

The Role of Social Networking Sites in Improving English Language Competence among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of social networking sites (SNSs) in enhancing English language competence among secondary school students in Rawalpindi District, Pakistan. The research employed a quantitative design with a positivist approach and collected data from 300 students selected through stratified random sampling from 30 secondary schools. A structured questionnaire measured SNS usage, engagement levels, and self-reported English language competence, and its validity and reliability were confirmed through expert review and pilot testing (Cronbach's alpha = 0.84). Descriptive statistics indicated moderate to high levels of SNS usage (M = 3.72) and English competence (M = 3.65). Pearson correlation and regression analyses revealed significant positive relationships between SNS usage and English competence ($r = 0.547, p < 0.01$), as well as between engagement on SNSs and English language skills ($r = 0.513, p < 0.01$), while SNS usage significantly predicted students' English competence ($\beta = 0.54, p < 0.001$). Demographic analysis showed slight variations in usage and competence across gender, grade level, and school type. The findings indicate that structured use of SNSs facilitates collaborative learning, improves reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, and enhances overall academic engagement. Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers integrate SNS platforms into English learning activities, promote structured and purposeful engagement, provide teacher training on effective digital pedagogy, and encourage responsible use of social media to maximize educational benefits. The study contributes to understanding the educational potential of SNSs in secondary school settings and highlights the importance of integrating technology to support language learning.

Keywords: Social networking sites, English language competence, secondary school students, academic engagement, digital learning.

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the ways individuals communicate, interact, and acquire knowledge in contemporary society. Among these developments, social networking sites (SNSs) have emerged as influential platforms that facilitate communication, information sharing, and collaborative interaction. SNSs such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube are widely used by students across different educational levels. These platforms provide opportunities for users to create profiles, interact with peers, exchange ideas, and access a wide range of digital content. The increasing accessibility of smartphones and internet connectivity has further contributed to the widespread use of SNSs among adolescents and school-aged learners. Researchers have noted that social networking platforms have become an integral part of students' daily lives and play an important role in shaping their academic behaviors and communication patterns (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Waqas et al., 2016; Tess, 2013).

Social networking sites are generally defined as web-based platforms that allow individuals to construct personal profiles, connect with others, and engage in social interaction within a digital environment. These platforms facilitate communication through various features such as messaging, group discussions, multimedia sharing, and online collaboration. In recent years, scholars have increasingly explored the potential of SNSs in educational contexts because these platforms enable students to interact with peers, exchange academic materials, and participate in collaborative learning activities. Studies have shown that social networking platforms can support the development of digital literacy skills and enhance students' engagement in learning processes when used effectively for educational purposes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Junco, 2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

English language competence has become an essential requirement for academic success and professional development in the modern globalized world. English is widely recognized as the dominant international language used in education, research, science, technology, and global communication. Students who possess strong English language skills are better equipped to access educational resources, participate in academic discussions, and pursue higher education opportunities. English language competence generally includes several key skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These skills enable learners to communicate effectively and engage in meaningful academic interactions. Language scholars have emphasized that effective language learning requires continuous exposure, practice, and interaction with authentic communication contexts (Crystal, 2003; Harmer, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Traditional classroom environments sometimes provide limited opportunities for students to practice language skills through authentic communication. While classroom instruction focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and structured learning activities, students may not always have sufficient opportunities to apply language skills in real-life situations. Consequently, educators have begun to explore innovative teaching approaches that integrate digital technologies into language learning environments. Social networking platforms provide interactive spaces where students can communicate, share ideas, and practice language skills in informal and meaningful contexts. Through SNSs, students can engage in discussions, exchange information, and collaborate with peers, which contributes to improved language proficiency and communicative competence (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Aydin, 2012).

Research has shown that the integration of social networking sites into educational activities can enhance students' motivation and participation in learning processes. Students who

actively engage with digital platforms for academic purposes tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and collaborative learning behavior. SNSs allow learners to access diverse educational resources such as videos, tutorials, articles, and interactive learning materials. These resources can support students in developing language skills and expanding their knowledge beyond the traditional classroom setting. Additionally, the interactive nature of social media platforms encourages students to participate in discussions and share their perspectives with peers, which promotes deeper learning and critical thinking skills (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Junco, 2012; Tess, 2013).

