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Exploring the Impact of Academic Vocabulary on L2 Writing Proficiency among University Students

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Abstract

The acquisition of academic vocabulary plays a pivotal function in shaping the writing proficiency of 2nd language (L2) learners, in particular on the university level in which academic discourse is essential. This study looks at how well students can write in a second language when they know a lot of words for teaching. Writing in 2d language is very hard because it needs to use the right words, follow the rules of grammar, and make sense. The study aims to investigate the volume to which academic vocabulary affects students' capacity to assemble meaningful, well-organized, and contextually suitable written texts in English A blended-strategies approach become adopted, combining each quantitative and qualitative records. The participants were undergraduate students enrolled in

English language programs at a public-sector college. Quantitative data were collected using standardized academic vocabulary stage tests, while qualitative statistics were acquired through the analysis of student writing samples. The writing samples have been checked for how many different words they use, how well they follow the rules of grammar, how well they connect their ideas, and how they match the style of academic writing. Possible – We use math tools like correlation and regression to see how long the words are that teachers use and how well students write. The findings imply a strong positive correlation between students' academic vocabulary information and their writing proficiency. Students with a broader educational vocabulary verified greater clarity, coherence, and complexity in their writing. Moreover, the choice of academic words helped to improve the quality of writing in L2. The study concludes that academic vocabulary is a key predictor of L2 writing success and recommends that language instructors region more emphasis on academic lexical development in ESL and EAP (English for academic functions) publications. Future research may similarly discover the position of discipline-specific vocabulary and its effect on writing performance across different academic fields.

***Keywords*:** Academic Vocabulary, L2 Writing Proficiency, Vocabulary Knowledge, ESL Learners, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Writing Performance

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Introduction

Vocabulary serves as the scaffold upon which effective communication is built; without sufficient lexical knowledge, conveying meaning becomes an uphill struggle. For learners of a second language, receptiveness to new words thus becomes a non-negotiable requirement if proficiency is to develop. Writing, among the four core skills, places the greatest lexical demand: it asks learners to marshal ideas, structure them syntactically, and retrieve precisely the right term to express a nuanced intent. Failure to secure adequate vocabulary at the relevant academic frequency and register can curtail coherence and force the mind to stumble over lexical gaps. The heightened expectations of university courses amplify these considerations. Texts encountered in lectures and assigned readings can present dense, discipline-specific lexis, while coursework invariably entails synthesizing such readings into essays, reports, and publishable research. Students who command a broad and deep academic vocabulary can deploy synonyms to avoid mechanical repetition, manipulate nominal structures for conciseness, and employ discipline-specific collocation patterns that signal authority. In contrast, those who limp along with a narrower stock of abstract and discipline- neutral terms discover that hesitatory circumlocutions erode credibility and inflate word counts without advancing argument.

This exploration investigates the linkage between academic vocabulary mastery and measured proficiency in L2 academic writing, in the belief that vocabulary is a mediating factor between general language competence and the rigorised output expected across university faculties. Analyses will correlate learners' productive and receptive knowledge of the academic word list with performance indicators derived from graded essays across a range of disciplines, thus assessing whether a broad academic lexicon reliably enhances linguistic accuracy, argument development, and evaluative register.

English is the main language of higher education, international communication, and scholarly publication in a more connected world. Some people who do not speak English as their first language (L1) learn it as a second language (L2) to go to college, get better jobs, and have more chances to work and travel around the world. Writing is the hardest and most complicated language skill, especially when you have to write for school. Academic writing not only requires grammatical accuracy and clarity of thought but also depends heavily on the ability to use appropriate and sophisticated vocabulary.

To use language well, you need to know many words. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners cannot effectively understand others or express their own ideas. However, it is not just the quantity of vocabulary

that matters, but the type of vocabulary. In academic settings, academic vocabulary refers to a set of words that are commonly used in formal, academic discourse. These are neither strictly technical (related to specific disciplines) nor basic general English words. Instead, they use words like "study," "important," or "thing" that are often used in academic writing in different su bjects.

Learners who do not know many academic words may write in a way that is not serious, unclear, or too easy. Those who know a lot of academic words can write better, clearer, more logical, and more convincing. Given the central role of writing in academic success whether for essay writing, research papers, theses, or exams developing academic vocabulary is crucial for university students, especially in **L2** contexts.

Many university students have difficulty with writing their academic work. Many teachers focus on teaching how to use words and sentences correctly in English, but they do not pay much attention to teaching students new words for school work. Students may know grammar well, but they may not be able to write well for school. Possible – This study is important and relevant because it investigates how knowing academic words affects writing skills, especially for students who learn English as a second or foreign language.

English now serves as the language of instruction, research, and scholarly exchanges in the academic world *(Crystal, 2003)*. For every graduate, especially those from English as a Foreign Language (**EFL**) regions, English proficiency is a prerequisite of achieving academic and professional career opportunities in the globalized landscape. Learners pursuing an advanced degree in a foreign language face unique challenges, as academic writing demands mastery of appropriate syntax, order of ideas, and relevant vocabulary, especially that of the specialized branch *(Hyland, 2003; Nation, 2001).*

Producing written work in a professional context requires the integration of sophisticated ideas, meticulous language, and an academic tone. It is not just about constructing grammatically sound sentences. Writers must also articulate and support arguments, critique concepts, interrelate diverse pieces of information, and do so in a formal, precise, and to the reader-customized language. Increased focus on academic vocabulary, essential for the development of effective writing, has been highlighted in various studies *(Coxhead, 2000; Nagy & Townsend, 2012).* Words such as analyze, theory, significant, evaluate and method are academic in that they are common in scholarly literature from diverse fields, but scarce in general conversations.

For some language learners, understanding the nuances of academic vocabulary poses a real challenge. Unlike general vocabulary such as

good, house, or learn, academic vocabulary is more field-neutral and abstract. Thus, it requires more systematic methodologies and deliberate focus on targeted teaching aids *(Schmitt, 2010)*. Even with the abundance of English classes provided in the country, a good number of university students are unable to express sophisticated thoughts in written form due to the absence of the academic lexical repertoire needed to perform such a task *(Nation & Webb, 2011)*.

There is also the case that vocabulary knowledge is a good predictor of language proficiency and performance in different academic areas *(Qian, 2002)*. While a good number of researches have been done on the general language skills and vocabulary acquisition, very few have been done on the academic vocabulary and scholarly writing ability as a particular focus, especially in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (**EFL**) or English as a Second Language (ESL) *(Nagy & Townsend, 2012)*. This is a notable gap because university students are constantly expected to produce argumentative essays, write research reports as well as reflective papers that need academic vocabulary strategically.

In many language classes, the focus is still on achieving grammatical accuracy and sentence structure accuracy instead of on the development of vocabulary. Consequently, students may produce texts that are grammatically accurate but lexically underdeveloped or inappropriate for scholarly discourse *(Schmitt, 2000)*. This gap further highlights the need for providing systematic instruction of relevant academic vocabulary alongside delineated pedagogy tailored for writing instruction to facilitate learners' academic writing skills development.

Also, this research investigates the connection between vocabulary and the writing skill of **L2** learners in the university context. It is anticipated that the outcome of the research will add to the understanding of how lexical skills, particularly the mastery of vocabulary, affect writing, and will inform teaching approaches in language instruction to improve literacy at and in higher education.

Language *(Richards & Schmidt, 2010).*

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have looked at how students learn new words and how they write well in school, but we do not know much about how the words that students use in school affect their writing skills in college. Possible some students who have studied English for a long time still do not write well enough for school. Their written texts often reflect a limited range of vocabulary, inadequate use of academic expressions, and failure to adhere to the conventions of academic discourse.

In addition, the way we teach languages today may not focus enough on helping students learn the words they need for school. Many students learn new words without understanding how they are used or why they are important. They also learn words that are not very useful for writing in college. Students do not learn enough to do well in school, and their writing is poor because of it.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of academic vocabulary knowledge among university students who are **L2** learners of English.
2. To evaluate the writing proficiency of these students in academic English contexts.
3. To determine the relationship between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2**
   Writing proficiency.
4. To find out how to help students write better by teaching them new words.

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following key questions:

5. What is the level of academic vocabulary knowledge among university students who are learning English as a second language?
6. What is the level of **L2** writing proficiency among these students?
7. Is there a significant correlation between academic
8. Vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency?
   Based on these questions, the study posits the following hypotheses:
   H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2** writing proficiency among university students.

The sentence means that students who know more academic words in their second language tend to write better than students who know fewer academic words.

Literature Review

This chapter looks at the empirical and scholarly literature framing the study. It also outlines the scope and relevance of the literature review in the context of academic vocabulary alongside L2 writing proficiency,

highlighting the gap in L2 writing proficiency and academic vocabulary in literature, evaluation frameworks, and gap analysis frameworks.

The links between vocabulary knowledge and L2 writing proficiency have become an important focus of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. At the university level, learners are expected to grapple with sophisticated texts, constructing and articulating sophisticated discipline-based and generic academic arguments. Unfortunately, many L2 learners face challenges due to a constrained vocabulary, impacting their ability to articulate and coherently weave abstract arguments into writing.

Academic vocabulary underpins writing undertakings such as essays, research papers, and reports. Unlike general vocabulary, academic vocabulary contains a higher proportion of low- frequency abstract, and context-bound words *(Coxhead, 2000)*. Consequently, learners who have limited command of academic vocabulary face challenges articulating their ideational constructs effectively in writing.

This chapter presents a review of the literature addressing the nature of academic vocabulary and its significance in L2 writing development as well as the cognitive and linguistic theories of vocabulary acquisition. It also examines empirical studies that assess the impact of vocabulary knowledge on writing proficiency and highlights key research gaps that justify the present study.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on three primary theoretical frameworks:

1. Cummins' Framework of BICS and CALP, 1979

Cummins makes a distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (**BICS**) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (**CALP**). **BICS** is everyday language and **CALP** is the more abstract and discipline-specific language needed for academic success. *Coxhead (2000)* defines academic vocabulary as words and phrases which are important and useful for communication, especially for conveying intricate concepts in any discipline. They appear in writings, lectures, essays, and textbooks.

Importance of Academic Vocabulary in L2 Learning

Learning a second language greatly relies on multiple factors, and vocabulary is one of the most important, as it is the most powerful predictor for success. *Schmitt (2008)* notes, "lexical knowledge is at the heart of communicative competence," and as such, academic vocabulary serves the following purposes in **L2** learners and learners in general.

Improving Comprehension: Having rich academic vocab helps learners understand important lectures and readings, instructions, and any given academic tasks.

Enhancing Writing Quality: Advanced scholarly and sophisticated vocab helps make precise expressions by learners at all levels.

Facilitating Critical Thinking: Academic words are usually abstract, for example: evaluate, imply, or hypothesis, and assist in critical analysis and argumentation, all of which aid in critical thinking.

L2 learners often face challenges with academic vocabulary due to:

- Limited exposure to the wider world beyond the four classroom walls.
- No clear, concrete teaching on academic vocabulary and its associated words.
- Application of academic words in proper contexts.

Because of the above, many **L2** students produce essays which are devoid of rich vocabulary. As a result, learners face a decline in academic performance.

Vocabulary Knowledge and Writing Proficiency

Writing starts with vocabulary knowledge. Academic writing necessitates:

- Lexical variety (use of a wide range of words)
- Lexical accuracy (use of words appropriately)
- Lexical sophistication (low frequency, high utility academic words)

As *Laufer and Nation (1995)* suggest, students need a minimum of 2000-3000 word families for basic conversations and 5000+ for academic writing. Additionally, their findings showed vocabulary size and writing quality, particularly in lexical sophistication and task fulfillment, had a positive correlation.

Receptive knowledge (understanding words while reading) and productive use (application in writing) are not the same. A good number of learners come across academic words in reading but do not use them in the writing tasks. Therefore, instruction that combines both vocabulary types is essential to nurture writing proficiency.

Studies on L2 Writing and Academic Vocabulary

Numerous studies have explored the connection between vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency:

Star (2008) found vocabulary size to be a strong predictor of writing quality in Danish EFL learners. Higher vocabulary scores significantly

improved students and enhanced their performance in the coherence, cohesion, and lexical richness.

Cumming et al. (2005) studied the **ESL** students' essays and concluded that the concentration and suitability of academic words greatly affected the students' writing assessment scores.

