

## Investigating the Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms (SMPs) in English Language Teaching and Learning from EFL Students' Perspectives

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### Abstract

Social media technologies have undeniably become an integral part of all fields, particularly in education and teaching EFL/ESL. This spread has exhibited huge effects in the system of teaching and learning resulting in the emergence of communities of learning that are supported by collective interaction and engagement. This study aims to explore EFL students' attitudes and perspectives towards the use of social media platforms in English language teaching and learning. The study is based on the quantitative approach utilising the survey method to collect descriptive data regarding the attitudes and perceptions of sixty-four EFL female students randomly chosen at the English Language Center in the UTAS in Oman. The study utilized 14 Likert scale statements organised into two sections. Analysis of the collected data revealed that the majority of the participants believed strongly in the advantages of social media platforms for supporting pedagogical purposes and boosting their English language proficiency. The study has provided a set of implications and recommendations for teachers and administrators in the area of TESOL.

**Keywords:** Social media platforms (SMPs), Technology, Pedagogical benefits, English language skills and competencies

### INTRODUCTION

Over the years, social media platforms (SMPs) such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and Youtube have become noticeably widespread among people, and particularly the youth. This is due to their unique affordances in providing applications that are user-friendly, communicative, and interactive (Greenhow et al., 2019; 2011; Kent & Leaver, 2014). Besides, the development of SMPs has created a place where users can find connections, build communities, share ideas, exchange thoughts, and develop new knowledge (Faizi et al., 2013).

In education, SMPs have introduced new forms of learning such as distance learning, blended learning, and e-learning by providing effective tools and methods of learning and teaching. Such methods and tools are characterised by their strengths in providing teachers with different types of instructional materials and resources that may engage students in a variety of collaborative, communicative, and interactive tasks, in addition to their positive cognitive, social, and emotional effects (Alassiri, 2014; Everson et al., 2013; Selwyn 2012). Besides, SMPs assist students in facilitating and boosting social interaction and sharing information with their peers and other users nationally and internationally (Fewkes & McCabe, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2013). This spread of SMPs has urged teachers and instructors in a variety of educational contexts to utilise these tools and methods to create a transformation of learning where students are empowered to construct their own knowledge, learn new skills of learning, and take responsibility and control of their learning (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010).

In learning English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), the SMPs have revealed worth in the teaching practice, and they have exhibited major changes in the teaching approaches, curriculum, and classroom practices. For example, the Facebook platform has the potential of providing interaction opportunities among its users via exposing learners to the real-time cultural and linguistic interchange (Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Al-Khalidi, 2019).

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In EFL contexts, students have limited access to real English communication and little exposure to authentic materials. No doubt, this limited access and exposure to the target language have impacts on students' communication skills and language proficiency. Even though SMPs have the potential of improving EFL students' skills and competencies, teachers in some EFL contexts are still more conservative in embedding social media in the classroom. Probably, the reason for their conservativeness is due to cultural considerations or the formality of the classroom that limits some teaching practices. Also, some teachers are unaware of the fact that the lack of utilising SMPs may also lead to subordinating students to traditional instructing and learning techniques (Bosch, 2009). This may lead to other negative impacts on students' involvement, motivation, and engagement in working on activities.

The popularity of social media platforms and the opportunities they offer in facilitating the teaching and learning process have urged the researchers of this study to conduct a quantitative study to investigate the effects and importance of SMPs through the lenses of EFL students who are supposed to be involved in the real world of social media. The literature shows a plethora of studies that have been conducted to examine the role of SMPs in EFL/ESL contexts. However, in the EFL Omani context where the entire study takes place, there is little research that has been conducted to investigate and explore the effects of SMPs on Omani EFL students. To address this gap, this paper aims to review the literature and collect data from the students' population in a real EFL context to investigate their attitudes and views regarding the potential role of SMPs in enhancing their English language skills and competencies.

The study aims to:

1. identify students' perceptions and attitudes towards incorporating social media as a digital mode of learning in the classroom and online lessons for enhancing pedagogical practices,
2. explore students' attitudes and perspectives towards the use of SMPs in promoting their English language skills and competencies.

