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## NEW HORIZONS OF ENHANCING WRITING ABILITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) LEARNERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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### **Shagufta Khurram**

Assistant Professor,  
Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Lyari, Karachi,  
Sindh, Pakistan.  
Email: [shaguftakhurram54@gmail.com](mailto:shaguftakhurram54@gmail.com)

### **Ishfaqe Ahmed Abbasi**

Lecturer,  
Sukkar IBA University  
Sindh, Pakistan.  
Email: [ishfaqe@iba.suk.edu.pk](mailto:ishfaqe@iba.suk.edu.pk)

### **Zulifquar Ali Chachar**

Lecturer,  
Department of Mathematics and Related Studies,  
Sindh, Pakistan.  
Email: [zchachar@iba.suk.edu.pk](mailto:zchachar@iba.suk.edu.pk)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Social media has permeated every aspect of our lives, and language educators are beginning to understand social media's potential to improve EFL writers' abilities. A narrative review was done to review and analyze the available literature in the study. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) requirements of the statement are followed in this narrative review (Moher et al., 2009). A thorough search of electronic databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar, was done as part of the review process. The search was confined to works that were published between 2011 and 2022 in English. This narrative review seeks to examine the potential of different platforms of social media for developing the writing ability of undergraduate EFL learners. The review provides an overview of the body of research on the use of different applications of social media. for learning to write, including investigations into the potential advantages and drawbacks of different applications of social media, its impact among EFL learners' writing ability, and the variables influencing efficiency of different*

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*applications of social media in writing instruction. The effectiveness of social media for writing instruction may depend on several factors, including the type of social media platform used, the nature of the writing tasks, and the instructional design. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that social media can provide learners with authentic writing experiences, facilitate collaboration, feedback, and increase motivation and engagement. Overall, this review provides insights for instructors who are interested in integrating social media into their EFL writing instruction. It is recommended that technology-based methods should be employed in teaching writing skills to EFL learners.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Writing Ability, EFL (English as a foreign language) learners, Social media, Narrative Review, PRISMA*

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Greenhow and Lewin (2016) we are social animals, thus, to survive in the world, we must interact with one another. The world is more accessible than ever and offers amazing opportunities for the exchange of knowledge because of the swift development of technologies. Lakhali (2021) states that social media has developed into a highly significant feature of technology and has been playing a crucial role generally in every sector of life, particularly in educational systems, the prevalence and enormous presence of social media are now widely acknowledged aspects of life. According to Slim and Hafedh (2019), people communicate with one another through different platforms of social media, including Facebook, WhatsApp, blogs, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and many more, to share their opinions and knowledge. Students are using social media tools more and more in academic and social contexts because of the rapid technological development. According to Towner and Lego Muñoz (2011) in EFL learning, the use of different applications of social media as a tool for language acquisition has increased recently. The four core skills of acquiring English language are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW). Johnstone et al., (2002) state that it is generally considered that the most challenging of the four English language skills for EFL learners is writing. It can be challenging for even native speakers to demonstrate strong writing skills. Undergraduate EFL learners frequently struggle with the difficulties of writing in a second language (Al Arif, 2019). In this narrative review, we look at new opportunities for developing undergraduate EFL learners' writing abilities using different platforms of social media.

According to Mehr (2017) in the context of modern communication, writing can be considered as an essential communication ability. The capacity to write well captures the work required to form the sentences and connect them in a meaningful and expressive manner. One of the main EFL skills is writing. It is seen as a

communication tool as well to build knowledge. The potential of social media to enhance language acquisition, including the development of writing ability, has been shown in numerous research (e.g., Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Ahmed, 2019; Kamnoetsin, 2014). Research studies have shown that different platforms of social media can be applied to promote peer feedback, exchange of language, and collaborative writing (Chen, 2016). Social media can also be used to create authentic writing tasks and foster learner autonomy (Azlan, & Yunus 2020). Despite the potential advantages of social media in writing education, there are also drawbacks and obstacles to consider. According to studies (Ma'azi, & Janfeshan, 2018), for instance, some students may be reluctant to engage in social media-based activities out of worries about their privacy and security. Student access to technology and digital literacy abilities may also differ. These difficulties emphasize the requirement for careful preparation and execution of writing activities based on social media.

The current study seeks to provide a thorough review of the numerous ways social media can promote the development of writing abilities among undergraduate EFL learners by synthesizing the available literature on this subject. The study specifically looks at the effects of social media on syntax, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatics in writing. The study also explores the positive and negative aspects of integrating social media in the classroom to teach writing to EFL learners. In the end, this narrative review seeks to offer perceptions and suggestions for academics, decision-makers, and researchers who wish to take advantage of social media's potential to improve the writing abilities of undergraduate EFL learners.

