



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## The effects of social media on second language learning: a case study of five selected secondary schools in Chilanga district

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### Abstract

As a product of technological advancements, social media has come with it a significant change of the way people live and share information. The primary purpose of this study is to find out the effects of social media on second language learning. It is unquestionable that social media influence the writing and speaking of English. With the aim of exploring the effects of social media on second language learning: how it is affecting writing and speaking of English as second language among secondary school learners, this research was conducted at 5 selected secondary schools in Chilanga District of Lusaka urban. A sample of thirty (30) teachers and forty (40) pupils were respectively selected from Three public school in Lusaka. Qualitative method was applied during data analysis. The results of the study indicated that social media has several and immense effects on second language learning on the writing and speaking of secondary school pupils with the negative effects outweighing the positive effects. Through the findings of the study, it was established that social media also has negative influence on the learner's ability to distinguish formal and informal language as is the case with the current situation. The students use short form of words, incorrect grammar and sentence structure in their formal writing and speaking unconsciously, which are the effects of social media as students are now much more familiar with those types of language.

**Keywords:** Effects; Learning; Second Language; Social Media; Technological Advancement

### 1. Introduction

Ideas, thoughts and beliefs surrounding social media pinpoint to the fact that it has constantly kept metamorphosing the way people in various speech communities leave their lives, particularly on grounds of communication, knowledge exchange, commerce, and education. With the increasing popularity of various social media platforms (sites) and other related platforms, scholars and researchers from different fields keep finding them to be an area of study that need to be explored further. Language practitioners and educators in particular have seen the impact of social media in second language acquisition and learning. In recent studies, it was found that a certain group that received learning, engagement, and motivation through a social media site has shown higher outcomes in an English proficiency test compared to the group that received education on a face-to-face basis.

With its advancements, the global communities is faced with the challenge of having to meet and cope with the drastic change that technology has brought into almost every facet of human life. Substantial and pervasive changes to communication among organizations, communities, and individuals is what has been brought by technology. Therefore, social media has greatly impacted language teaching over the past 20 years, as evidenced by a substantial and growing body of research in a variety of fields, including language pedagogy and assessment, second language acquisition (SLA),

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discourse analysis, literacy studies, computer-mediated communication (CMC), and sociolinguistics (Young, Crook & O'Malley, 2014).

The aim of the social media is to create and develop social interaction among people in which they share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks in a Language style they understood and have created for themselves. The evolution of social media has led to its use as the best medium for Communication, whereby two-third of the world's internet population visits social Networking sites on a regular basis. As a result, this serves as a communication and connection tool particularly in connecting with old friends and meeting new ones either for mutual, business or academic interests (Balakrishnan & Lay, 2016).

Selwyn (2012) adds that social networks such as Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp among others have come to yield unprecedented opportunities for foreign language teachers and learners. This is because it offers them the possibility to exchange limitless numbers of text messages, images, and videos. Such options can give the users and language learners in particular, the opportunity to practice with new texts and learn new vocabulary through interaction, especially if it extends over time. Nicholas et al, (2009) further stresses that as regard to educators, they can benefit from Facebook by using it as a platform to post different kinds of materials (texts, images, graphs, and video), to be worked upon, edited, added to and shared among their students to attain intended objectives. Hence, the teaching experience can be more accessible and centered on students, as more room is given to learners to collaborate and an atmosphere of conviviality and creativity is enhanced among them.

Truthfully speaking, this great advent has brought with it both negative and positive influence. Therefore, a direct relationship exists between Social media language usage and second language (English) and performance. However, the unpleasant side of this technological evolution has resulted in dilemmas such as the setback in the speaking and writing skills of English Language. This once used to be the pride of any students who possesses it, particularly in this present generation of students who form the majority of users interacting through the use of the social media sites. Thus, the main focus of this research study is to look into social media language styles and its usage and how it has significantly influenced the learning of second language which in this context, is English.

