

RESEARCH ARTICLE



THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN IMPROVING SPEAKING AND WRITING SKILLS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Paul Kilahounko¹ & Ulrich Orlando. Sèna. Hindémè²

¹English Department, University of Abomey-Calavi, Bénin.

² Research Group on Africa and the Diaspora Laboratory (GRAD LAB)

*Corresponding Author : e-mail : richdeme11@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2026.13316>

ABSTRACT



Article history:

Received on: 22-07-2026

Accepted on: 26-08-2026

Available online: 12-09-2026

The integration of digital technologies into higher education has generated increasing interest in the pedagogical use of social networking applications for language learning. Grounded in sociocultural theory and constructivism, this study aims to investigate the role of social media in developing EFL students' speaking and writing skills. It employed a descriptive mixed method research design among 17 lecturers and 312 higher students from ENEAM, FSS, and ENS all in Benin Republic. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires generated with google link and semi-structured interviews, with quantitative results analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative responses subjected to thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the platforms were found to promote increased oral interaction through voice notes, reduce learners' anxiety, and improve confidence in speaking. In terms of writing, the use of social networks facilitated frequent practice, collaborative writing, and timely feedback, which contributes to improvements in vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and text organization. Despite these advantages, the study-identified challenges related to digital distraction, unequal access to internet connectivity, lack of pedagogical guidelines, and increased teacher workload. The findings contribute to the field of technology-enhanced language learning and offer practical implications for EFL pedagogy, instructors training, and educational policy in similar contexts.

Keywords: *Social Networks, Higher Students, Speaking Skills, Writing Skills.*

Author(s) retain the copyright of this article. Copyright© 2026 VEDA Publications.

Author(s) agree that this article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License. 



1. INTRODUCTION

English plays a crucial role in today's globalized world as it serves as an international language of communication, education, science, business, and technology. It is widely used as a lingua franca, enabling people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate effectively (Crystal, 2019; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Regarding the history of teaching English as a foreign language, instructors mainly required that students learn the language through memorization and repetition of the second language structures without exposing them to real-life situations. These practices were unsuccessful in promoting English learners' capacity when communicating in different life situations using the target language. However, English language learners often struggle with improving productive skills, which are critical components of communicative competence (Richards, 2015; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Traditional EFL practices in Benin are still largely grammar-focused and teacher-centered, leaving students with limited exposure to authentic oral interaction and writing skills (Kpolovie, 2020; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). This pedagogical gap has led researchers and practitioners to explore the use of technology devices and social networks as complementary means to enhance productive skills.

Furthermore, empirical studies examining the integration of social networks in African higher education contexts remain limited. Instructors and students' perceptions are critical variables, as attitudes toward technology significantly influence adoption, pedagogical effectiveness, and sustainability of innovation (Kassem, 2021; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Without an in-depth

understanding of these perceptions, technology integration risks remaining superficial or pedagogically underutilized. Moreover, the integration of social networks into EFL instruction is not without challenges. Issues related to digital distraction, unequal access to devices and internet connectivity, lack of institutional policy, assessment difficulties, and increased instructors' workload continue to raise concerns about pedagogical feasibility. These challenges necessitate empirical investigation to inform context-sensitive pedagogical frameworks and policy decisions. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the use of social networks, especially WhatsApp and Telegram as pedagogical tools for improving English language speaking and writing abilities in higher education in Benin. Adopting a survey-based approach, the study explores instructors and students' perceptions of the usefulness, benefits, and difficulties associated with integrating these platforms into EFL productive skills instruction.

Studies have shown that the integration of social networks into instruction can boost students' engagement, motivation, and oral competence (Zou & Xie, 2022; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Thus, in the Beninese higher education context, the use of WhatsApp and Telegram as pedagogical tools to improve English language speaking and writing abilities in higher education in Benin remains underexplored. This creates a knowledge gap regarding how higher education stakeholders in Benin, namely, students, lecturers, and administrators perceive and use these platforms for EFL oral and writing abilities improvement. Therefore, this research work aims to investigate the



role of social media in developing EFL students' speaking and writing skills. Specifically, it examines how social media platforms help EFL learners improving their speaking and writing skills in English, and then identify the challenges EFL students face when using social media for developing speaking and writing abilities in English. To this end, questionnaires and interviews have been used for the collection of data. The findings are expected to contribute to ongoing debates on the role of social media in education and to provide a specific context of recommendations for fostering EFL learners' English productive skills in Benin.

1.1 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The introduction of e-learning in education sector today seems to be a necessity especially in higher education. At that level, the learners are already of age and more conscious of their future. But there are some hindrances for popular usage of e-learning, because most students can neither afford a computer nor get access to internet. Therefore, another solution needs to be found. Then, the advent of the mobile phones, mainly smart phones, appears to be the solution with the social networking. So, with the discovery of mobile phone, e-learning gives place to M-Learning which gives room to more possibilities for learners to use internet at school.

Since the smart phones became popular, individuals find it difficult to do without it. Social media are technology applications which are commonly used on smart phones and computers today. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Benin, the integration of digital technologies presents both opportunities and challenges for language learning. Despite the growing

popularity of social media devices among students and educators, there remains a gap in understanding its specific educational and pedagogical value within EFL classrooms. The main reason is that students do not care about learning especially English language, they prefer spending the entire day on their smart phones or in front of their computers' screen. What if this tool turns to a learning one? For the reasons above, a strategy should be adapted towards teaching and learning especially English language by introducing WhatsApp and Telegram so as to improve learners' productive skills. On the one hand, it is very hard to have a steady output of internet in Benin and the university is not well equipped in internet access. The research project is to investigate the role of social media in developing EFL learners' speaking and writing abilities.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The study aims at investigating the role of social media in developing EFL students' speaking and writing skills. More specifically, it intended to:

- ✓ examine how social media platforms help EFL learners improve their speaking and writing skills in English;
- ✓ identify the challenges EFL students face when using social media for developing speaking and writing abilities in English.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions served as a guide for exploring the research project:

- 1- How does the use of social media contribute to the improvement of EFL students' speaking and writing abilities?



