

# Does Social Media Impact the Development of General English Vocabulary? Perceptions of Egyptian University Students

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## ABSTRACT

*The importance of vocabulary in language learning cannot be overstated because meaningful communication requires a vast repertoire of words to convey ideas. Yet, social media places English language learners in multicultural communities where they can acquire new vocabulary knowledge and use it communicatively. The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of social media on learning English vocabulary at university level. A case study approach was adopted. To this end, a hypothesized model on aspects of learning English from social media was constructed. That was supported by participant observation and a thorough review of the literature. Based on the model, a questionnaire was constructed and disseminated to a total number of 135 Egyptian undergraduate university students. Findings of the study are: 1) learning vocabulary occurs through receiving, producing and constructing vocabulary knowledge, 2) the indirect impact of social media enhances self-confidence, self-esteem, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration among Egyptian university students, 3) social media is characterized by factors that enhance vocabulary learning, and 4) social media has a few limitations that, to some extent, hinder vocabulary learning. It is recommended that further research is conducted on the effect of different social media applications on learning English language vocabulary, grammar and other aspects.*

**Keywords:** English and social media, English language vocabulary, Egyptian university students, learning from social media.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the most significant component in language learning for the reason that meaningful communication cannot happen without a wide range of words to express thoughts (McCarthy 1990; Schmitt 2010; Laufer and Nation 2013). Fortunately, non-native speakers are not required to achieve the same level of performance in terms of word usage as native speakers. They only need the amount of vocabulary that permits appropriate commencement of communication (Schmitt 2010). A smaller number of words, perhaps between 3,000- and 5,000-word families, are required to give a base for comprehension, even though educated adult native speakers are familiar with about 20,000 of these word families. For effective use in speech and writing, a fewer number - approximately 2,000 to 3,000 - could be used (Nation and Waring 1997). Learners can even get exposed to a wider range of word families

in authentic reading and listening texts that may range from 6000 to 9000 (Nation and Waring 1997; Schmitt and Schmitt 2020). In this sense, social networks position English language learners in communities with culturally diverse participants where they can gain vocabulary knowledge and be able to use it communicatively (Ko 2019).

Nation and Chung (2009) classified vocabulary into four types in a way to distinguish between necessary vocabulary for learning and to increase the efficiency of vocabulary focus for teaching and testing purposes: high-frequency words used in everyday communicative activities, academic words used for academia in high schools and university writing and verbal communication, technical words used in specialist areas and, finally, the remaining low-frequency words. Similarly, Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) categorized vocabulary into General vocabulary and Academic vocabulary. Yet, they

described General vocabulary as useful when used in various contexts and with different topics and is high-frequent when used in spoken and written English whereas Academic vocabulary is used in academic contexts, not field-specific but rather provides a level of accuracy for academic texts and speech.

Vocabulary learning is a process that occurs because of the interaction between learners (Morgan and Rinvoluceri 2004). Nation and Chung (2009) identified two methods through which vocabulary learning could occur: meaning-focused input (implicitly) and language-focused learning (explicitly). Learning through comprehensible input gained through listening and reading is what is meant by meaning-focused input. An extensive reading program where students read a lot of engaging materials is a crucial component in this type of learning. Language-focused vocabulary learning, on the other hand, happens deliberately through language learning strategies, and it can also be through computers (computer-assisted learning).

Additionally, Schmitt (2007) argued that learning vocabulary is an incremental process. Hence, learners may not learn all aspects about a word, but some aspects can sometimes be enough for the correct usage of a word. To illustrate, the breadth and the depth of vocabulary knowledge is enhanced by exposure to language and time. Researchers claim that exposure to the most widely used social networking sites is both enhancing and harming learners' writing skills (Tomas and Dulin 2021). Zainal and Rahmat (2020) maintained that social media exposes learners to the most recent uses of words in very authentic real-life situations. Moreover, news, arguments, rumors feelings or expression of opinion, research, and other materials are shared, which is undoubtedly advantageous as a teaching tool since it offers the chance to foster creative and practical thinking as well as transfer of knowledge and skills (Tomas and Dulin 2021). Zainal and Rahmat (2020), in addition, maintained that social media has recently witnessed the emergence of some slang jargons such as ROFL, BTW, TYL and others that have been used by users prolifically.

Social media, in today's world, is considered an inseparable part of human activity as the primary role of its various platforms is to satisfy two basic human needs: getting to know new people and strengthening the existing relationships (Monica-Ariana and Anamaria-Mirabela 2014). From a language perspective, Monica-Ariana and Anamaria-Mirabela (2014) continued, the influence of social media is reflected in some new terms like newsfeed, viral, hashtag, and wiki. Even reputable dictionaries, like the Oxford dictionary, now include trendy words like derp, selfie, phablet, emoji, unlike, and others that have recently entered common usage, many of which

were influenced by these swiftly changing cultural and technological trends.