A similar study to this one was conducted in Kitwe Zambia, which focused on the impact of social media on student academic life in higher education. Sinyangwe (2014) reports that social media is widely used by students of higher education. At least, every student makes use of one social media and he further reports that social media contributes a significant quota to the development of student's academic life. Therefore, for this study which seeks to construct effects of social media specifically on second language learning in Zambia in English among secondary school pupils, there is a point of departure between the two studies.

The genesis of the problem emanates from the fact that since the introduction of social media in Zambia, its use among school going children has had a negative impact on the learning of English in secondary schools. Usually, school going children in the Zambian secondary schools have taken the ways of writing on social media into the classroom. English as a language has been subdivided into components which are taught in class such as structure, composition, summary, oral, and so on. The most affected type of language is the written language in which learners use the idea of short messages (SMS'S) in their composition writing in class.

Pupils tend to shorten most of the words used in their composition lessons and in addition, spellings of words in not standard thereby distorting the way they are expected to write as students who are learning a second language. This therefore, means that pupils go with this type of writing which has a drastic effect on the way language is supposed to be used not only in academic circles but also in commerce and industry. Also, it impacts negatively on pupil performance in class. Since language is the tool of communication and if people miscommunicate, then the development of education and the country at large is greatly affected.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Social media is an important tool that provides a platform for students to engage in various social discussions. It provides learners a direct medium by which to publicly evaluate and comment on their institutional policies, classes and administration as well as interacting with their fellow students. Gurcan (2015) confirmed that social media allows people to identify other users with whom they have a connection, read and react to postings made by them on the site and send and receive messages either privately or publicly. However, social media and its effects on learning especially second language (L2) has attracted several perceptions. Although there is a general view that social media has more of adverse effects on second language learning than benefits, little seems to be known whether what the general populous perceive is also what teachers and learners perceive as well. Cain and Policastri (2011)

## 1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the effects of social media on second language learning in five selected secondary schools namely Parklands, Lilayi, Musamba, Bulbab and Mount Makulu in Chilanga Urban District.

## 1.3. Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To establish the usage of social media by learners in selected secondary schools.
- To establish whether social media positively influences student's writing and speaking of English as a second language in selected secondary schools.
- To determine the impact of social media users on communication skills and English grammar in selected secondary schools.
- To find out whether social media has impacted negatively on learner's academic performance in English language in selected secondary schools.

## 1.4. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Luo Heldmans Communication Theory This analysis looks at the patterns and rules of conversation under Paul Grice's conversational maxims. This theory enlightens us that "...as humans we are social beings and when we talk, we usually talk with or to others" (unless we do a monologue). An English language philosopher: Paul Grice, exuberates that speakers intend to be cooperative when they talk (Yule1996). For Grice, *cooperative* means that the speaker knows that each utterance is a potential interference in the personal rights, autonomy and wishes ( a potential face-threatening act) of the other. This theory breaks down every aspect of conversation and states that maxims or rules must be followed: One maxim is quality, contributors must always be truthful in their interactions and also avoid misleading their peers. This is huge factor, when it comes to the internet because of its given ability to hide behind one an invisible shield. One of the greatest gifts of the social media world is the chance to let your freak flag fly and still make friends in the process. Another maxim is relevancy. In order to have a successful interaction, participants need to stay in the topic at hand, this does not mean that a conversation clarifies topics, but it needs to be natural progression. The great debate in social media is how do we know what is relevant? Most people use blogs or twitter and Facebook for their own personal use, therefore everything put on their site is somewhat relevant to their life (Molly, 2014). Little-John (2002) adds that, Twitter has also thrown a wrench in this theory how can anyone be relevant with 140 characters, 140 characters or less? Being predominant on personal site, statuses are all relevant. Since we choose who we want to follow. We must get some joy or satisfaction out of what they are saying, the frequency of tweets or Facebook statuses can be filled under relevancy and also quantity.