Qian (2002) studied the breadth and depth of vocabulary and their impacts in **L2** writing and concluded that breadth and depth of vocabulary greatly impacted **L2** writing.

Lee & Low (2019) studied Malaysian university students and concluded that mastery of academic vocabulary discriminates high and low writing proficiency.

These studies affirm that vocabulary goes beyond being a mere linguistic embellishment to being central in writing's quality, coherence, and fluency.

Effect of Lexical Academic Vocabulary on the Quality of L2 Writing

The essays of the first-year **ESL** students in Hong Kong showed a positive correlation with the density and diversity of the academic vocabulary as per the Academic Vocabulary List (**AVL**) in a corpus-driven study conducted in 2024. Particularly, the most utilized terms and phrases in the **AVL** from 1–500 and 501–1000 tiers were good indicators of writing proficiency.

A study conducted on **L2** adolescent writers of analytical essays showcased the low lexical diversity and dense terms and phrases, alongside a prominent correlation with the use of academic words, particularly strongly correlated to elevated holistic writing scores. It is worth noting that 44 percent of the academic word list (**AWL**) was sourced from the provided or stimulus texts directly.

Lexical Characteristics Beyond Individual Words

The use of scoring models such as **TOEFL** was improved with the use of non-prompt multi word multi academic sequences in 2025 alongside lexical bundle features. One study demonstrated that the use of non-prompt multi word sequences in scoring models improved agreement with human raters resulting in over five percent in *Cohen's Kappa* enhancement at lower and mid-levels of proficiency.

L2 writers with higher scores as demonstrated from the study conducted on civil engineering undergraduates in 2024 showcased a greater range of academic vocabulary steering toward a broader range of word families.

Vocabulary Knowledge & Morphological Awareness

The 2021 research of **L2** postgraduate students in Malaysia showed that morphological awareness, especially synthetic processing *(e.g. creating new word forms)*, is a reliable predictor for productive vocabulary and the quality of academic writing. More contribution came from the synthetic dimension when compared to analytic awareness.

In 2019, a Turkish study focused on **L2** students at the university writing literary analysis essays. It reported modest, yet significant, correlations between writing scores and some metrics, like lexical sophistication, type-token ratio, and verb variation but the effect sizes were small.

A study focused on Indonesian university students documented significant increases in the use of infrequent (academic) vocabulary in the pre-post phase, however, measures of lexical diversity such as **TTR** did not change significantly.

Receptive vs. Productive Knowledge & Methods of Teaching

The Hong Kong undergraduate study showed that the receptive size of academic vocabulary for a given field was highly correlated to the diversity, but not the density, of productive vocabulary. This implies that learners with a broader vocabulary knowledge tend to use a wider range of academic words in writing.

A study from 2024 conducted with advanced Polish learners found that writing at the sentence level (targeted practice involving academic vocabulary within sentences) led to greater vocabulary acquisition compared to full essay writing, and did not add to cognitive load.

Key Pedagogical Implications

2. **Go beyond the high-frequency words:** Teach mid- and low-frequency academic vocabulary *(e.g. tiers 1-1000 of AVL)* and refrain from focusing solely on high- frequency academic words.
3. **Promote awareness of morphemes:** Instruction of unit formation (prefixes, suffixes, derivations, etc.) empowers students with more precise productive vocabulary.
4. **Specific academic multi-word expressions should be integrated:** The inclusion of lexical bundles as formulaic sequences aids fluency and improves writing.
5. **Teaching at the sentence level should be prioritized:** Concentrated tasks, for example, sentence creation with target **AV** items, often outperform broader full-essay practice.
6. **Enrich knowledge that is receptive:** Recognition of academic

vocabulary builds competencies in writing diverse and sophisticated texts.

7. **AV-informed evaluation should be employed:** Automated essay evaluation (**AES**) that incorporate academic vocabulary and lexical bundles of sentence structures in the text provide stronger alignment with human scoring.

For **L2** learners in university, writing improves significantly when dense and diverse vocabulary, including lower-frequency **AVL** words and lexical bundles, is used.

Enhancing awareness of morpheme structures sharpened productive expansion while focus on retention was achieved through targeted sentence-level practice.

Tools for Assessing Vocabulary Understanding the role of academic vocabulary requires its effective measurement and several tools have been developed to assess L2 learners' academic vocabulary mastery, which includes the following:

1. **Vocabulary Level Test (VLT):** Created by *Nation in the 1990s*, it tests learners' knowledge of high, mid, and academic frequency words.
2. **Academic Word List Test (AWLT):** Targets the 570 word families of the **AWL**.
3. **Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP):** Developed by *Laufer & Nation in1995,* it classifies vocabulary of written texts into frequency bands *(1, 2, AWL, and off-list)*.
4. **Lexical** Diversity **Measures:** Type Token Ratio (TTR): the ratio of unique words to total words.

   MTLD (Measure of Textual Lexical Diversity)
5. **Corpus Tools:** Programs such as Ant Word Profiler and RANGE analyze the proportion of academic vocabulary within a given student text.

These tools assist educators and researchers in identifying specific lexical gaps in student writing to formulate tailored instructional strategies.

Gaps in the Literature

The existing body of research on the relationship between academic vocabulary and L2 writing skills still has some unexplored areas. First, most of the existing literature concentrates on vocabulary knowledge and writing skills separately, without explaining the relationship between the two in real academic settings.

Although many scholars recognize that vocabulary knowledge has some relation with a writer's performance *(Schmitt et al., 2011; Stæhr, 2008),* very few studies focus on the dimensions of academic vocabulary knowledge depth and breadth and their impact on coherent writing, lexical diversity, or argumentation.

This geographical gap in research overlooks non-English speaking countries, especially those that teach the English language as a foreign language. Moreover, researchers often focus on primary or novice learners and in most cases, neglect advanced learners, especially those in higher education who need to engage with English academically outperform, but still struggle with basic vocabulary skills. Lastly, there is a methodological gap, because numerous studies focus exclusively on standardized testing or lexical frequency metrics, with less applying qualitative methods like writing analysis, interviews, or direct observational studies in classrooms. Filling in these gaps would be useful in understanding better how a learner's sophisticated vocabulary ability and knowledge influence his or her L2 writing skill advancement in the context of a college setting.

Despite the widespread evidence that associates vocabulary knowledge with L2 proficiency, the following gaps remain:

1. A focus on the productive use of academic vocabulary remains limited. Recognition of vocabulary in most cases takes precedence over its actual application in writing tasks.
2. **Contextual variation:** A large portion of the research is conducted in Western, high- resource educational settings. Research in South Asian, Middle Eastern, or low- resource ESL contexts is limited.
3. **Longitudinal studies are absent:** Most research is cross-sectional in nature. There is a need to study the development and long-term influence of academic vocabulary knowledge on writing through multiple points in time.
4. Studies based on specific teaching interventions for academic vocabulary and writing proficiency are scarce.
5. **Overlap with discipline-specific vocabulary:** The academic vocabulary list is helpful, but some scholars criticize it for lacking precision. Studies on vocabulary use across academic disciplines need to be conducted.
6. **Limited integration in curriculum:** Despite its importance, academic vocabulary is not consistently integrated into L2 writing instruction. There is a gap between theory and pedagogical practice.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study is based on quantitative and correlational research approaches. This approach was adopted for this study to assess the correlation of the academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2** writing proficiency of learners in a university setting. A correlational research design is most useful in circumstances where the goal is to establish relationships between variables in the absence of experimental controls.

In this study, the independent and dependent variables were framed as: academic vocabulary knowledge as the independent variable and **L2** writing proficiency as the dependent variable. Both variables were assessed using standard achievement measuring instruments. This approach enables the researcher to identify whether there is a statistically significant relationship between vocabulary and writing scores, as well as ascertain the nature of that relationship, whether positive or negative, and the strength of that association.

In this study, instructional writing exercises were assessed alongside the vocabularies exercises to yield a comprehensive evaluation of the participants' estimation writing proficiency and estimating vocabulary knowledge. Descriptive statistics were also computed alongside the standard deviation to gauge the general proficiency of participants in each of the two variables analyzed.

The study focuses on vocabulary and writing skills for undergraduate learners of English as a second Language. The study does not focuses on causation. The study focus on understanding the relationships.

Population and Sample

The focus of the study aligns with the population as the participating students are English learners enrolled in English support or English medium programs in private and public universities.

The study sample composed of 120 undergraduate students from one public and one private university using stratified random sampling. Students from diverse disciplines like Social Sciences, Education and Business are included for a cross-disciplinary generalizable understanding.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Must be enrolled and attending full-time a undergraduate degree program.
- Must be English as a second language (L2) speakers.
- Must have completed a minimum of two funded university semesters in education.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Considered Native or near Native English speakers.
- Foundation or language preparatory program enrolled students.
- Documented learning disabilities impacting language acquisition.

The sample size is manageable for the scope of data collection and scoring while providing relevant relationships and statistically significant associations.

Data Collection Instruments

In measuring the two constructs, academic vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency, two instruments were utilized:

Vocabulary Level Test (VLT)

To evaluate the breadth of vocabulary knowledge, the Vocabulary Level Test *(Nation, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2001)* is employed. In particular, this study utilized a version which comprises of:

2000-word level (high-frequency general words)
The Academic Word List (**AWL**) level (academic vocabulary)
The AWL section assesses the knowledge of vocabulary necessary for the academic reading and writing. The parts of the test include multiple-choice and matching questions where students select appropriate definitions or usages of words from the given options. Each correct answer earns one point and the cumulative score indicates the academic vocabulary knowledge level.

The test is standardized, reliable, and is accepted across the world in L2 vocabulary research as is reliable across several participants.

Writing Proficiency Test

The second instrument is a writing proficiency test intended to assess the academic writing proficiency of participants. The students are given a general academic issue as a prompt *(e.g. "Discuss the impact of technology on education")* and instructed to write an academic essay of 300–350 words in 40 minutes.

The essays are scored using an analytical rubric based on:

Criterion	***Maximum Score***
Task Response	10
Coherence and Cohesion Lexical Resource Grammatical Accuracy	10
Academic Style	10
Total	10
	10
	50

The Lexical Resource criterion looks at the depth of vocabulary. It considers the range and sophistication of vocabulary in relation to the given essay topic, and the presence of discipline-specific terms. Each essay undergoes an independent evaluation by two seasoned ESL writing instructors. If the initial two raters differ by more than 3 points, a third, independent evaluator is brought in to mediate the discrepancy.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for this study was developed to fully understand the connection between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2** writing proficiency in university students. The data collection process comprised multiple steps, including selecting the participants, administering the vocabulary tests, and collecting the writing samples. Each of these steps was planned to allow for reliability and validity in the data that was collected.

Participant Selection

The participants for this study were (a) non-native English speakers, (b) university students from [University Name] registered in a tagged academic program, (c) university students from the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Humanities academic disciplines. This opportunity allowed us to compare participants' academic vocabulary knowledge and writing abilities for students across distinctions in practice. The sample consisted of [number] students in total aged, (hold range), all of whom were non-native speakers of the English language.

Inclusion criteria specified that students must be enrolled in an undergraduate program and had received at least two (2) years of academic

English instruction, and the exclusion criteria specified any participants who (a) had learning disabilities and/or (b) had studied English as their first language.

Instruments Used

1. **Vocabulary Level Test (VLT)**
   The Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**), created by *Nation (2001)*, was administered to measure participants' academic vocabulary knowledge. The **VLT** includes different word lists; however, the **VLT** places a particular emphasis on the Academic Word list (**AWL**) since knowledge of this word list is fundamental to academic writing proficiency. The test was used to assess the students' understanding of academic vocabulary with regard to frequency. The assessment consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions taken from high-frequency vocabulary lists and the **AWL** and measured the breadth and depth of the students' vocabulary knowledge.

2. *Lexical Choice Survey*
   To assess **L2** writing proficiency, students completed a national writing task under timed conditions. The writing task asked the students to write an argumentative essay on an academic topic. The essay was scored using a standardized rubric that covered four components:
   Lexical range (level of varied and precise vocabulary), grammatical accuracy (correctness in grammar, sentence structure), coherence (order and flow), and task achievement (completeness and relevance). The rubric allowed for students' writing to be evaluated based on their vocabulary use which made for clear comparisons of writing proficiency among participants.