With reference to social media pedagogical implications, Khan, Ayaz and Faheem (2016) defined social media as "a media which is used through various electronic devices and rechargeable devices like mobile phone, computer, tablets, and so many other ways to facilitate people while sharing their ideas with others in an easy and systematic way" (591). Zheng, Yim and Warschauer (2018) claimed that social media platforms can enhance collaborative knowledge and writing through conducting group research projects. In addition, these platforms promote intercultural communication that raises the awareness of learners concerning the differences in values, discourses and practices. For these purposes, Zheng, Yim and Warschauer (2018) argued that teachers should embrace their roles that often fluctuate between facilitation and direct instruction depending on learners' autonomy level.

A thorough review of the literature has revealed that some recent studies on the impact of social media on learning English language vocabulary were conducted. Khan, Ayaz and Faheem (2016), for instance, explored the role of social media in developing English language vocabulary for university students. Sivagnanam and Yunus (2020) investigated the role of social media in enhancing and motivating vocabulary learning for primary ESL learners. Nguyen (2021) is a review article that explored how social media impact English language vocabulary acquisition. Ichara Sinta (2022) explored how TikTok improves learners' memorization and vocabulary learning. Mamudi and Alamry (2022) investigated learners' perception with regard to using Instagram in learning English vocabulary. Hanan (2023) investigated the role of social media in improving students' vocabulary achievement. Pham, Van Nguyen and Cao (2023) investigated the use of social media in learning English language vocabulary for Vietnamese university students. These studies have revealed that utilizing social media tools and applications are of great benefit for language learning.

However, the contribution of this study to the existent literature is the construction of a model that includes key aspects related to learning General English from social media. In addition, according to the authors' knowledge, no previous study has investigated the impact of social media on learning English vocabulary for Egyptian university students. The study proposes a model of analysis, which is extracted from the data collected, in an attempt to illustrate the benefits of learning and acquiring General English language vocabulary from social media and its limitations in order to recommend various activities for language teachers to be utilized in language classrooms and in

after-class activities as well. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

**Research Question 1:** How do Egyptian university students learn English language vocabulary from social media?

**Research Question 2:** What indirect impact does social media have on Egyptian university students while learning English vocabulary?

**Research Question 3:** What are the aspects of social media platforms that assist Egyptian university students in the process of English vocabulary learning?

**Research Question 4:** What are the limitations of learning General English vocabulary from social media for non-native learners?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to elicit responses from Egyptian university students regarding the utilization of social media platforms in learning General English language vocabulary. In this sense, it is a case study that employed a quantitative and exploratory approach to investigate the social media benefits in the process of learning General English vocabulary.

### 2.1. Participants

The study included 135 Egyptian students from different Egyptian universities. Two of the participants' responses were removed due to their contradicting answers. Out of the 133 participants, 78 (58.6%) were female students and 55 (41.4%) were males. 70 participants representing 52.6% were between 15 and 20 years old and 63 constituting 47.4% were between 21 and 25 years old. Participants were from

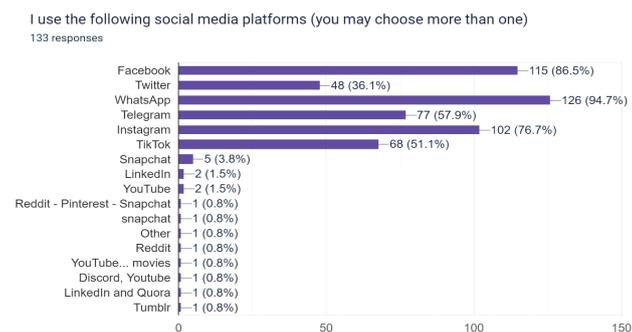


Figure 1: Utilization of social media platforms by Egyptian university students

As demonstrated in figure 1, a checkbox question was included in the demographic information section so as to identify the most commonly used social media platforms by university students. The participants were allowed to select more than one item as well as add other platforms if applicable. Based on the results, WhatsApp is the most commonly used social media platform constituting 94.7%, followed by Facebook with 86.5% and third is Instagram with a percentage of

76.7%. In addition, Telegram is used by 57.9%, Tik Tok is browsed by 51.1% and Twitter is logged in by 36.1%.

### 2.2. Data Collection

The main data collection instruments were observation and a questionnaire. The participant observation was conducted by one of the authors who works as an English language instructor at AHC over 35 Egyptian university students enrolled in the faculty of nursing, spending their final practical training year at AHC in order to become professional staff nurses (see Appendix B).

The participants were taught English courses for two weeks on a daily basis as an orientation course at the beginning and then continued their English professional development over a period of three months (see Appendix C). The instructor took notes during the time of the observation, analyzed the results, reviewed literature and constructed a taxonomy that explains aspects of learning General English vocabulary from social media. In addition, review of the literature on the impact of social media on language acquisition was conducted by the authors. Based on the model constructed from the observation and the review of the literature (see Figure 2), a questionnaire was constructed in order to measure the perceptions of Egyptian university students towards learning General English vocabulary from miscellaneous social media platforms. The model consists of four categories that contain a few thematic points each: Direct Learning, Indirect Impact, Helpful Characteristics and, finally, Learners' and Learning Limitations (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: A conceptual framework of learning general English vocabulary from social media

To clarify the terminologies used in the model, some operational definitions are needed. Direct learning refers to the process of intentional learning through receiving vocabulary, improving vocabulary knowledge and, finally, producing the words learned from social media. Indirect impact is the effect of learning from social media on learners' emotions, mental skills and the surrounding environment created by collaboration and interaction with other learners. As for the advantages of social media, they are some aspects that assist learners in the process of vocabulary learning. Limitations are divided into

learners' limitations which are concerned with the learner whereas learning limitations are concerned with the learning process. The model demonstrated in figure 2 serves as a conceptual framework that explains, based on the study's results, the way learners acquire General English vocabulary from social media platforms.

