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Social Media Utilization in English Language Learning and Teaching: Benefits and Challenges[326]

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Abstract:

Nowadays, social networks are being used for educational purposes apart from their common use for entertainment and communication. During Covid-19 pandemic, social networks started to be used as teaching and learning tools more constantly, so both teachers and students had to get used to them. Thanks to the growth of Web 2.0, distance education and online learning have been implemented with materials adapted to this new method of teaching. Therefore, this study aims to analyze social media platforms that have been utilized in English language leaning, concretely Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. Additionally, this review focuses on providing a summary of the benefits and challenges of them. The research method used in this article is in the form of narrative review. Previous studies used as references are from ERIC and Semantic Scholar databases. The findings reveal that social media provide more benefits than challenges in English language learning, such as an improvement of language skills, motivation, collaboration and engagement among students and teachers. However, some of the challenges faced are online safety and distractions. Hence, the results of this study may help language teachers to design more effective and efficient language learning programs with the integration of social media.

Keywords: Social media; English language learning and teaching; Facebook; YouTube; WhatsApp; TikTok; Instagram

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1. Introduction

English language learning and teaching has undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had shifted the educational system from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning and virtual classrooms.[328] These changes in educational institutions have brought many challenges to learners' study routine and acquisition of academic knowledge, especially on language learning. However, the rise of Web 2.0 and the increasing use of technology in education have contributed to the learning process during this era.[329] This type of learning that is conducted electronically is known as 'e-learning.'[330] Isyaku Hassan et al. investigated about how Web 2.0 materials have affected the learning process of English as a second language among students during the Covid-19 pandemic, its positive and negative aspects.[331] As some of the interviewed students respond, the benefits about implementing technological tools on educational context are: "collaborative learning," "independent reading and writing," "flexible learning," "access to variety of information" and "competence in using technology." Moreover, it is essential to mention the positive learning results on affective competences, such as motivation, learners' excitement and engagement to learn utilizing digital devices.[332] On the other hand, "poor internet connectivity," "inadequate knowledge of technology" and "inability to upload large file" are some of the potential challenges of applying Web-based learning tools.

The pandemic has resulted in a shift towards distance education, which has changed traditional teaching methods and learning styles. Online education has allowed for more flexible scheduling and increased access to resources, but it has also presented new challenges, such as ensuring effective communication and engagement with

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[328] Muneera Muftah, "Impact of Social Media on Learning English Language During the COVID-19 Pandemic." (*PSU Research Review*, 2022).

[329] Isyaku Hassan, Musa BaraU Gamji, Qaribu Yahaya Nasidi and Mohd Nazri Latiff Azmi, "Challenges and Benefits of Web 2.0-Based Learning Among International Students of English During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Cyprus." (*Arab World English Journal*, 2021), 295–306.

[330] Meenakshi Sharma Yadav. "Role of Social Media in English Language Learning to the Adult Learners." (International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 2021).

[331] Hassan, Gamji, Nasidi and Azmi, 295–306.

[332] *Ibid*.

students in a virtual environment. Furthermore, the main difference between distance and face-to-face learning is the physical location of the teacher and students. In distance learning, teachers and students are in different locations, while in face-to-face learning, they are in the same physical location. Therefore, distance learning involves online resources, such as blogs, microblogs, wikis, video conferencing applications, social networks and media sharing to afford online learning.[333] Distance learning also includes "asynchronous communication tools" that involves students accessing course materials at their own pace, without the need for real-time interaction with the teacher, and "synchronous communication tools" that involves real-time interaction between the teacher and students, typically through audio-video conferencing or chatting.[334] However, face-to-face learning implicates continuous interrelated relationship between teacher and student, so that it provides more immediate feedback and interaction, which can be especially important for language learning.

Social media are online communication platforms that enable people to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content. Social media allow users to connect and interact with one another through text, images, videos, and other forms of multimedia content. As Rdouan Faizi, Abdellatif El Afia, and Raddouane Chiheb stated, "[s]ocial media encompass a wide range of tools that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation."[335] Moreover, there are several types of social media platforms, including: social networking sites (Facebook), media-sharing sites (Instagram, YouTube and TikTok), microblogging platforms, discussion forums, blogging platforms and messaging apps (WhatsApp).[336]

Social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for English language learners and teachers to connect and engage in language learning activities. Muneera Muftah conducted a study about the impact of multiple social media on learning English as a second language and he concludes that these platforms positively influenced the

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[333] Rdouan Faizi, Abdellatif El Afia and Raddouane Chiheb, "Exploring the Potential Benefits of Using Social Media in Education." (Internal Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 2013), 50–53.
[334] Yadav, 2021.
[335] Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb, 50–53.
[336] Yadav, 2021.

learning process with a percentage of 86.75%.[337] Moreover, the questionnaires reveal that 81.92% of the respondents use social media for communicative purposes with teachers and colleagues. On the contrary, 84,94 % are interested in using these platforms as an educational tool. Therefore, social media can enhance language learning by supplying a platform for learners to practice their writing, listening, reading, and speaking skills through interactions with native speakers and other learners around the world. This being so, students will have the opportunity to be in contact with the learned English language instead of being continually exposed to it in a theoretical way.[338] It also provides access to authentic language use and cultural insights, as well as a wealth of resources for language learning, such as videos, podcasts, and language learning apps.[339] Teachers can use social media to facilitate collaborative learning, provide feedback, and assess students' language skills in real-time. However, it is important to consider the potential drawbacks of using social media in education, such as the risk of distractions and the need for proper moderation to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment.[340] Overall, social media has the potential to revolutionize language learning and teaching, making it more accessible, engaging, and effective. As a result, this study will analyze and review previous research that utilized social media for learning and teaching processes in an academic context, concretely English language learning. It aims to analyze five social platforms, specifically Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok, that have been implemented as a learning tool in English foreign language (EFL) context; to provide a comprehensive summary about the benefits and challenges of these social media that prior studies have demonstrated and to identify what competences are improved by using them. In conclusion, the reason for choosing this topic is the importance of stressing that, due to the advancement of technologies and their immersion in the educational environment, both teachers and students should be aware of the benefits and challenges caused by the use of these tools