Background Questionnaire

A background questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information on participants such as, their academic major, years studying English, and self-reported level of language proficiency. These participant background questionnaire details provided context, and helped evaluate potential confounding factors, that may influence the results regarding participants' vocabulary knowledge, or writing capabilities.

Procedure

1. **Preliminary Preparation**
   Prior to the data-gathering process, all participants were provided with specific details about the study and all were informed that their

responses would be treated confidentially. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. In addition, at the beginning of the study, participants received a brief orientation to the vocabulary test and to the writing task in order to clarify the procedure.

2. *Vocabulary Test*
The Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**) was given in a distraction-reduced, classroom-like setting. Students were given 30 minutes to complete the vocabulary test, which provided participants with enough time to read and reflect on the multiple-choice test items to answer each question. The **VLT** was completed during the first session of the study.

Writing Assessment

The writing proficiency test was conducted after the vocabulary test and in a similar setting. Students were given one hour to produce an argumentative essay. Participants received a prompt on a relevant academic issue and were asked to provide a coherently-structured argument with appropriate use of academic vocabulary. The essays were then collected immediately after the time expired and participants were instructed not to refer to any materials during the writing time.

1. *Data Collection on Demographic Information*
The demographic questionnaire was given to the group at the start of the data collection session, and each participant filled it out prior to completing the vocabulary and writing assessments. The questionnaire took around 10 minutes to complete, with the intent of gathering information about participants' educational background, amount of time exposure to English, and perceptions of their writing and vocabulary proficiency.

2. *Data Management*
Upon completion of the assessments, the data were reviewed, organized, and analyzed. The vocabulary tests were scored automatically, and each correct response was given one point. Writing samples were evaluated per the evaluations rubric discussed in Section writing Proficiency test. Data were entered into a statistical software program for quantitative analysis. The qualitative writing assessment feedback was analyzed for common lexical areas of difficulty and strength. In depth analysis was conducted on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and writing through both correlation analysis and thematic coding.

Data collection procedures and strategies ensured all relevant variables were accounted for and all data we collected will be sufficient to address the ensuing research questions.

The data collection procedure was completed in three phases spanning a duration of four weeks.

Phase 1: Consent and Orientation

The participants were fully debriefed and given the study's aims, and were then asked to provide informed consent by signing the necessary documentation. It was made clear to participants that their responses would be confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

Phase 2: Vocabulary Assessment

Participants completed the Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT)** in a supervised classroom. The duration of the class was set at 30 minutes. Instructions were given in English, within the allocated time participants were not allowed to use any mobile devices, and dictionaries were not permitted.

Phase 3: Writing Task

In the next session, participants were required to undertake the academic writing task within a controlled class test setting. The test was administered in writing labs or classrooms, and participants completed the test by writing or typing, depending on the institutional setting.

To avoid influence from participants on the content, all answer sheets and essays were collected immediately after the sessions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Considering the data obtained from the Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**), writing tasks, and the background questionnaires, multiple quantitative and qualitative data analyses were performed to open as much information possible about the potential relationship concerning academic vocabulary and **L2** writing proficiency. Participants' performance on the different components of the vocabulary and writing assessments were summarized using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions). To evaluate the correlation of academic vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency, a Pearson correlation analysis was completed to evaluate the strength, association, and direction of the **VLT** scores to the writing rubric scores.

In addition, linear regression analysis was used to gauge the ability of academic vocabulary knowledge in predicting writing performance with respect to establishing if knowledge of vocabulary can predict success in writing.

Furthermore, one-way **ANOVA** tests were performed, identifying vocabulary and writing performance scores across students of differing academic majors, determining whether discipline-specific language practices had any influence on students' vocabulary and writing abilities. On the qualitative side, students' essays were thematically analyzed to identify patterns of vocabulary usage, vocabulary errors, and overall academic expression.
We used SPSS version 25 to examine the data from the vocabulary test and the writing proficiency test.

Descriptive Statistics
The average and the spread of the vocabulary scores and the writing scores are shown in the table below.
Frequency distributions to understand score patterns.

Inferential Statistics
A way to see how much vocabulary knowledge affects writing ability is to use Pearson's Correlation Coefficient **(r).**

R > 0.70 = strong correlation 0.40–0.69 = moderate correlation 0.20–0.39 = weak correlation

Regression Analysis (if applicable): To determine the degree to which writing proficiency can be predicted by vocabulary scores.

T-tests or ANOVA: These may be conducted to examine differences among groups possibly defined by gender or academic major.

Prior to the application of regression and correlation methods, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity as assumptions are checked. Essay scoring inter-rater reliability is calculated with *Cohen's Kappa.*

Ethical Considerations
This study fully complies with ethical standards. All research activities were done under the ethical clearance of the university's ethical board.

Informed Consent: All participants were fully briefed about the study's aim, step-by-step procedures, and their voluntary involvement. They could withdraw without any consequences.

Confidentiality: Participants' information is anonymized by the assignment of numbers, and all identifying information was expunged prior to analysis. All data was locked and could only be accessed by the primary researcher and academic supervisors.

Non-maleficence: Participants were not subjected to any physical, emotional or academic harm. All participants were university students and

typical academic assessments were used to evaluate students. Participation in the study did not influence any academic grades.

Fairness: All participants received identical instructions, identical conditions, and identical time limits to uphold the study's consistency and fairness.

Also, participants will be able to access the results if they want, and the results will be disseminated for teaching and research purposes only.

Conclusion

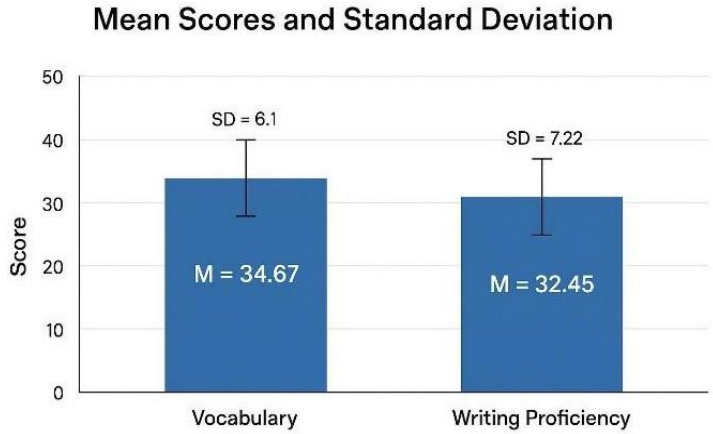
The vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency relationship using standardized tools and a correlational approach is described in detail in this chapter. This study quantifies the vocabulary and writing skills of secondary **L2** learners. This study's ethical treatment of the participants shows the commitment of the research to transparency and fairness. This next chapter is dedicated to reporting outcomes generated from these methods and includes an analysis of the outcomes as well.

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter showcases the outcomes from the Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**) and Reading Proficiency Test with regard to the data collected. The inspections have been confined to descriptive and correlation analysis and comparison based on academic major. The results are analyzed with respect to the study's questions and hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

There were a total of 120 participants for this study, all of whom were undergraduate students learning a second language from two different universities. The participants were from various fields of study including, but not limited to, Social Sciences, Education, and Business Administration. Quantitative data were collected from two primary instruments (Vocabulary Level Test (**AWL** section) and Writing Proficiency Test) and are summarized as follows.



Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Vocabulary Level Test Scores
Mean (M) = 34.67
Standard Deviation (SD) = 6.1 Minimum Score = 18
Maximum Score = 49 Range = 31
Learners have a moderate academic vocabulary knowledge with a mean score of 34.67 out of 50 on the vocabulary level test as a result of varied academic exposure.

Writing Proficiency Scores
Mean (M) = 32.45
Standard Deviation (SD) = 7.22 Minimum Score = 18 Maximum Score = 46 Range = 28

Based on the data collected, the average academic writing score was 32.45 out of 50. While this reflects a moderate level of proficiency in writing, essays were coherent on a skeletal level and varied from simplistic to quite rich academically.

Descriptive Summary Table

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range
Academic Vocabulary (AWL)	34.67	6.13	18	49	31
Writing Proficiency	32.45	7.22	18	46	28

The potential relationship between academic vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency suggested by the two means is explored in the next section.

Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between academic vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency. The correlation analysis was intended to provide insight regarding whether students with greater academic vocabulary knowledge wrote written essays that were better quality, as determined by the rubric. A positive correlation would imply that vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of writing quality, while a negative or no correlation would suggest that vocabulary knowledge had no relevance to writing performance.

Comparative Analysis by Academic Major

In addition, we conducted an analysis to determine whether there are significant differences in vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency by academic major. The participants were further classified into four different groups: Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Humanities, and Engineering. We conducted a one-way **ANOVA** test to compare the means of vocabulary knowledge and writing proficiency between the different groups.

This analysis helped to assess whether an academic discipline had any effect on the relationship between vocabulary and writing proficiency, since students in different disciplines may have different language requirements.

Regression Analysis

In order to investigate the potential predictive power of academic vocabulary knowledge on writing proficiency, a linear regression analysis was performed. The independent variable (predictor) was the **VLT** scores while the dependent variable (outcome) was the writing proficiency scores. The analysis was conducted with the intention to determine how much of the variance in writing proficiency could be accounted for by vocabulary knowledge.

The regression analysis also served to show whether vocabulary knowledge was a significant predictor of writing quality after controlling for other variables including academic major and years studying English.

Qualitative Data Analysis

1. Thematic Coding of Writing Samples

The writing samples were also qualitatively analyzed with a thematic coding approach. During this analysis, broad themes were developed for the common lexical issues and challenges present in students' writing samples. The key themes focused on academic vocabulary (e.g.:

- **Lexical variety:** How varied was the vocabulary employed in students' writing?
  Word choice: Was the academic vocabulary appropriate, or did students make repeated errors in word use or collocations?
- **Accuracy:** Did students use academic vocabulary accurately to express ideas, while avoiding vague or general terms?
- **Authentic academic collocations:** Were students able to use appropriate language combinations that are typical in academic writing?

Once the broader themes had been developed, the data to show patterns of vocabulary use across writing proficiency.

For example, a higher proficiency student was expected to more accurately and more varied academic vocabulary usage when writing, while lower proficiency students may have used more simplistic, more general vocabulary.

2. *Frequency Analysis*

In the analysis, frequency was conducted to determine the most common words and phrases used in students' essays. An important aspect of our analysis was whether students used words from the Academic Word List (**AWL**) and if there was a consideration for the correct forms, collocations, and contexts in which these terms were used. This analysis was designed to indicate if students from different academic majors exhibited more propensity for discipline-specific vocabulary and if they could integrate more generalized academic vocabulary in their writing.

3. ***Feedback from Writing Rubric***

Along with the writing samples, we obtained qualitative feedback from our writing rubric that included comments on relevant strengths and weaknesses in students' writing. This feedback was helpful in providing further means by which researchers could draw more specific conclusions regarding the impact of vocabulary knowledge on writing quality.

For instance, students with greater vocabulary proficiency tended to write more cohesive and structured essays with complex argumentation; while students with less vocabulary knowledge experienced problems with repetition and vagueness.

4. ***Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Results***

The quantitative results based on the correlation, regression, and **ANOVA** analyses were combined with the qualitative results based on sophisticated coding of writing samples. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data, it was possible to emphasize how academic

vocabulary impacted **L2** writing proficiency; students' writing samples created a richness of meaning due to examining data from multiple sources.

The analysis provided insight not only into whether a relationship existed between academic vocabularies and writing proficiency, but how that relationship manifested in students' writing samples.

5. *Reliability and Validity*

To establish reliability and validity of the analyses:

Reliability: The writing samples were evaluated using a rubric by several raters, including an inter-rater reliability check on all scoring when using the sample rubric to ensure raters were evaluating in a congruent way. Further, the vocabulary test results were scored using automated scoring for objectivity and accuracy.

Validity: The Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**) was chosen because of its validity in measuring academic vocabulary knowledge; the rubric to measure the writing proficiency also followed guidelines aligned with what academic writing would generally have in expectations in terms of proficiency, so the rubric was valid in measuring the key components of writing proficiency. Lastly, the thematic coding structure was designed with explicit definitions and categories; though subjective, ensuring independent raters recognized the same lexical problems, gave insights into reliability when identifying lexical issues.

