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Connecting Worlds: A Review of Social Media's Role in Informal English Language Learning

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Abstract

This review integrates recent empirical studies regarding the role of social media in facilitating informal English language acquisition, specifically in vocabulary enhancement, grammatical precision, writing accuracy, listening comprehension, speaking fluency, and intercultural awareness. A narrative review methodology was employed to gather studies published between 2022 and 2025 from Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science, utilizing search terms including "informal digital learning of English," "social media and language learning," and "online language communities". Peer-reviewed journal articles were prioritized, while additional scholarly sources (e.g., books and book chapters) were consulted to provide theoretical background. This left a final sample of 50 studies. The results indicate that social media offers substantial, genuine input, multimodal communication, and avenues for peer collaboration, thereby augmenting incidental vocabulary acquisition, writing proficiency, pronunciation, and cultural competence. Language-exchange platforms also help people feel more confident to speak, and improve their ability to communicate. However, the review also highlights several issues, including inconsistent content quality, a lack of pedagogical structure, distractions, limited feedback, and concerns regarding privacy and ethics. In general, the review emphasizes the importance of utilizing social media in blended learning settings. It also calls for teaching digital literacy, providing structured guidance, and implementing ethical safeguards. Subsequent research ought to investigate platform-specific efficacy, long-term educational outcomes, and the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and adaptive learning systems, on informal English language acquisition.

***Keywords*:** digital language communities, informal English language

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learning, learner engagement, social media

Introduction

Language acquisition has historically entailed following structured curricula, interacting with educators, and advancing through classes, assessments, and examinations. Cell phones and social networks have recently revolutionized the way people learn languages. Learning a language without formal instruction is now easy, fun, and possible thanks to the internet and other social networks (Otamurodova & Dadaxonova, 2025).

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, HelloTalk, and Tandem are all excellent platforms for language learners worldwide (Laor, 2022). They bring together native speakers and learners, provide learners with access to authentic language materials, and encourage them to converse naturally in everyday situations. Due to societal trends, digital spaces have become a common alternative to face-to-face communication. People learn things through social media in a way that is very different from what they learn in school. It enables people to utilize engaging materials, interact with learners from around the world, and study at their own pace and convenience (McHaney, 2023). As a result, researchers are increasingly investing effort in understanding how social media aids young people in learning English (Muftah, 2024).

Due to COVID-19, many people relied more heavily on online education, making informal learning through social media a necessity for many students. As a result, teachers, researchers, and students are examining the potential of social media, its associated problems, and the impact it may have on informal language teaching (Muhtaseb, 2022).

Importance of Informal Language Learning

It makes sense to use informal ways to learn a language because they give you more chances to study and use what you learn in school. Informal learning prioritizes learners' desires, emphasizes practical application, and involves interactions with others rather than focusing on grammatical rules and assessments (Hernández Báez, 2022). A significant benefit of informal learning is that it helps people learn how to speak and write in their own language. Students are exposed to authentic ways of communicating through slang, idioms, cultural references, and common phrases that are often not found in most textbooks. This exposure helps students learn how

to use English correctly in various social situations.

Additionally, online informal learning accommodates various learning styles that people prefer. It enables learners to decide on their subjects, their mode of learning, and their partners in interaction. Social media allows learners to apply what they learn in ways that work best for them, giving them more control and motivation. Additionally, sharing knowledge on social media enables learners to connect and communicate with people worldwide (Ahmad, 2024). Interacting with people from diverse parts of the world enables students to learn more about other cultures and develop practical communication skills. Informal learning is most beneficial for adults, immigrants, and individuals who have been excluded from formal education. Social networking enables students to enhance their English skills flexibly while completing their other tasks (Allaste et al., 2022 & Ríos-Ramírez, 2023).

Purpose and Scope of the Review

This review paper compiles and synthesizes research on the use of social media for informal English language acquisition. It seeks to demonstrate the language acquisition process through social media, distinct from conventional education, while analyzing the factors that promote and obstruct this learning experience. The goal of this review is to examine and achieve specific objectives.

- To examine the primary facets and methods of informal learning on social media.
- To investigate the impact of social media on vocabulary acquisition, grammatical proficiency, writing skills, listening comprehension, and oral communication.
- To examine how social media community members assist one another in language acquisition.
- To investigate the role of learner engagement and motivation in informal English language learning through social media platforms.
- To provide insights for language educators and suggestions for further research.

Search Strategy

The present research utilized a narrative review approach to examine how social media can be applied in informal English language learning. The concept of a narrative review was chosen since it provides the opportunity to flexibly synthesize varied and incumbent studies, which is most suitable in the case of interdisciplinary issues like the learning of digital and informal languages. An organized literature search took place in four large academic databases including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search period was between 10 January 2025 and 15 January 2025. A Boolean search strategy was implemented to find relevant studies based on certain combinations of the keywords, such as social media, digital platforms, online communities, informal language learning, informal English language learning, second language acquisition, learner engagement, and language development. The review was mainly on peer-reviewed journal articles that were published within the past 22-25 years in English. This period was selected to make sure that the review would provide the latest changes in social media technologies and their use in education. Other academic materials such as books and book chapters were used where appropriate to provide a theoretical context. Conference papers, editorials, and non-academic sources were filtered out. The choice of these databases was rooted in their in-depth coverage of studies in the field of education, linguistics, and digital learning, enhancing the quality and comprehension of the literature that has been chosen.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