- 2- What challenges do EFL learners encounter when using social media platforms to develop their productive skills in English?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND EFL SPEAKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A growing body of research emphasizes the positive role of social media in enhancing speaking skills. Tekin and Sallabas (2024) conducted speaking tasks via social media, where learners submitted voice recordings and received both written and oral feedback (as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Their findings showed that mobile-assisted feedback contributes significantly to the development of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. From a sociocultural theory perspective, the capacity for repeated, scaffolded interaction through voice notes allows learners to negotiate meaning, monitor their output, and develop fluency in a low-stress environment (Vygotsky, 1978; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Several studies have demonstrated the motivational and psychological benefits of mobile platforms for speaking practice. Zhao et al. (2022) reported that students using WhatsApp and Telegram for oral tasks experienced lower levels of speaking anxiety and higher motivation, primarily because the synchronous nature of voice notes provided a safe, and low-pressure environment. In the same vein, Tiemtoré (2022) as cited in Kilahounko, (2025) found that in West African higher education settings, the platforms supported speaking activities, encouraged shy students to participate more actively, thus enhancing both oral fluency and self-confidence. Ellis (2003) also found in his studies that traditional classroom

settings often provide insufficient opportunities for individual oral practice, leading to low confidence and limited fluency. In this context, mobile social networking applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram have emerged as effective tools to support oral language development. In addition, both of them offer features conducive to speaking practice.

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND EFL WRITING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

According to Weigle (2009) as cited in Kilahounko (2025), writing skills comprise the ability to develop and organize ideas into coherent written content and perform their writing properly using their background of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Among the scholars reviewed in the study, some of them argue that Telegram is beneficial for improving learners' writing skills (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018). Heidari (2018) as cited in Kilahounko, (2025) also found that Telegram can improve students' ability to develop content and organize their ideas into coherent writing. They found that the discussion forum in Telegram can be fertile place to engage trainees in developing their ideas. Similarly, WhatsApp possesses the potentiality to stimulate inspiration among students, ultimately resulting in increased levels of student drive and involvement. Moreover, it has been noted that WhatsApp maintains the capacity to enable the formation of surveys that can assist in assessing the degree of understanding and engagement of learners during academic writing within the classroom (Gamede et al., 2022, as cited in Ajani & Khoalenyane, 2023). In summary, the integration of WhatsApp into educational settings displays significant pedagogical avails, which include



the enhancement of their written between lecturers and students.

Vahdat and Mazareian (2020) focused on learners' improvement in collaborations words. For them, the informal nature of social media interactions enriched students' vocabulary and how they were used in authentic contexts. Thus, they are persistent that the more familiar students are used the words colloquially, the easier they absorb and use them in their writing. Besides learners' improvement on content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary, Aghajani and Adloo (2018) as cited in Kilahounko (2025) argue that the use of social media for teaching English also improve their mechanics. They observed that the discussions and feedback from both instructors and trainees became examples for the students on how to use punctuations, capital letters, and spelling properly. They also added that cooperative writing in computer-mediated Instruction or Mobile-Assisted Language Learning contributed positively to their learners' mechanics because the electronic devices used provided features that facilitate the proper use of mechanics.

2.3 CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING WHATSAPP AND TELEGRAM IN EFL PRODUCTIVE SKILLS INSTRUCTION

The integration of WhatsApp and Telegram into EFL productive skills instruction, while offering notable pedagogical benefits, is not without significant challenges and constraints that have been widely documented in the literature. One major difficulty is related to digital infrastructure and access, particularly in developing contexts where students may lack reliable internet connectivity, compatible devices, or sufficient mobile data to engage consistently with mobile-assisted learning activities,

which can exacerbate educational inequalities and limit the effectiveness of these platforms (Ebadi, 2023; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Teacher workload and professional boundaries represent additional constraints, as managing large online groups, monitoring student participation, providing timely feedback, and responding to messages outside class hours can create considerable time pressures and blur the lines between professional and personal responsibilities, leading to stress and potential reluctance to adopt these tools fully (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014; Jamil, 2018; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Furthermore, privacy, data protection, and ethical considerations constitute significant constraints, as both learners and instructors may be reluctant to share personal information, phone numbers, or sensitive materials on platforms designed primarily for social interaction rather than formal education, which necessitates careful policy and consent management to ensure compliance with institutional and national regulations (Harizpoor, 2024).

Taken together, these studies illustrate that while WhatsApp and Telegram offer transformative potential for enhancing speaking and writing skills, their integration in EFL classrooms is mediated by a complex interplay of infrastructural, pedagogical, ethical, and sociocultural constraints, highlighting the need for careful instructional design, teacher professional development, policy support, and learner preparation to maximise their effectiveness.

Despite these contributions, the existing body of literature presents uncountable gaps that warrant further investigation. Much of previous research has focused predominantly on WhatsApp, while



Telegram has received comparatively limited scholarly attention, particularly in EFL settings. Although Telegram offers many educational features such as larger group capacities, cloud-based storage, file-sharing capabilities, channels, and bots that can support language learning, its pedagogical value remains underexplored compared to WhatsApp. Many existing studies have concentrated on general language learning outcomes or receptive language skills such as reading and listening. While productive abilities are often acknowledged as essential components of language proficiency, relatively few studies have specifically examined how WhatsApp and Telegram contribute to the development of speaking and writing skills. Speaking and writing require learners to actively produce language, express ideas, and engage in meaningful communication, making them particularly challenging skills for EFL learners. Therefore, there is a need for more focused investigations into the ways these social networking platforms can support the enhancement of productive language abilities. Therefore, this study seeks to address the theoretical, empirical, contextual, and methodological gaps by investigating how WhatsApp and Telegram can be utilized to ameliorate speaking and writing skills among EFL students in Beninese higher education institutions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology follows to conduct this research work is displayed in this part.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research aims at investigating the role of social media in developing EFL students' speaking and writing skills among EFL students in Beninese

universities. The approach used in this research work was descriptive mixed method. Voxco (2021) as cited in Kilahounko (2025) states that a descriptive research design blends quantitative and qualitative data to provide one with relevant and precise information that aids in accurately and systematically describing a research problem. Descriptive mixed method was chosen because the analysis is in both quantitative and qualitative forms. The quantitative research method collects and analyses data with the help of statistical analysis whereas the qualitative research utilises non-numerical methods such as observations, in depth interviews, or focus groups. These research methods have helped to gather deep insights into the topic under study. To carry out this research, higher education actors have been considered. Besides, these actors are the right persons to provide genuine information regarding the integration of WhatsApp and Telegram as pedagogical tools at the tertiary level. The field investigation was carried out in some selected universities in some regions of Benin within a period of eight months.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