Social networking platforms also contribute to language learning by providing opportunities for authentic communication. When students interact with peers through comments, messages, and online discussions, they practice using language in meaningful contexts. Such interactions enable learners to develop vocabulary, improve writing abilities, and gain confidence in expressing their ideas. Furthermore, social networking environments expose students to diverse linguistic expressions and communication styles, which enhances their understanding of language usage and cultural contexts. These experiences play an important role in developing students' communicative competence and language proficiency (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Kabilan et al., 2010; Aydin, 2012).

In the context of developing countries such as Pakistan, the use of social networking sites among students has increased significantly during the past decade. The growing availability of affordable internet services and mobile technologies has enabled students to access social media platforms more easily than before. Studies conducted in Pakistan have indicated that students frequently use social networking platforms not only for entertainment but also for educational purposes such as sharing academic information, discussing assignments, and collaborating with classmates. These interactions can facilitate peer learning and contribute to improved academic engagement among students (Waqas et al., 2016; Junco, 2012; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

Research conducted by Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2022) examined the role of social networking sites in education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. Their study found that social networking platforms played a significant role in maintaining educational communication when traditional classroom instruction was disrupted. Students used platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook to share lecture notes, communicate with teachers, and participate in group discussions related to their studies. The findings suggested that SNSs could support educational continuity and enhance students' engagement in learning activities when used effectively for academic purposes (Mahnaz et al., 2022; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Tess, 2013).

Further research conducted by Mahnaz and Kiran (2024a) explored the relationship between Big Five personality traits, social networking site preferences, and academic achievement among secondary school students. The study revealed that students' personality characteristics significantly influenced their engagement with social networking platforms. For instance, students who exhibited higher levels of openness and extraversion were more likely to use social media for collaborative learning and academic communication. The study also indicated that the effective use of SNSs could contribute to improved academic outcomes and learning experiences among students (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024b; McCrae & Costa, 2008; Junco, 2012).

Another study conducted by Mahnaz and Kiran (2024c) investigated the impact of WhatsApp and Facebook usage on the scholastic performance of secondary school students. The findings revealed that students who actively participated in academic discussions through

social networking platforms demonstrated higher levels of academic engagement and improved scholastic performance. The researchers concluded that social networking sites can serve as valuable tools for collaborative learning when integrated appropriately into educational activities (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024b; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Tess, 2013).

Similarly, Sarfaraz, Shoukat, Shaheen, and Mahnaz (2025) examined the cognitive and social influences of social media on secondary school students. Their findings indicated that the use of social networking platforms was positively associated with students' academic engagement and collaborative learning behaviors. Shaheen et al., (2023), study suggested that SNSs can provide supportive environments where students interact with peers, exchange knowledge, and develop communication skills. These findings highlight the potential of social networking platforms to contribute positively to students' academic development when used responsibly (Sarfaraz et al., 2025; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

Another important advantage of social networking sites in education is their ability to promote autonomous learning among students. Through social media platforms, learners can independently explore educational resources, join language learning communities, and participate in discussions related to their academic interests. This self-directed learning approach encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and develop critical thinking skills. Additionally, SNSs enable students to access learning materials anytime and anywhere, which supports continuous learning beyond classroom boundaries (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Harmer, 2007).

Despite the numerous educational benefits associated with social networking sites, some researchers have raised concerns regarding their potential negative effects on students' academic performance. Excessive use of social media for entertainment purposes may lead to distractions, reduced study time, and lower academic achievement. Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to guide students in using social networking platforms responsibly and productively. When used in a balanced and purposeful manner, SNSs can serve as valuable educational tools that support students' academic development and language learning (Junco, 2012; Tess, 2013; Aydin, 2012; Mehrukh, 2022). Teachers and educational institutions play a crucial role in integrating digital technologies into teaching and learning processes. By incorporating social networking platforms into classroom instruction, educators can create interactive learning environments that promote collaboration and communication. Teachers can encourage students to participate in online discussions, share learning resources through social media groups, and collaborate on academic projects using digital platforms. These practices not only enhance students' technological skills but also contribute to the development of language competence and communication abilities (Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Kabilan et al., 2010).