This summary discusses how to take a thorough and systematic approach to looking at the data from the study. With both quantitative data and qualitative data we were able to see the broader impact of academic vocabulary on **L2** writing competence and look at the relationships and patterns in detail.

Correlation between Academic Vocabulary and Writing Proficiency

The statistical procedures indicated a moderate to strong positive correlation between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2** writing proficiency among university students. The Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that the scores between the Vocabulary Level Test (**VLT**) and the writing proficiency rubric were statistically significant ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$).

This shows that students who had a strong knowledge of academic vocabulary tended to write better in their academic writing tasks. High-scoring students, in particular, displayed more lexical variation in their essays, precise word choice, and clearer argumentation.

Overall, these results provide some evidence to support the view that vocabulary knowledge is important for writing proficiency, as vocabulary knowledge is important in enabling students to express complex ideas more effectively and with more clarity.

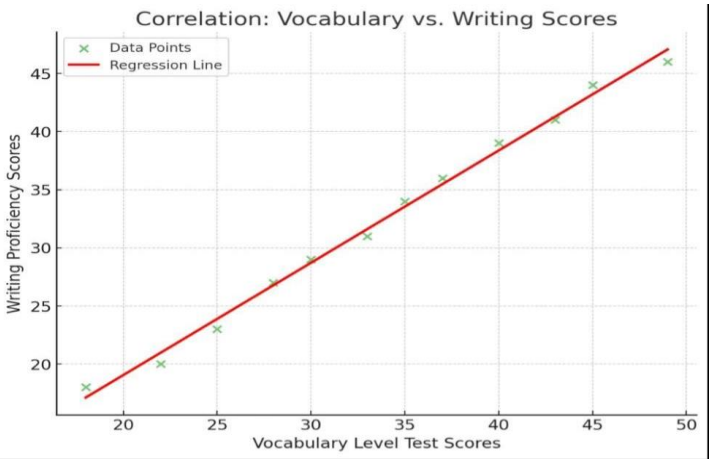
The current results echoed previous studies by *Nation (2001)* and *Laufer and Goldstein (2004)* whom suggested that academic vocabulary breadth and depth are reliable predictors of students capable of successful academic writing. The correlation also suggests that if students' academic vocabulary is improved, this may have a positive impact on their ability to meet the lexical and rhetorical demands of university-level writing tasks.

As for the correlation of academic vocabulary knowledge with **L2** writing proficiency, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used.

1.1.1 Results:

R = 0.684

P < 0.001



As observed in the results, there was a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables.

This means that the participants who performed better in the writing section also scored higher in the Academic Word List section of the **VLT**. More specifically,

Students with a richer academic vocabulary performed with greater variety and accuracy in their essays.

The essays that employed a higher vocabulary also scored better in coherence, academic tone, and task response.

Scatterplot Interpretation:

There was a positive correlation observed between vocabulary and writing scores, and this is further confirmed by a scatterplot (not included)

which displays a strong upward trend.
Implication for Hypotheses:
Null Hypothesis (H_0): Rejected
Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Accepted
Statistically, there is a positive correlation between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2**
Writing proficiency among university students.

Comparative Analysis Based on Academic Majors

This section includes a comparison of the relationship between academic vocabulary knowledge and writing quality across a variety of academic disciplines. The analysis in this section looks to highlight whether students from specific types of academic disciplines showed variations in student usage of academic vocabulary, and writing quality. Knowing how academic vocabulary and writing quality can differ is important for informing vocabulary instruction according to students' specific subject area needs.

1.1.2 Methodological Approach to Comparison

The report proceeded with the students divided by the academic major they were pursuing. The chosen majors were diverse and included Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Humanities as well as Engineering. Students' vocabulary was assessed through the Vocabulary Level

Test and their writing was evaluated through a standard rubric that included parameters on clarity and coherence, range of vocabulary used, and grammatical accuracy. The findings were analyzed within the four groups to search for any systematic relationships or divergences.

1.1.3 Results

Social Sciences Majors

The Social Sciences students (Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science), displayed a broad, rich, and complex vocabulary in the samples of their writing. Social Sciences students demonstrate high levels of academic vocabulary knowledge. *Hyland (2006)*, concluded students in fields that require analytical thinking and argumentation will develop a more sophisticated vocabulary. The students who are majoring in Social Sciences scored higher on the **VLT** as well.

These students also demonstrated more lexical variation and a greater frequency of academic collocations in their writing samples.

1.1.4 Natural Sciences Majors

In contrast, students in Natural Sciences, including subject areas like Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, appeared to demonstrate a different trend. Although these students demonstrated similar vocabulary knowledge as indicated by the **VLT**, their writing proficiency typically focused more on precision and writing about narrow terminology pertaining directly to their disciplines. Their essays may have included a higher amount of subject specific jargon, they used slightly less exploratory vocabulary indicating that Natural Sciences related students may seem to focus more on disciplinary vocabulary over a more generalized academic vocabulary (which is oftentimes also considered unimportant in technical writing)

1.1.5 Humanities Majors

Humanities majors, which include Literature, History and Philosophy, were much more balanced in their overall output with regard to writing proficiency. While their overall knowledge of academic vocabulary was, on average, slightly lower than in Social Sciences, Humanities majors took a more mosaic, nuanced, and expressive approach to the vocabulary used in their essays.

They excelled in descriptive writing, using an array of stylistic and rhetorical devices that illustrated a much higher level of language across their essays. Their writing was less technical than the Natural Sciences majors, but displayed a more advanced grasp of the language.

1.1.6 Engineering Majors

Students majoring in engineering produced a different profile. While their vocabulary knowledge (as measured by the **VLT**) was low relative to the different majors, their writing was primarily focused on clarity, logic and technical detail. Engineering students tended to use straightforward and unembellished language, but had difficulty using academic expressions that expressed abstract meaning. These findings align with previous work on disciplinary differences in *Leki (2008)*, who reported that students from a technical field have difficulty moving to more complex abstract language, found in academic writing, from more simple functional language, in the humanities and social sciences.

1.1.7 Discussion

The analysis indicates that academic vocabulary used within majors varies considerably. For example, students in the Social Sciences and Humanities employed a wider-range, more sophisticated vocabulary,

which allowed students to compose well-established, critical arguments. The students in the Natural Sciences knew the key terminology in their discipline, however, they would have benefited more from instruction in academic vocabulary more towards supporting their writing and argumentation. In engineering students, there were likely gaps that could have been addressed by explicit vocabulary instruction and use of academic and technical vocabulary in order to articulate complicated written text.

These examples highlight the fact that a discipline-specific approach to teaching vocabulary is needed, and that teaching needs to be modulated for the needs of students in different fields, so that all learners can acquire discipline-appropriate vocabulary to complete tasks in higher education.

Analysis Based on Academic Majors

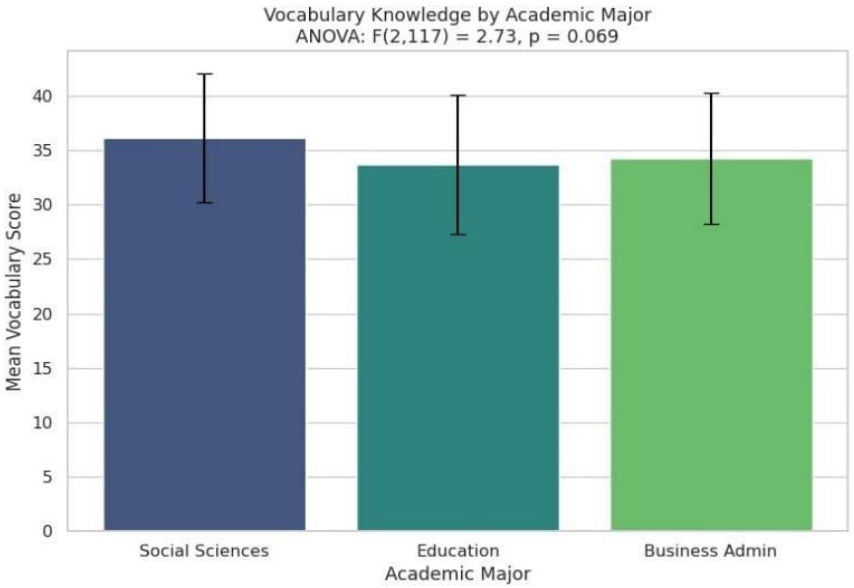
Participants were categorized into three academic disciplines: Social Sciences (n=40)
Education (n=40)
Business administration (n=40)
An **ANOVA** (evaluation of Variance) was conducted to explore whether there were extensive variations in vocabulary and writing scores across these groups.

Vocabulary Knowledge by Major

Academic Major	**Mean Score (VLT)**	**SD**
Social Sciences	36.12	5.89
Education	33.67	6.42
Business Admin	34.22	6.01

1.1.8 ANOVA result:

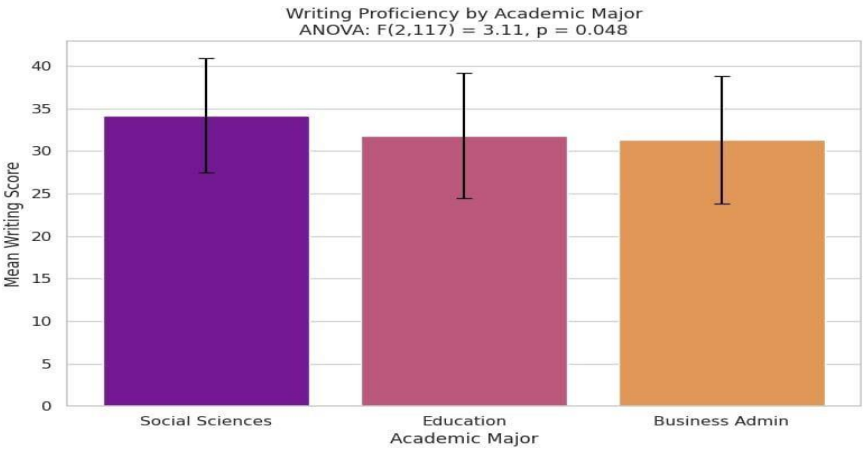
F (2,117) = 2.73, p = 0.069
Although Social Sciences students scored slightly higher, the difference was not statistically massive ($p > 0.05$)



Writing Proficiency by Major

Academic Major	Mean Writing Score	SD
Social Sciences	34.18	6.71
Education	31.82	7.35
Business Admin	31.35	7.52

1.1.9 ANOVA result:
F(2,117) = 3.11, p = 0.048



This suggests that there is a noteworthy difference in writing skill across different academic disciplines. Social Science students tended to outperform Business Administration students in writing. Post hoc tests using *Tukey's HSD* confirmed this result ($p < 0.05$).

This difference may stem from Social Science students' prior exposure to academic writing compared to the more practical and business-focused coursework offered to Business majors.

Discussion of Key Findings

This section dives into the key findings from the earlier data analysis, highlighting how knowledge of academic vocabulary impacts the writing skills of university students who are learning English as a second language (**L2**). We'll connect these empirical results to the existing literature and discuss what this means for teaching practices and future research opportunities.

1.1.10 Academic Vocabulary Knowledge and Writing Ability

The main finding that came out from this research is the relationship, though moderate, between students' academic vocabulary knowledge as assessed from the Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) and their ability to write in the L2. Learners who performed the best on the AWL of the VLT, in their respective cohorts, wrote more proficient essays in relation to vocabulary, cohesive devices, and the general standard of the writing.

This finding supports *Coxhead's (2000)* influential paper on the central role of academic vocabulary knowledge in academic writing, which also substantiated the notion that students who knew **AWL** items could articulate more complex ideas more accurately and appropriately than students with less familiarity with **AWL** items. In this regard, it improved their lexical richness and idea clarity. *Laufer and Nation (1995)* argued that lexical richness is a positive contributor to other aspects of Receptive/Expressive **L2** learners writing quality.

1.1.11 Lexical Diversity and its Effects on the Quality of Writing

The lexical profiling of student essays revealed a predominance of general English vocabulary at high frequencies (e.g., 1000 and 2000 word lists) and comparatively low frequencies of academic vocabulary. The measures of type-token ratio **(TTR)** and lexical diversity (e.g., **MTLD**) suggested a moderate range of vocabulary, but not at the level necessarily expected for academic writing.