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[337] Muneera Muftah, 2022.
[338] Al Fadda, 3–11.
[339] Zhai Xiuwen and Abu Bakar Razali, "An Overview of the Utilization of TikTok to Improve Oral English Communication Competence Among EFL Undergraduate Students." (*Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 2021), 1439–51.
[340] Zhai and Razali, 1439–51.

and how to use them correctly depending on the learning styles of each student. Thus, this investigation can serve as a guideline for them to be trained on how to use these platforms to address the development of content and language skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Media for Educational Purposes

According to Faizi et al., the way individuals engage with one another has changed because of social media, which is now a common communication tool among the younger and adult population.[341] Social media platforms have completely changed how people access, share, and trade information, making it simpler to do so with other people or organizations. Additionally, social media has been increasingly used in academic contexts as a tool for English second language acquisition in the digital era.[342] In this regard, previous studies have examined the impact and the efficacy of social media platforms in EFL contexts and educative environments.[343] These studies revealed positive effects of using social media as a teaching and learning tool. Muftah proves that social media platforms can be used as an educational tool by making a questionnaire to college students from the University of Najran, and 84.94% of the responses demonstrated this statement.[344] However, the studies' results are focused on various aspects of the utilization of social networks on language learning contexts. For instance, some of them are focused on linguistic factors, such as English language skills, grammar, and vocabulary, whereas others are centered on socio-affective factors, such as motivation, creativity, collaboration, interest, and interaction.

Social media platforms have opened new opportunities for language learners to improve their English language skills. One of the most significant benefits, regarding the practice of English competences via social media, is the ability to immerse students

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[341] Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb, 50-53.
[342] Yadav, 2021.
[343] Ahmad, T. H. Abdullah, Mohammad M. A. Al-Bawaleez, Mohd Nazri L. Azmi, and Isyaku H., "Analysis of EFL Learners' Language Proficiency Development across Different Social Media Platforms." (*Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2022), 1756–61.
[344] Muftah, 2022.

selves in an English-speaking environment. Xiuwen Zhai and Abu B. Razali conducted an exploration about the utilization of TikTok to improve oral English communication competence among EFL Chinese undergraduate students.[345] The research's results conclude that this app helps learners to enhance their speaking skills via short-videos activities, which is an innovative and creative method that motivates students to practice their communication competence with others. However, the percentage of students with lower scores on speaking and listening skills is still evident.[346] Therefore, E. Oos Anwas et al. established that it is relevant the type of English contents accessed on social media for improving these active skills (speaking and listening).[347] This being so, most of the language learners tend to look for video content since they are more excited to watch and easier to understand. According to Agung Rinaldy Malik and Muhammad N. Ashar Asnur, YouTube is the most popular social media among students of higher education because of it interactive contents in form of videos.[348] Additionally, Facebook is another platform that can be used to practice writing, reading and vocabulary. Manal Al-Tamimi et al. test two different groups by distributing them pre-post writing tests. The control group were taught with traditional learning method, while the experimental one with Facebook app.[349] Hence, the results show that the experimental group have better outcomes, so using Facebook is an exemplary way of enhancing writing skill and vocabulary enrichment.

In language learning, social media can be used as a pedagogical tool to improve the learning outcomes of English as a foreign language. One of the most significant purposes is the ability to create an interactive and engaging learning experience, where teaching is centered on students, and it facilitates the exchange of information easily

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[345] Zhai and Razali, 1439–51.

[346] Anwas, E. O. M., Sugiarti, Y., Permatasari, A. D., Warsihna, J., Anas, Z., Alhapip, L., Siswanto, H. W., and Rivalina, R., "Social Media Usage for Enhancing English Language Skill." (*International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies,* 2020), 41–57.

[347] Anwas, Sugiarti, Permatasari, Warsihna, Anas, Alhapip, Siswanto, and Rivalina, 41-57.

[348] Rinaldy Malik, A., and Ashar Asnur, M. N., "Using Social Media as a Learning Media of Foreign Language Students in Higher Education." (Bahtera: *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 2019), 166–75.

[349] Manal F. Al-Tamimi, Ahmad H. Al-Khawaldeh, Hashem I. M. Al Natsheh, and Amer A. Harazneh, "The Effect of Using Facebook on Improving English Language Writing Skills and Vocabulary Enrichment Among University of Jordan Sophomore Students." (*Journal of Social Science,* 2018), 187–214.

and rapidly.[350] Rinaldy Malik and Ashar Asnur demonstrate that social media give rise to a sense of curiosity in learners, so that it motivates them to practice and improve their English skills.[351] Thus, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram can be used to create an online community of learners, where students can interact with each other and their teachers, feel confident and comfortable sharing their ideas and perspectives, and ask questions.[352] Iman Al-Khalidi and Ouarda Khouni conducted a questionnaire survey among students from the university of OMAN (Arabia Saudi) and they proved that the 36.1% of the learners agreed about the positive effects of social media on mitigating learners' academic anxiety and the 51.6% admitted that these platforms have positively impacted students' interaction.[353] Hence, these features can make the learning process more interactive, engaging, and enjoyable for students, which can lead to improve linguistic and socio-affective outcomes.[354]

Another pedagogical implication of social media in EFL learning is the capacity to facilitate collaboration and teamwork. Social media platforms can be used to create virtual workspaces, where students can collaborate on projects, share their work, and provide feedback to each other. According to Al-Khalidi and Khouni, 37.19% of the students' survey responses agreed that social platforms promote collaboration among learners.[355] John Raven conducted research based on Input-Process-Outcome model (IPO) that demonstrates the effectiveness of learning the required contents of the course to afford a PET exam by making an authentic group project and using computer devices.[356] The post-project survey reveals that most of the students have learned a lot about teamwork skills (68%) and computer skills (78%). Additionally, Faizi et al. exposed that social networking prompt students to develop and improve their problem-solving