To deal with this research work, the researcher has identified the target population, which consists of higher education stakeholders in Benin. More precisely, lecturers specializing in English language education and students of the first, second and third year of EFL learning at the university formed the population for this study. University level was selected due to the fact that it is the stage where 90% of learners are found with a smart phone, tablet, or laptop. In focusing on these two groups, the research study gains a holistic perspective on the role



of WhatsApp and Telegram to foster speaking and writing abilities in academic contents. Therefore, the population of the study included English language learners and lecturers from ENEAM in Cotonou especially at Gbgamey in Littoral region, FSS at Parakou in Borgou region, and ENS at Porto-Novo in Plateau region all in Benin Republic. In the present study, the researcher conducted the investigation with the population of three thousand one hundred and twenty (3120) students and seventeen (17) EFL lecturers. All these state-owned universities required characteristics to cover this study such as the size of the available research population (EFL lecturers and higher education learners) and the appropriate geographical distribution. The research establishes a clear basis of sampling, data collection, and interpretation in defining the study population.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In research terminology, a sample is a group of people, objects, or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. In this research, total sampling techniques were used to collect the data. According to Arikunto (2003), cited in Kilahounko (2025), if the subject is less than 100 then all of them must be sampled. However, if the subject is more than 100, 10-15% or 20-25% can be taken (as cited in Dafit, 2021, p. 26). The study employed purposive sampling to select 312 students, representing approximately 10% of the student population. All 17 EFL lecturers were included because of their relatively small number. This approach helps ensure fair representation and reduces bias, allowing for reliable conclusions to be drawn from the selected group (Onen & Oso, 2008 in Lee 2016).

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaires and interviews are the research instruments used to gather information for this study.

3.4.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires herein were addressed to EFL universities lecturers and students to elicit information related to social networks implementation and its pedagogical implication in EFL classrooms. In this present study, two different questionnaires were elaborated. The first were addressed to EFL lecturers teaching in higher education (Universities), and the second were for university's students. The lecturers' questionnaire consists of eleven (11) questions, and the students' questionnaire encompasses thirteen (13) questions too. The questionnaires included closed, open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions.

3.4.2 INTERVIEW

In addition to questionnaires, Semi-structured interviews were used to solicit information from the education actors' point of view about the effectiveness of social networks and the difficulties experiencing in improving EFL students' productive skills. They were crucial to this research study and were referred to the capacity of interviews to produce data on the views of respondents rather than the researchers dictating the direction of respondents; as it is often the case with structured interviews (Flick, 2014; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Five (5) lecturers were interviewed, sixty (60) learners, and four (4) technology actors were interviewed too. They were informed to be recorded what they all accepted. Exploring questions were



asked to the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes and was conducted in a quiet and comfortable environment to facilitate open discussion. Then, the researcher transfers the audio recordings into the laptop to make listening and transcript the data easier, after listening to them carefully, analyses, interprets the data from the interview, and finally concludes the data of the interview. Comprehensive information about the study were given by the interviewees, which help the researcher to well transcribe and coding them manually.

3.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This section covers the overall detail on the procedures of data collection instruments administration. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information in a systematic way that enables one to provide answers to research questions, test hypothesis or evaluate outcomes (Bhandari, 2023; as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). It is important to mention that before carrying out the field investigation in the various universities, the head of department of each university was contacted, and explanation was given to them about the aim of the investigation. As far as questionnaires are concerned, they have been sent through google link to EFL lecturers as well as to higher learners of the selected universities. The filled questionnaire sample were collected automatically through google link. Meanwhile, researcher always reminded the respondents about the confidentiality in the information given while responding to the items in the questionnaires. It is to make sure that the private and sensitive issues of respondents are secure.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with lecturers, learners, and some technology actors. Ethical approval was obtained from ENEAM, FSS, and ENS. Permission was obtained from the participating institutions before data collection. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. After delivering research instruments, researcher administered and collected data for analysis. All these techniques or instruments helped the researcher to gather a great deal of information.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data analysis is the process of organization, manipulation, and consideration of the meaning of data collected (Kothari, 2009, as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). This research work brings out both quantitative and qualitative data methods. The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analysed statistically. Each question was stated and analysed separately going through lecturers and learners' responses. A good first step in the data analysis is to summarize the data using descriptive statistics in Microsoft Excel, in which the researcher counts the responses for each level of a given variable. The counts or frequencies have been converted into percentages to describe the details of the respondents. The second step involved the selection of appropriate statistical test. Researcher should check that the data met all assumptions that have been required for the test. Third, data from questionnaires are described and developed. The statistics of the quantitative data are displayed in

graphs, figures and tables and analysed as a result. answers provided by respondents into various themes according to the aims of the research work.

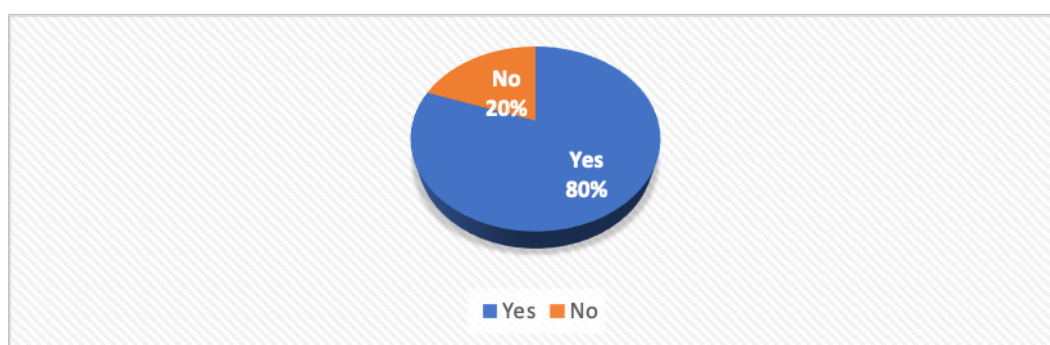
The results and comments of interviews were interpreted. The qualitative data derived were analysed using thematic analysis by gathering the

4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 FINDINGS OBTAINED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

The results related to higher students and lecturers' questionnaire are displayed below.

4.1.1 Results Related to Learners' Questionnaire



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 1: English Language Improvement via WhatsApp or Telegram

Through the results presented in this figure 1, 80.45% of the respondents affirmed that these platforms could enhance their learning experience. In contrast, 19.55% of them disagreed. This suggests that this portion of the participants does not see these platforms as effective tools for improving their English learning. These results suggest that while the majority of respondents recognises the potential of WhatsApp and Telegram as valuable learning resources, there is a minority who remain sceptical about impact.

Table 1: Learners' Thoughts about the Most Helpful Feature of WhatsApp or Telegram in Learning

Which feature of WhatsApp or Telegram do you think would be the most helpful for your learning?