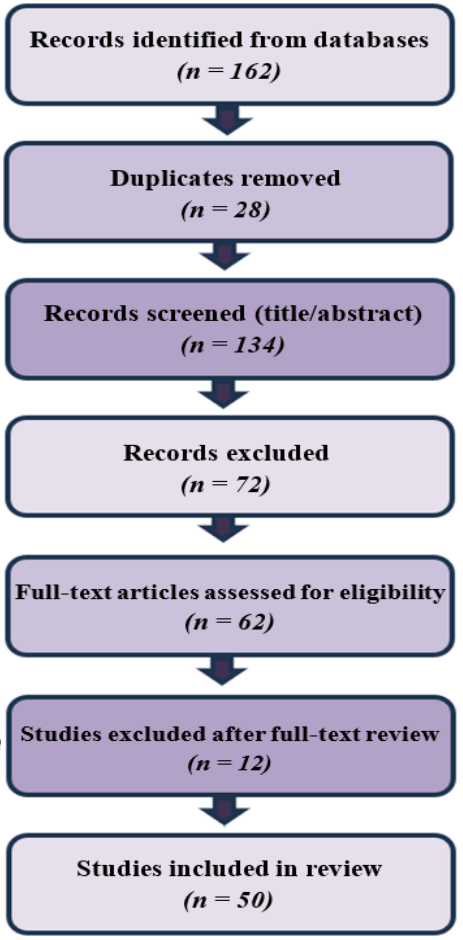
Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies. The use of clearly defined criteria helps to enhance the transparency and replicability of the review process. Studies were included if they were published between 2022 and 2025, written in English, and examined the use of social media platforms in informal English language learning contexts. Eligible studies also addressed learner engagement, language development, or improvements in language skills. Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on formal classroom instruction, were unrelated to English language learning, or did not provide empirical or analytical discussion of social media use in language learning. These exclusion criteria were applied to maintain a clear focus on informal, technology-mediated learning environments and to avoid conceptual overlap with formal instructional settings.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process involved several stages as shown in Figure 1. Initially, 162 records were identified from the databases. After removing 28 duplicates, 134 studies remained for title and abstract screening. A total of 72 studies were excluded due to lack of relevance. The remaining 62 articles were assessed through full-text screening, and 12 studies were excluded based on the eligibility criteria. Ultimately, 50 studies were included in the final review.

Figure 1

PRISMA-Style Flow Diagram Illustrating the Study Selection Process



Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data from the selected studies were systematically extracted, including authors, publication year, study context, the examined social media platforms, the investigated language skills, research methods, and key findings. This structured extraction process ensures consistency in data handling and enables meaningful comparison across studies. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the studies to be categorized according to language skills and social media platforms. Thematic analysis was chosen because it facilitates the identification of patterns and relationships across heterogeneous studies, which is essential in narrative reviews. This process helped identify recurring themes related to learner engagement, language development, and digital interaction, providing a structured understanding of how social media supports informal English language learning. Furthermore, this approach allows for the comparison and integration of findings from different research designs, thereby strengthening the overall analytical depth of the review.

Understanding Informal English Language Learning

Informal learning of English is the process of independent learning that takes place outside formal educational establishment, such as schools, universities, and language schools. Informal learning, however, is not very structured, self-directed, and is a natural aspect of our day-to-day existence (Kumar & Nanda, 2024). Cultural knowledge often develops through interpersonal communication, observation, reading, participation in hobbies, and collaboration with others. As digital technology and social media have become more prevalent, more people have engaged in this type of learning because it facilitates the practice of speaking (Muftah, 2024).

The primary feature is that casual language learning is compatible with various learning methods. People who study at their own pace can choose the subject and format of their sessions. It is very different from formal education, which has set schedules and a set curriculum. Informal learning is undertaken by the learner independently and does not require the involvement of others (Shamburg et al., 2023). Contextual learning is a key part of what Mentora offers. Casual learners often use English by talking to people, looking at social media, watching films, and posting on online forums. Practical experience improves our understanding and memory of information more effectively than the abstractions commonly used in

textbook learning (Mallek et al., 2024). In short, informal ways of learning English stress the following:

- Adaptability and learner independence
- Contextualized and purposeful language application
- Unplanned and accidental learning
- Interactive and social participation
- Integration with daily life activities and interests

Differences between Formal and Informal Learning

Differentiating between formal and informal language acquisition lets one see the advantages and constraints of various learning methods. Although they may complement one another, their structures, objectives, methodologies, and contexts are distinctly disparate as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Infographic: Formal vs Informal Learning

Aspect	Formal Learning	Informal Learning
Structure	Fixed curriculum, syllabus, and timelines	Unstructured, flexible, learner-driven
Environment	Classroom, schools, language institutes	Social media, online communities, everyday life
Motivation	Often extrinsic (exams, certifications)	Mostly intrinsic (interest, personal goals)
Content	Textbooks, controlled materials	Authentic, real-life language use
Interaction	Teacher-led, controlled	Peer-to-peer, spontaneous
Feedback	Formal assessments and corrections	Informal, peer feedback, self-correction
Language Exposure	Simplified, graded input	Natural, slang, idiomatic expressions
Assessment	Exams, tests, assignments	Self-assessment, peer validation

Benefits and Challenges of Informal Learning

Benefits of Informal English Language Learning

Authentic Language Exposure: Learners are introduced to everyday language, including unusual sayings, colloquialisms, and many variations of the language in speech. As learners experience different forms of language in this way, they prepare better for real-life use than they do with language from textbooks (Chavez, 2022).

Comprehensive Language Skill Development: Informal learning enables individuals to use reading, writing, listening, and speaking at the same time. Watching videos improves your listening, conversing in online chats improves your writing and talking, and exploring posts expands your vocabulary (Tran et al., 2024).

Learner Autonomy and Personalization: With informal learning, people can decide what they want, select the tools they need, and choose their learning methods. Independence helps students learn how to keep learning and gain confidence (Dobrzinskiene et al., 2022).

Convenience and Accessibility: The idea is to make information widely accessible, so social media is always merely a tap away on any device anywhere in the world. Because of this, students can learn a language at any time, in any place, and without much worry about expenses (Nguyen, 2023).

Challenges of Informal English Language Learning

Lack of Structure and Guidance: The absence of structured and experienced teaching may result in specific learners being unable to advance and correct their errors. Consequently, individuals may lack specific knowledge and continue to make the same mistakes.

Variable Content Quality and Reliability: There is a wide range in the quality of the material shared on social media, and students do not always know that the information they get is accurate (Soyoof et al., 2023).

Limited Feedback and Assessment: Informal learning events hardly ever use a set process for feedback and assessment. People may not learn about their blunders promptly, so their imperfections can become habits.