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[350] Muftah, 2022.
[351] Rinaldy Malik and Ashar Asnur, 166-75.
[352] Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb, 50-53.
[353] Iman Al-Khalidi and Khouni, O. "Investigating the Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms (SMPs) in English Language Teaching and Learning from EFL Students' Perspectives." (*Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2021), 46–64.
[354] John Raven, "A Model to Guide Practitioners Through the Process of Collaborative Projects." (Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives, 2006), 2–8.
[355] Al-Khalidi and Khouni, 46–64.
[356] Raven, 2–8.

skills in collaborative environments and teamwork.[357] An example of a social network that employs its services of comments and direct messages (DMs) as a collaborative tool to provide feedback among students is Instagram.[358]

According to Kheryadi Kheryadi and Vimala Balakrishnan & Chin Lay Gan, social media can also provide teachers with a powerful tool for assessing student learning.[359] By monitoring students' social media activity, teachers can gain insight into their interests, preferences, and learning styles. This can help teachers tailor their teaching methods to better meet the needs of their students and improve learning outcomes. Finally, social media can also provide EFL learners with opportunities to engage in language exchanges with native speakers and other learners of English. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp or Instagram can be used to 6 connect learners with native speakers for conversation practice and feedback.[360]

2.2. Types of Social Media for EFL Learning and Teaching

2.2.1. Instagram

According to Dixon, Instagram is one of the most successful social media platforms, concretely it is in the fourth position in the statistics about the most famous social media in the world.[361] Instagram is a photo and video-sharing app where users can follow and unfollow other users' profiles. Behind these profiles, there are different types of content creators, such as content centered on entertainment, creators' lifestyle, motivational and inspirational messages, marketing of some products, making socially responsible causes visible and education, among others. The educational materials shared on Instagram are very extensive, ranging from content on mathematics, literature, art, and

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[357] Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb, 50-53.

[358] Ghada Mousa Abdullah Alghamdi, "Investigating the Effect and Students' Perceptions of Using Instagram as a Writing Teaching Tool in Saudi EFL Classrooms." (*English Language Teaching, Canadian Center of Science and Education,* 2022), 1–46.

[359] Kheryadi Kheryadi, "The Implementation of 'WhatsApp' as a Media of English Language Teaching." (*Loquen: English Studies Journal*, 2018), 1; Vimala Balakrishnan and Gan Chin Lay, "Students' Learning Styles and Their Effects on the Use of Social Media Technology for Learning." (*Telematics and Informatics*, 2016), 808–21.

[360] Hind A. Al Fadda, 2020.

[361] Stacy Jo Dixon, "Instagram – Statistics and Facts." (Statista, 2023).

languages. Since English is the most spoken and used language internationally and is becoming a mandatory requirement for different disciplines, such as jobs or academic qualifications, there are many accounts that work and teach how to improve the different skills of this language in a creative, playful, and entertaining way. Some of these accounts are @ewa.english, @mariaspeakenglish and @englishwithmax. Moreover, content on Instagram can be shared in the form of images, 60-second videos, reels, and stories. Videos and photos can be grouped into a single post where users can make comments and feedback. Hence, Nouf Aloraini investigated about whether English grammar and vocabulary posts about lesson content effect on learners cognitive and affective competencies had.[362] The data used to measure these facts where learners' comments and feedback on these posts to contrast which of the two lesson posts have more outputs. Similarly, Ghada Mousa Alghamdi utilized the same Instagram tools for assessing students' writing skill.[363] However, this study also used Instagram's DMs tool to give students feedback. However, most of the students in these studies complained about short-time videos due to its impossibility to teach a full-time English lesson. An alternative to this is IGTV, Instagram Direct and IG calls. IGTV is a vertical video that allows uploads of 10 minutes and for verified accounts to 60 minutes, whereas Instagram Directs and IG calls are live records.

2.2.2. Facebook

According to Dixon, Facebook is the first most popular social media around the world followed by YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram.[364] Facebook is platform 7 that offers the possibility to post texts, photos, and videos. Additionally, users have access to Facebook Messenger, a chat for direct communication with one another, community groups, and updates on the activity of their Facebook friends and the pages they follow. Al-Tamimi et al. carried out an experiment with two different types of groups: control

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[362] Nouf Aloraini, "Investigating Instagram as an EFL Learning Tool." (*Arab World English Journal,* 2018).
[363] Alghamdi, 1-46.
[364] Dixon. "Facebook – Statistics and Facts." (Statista, 2023).

and experimental groups respectively.[365] The control group was taught with a traditional lesson program, while the experimental one was instructed through Facebook Groups. After examining both groups with pre-post writing and vocabulary tests, the results reflected that Facebook enhances writing skills and increases vocabulary. Craig Gamble and Michael Wilkins also confirmed, thanks to distributed questionnaires to students, that Facebook groups, forums and pages are suitable tools for reviewing homework assignments posted, being in contact with peers and teachers.[366] Moreover, Facebook is a platform where students can upload videos in form of assignments to practice their speaking and listening skills. Comments on posts can also be used to practice students grammar and vocabulary content and reading skills by reading colleagues' comments.[367]

2.2.3. WhatsApp

According to Laura Ceci, WhatsApp is an instant messaging platform for mobile and computer devices.[368] WhatsApp is the easiest and most famous global mobile messenger app with approximately two billion active users. This social network enables users to share text, images, video, voice messages, users locations, as well as voice and video calls. These features enables English learners to enhance and practice their cognitive and socio-affective competences easily and confidently. WhatsApp also allow to have a conversation with other students and teachers. This conversation can take place privately or in a group. Hence, working in a WhatsApp group enhance students' interaction and collaboration. Kheryadi conducted a research about teaching English skills during six-month lessons via WhatsApp groups.[369] Before putting into practice these new teaching method, the teacher explains the differences between learning activities on independent and dependent conversations. Therefore, within independent conversations, students have the possibility to dialogue about any topic or idea, so that