The study is shaped and designed by the following questions:

1. What are students' attitudes and perspectives towards using social media platforms in enhancing the process of English language teaching and learning?
2. Which English language skills and competencies are mostly affected by social media platforms from the perspectives of EFL students?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The importance of the study stems from the point that SMPs integration is a relatively new field in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Hence, the study aims to draw interest from a group of EFL students who are respondents in this research to raise EFL teachers' awareness to take advantage of SMPs in designing more updated lessons, materials, and courses that are in alignment with the needs of the digital generation and the growing educational systems in a globalized era. This study is also expected to provide the educators and the policymakers, curriculum planners, particularly in the local Omani academic institutions, with a clear picture about the nature of using SMPs to attain positive pedagogical effects.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Recently, literature in education is replete with previous studies that have been carried out to address the integration of social media in higher education environments. Reviewing the literature, the researchers found out that various studies (e.g., Baniyaseen, 2020; Slim & Hafedh, 2019; Al-Tamimi et al., 2018) have been conducted to investigate the role of social media in EFL/ESL learning. However, the studies differed in their goals, focus, and findings. While some studies only focused on addressing the effects of SMPs on enhancing learning the English language skills, others focused on pedagogy purposes such as collaboration, engagement, motivation, and interaction. The subsequent sections review and synthesize some of the most important theoretical concepts and previous studies that relate quite well with the current study.

### **Effects of Social Media on Enhancing English Language skills and Competencies**

In the area of TESOL, multiple studies have presented substantial evidence that social media plays a vital role in facilitating and enhancing the learning of language skills (e.g., Baniyassen, 2020; Barrett, 2018; Ahmed, 2016; Alqasham, 2018; Madidni, 2018; Alzouebi and Salhat, 2016; Belal, 2014). However, it has been realised that the main focus has been on the effects of social media on vocabulary and language acquisition. Probably, this is

due to the fact that "vocabulary learning is determined by the frequency of use and exposure to various situations, scenarios, forms, and contexts" (Schmitt in Alharthi et al., 2020, p. 320). These contexts are more likely to be found in SMPs that offer EFL students good opportunities to expand, share, experiment, and develop their vocabulary (Takac, 2008) more than the traditional EFL contexts in schools that are limited in time and space (Alqunayeer, 2016; Lomicka & Lord, 2016).

In a Jordanian EFL context, Al-Tamimi et al. (2018) conducted an experimental study to investigate the impacts of using Facebook to enhance English Language writing Skills and vocabulary among undergraduate Students. The study came up with results that "showed positive effects of using Facebook on improving the students' writing skills and vocabulary enrichment of the experimental group, compared to the control group" (p. 1).

An important study was designed by Sabater and Fleta (2015) to examine the effects of using Twitter on learning vocabulary in the context of ESP. The authors reported that "A significantly positive outcome is the role of Twitter in enhancing student participation. Additionally, regarding communication skills, a particularly important finding was the effectiveness of this blended approach in involving the learners in the classroom and beyond, creating the sense of a learning community" (p. 129).

Alqunayeer (2016) conducted an experimental study to investigate the impacts of teaching through Twitter on students' English vocabulary learning in a Saudi university. The student participants were divided into two groups, experimental and control. The experimental group was taught by the application of Twitter over eight weeks, while the control group was taught in a traditional way. The author came up with the result that the experimental group demonstrated considerably higher knowledge of vocabulary than the traditionally taught group. The author also indicated that the writing skill was improved as well, along with the vocabulary.

With regard to the writing skill, SMPs have positive effects on frequent users by assisting them to gain experience through composing various messages, and in reading, they have the chance to read a variety of new messages. Thus, they have the opportunity to learn new words in authentic contexts. In this regard, Brown & Lee (2014) and Ibrahim (2013) reported that the current generations are addicted to technology tools and SMPS to learn from more than the traditional methods. For example, they like chatting and texting with their peers and friends, and this, in turn, may assist them to improve their writing skills. Likewise, Shih (2011; 2013) reported that assigning Facebook writing activities among Taiwanese EFL students have improved their writings skills in terms of organisation, vocabulary, grammar and structure.

Other findings were explored by Alkhader (2015) in an attempt to investigate the impacts of Facebook on enhancing academic writing skills and reflective thinking of Jordanian university students. The study sample consisted of experimental and control groups. The study employed the instruments of Academic writing test, Reflective thinking test and Focus group discussion. Results of the study showed that Facebook had significant effects on EFL students' writing and rhetorical skills, while other linguistic features such as grammar and vocabulary were not significantly impacted.

Ahmed (2016) carried out a quasi-experimental study to investigate the effectiveness of Facebook on grammar discussion and the writing skill of EFL students at a university level. The study included two groups, experimental and control. The experimental group was taught using Facebook, while the control group was taught using the traditional method. The study came up with the result that "the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of EFL grammar and writing. This difference can be attributed to using Facebook" (p. 932).

In another study, Mabuan (2018) investigated the relationship between blogs as an educational tool and teaching English from the perspectives of students. The researcher used mixed-method research to collect the data. The results revealed that students perceived blogs as essential platforms to learn English writing skills because they provide freedom of thought expression, enable peer interaction, and, therefore, increase English writing skills.

