Research Article

The Impact Of Social Media On English Language Learning At High Schools In Duhok City

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Social media has ingrained itself into our daily lives, and students primarily use it as a tool to study and acquire English as a foreign language (EFL). This study examines how social media affects students' English language learning in high schools in Duhok City, Iraq. This study investigated the effects of social media on learning English using an exploratory methodology. In order to get the data, the researchers used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The research revealed that students use social media sites such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, Twitter and Viber. As a result, the students used social media more frequently for non-English learning objectives than for English language instructions. They nevertheless expressed favoured opinions about the influence of social media on learning English. Instructors also think that social media use helps students learn English. Students desired to use social media platforms to advance their English language proficiency and acknowledged the critical role that social media plays in this regard. **Keywords:** English language learning and teaching, second language learning, Social media, teaching

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Social media has ingrained itself into our daily lives, and students primarily use it as a tool to study and acquire English as a foreign language (EFL). This study examines how social media affects students' English language learning in high schools in Duhok City, Iraq. This study investigated the effects of social media on learning English using an exploratory methodology. In order to get the data, the researchers used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research

Social media is constantly changing how people live in many different ways. Today's social media platforms impact every aspect of life, including commerce, education, knowledge exchange, communication and information delivery (Rieger & Christoph, 2018; Bhatti et al., 2019; Amin et al., 2020). Due to the increasing use of social networking sites on the internet, researchers from a wide range of fields have started to concentrate on it, and she sheds more light on the relevance and impact of social media on various aspects of life, including social and educational factors.

In order to continue their ongoing efforts and view those components as an area of concertation that requires more research, language learning specialists and instructors have banded together to search social media and social networking sites on second language learning and foreign language acquisition. One study found that those who gained their education, inspiration and motivation via social media platforms performed significantly better on English competency exams than those who received instruction in person (Wamba & Carter, 2016). Social media is an internet platform that facilitates the creation and exchange of content and promotes the sharing of media and information. (Evans, 2014).

Additionally, social media facilitates connections and dialogue between two or more people. Social networking sites offering a wealth of information for students to build, modify, and share knowledge, such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, promise to support students' online learning (Gaytan, 2013). Given how quickly technology is developing and how common social media is, many ways exist to support and motivate students learning (Gikas & Grant, 2013). Many students communicate with others on social media. It is a popular, technologically enabled learning aid for public and academic use. 1.93 billion people access social media sites via mobile devices (Regan, 2015).

According to Abe and Jordan (2013), social media usage grew by 176 million in the preceding year, reaching over 2.206 billion active users in 2015 and contributing 30% of global penetration. It is time for teachers to acknowledge social media's significant contribution to enhancing instructional methods and creating a better learning environment in language classes (Kessler, 2013).

1.2 Aims and Hypothesis of the Study

Using social media in high school teaching in Duhok is thought to improve students' understanding of English. This research will attempt to investigate and respond to this statement.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research could be significant for the education department, especially for institutes teaching a second language, specifically English. It also could be helpful for researchers exploring this field of study. Additionally, for teachers teaching English as a second language.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background on the Study

Technology has numerous languages (HTML et al., C++. ext.) to develop the technology in machines and computers; social media is becoming one language day by day; people are speaking the English language as the One language in social media to develop socialisation because it is the best and most known language that people around the world know. For this reason, learning English on social media has become a primary way for people to learn and practice it. English is a primary language to socialise and communicate (Brian, 2020). There are many studies and resources on using social media platforms for foreign language acquisition (Artyushina & Sheypak, 2018; Ayers, 2020). With 2.95 billion users worldwide, social media use is gaining popularity and accessibility, particularly among younger individuals (Pikhart & Botezat, 2021). According to Li and Croucher (20200), social networking websites have supplanted traditional communication methods and are now essential for upholding a social lifestyle.

Teachers all across the world follow the pattern of creating learning forms through the integration of technology. Teachers frequently use Twitter, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, or Flickr to support their students' writing. Through online innovation and conditioning, using social media in the writing process helps it be creative and intuitive (Nichols, 2007). All things aside, modern society expects pupils to be equipped with cutting-edge specialist skills and tools that will enable them to "take part entirely out in the open, network, creative, and monetary life" (New London Group, 2000).

The fashion encourages social and text-construction abilities. The use of computer-generated simulations and exercises is expanding, giving students more opportunities to use the best language (Ranalli, 2008)

Thus, this study aims to determine how social media affects English language acquisition. Additionally, high school pupils will be the researcher's primary target. Many Kurdish learners use media to acquire English as a second language. It is well-organised that social media continuously alters people's lives in various ways. Social media platforms impact education, knowledge exchange, communication, and many other life factors.

