

The Influence of Social Media on English Speaking Skills of Young Learners

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Abstract:

This study discusses the importance of developing effective speaking skills and the impact of social media on the speech of young learners. It examines the impact of social media use on speaking trends among young learners and its consequences. The research will discuss the positive and negative effects of digital media on vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and the use of slang in speech. It will explore the change in the English spoken language, especially among youth.

Speaking is one of the most important communicative skills. The importance of perfect, meaningful, and effective communication cannot be ignored. Speaking fine, sophisticated English is essential and significant, the language that uses clear, understandable, and concise words that enable effective, successful, and precise communication. It has a powerful impact on listeners. While slang and abbreviations can be helpful in quick, friendly, and easy communication among youth, excessive use of these can lead to language deterioration. Speaking standard, refined language, and avoiding slang reflects professionalism and a refined personality. It has a wonderful impact on listeners and builds strong relationships.

This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on the speaking skills of young learners. A mixed-method approach is used, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative data is collected by a survey using a self-designed questionnaire (Google Form) consisting of 15 items (both open-ended and closed-ended questions). The sample size was 80 students (males 30% and females 70%) mean age of 15 to 20 years. Qualitative data is generated from interviewing a few of them, and the findings analysis. The findings suggest that 72.5% of students use social media (Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) for 3-4 hours a day, and about 98% feel that social media helps in learning English. More than 70% believe that it helps in building confidence and easy interaction. Most

of them rely on emojis and short sentences with abbreviations in communication. It is recommended that the academic guides advise the students to learn to balance the use of social media and learning from it.

Keywords: speaking skills, social media, communication, young learners, language learning

1. Introduction:

English has become one of the most important languages in the world today. A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. Crystal, D (2020). It is an official language in 58 to 67 countries, and around 1.5 to 2.3 billion people speak English. It is the most commonly spoken language in the world. It is the language of the internet. More than half of the content on the internet is written in English. It is the language of medicine, education, science, and technology. Besides educational purposes, good English-speaking proficiency increases the chances of getting a better job anywhere in the world. Learning English and particularly speaking skills is essential if the student intends to pursue higher education in the future.

On one hand, the ability to express ideas or thoughts clearly and coherently is part of the daily life of a student, and on the other hand, it is necessary in professional settings. It can persuade customers to buy a product or convince people to invest in a company. Fine speaking skills help to convey thoughts and ideas, which results in better communication and understanding. The importance of English-speaking skills cannot be ignored.

There is a growing trend of using emojis, abbreviations, and stickers to express ideas and emotions. The use of proper language structure is reduced. Teenagers are using very short, incomplete sentences, short-forms like LOL (Laugh Out Loud), DM (Direct Message), IKR (I Know Right), IDK (I Don't Know), TY (Thank You), and the like are very commonly used.

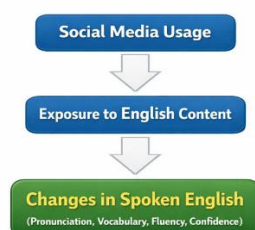


Figure 1: Showing the Impact of Social Media on Language Changes

2.Literature Review:

“Good speech is characterized by clear pronunciation, appropriate vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and the ability to communicate meaning effectively.” (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Developing strong speaking skills is crucial for personal and professional growth. The ability to speak effectively is not only helpful in daily life, but it is also needed in academic performance. An ESL student needs it in classroom discussions, presentations, group projects, debates, etc. Learning to speak fluently often proves to be challenging for ESL learners. The reason is that many learners know vocabulary and grammar rules, but they haven't practiced them in communication; they are afraid to make grammatical mistakes, and they aren't confident about the sentence structure, accent, etc. While speaking, they fear that the listener will judge them, as they haven't practiced speaking in real-life situations.

W.F. Mackey states the importance of good speaking skills by highlighting the importance of doing things in the right way to be a good speaker. A fluent speaker need not worry much about formal English. Effective, clear, and powerful communication gives a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. We also show aspects of ourselves through the way we speak. Our speech provides ideas to others about us and where we are from. Holmes (2022).

While many students learn grammar and vocabulary through years of formal instruction, they often find it difficult to use this knowledge in effective speech. Ismael, I., & LI, S. (2025). Social media has gained popularity during recent years, where formal speech isn't required, and students can speak the way they like. Teenagers spent a lot of time using the internet and particularly social media –chatting, sharing daily life activities, sending audio notes, sharing photos, videos, events, etc. There is a continuous interaction going on between young learners on the Internet. According to 2023-25 data, around 66% of teens use social media every day; YouTube (73-70%), TikTok (58-61%), Instagram and Snapchat (around 50%), Facebook (around 20%) of teens use it daily. The increased popularity of social media has affected the speaking skills of ESL learners. During these years, the influence of social media has changed the spoken language, making it more informal and casual. The way people talk is affected by the social context in which they are talking. Holmes (2022). However, excessive exposure to social media will definitely affect a learner's performance and will result in changed speaking styles and poor academic skills.