### **LITERATUREREVIEW**

According to Ilyosovna (2020), language serves as the primary means of communication. It gives us a way to communicate with one another and express our opinions. There are thousands of different languages spoken throughout the world. Every country has multiple regional dialects that its people may know and speak in addition to its official language. English is the most widely used language in the world, hence its importance cannot be minimized or undervalued. English is currently the language that is most widely spoken worldwide (Getie, 2020). English is commonly regarded as the universal language. Despite being a foreign language, it is nonetheless important everywhere. Most people on earth can read, write, speak, and understand English. The availability of this language allows people to communicate and feel connected to the world community from anywhere in the globe. Khan and Maroof (2021) assert that people who communicate effectively in English not only perform well academically but also successfully showcase their professional abilities on a global scale. Among all four skills of English Writing is understood very important means of communication. To communicate well one should be good enough at his writing ability.

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According to Wil et al. (2019), writing is one of the four essential language production skills. Unfortunately, compared to the other English language abilities, it is believed to be the most difficult one for learners, especially EFL students, to master. Various research investigations have revealed that EFL learners' writing skills are inadequate globally. According to Mehr (2017), writing can be seen as a basic communication skill in the contemporary communication context. Writing ability captures the mental effort needed to construct the phrases and make the connections in a reasoned and expressive way. One could consider writing to be a key EFL competency. It is viewed as both a communication tool and a way to increase knowledge. According to Kitchakarn (2014), undergraduates still need to work on their writing skills even though it's essential for them to thrive in school and the industry. Most of them suffer with their poor language skills, which leads to poorly constructed phrases.

According to Ariantini et al. (2021), social media has permeated all facets of daily life, including the educational sector. Through various exercises tailored to the features provided by the relevant social media, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook have all been utilized frequently for communication. According to Mustafa et al. (2022), writing is a critical skill that needs to be practiced and planned to develop the necessary competency. The development of technology has brought about changes in language instruction methods. Because of social media, people seem to communicate with one other more closely than ever before, giving the impression that we have become socially integrated. Lakhali (2021) asserts that social media is an essential part of our everyday lives. Youngsters have also been interacting on social media on a regular basis. Social media's widespread use and appeal are now accepted realities of modern life. Social media and the internet have grown in importance among today's youth. They communicate with each other on a regular basis mostly via text messages sent through social networking sites. People mostly depend on writing abilities to interact with one another on social media. Thus, there is a connection between writing skills and social media use. Writing is an essential skill for academic success that requires extra consideration. Being able to do this is crucial for effective communication.

According to Joseph and Khan (2020), writing is an essential skill for EFL students. When teaching writing to students, teachers need to include technology in their classes. Writing instruction has been attracting students with the use of devices such as laptops, tablets, and cellphones. Students can convey their thoughts, opinions, suggestions, dreams, and observations with friends and peers and develop their writing skills through digital writing. Shahzad, et al., (2021) asserted that computers are employed in almost every profession; thus, it is hard to overlook their significance in the educational sector. Researchers have been motivated to employ this technology in a variety of educational contexts. Technology-based learning should take the place of

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the conventional teaching and learning approaches since it aids EFL students in acquiring the English language, particularly in writing.

Siddique (2016) discovered that when smartphones were used as an intervention, students significantly surpassed their peers in terms of motivation. Through the usage of smartphones, students are effectively encouraged to enhance their writing skills by being immersed in a fun and learner-centered environment. Through their devices such as smart phones, laptops, personal computers EFL learners are active users of applications of social media. Different applications of social media help the EFL learners to enhance their writing skills in a very effective way.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To review the available published research articles to explore the importance of writing ability for English language learning for EFL learners.
2. To review the articles to explore new horizons for enhancing writing ability among EFL learners through social media.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This narrative review adheres to the guidelines set forth in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Moher et al., 2009). As part of the review procedure, a thorough search of electronic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar was carried out. In addition to "Social media," "writing Ability," "undergraduate students," and "EFL learners" were used as search terms. The search was limited to English-language works published between 2011 and 2022.

To ascertain eligibility, the reviewers independently skimmed the titles and abstracts of the selected studies. Studies that examined the impact of different applications of social media to enhance the writing ability of undergraduate EFL learners met the inclusion criteria. Studies that concentrated on other facets of language learning, those that did not employ social media as a tool for teaching of writing, and those that did not involve undergraduate EFL learners all met the exclusion criteria. Any disagreements were settled by discussion and agreement.