### **Pedagogical Effects of Social Media**

In view of the SMPs' affordances and possibilities they provide in education, a number of studies have confirmed the good relationship between SMPs and instructional pedagogy (Everson et al., 2013; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Kent & Leaver, 2014). In spite of the claims of researchers about the benefits and advantages of SMPs in higher education settings, the researchers in this study have realised that previous studies have only focused on teachers and students' perceptions or attitudes towards the role and benefits of SMPs. In other words, there is a gap in the literature regarding how SMPs affect classroom pedagogy. For example, we need to know how pedagogical features such as engagement, interaction, communication, and the like are practised when using SMPs. However, the discussion that follows reviews some of the empirical studies that provided arguments based on rational justifications and explanations.

Menkhoff et al. (2014), in their study about the importance of incorporating Twitter in a higher education setting in Singapore, found out that Twitter is of value for both the instructor and students. For the students, Twitter helps them to have "a voice, to be more engaged and to interact more freely with both their peers and the instructor via knowledge sharing and Twitter discussions" (2014). For the instructor, Twitter provides evidence that assists in monitoring if students have fully understood the content delivered in class. It also encourages the reserved students to voice out their thoughts and to articulate their queries. This way can help the instructor to identify knowledge gaps and address them on the spot. "This means that students who are expectantly captive in the traditional approach to teaching, are increasingly offered an opportunity to provide prompt feedback to instructors" (Chawinga, 2017, p.4).

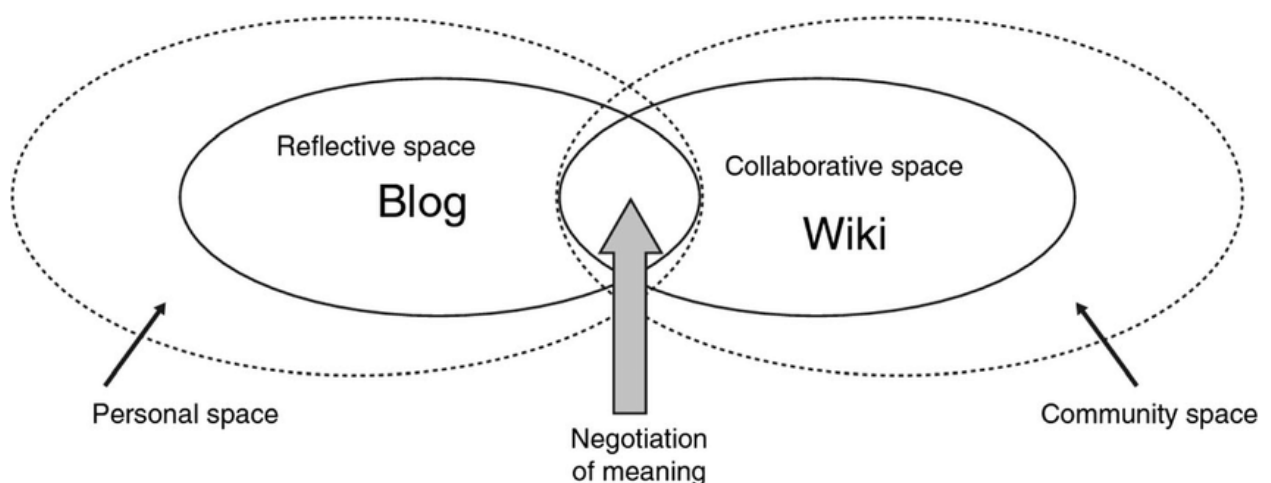
Unlike traditional face-to-face teaching that have some limitations in time and teaching practices, SMPs proved to support the much-treasured approaches in the area of TESOL- the communicative approach (Richards, 2014; Nunan, 2006) and the student-centred learning approach (Brown and Lee, 2014). First, SMPs helps students to engage in collaborative, interactive, and communicative learning through posting quotes and comments, sharing information and knowledge, publishing articles, expressing personal

identity and experience, reflections on a subject or course content, among others (Baniyassen, 2020; Barrett, 2018; Fithriani et al., 2019; Mabuan and Ebron, 2017; Yu, 2014; Hew, 2011). Facebook, for example, can help students to engage with their peers and instructor (Selwyn, 2012; Slim and Hafedh, 2017; Greenhow, 2016; Terrell, Richardson, & Hamilton, 2011).

Second, SMPs supplements blended learning and flipped classroom that provides positive contextual learning (Al-Khalidi, 2020; Keengwe & Agamba, 2015). For instance, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can be used to engage students in activities and tasks such as group discussion activities, post comments, texting, sharing reflections and experiences, among others.

