

Assessing Saudi learners' engagement with social media in English classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' perspectives on utilizing social media for educational and instructional activities, their experience with learning and teaching on social media, and how frequently they utilize these platforms to improve their language skills. The researcher randomly selected 288 EFL students from male and female campuses of College of Science and College of Business Administration, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. Respondents answered a questionnaire containing modified items from earlier studies. The data collected was examined using quantitative methods. The findings of the study revealed that tech-savvy Saudi EFL learners held exceptionally positive attitudes toward social media utilization as an effective language learning tool. It was also revealed that both learners and instructors had a very positive experiences utilizing social media for educational purposes, commonly employing it for different academic and educational activities in EFL classes. The study has implications for students and instructors because social networking sites and social media may be tailored to meet the demands of tech-savvy Saudi learners when conventional instruction no longer conforms to the taste of modern learners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Using social media sites is increasingly recognized as a crucial component of modern society, impacting practically every aspect of modern life. Over the last several years, English as a foreign language (EFL) students and teachers have displayed a growing interest in employing social media for English language learning and teaching. Today, professionals from almost all fields use different means of social media for different academic purposes. Educators and teachers today widely depend on the efficient utilization of social media for classroom instruction. This wider use has led to radical changes in the pedagogical methods and modes of instruction. As a result, the integration of social media is playing a very fundamental role in shaping students' learning behavior or achieving sustainable development [1]. As traditional classrooms severely restrict the learners' choices and do not conform to the modern technology-driven tastes of modern learners, social media and social networking sites have emerged as potentially transformative tools in the educational sector [2]. Moreover, they are more accommodating and fulfilling to the tastes of changed times. They are offering new opportunities and fresh avenues of learning and teaching, ensuring the participation and involvement of students, peers, and teachers [3]. The use of social media is getting further accelerated and becoming an important means of instruction and education.

Social media refers to innovations that enable immediate communication and swift sharing of updates details, information, and facts among various stakeholders. It includes text messages using phone-networking sites like Facebook [4]. It also refers to any computer-assisted technology that allows the exchanging of information, ideas, participation, and involvement in learning. With the help of these services, learning becomes easier and participative, and the learners become independent learners. The students learn new ideas and discuss them with their peers resulting in self-regulated learning.

As the acquisition of languages is a social transaction that requires engagement and interaction, multiple theoretical concepts underpin and support the implementation of social media in EFL classrooms. Vygotsky sociocultural theory [5], which views language acquiring as a social process, supports the utilization of social media as it requires collaboration and engagement with others. Similarly, Krashen [6] input hypothesis emphasizes that learners learn language by hearing understandable input slightly higher than their level. Posts, videos, and debates on social media offer linguistic input. Information slightly higher than learners' level of proficiency enables them to learn while understanding. Ryan [7] self-determination theory asserts that inherent motivation and autonomy increase language learning engagement. As social media usage in EFL classrooms offers learners an opportunity where they can share and engage with their friends in learning and exchange of ideas, this offers an alternative mode of instruction and learning.

Multiple studies have been carried out to examine the increasing integration of social media for EFL/English as a second language (ESL) instruction and learning. For example, Allam and Elyas [8] argued that social media and technological aids had transformed how people learned languages and communicated with one another, leading to collaborative intelligence-supported groups of learners. Quantitative study was carried out on 75 randomly selected male and female instructors from two Saudi institutions of higher learning. The results revealed that most Saudi Arabian teachers considered social media as a highly useful English language teaching (ELT) tool. However, the study advised against free social media usage and advocated controlled use in education. This study has some limitations, one of which is that it restricted itself to 75 students from two different Saudi universities. Future researchers may expand it to include more respondents from more universities which will bring about fresh perspectives from learners and enhance the reliability of the study. Donelan [9] talked about how social media could be used professionally with a special focus on its use by academicians in the context of the UK to contribute to career progressions and networking opportunities. The study investigated social media use via interviewing and surveys. It found that the number of motivations and consequences of social media use increased with the increase in activity. However, shortages of time and expertise were found to impede social media utilization. The study suggested practical learning, such as practice interaction, and institution-wide discussions regarding social media marketing for enhancing students' engagement. The study contributed immensely by investigating how social media could support higher education and improve and help scholars. Nevertheless, it lacked a discussion of the problems and difficulties of social media usage. Future studies may investigate this aspect of social media usage in the British context.