## 1.5. Significance of the study

The study intended to the explore effects of social media on second language learning among school learners. It is hoped that the study gives awareness to both the teachers and the learners on the effects of social media on second language learning which is English language. In addition, it is hoped that the findings help learners have a clear distinction between bad and good usage of social media, also assist teachers to make necessary adjustments as they engage learners in various academic activities which may involve the use of social media.

In extension, the study is meant to benefit the learners in secondary schools to use standard English, the teachers will also benefit in that they will have less challenges in communication and written language from learners. The schools will benefit as the curbing of this scourge may help improve learner performance and the Ministry of Education in its effort to improve learner performance in English Language at regional level.

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## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Interaction Opportunities

Upon a global scale, in the research conducted in Saudi Arabia, Lantolf (2000) advocates that with the interaction opportunities Facebook offers its users, it is the embodiment of the social-interactionist approach to language acquisition advocated by, in keeping with Vygotsky (1978). Facebook can provide language learners with new prospects of real time cultural and linguistic interchange. Besides, from an ecological perspective, which views context as fundamental to language learning, thanks to the contextual clues it provides and the conversational features it provides, Facebook can represent ideal sites of language learning.

Cain and Policastri (2011), evoke the use of affordances, defined as objects, places, events or things, by students, with the help of their teachers to maximize language learning. In the recent years, affordances have come to be embodied in high-performance mobile devices, which have enhanced connection and interaction features, providing learners with more opportunities of target language contact, thus contributing to the improvement of their academic performance (Harrison and Thomas, 2009; Harrison, 2013).

One fundamental interaction pre-requisite is the acquisition of target language vocabulary. Sim and Pop (2014) focus on the effects of social media, notably Facebook, in developing students' English vocabulary. Besides, social media were shown to be effective in developing the areas of language production, as proposed by Chartrand (2012). Chartrand argues, following Swain (2007), that production is an integral part of language learning. Chartrand claims that social media can assist students in learning the language through the use of podcasts and videos. Kamnoetsin (2014) found that the Facebook platform assisted students in developing their grammar, vocabulary, and writing, as it helped them share information and acquire new knowledge.

Moreover, the platform proved to be useful in updating students about modifications regarding their courses, as an online information center. Facebook, therefore, was shown by the above studies to be a useful tool for enhancing language skills such as writing and reading. In writing, users may gain experience through composing various messages, and in reading they have the chance to read a variety of new messages. Thus, they have the opportunity to learn new words in authentic contexts (Swain, 2007).

## **2.2. Characteristics of On-line based writing**

Further, Solomon (2011) stresses that the most important characteristic of online-based writing is text speak. The main purpose of it is to send a concise and comprehensible message using the fewest number of characters. They consist of initialisms, acronyms, vowel-free abbreviations, emoticons, symbols, slang, pictograms and logograms. Text speak was originally known as SMS, Short Message Service because in the beginning it was used as the standard message system of telephones. It allowed users to send a concise and instant message that consisted of around 160 characters.

Kleiman (2010) adds that as wireless communication became more developed, internet users started to use text speak in chat rooms, forums, blogs and social media sites which popularized it. Since around the 1980s, TXT speak has become an essential component of contemporary online written communication. In the text message, there are no established rules and words and expressions are freely varied. Spelling a word incorrectly is allowed under the condition that the sound or pronunciation of the word can be easily recognized. In certain cases, *tho* can be used instead of *though* or *u* can replace *you*. Using numbers or special characters to represent words is also very common. Text speak 4 can refer to the number *four* or even the preposition *for*. Ketari and Khanum (2013) argues that social media distracts students and disrupts their learning process (Rymer, 2012).

## **2.3. Effects of social media on Language learning in Africa**

A number of studies have been done in Africa concerning effects of social media on second language learning. Important to this study is Gurman (2015) in his research conducted in Lagos Nigeria stresses that "social media zips through our campuses" somewhere in the literature. Social network has dominated with regards to the use of social media among students. Social networks such as Facebook, WeChat, WhatsApp and LinkedIn are mostly used by all students. Generally, students use social media as platform of discussion for their assignments and other course work, they get feeds on class schedules, venues and so on. Further, Subrahmanyam and Smahel (2011), adds that every student makes use of social media and students believe that social media contributes a significant role to the development of their academic life.