Third, some prior studies have provided evidence about promoting students' motivation and their attitudes towards learning when integrating SMPs into the classroom. For example, Jones (2015) used Twitter for teaching a literature class at the university level. It is reported in the study that "my students soon embraced Twitter as a collaboration tool, and increasingly came to class with improved attitudes toward, and readiness for class discussions" (Jones, 2015:91). In a related study, Fithriani et al. (2017) conducted a case study to investigate whether Facebook, as the most popular social media in Indonesia, would be an effective learning tool to be used in EFL classrooms for teaching writing. The findings of the study revealed that "most students find the use of Facebook in writing class effective in boosting their confidence in using English as communicative means, encouraging their participation in class discussion, and improving their English language proficiency, particularly the writing skill" (p. 634).

The fourth pedagogical benefit of SMPs was raised by Wheeler (2010), who drew attention to two essential learning activities: reflection and collaboration, as shown in Figure 1. Blogs are described by Wheeler (2010:106) as web tools that promote reflective learning while as wikis are meant for collaborative learning".



**Figure 1.** Depiction of social media in higher education (Wheeler, 2010, p.111)

## Theoretical Background: Theories and Models Supporting SMPs

Theoretically, proponents of integrating SMPs in education base their views on specific theories, approaches, and frameworks to justify and support their arguments. This section sheds light on some of these theories and models.

Learning through social media platforms is theoretically guided by several learning approaches. Generally, learning theories fall into two main categories, social learning and education learning (Beniyaseen, 2000). "According to the social learning theory, learning occurs through a cognitive process involving the observation and following instructions (Lin et al., 2016 in Beniyaseen, 2000, p.12). The education learning theory, on the other hand, advocates that learning occurs cognitively through understanding and responses to experiences (Slim & Hafedh, 2019). Both categories agree that context is the key element or factor for learning to occur where individuals are exposed to skills and knowledge. So, what is the role of social media platforms in this sense? Based on the two learning categories, social media platforms have the potential of providing a variety of learning contexts for users to learn skills and gain knowledge from other users' posts and shared materials (Slim & Hafedh, 2019; Beniyaseen, 2000; Lin et al., 2016).

According to EFL/ESL learning, social media platforms provide contexts of interaction and communication (Slim & Hafedh, 2019) between learners and instructors or other users who are proficient in the language. For example, "Through instructions from teachers, English writings, for example, essays and comments from other learners or users, individuals are exposed to content and English skills, which they learn cognitively" (Beniyaseen, 2000, p. 13). The most common usable platform in the area of TESOL is Facebook which is due to its affordances such as places, events, and objects that assist students in language learning. In their favour of Facebook as a fundamental context to language learning, Slim & Hafedh (2019, p. 95) said, "thanks to the contextual clues it provides and the conversational features it provides, Facebook can represent ideal sites of language learning".

The literature presents several approaches that support the relationship between SMPs and language learning. Among these approaches are the social learning theory (SLT), Online Collaborative Learning Theory (OCL), Connectivism Model, TPACK, SAMR Model.

**Online Collaborative Learning Theory (OCL)**-This is one of the models that explain the relationship between SMPs and language learning and how learning occurs through online sites and platforms. Harasim, states that:

OCL theory provides a model of learning in which students are encouraged and supported to work together to create knowledge: to invent, to explore ways to innovate, and, by so doing, to seek the conceptual knowledge needed to solve problems ... While OCL theory does encourage the learner to be active and engaged, this is not considered to be sufficient for learning or knowledge construction.....In the OCL theory, the teacher plays a key role not as a fellow learner but as the link to the knowledge community or state of the art in that discipline. (Harasim, 2012, p.90)

**Constructivism and Social Media**-Constructivism is a theory of learning which has its roots in the cognitive theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, embracing several aspects. "From Piaget, we get active learning, schemes, assimilation and accommodation, etc. From Vygotsky; we get social constructivism, group work, apprenticeship, etc." (Aljohani, 2017, p.98). The theory of constructivism advocates that learning occurs through the construction of meaning and understanding of the world via social processes (Saqr et al., 2018; Gul, 2016). Knowledge occurs through shared activity, community engagement, dialogue, and communication in a community of shared activity. SMPs have the potential to provide opportunities for the evolution of knowledge. Social media provide new means and opportunities for learning that are consistent with major tenets of both social and cognitive constructivism and extend the process of learning and meaning construction to more diverse communities and universally accessible shared activities that are jointly and concurrently engaged in by both peers and experts.