Research by Tkáčová *et al.* [10] investigated the social media significance for amusement, leisure, communication, and education, and for promoting sustained well-being among secondary school learners in central Slovakia (previously Czechoslovakia) during the pandemic. The research utilized a questionnaire and a structured interview to show unexpected changes in opinions, student and teacher schedules, and online producers. It was revealed that social media triggered personal interests, interpersonal connectivity and communication, motivation, and online education. The study holds implications for those interested in understanding the effective use of technology for academic purposes in unusual and challenging times. As this study merely talks about how social media became a vital means of entertainment and pleasure for well-being of youngsters, it fails to address social media's usefulness for EFL instruction and learning. Future studies may explore this aspect from students' perspectives. Boca [11] talked about learners' attitudes and behavior toward online education during the pandemic at a Romanian university. The study, using a questionnaire divided into four parts to examine students' needs, individual characteristics, knowledge of using online sites, and their choices for online mode of instruction, found that online instructional mode during the pandemic was useful for 78% of learners. Though online learning was undesirable for students, they preferred online assessment. The research suggests matching methods of learning to the expectations and tastes of the new generation. As it is situation-specific research, future studies could investigate how to handle social media stress in everyday life.

Ionescu *et al.* [12] examined how the epidemic led Romanian teachers and students to adopt online learning. Questionnaires were utilized to analyze the psychological impacts of social alienation and online education on middle, high, and university students, instructors, and parents. The study advises parents and instructors to monitor students. Teachers, parents, and students have examined online education, which makes it reliable. Further studies could alter the context for fresh findings. Xue and Churchill [13] examined the wider educational possibilities of social media technology. Using a qualitative single case study, the study examined ways instructors in Mainland, China, integrate social media and media technology into classes at

universities. The qualitative content study revealed five educational advantages of using social media, which include content creation, sharing and assessment of resources, as well as a motivating environment. The results indicated that instructors' conceptual framework for using technology shifted as they experienced the advantages associated with its use. Future studies should focus on incorporating more teachers from different countries. Noori *et al.* [14] discovered that social media substantially affected learning and teaching. The study used a quantitative approach to analyze social media usage in ESL learning and teaching, revealing that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most dominant platforms. The statistical analysis revealed that female students utilized social media more for academic purposes than male students. The lack of generalizability of the research stands out clearly. The upcoming studies may deal with the challenges and difficulties of using social media in a country that lacks electronic infrastructure.

In the last few years, it has increasingly been observed that conventional methods of language instruction are losing their relevance and are incapable of responding to the taste of tech-savvy modern learners. In Saudi Arabia where almost three-fourths of the population of Saudi Arabia comprises tech-savvy youths, methods of conventional education no longer work. This younger generation immensely uses social media platforms for different purposes. However, there are a few studies that looked at the efficacy of social media as a tool for learning and teaching from Saudi EFL learners' perspective. This deficiency calls for new research to see how social media is addressing the changed tastes of learners in the post-pandemic era and how it altered learning situations and made learning a self-regulated business. Therefore, this study seeks to understand Saudi learners' engagement with social media platforms in EFL classrooms. The research questions that need to be answered are:

- i) How do Saudi EFL learners and their parents view social media platforms as tools of learning?
- ii) How is Saudi EFL students' experiences of utilizing social media platforms for learning English?
- iii) How do Saudi EFL learners view social media adoption for instruction in EFL classrooms?
- iv) How often do learners and instructors in EFL classes utilize social media?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Design

The study used quantitative analysis as it aimed to understand the perspectives of both learners and teachers. Creswell [15] argued that the quantitative approach was appropriate for research involving numerical and statistical findings. As a result, the study utilized this method to interpret and analyze its findings.