	Frequency	Percentage %
<i>Group chats</i>	111	35.58
<i>Video sharing</i>	98	31.41
<i>Voice messages</i>	74	23.72
<i>Document sharing</i>	29	9.29
<i>Others (please specify):...</i>	00	00
Total	312	100

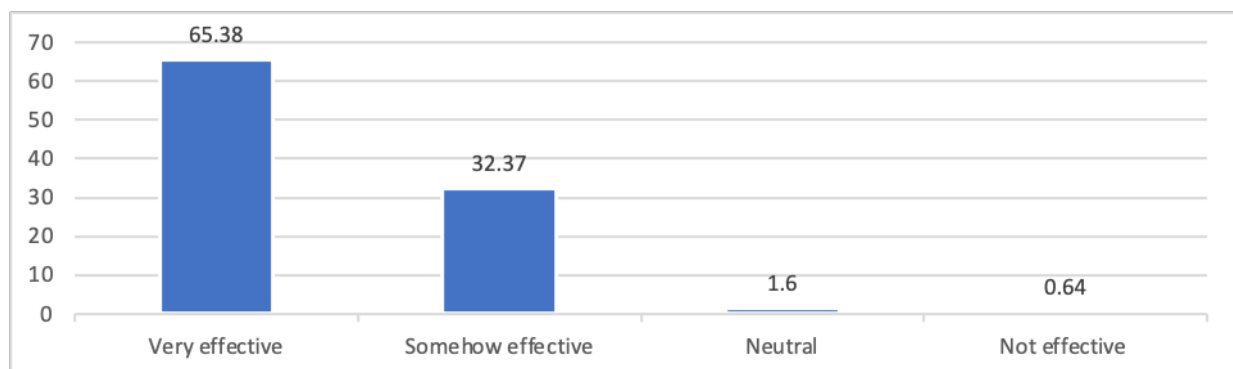
Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025



As shown this table, 35.58% of the participants considered group chats as the most helpful feature. Video sharing was the second most valued feature chosen by 31.41% of the respondents. This confirms

that visual content plays a pivotal role in improving understanding and engagement. 23.72% of the

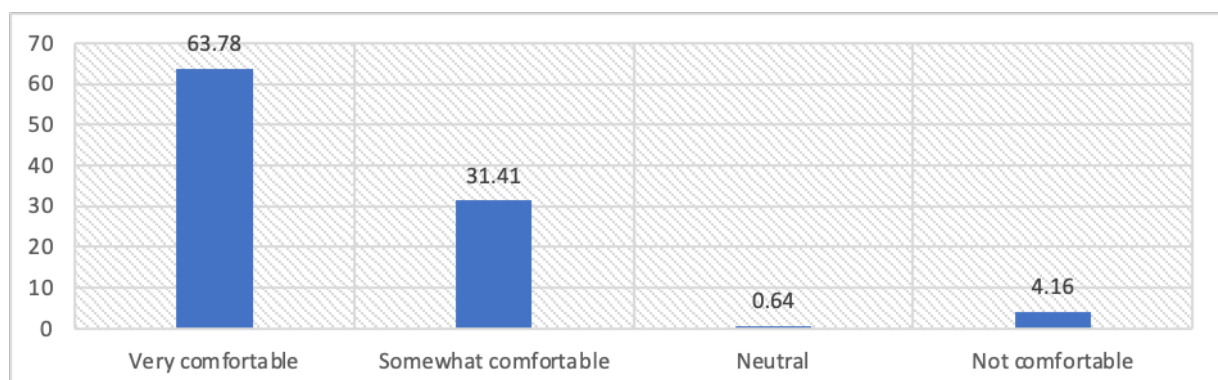
participants said they preferred voice messages. 9.29% of the respondents said they preferred document sharing; while no participants selected "Others" category. These findings highlight a clear preference for features that support interaction and multimedia communication in the English language learning process.



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 2: Students' Effectiveness Belief about WhatsApp or Telegram in Study

As shown this figure 2, 65.38% of the participants considered WhatsApp and Telegram to be very effective platforms for language learning. 32.37% of the participants viewed them as somewhat effective; this also shows a positive expectation. Only a small number of the respondents 1.60% expressed uncertainty or doubt and they remained neutral. When other 0.64% of them regarded the platforms as not effective. In general, all these data collected from learners reveal a broadly positive perception of WhatsApp and Telegram as tools that can meaningfully contribute to the improvement of English language abilities.



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 3: Learner's Feeling About the Academic Topic Discussion with Peers on WhatsApp or Telegram



Figure 3 presents the results regarding learners' feeling about academic topic discussions with their peers on WhatsApp or Telegram. Through the results, it is noticed that 63.78% of the respondents reported feeling comfortable. In addition, 31.41% of them stated they are somewhat comfortable. Only 0.64% of the participants remained neutral, and 4.16% of them felt not comfortable. These results show that WhatsApp and Telegram are largely perceived as effective and comfortable environments for peer-to-peer academic interaction.

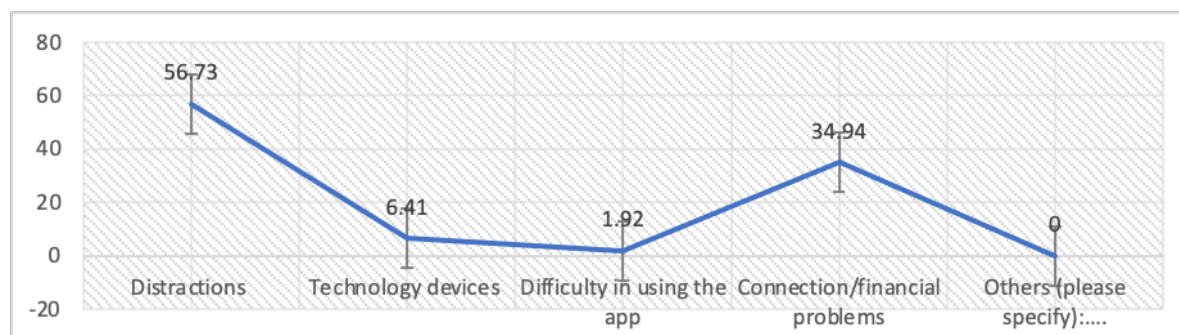
Table 2: The Rate Attitude towards the Use of Social Networks

How would you rate your overall attitude towards using social networks (like WhatsApp or Telegram) for learning?

Very positive	211	67.63
Somewhat positive	97	31.09
Somewhat negative	04	1.28
Very negative	00	00
Total	312	100

Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

The results of participants attitude's rate towards using social networks like WhatsApp or Telegram are displayed in table 2. These results revealed that 67.63% of the participants expressed a very positive attitude. An additional 31.09% of them rated their attitude as somewhat positive. Only 1.28% of the respondents held a somewhat negative view, and no respondents expressed a very negative opinion. These results point out that social networks like WhatsApp and Telegram are largely viewed in a favourable light as tools for improving language learning.