The whole texts of the selected studies were then assessed for quality and usefulness. The effectiveness of the investigations was evaluated utilizing the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Pluye et al., 2011). A recognized instrument for evaluating the methodological value of various study designs is the MMAT. Based on their contributions to the research topic and the scope of the narrative review, the studies' relevance was assessed.

The data from the selected papers was extracted using a data extraction form that was developed based on the research question and the objectives of the narrative review. The data were organized and synthesized using a narrative approach that involved summarizing the main findings of the studies and identifying pattern and themes across the studies.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Through the search strategy, a total of 18 studies that met the inclusion criteria were identified. The research used a range of social media platforms, including blogs, wikis, Instagram, WhatsApp and were carried out in multiple countries, including the United States, Malaysia, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and China.

According to the results of the narrative review, social media may be a useful instrument for improving the writing ability of undergraduate English EFL learners. The research that was examined in the current review reported successful outcomes in terms of teamwork, writing ability, motivation, and engagement.

The small sample size and the variability of the research studies incorporated in the current review, which restrict the conclusions' generalizability, are limitations of the findings. Additional information on a few research studies, including their research focus, research design, participants, intervention, and findings, is provided in the table below.

**Table 1:**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Research Focus</b>	<b>Research Design</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Findings</b>
					WhatsApp was an extremely successful tool for encouraging learners to work on their reading and writing skills.
Ahmed, (2019).	Use of WhatsApp to improve EFL learners' reading and writing abilities	Quantitative	Yemeni undergraduate EFL learners	WhatsApp	
Alodwan, (2021)	The impact of utilizing	Quasi-experiment	EFL undergraduate	Telegram	The Telegram

	Telegram on writing ability development	al study	tes of Jordan university		app improves the writing skills of EFL learners.
Alsaleem, (2013)	WhatsApp's impact on writing skills improvement	Quasi-experimental study	Saudi EFL undergraduates	WhatsApp	WhatsApp improves the writing skills of EFL learners. Increased peer feedback and improved writing quality
Atay and Kurt (2022)	WhatsApp usage in academic writing	Case study	Turkish university students	WhatsApp group	The use of social networking sites improved EFL learners' ability to write in English.
Azlan and Yunus, (2020)	Social Media Platforms to Develop English Writing	Survey	Malaysian university students	Social Network sites	The development of learners' writing ability was positively impacted by the integration of ICTs and social
Bakeer, (2018)	Impact of social media and ICT on Students' Writing Skills	Case study	EFL learners at Al-Quds Open University Palestine	Social Network sites	

					media.
Chen, (2016)	Peer review using technology in ESL/EFL writing classes	Systematic Review	Different research articles	Different applications of Technology Blogging platform and personal learning environme nts	Positive and negative impact
Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012)	Personal learning environmen ts and academic writing	Case study	US university students		Improved writing quality and increased motivation
Kamnoets in, (2014)	Impact of Facebook on English EFL students use for in-class writing	Qualitative study	Thailand University EFL learners	Facebook	Facebook has positive impact on EF learners writing class. Social networkin g is a practical technique for improving writing ability.
Lakhal, (2021)	Social media use among EFL students and its impact on writing ability	Mixed- method design	Moroccan University Students	Social media platforms	Iranian EFL learners' writing skills were greatly enhanced with the Edmodo application
Ma'azi and Janfeshan, (2018)	Iranian EFL students' writing abilities and the Edmodo social learning network	Quantitativ e	EFL learners of Iran	Edmodo application	

Mulyasari and Putri, (2020)	Group WhatsApp's impact on Undergraduate EFL learners' Writing ability	Mixed-method design	EFL learners of Indonesia	WhatsApp	WhatsApp group improved the writing skills of EFL learners. Blogging alone does not lead to improved writing performance
Özdemir, and Aydın, (2015)	Efficiency of Blogs in EFL writing classes	Experimental	Turkish EFL learners.	Blogging platform	Through introspection and peer review, blogs can encourage learners to improve their writing ability. Students' writing ability increases with the usage of Instagram
Vurdien, (2013)	To improve writing ability through blogging	Mixed Method	Spanish EFL learners	Blogging platform	Facebook is a significant tool to improve writing
Wahyudin, and Sari, (2018)	Impact of Instagram on learners' ability to write social networking sites are used to improve writing	Quantitative study	Undergraduate EFL learners	Instagram	
Wichadee, (2013)		Mixed method	EFL undergraduates	Facebook	

	skills.				ability
	Blended learning using social media in developing countries	Case study	Moroccan university students	Facebook group and Moodle LMS	Improved writing skills and increased student engagement
Yeou, (2016)					Increased collaboration and improved writing quality
	Using social media for collaborative writing	Experimental	Chinese university students	WeChat (a Chinese social media app)	
Zhang et al., (2022)					