The rapid increase in the use of social media has transformed language learning, providing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners with opportunities

for learning, interaction, and communication (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Young learners are using social media for this purpose daily. According to Crystal (2011), language change speeds up by exposing learners to informal language patterns. Excessive use of slang and abbreviations, which has developed only recently, has helped in informal language learning. These days, young learners excessively depend upon social media for interaction and entertainment. Use of slang and abbreviations has increased at an alarming rate, resulting in the use of short terms like LOL, OMG, TY, IDK, and the like in almost every sentence. This change isn't very positive and can lead to language deterioration. They may have difficulty in switching to formal and standard language while giving presentations or writing assignments.

Learning through social media is an innovative method of self-directed learning. Al Eidan, R. (2025). Several studies talk about the positive influence of social media on learning fluent speaking skills. Labaidi (2024) states that social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter can increase learners' fluency and pronunciation. The use of social media improves confidence in speaking and helps one speak like a native speaker. Teenagers find it trendy among their peers, and this can be the result of their desire to fit into the social groups. Bandura (1977) states that children are more inclined to copy their peers. They tend to imitate people to whom they can relate (Bandura, 1977; McLeod, 2011). The desire to feel good, trendy, and well-accepted among peer groups urges them to use the same slang language as used by their friends.

Meaningful and beautiful discourse is crucial in personal as well as professional growth. Thoughtful and eloquent conversation leads to sophisticated and precise expression. It promotes personal and intellectual growth. Our speech reflects our personality. A beautiful expression reflects a beautiful personality. On the other hand, meaningless words, excessive abbreviations, and slang in speech aren't much appreciated. It is very important to choose appropriate and meaningful words in our discourse to achieve depth and clarity. Besides abbreviations (*LOL, OMG, IDK, TY, etc.*), shortcuts for describing social interactions (*Cap/ no cap, Rizz, Slay, Sigma, Aura farm, flex, etc.*) are widely used by them in everyday speech. The influence of social media on language use also extends to non-verbal communication. Emoticons, emojis, and GIFs have become common elements in digital conversations, allowing teenagers to express emotions and reactions without using words. (Yusuf et al., 2025)

A few words used by teenagers these days, which they learnt from digital media, don't have any meaning, or sometimes the word may have been used negatively in the past. They learn these words and start using them in their informal conversation without knowing their meaning. This situation, if it increases, may result

in loss of eloquent spoken language. In this age of the internet, when students are relying more and more on electronic gadgets and working mostly online, it is natural to imitate and get influenced by their surroundings, but just copying without thinking is not advisable. The teachers should encourage the students to use standard English, vocabulary, and to speak sentences with proper grammatical structures. They should provide a supportive, inspirational, and encouraging environment during presentations and class discussions to make them think critically and to make the speech more precise, meaningful, and effective.

3.Methodology:

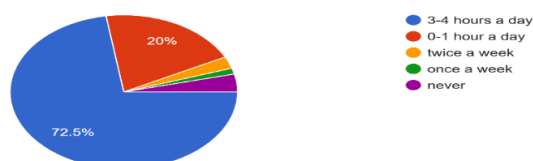
Research Design & Participants

A mixed-method approach is used, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative data is collected by survey using a self-designed questionnaire (Google Form), consisting of 15 items (both open-ended and closed-ended questions). The sample size was 80 students (both males and females) of average age 15 to 20 years. Each question was translated into Arabic to get a precise and error-free result. The survey asked the students about their opinions and self-assessments, and the data was collected to determine the influence of social media on speaking skills.

4.Result Findings and Data Analysis:

As previously mentioned, this study is conducted to analyze the influence of social media on the speaking skills of young learners. The data is collected using Google Forms, and the survey, which consists of fifteen questions, was sent to the students via WhatsApp. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analyses have been done to analyze the opinions of the students studying English. The type of questions used in the survey were closed-ended (Yes/No) questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended (comment box) questions. The sample is collected from 80 students from different levels, studying English. The data was collected electronically by sending the survey to the students. Their responses were recorded, and the data analysis is given below.