On the other hand, Lamy and Zouron (2013) argue that social networking sites like Whatsapp causes addiction to the teens as they use their phone for messages. They are extremely obsessed with sharing of selfies, videos and audio files with their friends and colleagues. As a result, they are not able to focus on important tasks. Furthermore, Facebook being a huge online platform grabs learner's attention from engaging into meaningful academic activity and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions. This includes useless chatting which has eroded their ability to use and write English language correctly as they are taught.

## **2.4. Effects of social media and student academic life in Zambia**

Similar research has been done in Zambia, either by locals or foreign organizations regarding the effects of social media and student life academically. Kambilima, (2014) reports that Studies on how social media affects students have been conducted by different organization and institutions. Teveta Zambia has come up with ways in which Social Media affects students positively. Mainly focused on Facebook as the highly used social network site. Facebook, the most

popular and widely used online social network website, has created frenzy among school college students in recent years. Therefore, the use of Social Media by students in most of the learning institution has become rampant.

Many students rely on the accessibility of information on social media specifically and the web in general to provide answers. That means a reduced focus on learning and returning information. For example, students in higher learning institutions such as the University of Zambia, Copper belt University etc. Student use social media as a way of chatting, exploring and interacting online with other students. Student's academic performance has reduced because the time spent charting online is more than time required on books. It has also promoted the so-called riotous behavior among others because they get to mobilize themselves and send pictures quicker and faster. However, the popularity of social media and the speed at which information is published has created a lax altitude towards proper spelling and grammar. This has reduced the student's ability to effectively write without relying on a computer's spell check feature (Mwape, 2018).

On the other hand, social media has increased the rate and quality of collaboration for students. They are better able to communicate meeting times or share information quickly, which can increase productivity and help them learn how to work well in groups. By spending more time on working with new technologies, students develop more familiarity with computers and other electronic devices. In most of these learning institutions students are fixing computers on their own or little supervision, this is because they are always found with these gadgets. However, students are able to interact with lecturers online as form of easing work (Mwape, 2018).

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### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

This study investigated the effects of social media on second language learning (L2) with special interest to selected secondary schools in Chilanga urban district. The study used a descriptive survey because this is a social inquiry and is targeted towards various sources and many levels that influence a given problem (for example; policies, organizations, family, individual). It relies on observation (questionnaire and interview) for the acquisition of the data, so that valid and accurate conclusions can be drawn from them (Pasick et al., 2009). Therefore, this study depended on qualitative methods in data collection and analysis.

#### **3.2. Research sites**

The study was conducted in Chilanga District in Lusaka Province of Zambia in five (5) schools namely Parklands, Lilayi, Musamba, Bulbab and Mount Makulu.

#### **3.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

This study drew its targeted population from respondents who were English language teachers, heads of department/section as well as some of the English language learners from the selected secondary schools. These were considered to be the direct users of the social media and the key people in teaching the English language in the different educational institutions. 70 respondents from the mentioned selected secondary schools (Gurcan, 2015). Respondents were selected as follows: the 40 pupils selected using the simple random procedure while Head teachers, teachers and HOD's were selected using purposive method and simple random procedure because the participants were selected for their ability and background in social media to provide the right kind of information on the field of English language learning and were expected to meaningfully contribute educated insights pertaining to the topic chosen by the researcher Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013).

#### **3.4. Data Analysis**

Makinde (1994) defines data analysis as the examination of the given problem in the light of the information collected after which some tentative inferences were possibly made. The researcher had after field work, transcribed qualitative data, checking for completeness and consistency as well as for various omissions, incomplete or unusual responses. Since data analysis involves editing, cleaning, transformation and tabulation of the data collected, micro-soft Excel and Google forms was used to analyze the data collected and to represented it in the form of graphs, tables and charts.

#### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

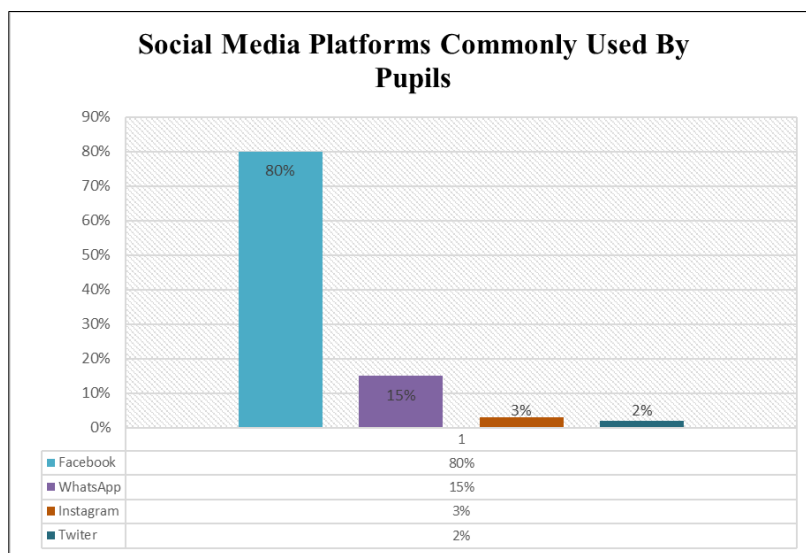
Since qualitative research involves direct interaction with respondents, the researcher upheld the principles of honesty, integrity and mutual trust between himself and the participants in order to yield objective and quality information. The

researcher furthermore assured the respondents regarding the data which was collected and their identities that they remained or were kept confidential and that the information was used only for academic purposes.

## 4. Results and discussions

### 4.1. The usage of social media by learners in selected secondary schools.

According to study findings, the social media platforms commonly used by the Pupils in selected secondary schools were Facebook at 80%, WhatsApp at 15%, Instagram at 3% and Twitter at 2%, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Source: Research findings

**Figure 1** Social media platforms commonly used by the Pupils

The study reviewed that the use of social media in education provides students with the ability to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. However, the usage of social media by learners in secondary schools was found to have had influenced the way pupils write and speak English language. It is because of this that the researcher was compelled to investigate what was causing pupils to write short hand messages in formal writings as well as speaking grammatically incorrect sentences. According to the findings, it was also revealed that the majority of pupils engage in the use of social media. This is in line with the literature reviewed by Plester et al. (2008) where he said that 90% of students own a mobile phone, and 96% use text messaging. This showed that young people are the most active users of social media.

In addition, it was also noted the majority of users were female presented by 55% between the age 10 – 21 years. This was because phone are valuable gifts that parents could give to their female children when they do well in an exam as a way of motivating them to work extra hard. When it can to social media platforms commonly used by pupils, the study reviewed that there are some of the most popular social media sites that are being explored by the world today. In focusing on the aforementioned, the researcher noted that there are specific social media apps which are a favorite and common to the users. According to his findings, pupils commonly use Facebook and WhatsApp as established in the previous chapter. This was in common with a similar study which was conducted by Bunce (2010: 112) "Facebook and WhatsApp are easy to use." One respondent when she was approached by the researcher said that:

*"I like to use Facebook and WhatsApp because they are user friendly, and they do not require a lot of money to buy social bundle"*

Further, the study reviewed that the reason why Facebook and WhatsApp are commonly used among school pupils was simply because with the former, they easily share thoughts, ideas and photos with all of their friends and family members. This was indicated by the highest percentage (80%) of pupils that have access to Facebook and WhatsApp respectively. How we spend our time has been a major concern mostly from people connected to us. Of interest of the study, how much time pupils spend on social media induced lots of doubt towards the academic performance. Language

experts and researchers delved deeply into the research of the effects and impacts both good and bad of Social media on the society and also in the academic environments.

