%)said the reason is to gain time when writing academic essays, and the rest 9 students (15.5%)said they forget the formal forms.

**Question n°16:To what extent do you think that the excessive usage of non-standard English (Abbreviations, acronyms, slangs) and the violation of rules of grammar on social networking sites may impact students' academic writing?**

Students were asked this question to what extent the language used in social networking sites might affect their writing and the question was optional.

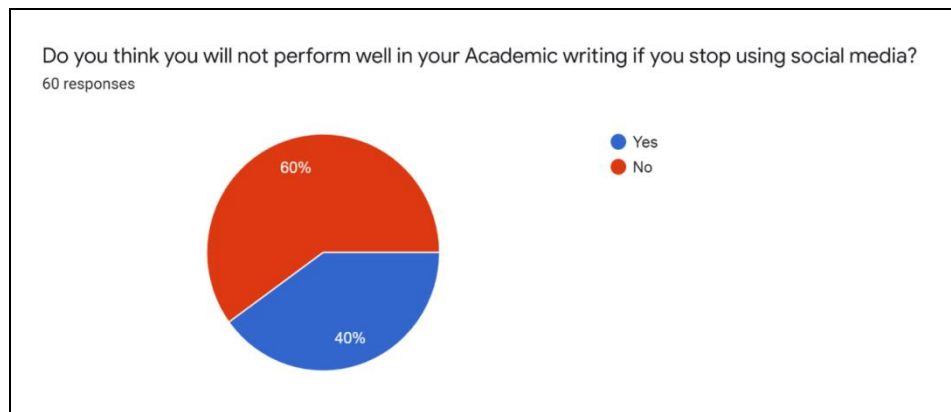


**Figure 15: The Extent of Non-Standard English Usage in Academic Writing**

As shown in graph 16, 29students (47.5%) believe that the overuse of social media language in general has a medium effect on students' academic writing, while 28students

(45.9%) claimed that the effect is high. Only 4 students (6.6%) see that the effect is mostly non-existent or has low impact.

**Question n°17:Do you think you will not perform well in your Academic writing if you stop using social media?**



**Figure 16:Students' Opinion on the Impact of Social Media on Their Writing Performance**

The results indicate that 36 students (60%) said " NO"; it does not affect their academic writing. However, 24 students (40%) said "YES", meaning, the use of social has a positive effect on their academic writing.



### 1.3 Discussion and findings

The findings showed some noteworthy results. The use of text messages in social networking sites has become a necessary and familiar matter among students, as most of the messages sent among them in their groups of studying on Facebook contain a combination of their home dialect and non-standard English.

Using the observation method, certain samples that were taken show how students communicate with each other on social networking sites. The observation method shows unconventional and different forms of writing where each person is free to use any form of his or her choice to represent his or her message. which are as follows:

- The use of letters of orthography to stand for or represent words. In example the letter *b* represents (be), the letter *u* represents (You).
- The use of more than a form to stand for an abbreviated word. For example, *tnk* and *tnx* are used to stand for thank; *Wlc* and *wlcm* stand for welcome. In the text messages, single letters and abbreviated ones were used to represent the same words. Students prefer to write words in short forms, and this does not apply only to well-known English abbreviations, but also, they resort to creating their

own abbreviations.

- The use of non-standard spelling: *good* (good).
- The use of Letter/number homophone. For instance, 4 represents (for); gr8 represents the word (great); 2 represents (to or too) ...etc.