A questionnaire of 39 items was constructed and disseminated to Egyptian students in various universities in the realm (see Appendix A). Apart from the demographic section that contains seven questions, the questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and consisted of four sections that aimed to elicit information on Direct Vocabulary Learning (7 questions), Indirect Impact (6 questions), Characteristics of Learning from social media (10 questions), and finally, Limitations of Learning Vocabulary from Social Media (9 questions). The questionnaire was translated for accuracy purposes, validated by an associate professor of applied linguistics, piloted over five Egyptian university students and, finally, modified prior to the dissemination process. It was administered via a Google form link and was left for three weeks for the university students to submit their responses. 135 students responded, two were removed due to their contradicting answers and not meeting the sample selection criterion, which is being an Egyptian university student who uses social media for communication and learning.

Table 1: Validity of the questionnaire items

Item No.	Correlation	Item No.	Correlation	Item No.	Correlation
1	.498**	12	.433**	23	.380**
2	.510**	13	.528**	24	.388**
3	.564**	14	.234**	25	.424**
4	.522**	15	.524**	26	.316**
5	.581**	16	.547**	27	.304**
6	.481**	17	.593**	28	.276**
7	.571**	18	.626**	29	0.123
8	.618**	19	.545**	30	.234**
9	.577**	20	.483**	31	0.139
10	.608**	21	.558**	32	.233**
11	.623**	22	.595**		

Note. \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To ensure the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, Pearson correlation and Cronbach Alpha tests were conducted. In terms of the correlation test, all items except 29 and 31 were significant at the ( $P \leq 0.01$ ) level and none were significant at the level

( $P \leq 0.05$ ). Moreover, the reliability test of Cronbach Alpha for the 32 items of the questionnaire ( $\alpha = .87$ ) revealed that the questionnaire is highly reliable and applicable.

### 2.3. Procedures of the Study

Procedures of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. The authors selected a sample of 4th year nursing undergraduate students, and participant observation was conducted through the English courses provided by AHC,
2. observation data were analyzed, and a review of the literature was conducted in order to identify how learners acquire English vocabulary through social media platforms, factors affecting learning from social media and limitations of learning,
3. a model was hypothesized to explain how Egyptian university students learn vocabulary from social media,
4. for data triangulation, a questionnaire was constructed based on the model,
5. the questionnaire was disseminated to various students in Egyptian universities,
6. the results were analyzed using the SPSS program and interpreted based on the hypothesized model (see Figure 3).

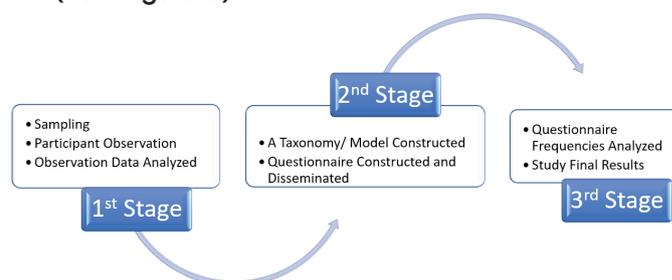


Figure 3: Stages of the study

## 3. FINDINGS

The findings are extracted from two data collection methods: the participant observation and the questionnaire.

### 3.1. Observation

Observation has revealed that participants receive and produce a considerable amount of vocabulary when they log into their personal accounts on social media platforms. They could be writing or uttering real-life situations, academic, semi-technical or technical vocabulary. They can, in addition, construct their own knowledge identifying grammatical patterns, collocations, pronunciation and other aspects of the language gradually through their exposure and usage of the language. One can receive and produce vocabulary through:

- posts that tell stories and past-life experiences,
- posts that contain essays with academic and

technical words or contain links that lead to essays in newspapers and other website pages,

- comments of users on various general and personal issues and matters,
- users' voice notes in private and public groups and chats that tell instructions and respond to others' opinions and expressions of feelings,
- videos posted publicly and in private groups,
- conversations with friends and strangers.

To start with, reading posts and comments of other users is the most obvious way through which users gain a significant amount of vocabulary. These posts may contain life experiences, stories, advice, instructions, emotions expressions, different opinions on trendy real-life matters and famous people quotes. Moreover, some corporations use social media pages as marketing platforms for their products that range from miscellaneous abstract services to concrete and tangible products. These pages mostly contain advertisements that are written in a language that uses catchy and grasping vocabulary in an attempt to attract people's attention leading people to purchase their products and request their services. When users get exposed to these advertisements, they not only gain much vocabulary, but also become familiar with the advertising and marketing vocabulary.