Social media's popularity and opportunities have led researchers to support its educational usage (Eversonal et al., 2013). According to reports, Facebook and YouTube are used inside and outside classrooms for instructional purposes. It was recommended that students only have access to social media for educational purposes and that system administration locations should develop folios for homework assignments (Balakrishnan, 2016).

Learning English online is one of the best ways to acquire informal English language skills among the many available ones. A study found that Slovenia students enjoy using English-language internet resources to increase their comprehension and acceptance of practical skills. Moreover, research on the use of online media in teaching English as a foreign dialect has also been conducted in a few other nations.

Facilitating meaningful exchanges in the target language through simplified online international is beneficial for speakers (Mutum & Wang, 2010). Reduced communication anxiety is another benefit of social networking. People are comfortable disclosing their preferred identities behind monitors because anonymity is hastened in such a situation. Thus, they frequently interact and learn English, share information, and create new linguistic and personal identities on social media.(Blattner & Fiori, 2011).

Social networking can be a friend or a threat to natural language processing, according to Baldwin (2012). He attributes "spelling irregularities, the free-form use of new terms, and regular violations of English grammar standards" to social media. However, he also highlights the benefit of "lexical normalisation" in the same linguistic context.

Thurairaj et al. (2012) studied how social media affects academic English and how regular internet software and irregular spelling impact non-native speakers' language development. The learners' findings demonstrated that the discourse used on social media did not affect their English language proficiency because they were more conscious of the distinctions between their formal academic language and their online casual meta-language/

2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Social Media

The effects of social media on language could be both positive and negative. If we are going to learn a language, one of the main things is that we need to practice using the language (Oswal, 2021). Social networks are a chance to practice your language without fear of making mistakes or hostile acts because practising in a classroom or in front of people is more stressful and fearful (Oswal, 2021). Social media can frequently be beneficial and elevate language. For example, many new terms are added to the language dictionary when we converse on social media. This helps us understand what is being said and decide how best to respond quickly to get a clear response. Because of this, many people who communicate this way try to shorten their language by using emotions, acronyms, images, symbols, and phrases with special meanings.

According to Muftah (2022), social media is terrible for learning English since it changes quickly, speaking is not as formal as it used to be, and the social media realm is not like the real world. For instance, a word commonly used on social media can become popular. Every user tries to use it, but since not all trendy words are used appropriately, this does not improve the language. Additionally, the current language is used less on social media when new words are introduced.

As a result, the negative impact of social media on language has led to several communication barriers and a decline in vocabulary.

Additionally, in terms of language proficiency, young people frequently interact with one another by using slang or acronyms. Since social networking primarily involves written context messaging, students occasionally require assistance when instructed to speak proper, business-like English. Some of them struggle to develop proper grammar at the moment.

2.3 The Status of English Teaching in Kurdistan Region Schools

According to Sofi-Karim (2015), the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has two semesters in a school year. Kurdish people have a positive attitude towards studying English, which is highly regarded compared to Arabic and other languages. Iraqi English language instruction can be historically separated into two phases. In Iraq, FL, English instruction began in 1873.

Additionally, The New English Course for Iraq employed Direct Method teaching tactics, emphasising speaking and listening over reading and writing, and was first implemented in Iraq and Kurdistan before 2001. It was based on the structural approach and the audio-lingual method.

The Rafidain English Course for Iraq was available in Kurdistan until 2007 but was not taught due to financial constraints and economic sanctions. Finally, English in KRI is primarily taught in the classroom, with few opportunities for practice outside of it. While some students begin their English language education in kindergarten or at home, and many begin in primary school, the primary cause for this is that students across the board are becoming less motivated (Anwar & Shukur, 2015).

Kurdish EFL learners might benefit from the Sunrise English programme based on communicative language education. However, for several reasons, including social-cultural aspects of Colle dualism (a term I invented to combine the two extremes of collectivism and individualism), a dearth of specialists with training in English, a dearth of programmes preparing English teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and a paucity of communicative activities, this programme still fails a requirement for the students (Sofi-Karim, 2015).