Social media allows the individual to express themselves without any language restrictions; it gives complete freedom to use the language in any way so that there are no follow-ups that oblige the individual to use the language with its correct rules and forms. It should be taken into account that the language used in social communication may pose a great harm to English language students due to a lack of attention to grammar, punctuation marks, spelling, the use of acronyms and slang. The extent to which the language of social media has negatively impacted students is noticeable in figures 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17:

- 44 students agreed that social media affects their academic writing (Figure 8).
- 49, 9% of students claimed that they used forms of informal English in their academic writing. It is considered a high percentage. (Figure 12).
- Students gave some examples of informal English they have used in their academic writing. The most repeated answers were abbreviations, it was mentioned multiple times especially the form 'cuz' which refers to 'because'. While other students could not remember the informal forms of English they wrote unconsciously because they used to violate academic English restrictions when they chat with each other, in fact they rather focus on the idea. (Figure 13).
- Most students justified their use of abbreviations in their formal writing for various reasons, the main reasons being: These forms are used unconsciously, to gain time while writing official articles, forget word forms and it's easier to use abbreviations. This indicates that their addiction to using these abbreviations created a habit in them as they began to use them unconsciously (Figure 15).
- Most of the students believe that the excessive usage of non-standard English (Abbreviations, acronyms, slangs) and the violation of rules of grammar on social networking sites may impact students' academic writing (Figure 16).
- 40% of students think that they will not perform well in their Academic writing if they stop using social media. This indicates two things; This percentage of students are aware of how to use social media in their favour, or they are not aware that the language used in social networking sites is not entirely correct (Figure 17).

Through the two research tools used, the language that students use in text messages without giving importance to the formal English language, such as neglecting its rules, capital letters and punctuation marks ... etc. has a negative impact on their writing.

Students who make use of social media in an appropriate manner may have positive effects on their writing, while an undergraduate student who uses social media excessively and without restrictions can have negative consequences. Therefore, self-control plays a crucial role in determining the effects of social media towards their writing skill.

## **2. Summary of the Results:**

- ✓ All the participants have been using internet for a long time, and most of them are familiar with.
- ✓ Social media is very important to Students. Using it can be considered as an addiction since the majority of them uses it for more than 4 hours a day, and that could be is a critical concern.
- ✓ Generally, students prefer Facebook; it is the most familiar social networking site used by them. Then comes Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube as the most used SNS among students.
- ✓ Students don't use formal English in social media. They prefer informal English or use slang language.
- ✓ The majority of students tend to use writing for chatting; whereas, others prefer both: writing and speaking, and only few communicate through speaking, and that reveals the importance of writing in social networking sites.
- ✓ Language of social media has crept into students' way of writing, and that may be noticed through the informal writing such as abbreviations, spelling mistakes...etc. This rapid evolution may have serious consequences on the efficiency of academic writing among EFL students.
- ✓ Based on students' answers, academic writing can be highly affected by social media, and this affection is negative.

- ✓ Abbreviations are used voraciously by students in writing on social media; the concern is this may develop into a bad habit, where students are oblivious of its consequences.
- ✓ The use of social media drives EFL students to disregard the principles of formal writing; as mentioned above, the main reason is the unconsciousness which means it became a habit; moreover, student tend to use it to gain time, and because it's easier than the formal one, another cause is that they forget the words spelling. Students are not restricting to adjust grammar and writing properly anymore; they neglect and forget the principles of formal writing.
- ✓ Most of the students believe that the excessive usage of non-standard English (Abbreviations, acronyms, slangs) and the violation of rules of grammar on social networking sites may impact their academic writing.

### **III. Section Three: Implication, Recommendations, Delimitation, and limitations.**

#### **Introduction**

There is no doubt that social media has many positive features in students' daily lives, both from a personal and educational aspects, because it provides useful information. From a pedagogical perspective this research work has proven social media has a negative impact on students' academic writing performance. Thus, that raises the necessity for a quick act by teachers to sensitize their students of the situation, and to be stricter dealing with students' writing in class and papers which may alleviate it. Furthermore, increasing students' awareness of how social media contribute positively in educational aspects may be helpful. For this reason, this last section presents some of the practical implications, the recommendations, the delimitation, and the limitation of the study.