It is worth mentioning that social media groups dynamics are affected by the number of people joining them and reacting to different posts as it eventually leads the page and its administrator to becoming an influencer whose words affect people's attitudes and behaviors. A number of these posts have a tinge of academia that tends to persuade and direct people to take actions towards rising world issues such as war and peace, states economic situations, cultural values and traditions. Not mentioning that these pages make use of academic vocabulary prolifically in order to obtain and maintain a professional image and seem convincing to their readers. In addition, posts in specialized groups - probably on Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and others - may have technical and semi-technical vocabulary such as medical staff groups, engineers' groups and other professions/domains groups. Members in these groups gain a significant amount of English-for-specific-purposes vocabulary. This would be helpful and of much magnitude to users who have recently joined and commenced the experience of a professional life.

Comments on social media are sets of phrases and sentences people produce so as to utter their opinions, correct some information and they can be sarcastic sentences which are absolutely ubiquitous on social media. Comments on various technical and non-technical posts can also be a source of vocabulary learning, however, it depends mainly on the level of education and life experiences people may obtain.

One can read vocabulary-rich comments especially those on newspapers posts that require people's opinions or request some information from people. Comments come in different forms on social media: written and spoken through voice notes. Both methods are beneficial as they can improve a person's ability to write correctly in terms of grammar and spelling, sometimes with the help of the platforms' Artificial Intelligence (AI) devices. Moreover, commenting on posts can improve the word quality one uses because he/she has previously received words that collocate together. On the other hand, voice notes not only improve listening skills but also spoken English vocabulary non-native speakers do not hear very often. Therefore, voice notes seem like speaking to a native speaker, yet in a slower way, which can be of tremendous benefit as one receives new words and searches for meaning and pronunciation immediately so that he/she could ultimately produce professional language.

Videos are similar to voice notes, however accompanied by moving pictures (Cartoons) and recorded situations that tend to be very clarifying to learners in terms of words meanings in a certain context. This can also be perplexing as learners sometimes cannot concentrate visually and auditorily. That is why learners have to re-watch them often several times to understand and grasp new vocabulary as well as search for the unknown new words they encounter. Conversations are more like role plays in a real context. However, in this case, they are through a technological device and a platform that brings people together. Sometimes a person knows who he/she is talking to and other times not as disclosure of personal information is sometimes not allowed in some networks depending on users' personal preferences. All in all, the above-mentioned methods of learning can be in both processes, reception and production of vocabulary.

In addition, there has been an indirect impact of learning vocabulary from social media, that is the psychological and the sociological influence when learners gain vocabulary from logging into social media platforms. It is, to a great extent, revealed through the affective and the cognitive skills along with the environment created for the learning process. Learners tend not to think so much about the content they are going to produce on social media, they just speak their minds using English vocabulary because they presume that people will not judge the way they use their vocabulary or write their content. This, in some way, elevates their self-confidence and self-esteem, especially when people react and comment on their posts. One more point is that social media enhances their critical thinking and creativity in terms of the cognitive skills as learners tend to think a little about whether the words they use are correct or not and they produce their own stories, situations using these words.

The third category in the analysis model is the characteristics that enable university learners get exposed to General English vocabulary: redundancy of vocabulary, interaction and collaboration, connectivity, autonomy, authenticity and contextuality, attractiveness and openness, information, texts and media storage, variety of resources and finally free-of-charge accessibility. As for the limitations of learning from social media, they are divided into learners' and learning limitations. The former is related to privacy, exposure to harmful content, security, cyberbullying, distraction and excessive comfort. The latter is related to the effectiveness of pedagogy, time-consumption, lack of guidance and reliability of information disseminated on social media.

Thus, based on the observation process and the review of literature, characteristics and limitations of social

media have been extracted. Previous related studies such as the ones by Siddiqui and Singh (2016), Kapoor et al. (2018), Jadhav (2020), Shvets et al. (2021) and Mallick et al. (2022) have been reviewed to confirm the results of the observation and construct the model on which the questionnaire was constructed.

### 3.2. Questionnaire Frequencies

This section presents the frequencies of the questionnaire with regard to learning General English vocabulary from social media. Table 2 illustrates the frequencies of social media English language direct learning. Table 3 reveals the frequencies of social media indirect impact on learning English language vocabulary. Table 4 shows the frequencies of social media assistive aspects in the vocabulary learning process and, finally, Table 5 presents the frequencies of social media limitations.

Table 2: Frequencies of direct learning of general English from social media

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Rank
(1)	I sometimes learn English vocabulary from reading posts and comments on social media.	39	70	26	5	0	4.02
		27.86%	50%	18.57%	3.57%	0%	
(2)	I sometimes learn English vocabulary from voice notes on social media.	21	60	39	18	2	3.57
		15%	42.86%	27.86%	12.86%	1.43%	
(3)	I sometimes learn English vocabulary from watching videos on social media.	59	66	13	2	0	4.3
		42.14%	47.14%	9.29%	1.43%	0%	
(4)	Social media sometimes drives me to know the meaning of some words to use them correctly.	71	50	13	4	3	4.31
		50.35%	35.46%	9.22%	2.84%	2.13%	
(5)	Social media sometimes drives me to know the form (e.g., nouns, adjectives, adverbs) of some words to use them correctly.	38	50	39	9	4	3.78
		27.14%	35.71%	27.86%	6.43%	2.86%	
(6)	Social media sometimes drives me to learn the pronunciation of some words to say them correctly.	53	64	17	6	0	4.17
		37.86%	45.71%	12.14%	4.29%	0%	
(7)	I sometimes use vocabulary that I learned from social media when creating posts, comments or when recording voice notes.	52	56	24	7	1	4.08
		37.14%	40%	17.14%	5%	0.71%	