2.2. Participants' description

Table 1 shows the statistical description of the respondents. As undergraduate Saudi EFL learners are tech-savvy, they were chosen to understand how the incorporation of social media platforms assisted them in improving their English skills. 288 respondents specializing in English were selected using the random sampling approach. There were 202 male learners and 80 female students in total. Six learners did not indicate their gender. English has been among their mandatory courses for the past seven or eight years. Being native Arabic speakers, they learn EFL.

2.3. Data collection instrument

For data collection, a questionnaire was developed using modified items from earlier studies [16], [17]. It had primarily two parts. The first section focused on the demographics of the respondents; the second one on their perspectives regarding social media adoption as a tool for language instruction, their experiences in EFL classrooms, and lastly, their regular utilization of these platforms for language acquisition and instruction, as given in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Description	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	202	70.10
	Female	80	27.80
	Other	6	2.10
Educational level of the participants	Level 5th to 8th	54	18.80
	Level 3rd to 4th	50	17.40
	Level 1st to 3rd	175	60.80
	Others	9	3.10
Participant's parent's education	Postgraduate +	75	26
	Pre-university to graduation	147	51
	Middle school+	43	14.90
	No education	23	8

Table 2. Items representing Saudi EFL learners' engagement with social media

Items/statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. Since using social media, my English has improved.					
8 Social media helps me learn new English words and phrases.					
9. Social media helps me study English without instructors/institutions.					
10. Social media lets English learners study at their own pace.					
11. Learning English through social media is a pleasant experience.					
12. Social media is crucial for English learning since the pandemic.					
13. Social media have become appealing to my parents to learn English.					
14. Post-pandemic EFL classrooms frequently utilize social media.					
15. Social media offers several English-learning resources.					
16. Social media helps me know more about my course.					
17. I get more information easily with the help of social media.					
18. I learned many new skills using social media.					
19. I use social media to keep up with my lecture time and location.					
20. I develop my writing skills due to social media usage.					
21. Social media usage helps me improve my reading skills.					
22. I have easy access to many resources due to the use of social media.					
23. Social media lets me learn whenever and wherever I choose.					
24. While using social media, I am engaged in my learning.					
25. Social media use improves my thinking skills.					
26. For learning and knowledge, social media is an important tool.					
27. Social media simplifies instructor communication.					
28. My professors utilize social media effectively.					
29. Social media is now a powerful tool for institutions					
30. Using social media saves and maximizes time.					
31. My teachers make use of social media.					
32. Students make use of social media.					
33 I utilize social media, videos, and class notes.					
34. Teachers text and interact using social media.					
35. Classmates discuss ideas using social media.					
36. I utilize social media to learn and improve.					

2.4. Validity and reliability

Given respondents' inadequate English skills, English questions and statements were translated into Arabic to enhance understanding and response accuracy. Two Arabic and English professionals verified the translation. The suggestions and feedback from the pilot study and language experts were incorporated. SPSS was utilized for evaluating data from a reliability test. The results indicated that each questionnaire category had an acceptable reliability value ($\alpha=.70$ or above) [18], as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability statistics

Items/statements	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
1. Saudi EFL students' perspectives on social media usage as a learning tool	9	.870
2. Social media classroom experiences of Saudi EFL students	11	.906
3. Saudi EFL learners' classroom social media teaching experience	4	.792
4. Saudi EFL students' and teachers' social media engagement frequency	6	.766
Total	30	.945

2.5. Data analysis and interpretation

The questionnaire was retrieved from Google Forms in Excel following data collection and assigned number codes. The researcher used descriptive statistics to calculate the mean, frequency, and standard deviation. The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 means strongly agree, 4 means agree, 3 means neutral, 2 means disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree. Table 4 shows the criteria assumed to analyze and categorize the learners' degree/level of positive/negative attitudes.