2.4 Previous Studies on Social Media Role in Language Learning

People use social networking (OSN) websites more frequently due to the explosive expansion of Web 2.0 technologies. Millions of people use OSNs like Facebook every day (Brailovskaia et al., 2020). Brailovskaia et al. (2020) stated that online social networks facilitate communication with social networks and self-presentation maintenance. Thus, using OSNs has always appealed to young adults, especially students (Kokkinos & Saripanidis, 2017; Paul et al., 2012). Children in the twenty-first century have learning preferences different from those of earlier generations due to their increased use of technology (Moghavvemi et al., 2017).

Students today can choose how and what they study during their free time. Through OSNs, students can offer teaching and ask for help. Content analysis was directed by Abdulgalil and Abuelgasim (2018) to investigate how understudies utilise social media for instructional objectives. Both found that because social media forces students to do a variety of activities and tasks in order to increase their learning, they utilise it to exchange information, hunt for data and try to solve problems. Karim and Hasan (2020) also conducted a study on social media usage and found that many students feel at ease with online learning.According to Jurkovic's (2019) research, Slovenian students prefer to access English-language resources online to improve their acceptance of practical skills. Additionally, research on the use of online media in teaching English as a foreign dialect has been conducted in a few other nations. In his study, Sakkir (2018) discovered that students' enthusiasm for participating in writing classes improved when they used social media sites like Facebook. According to the survey, students who use social media sites like Facebook find it interesting to write in English and keep up their enthusiasm for the language.

Heffner (2016) conducted a study with Rowan University students in the United States. The study concludes that social does not enhance students' academic performance. Mushtaq (2018) discovered in another study that social media plays a part in students' lack of newspaper reading habits, which could cause them to miss out on important information that can be obtained.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology
This chapter describes the procedures taken to design a methodology for the data collection.

3.2 Questionnaire
The questionnaire, prepared online via Google Forms and printed on paper, was conducted at four different high schools in Duhok City. At first, a briefing on the purpose and reasons behind this questionnaire was given to those who voluntarily accepted to participate in this study. The sample comprised 30 students: 15 males and 15 females, ages 15-18. The participants were native speakers of Kurdish.

3. 3 Interviews
The interviews were conducted with the high school teachers in the same schools where the questionnaire was filled out. The interview included 15 teachers, 73% males and 27% females, as shown in Fig (1).
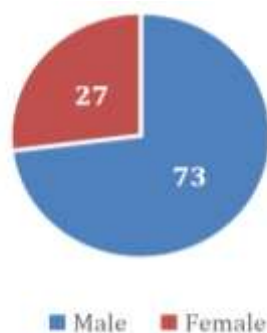

Figure 1 Teachers' Gender

All of the teachers were native speakers of Kurdish and hold a Bachelor's degree in the English language, but their teaching experience was different; 40% had 1-5 years of experience, 27% 5-10 years, 20% 10-15 years, and 13% more than 15 years of teaching experience.

The purpose of the interview was to collect qualitative data and teachers' perspectives about learning English through social media. The interview consisted of seven questions, each lasting about 13 to 15 minutes. The questions were prepared to help the researcher know and identify the impact of social media on learning the English language. Before starting the interview, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research and that participation is voluntary.
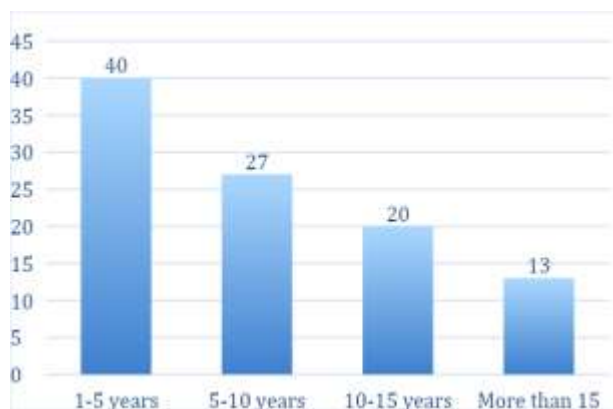
Figure 2 Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

4. Results and Discussion

4.2 Results and Discussion
4.2.1 Questionnaire

As mentioned, the data was collected from 5 high schools in Duhok City, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Each student was asked questions on the use of social media and if it helps them learn English. They were also asked what type of social media they use, how much time they spend on social media, etc.