Statements from one to seven present the frequencies of direct vocabulary learning from social media platforms. Out of 133 participants, 109 constituting 77.86% stated that they learn English vocabulary from reading posts and comments on social media, 81 representing 57.86% reported that they sometimes learn English vocabulary from voice notes and 125 comprising 89.28% approved that they learn English vocabulary from watching videos on social media. Furthermore, 121 students (85.81%) confirmed that social media sometimes drive them to know the

meaning of some words in order to use them correctly, 88 students (62.85%) stated that social media drives them to know the form of some words so as to use them correctly and 117 (83.57%) approved that social media drives them to learn the pronunciation of some words to say them correctly. In terms of productivity, 108 representing 77.14% confirmed that they use the vocabulary they learned from social media when it comes to creating posts or writing comments and when recording voice notes.

Table 3: Frequencies of social media indirect impact on learning English language vocabulary

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Rank
(8)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually enhances my self-confidence.	20	58	44	15	3	3.55
		14.29%	41.43%	31.43%	10.71%	2.14%	
(9)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually improves my self-esteem.	19	53	51	12	5	3.49
		13.57%	37.86%	36.43%	8.57%	3.57%	
(10)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media sometimes improves my critical thinking skills because I try to differentiate between the right and the wrong usage of words	30	71	28	9	2	3.84
		21.43%	50.71%	20%	6.43%	1.43%	
(11)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media sometimes improves my creativity because I try to use the words in posting, telling stories and describing situations.	30	66	29	13	2	3.78
		21.43%	47.14%	20.71%	9.29%	1.43%	
(12)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually enhances collaboration between people and improves the relationships among its users.	22	68	35	14	1	3.69
		15.71%	48.57%	25%	10%	0.71%	
(13)	Learning and using vocabulary on social media creates an environment that promotes learning English generally and English vocabulary specifically.	28	89	21	2	0	4.02
		20%	63.57%	15%	1.43%	0%	

Statements from eight to thirteen are related to sociological and psychological impact of learning vocabulary from social media. 78 participants constituting 55.72% stated that learning and using vocabulary on social media enhances their self-confidence, 72 representing 51.43% reported that learning and using vocabulary on social media improves their self-esteem, and 101 comprising 72.14% approved that social media improves their critical thinking skills because it drives them to know how to differentiate between the right and the wrong usage

of words. Also, 96 (68.57%) stated that learning and using vocabulary on social media improves their creativity because they try to use the words in posting, telling stories and even describing situations. 90 participants (64.28%) reported that learning and using vocabulary on social media usually enhances collaboration between people and improves the relationship among its users, 117 (83.57%) reported that learning and using vocabulary on social media creates an environment that promotes learning English generally and English vocabulary specifically.

Table 4: Frequencies of social media assistive aspects in the vocabulary learning process

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Rank
(14)	I always see people using the same words on social media.	30	69	24	17	1	3.8
		21.28%	48.94%	17.02	12.06%	0.71%	
(15)	I learn vocabulary from collaborating, contacting and interacting with people on social media.	26	64	38	11	1	3.74
		18.57%	45.71%	27.14%	7.86%	0.71%	
(16)	I construct my own vocabulary knowledge from reading social media posts/comments, listening to voice notes and watching videos because I search for the meaning, form and pronunciation of words.	34	69	25	11	1	3.89
		24.29%	49.29%	17.86	7.86%	0.71%	
(17)	When people use new words in creating posts, writing comments, or recording voice notes, they are disseminating knowledge because I learn new English vocabulary.	33	83	20	4	0	4.04
		23.57%	59.29%	14.29%	2.86%	0%	
(18)	I learn English vocabulary in context as most posts are either written by famous people or written and shared by social media users.	29	67	32	12	0	3.81
		20.71%	47.86%	22.86%	8.57	0%	
(19)	Social media platforms are stimulating and attractive to learn English words.	36	72	25	5	2	3.96
		25.71%	51.43%	17.86%	3.57%	1.43%	
(20)	Social media are open platforms to express my thoughts in English and communicate with the world.	43	64	27	5	1	4.02
		30.71%	45.71%	19.29%	3.57%	0.71%	
(21)	Information is stored on social media so that I would get back to any posts and learn English vocabulary from them whenever I want.	26	65	33	12	4	3.69
		18.57%	46.43%	23.57%	8.57%	2.86%	
(22)	There are various resources (e.g., videos, audios, pictures, links to other pages) from which I learn English vocabulary on social media.	44	76	15	4	1	4.13
		31.43%	54.29%	10.71%	2.86%	0.71%	
(23)	Social media platforms are available all the time, easy to use and free-of-charge.	61	62	13	3	1	4.28
		43.57%	44.29%	9.29%	2.14%	0.71%	