Table 4. Scale/criteria designed to assess the degree/level of the perspective

Mean square	Level
3.1-4.50	High
1.51-3.00	Moderate
1.00-1.50	Low

3. RESULTS

The investigation as displayed in Table 5 revealed that Saudi EFL students held highly positive attitudes toward social media as an important tool for language acquisition and instructional purposes. It was also revealed that Saudi students had good experience of utilizing social media for learning English and for different academic purposes in EFL classrooms. They used it for learning, becoming familiar with the syllabus, courses, and contents, sharing material and notes, downloading material, communicating with their classmates, and staying updated on the changes in times and places. It was also revealed that Saudi EFL learners' engagement with social media for EFL teaching was also very positive and encouraging. They used it for communication purposes and considered it an effective tool for teaching in their EFL classrooms. The study also showed that instructors and learners frequently used social media for learning and teaching activities. The course instructors employed social media for academic purposes, communication, and sharing of materials.

Table 5. Overall means of Saudi EFL learners' responses to study research questions

Research questions/items	Overall means
3.1. Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward social media	4.11
3.2. Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for EFL learning	4.21
3.3. Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for EFL teaching	4.16
3.4. Saudi EFL learners' frequency of using social media	4.20

3.1. Statistical analysis of Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward social media

Table 6 shows the attitudes of Saudi EFL learners and their parents toward social media adoption as a tool of learning measured through items 7 to 15. In item no. 7, 82.7% (43.1% SA and 39.6% A) said that they saw an enhancement in their English skills since they started using social media. While 13.2 remained neutral, 3.5 disagreed, and only .7 absolutely disapproved. The mean is 4.2, which is thought of as high. Concerning item 8, 92% (51.4% SA and 40.6% A) said that they learned English phrases and vocabulary using social media. While 5.6% of the respondents stayed neutral, 1.4% disagreed and 1% completely disregarded the opinion. The mean score is 4.39, which is thought of as high.

Regarding item no. 9, 62.5% (31.6% SA and 30.9% A) said that social media helped them learn English and made them independent learners who could learn without the need for teachers and the formal system of education. While 22.2% remained neutral, 13.2% disagreed, and 2.1 strongly dismissed the assertion. The mean score is 3.6 which shows that a substantial number of learners believe that social media cannot replace physical modes of learning and informal system of learning is not a viable alternative. In item no. 10, 84% (45.1% SA and 38.9% A) of the respondents agreed that social media, in today's busy environment, allows English learners to learn at their speed. While 13.2% were uncertain, 2.1% were opposed, and .7% strongly rejected the opinion. The mean score is 4.25, which is classed high.

In responses to item 11, 83.3% (43.4% SA and 39.9% A) stated learning English via social media was fun. 12.8% were neutral, 3.1% disapproved, and .7% strongly opposed. The average score is 4.22, indicating that students enjoy learning English on social media. About item no. 12, 85.1% (49.7% SA and 35.4% A) of the participants agreed that social media became essential for learning English in the post-pandemic world. While 10.8% remained neutral, which called for a need to train these students on how the pandemic crisis introduced both teachers and learners to unknown and unexplored avenues of learning. A total of 3.5% differed, and .7% strongly refuted the opinion.

Item no. 13 offers a bit different picture, 65.2% (27.4% SA and 37.8% A) of the participants said that their parents became positive about social media platforms as important tools for English instruction during and after the coronavirus pandemic. There were 26% remained neutral which showed that still there were parents who did not view social media as an instrument of mastering English. A total of 6.9% disputed and 1.7% firmly disagreed. The mean is 3.82 which, though comparatively considered high, questions social media's educational potential. Regarding item no. 14, 81.6% (37.8% SA and 43.8% A) of the respondents indicated regular usage of social media in EFL classes after the pandemic. While 14.9 % remained neutral, 3.1% disagreed, and only .3% strongly rejected the opinion. The mean is 4.15 which is classed high.