**Connectivism Model**-Connectivism is another model that confirms the relationship between social media learning and English language learning improvement. Connectivism is a learning theory that highlighted the value of networks and the shared information within those networks. The theory advocates that learning takes place through sharing and synthesising multiple viewpoints where learners connect different information to improve what they had already known about some topics (Saqr et al., 2018). Based on the model of connectivism, social media provides an environment where learners can build a network with diverse group members. Through social media, learners can be connected to pieces of information that adds to their current set of knowledge.

**The SAMR Model in English Language Learning** -The SAMR model was developed by Dr Ruben Puentedura (2009) to describe how one should use or integrate technology in a learning environment. It is a model or framework composed of four levels: Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. According to Puentedura, the purpose of the model is to help teachers and educators to design and develop technology-based learning to transform and improve the learning experience for students. Kristina et al. (2019) view the SAMR model as a reflective tool that assists teachers to self reflect and modify their teaching practice using instructional technology. Other authors (such as Al-Khalidi, 2021; Ledford, 2016; Chou et al., 2012) think of the SAMR model as a necessary document for a teacher's professional development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The primary goal of the present research work is to understand students' perspectives and attitudes towards the role of SMPs in facilitating and promoting EFL/EAP learning, in addition to investigating their role in supporting and upgrading teaching practices. For this goal, a questionnaire survey making use of the quantitative approach was utilised to collect data from the students who are enrolled in the teacher's class. The survey is a technique whose primary goal is to describe a population's "attitudes, opinions, behaviours, experiences, or other characteristics" (Creswell, 2016, p.112). Consequently,



opting for a survey design to figure out the pedagogical role of SMPs on EFL learners can be more appropriate for this study, in addition to assisting the researchers in seeking more reliable and valid results from the students.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The method of data collection was a questionnaire survey. The researchers used a self-made questionnaire based on the research goals and questions and shaped by certain theoretical concepts adapted from the literature. For measuring the respondents' attitudes, the Likert Scale with five options (ranking from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used. The questionnaire survey included 14 items organised in two sections. The first section includes items (1-7) relating to students' opinions on the use of SMPs for pedagogical purposes. The second section, on the other hand, includes items (1-7) relating to their opinions about the use of SMPs for language learning purposes. The questionnaires were sent to students online to be completed at a convenient time and return to the researchers.

To ensure the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the questionnaire, the survey items were sent to three experts in the field of TESOL who teach English in three colleges. They provided feedback and comments on the statement and organisation of the items. The questionnaire was then modified based on their feedback. The quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to corroborate and support the findings and address the research questions of this study.

### **Sample**

The selected sample represented the population that the researcher targeted to study without bias to the selection process. The participants were 70 (only 64 participated) students of English randomly selected as a sample population for the present study. They belonged to Level 2 in the Foundation Center at the UTAS in Oman. The student sample has been involved in this case study due to their experiences in using social media at the personal (informal) level as digital natives (Brown and Lee, 2014). Thus, investigating the utilisation of social media in EFL classes from the perspective of students can reveal significant insights into the effectiveness of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Dorney, 2011).

Before they answered the questionnaire survey, the teacher explained the purpose of the study and elaborated on the items to make it clear for them. They were told that giving their views and perspectives would contribute to developing and updating the material selection and methods of teaching.

## **RESULTS**

The primary source of data collection included a questionnaire addressed to the students who are currently studying EFL at the foundation level. The questionnaire is designed to explore students' attitudes and perspectives on the effects of social media on enhancing their English language skills and the process of teaching and learning. This section, therefore, deals with presenting the results of the data analysis from the students' questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. Each section relates to

one goal and one research question. For the purpose of associating the results with the research goals and questions, this section is organised into two subsections in terms of the main research questions. Section A presents the findings of the effects of SMPs on language learning skills, while Section B presents findings of the pedagogical effects of the MSPs. Each section includes a set of items or statements as being provided in the questionnaire survey.

**A. Pedagogical Effects of Social Media on Enhancing Students' EFL Learning**

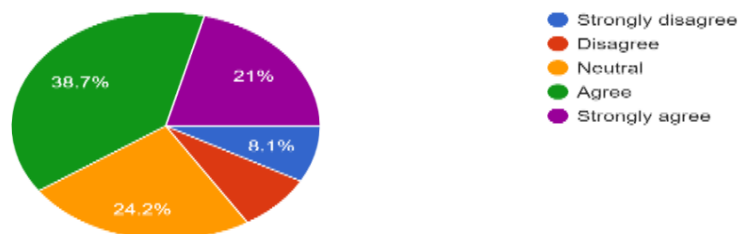
This section presents seven questionnaire items that provided answers to the first research question:

*Q.1 What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards the pedagogical effects of social media platforms (SMPs) in enhancing their English language learning?*

**Item 1: Positive Effects of SMPs on English language learning**

Item (1) in the questionnaire survey generally aims to explore students' perceptions and attitudes towards incorporating social media into EFL learning. The analytics revealed that (38.7%) of the students agreed that social media has positive effects on English language learning, and (21%) students strongly agreed. In contrast, a few students (8.1%) disagreed on social media positive effects and around (24.2%) of the students were neutral.