Distractions and Information Overload: Being highlighted and promoted, social media entertainment makes it easy to be unfocused. Because of a large amount of non-educational content, viewers may take

longer to learn something successfully. Even more, sorting through all the information you get daily can be exhausting.

Privacy and Safety Concerns: Communication with strangers on the internet can be risky from the perspective of privacy. Online safety and good digital manners matter to learners.

Digital Divide and Unequal Access: Not all learners can access the internet and electronic devices which keeps them from being part of online informal study. It can enhance educational differences among learners (Soyoof et al., 2023).

Fluctuating Motivation: Even though informal learning is good for motivation, not having a set routine can cause some learners to drift away (Naghdipour, 2022).

Social Media as a Language Learning Tool

Social media has developed into a vibrant platform for language acquisition, providing engaging and interactive experiences. It allows individuals to interact with genuine material and converse with native speakers instantaneously. Figure 2 shows the informal learning process using social media.

Overview of Popular Social Media Platforms

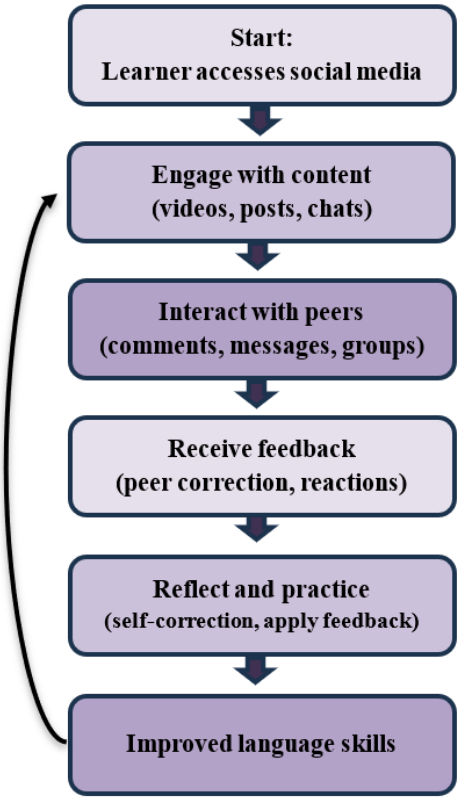
Since social media is so widely used worldwide, it offers a busy environment for online chats and a variety of content. Platforms like these have grown past social networking and now offer many ways for informal language learning, including English. Figure 3 shows the usage-wise distribution of social media platforms for English language learning.

Facebook

The world's largest social network, Facebook, is used by billions of daily users. This platform allows language learners to join English groups, engage in discussions, upload their material, and link with native English speakers. This service supports reading and speaking English, through comment sections, live streams, and chat messenger. Additionally, Facebook hosts numerous language-learning communities and educational pages that provide learners with grammar guidance, vocabulary enrichment activities, and opportunities for interactive language practice (Kraus et al., 2022).

Figure 2

Flowchart of Informal English Learning Process



YouTube

With over a billion users, YouTube is the world's preeminent video site and now it helps people learn. English learners can find endless videos covering grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. Videos support learning by applying both our sense of sight and hearing. Besides, supportive tools such as comments and live chats add opportunities for interaction between students and community members (Shoufan & Mohamed, 2022).

Instagram

Young language learners are drawn to Instagram mainly because it stands out visually. English teachers and content creators take advantage of Instagram stories, reels, and posts to share helpful tidbits of the English

language, including new words, idioms, and pronunciation tips. By search-viewing hashtags, learners can find valuable content, and with direct messaging, they can interact with teachers and classmates (Salunke & Jain, 2022).

Twitter/X

Users can create short messages and tweets that fit up to 280 characters on Twitter/X. Since posts are relatively short, people have to write and read with brevity in mind. People can find information by following English language educators, joining in on language challenges, and discussing popular subjects (Murthy, 2024).

TikTok

This app is rising rapidly due to its collection of short, artistic videos supported by music and voices. People come to TikTok now for tips on English, understanding slang words, and learning to speak the language. Since TikTok is fun and fast, it catches the attention of younger learners and lets them hear and use informal language (McCashin & Murphy, 2023).

Applications for Language Exchange (Tandem, HelloTalk)

In addition to widely used social media platforms, specific applications facilitate direct connections between learners and native speakers worldwide. Utilizing the chat, voice, and video features of HelloTalk and Tandem allows for immediate practice of conversational English. Individuals utilize these applications to exchange knowledge, share cultural insights, and obtain personalized feedback that caters to their needs. Table 2 summarizes the social media platforms and their features (Yin & Fathi, 2025).

Table 2

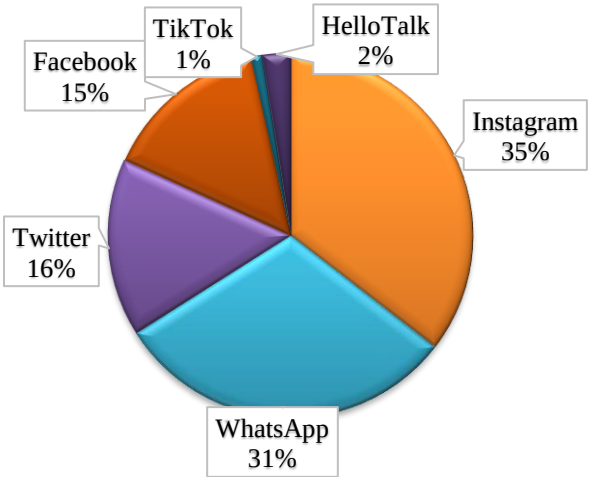
Popular Social Media Platforms and Their Features for Language Learning

Platform	Main Features	Language Skills Supported	Typical Learning Activities
Facebook	Groups, live videos, posts, chats	Writing, reading, speaking	Discussion groups, peer interaction
YouTube	Videos, subtitles, comments	Listening, pronunciation, vocabulary	Watching lessons, tutorials, vlogs

Platform	Main Features	Language Skills Supported	Typical Learning Activities
Instagram	Photos, short videos (Reels), Stories	Vocabulary, writing, listening	Flashcards, mini-lessons, challenges
Twitter	Microblogging (280 characters), hashtags	Writing, reading	Tweets, language challenges, discussions
TikTok	Short videos, duets, challenges	Speaking, listening, vocabulary	Pronunciation tips, slang tutorials
HelloTalk	Text, voice, video chat with native speakers	Speaking, listening, writing	Real-time language exchange

Figure 3

Social Media Usage for English Language Learning



Features of Social Media that Facilitate Language Learning

Many features of social media make it an excellent place for informal learning of English. As a result, students become more involved, exchange ideas, and learn these new languages more easily and in the most suitable way.