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[365] Al-Tamimi, Al-Khawaldeh, Al Natsheh, and Harazneh, 187-214.
[366] Craig Gamble and Michael Wilkins, "Student Attitudes and Perceptions of Using Facebook for Language Learning." (Dimension 49, 2014), 49–72.
[367] María Martínez Lirola, "Approaching the Use of Facebook to Improve Academic Writing and to Acquire Social Competences in English in Higher Education." (Contemporary Educational Technology 14, 2022).
[368] Laura Ceci, "WhatsApp – Statistics and Facts." (Statista, 2022).
[369] Kheryadi, 2018.

teacher's role in this type of activity is merely a viewer how whether they are active or not. On the other hand, dependent conversations have a predetermined theme as a starting point where teacher's role is active and giving feedback and corrections to student's grammatical errors. Some teachers uses recorded videos of the lesson in 5-10 minutes, 8 clips and video calls. Additionally, teachers send back homework's corrections in form of images and utilizes voice notes to explain lessons.[370] As Fawzia Alubthane & Ibrahim ALYoussef affirmed WhatsApp also functions as a tool to share study materials and assignments, past exam papers and coursework results via documents and links.[371]

2.2.4. YouTube

As stated by Ceci, YouTube is globally the biggest online video-sharing network with more than 2.5 billion users.[372] YouTube offers a vast variety of video content, such as music and song videos, short films, documentaries, gaming, and educational videos. Users of this platform can post, comment and rate other users' videos. Additionally, they can also save videos on their YouTube account and subscribe to other users' channels. Talking about educational clips, it is essential to know that this platform allows students of all ages to access all kinds of teaching and learning related content. Hence, they can find everything from videos on solving mathematical problems to tips and lessons on how to develop different language skills for learning English as a foreign language. Hadeel A. Saed et al. investigated the mastery of the various English language skills and competences via watching YouTube videos.[373] Therefore, two groups, the experimental group that was taught by utilizing YouTube services and the control one that continued to maintain the traditional teaching method, were exposed to several questions to find

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[370] Iram Afzal, and Nauman A. Abdullah, "Role of WhatsApp in Teaching and Learning Process in Schools in Pakistan." (*Journal of Educators Online* 19, 2022).

[371] Fawzia Alubthane, and Ibrahim ALYoussef, "Pre-Service Teachers' Views about Effective Use of the WhatsApp Application in Online Classrooms." (*The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 20, 2021), 44–52.

[372] Ceci, "YouTube – Statistics and Facts." (*Statista*, 2023).

[373] Hadeel A. Saed, Haider, A. S., Al-Salman, S., and Hussein, R. F., "The Use of YouTube in Developing the Speaking Skills of Jordanian EFL University Students." (*Heliyon* 7, 2021).

out which teaching method was most effective. The results concluded that learning through YouTube videos favors the development and improvement of students' listening and speaking skills. In addition, a similar investigation with the same group division was conducted to demonstrate that students exposed to YouTube clips in reading lessons have better outcomes in comprehension and vocabulary improvement.[374]

2.2.5. TikTok

TikTok is a short-form video sharing platform with 740 million users in 2021.[375] Like other social networks, TikTok apart from video posts with added sounds and music, it also gives users the option of commenting, replying to comments, liking, or saving the video. Also, to be able to change the video so that it does not repeat in a loop, the viewer only must swipe upwards.[376] However, only users who 9 reach one thousand (1000) followers can access the live video service on TikTok to provide content with no estimated time limit, as TikTok videos have a duration of 15-180 seconds. Among the content published on TikTok, it can be found many videos about English learning. Nurul Afidah, Novi Kumala Sari and Hanifah; Zhai and Razali, and Huining Yang expose that TikTok videos are mostly used for enhancing listening and speaking skills, although these educational videos also contribute to vocabulary and grammatical enrichment.[377] Furthermore, it is important to state that there are very few previous research studies that analyze in depth what other competences of English language learning are involved in the utilization of TikTok in educational contexts, since this application is the newest one.

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[374] Raniah Kabooha and Tarik Elyas. "The Effects of YouTube in Multimedia Instruction for Vocabulary Learning: Perceptions of EFL Students and Teachers." (*English Language Teaching* 11, 2018), 72–81.

[375] Ceci, "TikTok – Statistics and Facts." (*Statista*, 2022).

[376] Katie Elson Anderson, "Getting Acquainted with Social Networks and Apps: It is Time to Talk about TikTok." (*Library Hi Tech News* 37, 2020), 7–12.

[377] Nurul Afidah, Novi Kumala Sari and Hanifah, "Investigating Students' Perspectives on The Use of TikTok as an Instructional Media in Distance Learning during Pandemic Era." *DINAMIKA: (Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 6, 2021), 47–68; Zhai and Razali, 1439–51; Huining Yang, "Secondary-School Students' Perspective of Utilizing TikTok for English Learning in and Beyond the EFL Classroom." (In 3rd International Conference on Education Technology and Social Science, 2020), 162–83.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

The following research questions will serve as a common thread throughout the study and each part of it will answer them by providing a solution. Furthermore, these questions will guide the arguments that will support the thesis of this study.

1. What are the benefits of using social media in English language learning?

2. What are the challenges of using social media in English language learning?

3. What competences and skills are improved by utilizing social media as a learning tool?

3.2. Steps of Research

This narrative literature review is focused on describing and discussing the utilization of several social medias (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube) in English language learning and teaching; concretely, it aims to collect benefits and challenges of using them from previous studies. The literature search was conducted and centered on using two main databases: ERIC and Semantic Scholar. In addition, the search was supplemented with findings from Web of Science and Google Scholar. The following key search terms were used: "Teaching English as a Second language" (TESOL) and "social media," "social media" and "second language acquisition," "English as a foreign language" and "WhatsApp" or "TikTok" or "Facebook" (using the stipulated five social media and combining them with other keywords previously searched).