According to Bulus et al (2012), “a huge amount of time spent on social media affects students’ use of English and grammar.” As the researcher was trying to establish how much time learners invest in doing their homework, he learnt that pupils in schools spend more time on social media on average week days. The findings showed that 85% of the pupils in schools invest a lot of time on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp respectively. When one teacher was approached for a comment on the subject, he said that:

*“Because of the short form of writing employed on social media in the preservation of time and space, informal register is what the pupils are writing and speaking.”*

In addition, the study reviewed that social media was also responsible for the continued trend by pupils to depend on exam leakages to the tendency of spending more time on social media instead of concentrating on studies.

Views on whether social media positively influences student’s writing and speaking of English as a second language in selected secondary schools.

**Table 1** Views from Teachers on whether social media positively influences student’s writing and speaking of English as a second language in selected secondary schools

Views	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	27	38%
Disagree	13	19%
Strongly agree	17	24%
Strongly disagree	13	19%
Total	70	100%

Source: Research Findings

The table above reflects the views on whether social media positively influences student’s writing and speaking of English as a second language in selected secondary schools. 27 (38%) respondents agreed and 17 (24%) strongly agreed that social media negatively influencing student’s writing and speaking of English, while 13 (19%) disagreed by saying that social media has not negatively but positively influenced the student’s writing and speaking of English language and the other and 13 (19%) respectively.

The study results reviewed and acknowledged the benefits of social media to education, its negative effects which cannot go unnoticed. The results of the finding depicted the negative effects of social media outweighing the positive. According to the related literature consulted from various scholars, Crystal (2001) asserted that, “social media has positive changes in the way pupils communicate and share information and negatively changed writing and speaking standard languages.” In line with the views collected from both teachers and learners, the study showed that the significant percentage of the negative effects of social media came from teachers and pupils. 27 (38%) respondents agreed and 17 (24%) strongly agreed that social media negatively influencing student’s writing and speaking of English, clearly proved that social media was one among other causers of grammatically incorrect sentences pupils produce both in written and spoken. Despite concerted efforts by teachers to address the matter through CPD meetings which are held regularly in schools, the researcher recommended that parents and other stakeholders must be correcting their children when they use short form of writing and conditioning them not to be spending more time on social media.

In addition, Obi et al, (2012) observed that the use of these sites also affects students’ use of English and grammar, particularly; writing and speaking. In line with this statement, the study reviewed that texting threatens pupils’ literacy because it creates undesirable reading and writing habits due to common use of abbreviations and unusual jargon, thereby damaging pupils’ ability to apply formal literacy skills. The study established social media as one among other causes of poor writing and speaking skills in English language among the secondary school pupils. A related study Lee (2002) did reviewed that, social media has caused a paradigm shift of some sort on the mindset of our secondary school students in corrupting their ability to compose grammatically correct words and phrases in one of the most important subjects of learning; English Language.

Pinning to the views the researcher got from teacher about the way pupils write on social media influence the write in class, one (1) of the teacher who handles grade 10 class confirmed about their pupils using simple sentences when writing in class and that there were a minimal percentage of good improvements in their writing. To support this, the researcher sampled 20 scripts for composition 5 notebooks in which pupils exhibited the following short forms of writing:

i, ao r u? (Hi, How are you?)

V fyn (Very Fine)

Sup: (What's up)

Sul (See you later)

'U' for 'you',

'between', 'btn'

'I know, right! For 'Ikr'

It was then concluded by the study that lots of the spelling mistakes exhibited in the writings of the pupils are partly because while chatting with their peers on social media, they don't care about misspelling of words.