Instant Communication and Interactivity

Interaction is a significant strength of social media. Using comments,

chats, and video calls allows learners to talk to each other. Communicating instantly and in groups makes it easy for learners to practice immediately, get answers promptly, and have fun (Ramzan et al., 2023).

Multimedia Content

Different types of content, such as text, pictures, audio, videos, and broadcasts, are supported on social networks. Multimodality supports all forms of language development since it uses visual, auditory, and physical methods. Videos teach people to listen and talk clearly; memes and infographics help them recall essential vocabulary (Yu et al., 2022).

User-Generated Content

Traditional learning tools for languages may involve organizations composing the content, but for social media, no such constraint exists since an average person most often develops the material (Yu et al., 2022).

Personalization and Autonomy

Users receive suggested materials using data from their preferences to make learning more unique. As a result, students become more motivated, and procedures focus on individual learners (Mujeeb et al., 2026).

Building Community and Peer Support

Social media helps students come together, collaborate, exchange learning materials, and practice what they are learning. Engaging with peers allows people learning from home to connect with others.

Gamification and Challenges

Many social media companies include badges, challenges, and leaderboards in their apps. Actively engaging and motivating users is possible in language learning thanks to these features used by pages and apps in the form of interactive quizzes, competitions, and streaks.

Convenience and Accessibility

One can participate in social learning anytime from one's smartphone, tablet, and computer. Since it is so flexible, learning happens at convenient times for everyone.

Error Correction and Feedback

Several communities and sites welcome feedback with comments, peer

help, and expert advice. Even though it is not organized, this advice supports learners in finding their errors and getting better.

Cultural Relevance and Viral Trends

Trending topics, popular memes, and viral content sold by social media help learners see what people use and discuss most recently. This setting enables students to understand and follow new language and social behavioral changes. Table 3 summarizes these features (Yu et al., 2022).

Table 3

Social Media Features Supporting Language Learning

Feature	Description	Learning Benefit
Interactivity	Real-time chats, comments, and video calls	Enhances speaking and writing practice
Multimedia Content	Videos, audio, images, memes	Supports varied learning styles and skills
User-Generated Content	Authentic language by diverse users	Exposure to real-life language use
Gamification	Badges, challenges, leaderboards	Boosts motivation and consistent practice
Personalization	Algorithm-based content recommendations	Learner autonomy and engagement
Peer Feedback	Corrections and support in communities	Error correction and confidence building

Types of Social Media Language Learning Activities

There are many ways for people to informally learn English through social media. Through these activities, students use language in real ways to build their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Engaging with Content

Watching videos, reading content, and tuning into podcasts on social media allows learners to hear different languages. Studying accurate content can expand one's word knowledge, help one understand the reading material, and introduce one to different cultures. One can practice listening naturally by watching tutorials on YouTube, stories on Instagram, and videos on TikTok.

Content Creation

Developing posts, stories, videos, and blogs in English helps one improve one's language skills by doing activities independently. This activity improves one's knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, develops writing, and adds to a person's confidence. Students and teachers can show creativity on Instagram and TikTok using audio and visual tools.

Peer Feedback and Correction

Participants are usually given feedback about their language through comments and facial reactions from peers. Because of this interaction, students can fix their mistakes and get helpful feedback (Zhang & Zou, 2022).

Tandem Practice and Language Exchange

Apps and specific social media sites make it easy for people to have live language conversations. Taking part in voice and video calls improves one's way of talking, hearing and understanding others, and develops one's speaking skills in a targeted context.

Following Educators and Influencers

Many resources, lessons, and tips about language are shared by teachers, linguists, and creators on social media nowadays. This allows learners to learn directly from experts, be inspired by content, and work through short tutorials with no formal structure (Zhang & Zou, 2022).

Cultural Engagement

On social media, we can experience news, learn about traditions, find humor, and gain insight into people's everyday lives. Using culture-based resources increases how clearly learners understand the contexts in which English is spoken and used.

Using Forums and Hashtags

Hashtags guide learners to relevant information and help them link up with others in discussions on topics they care about. People ask questions, provide information, and troubleshoot on X and other forums (Degner et al., 2022).

The Role of Social Media in Enhancing English Language Skills

This section aims to examine the content, list the ways and advantages of this kind of learning, and explore how English language skills are built through social media. Learners have many ways to strengthen their vocabulary, writing, grammar, listening skills, speaking skills, and understanding of different cultures. Rather than functioning in isolation, these skills are often developed simultaneously through interactive and multimodal engagement on social media platforms, as suggested across multiple studies.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Usage

Proven language skills are based on an extensive vocabulary that helps individuals talk clearly and understand well. Through its many videos, images, comments, and conversations, social media provides multiple opportunities to discover new language.

Exposure to Authentic and Relevant Vocabulary

People on social media communicate daily, helping learners listen to native accents of the language. While textbooks can contain old and unrelated vocabulary, social networks show us the words and phrases that are used by people every day. Using hashtags on Twitter and following trends on TikTok often helps us discover words and phrases about social happenings, modern technologies, and youth bands. Words are presented in real contexts through stories, comments, memes, and videos, making it easier to remember. When people use contextual learning, they are more likely to understand the fine points, meanings, and usage of words, something that often seems more complex with lists of vocabulary words (Alimbetova, 2024). In comparison to traditional vocabulary learning, which often relies on memorization, this approach emphasizes contextual and functional usage, suggesting a shift from passive to active vocabulary acquisition.

Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Mostly, students learn new words on social media simply by noticing them as they follow their favorite posts. Watching cooking videos and travel blogs in English may teach learners cooking and geographic vocabulary without knowing it. While Teng (2023) highlights the effectiveness of multimodal input in vocabulary retention, incidental learning suggests that

not all vocabulary acquisition is intentional, indicating that both structured and unstructured learning processes coexist on social media.

Interactive Vocabulary Practice

Social media makes people use more vocabulary when they post, comment, and message. Newly learned words are used in honest conversations, which helps retain them in memory. Certain educators and websites host vocabulary challenges, quizzes, and daily word-of-the-day activity to encourage learners to keep up with new words. This interactive use of vocabulary contrasts with more passive exposure, indicating that active participation may lead to deeper retention compared to mere content consumption.

Multimodal Learning Enhances Vocabulary

We learn vocabulary with social media by using visuals, audio, and text together. With infographics, emojis, subtitled videos, and pronunciation, social media supports vocabulary learning. Instagram images that explain common idioms and words can strengthen a learner's ability to remember them well (Teng, 2023). This aligns with cognitive theories of multimedia learning, which suggest that combining visual and auditory input enhances memory; however, it also raises questions about cognitive overload when too much input is presented simultaneously.

Improving Grammar and Writing Skills

To communicate well, we need to use writing and grammar accurately. Since content on social media is interactive and comes from different users, learners have many opportunities to improve their speaking skills in real situations.

Authentic Writing Practice

While traditional classroom work sets out stipulated writing exercises, social media helps learners write in formats used by real people, such as comments, posts, messages, blogs, captions, and tweets. Our focus on the real-world drives learners to care about being clear and original. Young learners play with different ways of speaking, tone and style suitable for each group they meet (Alghamdy, 2023). In contrast to formal writing tasks, this informal practice encourages creativity and fluency, although it may sometimes compromise grammatical accuracy due to the casual nature of communication.

Immediate and Diverse Feedback

Comments and messages from peers, native speakers, and teachers can be found immediately on social media. Using this chat allows students to overcome issues with grammar, organize sentences, and enhance word selection. On certain websites, built-in spell checkers and grammar advice help fix our writing skills. However, unlike formal feedback from instructors, peer feedback may vary in quality and reliability, suggesting a potential limitation in depending solely on social media for grammatical development.

Learning Grammar Through Quality Input

Through carefully created content from skillful users, students get exposed to grammar improvement. Often, posts by language educators on social media cover questions about grammar and point out the most common learner errors. Hashtags like #EnglishGrammar and #LearnEnglish collect educational content in accessible formats (Kitila et al., 2023). This supports the idea that exposure to accurate input can facilitate implicit grammar learning, although it depends heavily on the credibility of the content creators.

Contextualized Grammar Usage

Social media focuses on using grammar rules in impromptu honest conversations. Grammar tools are shown to students in daily language use, helping them better use English verb tenses, articles, prepositions, and sentence construction. Compared to rule-based instruction, this contextualized approach may enhance communicative competence, however, it may not fully replace explicit grammar teaching for complex structures.

Multimedia Tools for Speaking and Listening Practice

Working on listening and speaking skills is usually much harder outside intensive learning programs. Learning to speak a new language can be made fun and simple for students by using social media's many multimedia options.

Authentic Listening Materials

There are many ways to find real input, like watching YouTube videos, listening to TikTok reels, checking out Instagram Live, and hearing voice

messages on apps for exchanging languages. The audio in various lessons features many different accents, speaking speeds, and types of speech, similar to real life. The understanding and the growth of our vocabulary get a boost from subtitles and transcripts often found in videos (Kitila et al., 2023). Compared to classroom audio materials, which are often simplified, these authentic inputs provide more realistic exposure, although they may be challenging for lower-level learners.

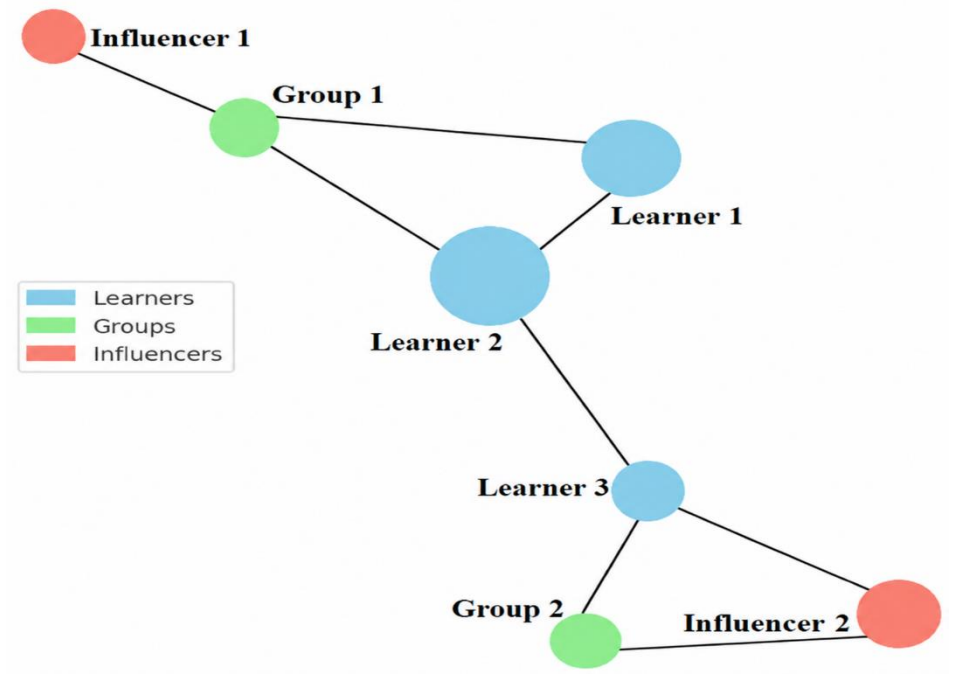
Exposure to Cultural Variation in Speech

Exposing learners to speakers outside their country lets them grasp accents, catch slang phrases, and pick up on cultural meanings. This highlights the sociocultural dimension of language learning, where exposure to diverse speech communities enhances pragmatic competence, although it may also lead to confusion due to varying language norms.