In secondary education, the integration of social networking sites into language learning is particularly important because students at this stage are developing essential communication skills that influence their academic and professional futures. Since many secondary school students are already active users of social media platforms, incorporating these technologies into educational practices can help bridge the gap between students' everyday digital experiences and formal classroom learning. Understanding how SNSs influence English language competence among secondary school students can therefore provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to improve language education strategies (Aydin, 2012; Junco, 2012; Kabilan et al., 2010).

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the role of social networking sites in improving English language competence among secondary school students. By investigating students'

engagement with SNSs and their influence on language learning outcomes, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on educational technology and language learning. The findings of this research may provide useful recommendations for teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers regarding the effective integration of social networking platforms into language education practices (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Mahnaz et al., 2022; Tess, 2013).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the extent of social networking sites usage among secondary school students for English language learning.
2. To investigate the impact of social networking sites on the English language competence of secondary school students.
3. To explore the relationship between students' engagement with social networking sites and their English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis 1:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the use of social networking sites and English language learning among secondary school students.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the use of social networking sites and English language learning among secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀₂: Social networking sites have no significant impact on the English language competence of secondary school students.

H₂: Social networking sites have a significant impact on the English language competence of secondary school students.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between students' engagement with social networking sites and their English language skills.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between students' engagement with social networking sites and their English language skills.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it provides insights into the role of social networking sites in improving English language competence among secondary school students. Understanding the usage, impact, and engagement patterns of SNSs helps teachers, administrators, and policymakers determine how digital platforms influence students' language learning and academic performance. Research has shown that students' use of social networking sites for educational purposes can enhance motivation, engagement, communication, and collaborative learning.

Furthermore, the study can guide curriculum developers and educational authorities to promote responsible and productive use of social networking platforms in schools. By analyzing the relationship between SNS usage and English language skills, educators can design strategies that support collaborative learning, improve communication abilities, and strengthen students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking competencies. Ultimately, the findings of this study contribute to the broader literature on educational technology and language learning while providing practical recommendations for integrating SNSs into teaching and learning practices.

Literature Review

Introduction to Social Networking Sites and Education

The increasing integration of social networking sites (SNSs) in educational settings has generated substantial scholarly interest, particularly in relation to students' language learning and academic development. Social networking sites have evolved from platforms for casual social interaction into tools with significant potential for learning. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to create profiles, connect with others, and share content. Research on SNSs in educational contexts highlights their capacity to support collaborative learning, peer interaction, and access to diverse information resources (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These features align with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize active engagement, social interaction, and the co-construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Mahnaz et al., 2025). Thus, SNSs can provide environments that extend learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries and promote English language practice in authentic contexts (Abbasi et al., 2025).

SNS Usage Patterns Among Students

Several scholars have investigated the extent to which students use SNSs for academic purposes. Junco (2012) found that college students who used Facebook for academic communication reported higher levels of engagement and academic performance compared to those who did not. Similarly, Tess (2013) reported that SNS usage can influence students' learning behaviors when integrated with pedagogical goals. Although these studies focused largely on higher education, their findings suggest that secondary school students—who are often highly active on social media—may also benefit from educationally oriented SNS engagement (Nasir & Mahnaz, 2026).

SNSs and Language Learning

Research on social networking and language learning has identified specific ways in which digital interaction supports the development of language competence. Blattner and Fiori (2009) demonstrated that using Facebook in language classrooms increased students' opportunities for meaningful communication in English, leading to improvements in vocabulary and writing skills. Likewise, Aydin (2012) reported that SNSs provide interactive spaces where learners can practice language skills in informal settings, enhancing both confidence and participation. These studies indicate that digital environments can facilitate real-time language use, which is critical for developing communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Mahnaz et al., 2023).

Multimedia and SNS-Based Learning

The role of SNSs in language learning extends to multimedia learning opportunities. Greenhow and Lewin (2016) described how platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp allow learners to access and share educational videos, practice pronunciation, and engage in discussions that support listening and speaking skills. These multimedia interactions help learners receive immediate feedback and observe language use in diverse contexts, enhancing their comprehension and expressive abilities (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). The integration of multimedia content with SNS interaction further enriches language learning experiences and reflects the multimodal nature of contemporary communication (Ibrahim et al., 2025; Abbasi et al., 2025).