The analysis of the question which was "Which of the following social platforms do you use?" indicated that 34% of students use Instagram to learn the English language, 28% use YouTube, 14% use TikTok, 9% use WhatsApp, 6% Twitter, 3% each of Facebook and Snapchat, 3% Viber. As illustrated in Fig 1.
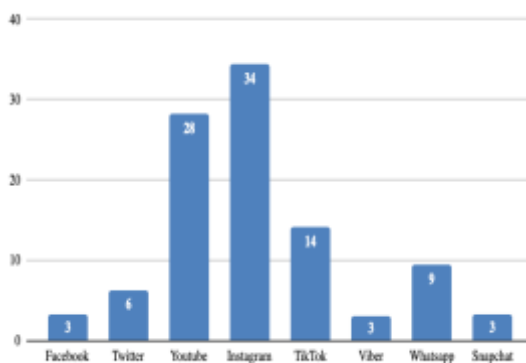
Figure 3 Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

The respondents to the question "How much time do you spend on social media?" showed that the most common answer was 23% spent both 1-3 hours and 3-5 hours on social media, 20% spent 30 minutes - 1 hour, 13% spent 10-30 minutes, 13% more than 5 hours, whereas 8% showed that they do not spend time on social media as this is shown in Fig 2 below:
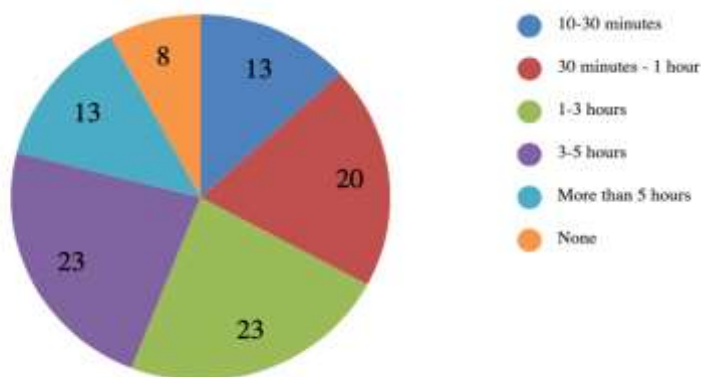

Figure 4 Time Spent on Social Media Platforms

The findings to the question "What is your purpose of using social media?" discovered that 30% of them use it to chat with friends, 25% use social media for studying, 17% for some other purposes, 14% for entertainment, and 14% use it for playing games as it is shown in Fig 3.
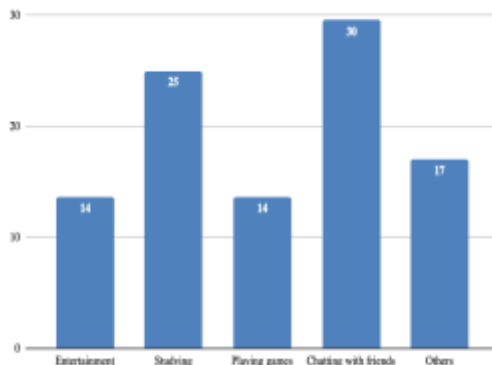

Figure 5 Motives for Using Social Media Platforms

The results of the question "Do you think social media platforms can affect learning English positively?" presented that 97% indicated that social media positively affects learning English. However, only 3% expressed otherwise. This is illustrated below in Fig 4:

Figure 6 The Effect of Social Media Platforms on Learning English

According to the analysis of the question "How would you rate the use of social media platforms for learning the English language?", it was discovered that 67% expressed that the use of social media on English language learning is good, 20% said it is excellent, 10% said average, and only 3% said very poor. Fig 5 illustrates that.
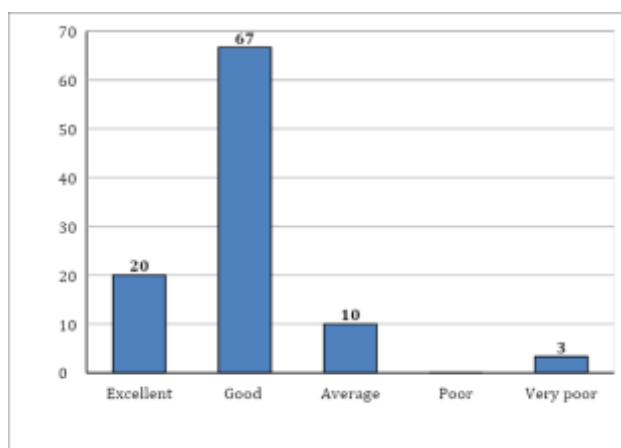

Figure 7 The rate of social media platforms used for English language learning.