Last item 15, 73.7% (29.9% SA and 43.8% A) of the respondents accepted that the rise in social media educational institutions during the pandemic had exposed learners to a variety of English language learning content and methodologies. While a substantial number of 21.9% remained neutral, 3.5% disagreed, and only .7% firmly disapproved of the opinion. The mean is 3.97 which is categorized as high. All items in this category rate 4.11 which implies that Saudi EFL students embrace social media as a language learning tool. This analysis addressed the first research question.

Table 6. The attitudes of Saudi EFL learners and their parents toward social media

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
7	124(43.1%)	114(39.6%)	38(13.2%)	10(3.5%)	2(.7%)	4.2	High
8	148(51.4%)	117(40.6%)	16(5.6%)	4(1.4%)	3(1%)	4.39	High
9	91(31.6%)	89(30.9%)	64(22.2%)	38(13.2%)	6(2.1%)	3.76	High
10	130(45.1%)	112(38.9%)	38(13.2%)	6(2.1%)	2(.7%)	4.25	High
11	125(43.4%)	115(39.9%)	37(12.8%)	9(3.1%)	2(.7%)	4.22	High
12	143(49.7%)	102(35.4%)	31(10.8%)	10(3.5%)	2(.7%)	4.29	High
13	79(27.4%)	109(37.8%)	75(26%)	20(6.9%)	5(1.7%)	3.82	High
14	109(37.8%)	126(43.8%)	43(14.9%)	9(3.1%)	1(.3%)	4.15	High
15	86(29.9%)	126(43.8%)	63(21.9%)	10(3.5%)	3(1%)	3.97	High

3.2. Statistical analysis of Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for learning the English language

Table 7 shows Saudi EFL learners' engagement with social media in language learning measured through items 16 to 25. In item no. 16, 79.5% (34% SA and 45.8% A) of participants said that social media usage helped them know more about their courses and programs. While 15.6% remained undecided, 3.1% rejected and 1.4% strongly refuted the assertion. The mean score is 4.07 which is thought to be high. Concerning item no. 17, 90.6% (55.9% SA and 34.7% A) of the participants agreed that they got more information easily using social media for learning and academic purposes. A total of 8.7% remained neutral, 1% opposed, and the same number strongly disapproved. The mean score is 4.45 which is thought of as high.

Similarly, in item no. 18, 87.2% (46.2% SA and 41% A) of the participants agreed that they learned many new skills while they used social media. While 11.8% of the participants were undecided, only 1% disagreed and there was no one to strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.32 which is classed high. In item no. 19, 86.1% (51.7% SA and 34.4% A) respondents agreed that due to the utilization of social media, they stayed updated on the change of time and place of my lecture. While 9% were undecided 4.2% disagreed, and .7% firmly opposed the assertion. The mean score is 4.32 which is thought of as high.

Regarding item no. 20, 70.1% (37.5% SA and 32.6% A) of the participants said that social media enhanced their writing skills. While 20.5% did not express their opinion, 6.9% of the participants disagreed, and 2.4% strongly opposed the opinion. The mean is 3.95 which also is considered high. In item no. 21, 83.7% (45.5% SA and 38.2% A) of the respondents agreed that the use of social media helped them improve their skills of reading. 11.8% of participants chose to stay neutral, 2.4% disagreed and only 1% expressed strong disapproval. The mean score is 4.26 which is thought of as high.

Regarding item 22, 80.1% (47.9% SA and 32.2% A) of participants agreed that they received quick access to multiple resources because of social media. While 13.5% of the participants were undecided, 1% disagreed, and .3% expressed a strong rejection of the statement. The mean score is 4.31 which is classed high. In item 23, 89.3% of respondents (58% SA and 31.3% A) reported that social media allowed them to learn at their convenience. A total of 9.4% of the participants were neutral, .7% disagreed, and .7% firmly disapproved. The mean score is 4.45 which is thought of as high.