Personality Traits and SNS Engagement

In the context of personality traits and technology use, researchers have examined how individual differences influence students' SNS engagement and learning outcomes. The Big Five personality traits—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and

neuroticism—have been widely used to explain variance in students' engagement with digital platforms. McCrae and Costa (2008) suggest that extraverted learners are more likely to engage in online communication due to their sociable nature, which may facilitate language practice through interaction. Conversely, learners high in neuroticism may be less comfortable engaging in digital discussions that require frequent communication. This research underscores the importance of considering individual learner characteristics when evaluating SNS-based learning outcomes (Mehmood et al., 2022).

Empirical Studies from Pakistan

Studies conducted in Pakistan by Wajid Mahnaz and colleagues provide contextualized insights into the educational use of SNSs among school-aged students. Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2022) examined the role of social networking sites in education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook became essential for academic communication when traditional classroom instruction was disrupted. Students used SNSs to share lecture notes, discuss assignments, and maintain communication with teachers and peers (Kiran et al., 2025; Nazir et al., 2025).

Building on this work, Mahnaz and Kiran (2024c) explored the relationship between Big Five personality traits, SNS preferences, and academic achievement among secondary school students. Their findings indicated that students with higher levels of openness and extraversion were more likely to engage with SNSs for collaborative learning and academic communication. Another study by Mahnaz and Kiran (2024c) investigated the impact of WhatsApp and Facebook usage on the scholastic performance of secondary school students. The research demonstrated that students who actively used these platforms for academic discussions showed improved engagement and scholastic outcomes. Sarfaraz, Shoukat, Shaheen, and Mahnaz (2025) examined the cognitive and social influences of social media on secondary school students, finding positive associations between SNS usage and academic engagement (Kiran et al., 2025; Bibi et al., 2025).

Benefits and Challenges of SNSs in Education

While SNSs offer numerous educational advantages, scholars also warn of potential drawbacks when these platforms are used without academic focus or guidance. Junco (2012) pointed out that excessive use of social media for entertainment can detract from study time and lower academic performance. Similarly, Tess (2013) noted that without pedagogical framing, SNSs might reinforce superficial engagement rather than deep learning. However, when used with structure and guidance, SNSs can enhance collaborative learning, improve language skills, and promote autonomous learning (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

SNSs and Autonomous Learning

SNSs enable students to access learning resources independently, join language learning communities, and engage in discussions related to their academic interests. Greenhow and Lewin (2016) argue that such self-directed engagement fosters critical thinking and language skill development. Blattner and Fiori (2009) found that learners who participated in SNS-based writing activities improved their writing fluency and vocabulary. Aydin (2012) similarly reported that frequent practice on SNS platforms strengthened learners' confidence and communication skills (Nazir et al., 2025).

Speaking and Listening through SNSs

Several studies highlight the potential of SNSs to support speaking and listening skills. Platforms such as YouTube and voice-enabled messaging apps allow learners to watch, listen, and respond to spoken language. These interactions provide authentic input and opportunities for practice, supporting the development of oral skills and comprehension

(Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Noreen et al., 2025; Canale & Swain, 1980). In summary, SNSs have significant potential to support English language competence among secondary school students. Studies indicate that digital platforms enhance vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening skills, while also fostering engagement and collaborative learning. Research by Mahnaz and colleagues provides strong evidence that secondary school students benefit academically from SNS usage, especially when integrated into structured educational tasks. Effective use of SNSs requires instructional guidance and consideration of students' individual differences to maximize learning outcomes and minimize potential distractions (Mahnaz, 2023; Haq et al., 2025).

Research Methodology:

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design to examine the role of social networking sites (SNSs) in improving English language competence among secondary school students. Quantitative research enabled systematic measurement, statistical analysis, and hypothesis testing based on numerical data (Creswell, 2014). This design was appropriate for identifying relationships between variables such as SNS usage, student engagement, and English language competence.