Firstly, in the initial search, 115 articles were found in the ERIC database, 87 from Semantic Scholar, 17 from Web of science and 14 from Google Scholar. All of them are open and free access sources. Secondly, after removing the duplicates articles, 175 pieces remain. Then, the titles and abstract of 109 articles were screened before stating the eligibility criteria. Subsequently, a total number of 66 retrieved articles were read and assessed for determining the eligibility criteria. The inclusion criteria applied are: 1) Language learning and teaching, particularly English language, that utilizes social media for an educational purpose, 2) mixed methods research that analyze the advantages and

disadvantages of using social media for learning and teaching, and 3) articles just focused on a specific platform, such as Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube. Moreover, the included articles are focused mostly on students of High and Secondary education, specifically undergraduate (upper intermediate level) and high school students (intermediate level); although a small part of these articles are centered on Junior education. On the other hand, articles centered on different social media are excluded. Narrative reviews were also excluded because these type of articles do not include empirical observations and experiments. Furthermore, the articles concentrated on other non-English languages are also ignored. Finally, 30 articles are ruled out and a total of 36 articles are included in the reference list and used to obtain the necessary information that will respond to the research questions.

The remaining 36 research articles that were initially skimming and scanning, in this last step, are going to be critically read and analyzed to look for evidence that will support the arguments responding to the research questions. The studies focused on certain social media, such as Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube and IG, were summarized; and quantitative and qualitative information, extracted from their analysis of benefits and challenges, were also synthesized. However, these data are not only extracted from these articles, but also from others that examines the influence of various social networks in general. Subsequently, **Figure 1** displays the flow diagram for PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses).

Figure 1. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow diagram.
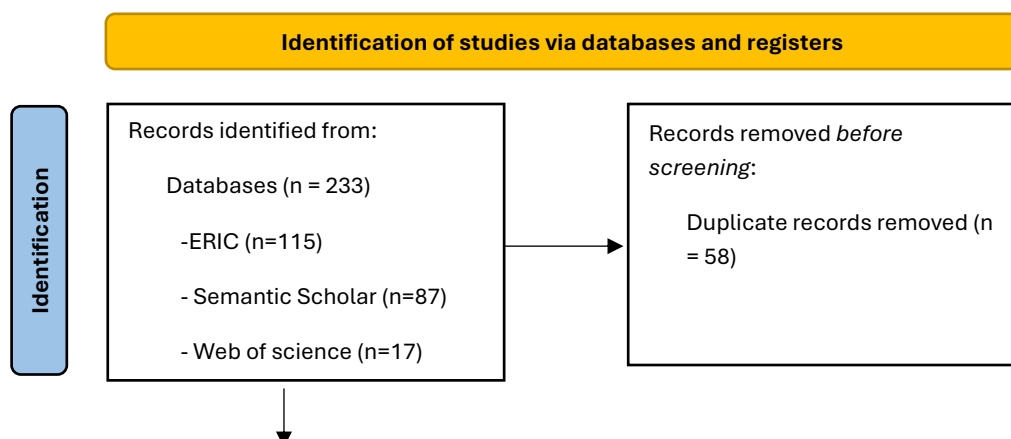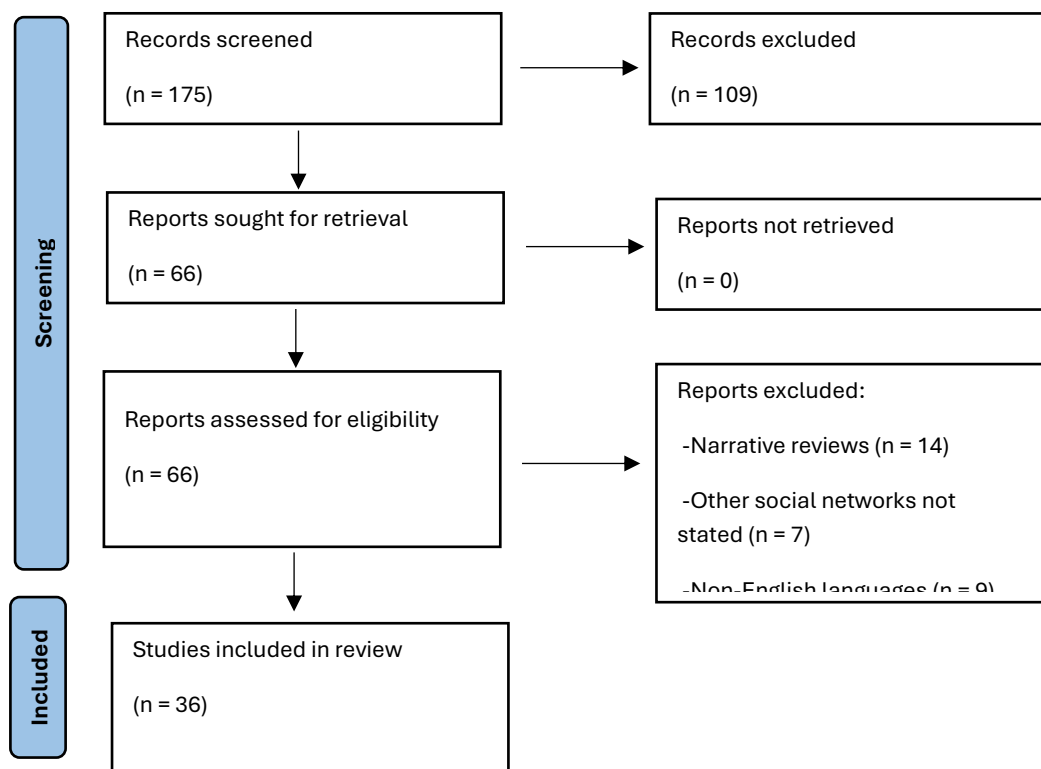
4. Findings and Analysis

English second language learning is a complex process influenced by several factors. Among these factors, socio-affective and linguistic factors play a significant role in shaping second language acquisition. Consequently, the following **Table 1** displays both factors.