The quantitative study, which was carried out by Ahmed, (2019) and examined how well Yemeni undergraduate EFL learners' reading and writing ability could be improved by utilizing WhatsApp. The research study found that WhatsApp was highly helpful to enhancing EFL learners' reading and writing ability. Alodwan, (2021) conducted a quasi-experimental study, the effect of utilizing the Telegram app on the improvement of writing ability among EFL undergraduates at Jordan University was investigated in this study. The results of the study showed that the Telegram app had an advantageous effect on the writing ability of the participants. Alsaleem, (2013) also performed quasi-experimental study and the impact of WhatsApp use on Saudi EFL undergraduates' writing ability was examined. The findings showed that WhatsApp had a favourable effect on enhancing the participants' writing skills. Another case study was done by Atay and Kurt (2022) to explore Turkish university students' use of WhatsApp for academic writing. The researchers observed an increase in peer feedback and improved writing quality when utilizing WhatsApp in the context of academic writing. Azlan, and Yunus, (2020) conducted survey-based research and examined the use of different applications of social media to improve writing ability among Malaysian university undergraduates. The results of the study showed that the usage of different applications of social media had a positive impact for enhancing English writing ability.

Bakeer, (2018) conducted a case study. This research explored the effects of information and communication technologies (ICT) and applications of social media on the advancement of learners' ability. The research focused on EFL learners at Al-Quds Open University in Palestine and highlighted the positive effect of integrating ICTs and social media in enhancing students' writing skills. Chen, (2016) did a review and research publications on technology-supported peer review in ESL/EFL writing

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classes were systematically reviewed and analyzed. The review found both positive and negative impacts of different technology applications on peer review in classes of writing. Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012) did a case study and investigated the use of personal learning environments and blogging platforms in improving academic writing among US university students. The study revealed that the integration of blogging platforms and personal learning environments led to improved writing quality and increased motivation. Kamnoetsin, (2014) conducted a qualitative study and explored Facebook's impact on EFL learners at a Thai university's in-class writing usage. The findings suggested that Facebook had a positive impact on EFL students' in-class writing activities.

By using a mixed-method design, Lakhali, (2021) conducted a research study in Moroccan universities. This research examined the use of different platforms of social media and their impact on ability to write in English among EFL students in Universities of Morocco. The research concluded that social media served as a convenient tool for developing better writing ability. Ma'azi, and Janfeshan, (2018) performed a quantitative study and looked on how writing ability of EFL learners in Iran were affected by application of Edmodo (a social learning network). The findings revealed that the Edmodo application significantly improved the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. Mulyasari, and Putri, (2020) used a mixed-method design to investigate the effect of group WhatsApp among undergraduate learners' ability to write among Indonesian EFL learners. The study indicated that the WhatsApp group had a positive influence on the writing ability of EFL learners. Özdemir, and Aydın, (2015) performed experimental research focused on the impact of blogging in EFL writing classes among Turkish learners. The study revealed that blogging alone did not lead to improved writing performance, suggesting the need for additional instructional strategies alongside blogging.

Vurdien, R. (2013) conducted a mixed-method study, this research examined the enhancement of writing skills through blogging among Spanish EFL learners. According to the study, blogs can encourage learners to develop their writing ability through self-evaluation and peer review. Wahyudin, and Sari, (2018) performed a quantitative study and explored the impact of Instagram on undergraduate EFL learners' writing ability. The findings indicated that students' writing ability increased with the usage of Instagram. Wichadee, (2013) used a mixed-method approach to investigate the use of networking websites of social media, specifically Facebook, to enhance ability to write among EFL undergraduates. The study highlighted Facebook as a significant tool for improving writing ability. Yeou, (2016) did a case study and examined the implementation of blended learning using social media, specifically a Facebook group and Moodle LMS, among Moroccan university students. The study found that blended learning through social media resulted in improved writing skills

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and increased student engagement. Zhang et al., (2022) performed experimental research and explored the use of social media, specifically WeChat (a Chinese social media app), for collaborative writing among Chinese university students. The study found that there has been a rise in the use of social media for group writing collaboration among students and improved writing quality.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to Ahmadi and Reza (2018), technology use has increased to be a significant factor in communication. Every language class typically makes use of technology. Language is one of the main elements affecting international communication. EFL learners employ a range of English language skills to improve their communication and fluency, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Social media is currently the most productive tool utilized by language learners in this technology-based learning environment. According to Yadav (2021), social media is now an important part of adult life. Adult learners who are studying and practicing English as a foreign language (EFL) frequently use social media.