Statements from fourteen to twenty-three are connected to frequencies of social media assistive aspects in the vocabulary learning process. 99 participants comprising 70.22% stated they always see people using the same words on social media, 90 students representing 64.28% reported that they learn vocabulary from collaborating, contacting and interacting with people on social media and 103 students constituting 73.58% stated that they construct their own vocabulary knowledge from reading social media posts/comments, listening to voice notes and watching videos as they search for the meaning, the form and the pronunciation of words. Additionally, 116 students (82.86%) stated

that people are disseminating knowledge when they use new words in creating posts, writing comments or recording voice notes. 96 (68.57%) reported that they learn English in context as most posts are either written by famous people or shared by social media users, 108 (77.14%) expressed their approval that social media platforms are attractive and stimulating to learn English words, and 107 (76.42%) stated that social media platforms are open to express their thoughts in English and communicate with the world. Moreover, 91 (65%) students proclaimed that they could get back to any posts to learn English vocabulary as information is stored on social media, 120 students (85.72%) reported that there is a variety of resources

from which they could learn English vocabulary on social media, and 123 (87.86%) confirmed the permanent availability of social media, its easiness of usage and being free-of-charge for its users.

Table 5: Frequencies of social media limitations in the vocabulary learning process

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Rank
(24)	Sometimes I feel concerned about my privacy on social media.	51	61	21	5	3	4.1
		36.17%	43.26%	14.89%	3.55%	2.13%	
(25)	Sometimes I encounter harmful content (e.g., Hate speech, Cyberbullying, Pornography ... etc.).	48	63	21	4	4	4.05
		34.29%	45%	15%	2.86%	2.86%	
(26)	Information is not always secured on social media	45	73	21	1	0	4.16
		32.14%	52.14%	15%	0.71%	0%	
(27)	I get distracted a lot by social media content and I cannot concentrate on doing one thing.	46	47	28	19	0	3.86
		32.86%	33.57%	20%	13.57%	0%	
(28)	Excessive comfort is something useful in learning vocabulary.	14	34	44	38	10	3.03
		10%	24.29%	31.43%	27.14%	7.14%	
(29)	Learning English vocabulary from social media is not very effective and useful.	5	22	22	77	14	2.48
		3.57%	15.71%	15.71%	55%	10%	
(30)	Learning English vocabulary from social media takes a lot of time.	13	39	42	38	8	3.08
		9.29%	27.86%	30%	27.14%	5.71%	
(31)	There is no guidance or training on learning English vocabulary from social media.	24	57	36	19	4	3.56
		17.14%	40.71%	25.71%	13.57%	2.86%	
(32)	I am not always sure that the information I read is reliable.	39	69	28	3	1	4.01
		27.86%	49.29%	20%	2.14%	0.71%	

Statements from twenty-four to thirty-two are concerned with the frequencies of social media limitations in the vocabulary learning process. 112 participants ((79.43%) reported that they sometimes feel concerned about their privacy on social media, 111 (79.26%) stated that they sometimes encounter harmful content such as hate speech or cyberbullying, and 118 (84.28%) stated that information is not always secured on social media. In addition, 93 (66.43%) confirmed that they get distracted a lot by social media content and cannot concentrate on doing one thing. Also, 48 (34.29%) reported that excessive comfort is something useful whereas the same number stated the opposite and 44 (31.43%) adopted a neutral disposition. 91 participants (65%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed to the statement saying that learning English vocabulary from social media is not very effective and useful while only 27 (19.28%) either strongly agreed or agreed. 52 (37.15%) reported that learning English vocabulary from social

media takes a lot of time, 81 (57.85%) stated that there is no guidance or training on learning English vocabulary from social media. Finally, 108 (77.15%) reported their concern on the reliability of information they read on social media platforms.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. How do Egyptian university students learn English language vocabulary directly from social media?

The quantitative findings reveal that learning English vocabulary from social media occurs directly through receiving vocabulary, constructing knowledge about English vocabulary and, finally, producing the vocabulary gained. Direct learning happens in the process of receiving and producing vocabulary through posts, comments, videos and audios. Furthermore, social media drives university students

to construct their vocabulary knowledge by knowing the grammatical patterns of the words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions), the pronunciation and the collocation.

#### 4.2. What indirect impact does social media have on Egyptian university students while learning English vocabulary?

There is an indirect impact of social media that influences learners affectively through raising learners' self confidence and self-esteem. When learners are confident and have high level of self-esteem, they will be encouraged to use the vocabulary learned from social media so easily. The cognitive influence is revealed through improving their creativity and critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is activated when learners try to differentiate between the wrong and the correct usage of words whereas creativity is enhanced when learners produce their own posts, comments and voice notes using English language vocabulary. Learning from social media also improves collaboration, relationships between users and at the same time the surrounding environment of learning. Creating a safe environment for learners to share and disseminate their knowledge is beneficial in enhancing collaboration and life-long learning of the language in general and vocabulary in particular.

#### 4.3. What are the characteristics of social media that assist Egyptian universities students in the process of English vocabulary learning?