Table 1. Benefits and Challenges of Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA	BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES	
Facebook	-Interaction and engagement development -Language skills Improvement -Grammar and syntax correction -Vocabulary enhancement -Motivation, enjoyment and collaboration -Immediate feedback	- Confusion between educational and personal use - Evaluation of students' academic performance - Not Internet access or technological devises - Privacy and safety - Problem with assignment downloads

WhatsApp	-Self-confidence -Independency -Active joining -Interest -Creative assignments -Ease of use -Writing and reading improvement -Communication enhancement -Vocabulary proficiency	- Distractions - Plagiarism - Informal use of the language -Lack of participation - Neglecting questions on conversation groups
YouTube	-Confidence enhancement -Motivation -Collaboration -Interest and enjoyment -Vocabulary memorization and comprehension -Speaking, pronunciation and fluency development -Grammar improvement	- Distractions - Confusion between educational and personal use -Privacy and safety
Instagram	-Vocabulary improvement -Writing practice -Immediate and creative feedback -Content and language use enhancement -Motivation and interest -Self-confidence	- Grammar, punctuation and spelling problems - Use of the native language for commenting and posting - Not all the students have an account
TikTok	-Speaking and listening development -Vocabulary and grammar enrichment -Interest and motivation -Real-life materials	- Limited and incomplete explanations - Distractions

Socio-affective factors refer to the social and emotional aspects of language learning, including motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy, identity, and socialization. These factors can impact on how learners approach language learning, their level of engagement, and their success in acquiring the language. For example, learners who are highly motivated to learn English are more likely to persist in their language learning journey and achieve better outcomes than learners who lack motivation.

On the other hand, linguistic factors refer to the structural and functional properties of the language itself, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and discourse. These factors can be particularly challenging for second language learners who may have different first language structures and norms.

4.1. Socio-affective Factors

As can be observed in the table of extracted results, the socio-affective factors that are most frequently repeated in the process of learning English through social networks are: motivation, interest, collaboration, enjoyment, self-confidence, and autonomy. These five social media can provide learners with a sense of community, enjoyment, and motivation to learn English. However, Instagram can be a great tool to enhance motivation by creating a class account where students can post pictures of their English learning experience and connect with others who share their interests and goals. They can also follow other English language learners and English-speaking accounts to stay motivated and inspired while learning. Additionally, it is important to mention that this social network, together with YouTube and TikTok, is also suitable for developing inspiration among students with an audio-visual learning style. Since motivation stems from the learner's interest, this socio-affective factor is also important in this type of innovative teaching through these platforms. Consequently, TikTok may be the best option for developing interest by creating short videos related to English language learning. Students can use this platform to showcase their creativity and engage in fun and interesting English language activities. Also, apart from being interesting and creative, the activities should encourage the practice of teamwork. This type of project fosters the development of collaboration and working skills.[378] Thus Facebook, creating private groups and forums that support collaboration among students, facilitates the sharing of English language learning resources and materials; and contributes with student-to-student and teacher-to-student feedback exchange. Therefore, as social networks provide opportunities for learners to display their language skills and receive positive feedback from others, this can boost learners' self-esteem and confidence in the practice of their English abilities.[379] Another platform that can be employed to improve self-confidence is YouTube. Students can create a class channel, where students can enhance their English language skills, and their own videos to practice

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[378] Raven, 2-8.
[379] Gamble and Wilkins, 49–72.

speaking skills. Furthermore, the comments in each of their videos giving positive feedback or correcting their errors also contribute to enhancing this factor. Finally, WhatsApp can be a great tool to enhance autonomy by creating a group for English language learners where students can communicate with each other and practice their language skills independently and dependently with the teacher's guidance.[380] Hence, this platform also assists students with an independent learning style to deepen in their autonomy.[381]

On the other hand, these social networks share some common socio-affective challenges in their application in an educational context, such as distractions, confusions between educational and personal use, privacy, and safety. Social media can be a highly distracting environment, with notifications, messages, and other content vying for learners' attention. This can make it difficult for learners to stay focused and engaged in their English language learning. Furthermore, these distractions can lead learners to be confused about the appropriate use of these social networks to find the required materials for effective learning and not use them for personal entertainment. Concerning safety and privacy, social media can expose learners to cyberbullying and negative comments from others, which can harm their self-esteem and motivation to learn. However, depending on which social network, they have specific challenges that impact on their use as teaching and learning tools. This being so, one of Facebook's problems are the evaluation of learners 'academic performance. As María Martínez Lirola claimed: "It is difficult to select the aspects to be analyzed and to determine the type of feedback that students will receive."[382] Moreover, WhatsApp's most criticized problem among students is the distraction towards student's questions in group activities.[383] Finally, Instagram and TikTok are two similar audio-visual platforms that share some features. Among these features, both have the possibility to make comments on diverse types of posts. Consequently, Instagram's most problematic issue is that not all students have an account on this platform. According to Aloraini, all the

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[380] Kheryadi, 2018.
[381] Vimala Balakrishnan and Chin Lay Gan, 808-21.
[382] Lirola, 10-11.
[383] Alubthane and ALYoussef, 44-52.

students cannot use technologies due to disliking that kind of learning, not having access to the Internet and having morality constraints.[384] Regarding TikTok posts, most of the students complain about the limited and uncompleted explanations they provide on the different English contents.[385]