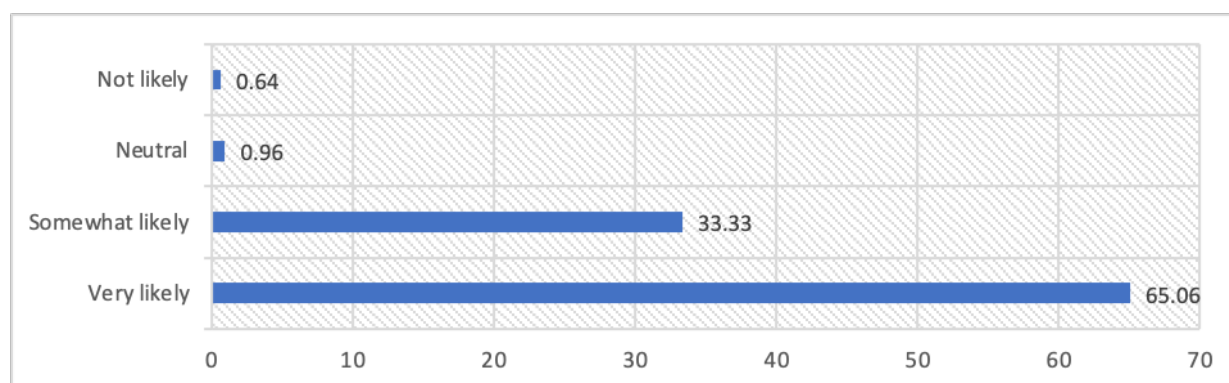


Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 4: Students' Thoughts about the Main Challenges of Using Social Networks for the Studies

Figure 4 shows the results of the main challenges identified by students when using social networks for their studies. 56.73% (177 out of 312) of the respondents confirmed that distractions are their most significant

concern; this percentage suggests that while social networks may offer educational benefits, their potential to divert attention from academic tasks is a major drawback for learners. In addition, 34.94% of them confirmed that connection and financial problems were the second greatest challenge. 6.41% of the respondents pointed to limitations related to technological devices, and only 1.92% of them reported difficulty in using the applications themselves. No respondents selected “others”. These findings highlight the importance of addressing both digital distractions and infrastructural barriers when promoting the use of social networks for educational purposes.



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 5: Learners' Love to Engage with WhatsApp or Telegram in Education

This figure 5 shows the results of learners' love to engage with WhatsApp or Telegram for educational purposes in English language classes. Through these results, the majority of the participants, 203 out of 312 (65.06%), stated they would be very likely to engage with these platforms. An additional number, 104 out of 312 (33.33%), of them reported that they would be somewhat likely to participate. A proportion of 0.96% (03 respondents) remained neutral; and an even smaller number of 0.64% of the participants said they would not be likely to engage. One can assert that these findings show a highly favorable attitude towards the educational use of messaging applications, particularly in the context of English language learning.

Table 3: WhatsApp or Telegram Can Improve Language Skills

How do you believe WhatsApp or Telegram can help improve your language skills?

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>Very profitable</i>	231	74.03
<i>Somewhat</i>	58	18.59
<i>Not profitable</i>	08	2.56
<i>Not at all</i>	15	4.81
Total	312	100

Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025



This table presents the results of learners' belief in how WhatsApp or Telegram could aid in improving language skills. 74.03% of the participants considered the use of these platforms to be very profitable for language development. In addition, 18.59% of the respondents said that they were somewhat profitable. Nevertheless, 2.56% of the respondents stated they were not profitable, then 4.81% of them indicating that they were not at all beneficial. These findings reveal an important favourable perception of WhatsApp and Telegram as tools for language learning.

4.1.2 Results Related to Lecturers' Questionnaire

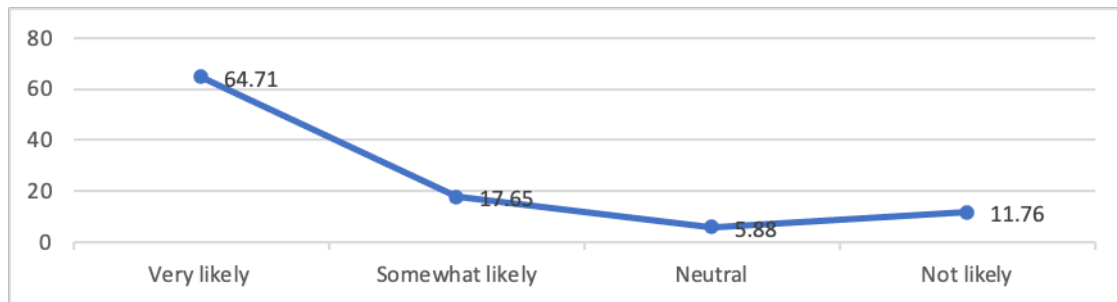
This part presents the data collected from lecturers with their interpretations.

Table 4: Instructors Belief in Telegram Collaborative Learning Support among Learners

<i>How do you believe Telegram could support collaborative learning among learners?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>Very supportive</i>	12	70.59
<i>Somewhat supportive</i>	03	17.65
<i>Neutral</i>	01	5.88
<i>Greatly distractive</i>	01	5.88
Total	17	100

Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

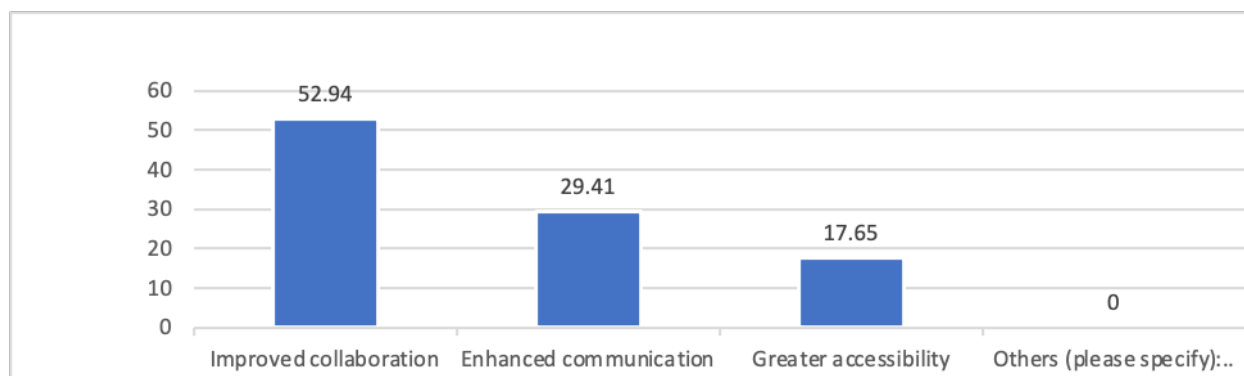
In this table 4, findings revealed that 70.59% of the respondents considered Telegram to be very supportive of collaborative learning. 17.65% of them felt it was somewhat supportive, meaning that they see some advantages but still having reservations. However, 5.88% of them remained neutral, and another 5.88% perceived Telegram as greatly distracting for collaborative learning. One can confirm that while most see Telegram as a strong tool for collaboration, there are some concerns regarding its potential for distraction.