About item no. 24, 72.5% (31.9% SA and 40.6% A) of the respondents agreed that they were involved in gaining knowledge while they made use of social media. 23.3% remained neutral, which showed that they were not aware of the informal learning and knowledge they gained due to social media usage. A total of 3.8% disagreed and there was no one to strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.99 which is thought of as high. About item no. 25, 76.3% (SA 38.5% and A 37.8%) of participants stated that social media use improved their thinking skills and critical abilities. While 18.8% remained neutral, 4.5% differed, and .3% firmly disapproved. The mean score is 4.09 which is classed high. Similarly, in the last item no. 26, 82.3% (SA 43.1% and A 39.2%) participants said that social media became an indispensable tool for knowledge and learning. 14.2% stayed neutral, 2.1% disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed. The mean score is 4.2 which is classed high. The overall mean for all the items is 4.21. The analysis revealed that Saudi EFL students used social media for educational purposes in EFL classrooms. Students used social media to learn about the syllabus, share notes, download materials, engage with peers, and stay up-to-date about time and place changes. Most participants believed social media enabled them to learn at their own pace. This analysis addressed the second research question.

3.3. Analysis of Saudi EFL learners' experience of using social media for EFL teaching

Table 8 shows the documents Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for ELT in EFL classrooms. In item 27, 85.4% (40.3% SA and 45.1% A) of the participants agreed that social media adoption in EFL classrooms made interaction and communication with their class teachers easier. 12.5% were neutral, 1.7% disapproved, and .3% completely disagreed. The mean is 4.23, which is thought of as high. Similarly, in item no. 28, 77.8% of respondents (36.1% SA and 41.7% A) said their EFL teachers made efficient use of social media. 17.7% did not express their opinion, 3.5% differed, and 1% firmly disapproved. The mean

score is 4.08 which is thought of as high. In response to question 29, 82% of respondents (48.3% SA and 33.7% A) believed social media was an invaluable asset for higher education. 13.5% of the participants stayed neutral, 2.8% disapproved, with 1.7% strongly refuting the idea. The mean score is 4.23 which is classed high. Regarding item 30, 76.1% (43.8% SA and 32.3% A) of the respondents stated that utilizing social media facilitated time efficiency and optimization. While 18.1% chose to be neutral, 3.8% disagreed, and 2.1% firmly rejected the statement. The mean score is 4.11, which is thought of as high. The overall mean is 4.16. The analysis showed that Saudi EFL students' observation of social media for EFL teaching was very positive. They used it for communication purposes and considered it an effective tool for learning. This analysis addressed the third research question.

Table 7. Saudi EFL learners' engagement with social media in language

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
16	98(34%)	132(45.8%)	45(15.6%)	9(3.1%)	4(1.4%)	4.07	High
17	161(55.9%)	100(34.7%)	25(8.7%)	1(.3%)	1(.3%)	4.45	High
18	133(46.2%)	118(41%)	34(11.8%)	3(1%)	0	4.32	High
19	149(51.7%)	99(34.4%)	26(9%)	12(4.2%)	2(.7%)	4.32	High
20	108(37.5%)	94(32.6%)	59(20.5%)	20(6.9%)	7(2.4%)	3.95	High
21	134(46.5%)	110(38.2%)	34(11.8%)	7(2.4%)	3(1%)	4.26	High
22	138(47.9%)	107(37.2%)	39(13.5%)	3(1%)	1(.3%)	4.31	High
23	167(58%)	90(31.3%)	27(9.4%)	2(.7%)	2(.7%)	4.45	High
24	92(31.9%)	117(40.6%)	67(23.3%)	11(3.8%)	1(.3%)	4	High
25	111(38.5%)	109(37.8%)	54(18.8%)	13(4.5%)	1(.3%)	4.09	High
26	124(43.1%)	113(39.2%)	41(14.2%)	6(2.1%)	4(1.3%)	4.2	High

Table 8. Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for ELT in EFL classrooms