According to the questionnaire's frequencies, English words are repeated all the time on different platforms which invites learners to know their meanings and memorize them due to redundancy. Also, students learn from interacting with people from other cultures even if they are not non-native English speakers. Having a friend from China, for instance, will enthrall a user to have a conversation in English as he/she cannot speak Chinese and vice versa. Connectivity is another characteristic as it was not possible in the past to get in touch with people from other countries or cultures so easily as it is nowadays. People used to adopt ineffective techniques to or had to travel to learn the language. Now that social media exist, people from all over the world are connected to one another. Moreover, learners construct their own vocabulary knowledge and disseminate it as well. This, to a great extent, goes hand in hand with the theory of Constructivism. Constructivism states that learner build their own knowledge through adopting different strategies. Another theory that confirms the benefit of social media is Heutagogy. Heutagogy promotes lifelong self-learning through technology. Constructing own knowledge for learners is simply called autonomy, which is another aspect of social media.

Most texts, videos and audios on social media are authentic, not tailored especially for teaching or learning. This entails that not all texts, audios or videos have accurate language. However, learners get to be exposed to the real language used by native and non-native speakers as well in real contexts. Also, since social media platforms have beautiful interfaces for various users, they attract students to use and learn from them. They are, as well, open platforms for expressing opinions and thereby celebrate and enhance diversity, tolerance and acceptance of the other. Furthermore, all types of information are stored on these platforms and can never be removed unless its user permits to do so, or the platform administration identifies it as harmful content. These platforms are free-of-charge and have a variety of resources to learn from such as posts, comments, videos, audios and hyperlinks to websites.

#### 4.4. What are the limitations of learning General English vocabulary from social media for Egyptian university students?

Egyptian university students sometimes encounter problems when learning from social media. These problems are divided into two types. The first is the learner's problems while the second is the learning problems. Based on Egyptian university students' opinions, privacy, exposure to harmful content, security, cyberbullying, distraction and excessive comfort are the learner's limitations whereas effective pedagogy, time-consumption, lack of guidance or training and, finally, the reliability of information are the learning limitations.

Concerning the learner's limitations, students have a problem with privacy as people sometimes violate one's private space by intruding in matters that are not their concern and speak their minds in disrespectful ways and give themselves the right to speak privately without any permission from users. Users might also encounter harmful content such as hate speech or pornography which may lead to a negative effect on their psychological status. Not to mention that users' personal pictures or information are not always protected and could be used in a harmful way. Students are also liable to cyberbullying malpractice and their attention is often divided by the tremendous amount of content (reels, pictures, comments etc..). Egyptian university students were not sure whether excessive comfort is one of the limitations as almost 34% of the participants agreed and the same proportion of the participants disagreed.

As for the learning limitations, according to the authors' knowledge, there is no particular pedagogy in the literature that has been proven to be effective in teaching language through social media. Social media also consumes much time in teaching or learning vocabulary due to several reasons that include the

large amount of uncensored content, the infrastructure that provides accessibility to the internet and choice of proper activities by the teacher. Lack of training is another learning issue that affects teachers and learners. Some teachers do not know how to use social media platforms and have not been trained on using them by their institutions. The last issue is the reliability of information. One cannot always believe that the information posted on social media is always true as they are written by users who might not have a good level of education even if they are native speakers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the way Egyptian university students gain general English vocabulary from social media, the indirect impact of social media in the learning process, the factors that influence the learning process and, finally, the limitations of social media in learning English vocabulary particularly and the English language generally. The study has proven that learning vocabulary occurs through receiving, producing and constructing knowledge on the way it is used on social media through posts, comments, voice notes, videos and hyperlinks to other websites. As for the indirect impact, social media enhances self-confidence, self-esteem, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration among Egyptian university students. The characteristics of social media that help users in learning General vocabulary in the learning process of English vocabulary include redundancy of vocabulary, collaboration and interaction, connectivity to people from all over the world, learning autonomy and constructing one's own knowledge, authenticity and contextuality, attractiveness and openness, information forever storage, variety of learning resources and free-of-charge accessibility. The learners' limitations of social media involve privacy violation, exposure to harmful content, low-level of security, cyberbullying, distraction and excessive comfort whereas the learning limitations include questioning the effect of a learning pedagogy, time consumption, lack of training and guidance and finally

reliability of information. These findings confirm those of previous studies such as Khan, Ayaz and Faheem (2016), Mamudi and Alamry (2022), Ichara Sinta (2022) and Hanan, Yuliani and Suadiyatno (2023).

Practical implications for using social media in learning general English vocabulary may include having a discussion about the posted facts or giving opinions on important matters. In addition, English language instructors may converse using the pre-planned-for-teaching vocabulary with his/her students before or after the delivery of the lesson in an attempt to expose them as much as possible to the target language. Instructors are also encouraged to post pictures on social media and ask their students to describe them thoroughly and express their feelings about pictures and videos. Creative writing is also another technique for students to produce language using the previously learned vocabulary. Summarizing videos and telling stories through voice notes, posts or comments are advised to be implemented by language instructors to make sure the vocabulary they have taught is learned.