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 6: Lecturers' Love in Experimenting WhatsApp and Telegram in Future Teaching.

This figure 6 shows the results of instructors' love to experiment with WhatsApp and Telegram in their future teaching. The majority of the respondents that is 64.71%, indicated that they are very likely to incorporate WhatsApp and Telegram into their teaching practices. A further 17.65% of them stated they are somewhat likely to do so. Only 5.88% remained neutral; while a small minority of 11.76% of the respondents reported that they were not likely to explore these tools in their teaching. This highlights their perceived potential for improving communication and engagement in teaching and learning process.



Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

Figure 7: The Biggest Potential Benefit of Using WhatsApp and Telegram in the Teaching Process

Figure 7 shows the results of the potential benefits of using WhatsApp and Telegram in the teaching process. 52.94% of the respondents confirmed that these platforms improved the collaboration; they recognize the platforms' potential to foster teamwork and interactive learning among learners. 29.41% of them said that these platforms enhanced communication. Only 17.65% of the participants highlighted greater accessibility as the main benefit. No one selected "others". Through all these results, one can strengthen that participants place a significant value on the collaborative and communicative aspect of WhatsApp and Telegram in the educational context.

Table 5: The Biggest Potential Challenges of Using Social Networks in the Teaching Process

What do you consider the biggest potential challenge of using social networks in teaching process?	Frequency	Percentage %
Distractions	10	58.82
Lack of technology devices	00	00
Privacy concerns	02	11.76
Lack of student's engagement	05	29.41
Others (please specify):.....	00	00
Total	17	100

Source: Field Investigation, From September 2024 to May 2025

This table 5 reveals the results regarding the biggest potential challenges of using social networks in the teaching process. The most commonly identified challenge was distractions with 58.82% of respondents expressing their concerns over this problem. Lack of student commitment was one of the most challenge with a percentage of 29.41% of the participants. 11.76% of the respondents mentioned privacy concerns as the biggest challenge. One can assert that distractions and lack of students' engagement are the biggest potential challenges for using social networks in language teaching.

Q5: In what ways do you think social networks could positively impact the teaching and learning process?

Based on this research question, the participants confirmed that social networks improved communication between instructors and learners is

one of the primary benefits, as social networks allow for instant feedback, announcements, and easy access to learning resources. Some participants said that social networks offer greater accessibility to learning materials, and enable students to access study resources, assignments, and lecture content anytime, anywhere. Some said that social networks can foster collaborative learning through features like group chats, forums, and discussion groups, encouraging peer-to-peer interaction and the exchange of ideas. In addition, social networks can help create a more engaging learning environment by integrating multimedia elements such as videos, voice messages, and interactive content. This will make lecture more dynamic and stimulating. And finally, some participants suggested that instructors should promote personalized learning by allowing learners to engage with content at their own space



and interact directly with teachers for adequate support. In these ways, social networks can significantly improve both teaching effectiveness and the overall learning experience.

4.2 DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

4.2.1 Usefulness of the Introduction of WhatsApp and Telegram in the Development of EFL Students' Productive Skills

Based on the data collected from lecturers and students' questionnaires along with interviews, findings demonstrate that the introduction of WhatsApp and Telegram is widely perceived as useful for the development of EFL students' productive abilities, particularly speaking and writing. Findings reveal as shown figure 1 from learners' questionnaire that 80.45 % of the respondents believe that WhatsApp and Telegram can enhance English learning. This corresponds with the previous studies by Andujar and Cruz-Martiner (2017) and Al- Saleem (2014), as cited in Kilahounko (2025) who demonstrated that messaging applications encourage frequent written interaction, which positively influences writing accuracy and fluency. Lecturers' interviews confirm this, as an instructor explained, *"students write more messages and record voice notes, which increases their confidence in using English."* This denotes that the platforms were found to foster writing development, as students write more frequently through discussions, prompts, and short assignments, while rapid teacher feedback further enhances accuracy, coherence, and vocabulary use. These findings also resonate with Swain's (2005) output hypothesis, emphasizing that frequent language production is essential for

developing speaking and writing abilities (as cited in Kilahounko, 2025).

The strong perception of effectiveness reported by learners in figure 2, where 65.38 % rated WhatsApp and Telegram as very effective and 32.37 % as somewhat effective, aligns with Kaceti and Klimova (2019) as cited in Kilahounko (2025), who argued that mobile application promoted learner autonomy and continuous language practice, which are essential elements for productive skills development. Lecturers' interviews support this perspective, as they reported that students practice English more regularly through messaging platforms than through conventional homework tasks. This is also backed up with students' interviews where learners emphasized that WhatsApp and Telegram offer additional opportunities for practice, they also foster motivation, and create a less stressful learning environment compared to traditional classrooms.

The features identified by the learners as most helpful for learning are particularly group chats (35.58%), video sharing (31.41%), and voice messages (23.72%) in Table 1, are supported by Sykes (2018) and Hamped & Stickler (2015), who emphasize that collaborative interaction and multimodal input are essential for developing speaking and writing skills in digital environments. Lecturers' interviews corroborate this, as an instructor observed, *"Group chats create real interaction in English, while voice notes help students practice pronunciation and fluency"*. These findings also align with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes learning through social interaction and collaboration (as cited in Kilahounko, 2025).



Learners' comfort in discussing academic topics on WhatsApp and Telegram, reported by 95.19% of respondents in figure 3. This reinforces Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis, suggesting that reduced anxiety enhances language acquisition. Lecturers confirmed that these platforms create a less threatening environment, with one stating, *"students who are silent in class express themselves more easily online"*. This is consistent with Zhang and Pérez-Paredes (2021), who found that online interaction reduces speaking anxiety among EFL learners. Students' positive attitudes toward WhatsApp and Telegram (Table 2; Figure 5) support Dornyei (2001) as cited in Kilahoungo (2025), who identifies motivation as a crucial factor in language learning success. Learners' belief that these platforms are very profitable for improving language skills (74.03% in Table 3) aligns with Stockwell (2016), who demonstrates that mobile-assisted language learning enhances learner engagement and output. Instructors' concluding observations, such as *"WhatsApp and Telegram can significantly improve speaking and writing if used pedagogically"*, confirm that these platforms can effectively support productive skills when pedagogical strategies are implemented.