8. Social media have positive effects on English learning.  
62 responses



**Figure 2.** Students' Perspectives on SMPs Use

**Table 1.** Positive Effects of SMPs on English language learning

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	13	21	24	38.7	15	24.2	5	8.1	5	8.1

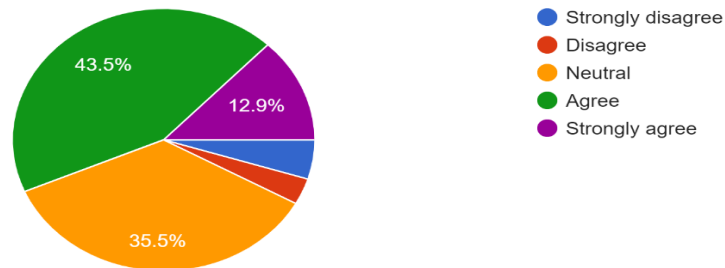
Abbreviations: SA, strongly disagree; A, agree; UD, undecided; DA, disagree; SD, strongly disagree; F, frequency

**Item 2: SMPs is more motivating than the classroom**

Figure 2 indicates that (21) and (38) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that SMPs is more motivating than the classroom. In comparison, only (8) of

the respondents equally indicated their disagreement and strong disagreement. Around (24) of the respondents were neutral.

12. Social media enhance motivation towards English language learning.  
62 responses



**Figure 3.** SMPs is more motivating than the classroom

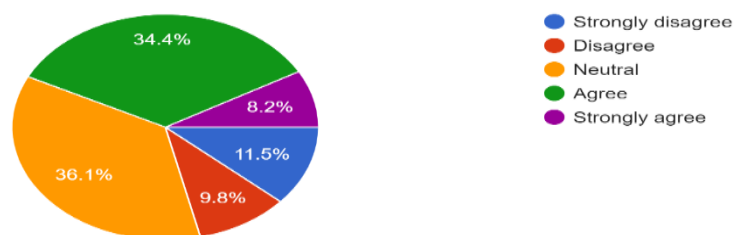
**Table 2.** SMPs is more motivating than the classroom

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	8	12.9	27	43.5	22	35.5	2	3.2	3	4.8

**Item 3: Effects of SMPs on students' anxiety**

As it can be seen in figure 3, about one-third of the students think that SMPs help to reduce students' anxiety, and only (8.2%) who strongly agreed on that potential. However, a small proportion of the students (11.5%) chose the strongly disagree option and (9.8%) chose the disagree option. The biggest third of the responses (36.1%) were neutral.

13. Social media reduce learners' anxiety towards English language learning.  
61 responses



**Figure 4.** Effects of SMPs on students' anxiety

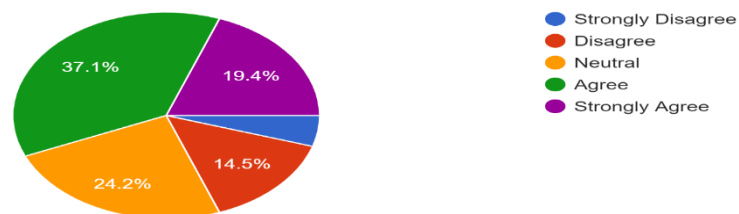
**Table 3.** Effects of SMPs on students' anxiety

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	5	8.2	21	34.4	22	30.1	6	9.8	7	11.5

**Item 4: SMPs enhance collaboration among students**

Figure 5 significantly illustrates students' agreement (37.1%) and strong agreement (19.4%) regarding the effects of SMPs in enhancing collaboration among students. On the other hand, only (14.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while Less than one third (24.2%) were neutral.