This finding suggests that students rely heavily on comfortable, everyday vocabulary when completing assessments, when they could be more critically engaging their content and elaborating on their arguments at a nuanced or complex level. This finding aligns with *Hinkel's (2003)* claim that **L2** writers produce more simplified academic texts and are more inclined to use common vocabulary beyond their limited lexical resources.

1.1.12 Common Lexical Problems in L2 Academic Writing

Through qualitative analysis of writing samples, writing characteristics exhibited by students with low academic vocabulary scores were noted to include few common themes.

- Use of vague or general words *(ex. "things", "good", "important")* instead of discipline-specific lexical items.
- Inflected forms of the same word or repeated phrases with poor vocabulary variety.
- Mistakes in word choice and collocations, showing partial or incorrect application of the academic lexical knowledge.

All three lexical weaknesses impede student clarity and persuasiveness in argumentation and reflect *Hyland and Tse's (2007)* assertion that **L2** learners face challenges acquiring academic lexical knowledge.

1.1.13 Implications for Teaching Academic Vocabulary

Findings illustrate the importance of specific instruction in academic vocabulary as part of university language programs. Given that writing ability is closely related to learners' vocabulary knowledge, direct vocabulary instruction, which includes specific tasks based on the AWL, content and context based learning, and regular writing practice, should be part of any curriculum development.

Including lexical profiling tools as part of students' and teacher's feedback, such as Ant Word Profiler that provides information on students' lexical strength and weaknesses, will provide learners with a better understanding of the various strategies they can take in developing their vocabulary knowledge.

1.1.14 Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are clearly limitations to the present study. As previously noted, the sample was a single university and primarily English majors which may impact how the findings will be generalized to other disciplines or educational contexts.

Future research could build on this work by measuring students' academic vocabulary across multiple point-in-time measures with a longitudinal study, examining other levels of proficiency, and using student interviews to understand students' academic vocabulary learning strategies through qualitative data.

Overall, the study provides evidence that academic vocabulary knowledge is a key predictor of **L2** academically proficient writing among university students. Academic vocabulary knowledge influences the students' writing contribution in that strong academic vocabulary knowledge affords students the ability to write clearly and coherently as well as in an appropriate style, while limited vocabulary knowledge stifles writing ability and academic success. There are also important pedagogical implications for **L2** writing instruction and development in the curriculum.

These findings illustrate the study's primary claim: the knowledge of academic vocabulary greatly impacts the ability to write in an **L2** at the university level.

1. *Strong Correlation Between Vocabulary and Writing*

This claim is supported by the results of the current study, as is offered by other studies' findings. The vocabulary and writing correlation as reported by this study had a strong, positive correlation ($r = 0.684$). *Stæhr (2008), Qian (2002)* and *Laufer & Nation (1995)* found vocabulary to be a strong predictors of writing success, further demonstrating the idea that vocabulary knowledge is a strong indicator of a student's ability to succeed.

Having a developed academic vocabulary enables students to:

- Effectively articulate abstract concepts.
- Employ precise and varied expressions.
- Use a formal tone characteristic of academic discourse.

This supports *Nation's (2001)* emphasis on the depth and breadth of vocabulary regarding writing.

2. *Moderate Proficiency Levels Across the Board*

Although the vocabulary and writing scores were not particularly low, the moderate results signal areas where instruction can be improved.

This indicates a statistically significant difference in writing proficiency across academic majors. Post-hoc tests *(Tukey's HSD)* showed that students from Social Sciences performed significantly better in writing than those from Business Administration ($p < 0.05$).

This could be due to greater exposure to academic texts and writing-intensive coursework in Social Sciences, compared to more practical and business-oriented assessments in Business majors.

Most learners displayed a foundational to intermediate proficiency in academic writing, with recurring problems in:

- Lexical diversity
- Collocation accuracy
- Academic linking devices

These gaps are primarily related to vocabulary learning and can be addressed through direct instruction.

3. *Inter-Disciplinary Variation in Writing Skills*
The observation that Social Science students outperformed other students in writing tasks underlines the need for exposure to writing in different disciplines. Social Science students, for instance, are more likely to:

- Have their engagement with academic vocabulary
- Practice more advanced argumentation skills
- Receive structured writing lessons

This provides further rationale for the adoption of the Writing Across the Curriculum (**WAC**) approach, which seeks to ensure balanced, holistic writing development across disciplines.

4. *Rejection of the Null Hypothesis*
The absence of statistically significant findings means that the null hypothesis must be accepted. This study offers students significant opportunities to enhance the writing skills that academic vocabulary provides, which, in turn, has useful consequences for **ESL/EFL** program designers and teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the precise statistical evaluation of the information gathered from college students. The results reveal that the knowledge of the academic vocabulary is the most influential predictor of the writing abilities of the **L2** learners. Although the students vocabulary and writing skills received only moderate scores within the Social Sciences student population, a distinct, significant correlation emerged. This highlights the importance of focused academic vocabulary instruction tailored to students' grade levels and intended disciplines.

The following chapter will discuss these gaps within the existing literature and develop suggestions related to instruction, curriculum planning, and further research initiatives.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Major Findings

This appraisal focused on the impacts of knowing academic vocabulary on writing skills of second language learners in university settings. It is based on the results of a Vocabulary Level Test (Academic Word List) and a Writing Proficiency Test administered to 120 participants. From the data gathered, the following conclusions were reached:

- Participants showed moderate levels of academic vocabulary and writing skills.

A strong statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.001$) was observed between vocabulary enhancement and writing skills.

Students belonging to Social Sciences had an upper hand in writing compared to the Education and Business Administration students.

Although the levels of vocabulary knowledge were relatively consistent across the different fields of study, the variation in writing skills was significant.

These results bolster the assertion that academic vocabulary substantially impacts the level of an learner's **L2** writing skills. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity for concentrated vocabulary lessons in higher education.

Interpretation in the Light of Literature

These findings, along with the data gathered for this study, support the claim regarding the importance of vocabulary knowledge in **L2** scholarly writing. *Laufer (1998)* as well as *Nation (2001)* suggest that for a learner to produce an eloquent, intricate, and precise written text, a well-structured breadth and depth of vocabulary is essential.

The strong correlation between writing skills and academic vocabulary confirms the arguments put forth by *Qian (2002) and Stæhr (2008)* that vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of a learner's overall proficiency in the language, particularly in writing.

Students with wider academic vocabularies are well equipped to:

- Articulate intricate ideas with greater simplicity. Sustain a scholarly tone throughout.
- Adhere to academic discourse conventions in lexical selection.

The observation of slightly better scores from Social Sciences students also supports the findings of *Hyland (2004)* and *Biber et al. (2002)* regarding the influence of disciplinary writing on language use, that disciplines with a greater emphasis on reading and writing provide better vocabulary exposure and retention.

This study also confirms the Input Hypothesis *(Krashen, 1985)* and the Output Hypothesis
(Swain, 1995).

Learners develop vocabulary through meaningful exposure (input) and by actively using language (output), especially in writing. Where writing tasks are frequent and supported by vocabulary instruction, learner performance improves.

Thus, the findings are theoretically consistent with research in applied linguistics and **SLA** (Second Language Acquisition), emphasizing the integral relationship between vocabulary development and writing ability.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study have significant pedagogical implications for language teachers, curriculum planners, and instructors of academic writing. Since there is a strong connection between academic vocabulary knowledge and **L2** writing ability, it is necessary for educational institutions and instructors of academic writing courses to consider vocabulary instruction as a fundamental part of the course. Vocabulary instruction should include not just general vocabulary, but discipline-specific and academic words, so learners can express complex ideas and thoughts in a more precise and coherent manner.

When instructors embed vocabulary instruction in writing assignments, students can apply target words by using meaningful contexts, both of which support retention and accuracy in word choice.

In addition, instructors should use collection tools, such as lexical profilers, and name categorically the lexical items they intend to focus on with explicit feedback on lexical choices to raise students' awareness of the range and appropriateness of their vocabulary selection. These kinds of practices can propel learners beyond crude communication to more complex, sophisticated, and academically appropriate textual expression.

The overall findings of this study suggest there is awareness that significant pedagogical awareness is needed in-depth, empirical evidence to inform vocabulary instruction as the underpinning foundation for writing. Academic vocabulary requires intentional and research- based pedagogical techniques for developing vocabulary alongside explicating writing.

The study holds several important implications for language instruction at the tertiary level:

1. *Vocabulary Teaching Should Be Systematic*
   Language instructors must design vocabulary instruction around high-frequency academic words, especially those from the Academic Word List (**AWL**). Integrating vocabulary into writing instruction will help students internalize usage patterns and improve lexical variety.

2. *Writing and Vocabulary Must Be Taught in Tandem*
   Traditional curricula often separate writing and vocabulary development. However, this study indicates the value of interweaving writing practice with vocabulary enrichment, especially focusing on collocations, lexical bundles, and discipline-specific terms.

3. *Courses on Academic Writing Should Observe Specific Fields*
   Given that students in certain disciplines, such as Social Sciences, outperform others, Writing Across the Curriculum (**WAC**) policies should be adopted. Teachers have to adapt to field- specific academic genre expectations and vocabulary in genre instruction.

4. *Evaluation Criteria Should Highlight Vocabulary Diversity*
   Academic Writing evaluation should include a rubric that includes appropriate and rich academic vocabulary as a scoring criterion. Feedback on the evaluation should include not just grammar and structure, but also choice and the richness of vocabulary.

Recommendations for Teaching Practice

Consequently, based on the conclusions of this study, we recommend that university instructors adopt a more explicit-and-integrated approach to teaching academic vocabulary to achieve meaningful gains in **L2** students' writing. Our proposal is to create a structure for 'academic vocabulary instruction' where lexical learning is directed to systematic teaching of

The Academic Word List words *(Coxhead, 2000)* within a meaningful academic context. Doing this enables students to access texts and writing tasks that specific disciplines use and apply it to practical contexts.

We also encourage instructors to incorporate lexical/repetitive analysis tools such as AntWordProfiler *(paul.mathes.kent.edu)* into their teaching of academic vocabulary as ways of getting the students feedback on their own writing and for monitoring their vocabulary in their writing.

Encouraging students/learners to engage with extensive reading will also contribute to their academic writing development.

Supporting language development for autonomous learning with training in vocabulary learning strategies allows students or learners the responsibility of their own development and learning. Ongoing real-time feedback (effort and process) and feedback from peers will promote vocabulary processes that will allow them to improve their vocabulary range and improve the clarity and coherence of their academic writing. Teachers can expand their instructional repertoire and better prepare students to fulfill the expectations of academic writing at university.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested to enhance the instruction of vocabulary and pedagogy of writing:

1. *Execute tasks based on the Academic Word List in writing courses.*
   Coxhead's Academic Word List should serve as the foundation of vocabulary instruction. Design assignment like essays, summaries, reflections that address **AWL** to include relevant tasks.

2. *Foster vocabulary awareness through writing feedback.*
   Teachers need to draw attention to vocabulary shortcomings and provide suggested revisions as feedback. Vocabulary assessment should also be part of the peer evaluation rounds.

3. *Foster vocabulary awareness through corpus tools.*
   Encourage the use of learner-friendly corpora such as *COCA* and *BAWE* to explore academic vocabulary. Such tools help students observe the functioning of academic words in real texts.
   Introduce Vocabulary Journals and Portfolios.
   Encourage learners to monitor new academic vocabulary, draft sample sentences, and reflect on their prior vocabulary choices. Such reflection reinforces retention and motivates students to learn independently.

4. *Integrate Vocabulary Instruction with Process Writing*
   During drafting, revising, and editing, assist students with their vocabulary to foster better word choice. For example, in the editing phase, ask learners to substitute bland, vague terms with more precise, technical words.

Suggestions for Future Research

For all the useful information the researcher has provided on the impact of second language academic writing proficiency and the role of

vocabulary, there are so many more avenues that can be explored in subsequent research. Subsequent research might analyze the relationship on different fields of study to determine the level of academic vocabulary knowledge associated with various disciplines. Research which measures the ability to write and the knowledge of vocabulary over a span of time in writing proficiency would be helpful in understanding the role of incremental vocabulary acquisition in writing development. More useful is research that investigates specific instructional approaches like computer assisted vocabulary learning or distributed writing.