4.2 Linguistic factors

As can be observed from the extracted results, each of the five specified social networks are of great use in developing the different linguistic factors, such as grammar, vocabulary and language skills. However, depending on which linguistic factor the learner wants to improve, there is a social network that is best suited to enhance some of these factors. Hence, Facebook is a good platform for improving English reading and writing skills. Students can join groups related to language learning, news, literature, or other topics that interest them, and read and interact with posts and comments in English. They can also practice their writing skills by composing thoughtful comments and posts. Similarly, Instagram offers the possibility to practice and improve writing skill by interacting with other English learners, native speakers and teachers while commenting on posts. Moreover, Instagram can be also used for enhancing English vocabulary because it offers opportunities to learn new vocabulary through visuals, captions, comments, and hashtags. By following English-speaking accounts and engaging with other users, learners can expose themselves to new vocabulary words and phrases in a fun and engaging way. Some researchers, such as Aloraini and Hind Abdulaziz Al Fadda, have found and confirmed that many students prefer to improve their vocabulary through this social network.[386] Furthermore, WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube are the best platforms for practicing and developing communication and comprehension competences. By joining on WhatsApp's group chats and videocalls with native English speakers or other language learners, English learners can practice speaking and listening skills in real-time. They can also use voice messages to practice

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[384] Nouf Aloraini, 2018.
[385] Nurul Afidah, Sari and Hanifah, 47-68; Yang, 162-83.
[386] Aloraini, 2018; Hind Abdulaziz Al Fadda, "Determining How Social Media Affects English learning".

pronunciation.[387] By watching videos on TikTok and YouTube, students can try to imitate native speakers' pronunciation and intonation and thus improve their pronunciation and listening skills.[388] However, while YouTube and WhatsApp are versatile platforms that also allow students to improve their writing and reading skills thanks to the comments section, TikTok's time-limited videos do not.

On the other hand, just as some of these social networks favor the efficient acquisition of linguistic factors, they also offer some challenges in their use for English language learning. As mentioned above, due to TikTok's time-limited and thus incomplete video contents, most of the students find it difficult to use this application to improve passive language skills, such as reading and writing. This being so, as Yang stated: "English reading and writing materials that require sufficient time to read, and think are not suitable to be displayed in the form of short video."[389] In relation to Instagram, its most problematic issues are grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors when students comment on posts or write direct messages. According to Aloraini, this is due to students' poor keyboarding habits, making it easier for them to handwrite to avoid these problems.[390] In addition, another challenge of using this platform is that most students, who are not fluent in the English language, tend to comment on the posts' activities using their native language. Facebook shares these same Instagram challenges. Finally, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube are social networks that serve both for learners' personal entertainment and educational purposes, so that this can lead learners to fall into the informal use of the language to express him/herself through them. Therefore, this is another of the most complicated challenges of this type of learning among learners, as it led them to confuse the formal

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[387] Alubthane and ALYoussef, 44-52; Afzal and Abdullah, 2022; Ishtiaq Khan, Raja Muhammad, Radzuan, Noor Radzuan, Farooqi, Shahzad, Shahbaz, Muhammad, and Khan, Mohammad, "Learners' Perceptions on WhatsApp Integration as a Learning Tool to Develop EFL Vocabulary for Speaking Skill." (*International Journal of Language Education* 5, 2021), 1–14.
[388] Anwas, E. O. M., Sugiarti, Y., Permatasari, A. D., Warsihna, J., Anas, Z., Alhapip, L., Siswanto, H. W., and Rivalina, R., 41-57.
[389] H. Yang, 167.
[390] Aloraini, 2018.

and academic context in which they find themselves due to indirectly associating these media with their non-didactic use.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings show that most of the benefits and challenges of using social networks in learning and teaching processes for the acquisition of English as a foreign language are focused on two different factors. These factors are socio-affective and linguistic competences. Among the socio-affective factors developed, the following stand out: motivation, collaboration, self-confidence, enjoyment, and independence. While among the linguistic ones: vocabulary, the four basic language skills and grammar. However, some common socio-affective challenges when using social networks are related to distractions, privacy and safety and time-limited and incomplete explanations. Additionally, grammar, punctuation, spelling errors and informal language use in academic context are repeated challenges caused by applying this non-traditional learning and teaching method. Therefore, these results revealed that social media platforms are important tools for developing the different competences involved in EFL.

The results concerning the first and the second research questions, posed in the methodology of this study, agree with previous studies about how to use the services these five platform provide for an effective English language learning and teaching. Hence, according to Aloraini, Martínez Lirola, Kheryadi, Raniah Kabooha & Tarik Elyas and Yang among others; Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram offer services such as: direct messaging, comments, and posts, videocalls, forums, pages, direct videos, videos, photos, and voice messages.[391] These features can be used for engaging students in learning English and developing the socio-affective and linguistic factors of it. Most of these studies are centered on investigating the benefits and challenges of each social media for its application in educational context. Consequently, this research shares similar conclusions by indicating which social network, depending

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[391] Aloraini, 2018; Lirola, 2022; Yang, 2020; Kabooha, R., and Elyas, T., 72-81; Kheryadi, 2018.

on the services it provides, best suited for enhancing each of the factors relating to socio-affective and linguistic competences.