18. Social media help me to learn collaboratively with those who have similar interests.  
62 responses



**Figure 5.** SMPs enhance collaboration among students

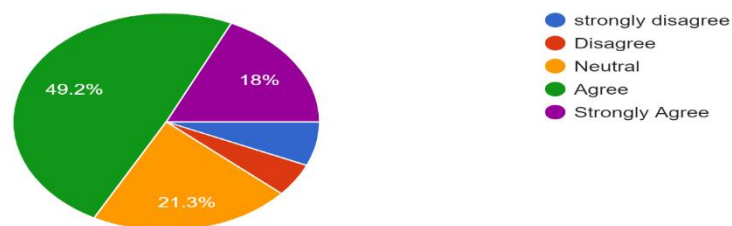
**Table 4.** SMPs enhance collaboration among students

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	12	19.4	23	37.1	15	24.2	9	14.5	3	4.8

**Item 5: Effects of SMPs on the interaction among students**

Figure 6 indicates that most of the respondents, about (30) strongly agreed and about (13) agreed that SMPs has positive effects on their interaction. In contrast, only (4) and (6) who disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively on the impacts of SMPs on enhancing students' interaction.

20. Interacting with class group on social media helps me to improve my social skills.  
61 responses



**Figure 6.** SMPs enhances interaction among students

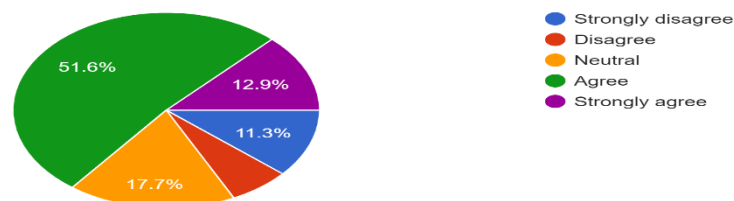
**Table 5.** Effects of SMPs on the interaction among students

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	11	18	30	29.2	13	21.3	3	4.9	4	6.6

### Item 6: Effects of SMPs on students' engagement

Figure 6 illustrates that more than half of the students agreed (51.6%) and strongly agreed (12.9 %) on the role played by the SMPs on students' engagement. Only a few students about (11.3%) disagreed on the effects of the SMPs on students' engagement.

14. Social Media help minimize hesitation to learn and participate in communication in English.  
62 responses



**Figure 7.** Effects of SMPs on students' engagement

**Table 6.** Effects of SMPs on students' engagement

Valid	Responses									
	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	8	12.9	32	51.6	11	17.7	4	6.5	7	11.3

### B. Effects of social media on Enhancing Students' English language Skills and competencies

This section presents all items that answer the question 'Which English language skills and competencies are mostly affected by social media platforms from the perspectives of EFL students? The results are illustrated in Table 8 below to show how students' attitudes and perspectives vary according to the type of skill and competency.

**Table 7.** Effects of SMPs on English Language Skills and Competencies

Effects of Social Media	% Frequency of participant				
	SA	A	N	DA	SD
Social media help me improve my writing skills.	19	49	21	4	2
Social media help me improve my reading skills.	23	45	20	1	10
Social media help me improve my speaking skills.	26	50	11	4	3
Social media help me improve my listening skills.	29	36	26	1	4
Social media help me improve my vocabulary.	24	39	37	2	3
Social media help me improve my grammar.	12	46	19	9	11
Social media help me improve my pronunciation.	16	52	18	4	4

The above table clearly highlights the role of social media in enhancing English language skills and competencies, as the highest response rates were given to "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses. However, the rates are different according to the items or language skills. The highest rates were given to the listening and speaking skills because 18 (29%) and 22 (36%) of the respondents either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' to the statement that social media platforms affect the listening skills. A sizable number of 1

(1%) 'Disagree' and only 4 (6%) 'Strongly Disagree' and 16 (26%) of the respondents remained neutral.

Similarly, the statement relating to the speaking skill received the highest rate, 16 (26%) 'Agree' and 31 (50%) 'Strongly Agree'. In contrast, the rates are given to 'Disagree' 4 (4%) and 3 (3%) 'Strongly Disagree' were lower, indicating that the respondents were in favour of the role of SMPs. Only 7 (11%) of the respondents were neutral.

The data presented in Table 2 highlighted that out of 64 respondents, 37 (45 %) 'Agree' and 17 (23%) 'Strongly agree' to the statement that social media platforms improve students' reading skill, while very few respondents 6 (10, %) and 1 (1%) 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree', respectively. Less than a quarter of the respondents remained neutral 12 (20%).

With regard to the statement that SMPs help improve students' writing skill, the data in Table 2 show that 30 (49%) and 12 (19) of the respondents 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree', respectively. Very few of the respondents 4 (4) and 2 (2) 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree', respectively, while 13 (21%) of the respondents remained neutral.

With regard to the effects of SMPs on improving students' language competencies, above Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents showed their agreement and strong agreement with the statement that SMPs help improve vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. However, the variation between 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' responses are quite obvious.