#### **1. Practical implication**

The results of this research indicate that most of the students are familiar with the internet and they have been using it for a long time which caused an addiction. Students prefer Facebook, and they think it affects positively their academic progress. Most of them prefer writing on social media platform rather than speaking. However, the studies showed that social media has a negative effect on students' academic writing performance.

## **2. Recommendations**

Based on what is found in this paper, for further studies researchers should repeat the study in a broader way. Also, it is recommended for the researcher to interview the teachers about their conception of social media and how it affects students' academic performance. Moreover, the researchers must seek an access to exam papers of students and examine them in order to better ensure credibility for the research.

## **3. Delimitation**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of social media on students' academic writing. This study narrows its scope from general media to social media. Furthermore, this study focuses only on writing skill; to make the thesis concise.

## **4. Limitation**

This research was conducted in only few months due to time constraints; as a result, there was no time to interview teachers. Moreover, it was impossible to explore students' examinations papers because of the circumstances of COVID19. It was difficult.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has described the research design of the study, the sample, the data collection instruments, and the statistical analysis of the results which proved that social media plays the main role in students' daily life whether from the personal or educational side. However, this research work proved that there is another side in which social media can affect negatively the students' educational career. EFL students of English department of Adrar have some serious difficulties in their academic writing due to the addiction of social media language.



## **General conclusion**

There is no doubt that social media has an effective role in teaching languages. The daily use of social media helps students learn and adopt new words, but on the other hand, the negative side of it cannot be denied. Social media has a different way of writing that people use when they communicate with each other. The current study examined the negative impact of social media on English language students at Ahmed Draia university of Adrar, and the reasons for their neglect of using formal English language to communication in these sites.

This dissertation consists of two chapters. The first chapter is divided into two parts, the first part entitled writing, provides an overview of writing in general and the necessary stages. The second part introduces the term social media and their role, advantages and disadvantages. This part also shed the light on the language used in SSNs and its impact on EFL students. The second chapter presents the research tools, and analysis of the collected data, also a general discussion of the findings. This chapter presents the analysis of student's questionnaire, and the observation extracted from Facebook. The chapter aimed to investigate the reasons that makes students use the language of social media instead of formal English language, and how social media language may affect learners' academic writing performance.

The obtained results showed confirmation of two hypotheses which are: Most students neglect the use of formal language while communicating with each other even in studying groups and most students agree that the language used in social media affects their writing skills.





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## Appendices

1. Which grade are you in?\*

- BA degree
- Master degree

2. How long time have you been using internet?\*

- More than 10 years
- 5 to 9 years
- 2 to 5 years
- Less than 3 years

3. Which social network site do you prefer more?\*

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Other...

4. In average, how many hours do you spend on social media daily?\*

- Less than an hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- More than four hours

5. Do you use formal English in Facebook/Instagram/Twitter?\*

- Yes
- No

6. According to your opinion, social media:\*

- Helps you learn better
- Has no effect
- Prevents you from learning appropriately
- Other...

7. What do you prefer when communicating with others on social networking sites?

- Writing
- Speaking
- Both

8. Do social media influence your formal writing?\*

- yes
- no

9. If yes describe whether it is positive or negative.

Long answer text...

10. Do you use abbreviations and acronyms while texting, like (OMG, LOL, PLS)?\*

- Yes
- No

11. If yes, why do you use them?

Long answer text...

12. Have you ever used any kind of forms (informal English) in your academic writing?

- Yes
- No

13. If yes, write some examples

Long answer text...

14. What are the causes that make you use these forms in formal writing?

- Forget the formal forms
- To gain time while writing your essay
- Unconsciously used
- Easier than formal language

15. To what extent do you think that the excessive usage of non-standard English (Abbreviations, acronyms, slangs) and the violation of rules of grammar on social networking sites may impact students academic writing?

- High
- Medium
- Low

16. In your opinion, what are the reasons that lead EFL students to use non standard English while interacting with each other on SNSs?

Long answer text...

17. Do you think you will not perform well in your Academic writing if you stop using social media?

- Yes
- No