Based on all the findings above, the use of WhatsApp and Telegram significantly improve EFL students' speaking and writing abilities through increased interaction, authentic language practice, and frequent opportunities for written communication and feedback. The effectiveness of social networks in language improvement is due to learners and lecturers' recognition of their pedagogical potential and motivational value.

4.2.2 Challenges Related to the Integration of WhatsApp and Telegram in Enhancing English Productive Skills

The analysis of both lecturers and learners' responses highlights several challenges associated with integrating WhatsApp and Telegram for enhancing English productive skills, particularly speaking and writing in higher education. Findings revealed from lecturers' questionnaire that issues such as limited access to devices, poor internet connectivity, and insufficient technical infrastructure. These findings align with Kukulska-Hulme (2012) and Cochrane (2015), who emphasize that technological constraints can significantly hinder the effective adoption of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tools in classroom contexts (as cited in Kilahoungo, 2025). A lecturer noted, *"Many students cannot participate fully because their phones or internet connections are unreliable"*, reflecting the practical difficulties of ensuring equitable access to these platforms.

Lecturers suggested that training on safe and responsible use, as well as implementing privacy protocols could mitigate/reduce these concerns. An instructor explained during the interviews, *"We need to teach students how to use WhatsApp responsibly, so personal information is not shared unintentionally"*. Moreover, distraction emerged as another major challenge. Lecturers reported that 56.73% experienced distractions while using social networks for learning as shown in Figure 4, and 58.82% of lecturers perceived distractions as the main potential challenge as shown in Table 5. These findings are consistent with Lepp et al. (2015) who demonstrated that mobile device use can detract from learners' focus, potentially reducing the



effectiveness of digital learning interventions (as cited in Kilahounko, 2025). Findings from interviews also support these ideas during which instructors emphasized that social networks can divert attention from learning objectives, with one participant noting, "Students sometimes get sidetracked by social or entertainment content while trying to complete assignments".

Students' engagement and participation were also identified as challenges. Although WhatsApp and Telegram have interactive features, 29.41% of lecturers cited a lack of student's engagement as a potential barrier in Table 5. These findings resonate with Mtega et al. (2012) who mention that without structured pedagogical integration, mobile tools may not be fully effective in promoting language practice. Lecturers' interviews supported this observation, with one stating, "Even when I post exercises, some students do not check them regularly, so participation is inconsistent". Findings also revealed that financial and infrastructural constraints were highlighted by learners in Figure 4. In this figure, 34.94% of participants reported connectivity or financial problems as a key challenge. This aligns with the results from students' interviews, students reported a range of challenges such as poor internet connectivity, high data costs, and limited device storage were commonly enumerated. Following the technical issues, pedagogical challenges included insufficient guidance, lack of structured instructions, inadequate feedback, and poorly managed or overcrowded groups. Social factors also constituted a barrier for students such as fear of making mistakes or distractions from unrelated content also hindered participation. This reflects the persistent issue of

digital inequality in many developing contexts (UNESCO, 2021), which limits equitable access to online learning tools and hinders their potential impact on productive skills development. Harizpoor (2024, p. 25) as cited in Kilahounko (2025) supports the same ideas by saying in his study that:

Privacy, data protection, and ethical considerations constitute significant constraints, as both learners and teachers may be reluctant to share personal information, phone numbers, or sensitive materials on platforms designed primarily for social interaction rather than formal education, which necessitates careful policy and consent management to ensure compliance with institutional and national regulations.

Furthermore, learners' willingness to engage with WhatsApp and Telegram despite challenges indicates the potential for overcoming barriers. As shown in Figure 5, 65.06% of learners reported they would be very likely to engage with these platforms, and 33.33% somewhat likely. This aligns with Dörnyei (2001) who highlights the role of learner motivation in overcoming obstacles in language learning contexts. Lecturers' interviews confirmed that guided use of these platforms combined with structured activities and regular monitoring, could decrease many of the identified challenges (figure 4).

To sum up, the integration of WhatsApp and Telegram into English productive skills classrooms faces multiple challenges, including technological limitations, distractions, privacy concerns, and digital inequality. Nevertheless, the data suggest that with institutional support, professional development, and structured pedagogical strategies, these barriers can



be effectively addressed, enabling these platforms to serve as valuable tools for enhancing both speaking and writing abilities in higher education EFL contexts.

2. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study imply that WhatsApp and Telegram constitute effective pedagogical tools for fostering EFL learners' productive skills, particularly speaking and writing. These platforms extend learning beyond the physical classroom and provide learners with frequent opportunities to engage in meaningful language production. Thus, the pedagogical implication is that productive skills instruction should move beyond isolated classroom tasks to include continuous, interactive language production supported by digital tools. Another implication of this study concerns learners' autonomy and motivation. WhatsApp and Telegram empower students to take greater responsibility for their own learning by allowing them to practice speaking and writing at their own pace and according to their individual learning needs. Online interaction through voice notes and text messages provides a less threatening environment, encouraging learners to participate more actively. Increased participation leads to greater exposure to language use, which positively affects both speaking and writing proficiency. From a curriculum perspective, the findings imply the need to formally integrate Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) into EFL programmes. WhatsApp and Telegram should be recognised as supplementary instructional tools that support the achievement of speaking and writing objectives.

At the institutional level, the findings imply that higher education institutions should support the

pedagogical use of WhatsApp and Telegram by providing clear guidelines and professional support. Institutions should encourage innovation in teaching while ensuring ethical and responsible use of digital platforms. This includes addressing issues of digital etiquette, privacy, and academic integrity. Based on the implications discussed above, several recommendations are made. EFL instructors are strongly encouraged to integrate WhatsApp and Telegram into their instructional practices to support the development of speaking and writing skills. Educational policymakers are encouraged to invest in digital infrastructure and promote digital literacy among teachers and learners. Professional development programs focusing on mobile-assisted language learning should be prioritized to ensure the long-term success of technology integration in language education.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of social media in developing EFL students' speaking and writing skills. This objective lies in the growing importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in modern education, especially in the field of language learning. The study was grounded in the growing need to integrate digital technologies into EFL instruction in order to address persistent challenges related to learners' low participation, limited exposure to authentic language use, and insufficient practice of productive skills. The study adopted a descriptive mixed methods design, targeting lecturers, students and academic stakeholders within higher education institutions. This methodological approach provided both quantitative and qualitative insights, ensuring that



the voices of different categories of stakeholders were adequately represented. Questionnaires and interviews were used as tools to gather data from participants on awareness, perceptions, practices, and challenges regarding the use of WhatsApp and Telegram in English learning. The data collection process highlighted the widespread availability of smartphones and access to these platforms, thus making the study both timely and relevant.