The analysis of the question "What aspects of language skills do you improve via social media?" indicated that 31% said it helped improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, 25% said listening, 16% said vocabulary, 16% reading, 6% grammar, and 6% said writing. Fig (6) illustrates that.
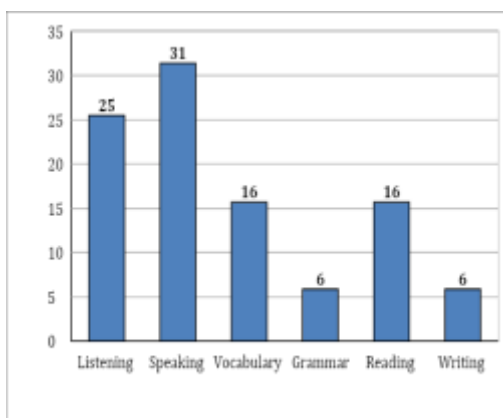
Figure 8 Aspects of Language Skills Improve via Social Media

The answers to the question "To what extent do you think social media platforms help you with your studies (learning)?" revealed that 50% of the students support using social media seriously helps them in their studies, and 47% said it helps them slightly. In contrast, only 3% of the students do not believe that social media platforms help them with their studies. The findings are shown below in Fig 7:
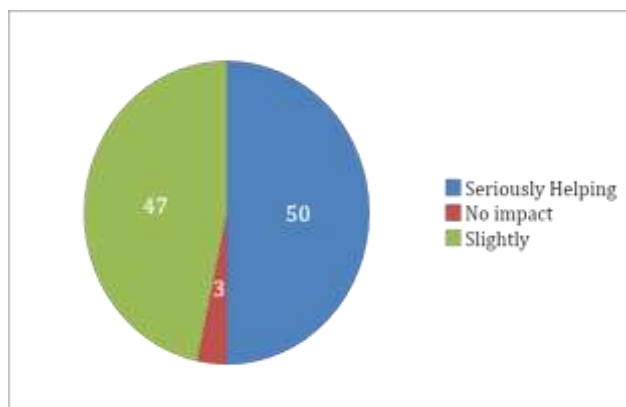

Figure 9 Social Networking Sites Effect on Students' Studies

Students were asked, "Do you think social media improved your English Language?" the results pointed out that 50% of students agreed that social media has improved their English language, 23% strongly agreed, 20% neutral, and 7% disagree as shown below:
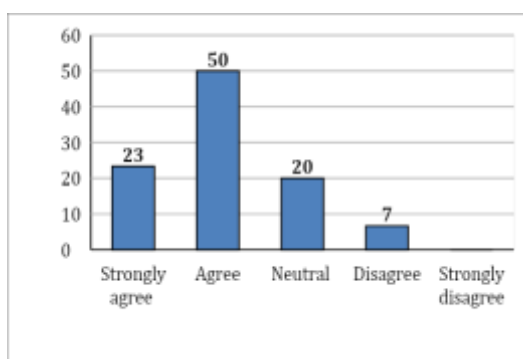

Figure 10 Social Media Improve of English Language

The questionnaire results revealed that students are more likely to use social media platforms to help them learn English, as 23% of the students indicated that they spend 1 to 3 or 3 to 5 hours daily on social media. It was also revealed that though 30% use social media for chatting, 25% use it for studying. In addition, 97% of the students stated that social media positively impacts learning English as a second language.

The students' social media rate for learning English was 67% as it mainly helps them improve their speaking by 31%, listening by 25%, 16% vocabulary, 16% reading, 6% grammar, and 6% writing. Furthermore, 50% of students stated that social media seriously helps them in their studies, 47% said slightly, and only 3% said otherwise. Moreover, 50% of the students said that social media has improved their English language, 23% strongly agree, and only 7% disagree.

4.2.2 Interviews
The findings of the interviews also support the findings of the questionnaire as it is revealed that 53% of the teachers stated that social media should be used in the English classroom at high schools, whereas 47% stated otherwise, as shown below:
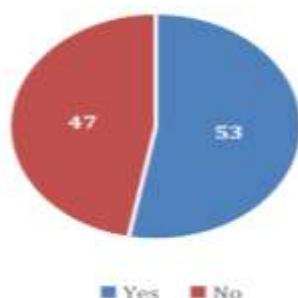
Figure 11 Social Media to be Used in Classroom