**Table 2** Overall response of the student regarding different issues of social networking sites.

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total (%)
Use English when chat with friends	66%	4%	30%	100%
Use English when chat with teacher	97%	3%		100%
Friends correct mistakes in status/comment	2%	79%	19%	100%
Teacher correct mistakes in status/comment	1%	89%	10%	100%
Conscious about grammar/spelling when chat or give status	95%	5%		100%
Online chatting helps to improve speaking	86%	14%		100%
SMP helps to improve writing	80%	10%	10%	100%
Language of SMP influence formal writing	6%	89%	5%	100%
Use short form in formal writing	3%	94%	3%	100%
Feel comfortable to practice English in SMP	95%	3%	2%	100%
Sometimes pronounce informal word in class.	3%	95%	2%	100%

Source: Research Findings

This table presents the overall response of the student regarding different issues of social platform which exhibits the effects of the social media in writing and speaking of secondary school pupils.

The negative attributes of online based writing (SMS) in writing and speaking of English as a second language resulting from social media's influence.

The researcher was interested in knowing the negative attributes of online based writing (SMS) in writing and speaking of English as a second language resulting from social media's influence, these are shown in the Table below.



**Table 3** Negative attributes of on-line based writing

<b>The negative attributes of online based writing</b>
Diminishing Privacy: Many social networking sites regularly make changes that require people to update their settings in order to maintain privacy.
Isolation: As people spend increasing amounts of time on social networks, they experience less face-to-face interaction.
Literacy Errors: texting creates undesirable reading and writing habits due to common use of abbreviations and unusual jargon.
Poor Grammar Usage: people comfortably use these word abbreviations and ungrammatical spellings that they are not so cautious even during examinations.

Source: Research Findings

The table above reviewed the negative attributes of online based writing (SMS) in writing and speaking of English as a second language resulting from social media's influence.

The study reviewed that studies generally imply that social media is mainly used by college students to socialize rather than for academic pursuits. However, with secondary school pupils, some studies take a similar stance on the matter. Also, on the academic performance of the 40 pupils sample from five (5) different selected secondary schools of Lusaka urban showed 64% of the pupil's academic performance was negatively impacted in English subject. This meant that excessive use of social media negatively impacted their performance. To support this outcome with a related study in literature review, Gurcan (2015: 217) said that "the time spent on social media takes away from the time available for studying."

The conclusion made from the findings of the study was that most of pupils performed poorly in school and especially in English grammar related subjects because they are always on social media platforms (Facebook) interacting with their peers. This was supported by Croft, et al (2008) in the literature review where it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English and grammar. 37 of the respondents confirmed they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They used things like 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The. and this obviously highly affected their class assessment.

#### **4.2. The impact of communication skills of social media users on English grammar in selected secondary schools.**

The researcher intended to find out the views on whether the way pupils write on social media influence the write in class. According to his findings, pupils use online based writing when they are writing in class, as analyzed below.

**Table 4** Views on whether the way pupils write on social media influence how they write in class

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	40	79%
No	30	21%
Total	70	100%

Source: Research Findings

The table above displays responses on whether the way pupils write on social media influence how they write in class. 40 (79%) show an overview of the responses of the respondents that said YES, social media influence how pupils write in class, while 30 (21%) indicate respondents that said NO, social media doesn't influence how pupils write in class.

The study reviewed that writing styles impact good grammar, the researcher wanted to prove if at all the writings exhibited by some pupils was just a style of the new error or not. Both teachers and pupils echoed their views patterning to the impact of communication skills of social media users on English grammar. The researcher learned that about 57% of the pupils in schools had their grammar impacted by social media based writing style.

To support the statement, Croft, et al (2008) cited in line with the subject that: “social media based writing styles impact good grammar. In a face to face discourse with one of the teachers, she said:

*“I have some challenges with a quarter of my pupils when it comes to writing. What I teach don’t seem to apply to my pupils. It is difficult to eliminate social media writing when I administer any work in class. It is like a patient who has told to stop drinking beer on medical grounds yet in the evenings he goes to drink anyway. I labor so much to teach them to write correctly but when they go back home, they still engage themselves in social media platforms where they write short form messaging.”*

The study therefore indicated that the pupils are not also conscious about the grammar. Most of the teachers stated that as the pupils are not careful about their grammar while talking to their friends in the social media platforms. This according to Balakrishma and Lay (2016) creates a greater impact on the use of grammar both in speaking and writing