Regarding the third research question about what English language skills are enhanced with the utilization of Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, most of the results conclude that students can develop the four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Moreover, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills are also improved. Overall, most of the students reveal positive attitudes towards learning English skills through social platforms.[392] However, most students have shown a preference for improving active skills (speaking and listening). That is because these social networks display audio-visual content which enables learners to acquire knowledge using this type of material. As Anwas et al. claimed, "videos or animations are more exciting to watch and easier to understand since the messages are created in the form of moving visual images completed with an audio."[393] Therefore, this means that these platforms will ensure practical and authentic language learning by involving the learner in an English-speaking environment.[394]

The findings of this study determine that YouTube and TikTok are the leading social networks for practicing English speaking and listening proficiency. Also, both platforms contribute to the easily retention and memorization of English language vocabulary thanks to an attractive audio-visual learning environment. TikTok together with YouTube are making students more interested and motivated in learning English, because they are entertaining applications where they can learn the language by watching videos of people from other cultures and nationalities.[395] Previous research conducted by Saed, Haider, Al-Salman & Hussein and Afidah, Sari & Hanifah agrees with these affirmations.[396] Saed et al. carry out an investigation where the results reveal that

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[392] Anwas, E. O. M., Sugiarti, Y., Permatasari, A. D., Warsihna, J., Anas, Z., Alhapip, L., Siswanto, H. W., and Rivalina, R., 41-57; Sameer O. A Baniyassen, "The Impact of Social Media on Improving English Learning Skills: A Case Study of UAE". (United Arab Emirates University, 2020).
[393] Anwas, E. O. M., Sugiarti, Y., Permatasari, A. D., Warsihna, J., Anas, Z., Alhapip, L., Siswanto, H. W., and Rivalina, R., 48.
[394] Zhai and Razali, 1439–51.
[395] Raniah Kabooha and Tariq Elyas, 2018.
[396] Hadeel A. Saed, Haider, Al-Salman, and Hussein, 2021; Nurul, Sari and Hanifah, 2021.

an experimental group, taught through YouTube, get better outcomes on speaking and listening tests than a traditional learning group.[397] However, it is significant to highlight the challenges surrounding these social networks, such as privacy, safety, and distractions. Students should be careful about what kind of videos and content they visit on these social networks, as their accounts can be hacked, they can be cyberbullied, or they can even access videos of unwanted content. In addition, another problem they may suffer are distractions due to inappropriate use of these, both in the classroom and at home, and thus waste study time consulting videos, accounts or pages that have nothing to do with learning English. Another problem may be the limited time of the TikTok videos due to short-videos upload. Yang reveals similar issues of this application stating that one of the most problematic challenges of TikTok videos among students is the uncompleted explanations.[398]

Regarding passive skills, such as reading and writing, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp are the most used for developing them, although WhatsApp is a multi-function platform that can also serve as a learning tool for practicing active skills due to the diverse services it provides. The results reflect that they are applications that can be used, both by teachers and students, to improve writing, reading and critical thinking skills, and to enhance group work. Furthermore, Instagram is a photo and video-sharing platform that can be used to enhance motivation thanks to its creative and real-life materials that attract and encourage students to learn English. Also, Instagram can be used to enrich students' English vocabulary. Hence, Qais Faryadi and Gamble & Wilkins coincide with the findings obtained on Facebook. Both studies show that Facebook can be used as a learning tool in the subject of English, as through tests and questionnaires, they concluded that many students prefer this social network to develop these skills thanks to the commenting and messaging services it offers.[399] Furthermore, Alghamdi agrees with the results found about IG.[400] Based on the findings of his study, he

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[397] Saed, Haider, Al-Salman, and Hussein, 2021.
[398] Yang, 2020.
[399] Qais Faryadi, "Effectiveness of Facebook in English Language Learning: A Case Study." (*Open Access Library Journal* 4, 2017), 1–11; Gamble and Wilkins, 2014.
[400] Alghamdi, 2022.

concludes that by adapting the daily use of this network to educational purposes, students show an improvement in writing skills and an expansion of their vocabulary. Aloraini and Al Fadda share the same opinion on the use of IG to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, since their investigations reflect learners' preference and interest in using this app for learning vocabulary over grammar.[401] However, all the above-mentioned researchers came to similar conclusions about the challenges that learners may face when using these networks. The most prominent of these are: grammatical and spelling errors, informal language, and time constraints.

To sum up, the extracted pieces of evidence from this study demonstrated that social media, namely WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, have unquestionable benefits for English language learning and teaching. The benefits detected are related to an improvement in students 'language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. These platforms also contribute to developing grammar constructions and vocabulary. Overall, social media can enhance socio-affective factors in English language learning by providing learners with opportunities to connect with others, enhance their skills, and develop a sense of autonomy and cultural awareness. However, some of the few challenges faced are mostly related to distractions, safety and privacy, limited time and explanations, and grammatical and punctuation errors. Therefore, it is important for learners to be aware of these challenges and take steps to overcome them, such as setting boundaries for social media use, seeking out resources and support, and practicing their English language skills in a variety of contexts.

I contend that social media should be used as a supplement to traditional language learning methods, not as a replacement. Social networks provide many materials and explanations that can be used to support English language learning, which does not mean that teachers' intervention are not necessary. Thus, teachers play a crucial role in the learning process of English via social networks. They can provide guidance on how to effectively use social media platforms for language learning, and

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[401] Aloraini, 2018; Al Fadda, 2020.

help students navigate through the overwhelming amount of content available. Teachers can also help students develop critical thinking skills by teaching them how to evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources found on social media. Furthermore, teachers can create engaging and interactive lessons that incorporate social media activities such as watching videos, participating in online discussions, and sharing content related to English language learning. Finally, they can also provide timely and personalized feedback to students, which can help them improve their language skills and increase their motivation to learn.

6. Further Research and Limitations

This study is a narrative review that investigates the benefits and challenges of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube in teaching and learning English as a foreign language to students of all ages, specifically learners from high school and university. Therefore, similar investigations should be conducted using quantitative and qualitative approaches by making empirical observations, social experiments, and surveys among Andalusian university students. Also, as the present study does not explore Twitter platform, because there is little information on its use for educational purposes and it is a platform that offers very limited materials and content that can be used for English language learning, the further research should include it along with the other social networks to be investigated.

This research may be limited due to the little information that exists and is known on this topic, as we are talking about an innovative study methodology based on learning the different skills that make up a language through social networks. Many of the sources used for this research are focused on a very current period of time, specifically since the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, more investigations should be carried out on this topic over a longer period of time in order to extract more conclusive results that will guide both teachers and learners in the correct use of these tools for learning English.

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