Community Development and Social Engagement in Language Learning

Figure 4

Network Diagram: Language Learning Communities



Social networking with others is important for good language learning, especially for learning online. The best way to become good at a language is by joining others in conversations and group activities. This section aims to examine the effects of exchanging experiences, joining learning groups, and listening to influencers on language learning using social media sites, as shown in Figure 4.

Peer Interaction and Collaborative Learning

The Importance of Social Interaction in Language Learning

The idea that learning a language depends on social interactions is proven by sociocultural theorists, mainly by Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Alghamdy, 2024). In such situations, learners can move into their ZPD and achieve tasks slightly too complicated, with some support from knowledgeable and native speakers. Now, social media makes it easy to communicate with peers worldwide, giving many opportunities for teamwork in learning (Alharbi, 2023).

Types of Peer Interaction on Social Media

Ways to interact on social media include direct confident messages, group chats, forum debates, and collaboration in content creation. By interacting with other learners, participants can practice language, talk through concepts, and see how their answers score (Thorne & Tasker, 2023).

Text-based interactions such as instant messaging, forum discussions, and comment sections provide rich opportunities for reading and writing practice. For example, learners participate in discussions resembling real-life conversations on Reddit and Facebook groups.

Oral communication occurs via live streams, video calls and voice messages. Apps such as Tandem and HelloTalk are effective in matching learners to talk with one another, boosting speaking and conversation skills, especially pronunciation (Nouria & Fatima, 2024).

Benefits of Collaborative Learning

Working together within a group to achieve similar language goals is greatly assisted by social media. Together, students might write stories, review one another's posts, create videos, and join in language challenges. These partnerships improve students' mentality since they share ideas, negotiate their understanding, and work together to develop knowledge.

When we explain lessons in a shared language, things can be much simpler and easier to understand (Huang & Lajoie, 2023).

Challenges in Peer Interaction

Though social media peer interaction can be helpful, it sometimes creates problems. It is common to experience problems stemming from differences in language ability, differences in culture, and other misunderstandings. Besides, some students may be too hesitant to participate because they are not confident enough. Creating kind and unbiased spaces allows the most gain from learning with others (Huang & Lajoie, 2023).

Language Learning Communities

People and educators who love to speak and learn English form language-learning communities on social media. Learning communities can be set up officially on Facebook, or informally using hashtags on Twitter and Instagram. Members use online communities to connect, support one another, be motivated, and take part in group learning experiences (Baralt et al., 2022). They build online communities to give learners emotional support and relieve the loneliness typical of studying alone.

Types of Learning Communities

- Interest-based groups focus on business English, TOEFL and IELTS preparation, and travel English.
- Skill-specific groups concentrate on particular language skills, such as reading clubs, writing workshops, and pronunciation practice.
- Cultural exchange groups allow learners to interact with native speakers and gain cultural insights.
- Motivational groups use challenges, progress tracking, and peer encouragement to keep learners engaged.

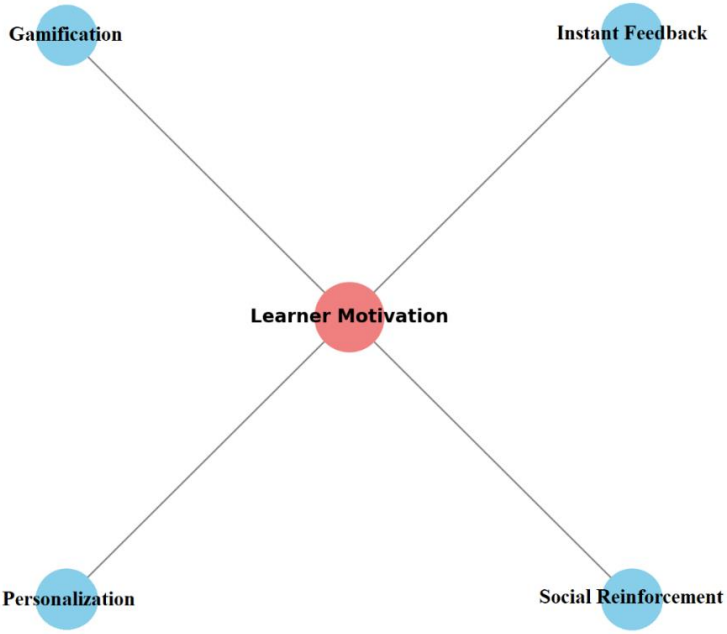
Social Media Engagement and Motivation

The power of social media as an informal English learning tool is increased by how it keeps learners interested and motivated. Language learning is challenging if done informally since it often requires us to stick with it all on our own (Mariotti, 2024). Social media supports these challenges using strategies and interactive features to inspire students to participate, practice,

and build their language ability. Figure 5 shows how gamification, instant feedback, social interaction, and personal details on social media help learners stay motivated.

Figure 5

Motivation Model



Interactive Content and Gamification

Understanding Gamification in Language Learning

Gamification is the practice of including game elements in websites and apps to help people stay interested and motivated. Social media language learning combines points, badges, leaderboards, and active puzzles to make learning more pleasant. Using gamification, teachers help learners achieve more, enjoy rivalry, and receive public notice, encouraging them to practice a new language. Compared to traditional learning, using video games in education turns basic tasks into engaging and enjoyable experiences.

Considerations for Effective Gamification

If gamification is to work, it must be appropriately set up and designed with student learning in mind. The primary concern is that paying strong

attention to competitions might bring down some learners' confidence and poorly built tasks may not match the development stage of the learners. Valuable and interesting games help diverse learners by giving them the right amount of motivation (Montiel-Ruiz et al., 2023).