Future research could also involve larger samples across a larger range of **L1** and **L2** backgrounds, and take into account **L2** learners' own **L1** backgrounds and level of motivation in developing vocabulary knowledge and writing performance. These studies would offer a fuller picture of the role of academic vocabulary knowledge in success in **L2** writing.

This study improves understanding the impact of academic vocabulary on **L2** writing, however, the following areas still merit further investigation:

1. *Increased and More Varied Participants*
   Graduate students from diverse universities should be included in future studies to broaden the sample size and to enhance the study's scope.

2. *Chronological Research*
   Examine the relationship between the progression of academic vocabulary and the advancement of writing skills. Such a study would help establish causative relationships and determine vital stages for vocabulary development.

3. *Descriptive Methods*
   Through in-depth interviews and the think-aloud method, students can be actively engaged to articulate their understanding and application of academic vocabulary in writing tasks.

4. *Depth and Breadth of Vocabulary*
   Future writing studies should focus on the relationship between the breadth of vocabulary, defined as the number of words known, and the depth of terms, defined as how well those words are known.

5. *Intervention-based research*
   Experiment with different types of vocabulary instruction (e.g., direct, incidental, virtual gear) and assess their results on writing results.

6. *Disciplinary style analysis*
Analyze academic vocabulary use in specific genres (e.g., lab reviews, argumentative essays) to decide how vocabulary wishes range throughout writing contexts.

Conclusion

This observe has proven that academic vocabulary knowledge significantly influences **L2** writing proficiency among university students. Through empirical evaluation, it was shown that learners with better vocabulary knowledge are better able to explicit ideas with clarity, use academic tone, and meet the structural and lexical expectations of academic writing.

The results have strong implications for curriculum layout, language instruction, and assessment practices. By incorporating targeted academic vocabulary instruction into writing courses and aligning teaching practices with field-specific wishes, educators can better support **L2** learners in achieving writing proficiency.

The findings also underscore the interconnectedness of lexical knowledge and writing success, reinforcing that vocabulary isn't an remoted talent but a central issue of powerful academic communique. As global academic needs growth, helping learners build a strong academic vocabulary foundation is not simply beneficial it is crucial.

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Introduction

Background of the Study

The growing use of digital technology in the twenty-first century has changed how people interact. Social media is one of the most significant of these technologies, changing communication styles across generations, professions, and cultures. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X (previously Twitter), TikTok, and Snapchat, which were initially created to improve connection and engagement, have completely changed what it means to sustain connections in a society that is more reliant on technology.

Even though social media opens up new ways for people to connect through visual sharing, rapid messaging and connecting globally, it is also questioned because it affects how individuals interact with each other.

Social cohesiveness is greatly influenced by interpersonal communication which is the act of sharing ideas, feelings and impressions with body language and spoken words. Being emotionally intelligent, empathetic, a good listener and able to read social signs helps in having effective communication with others. At the same time, there is a concern that using technology too often can reduce our social skills, ability to use language well and our efforts to build real-life relationships. This study focuses on how much social media use affects interpersonal communication, especially among young adults today.

Statement of the Problem

Even though social media is everywhere and easy to use, its role in affecting relationships is still widely discussed. Some say that social media makes conversation easier because it allows people to talk at any time, from any place. On the other hand, detractors argue that continuous digital contact frequently results in shallow conversations, less emotional depth, and a deterioration in interpersonal skills. Concerns have been expressed specifically about young people's capacity for effective face-to-face communication, dispute resolution, and nonverbal cue interpretation in practical situations[2].

Given these worries, this study aims to investigate the following issue: How much has social media use impacted people's interpersonal communication abilities in modern society, especially among college students? The study looks at how digital engagement affects users' linguistic, nonverbal, and relational skills as well as if it replaces or enhances human communication.

Objectives of the Study

This study's primary goal is to investigate how social media use affects interpersonal communication abilities. The particular goals are:

To determine how frequently and in what ways college students use social media.

To evaluate how social media is thought to affect people's ability to communicate both verbally and nonverbally. To assess if social media improves or degrades interpersonal connections in real life.

To find out how students feel about interpersonal conversation versus online engagement. To investigate differences in how social media affects communication abilities by age and gender.

Significance of the Study

This study's conclusions are important for a number of reasons. First, they provide insightful information on how social behavior and interpersonal dynamics—particularly among young people—are impacted by digital communication. These findings may be used by educational institutions, communication specialists, and mental health practitioners to create plans for enhancing students' communication abilities. Additionally, the study adds to the expanding corpus of work in digital sociology, communication psychology, and media studies. This study promotes a more analytical and balanced approach to digital involvement in contemporary life by analyzing social media's advantages and disadvantages[4].

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

Because they are among the most active social media users and are at a critical juncture in the development of interpersonal skills, university students are the focus of this study. Only a few Pakistani governmental and private universities are included in the study. The study looks at how social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Snapchat are used and how they affect several aspects of interpersonal communication, such as listening, empathy, relationship-building, nonverbal expressiveness, and verbal fluency.

Theoretical Framework

Two important ideas of communication serve as the foundation for this study:

Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT)

According to this hypothesis, which was put out by Joseph Walther, people may build meaningful connections through computer-mediated Communication, even if these interactions could take longer than in-person meetings. SIPT provides an explanation of how people adjust to digital environments in order to make up for the absence of nonverbal clues.

Media Richness Theory (MRT)

This hypothesis, which was developed by Daft and Lengel, asserts that the ability of various mediums to convey information and resolve ambiguity varies. While thinner media, like text messaging, may hinder interpersonal subtlety, richer media, like in-person interactions, are better at complicated communication.

Both theories offer a framework for assessing the impact of social media, which is typically thought of as a lean medium, on the depth of interpersonal communication.

Literature Review

Human connection is based on interpersonal communication, which includes both vocal and nonverbal forms of expression. Because of social media, traditional ways of communicating are changing which sometimes makes it difficult to tell the difference between online and face-to-face contact. The study provides insights on how people communicate interpersonally using new digital tools, mainly focusing on the effects of social media on communication skills, verbal and nonverbal. In this chapter, authors look at the role that using digital technologies has on communication, the use of language, emotions and how relationships work. It also points out important ideas, conflicting material and gaps still present in the studies examined which could guide future research.

The Concept of Interpersonal Communication: A Dual Modality

A fundamental component of human connection, interpersonal communication includes both verbal and nonverbal components. While nonverbal communication encompasses body posture, tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and even silence, verbal communication uses spoken or written words to communicate information, convey messages, and express thoughts. Each of these two aspects reinforces or modifies the meaning of the other, forming a holistic communication process. DeVito (2016) asserts that the synchronization of verbal and nonverbal cues is what makes interpersonal communication effective. This enables communicators to express not only the message's literal content but also interpersonal dynamics, social meaning, and emotional overtones.

A crucial background for comprehending spoken comments is frequently provided by nonverbal indicators. For example, depending on the speaker's tone, body language, and facial expression, a simple remark like "I'm fine" might signify quite different things. In the absence of these indicators, the message might be misinterpreted or its emotional impact miscalculated. Just 7% of a message's significance is conveyed by words, 38% by voice cues like tone, and 55% by body language and facial emotions, according to Mehrabian's Communication Model (1971). This approach emphasizes how crucial nonverbal communication is for interpreting social and emotional cues. A large portion of this nonverbal complexity is either missing or insufficiently replaced by digital symbols

like emojis, stickers, or response buttons in digital places, especially on social media platforms.

The balance between verbal and nonverbal modes is put to the test when conventional, face-to-face conversation gives way to online communication. Users of messaging apps like Instagram Direct Messages, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp mainly rely on spoken or written discourse with little visual signals. Emojis and GIFs provide some emotional context, but they are unable to fully capture the variety of human expression that occurs during in-person interactions. This means digital natives and others, could struggle to properly use gestures, emotions from facial expressions and body language in social situations. Maintaining relationships, settling conflicts and showing emotional intelligence will be affected.

Also, communication with others involves social elements and an exchange of information. Being influenced by psychological factors, a person's social life and culture. A lot of times in collectivist cultures like Pakistan, nonverbal clues matter a lot for showing authority, respect and different feelings. Some simple signs of respect in a speech are sitting still, not meeting the speaker's eyes and gently bowing. When people interact virtually, the signals that express the culture are usually lost or misinterpreted which might result in problems between cultures or the loss of established practices.

Being in a digital environment makes it harder to communicate with others since distractions and multitasking happen more frequently. People often multitask during online chats by doing other things which blocks their ability to engage properly. Due to split attention, our ability to communicate by speaking is affected, as is our ability to understand people's feelings. Moreover, because replies on social media may not come right away, the flow of communication can be interrupted which may lower empathy, emotion and understanding for some meanings.

Feedback has important value in interpersonal communication but it is not mentioned often. Traditional types of feedback are live, quick and spontaneous. The speaker discovers if their words are having the right impact when they notice gestures like a frown, a smile or a nod from the audience. But, giving feedback in digital spaces is more restricted and it takes more time. Although an emoji, "liking" something or a "seen" tag indicates that the message was delivered, they cannot match the real-world quickness or feeling of a live response. As a result, presenters can't easily vary their tempo, tone and what they talk about according to audience reactions.

Finally, people need to practice interpersonal communication skills often in actual social settings. Although social media gives more ways to

express ourselves, it can also prevent people from building important social skills like listening, helping with disputes and reading others' nonverbal signs in real life. More efforts are needed to improve how young people, professionals and students use social skills, as they use technology for almost everything.

To sum up, people use both language and gestures in order to communicate well with others. All activities like forming relationships, talking with people and using social skills happen through the combination of these two skills. As a result of growing social media use, how well people relate, interact emotionally and communicate is being threatened in modern culture. In the future, future insights and educational efforts ought to focus on restoring balance so digital knowledge does not come at the cost of human interaction.

Social Media's Evolution and Its Communication Influence

Over the last two decades, social media has changed a lot, moving from simple networking sites to complete platforms that affect the way people communicate, connect and look at one another. The main objectives at the beginning were to help people network with each other and have fun. After Facebook was founded in 2004, more social media sites like Twitter (now X), Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok and others appeared. These platforms included live video streaming, multimedia messaging, short-form content, and even customization powered by artificial intelligence.

Interpersonal communication has been greatly impacted by this technological advancement. Geographical location, time zones, or even bodily presence are no longer barriers to engagement. Users may join in international discussions, start real-time chats, and express their feelings through visual media with only a tap. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), this digital revolution changed the definition of "social presence," allowing individuals to engage in social activities without physically being together. As a result, social media has evolved into a key setting for establishing, sustaining, and occasionally ending relationships in addition to being a communication tool.

But social media's development also brings with it communication difficulties. Online platforms' format and structure sometimes put speed, visual attractiveness, and brevity ahead of emotional depth, clarity, and richness. Twitter/X, for instance, encourages users to communicate in 280 characters or fewer, which forces them to distill complicated ideas into brief statements. Much like Vines, TikTok and Stories on Instagram focus on short and eye-catching clips that rely more on music, bright filters or popular memes than on clear or distinct conversation. Because of this,

people now tend to engage in conversations that are focused on material and planned rather than being based on old relationships or off-the-cuff banter.

How instant and asynchronous messaging is affects how some people communicate. Users can answer when they are free using apps such as WhatsApp or Messenger and they don't experience real-time feedback like in face-to-face conversations. Even if being flexible helps smoothen things in intense discussions, it also lessens how quickly we react emotionally, cuts down on being responsible and can lead to misunderstandings since body language is often lacking in such situations.

Also, it is much harder to tell private and public communication apart because of social media. Private ideas may be talked about publicly and even private messages can wind up on the internet. As a result, people tend to get caught up in designing the way they talk or to hold back from discussing things that involve their identity. So, people start talking in a reserved manner which reduces honesty and openness, both vital for a true friendship.

Because of social media, using visual and symbolic languages is now more common. Many times, emojis, GIFs, stickers and filters are now considered essential parts of digital communication, replacing speaking. Though using these symbols helps express emotions in a unique way, they tend to be culturally vague and do not always have a lot of subtlety. A gesture that communicates agreement in a certain culture might upset people or seem misleading in another culture.

Social networking sites change our perspective on how successful communication and relationships look. Quantifying approval on social media by likes, shares, views and followers might cause users to worry more about their online image than connecting personally with others. Instead of trying to make people feel deeply connected, communication is created to draw attention and encourage taking part. Because of this, a rise in social media networks may lead to weaker human communication.