#### **4.3. How social media based writing styles impact good grammar.**

The study reviewed that in relation to how social media based writing styles impact good grammar. Views from most teacher had one thing in common that “everything pupils use on the social media is short: short forms, short summaries, short sentences and short opinions.” Plester et al. (2008) The researcher discovered that even those learners that had good grammar, because of the exposure to online based writing, about 14% of the pupils in some cases would use (SMS) in class. The researcher concluded therefore that in as much as short writings on the social media help pupils to share information in a faster way, it however enabled them give up their ability of writing long essays.

How social media has impacted negatively on learner’s academic performance in English language among learners in selected secondary schools.

According to the findings of the study, 45% of pupils mentioned that the language of Social Media does not influence their formal writing (exam script, test script, etc). 55% students said it influences their formal writing, supported by the quote in literature review as Ellis (1985) t h a t sometimes the pupils unconsciously use short form in their writings which they are used to use in Social Media Platforms.

25% students said they do not use short form in their formal writing while 75% said most of the time they write in short form in Social Media Platforms. The researcher also noted from the reviewed assessments of the respondents that when they write any formal paper sometimes, t h e y unconsciously used short form in their writing. Mostly they used short form in their notebooks and composition assessments because there is no spelling checker.

#### **4.4. How social media has impacted negatively on learner’s academic performance in English Language in selected schools.**

The study reviewed that social media is mainly used by college students to socialize rather than for academic pursuits. However, with secondary school pupils, some studies take a similar stance on the matter. The study findings on the academic performance of the 40 pupils sample from five (5) different selected secondary schools of Lusaka urban showed 64% of the pupil’s academic performance was negatively impacted in English subject. This meant that excessive use of social media negatively impacted their performance. To support this outcome with a related study in literature review, Gurcan (2015: 217) said that “the time spent on social media takes away from the time available for studying.”

The conclusion made from the findings of the study was that most of pupils performed poorly in school and especially in English grammar related subjects because they are always on social media platforms (Facebook) interacting with their peers. This was supported by Croft, et al (2008) in the literature review where it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students’ use of English and grammar. 37 of the respondents confirmed they forget and use the same in the classrooms. They used things like 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The. and this obviously highly affected their class assessment.

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## **5. Conclusion**

Social media platforms can be a great way to stay in touch with a large group of people. Pupils in secondary schools have embraced this new way of communication to connect with their classmates and to keep in touch with their friends. Communication is rapidly changing, as now the educators and the students communicate through social networking sites. Therefore, it is important to emphasis on how the educators can help their students to utilize the benefits of social media to improve their language skills. Thus, this research study suggests that if the teachers as

well as the pupils utilize social media platform in proper way, it will be beneficial for them to enhance their English language. The findings of the study clearly show that the majority of the pupils in secondary schools use Facebook and WhatsApp as their favorite social media platforms (SMPs) and that most of them usually spend substantial amount of time on these sites. The research findings equally show that there are some drawbacks which SMPs come with. Pupils write in short form in SMPs when they chat with their friends, when give any status or comments and it reflects in their formal writing and speaking, like in note books and exam scripts.

### *Recommendations*

There's great influence of SMP in writing and speaking of secondary school pupils. Pupils can take advantage to improve their productive skill in English as (L2) if they use it in a proper way.

There are potential improvements in the pupil's writing and speaking if the teachers as well as the pupils motivate themselves precisely. Teachers can be very innovative while using SMP for teaching purpose and can make lessons interesting and varied.

Teachers can provide an opportunity to the pupils to learn informally by seeking, exploring and testing ideas with other pupils within their own social network. The teacher can open a discussion board on SMP where the teacher and the pupils can post different articles, can discuss different issues.

The teacher should use proper sentence structure, correct word and grammar. The class teacher should be present, observing what is happening on online. So, pupils will be conscious about their writing and as a result it will enhance student's writing.

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## **Compliance with ethical standards**

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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