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy guiding this study was positivism. Positivist research assumes that reality can be observed and measured objectively and that human behavior can be understood through empirical analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). By using structured questionnaires and statistical tests, the study collected empirical data to test hypotheses about SNS usage and language learning outcomes among students.

Population

The population for this study comprised all secondary school students in Rawalpindi District. According to the official district profile, Rawalpindi had approximately 365 secondary schools, including government and private institutions (PBS, 2015). Secondary schools in Rawalpindi provided education to a large number of students, estimated in thousands, which made the population suitable for the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different types of secondary schools (government and private) in Rawalpindi District. From the total number of secondary schools, a sample of 30 schools was selected proportionally from both sectors. Within each selected school, students from grades 9 and 10 were randomly chosen.

A sample of approximately 300 students participated in the study. The sample size was considered sufficient to allow reliable statistical analysis using SPSS, based on guidelines recommending a minimum of 30 respondents per subgroup for quantitative research (Field, 2013).

Research Tool

The main research instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to measure:

1. Frequency and purpose of SNS usage related to English learning,
2. Students' engagement levels on SNSs for academic activities,
3. Self-reported English language competence (reading, writing, listening, speaking).

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended Likert scale items and demographic questions (age, gender, grade level). The tool was adapted from previously validated instruments in educational technology research (Junco, 2012; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016) and refined for secondary school students.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Tool

To establish validity, the questionnaire underwent expert review by university faculty in education and English language teaching. Content validity ensured that the instrument's items meaningfully represented the constructs of interest (Taherdoost, 2016). Based on expert feedback, items were revised for clarity and relevance. A pilot test was conducted with 30 students from schools not included in the final sample. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency reliability, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable for social science instruments (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Items with low item-total correlation were removed or revised.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the District Education Authority, Rawalpindi, and school principals. A formal letter explaining the purpose, scope, and ethical considerations of the study was submitted to relevant authorities. After receiving approval, questionnaires were administered to students in groups during school hours. Clear instructions were given, and researchers clarified any questions. Data collection occurred over a two-week period. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, coded, and entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies) and inferential statistics (correlation, regression) were used to test the hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided the entire research process. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Written consent was obtained from school authorities, and assent forms were used for students under 18. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were maintained. No personal identifying information (names, IDs) was collected. Data were stored securely and used exclusively for research purposes.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 300 secondary school students participated in the study. The demographic information included gender, age, grade level, and type of school. The distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 300)*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	160	53.3
Female	140	46.7
Age		
14-15	120	40.0
16-17	180	60.0
Grade Level		
Grade 9	130	43.3
Grade 10	170	56.7
Type of School		
Government	160	53.3
Private	140	46.7

The data indicate that the sample consisted of slightly more male students than female students, and most respondents were aged 16-17. Grade 10 students were slightly more than Grade 9, and government school students were slightly higher than private school students.

Descriptive Statistics of SNS Usage and English Language Competence

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the main study variables: frequency of SNS usage for English learning, engagement level, and self-reported English competence.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
SNS Usage Frequency	300	3.72	0.89
SNS Engagement Level	300	3.58	0.92
English Language Competence	300	3.65	0.85

The results indicate that students reported moderate to high usage of SNSs for English learning, with an average engagement level of 3.58 out of 5. English language competence was also reported as moderate to high ($M = 3.65$), suggesting that SNS usage could be associated with language learning outcomes.

Inferential Statistics

To test the hypotheses, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were conducted.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between SNS usage and English language learning.

Pearson correlation showed a positive and significant relationship between SNS usage and English language competence ($r = 0.547$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that higher SNS usage is associated with better English language skills among secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2: SNS usage has a significant impact on English language competence.

A simple linear regression was conducted, with SNS usage as the independent variable and English competence as the dependent variable. Results indicated that SNS usage significantly predicted English competence ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 29.9% of the variance in English language competence ($R^2 = 0.299$).

Hypothesis 3: Students' engagement with SNSs is significantly related to English language skills.

Pearson correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between SNS engagement and English language competence ($r = 0.513$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that more engaged students on SNS platforms demonstrated higher English language proficiency.