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Level
27	116(40.3%)	130(45.1%)	36(12.5%)	5(1.7%)	1(0.3)	4.23	High
28	104(36.1%)	120(41.7%)	51(17.7%)	10(3.5%)	3(1%)	4.08	High
29	139(48.3%)	97(33.7%)	39(13.5%)	8(2.8%)	5(1.7%)	4.23	High
30	126(43.8%)	93(32.3%)	52(18.1%)	11(3.8%)	6(2.1%)	4.11	High

3.4. Statistical analysis of Saudi EFL learners' frequency of using social media in EFL learning and teaching

Table 9 displays how EFL learners in Saudi Arabia utilize social media for learning and instructing English in EFL classes. In item no. 31, 90.7% (27.8% A, 35.1% VO, and 27.8% S) of the participants accepted that their teacher always and very often employed social media for academic interaction and English instruction. 27.1% of the participants said that their teachers sometimes used social media for teaching purposes. While 6.3% stated their EFL instructors rarely utilized social media, 3.1% said they never did. The average score is 3.78, regarded as high. In item no. 32, 99% (75.7% A, 17.4% VO, and 5.9% S) of the participants agreed that they always and very often made use of social media platforms for language acquisition. There were .3% and .7% of respondents stated they had never used social media to study a language, respectively. The mean score is 4.67 which is thought of as high.

About item no. 33, 88.5% (44.8% A, 22.9% VO, and 20.8% S) of the learners said that they made use of social media, watched videos, and downloaded class notes. There were 6.9% and 4.5% of participants, respectively, reported using social media, watching videos, and downloading class notes little or never. The mean score is 3.96, which qualifies as high. Concerning item no. 34, 92.7% (45.8% A, 25.7% VO, and 21.2% S) of the study participants reported that social media platforms were being used to text and communicate with teachers. 4.9% and 2.4% of participants said that they rarely and never use social media platforms for communicating and texting with the course instructors. The mean score is 4.07 which is considered high.

In item no. 35, 95.5% (64.6% A, 19.1% VO, and 11.8% S) of the respondents said that they utilized social media platforms to communicate and text with their classmates. 2.1% and 2.4% of the participants respectively said they utilized social media for communicating and texting with their classmates. The average is 4.41, which counts as high. In the last item no. 36, 97.2% (55.2% A, 27.1% VO, and 14.9% S) of the respondents said that they utilized social media as an instrument to expand their knowledge and hone their skills. Only 1.7% and 1% of the respondents respectively said they rarely or never used social media to learn new things and enhance their English skills. The overall mean score is 4.20.

The analysis showed that students and teachers frequently used social media for learning and teaching activities. The course instructors used social media for educational goals, communication, and

sharing of materials. An overwhelming number of students too frequently use social media to gain access to academic resources, text with friends, watch academic videos, and download relevant material. The combined mean for all items in this group is 4.20. The analysis demonstrated that students and teachers frequently used social media for language acquisition and instruction. Course instructors utilize social media for educational goals, communication, and exchange of information. However, too many students utilize social media to get educational materials, text with friends, view academic videos, or download useful content. Many students utilize social media to enhance and advance their language proficiency. This analysis addressed the fourth research question.

Table 9. EFL learners in Saudi Arabia utilize social media for learning and instructing English in EFL classes

Statements	Always	Often	Sometime	Rarely	Never	Mean	Level
31	80(27.8%)	101(35.1%)	80(27.8%)	18(6.3%)	9(3.1%)	3.8	High
32	218(75.7%)	50(17.4%)	17(5.9%)	1(0.3%)	2(0.7%)	4.7	High
33	129(44.8%)	66(22.9%)	60(20.8%)	20(6.9%)	13(4.5%)	4	High
34	132(45.8%)	74(25.7%)	61(21.2%)	14(4.9%)	7(2.4%)	4.1	High
35	186(64.6%)	55(19.1%)	34(11.8%)	6(2.1%)	7(2.4%)	4.4	High
36	159(55.2%)	78(27.1%)	43(14.9%)	5(1.7%)	3(1%)	4.3	High