The findings reveal that WhatsApp and Telegram possess strong potential as complementary tools for EFL instruction. WhatsApp was identified as a highly interactive platform that support immediate communication, peer collaboration, and oral practice through group discussions, voice notes, and live calls. Its accessibility and low-cost nature make it particularly attractive in Benin, where educational resources are often limited. Telegram also is perceived as highly useful in the development of EFL students' productive skills. The discussion of this study linked these findings to existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks such as social constructivism and learner autonomy. The results are consistent with previous studies suggesting that social networking platforms create interactive, learner-centred environments that support authentic language use and collaborative learning. WhatsApp and Telegram were found to bridge formal and informal learning contexts, enabling continuous practice of speaking and writing skills and fostering learner responsibility in the learning process.

However, in response to the second research question, the study also identified several challenges related to the integration of WhatsApp and Telegram in English productive skills classrooms. These

challenges include unstable internet connectivity, limited access to smartphones or data bundles for some learners, distractions caused by non-academic content, and the lack of clear pedagogical guidelines for effective classroom integration.

Regarding all these findings, several implications and recommendations arise. First, higher education institutions in Benin consider formalizing the use of social networks in their English curricula in developing structured guidelines and strategies that maximise their educational benefits. Teachers should receive appropriate training in the pedagogical use of social networks, and that institutions develop clear policies to guide their integration into language instruction. Second, training programs should be organized to enhance lecturers' technical and pedagogical competence in using digital tools, thereby enabling them to design engaging activities that effectively integrate WhatsApp and Telegram and help to improve their language skills. Third, investment in digital infrastructure, such as improved internet connectivity and affordable access to mobile data, is necessary to ensure that students can fully participate without financial or technical barriers.

REFERENCES

- Adloo, A. (2018). The effect of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) on EFL learners' writing performance. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English literature*, 7(4), 1-8.
- Aghajani, M., & Adloo, M. (2018). The effect of online cooperative learning on students' writing skills and attitudes through Telegram application. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(3), 433-448.
- Ajani, O. A. & Khoalenyane, N. B. (2023) Using WhatsApp as a tool of learning: A systemic literature review of prospects and challenges. *International Journal of Innovative*



- Technologies in Social Science, 3(39).
https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30092023/8025
- Al-Saleem, B. I. (2014). The effect of WhatsApp electronic dialogue journaling on improving writing vocabulary word choice and voice of EFL undergraduate Saudi students. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(3), 213-225.
- Andujar, A., & Cruz-Martinez, M. S. (2017). Mobile instant messaging: Whatsapp and its potential to develop oral skills. *Comunicar*, 25(50), 43-52.
<https://doi.org/10.3916/C50-2017-04>
- Arikunto, S. (2003). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktik* (Revised ed.). Jakarta, Indonesia: Rineka Cipta.
- Bhandari, P. (2023). *Data collection: Definition, methods and examples*. Retrieved from www.scribbr.com. On October 27, 2023 at 5 :16 pm
- Bouhnik, D., & Deshen, M. (2014). WhatsApp goes to school: Mobile instant messaging between teachers and students. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 13(1), 217-231.
<https://doi.org/10.28945/2051>
- Cochrane, T. (2015). Critical success factors for transforming pedagogy with mobile web 2.0. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 45(1), 65-82.
- Crystal, D. (2019). *The Cambridge encyclopaedia of the English language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Dafit, F. (2021). *Digital literacy and language learning in the twenty-first century*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ebadi, S. (2023). Artificial intelligence and mobile-assisted language learning: New perspectives for English language teaching. *Education and information Technologies*, 28, 1-20.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Hampel, R., & Stickler, U. (2015). *Developing online language teaching: Research-based pedagogies and reflective practices*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heidari, T. (2018). The impact of mobile-assisted language learning on EFL learners' writing performance. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 5(2), 45-58.
- Kaceti, J., & Klimova, B. (2019). Use of smartphone applications in English language learning: A challenge for foreign language education. *Education Sciences*, 9(3), 179.
- Kassem, H. M. (2021). The impact of social networking applications on EFL students' writing performance and engagement. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(1), 1-15.
- Kilahouko, P. (2025). *Using social networks (WhatsApp and Telegram) as pedagogical tools to improve English language speaking and writing abilities in higher education in Benin: A survey of teachers and learners' perceptions* (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). Faculté des Langues, Art et Communication, Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin.
- Kothari, C. R. (2009). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- Kpolovie, P. J. (2020). Effective English language teaching and learning in Africa. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(5), 102-121.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831865>
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Kukulska-Hulme, A. (2012). Language learning defined by time and place: A framework for next generation designs. In J. Diaz-Vera (Ed.), *Left to my own devices: Learner autonomy and mobile-assisted language learning* (pp.1-13). Emerald.
- Lee, L. (2016). Autonomous learning through task-based instruction in fully online language courses. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(2), 81-97.
- Lepp, A., Barkley, J. E., & Karpinski, A. C. (2015). The relationship between cell phone use and academic performance in a sample of U.S. college students. *SAGE Open*, 5(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015573169>
- Mtega, W. P., Bernard, R., Msungu, A. C., & Sanare, R. (2012). Using mobile phones for teaching and learning purposes in higher learning institutions: The case of Sokoine university of agriculture in Tanzania. *Proceedings and development Journal*, 118-129.
- Onen, D., & Oso, W. Y. (2008). *A general guide to writing research proposal and report* (Rev. ed.). Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.



- Sykes, J. M. (2018). Digital games and language teaching and learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(1), 219-224.
- Stockwell, G. (2016). Mobile language learning. In F. Farr & L. Murray (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language learning and technology* (pp. 296-307). Routledge.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contact for education*. UNESCO
- Vahdat, S., & Mazareian, F. (2020). The impact of mobile assisted language learning on EFL learners' writing performance. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 11(2), 250-259.
- Voxco. (2021). *What is a structured questionnaire?* Retrieved in Jun 2026 from <https://www.voxco.com/blog/structured-questionnaire/>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weigle, S. C. (2009). Assessing writing. In M. H. Long & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 128-146). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Zhang, D., & Perez-Paredes, P. (2021). Chinese postgraduate EFL learners' perceptions of mobile-assisted language learning for academic writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.2021.2021>
- Zhao, Y., Wang, L., & Xie, H. (2022). Artificial intelligence in language education: A systematic review of writing instruction. *Education and Information Technologies* 28(1), 23-44.
- Zou, B., & Xie, H. (2022). The use of social media in EFL learning: Ameta-analysis. *Language Learning & Technology*, 26(1), 1-25.
<https://doi.org/10125/73499>
-