At a time when only 40% of the teachers said that they use social media in the classroom and 60% said they do not, Those who said they do not use it are mainly due to technical problems they face in their classrooms, which are poorly equipped.
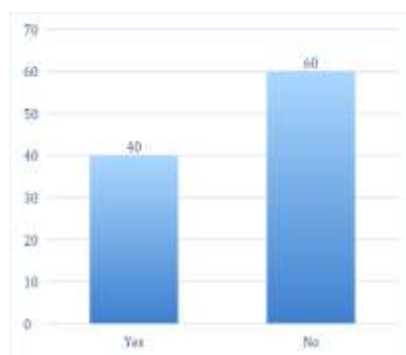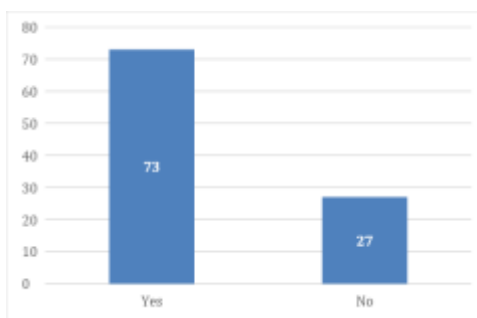
Figure 12 Teacher Use Social Media in Class

Figure 13 The Use of Social Media is Positive on English Learning and Teaching
From the interview, teachers use social media in their classes, and 73% of the teachers indicated that social media has a positive role in English teaching and learning.

4.3 Summary of the Findings
From the findings of each of the questionnaires with the students and the interviews with teachers at high schools in Duhok City, both students use social media, and teachers are with the use of social media. It also revealed that students and teachers believe that social media helps in English language learning and that using social media has a positive role.

5.1 Conclusion

From this study, these conclusions were arrived at:
● The use of social media by students is a reality, and they spend more than 3 hours each day for different purposes, from studying to chatting and entertainment.
● It was also observed from the questionnaire and the interviews that social media positively affects English learning and teaching.

● Teachers refrain from using social media in their classes due to technical issues they face in their classrooms.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Students
(Please try to answer all the questions applicable to your situation)

We are students at the English Department, College of Languages, University of Duhok. We are doing research under '**The impact of social media in English language learning**'.

This questionnaire aims to determine how social media affects high students' use of social media in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms.

It is not a test with no correct or incorrect answers. Your personal and sincere answers will be appreciated. We assure you that research ethics will treat your responses with confidentiality. Thank you for your kind cooperation and participation.

This questionnaire is adopted from (Muftah, 2022) and used according to our context in Duhok City of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Personal Information
1. Gender
A. Male
B. Female
2. Grade

3. Which of the following social media platforms do you use? (You can choose more than one).
A. Facebook?
B. Twitter?
C. YouTube
D. WeChat
E. Instagram?
F. TikTok
G. LinkedIn
H. WhatsApp
I. Others

4. How much time do you spend on social media platforms during a typical day?
A. 10 to 30 minutes
B. 30 minutes – 1 hour
C. 1 - 3 hours
D. 3 - 5 hours
E. + 5 hours
F. None

5. What is your purpose for using social media?)
A. Entertainment
B. Studying
C. Playing games
D. Chatting with friends
E. Others

6. Do you think social media platforms can positively affect learning English?
A. Yes
B. No

7. How would you rate using social media platforms for learning the English language?
A. Excellent
B. Good
C. Average
D. Poor
E. Very pool

8. What aspects of language skills do you improve via social media?
A. Listening
B. Vocabulary
C. Grammar
D. Speaking
E. Reading
F. Writing

9. To what extent do social media platforms help you with your studies (learning)?
A. Seriously helping

B. No impact
C. Slightly helping

10. Do you think social media has improved your English language?
A. Strongly agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

11. Do you want to give any other comments or feedback on using social media?
Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 2: Interview sheet

Interview for Teachers
(Please try to answer all the questions applicable to your situation)
We are students at the English Department, College of Languages, University of Duhok. We are doing research under '**The impact of social media in English language learning**'.
This interview is to determine the impact of social media platforms on English language learning.
It is not a test with no correct or incorrect answers. Your personal and sincere answers will be appreciated. We assure you that research ethics will treat your responses with confidentiality. Thank you for your kind cooperation and participation.

1. Please indicate:

Grade	
Gender	
Date	

2. How many years have you been teaching English?
a. 1-5 years
b. 5-10 years
c. 10-15 years
d. More than 15 years

3. Do you think social media should be used in the English classroom at high school or not? If yes, why? If not, why?
4. Do you, as a teacher, use social media in your class? If yes, for what teaching skills?
5. Do you think using social media positively affects students learning English?

Thank you very much!