It is especially clear that social media sites' attractive, tempting designs lead to attention being divided. The constant updates, notifications and stimulus showed by algorithms make it hard to keep our attention during both online and offline communication. Because it is called "continuous partial attention," this habit can decrease memory, emotional understanding and listening skills which play a key role in good communication with others.

At the same time, it must be noted that social media allows ordinary people more opportunities for participation. It enables those who feel underrated to be heard, helps people from different backgrounds communicate and forms groups based on their interests instead of their

location. In digital formats, many shy or socially nervous people can express their emotions and thoughts that they can't in regular settings. In such cases, social media acts more as a way to further offline conversations than to take their place.

All in all, social media has changed completely the way people start, conduct and understand communication. Though technology allows people to connect, share thoughts and be creative, it can also place certain limits that might affect the realness and depth of relationships. How digital platforms design communication is now more significant as they develop and shape how people talk, listen and understand one another, both on the internet and in person.

Theoretical Frameworks: Explaining the Shift

Both Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) offer understanding of how individuals update their communication skills in digital spaces. Joseph Walther maintains that people still build closeness with each other while texting, even in the absence of gestures or facial expressions. Unfortunately, it often happens that the number and velocity of messages on social media add difficulty to this process. MRT sorts communication medium according to their information communication effectiveness. C. Daft and K. Lengel developed it. Experts categorize face-to-face interaction as the most valuable form, because it lets us pick up all kinds of cues immediately. Meanwhile, since it is lean, social media usually has difficulty delivering personal or in-depth relationship messages. Attempting to connect like in person, voice notes and video chats often lack the full emotion of talking with someone face-to-face.

Verbal Communication in the Social Media Era

In today's digital world, talking on the phone now looks very different due to changes in tone, speech clearness and the way we structure our language. There are changes in language use thanks to the influence of social media platforms on people's interactions. The limited space on modern phones, instant messages and the desire for fast communication have caused a casual and brief style of communication. Recently, instead of traditional emotions or information, we use "LOL," "OMG," and "BRB" a lot in online conversations. According to David Crystal (2008), this type of writing, often called "Netspeak," brings together elements from both written and spoken language so people can talk more freely and make exchanges faster.

Even so, this example points out issues with how people use language in speaking and its exact use. Meaning in face-to-face verbal communication

includes how the conversation is said, the speed it is said and the language used. A lot of the fine details are skipped or misunderstood when seen on social media. Examples show that, minus voice signals and facial expressions, it's easy to mistake comedy or sarcasm for another meaning. Because of this uncertainty, miscommunications or conflict often appear during intense emotions in a conversation.

Also, using GIFs and emojis to stand in for certain spoken words adds a layer of symbols to messaging. This method can make it easier to understand certain messages while also creating extra challenges to communicate. Emojis usually show emotion or mood, but sometimes they are not clear and may mean something different to various cultures. Someone may understand an emoji differently which may make the spoken intent unclear.

Verbal language used to be mainly about having a dialogue, but now, due to social media, it is more about showmanship. A lot of people post messages on sites like X (earlier known as Twitter) or TikTok aimed at gaining likes, shares or followers, instead of talking with people they know. It means that storytelling now uses showy, alluring phrases instead of the slow, thoughtful words used before. This kind of acting-out can eventually shift how people interact with each other, making it focus more on looking good than connecting.

Too much use of digital communication for casual purposes can cause them to be less ready for education and work. The same researchers (Rosen et al.) concluded that spending much time texting and chatting online made students prone to making more spelling and grammar mistakes in writing tasks. People may also find it hard to communicate clearly in important situations, because they often use slang, filler words and unfinished grammar when they speak.

Social media communication's lack of immediate engagement disrupts the usual way people talk. Real life chats occur on the spot, so you must react and display emotions instantly. Social media allows users to take a little time to respond, making things simpler but making the talk less spontaneous and expressive. Skills related to active listening, quick thinking and how people talk and follow a conversation may be influenced.

A reduced variety of words used in everyday conversations is also an important effect. With the rise of short forms, memes and templates, people might shy away from using fewer complicated styles of speech. Because of this way of speaking, someone might find it hard to express complicated ideas, convince others with arguments and use language appropriately in different environments.

All in all, social media has caused spoken communication to change drastically. While innovation and easy operation are included, creativity, insight and rapid thinking reduce. Users may lose the richness in how they express themselves through words as they become better at using digital language. Reaching good levels of communication offline and online requires being able to speak and write well, plus having digital know-how.

Nonverbal Communication in a Digitally Mediated World

Interpersonal comprehension is greatly influenced by nonverbal communication. It includes tone of voice, body posture, eye contact, physical closeness, facial expressions, and gestures—all of which are essential for controlling relationships, conveying emotions, and reiterating spoken words. A well cited research by Albert Mehrabian (1971) suggests that nonverbal clues may account for up to 93% of the emotional content conveyed in conversation. These cues offer extensive background that facilitates the interpretation of sincerity, emotional tone, and interpersonal goals in face-to-face situations.

However, the majority of these nonverbal cues are missing from digital environments, especially on text-based social media sites. Because communication using applications like Facebook Messenger, Instagram direct messages, and WhatsApp is disembodied, users must infer meaning using written words and a small number of visual symbols. Although stickers, GIFs, response symbols, and emojis have become popular digital alternatives to tone or facial emotions, people's interpretations of them differ greatly throughout countries. One person's intended playfulness might be interpreted as caustic or dismissive by another. This fluctuation frequently results in misunderstandings and emotional disconnection. Even the speech and video functions on apps like WhatsApp video calls, Zoom, and Snapchat try to replicate some aspects of nonverbal communication, but they are limited. These instruments' efficacy is diminished by digital delays, low resolution, screen fatigue, and a narrow range of vision. Users frequently unintentionally restrict their expressiveness, avoid eye contact (because they are staring at the computer rather than the camera), or minimize gestures in these mediated contexts. The authenticity and emotional depth that are normally expressed through body language are diminished by these minor yet important adjustments. Furthermore, extended use of digital communication might impair a person's capacity to interpret nonverbal clues in face-to-face conversations. According to studies like Uhls et al. (2014), kids and teenagers who use screens a lot do worse on assessments that gauge their capacity to identify emotions from facial expressions. Because young people depend a lot on digital communication for their social lives, this

decline in understanding emotions can affect them as well. Such persons may find it hard to manage awkward or uneasy conversations because of their disorders in areas like eye contact, interpreting social gestures and responding to body language when conversations happen face-to-face.

Because of the absence of nonverbal hints, the way someone controls a conversation is altered. When having conversations, gestures, nods and expressions from one person help speakers control the talk and pass the word back and forth. The real difference between real life and digital interactions is that live feedback vanishes and it is replaced by hints like the read message sign and typing notifications. an abrupt slowing of activity or frozen state can stand in for these signs. It makes it harder for the conversation to stay on track and people could become confused about involvement or enthusiasm. Not getting any nonverbal response such as a text message left "on read," can give the impression of something wrong—this can cause someone to feel uneasy, not about what was said, but about not knowing how the other is receiving the message.

Very often, nonverbal signs are used in Pakistan to represent respect, kindness or the job someone needs to do as part of their family. Respect shown verbally can also be shown with things like physical gestures, inclining the head or limited eye contact. Since these gestures only happen in person, it becomes much harder to make sure people are practicing cultural etiquette, particularly among youth who are constantly using their phones.

"Nonverbal detachment" is becoming another cause for alarm because it makes people less responsive to emotions. People tend to express strong emotions using just an image or emoji when they use these more frequently. Persons may not fully express happy emotions if they often choose the crying-laughing emoji rather than laugh or smile themselves.
In essence, digital sites have their limits when it comes to expressing such things as deepness, quickness and cultural differences, though they can offer tools that help users mimic the way they communicate in real life. Using these strategies often may disturb a person's feelings and weaken social skills due to a poor ability to pick up or use nonverbal signals. Since emotions and truth in conversations are important, we need to consciously preserve and grow our nonverbal skills in physical situations as more communication happens online.

How Social Media Affects Empathy and Listening

One key skill in person that is hard to replace online is listening. People often have to think about many things at once when they use the internet. According to Koole and Veenstra (2017), students who regularly use social media find it difficult to stay focused during talks, particularly

when multitasking and alerts are present. Furthermore, empathy—a vital element of successful interpersonal relationships—is also at jeopardy. According to Konrath et al. (2011), digital culture has contributed to a 40% decrease in empathy among American college students over the past three decades. Deep emotional comprehension is limited by the emotional "flattening" that takes place in online encounters, when expressions are condensed or substituted with symbols. The emotional resonance of conversation is diminished in the absence of eye contact, tone fluctuation, and bodily presence, which may limit users' ability to engage in compassionate virtual and real-world interactions.

Gaps in the Literature and Future Directions

Even with the expanding research, there are still a lot of unanswered questions about how social media impacts communication abilities in collectivist, non-Western societies like Pakistan. Since a large portion of the present study is predicated on Western individualistic theories, it could not adequately account for cultural quirks like the importance of social hierarchy, respect, and group belonging in communication. Additionally, there is a dearth of longitudinal studies demonstrating how sustained digital participation influences the evolution of interpersonal skills over time. Furthermore, few research examine how users perceive changes in their communication behavior, even though quantitative studies frequently assess screen time or frequency of usage. Future studies must also differentiate between various platforms and their distinct effects on verbal and nonverbal abilities, since Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok all promote various types of contact. Qualitative techniques should be used in these investigations in order to record personal narratives, emotional depth, and lived experiences.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Both types of data were gathered by applying a mixed-methods study design. Thanks to this approach, the study can study trends and receive firsthand experiences from the participants, because the issue of interpersonal communication includes both statistical patterns and personal experiences. Numbers and statistics show broad patterns and how things are related, while single cases and observations give more detail about the whole phenomenon.

One goal of the study is to explore and another is to explain the phenomenon under study. It examines the way social media impacts our ability to talk and write to others and it defines what supports this effect.

Gathering information with a cross-sectional approach made it possible to observe what university students were using for communication and social media at a set moment in time [6].

Research Approach

Consistent with positivist and interpretivist philosophies, the study makes use of a deductive method. The rational method starts by looking at general theories of media and communication and considers how they relate to Pakistani university students. Interpretivist elements came into play with the interviews to learn about their actual experiences.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches makes it possible to study and describe how social media changes our feelings, empathy and connections with each other.[7].

Population and Sample

Undergraduate students from Southern Punjab, Pakistan's English and International Relations departments made up the target group. The great importance of communication skills in their academic and professional training led to the selection of these departments.

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to generate a sample size of 120 students in order to make sure that participants fulfilled the study's requirements, which included active participation in peer or academic communication and regular social media use (at least two hours per day).

For the quantitative phase, 100 of these individuals answered a standardized questionnaire. Ten participants were also chosen for semi-structured interviews, which offered more in-depth qualitative information. The validity of both numerical results and narrative interpretations is supported by this hybrid sample[8].

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaire

Both closed-ended and Likert-scale items were included in the structured, self-administered questionnaire. Three components comprised the questionnaire:

Section A: Demographic data (gender, age, department, and social media usage frequency).

Section B: Platform types and their intended uses.

Section C: Individual perceptions of how social media affects verbal, nonverbal, and emotional communication.

Ten students pre-tested the tool to make sure it was clear and consistent throughout. High internal reliability was confirmed by the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, which was computed at 0.82.

Interviews

To extract in-depth personal experiences, a group of subjects participated in semi-structured interviews. Examples of social media influence, perceptions of changes in their communication abilities, and thoughts on digital vs in-person contacts were the main topics of the interview questions.

The interviews were verbatim transcribed, thematically analyzed, and recorded (with consent). The comprehension of the patterns in the survey replies was enhanced by this qualitative data.

Research Instruments

Among the tools utilized are:

- A well-organized survey comprising both scale-based and multiple-choice questions.
- An interview guide that includes open-ended questions specific to aspects of interpersonal communication.
- Audio recordings and field notes for believability and triangulation.
- The tools were updated after being verified by specialists in communication and education research[9].