Table 2 shows that (24%) of the respondents' Strongly Agreed' and (39%) 'Agreed', while few respondents (2%) and (3%) 'Disagreed' and 'Strongly Disagreed', respectively. On the other hand, over one-third of the respondents (37%) were neutral. With regard to the statement supporting grammar, the data revealed that (12%) 'Agreed' and (46%) 'Strongly Agreed', while (9%) 'Disagreed' and (11%) 'Strongly Disagreed'. About (19%) were neutral. The surprising results were in the rates of the listening skill as more than half of the respondents were between 'Agreed' (16%) and 'Strongly Agreed' (52%), while (18%) were neutral. In comparison, the lowest rates were given to "Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' responses (4%) for each.

## DISCUSSION

The survey questionnaire explored the students' perceptions of the advantages of social media experience. Evidence from the questionnaire shows that the majority of students are in favour of the SMPs. The high rates of students' responses were on important pedagogical features such as interaction, motivation, collaboration, and engagement. These features are essential in facilitating and expanding learning the target language in a foreign environment. This finding revealed two things. First, it revealed that SMPs play a vital role in supporting the process of teaching and learning in an EFL context through motivation, interaction, engagement, and interaction.

This finding supports the perspective that highlights the theoretical concepts "within cognitive and sociocultural constructivism that relate specifically to new and social media use and how such use promotes learning and stimulates the evolution of meaning-

making" (Schrader, 2018, p.28). Based on the perspectives of the theory of constructivism, knowledge, new skills, and learning occur "through shared activity, through community engagement, dialogue, and communication in a community of shared activity" (p.28). This implies that SMPs can be used as a constructivist technique to help students increase their language skills more than the traditional teaching method of the English language (Al-Muhaimed, 2013). Hence, through SMPs, students can be encouraged to do constructivist activities such as sharing a post, video, pictures, and comments with the teamwork and the teacher.

The result of the first question agrees with similar results obtained from several studies conducted by researchers who have addressed the effect of using social media in general and forms of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, blogs, and Twitter in the teaching and learning process. Such studies include Baniyassen (2020), Slim & Hafedh (2017), Al-Tamimi et al. (2017), Ahmed (2016), as well as others. Most of these studies focused on exploring students' attitudes and perspectives towards social media. They mostly came up with similar findings indicating the effectiveness and affordances of SMPs in improving the process of English language teaching and learning.

According to question two concerning the effects of SMPs on enhancing students' English language skills and competencies, the overall outcome showed a positive indication from the part of the students. This implies that SMPs can be used as a means for language teaching and learning as they may develop students' writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. Probably, the most surprising finding is relating to the respondents' attitudes towards the effects of SMPs in enhancing two related features, the speaking skills and pronunciation, as both got a high 'Agree' rating based on Likert Scale. This leads to the implication that SMPs have the potential of providing authentic speaking practices.

This finding agrees with a number of research studies (Ainun et al., 2020; Alkathiri, 2019) conducted to investigate the effects of social media applications on improving speaking skills. For example, Ilyas and Putri (2020) reported that the integration of YouTube in the teaching process reinforces a positive learning attitude, especially for the teaching of speaking. The findings from this study indicated that the students who were taught using YouTube were highly motivated to participate in the class and with their classmates. Similarly, Hamad et al. (2019) showed that the use of YouTube could assist the students who were studying English at a university where they were given videos to watch and then narrate to others. This is considered an effective method of practising the language as it helped in familiarising them with the vocabulary as well as increasing their motivation to speak.

With regard to the writing skills, the results of the study agree with Kabilan et al. (2010), Shih (2011), and Yunus et al. (2019), who reported that students learned new sentences or new writing structures through sharing with friends their feelings and ideas, through reading the comments and posts by their peers, and through responding to classmates' comments and feedback.

## CONCLUSION

From the evidence showed in this study, it is very clear that the application of social media offers a lot of pedagogical advantages to the teaching and learning of a language through providing effective platforms and tools. Most importantly, the students agreed that social media has positive effects on their English language learning skills, particularly speaking and pronunciation.

After the analysis of the obtained findings, teachers are encouraged to integrate SMPs in designing their classroom as well as online lessons due to their highly sophisticated delivery and interactivity, in addition to their potential in exposing students to real authentic language. Integration can be done in the form of synchronous and asynchronous activities, material development, pair and teamwork, and other pedagogical practices. Additionally, teachers and administrators need to need to be flexible to their student's needs through the integration of social media informal learning with formal classroom learning. This requires teachers to have the competency required for integrating SMPs in English language lessons to achieve the designed objectives.

For further research, researchers can explore how SMPs can be integrated into formally based lessons and courses. Further research is also required to address how SMPs contribute to enhancing the acquisition of other language skills such as reading, listening, and writing, as well as vocabulary and grammar.

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