Drawbacks and Limitations of Using Social Media for Language Learning

Since social media offers lots of real-life language materials, joins users in communities, and helps customize learning, it is very effective for informal English learning. Even so, it does encounter some obstacles and limits. Both learners and teachers should know these issues to get the best value from social media and avoid these problems (De la Vall & Araya, 2023). This section examines ways to counter the most significant issues regarding the use of social media for language learning, including avoiding distractions, and managing time, privacy, and ethics, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Benefits vs Challenges of Using Social Media for English Learning

Benefits	Challenges
Access to authentic language input	Variable content quality
Interactive and immediate feedback	Distraction and time management issues
Flexible, learner-centered and personalized	Privacy and ethical concerns
Motivational features like gamification	Lack of structured progression and guidance
Cultural exposure and pragmatic learning	Potential misinformation and cultural misunderstandings

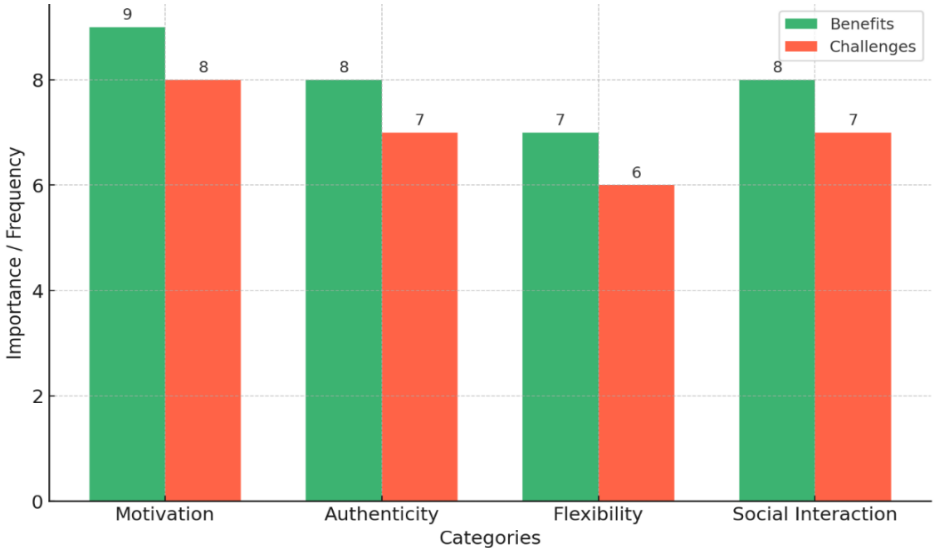
Overcoming Limitations and Future Technology Trends

Misinformation

Misinformation can be a big problem when using social media. Incorrect grammar, confusing advice on language, and culturally inappropriate material are common issues that learners may find. It is important to review our learning sources and ask qualified language teachers before picking up bad language habits (Muhammed T & Mathew, 2022). Figure 6 compares the benefits and challenges of social media usage.

Figure 6

Benefits vs Challenges: Use of Social Media for Language Learning



Distraction and Time Management

The large number of engaging videos and posts on social media can take learners' attention away from their educational work (Siebers et al., 2022). People learning should plan specific study times and try to avoid irrelevant content during this time.

Privacy Issues: Accidentally sharing private information on social networks leaves people's privacy at risk. Educators and technology providers should show users how to use the platform safely by encouraging them to use private accounts.

Emerging Trends in Language Learning Technology

AI and Personalized Learning

Running on AI, such tools can identify how far students have come and offer personalized content. Some applications could immediately adjust to the users' needs by identifying their weak and strong points (Lampropoulos, 2025).

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Learners may soon practice English by interacting with virtual 3D

characters who represent actual life situations (AbuSahyon et al., 2023).

Chatbots and Language Bots

Such tools now rely on chatbots to help learners simulate honest discussions with local people. These bots could improve participants' grammar and vocabulary, and show them how to act and speak in specific conversations.

Distraction and Time Management Challenges

The Double-Edged Nature of Social Media

Social media keeps users engaged by sending many alerts, offering endless content pages, and providing entertainment. These tools help us interact with many languages, but their constant notifications can get in the way of paying attention to our lessons, as learners can easily turn to things like memes and videos (Zhang & Mao, 2025).

Difficulty Maintaining Discipline and Consistency

Learning a language well depends on our commitment to do it day after day. Even so, because social media is so informal, it can be challenging for students to work out effective study habits.

Information Overload

Since social media offers a tremendous amount of content, learners can feel overstimulated. In trying to sort through different updates, videos, remarks, and commercials, learners may experience information overload (Shi et al., 2024).

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

Privacy Risks

Learning a language on social media usually means exchanging personal details, talking to strangers, and joining public discussions. As a result, these activities put users at risk by causing data breaches, revealing personal identity, and allowing bad actors to contact them (Kaimara et al., 2022). Some learners, often children and people easily influenced, might inadvertently share secret details about themselves using a forum. Linguistic exchanges and apps that a third party owns may cause concerns about user data being safe and their exploitation of user information.

Ethical Issues in Online Behavior

Since social media is informal and managed mainly by users, there are many questions about fairness in content, ownership, and respect among messages. Those learning and teaching languages should be careful. If we plagiarize by copying someone else's work without giving credit to the original creator, it may lead to academic dishonesty (Abdelhalim & Alsehibany, 2025).

Future Directions and Implications for Educators

The informal relationship between social media and the learning of English presents opportunities and challenges to educators and institutions. As social media is changing rapidly, educators ought to modify their classes to exploit its advantages and overcome its limitations. This section analyses how social media can be implemented in schools, explains how social media activities can be practically prepared to be used in language learning, and mentions where further research can be found, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Future Directions for Educators in Social Media Language Learning

Direction	Description	Implication for Educators
Integrate social media in curriculum	Blend formal instruction with social media tools	Develop blended learning models and digital literacy
Design pedagogically sound activities	Use multimedia, interaction, collaboration	Create engaging, scaffolded, learner-centered tasks
Promote learner autonomy	Encourage self-directed content consumption and creation	Provide guidance and scaffolding
Address digital literacy and ethics	Teach privacy, responsible online behavior	Include digital citizenship in curricula
Research effectiveness	Study impact across skills, populations, and platforms	Inform best practices and technology use

Integrating Formal Education with Social Media

Educators can allow students to collaborate, access and share resources, and support their learning after classroom sessions, via Facebook groups, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Teacher Training

To make social media integration a success, educators should be familiar with digital pedagogy, social media, and how to conduct online classes. Programs for professional development should give teachers the ability to use the right tools, create interactive lessons, manage online discussions, and solve problems concerning privacy and misleading information.