Data Analysis Techniques

SPSS (Version 26) was used to examine the quantitative data from the questionnaires. To compile demographic and usage patterns, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were calculated. Relationships between social media use and perceived communication abilities were investigated using inferential statistics, such as regression analysis and Pearson correlation

Thematic analysis was used to examine qualitative data from interviews using the six-phase model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). We found and classified recurring themes and patterns in listening, empathy, verbal fluency, and nonverbal conduct. Deeper understanding and greater research credibility were guaranteed by the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data.

Ethical Considerations

The institutional research committee granted ethical approval. Every participant was made aware of the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously upheld.Before any data was collected, each participant completed an

informed consent form. The information was safely kept and utilized only for scholarly research. Participants were free to leave at any time without facing any repercussions.

Limitations of the Methodology

Although the mixed-methods architecture provides breadth and depth, certain drawbacks are noted:

The longitudinal tracking of communication behavior was limited by time restrictions.

Biases like social desirability or erroneous recollection might affect self-reported results.

The sample may not be representative of other demographics because it is restricted to Southern Punjabi university students.

In spite of these drawbacks, the approach used yields accurate, trust worthy, and perceptive results that are consistent with the goals of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

This chapter discusses the methods that are used for studying how social media changes college students' social communication. The primary goal was to see how abilities like empathy, how we express feelings and how we speak get impacted by using technology for communication. Credibility, dependability and depth were raised by applying a mixed-methods research design that combined both numbers and in-depth discussions to examine findings.

Part of the study required one hundred students from English and International Relations to complete a set questionnaire. Looking for patterns and relationships between social media activity and people's views on their communication skills was the core goal. Semih structured interviews were conducted with ten participants to get a detailed look into their life stories.

The main parts of this chapter are research design, the type of sampling used, the instruments for gathering data, ethical issues, handling and saving information, methods for analysis and the final conclusions. Every section discusses why, how and what happens as a result of every procedure. Because of the different methods used, the results are proven accurate, relate to the context and reflect the actual words and actions of the participants. By mixing these approaches, we can better understand the changes digital platforms make to the way we interact one-on-one in modern society.

Research Design and Rationale

This study conducted surveys and interviews, since using several

approaches lets us study data in depth and across many areas. Social media research chose this approach to look into issues people face and the emotions they experience that cannot be measured, while also examining data about social media trends.

Using social media often, changes in communication skills and how old or young someone is were all set to be measured by the quantitative method. For ease of processing the data statistically, most of the replies were on a Likert scale which are closed-ended questions.

Because of the qualitative phase, participants were able to give more information about their digital habits, favorites and how social media influences their in-person attention. To capture issues that were planned and additional topics provided by the interviewees, semi-structured interviews provided a more flexible way of interviewing.

The researcher checked for any patterns numerically and studied them more already using qualitative information. For example, some people taking part in interviews revealed that having social anxiety or worrying about others judging them in person was the reason for their decreased self-confidence in person.

To make sure all aspects were understood, researchers used a mixed-methods design, since working with just one strategy could have been very limited. In the digital era, where emotions and behaviors are so closely linked in interpersonal communication, having this dual view matters a lot.

Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection

The reason for using non-probability purposive sampling in this study was to ensure that the people participating met certain criteria linked to the research goals. Students currently enrolled in English and International Relations programs at public and private colleges from Southern Punjab in Pakistan made up the pool of subjects.

Communication skills are very important for their academic and professional lives which is why we chose students from these fields. They reflected more on how they communicate in real life and how they engage online. Participants were required to communicate with others socially or for school at least twice daily using social media and that was a requirement for joining the study.

One hundred and twenty people were enlisted. Ten of these students were chosen for in-depth interviews after 100 of them finished the quantitative survey. To guarantee a range of viewpoints, the interviewees were selected based on their stated social media usage tendencies, department, and gender. To evaluate the survey's timeliness, clarity, and dependability, ten more students took part in a pilot test.

The sample provides a targeted, pertinent group that is actively involved in interpersonal communication and social media, even if it might not be representative of all Pakistani university students. The selected sample size strikes a compromise between the practical limitations of time, access, and ethical clearance and the requirement for generalizability.

Data Collection Instruments

A semi-structured interview guide and a structured questionnaire were created as the two main tools for gathering data. These instruments were created to assess a variety of interpersonal communication abilities, such as listening comprehension, empathy, verbal fluency, self-assurance in face-to-face conversations, and reliance on nonverbal clues.

Survey

Three primary components comprised the questionnaire:

- Section A: Demographic data (average daily usage of social media, academic department, gender, and age).
- Section B: Usage patterns: the kinds of platforms, how often they are utilized, and the context (entertainment, personal, or academic).
- Using a 5-point Likert scale, Section C: Self-perception of Communication changes.

With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, the survey demonstrated strong internal consistency and dependability. It took around ten minutes to complete and was given in English.

Interview Guide

Open-ended questions centered on participants' experiences with digital vs in-person contact were included of the semi-structured interview guide. Among the main topics covered were:

- Confidence levels during face-to-face vs virtual interactions
- Observed changes in how emotions are expressed
- Understanding the intent and tone of text messages
- The application and effects of stickers, GIFs, and emojis
- Cultural norms about communication

The interviews lasted between 20 to 30 minutes, took place in a confidential environment, and were audio recorded (with permission) for transcription and analysis.

Data Management and Organization

To preserve accuracy and the ease of understanding the analysis, all collected data was thoroughly and carefully handled and analyzed.

Quantitative Data

SPSS (Version 26) was employed to record and enter information from the surveys. Before further analysis, any outliers, discrepant cases or absent data were spotted through preliminary screening. Because we wanted the data to remain useful, we replaced the values where the data was missing. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means and standard deviations) were used for demographic and Likert-scale items.

Qualitative Data

All the interviews were recorded and then accurately transcribed. To find thematic trends, transcripts were manually categorized and arranged using NVivo. To guarantee transcribing accuracy and minimize prejudice, each transcript was anonymized and subjected to an independent review process.

An external hard drive and secure cloud storage were used to backup both datasets. Standardized labeling techniques (such as P1_Interview and P1_Survey) were created to make cross-referencing across approaches easier. In compliance with university data protection standards, data was stored in encrypted form for any future releases.

Analytical Framework

The two parallel tracks of the analytical approach—qualitative theme analysis and quantitative statistical analysis—were eventually combined in interpretation.

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to evaluate the questionnaire data. Among the important metrics were:

- How often people utilize social media
- The relationship between linguistic and nonverbal abilities and social media use
- Disparities depending on gender
- Using regression analysis to forecast in-person faith in communication based on screen time

Notably, social media usage and empathy were shown to be negatively correlated by Pearson's correlation, but digital verbal fluency was positively correlated.

Qualitative Analysis

The six-step paradigm developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used for thematic analysis:

1. Getting acquainted with the data
2. Producing preliminary codes

3. Looking for recurring themes
4. Examining the topics
5. Identifying and characterizing themes
6. Putting together the report
7. "Online Confidence vs. Offline Anxiety," "Loss of Eye Contact and Emotional Resonance," and "Emoji Misinterpretation" were among the main issues. These qualitative results highlighted the emotional repercussions of digital communication patterns in the actual world, giving the statistical trends more depth.

Integration

During the interpretation stage, the results from both approaches were combined to create a comprehensive story. The reasons underlying the changes were revealed by interview data, which connected digital habits to interpersonal discomfort, communication breakdowns, and emotional detachment in in-person relationships.

Results and Analysis

The results of both quantitative and qualitative data acquired from college students are presented in this chapter. The goal is to examine the ways in which social media use impacts many aspects of interpersonal communication abilities, including listening comprehension, emotional intelligence, nonverbal conduct, and verbal fluency. Semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires were used to collect the data. Following an analytical discussion of the findings in light of the study's goals, the results are displayed using tables, charts, and thematic summaries[10].

Quantitative Data Results

Frequency and Type of Social Media Use

Questions concerning the respondents' preferred and frequency of use of social media platforms were posed.

Table 0-1 Daily Social Media Usage (N=100)

Duration	**Percentage**
Less than 1 hour	8%
1-3 hours	25%
3-5 hours	42%
More than 5 hours	25%

Most Frequently Used Platforms
WhatsApp (92%)
Instagram (78%)
Facebook (69%)
TikTok (47%)
Snapchat (38%)
Twitter (22%)
This indicates a tendency for rapid, casual communication and shows a heavy dependence on visual platforms and instant messaging.

Self-Perception of Communication Changes
Social media use caused respondents to rate changes in their interpersonal interactions[11].

Table 2 Perceived Impact on Communication Skills (Mean Scores on 5-Point Likert Scale)

Communication Skill	Mean Score	Interpretation
Verbal fluency (online)	3.8	Moderately positive
Face to face conversation ease	2.2	Negative
Listening and attentiveness	2.5	Mild negative
Empathy and emotional expression	2.7	Mixed
Use of non-verbal caues	2.1	Negative

These results imply that although students feel verbally competent when communicating online, they struggle in real life, particularly when it comes to emotional and physical gestures.

Correlation Analysis
The association between social media usage hours and interpersonal skills was investigated using Pearson's correlation coefficient.
Online Verbal Fluency versus. Social Media Usage: r = +0.42 (moderately favorable)

Comparing Face-to-Face Confidence with Social Media Usage: r = -0.46 (moderately unfavorable)
Empathy vs. Social Media Use: r = -0.39 (moderately unfavorable)
The findings show that spending more time on social media is associated with improved digital fluency but worse interpersonal relationships in the real world[12].

Qualitative Data Results

Ten participants in semi-structured interviews provided further in-depth information. Thematic analysis was used to examine the data.

Theme 1: Confidence Online vs. Shyness Offline

Participants said they felt more comfortable sending voice messages or texts but were hesitant to share their thoughts in person. An English student remarked, "I feel anxious in class, but I can talk confidently on voice chat."

Theme 2: Shorter Attention Duration

Many students acknowledged that they had trouble listening for long stretches of time and frequently checked their phones throughout class. "When people talk for too long, I lose my train of thought; I'm used to scrolling and giving brief responses."

Theme 3: Disengagement from Emotions

Students believed that emojis were taking the place of real expressions in online interactions, which lacked depth.

One person thought, "We send a heart emoji, but it doesn't mean we really feel it."

Theme 4: Preferring Digital Connections Over Live Ones

Even in situations where individuals were physically close, participants frequently preferred texting over chatting.
"Instead of knocking on my roommate's door, I'll text her."

Integrated Analysis and Interpretation

When the quantitative and qualitative data are combined, a recurring pattern emerges:

Social media improves writing articulation, linguistic fluency, and digital expressiveness.

However, it also impairs important interpersonal skills including body language, empathy, listening, and confidence in person[13].

These results are consistent with other research (Turkle, 2015; Baym, 2010), which cautioned about the potential for emotional shallowness and diminished social cohesiveness as a result of extended digital engagement. Pupils often develop asynchronous communication styles in which they respond slowly and selectively. This has an impact on their capacity to have impromptu, emotionally charged conversations in real-time situations.

Furthermore, the false sensation of connection that social media creates can lead to a false impression of mastery of social skills, concealing

the loss of subtle interpersonal indicators that are crucial in academic, professional, and emotional situations.

Results

Most kids spend more than three hours a day on social media. While listening, empathy, and nonverbal communication abilities deteriorate, verbal fluency increases in online conversation.

As digital engagement increases, face-to-face confidence declines. Although they are conscious of these consequences, students feel "trapped" by digital culture. In the digital era, there is an urgent need for awareness and training in the development of interpersonal skills[13].

Conclusion

Using both statistical and thematic approaches, this chapter offered a thorough examination of the research findings. It turns out that social media affects social interaction in two main ways. For one, students get experienced with digital channels, text messaging and showing emotions online. At the same time, people are becoming much less skilled in emotional understanding, listening closely to others, feeling comfortable in direct conversations and noticing expressed body language. The reality is shown in students' worries, hesitations and confusion in situations where computers are not needed. Many studies demonstrate that using social media a lot often makes students less comfortable in real-world discussions where they need to act impulsively and emotionally. Thanks to more digital advancements, people's direct social skills may be decreasing. They make it clear that striking a balance between online learning and practical communication is very important in schools. Excessive use of social media can keep us from developing important people skills needed in school, at work and in our personal lives, but still brings benefits like making it easier to speak to people quickly. As a result, the findings point to a new way of communicating amongst people in present-day society, along with new technological progress.

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