Discussion

The findings align with prior studies showing that social networking platforms can enhance academic performance and language learning (Mahnaz et al., 2022; Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024c; Junco, 2012). The significant positive relationships indicate that SNSs are not merely social tools but can support reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills when used purposefully. The moderate mean scores of SNS engagement suggest that while students are using these platforms academically, there is room to increase structured academic interaction. This finding is consistent with Greenhow and Lewin (2016), who emphasized that guided use of SNSs can maximize educational benefits.

Differences in demographic variables were also observed. For instance, male students showed slightly higher SNS usage, whereas female students demonstrated slightly higher self-reported English competence. Government school students reported higher SNS engagement than private school students, likely reflecting institutional support for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mahnaz et al., 2022). The study found that secondary school students used social networking sites moderately to frequently for English language learning. This aligns with Mahnaz, Mehmood, Mehrukh, and Shaheen (2022), who reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students actively relied on platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to share notes and communicate academically. Similarly, Junco (2012) observed that college

students frequently used Facebook for academic purposes, which increased their engagement and performance. Batool et al., (2025) also highlighted that students' frequent SNS use can support learning behaviors when directed towards academic activities.

A significant positive relationship was found between SNS usage and English language competence ($r = 0.547$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that students who used SNSs more often had higher reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. These results are consistent with Mahnaz and Kiran (2024b), who reported that secondary school students with higher SNS usage demonstrated improved academic performance and language outcomes. Blattner and Fiori (2009) also found that using Facebook for classroom activities increased students' vocabulary and writing abilities. Greenhow and Lewin (2016) emphasized that SNSs provide a flexible environment for real-time communication, which supports language skill development. The study revealed that higher engagement on SNS platforms was associated with better English language skills ($r = 0.513$, $p < 0.01$). This corresponds with Aydin (2012), who argued that SNSs offer interactive spaces where learners can practice language skills and improve confidence (Bibi et al., 2023; Kiran et al., 2025).

Mahnaz et al. (2022) also observed that students who actively participated in discussions, shared learning materials, and collaborated online showed higher academic engagement and better outcomes. Junco (2012) further noted that engagement, rather than mere access to social media, is critical in enhancing learning outcomes. Haq (2025) stated that, male students reported slightly higher SNS usage, while female students had slightly better English competence. Government school students demonstrated higher SNS engagement compared to private school students. These results support Sarfaraz, Shoukat, Shaheen, and Mahnaz (2025), who noted that institutional reliance on online platforms influenced student engagement. Similarly, Mahnaz and Kiran (2024a) highlighted that personality traits and institutional support can influence how students use SNSs for academic purposes, which may explain the observed demographic differences.

The overall English language competence of students was moderate to high ($M = 3.65$), suggesting potential for further improvement. This is consistent with Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010), who reported that SNSs could enhance language learning when integrated with structured educational tasks. Greenhow and Lewin (2016) emphasized that SNSs, when used purposefully, can strengthen learners' communication, writing, reading, and speaking skills. The study also reflects Mahnaz et al. (2022) findings that structured SNS activities support English language development and collaborative learning.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that:

1. SNS usage positively correlates with English language competence among secondary school students.
2. SNS usage significantly predicts English language competence, supporting the second hypothesis.
3. Student engagement on SNS platforms is strongly associated with improved English language skills.

These findings suggest that integrating SNSs in secondary school English education can enhance communication, collaboration, and language skill development. Teachers and policymakers can leverage these platforms to supplement traditional classroom instruction.

Findings

1. Students used social networking sites moderately to frequently for English learning ($M = 3.72$).

2. SNS usage had a significant positive relationship with English language competence ($r = 0.547, p < 0.01$).
3. Higher engagement on SNS platforms was associated with better English skills ($r = 0.513, p < 0.01$).
4. Male students reported higher SNS usage, while female students had slightly better English competence.
5. Overall English competence was moderate to high ($M = 3.65$), indicating room for improvement.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should integrate SNSs into English language activities to enhance collaborative learning.
2. Structured SNS engagement should be encouraged to focus on academic purposes.
3. Teacher training is needed to effectively use SNSs for language instruction.
4. Students should be educated about responsible SNS use to avoid distractions.
5. Peer-based online learning can improve communication skills and confidence in English.

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