Policy and Institutional Support

Schools should establish clear policies and install the required technology to help students and teachers manage social media. Through ethical use, privacy, and digital citizenship guidance, learners would be safe and follow sensible practices.

Designing Effective Social Media Language Learning Strategies

Pedagogically Sound Activities and Content

Teaching a language on social media works best if we keep lessons educational and, at the same time, enjoyable. All activities should match the main learning objectives and gradually help students develop the necessary skills. Educators may use social media for word learning activities, joint writing tasks, debates, and activities where students interact in real life.

Addressing Accessibility and Learner Diversity

Designers of this kind of learning need to consider the variety of learners' backgrounds, the extent of their knowledge, and their equipment. Everyone can participate when learners have various ways to enter and can practice a range of tasks.

Areas for Future Research

- *Evaluating Impact and Effectiveness:* More research is required to show whether social media can help English learners from various groups.
- *Understanding Learner Behavior and Engagement:* Identifying learners' interactions with social media language resources, what they like, what

challenges they meet, and how they become engaged helps us improve language learning.

- *Digital Literacy and Teacher Training:* Studying the best methods for giving educators social media training will help implement this well.
- *Technological Innovations:* Together, investments in currently emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) with social media would help learners gain meaningful and personalized experiences with language apps.

Evidence Synthesis of Social Media Outcomes in Informal English Learning

Table 6 presents some of the major empirical research studies that have been conducted to analyze the role of social media in informal learning of the English language. The table aligns particular learning outcomes, including vocabulary growth, grammar enhancement, pronunciation, intercultural competence, and learner confidence, to the studies that support these assertions. This synthesis helps to avoid overgeneralization and explain how various studies can help us understand language learning mediated by social media.

Table 6

Evidence Synthesis of Social Media Outcomes in Informal English Language Learning

Study	Social Media Platform	Research Context	Reported Learning Outcome	Evidence Type	Critical Insight / Comparison
Kaimara et al. (2022)	Social media communities	University learners	Increased vocabulary exposure and retention	Survey & learner reports	Relies on self-reported data, which may overestimate effectiveness compared to experimental studies (e.g., Ramzan et al., 2023).
Hernández Báez (2022)	Instagram / TikTok	Informal digital learning	Improved pronunciation through short video repetition	Qualitative observations	Supports findings from video-based learning studies (Muhtaseb,

Study	Social Media Platform	Research Context	Reported Learning Outcome	Evidence Type	Critical Insight / Comparison
					2022), but lacks measurable outcomes.
Muhtaseb (2022)	YouTube	Self-directed learners	Better listening comprehension and pronunciation	Case study	Provides in-depth insight but limited generalizability compared to larger-scale studies.
Kumar and Nanda (2024)	Facebook groups	Online peer interaction	Grammar improvement through discussion and feedback	Mixed-method	Contrasts with video-based studies by emphasizing interaction rather than content consumption.
Yu et al. (2022)	Language exchange apps	Cross-cultural communication	Intercultural competence and pragmatic awareness	Interview data	Highlights social interaction as key, unlike studies focusing on passive exposure (e.g., TikTok-based learning).
Ramzan et al. (2023)	TikTok / short videos	Youth learners	Vocabulary acquisition and engagement	Experimental study	Provides stronger empirical evidence compared to survey-based studies, supporting causal impact.
Ahmad (2024)	Digital language communities	ESL learners	Increased learner confidence and motivation	Survey	Focuses on affective outcomes, which complement but do not directly measure language proficiency

Study	Social Media Platform	Research Context	Reported Learning Outcome	Evidence Type	Critical Insight / Comparison
					gains.
Murthy (2024)	Social networking platforms	Informal learning spaces	Improved communicative competence	Qualitative study	Aligns with Ahmad (2024) on social benefits but lacks quantitative validation.
Montiel-Ruiz et al. (2023)	Online language networks	International learners	Cultural awareness and intercultural interaction	Mixed methods	Bridges both qualitative and quantitative findings, offering more balanced evidence.
Bhavani and Shankar (2023)	Mobile social apps	Self-paced learning	Grammar and writing improvement	Experimental design	Supports structured learning benefits, contrasting with informal-only approaches.

Conclusion

This review article examines the advantages that social media provides to English learners when utilized beyond the classroom setting. The report shows that social media can be used to learn real language, communicate with other people, and find resources relevant to your culture. These help people learn new words, write correctly, use grammar, listen, talk, and understand how to communicate with others. Making sure users can connect on social media platforms is vital for encouraging collaborative learning and feedback. In addition, influencers and content creators help provide relevant and engaging knowledge in an accessible manner. Using these strategies, social media lets learners concentrate on language practice frequently and build motivation. Even so, users experience challenges such as the improper quality of educational materials, tempting distractions, mismanagement of time, and privacy and moral limitations. Therefore, learners, teachers, and platform builders must carefully steer the process. We may utilize social media in education to promote blended classrooms with controlled timetables and customized choices. Language learning through social media

is most effective when teachers apply the finest practices and current research for everyone's benefit and learning success.

Learning informal English online has become accessible to more individuals because of social media's vast reach, support for international communication, and capacity to empower learners to direct their personal learning pathways. Since interactive exercises incorporate numerous media, language learning becomes entertaining, relevant, and meaningful. Though social media may not remedy everything in language acquisition, it helps with other lessons. Guided use of social media on the web helps compensate for inadequacies in access, drive, and learning opportunities for learners not participating in regular schooling. The most essential thing social media offers is the capacity to join students from around the globe, enable them to establish active groups where they can study, and give them continual, informal practice in English. Growing knowledge and employing new digital tools can assist in taking English language learning into a digital era.

Author Contribution

Nashra Mujeeb: conceptualization, formal analysis, writing – original draft, methodology. **Muhammad Arfan Lodhi:** supervision. **Aqib Ali:** writing—review and editing

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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