Identifying the classifications of the process of learning vocabulary from social media is a gateway to understand how vocabulary acquisition happens for individuals using these platforms for communication and other purposes. The psychological factor, for instance, affects the process of learning significantly. That is why considering this factor in designing activities using social media is central for the process of vocabulary learning or acquisition for Egyptian university students. In addition, knowing the characteristics of social media will enable instructors to find innovative ways of using them in designing activities that are suitable for today's tech-savvy learners and motivate them to learn more vocabulary from posters, videos and others.

It is recommended that scholars conduct research on the effect of different social media applications in order to discover the most effective ones in learning English language vocabulary, grammar and other aspects of the language. It is also important to survey the perceptions of learners on these platforms to see which one(s) are most appealing to learners.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Questionnaire of Learning General English Vocabulary from Social Media

The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure the perceptions of Egyptian University Students towards Learning General English Vocabulary from Social Media. The questionnaire consists of five sections: the first section aims to elicit demographic information about the participants. The following four sections aim to elicit information on Direct Vocabulary Learning, Indirect Impact, Characteristics of Learning from Social Media, and finally, Limitations of Learning Vocabulary from Social Media.

#### A) Demographic Information

- I am a (Male – Female)
- My age is (from 15 to 20 – from 21 to 25 – from 26 to 30 – above 30)
- Do you study at an Egyptian university (Yes – No).
- University :.....
- College / Faculty : .....
- Department : .....
- I use the following social media platforms (you may choose more than one)
- (Facebook – Twitter – Instagram – WhatsApp – Telegram – TikTok – other .....

(Strongly Agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly disagree)

#### B) Direct Learning or Acquisition

1. I sometimes learn English vocabulary from reading posts and comments on social media.
2. I sometimes learn English vocabulary from voice notes on social media.
3. I sometimes learn English vocabulary from watching videos on social media.
4. Social media sometimes drives me to know the meaning of some words to use them correctly.
5. Social media sometimes drives me to know the form (e.g., nouns, adjectives, adverbs) of some words to use them correctly.
6. Social media sometimes drives me to learn the pronunciation of some words to say them correctly.
7. I sometimes use vocabulary that I learned from social media when creating posts, comments or when recording voice notes.

#### C) Indirect Impact (Sociological and Psychological Impact)

8. Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually enhances my self-confidence.
9. Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually improves my self-esteem.
10. Learning and using vocabulary on social media sometimes improves my critical thinking skills because I try to differentiate between the right and the wrong usage of words.
11. Learning and using vocabulary on social media sometimes improves my creativity because I try to use the words in posting, telling stories and describing situations.
12. Learning and using vocabulary on social media usually enhances collaboration between people and improves the relationships among its users.
13. Learning and using vocabulary on social media creates an environment that promotes learning English generally and English vocabulary specifically.

#### D) Characteristics of Learning Vocabulary on Social Media

14. I always see people using the same words on social media.
15. I learn vocabulary from collaborating, contacting and interacting with people on social media.
16. I construct my own vocabulary knowledge from reading social media posts/comments, listening to voice notes and watching videos because I search for the meaning, form and pronunciation of words.
17. When people use new words in creating posts, writing comments, or recording voice notes, they are disseminating knowledge because I learn new English vocabulary.

18. I learn English vocabulary in context as most posts are either written by famous people or written and shared by social media users.
19. Social media platforms are stimulating and attractive to learn English words from.
20. Social media are open platforms to express my thoughts in English and communicate with the world.
21. Information is stored on social media so that I would get back to any posts and learn English vocabulary from them whenever I want.
22. There are various resources (e.g., videos, audios, pictures, links to other pages) from which I learn English vocabulary on social media.
23. Social media platforms are available all the time, easy to use and free-of-charge.

### E) Limitations of Learning Vocabulary from Social Media

24. Sometimes I feel concerned about my privacy on social media.
25. Sometimes I encounter harmful content (e.g., Hate speech, Cyberbullying, Pornography ...etc.).
26. Information is not always secured on social media.
27. I get distracted a lot by social media content and I cannot concentrate on doing one thing.
28. Excessive comfort is something useful in learning vocabulary.
29. Learning English vocabulary from social media is not very effective.
30. Learning English vocabulary from social media takes a lot of time.
31. There is no guidance or training in learning English vocabulary from social media.
32. I am not always sure that the information I read is reliable.

## APPENDIX B

### Regular English Classes Observation Schedule

#	8:30 AM	5:00 PM	8:30 PM
Sat	Elem (A2)	Upper-int (B2)	Elem (A2)
Sun	Pre-int (B1-)		Pre-int (B1-)
Mon	Int (B1)		Int (B1)
Tue	Elem (A2)	Upper-int (B2)	Elem (A2)
Wed	Pre-int (B1-)		Pre-int (B1-)
Thu	Int (B1)		Int (B1)

## APPENDIX C

### Orientation Group Observation

#	4:00 – 5:30 PM	Check Attendance
Sat	Introduction	√
Sun	Orientation 1	√
Mon	Orientation 2	√
Tue	Orientation 3	x
Wed	Orientation 4	√
Thu	Orientation 5	√
Sat	Orientation 6	x
Sun	Orientation 7	√
Mon	Orientation 8	x
Tue	Orientation 9	√
Wed	Orientation 10	√
Thu	Placement Test	√