The research presented in this narrative review indicates that social media could prove to be a valuable tool for improving undergraduate EFL learners' writing abilities. In terms of writing ability, motivation, involvement, and teamwork, the studies included in this review reported successful outcomes. Social media can help students collaborate more easily, foster motivation and engagement, and give realistic writing experiences (Azlan & Yunus, 2020; Lakhali, 2021).

Social media use can contribute to the development of a real-world writing environment where students can practice their writing in a more meaningful and pertinent way. Social media can help students collaborate by enabling them to share feedback and collaborate on writing assignments (Bakeer, 2018). As it enables students to share ideas and receive criticism from peers, collaborative writing has been found to be an excellent approach for enhancing writing abilities (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 2006). Additionally, social media can boost engagement and motivation among EFL students, who frequently struggle with writing owing to a lack of enthusiasm or confidence.

The impact of social media for writing instruction may depend on several factors, including the type of social media platform used, the nature of the tasks to write, and the instructional design (Özdemir, & Aydın, 2015). In addition, the quaternary structure of the social media platform may have an impact on the impact of social media for writing instruction. Despite the potential benefits of using social media for writing instruction, there are also some concerns regarding the usage of tools of social media in educational settings, including privacy and security issues, as well as the

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potential for distraction. Therefore, it is very essential for instructors to carefully ponder the use of social media in writing instruction and to design activities that are appropriate and effective for their learners.

In conclusion, the findings of this narrative review suggest social media can function as a useful tool for enhancing the writing skills of undergraduate EFL learners. Social media can provide learners with authentic writing experiences, facilitate collaboration, feedback, and increase motivation and engagement. However, the use of social media for writing instruction should be thoroughly contemplated and designed to maintain that it is operative and appropriate for the learners and the learning objectives.

This narrative review has investigated how social media might improve the writing abilities of undergraduate EFL learners. The results imply that social media might give students real-world writing experiences, encourage collaboration and feedback, and boost interest and motivation. The rise of social media platforms has created new opportunities for improving undergraduate EFL students' writing skills. Social media's interactive and collaborative features offer a favorable atmosphere for refining writing abilities in a practical setting. Students can receive immediate feedback and exposure to various writing styles by interacting with peers and mother tongue speakers of the target language. This helps students improve both their language skills and awareness of other cultures.

Social media platforms can provide an abundance of educational communities and tools for language learners. Students get access to a wide variety of writing tasks, tutorials, and advice, enabling them to take charge of their education. Additionally, they can take part in online language learning courses or writing groups that promote cross-cultural communication. Additionally, including social media into language instruction encourages learner autonomy and self-expression. Students can share their written works with a larger audience and receive positive criticism and support from their peers and online communities. Their confidence is boosted, and their creativity and critical thinking abilities are fostered by this exposure.

However, it's crucial to Consider the dangers that might exist. and difficulties of using social networking sites to develop writing skills. To promote a balanced and successful learning experience, concerns including the veracity of online material, the danger of distraction, and the need for assistance navigating the digital world should be addressed. The sort of social media platform used, the nature of the writing assignments, and the instructional design may all have an impact on how effective social media is for teaching writing. While this review's studies present some encouraging new information, the use of social media for writing training is a largely unexplored field of study till today. Future researchers should investigate the efficacy

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of social media for teaching writing in greater detail as well as the effects of various instructional design approaches and social media platforms on learning outcomes.

In conclusion, social media has fundamentally changed how undergraduate EFL students hone their writing abilities. Students can engage in authentic writing practices, find useful materials, and promote a feeling of community by utilizing the interactive and collaborative elements of these platforms. While there may be difficulties, social media may be an effective tool for giving kids the skills they need to succeed in the digital age and beyond with the right direction and support. Using social media in writing teaching should be thoroughly thought out by teachers, considering both potential advantages and drawbacks. Teachers may participate in the creation of a more engaging and beneficial educational atmosphere for EFL writing teaching by creating activities that are successful and appropriate for their learners.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology-based methods should be employed in teaching writing skills to EFL learners.

Policy makers should revise the learning courses according to the requirements of the modern era.

Future research is strongly recommended for the use of different applications of social media for enhancing writing skills of EFL learners.

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