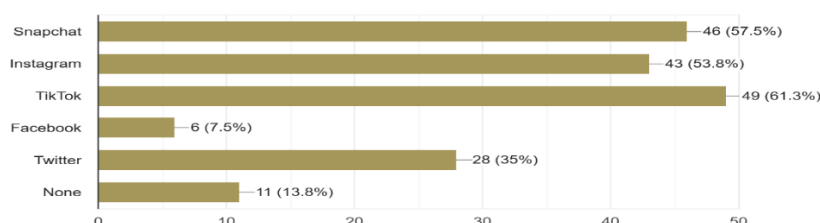
How often do you use social media like Snapchat, Instagram, telegram, TikTok, etc. كم مرة تستخدم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثل سناب شات، وإنستغرام، وتليغرام، وتيك توك، وغيرها؟
80 responses



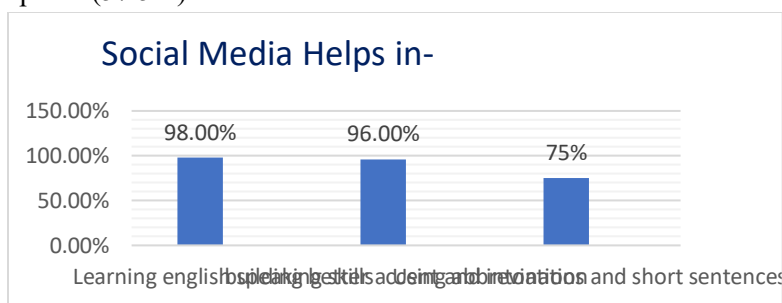
According to the results, 92.5% of the students use social media every day, and among them

72.5 % are those who use it more than 3 hours every day. Teenagers spend a lot of time using social media.

Which social media platform do you use the most? ما هي منصة التواصل الاجتماعي التي تستخدمها أكثر من غيرها؟
80 responses



As shown above, the most frequently used social media platform is TikTok (61.3%), followed by Snapchat (57.5%)



98% of the students believe that social media helps in learning English in some way or the other. 96% of them think that listening to English content on Social media helps in building a better accent and intonation. The reliance of young learners on social media can be easily seen in these data findings.



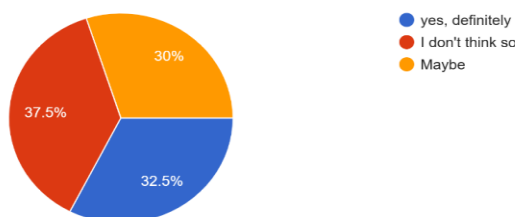
Due to many reasons, most of the students found that social media is an essential tool in learning to speak. A lot of them believe that social media helps in building speaking confidence and fluency. While texting online, they prefer very short sentences without subjects and auxiliary verbs. 75% say they use very short sentences, slang, and abbreviations while using social media.

Missing vowels is a usual practice to make the words short. They find it convenient, time-saving, and up-to-date.

Students feel that they are more comfortable and relaxed in online interactions as compared to face-to-face. Social media has made their lives easier, more fun, and they enjoy the new trends in speaking. They don't think it will have any adverse consequences on standard English. Social media is an essential and indispensable part of their lives.

هل تعتقد أن الإفراط في استخدام اللغة العامية أو الاختصارات سيؤثر على اللغة الإنجليزية القياسية؟
Do you think excessive use of slangs, or abbreviations - will affect standard English?

80 responses



5. Conclusion:

This study shows that the speaking skills of young learners are highly affected by the use of digital media. YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat play the leading roles. These platforms are used by a large number of teenagers. In this current scenario, speaking trends are changing. Teenagers learn trending slang, abbreviations, and symbols from social media and excessively use them in their conversations. The desire to fit in and to be like their peers is the main reason for this change in communication style. The main concern is that they are unable to use standard language in their academic fields. Excessive use of slang, abbreviations, and very short expressions has negatively affected standard speech as well as writing. As a result, they lack knowledge of grammar rules, make spelling mistakes, write incomplete sentences, etc. Teenagers prioritize ease, style, and trends in speaking. The positive aspect is that they easily learn to speak English fluently (without the stress of perfection). They enjoy using innovations and abbreviations in speech.

To avoid the fear of language degradation, teachers should provide guidance, and timely feedback should be given, which could result in the improvement of fine speech. Students should know that speaking the proper language is crucial.

Timely and useful feedback has a very significant role in the improvement process. If the student is willing to improve and develop good speaking skills, they should participate actively in the learning process. Good speaking skills are beneficial for them not only academically, but also personally and professionally.

6. Appendix – Questionnaire and interview questions:

<https://forms.gle/oyNvD54aFZqY7zKC7>

- How often do you use social media, like Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, etc.?
- Do you think social media helps in learning English?
- Do you think listening to English content on social media helps your English accent and intonation?
- Do you think social media increases your speaking confidence?
- Are you more comfortable in online or face-to-face conversation?
- Do you think interaction has become easy because of social media?
- To what extent does social media help you in English vocabulary development?
- Which social media platform do you use the most?
- Which social media platform can help you in learning English speaking?
- When you speak English or send messages, do you use perfectly structured sentences or simple/ short sentences?
- Do you feel it's important to use grammatically correct sentences on social media?
- Do you use emojis while communicating on social media?
- Do you use slang and Abbreviations? Which ones?
- Why do you prefer using these abbreviations/slang?
- Do you find it difficult to speak formal English in presentations and class discussions?

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