4. DISCUSSION

The study assessed Saudi students' perspectives on the effectiveness of social media platforms for instructional and learning purposes, their experience of learning and teaching using these platforms, and how often they utilized them to acquire and enhance their language skills. The study findings showed that Saudi EFL learners held highly favorable attitudes toward social media utilization for EFL language acquisition and instruction. This outcome aligns with several studies [19]–[25]. These studies highlighted the increasing and wider popularity of social media platforms as an efficient alternative tool for instruction and learning among the tech-savvy younger generation. However, certain studies [26], [27] are inconsistent with our findings. The findings (related to the second research question) also revealed that students had a good experience utilizing social media for learning and improving their English skills, choosing courses, taking notes, downloading material, sharing resources, participating with classmates, and maintaining location and time changes in their schedules. This result of the study is supported and corroborated by several studies [28]–[30] which also reported that students made extensive use of social media to exchange material and keep them updated regarding the syllabus progress and the daily development in the department and university. However, study by Haand and Shuwang [31] found a significant connection between despair and social media addiction. The study findings (related to the third research question) revealed that Saudi EFL learners' social media experience for instructional purposes was very positive and they appreciated their course instructors for adoption of social media in their EFL classrooms. These findings corroborate multiple studies [32], [33]. However, the findings of Akbari *et al.* [33] are inconsistent with the paper's findings as this study supported conventional foreign language techniques because online language learning was found to be incapable of being parallel to the physical modes of language learning. The findings (related to the fourth research question) also revealed that social media and many other tools and web applications were frequently used by both course instructors and Saudi EFL learners for learning, engagement, and communication. This is supported by many existing studies [34]–[37]. However, study by Burbules [38] demonstrated that the utilization of social media to learn a language came with a variety of problems and concerns.

5. CONCLUSION

The study investigated Saudi EFL students' perspectives on the effectiveness of social media as a means of instruction, their experience studying and teaching using social media, as well as how frequently they used these platforms to enhance their language skills. It was revealed that Saudi EFL students had exceptionally favorable attitudes toward the efficiency of social media as an instrument of instruction. The study additionally revealed that they had an excellent experience utilizing social media for learning and instruction since it offered them the freedom to learn when and where it was most convenient for them. The study also found that course instructors frequently utilized social media to interact with their students, distribute instructional materials, and notify them about any changes to schedules for classes or exam dates. It was also revealed that students employed social media platforms more often than instructors for discussions, communication, and academic interactions. The findings hold significant implications for social media integration in EFL classrooms to conform to the modern taste of tech-savvy Saudi EFL learners who find conventional methods of learning and teaching less appealing and motivating. As this study merely deals with EFL learners in the Saudi Arabian context, future studies may examine the efficacy of social media as

learning instruments in the context of the larger Arab world. The findings of the research hold implications for both educators and learners since social networking sites and social media platforms can be adapted to meet the requirements of digitally savvy students in situations when traditional methodologies of instruction are no longer viable. The study offers wider possibilities of how social media usage in EFL classrooms can empower students and help them become self- and independent learners. The study's limitations-including its reliance on data from a single university and its exclusive focus on a specific age and geographic group-raise concerns about its generalizability to all Saudi Arabian students. A larger sample size and an examination of social media's efficacy as a pedagogical tool throughout the broader Arab world might be part of future research.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

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C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors affirm that they have no competing interests.

INFORMED CONSENT

The informed consent was obtained from all individuals who contributed to this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Ethical Committee of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University granted consent to the study (PSAU/2025/R/1446).

DATA AVAILABILITY




The corresponding author is willing to provide the data used to support the findings of this study on request [MJ]. Due to ethical and privacy restrictions, the data are not publicly accessible.

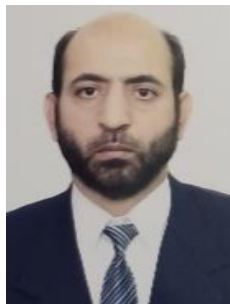
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