Texting, Social Media and Literacy: Writing in BS Classroom

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Writing is a very difficult and complex process. It requires some important skills in order to make it clear and acceptable. It has never been an easy task to achieve especially for second language learners. As a productive skill, it is a crucial skill to master in order to be successful in one's academic pursuits. Due to its importance, it is an important skill cultivated in an English language classroom at BS level. Within the globalization, new trends of using social media or social networking sites have been recently highlighted.

Social media influence peoples' lives in many aspects including education and English language learning. The Pakistani society is not an exception since Face book among other social media is more and more used, especially in the daily interactions of students among them the BS level students of The IUB. Social media were blamed firstly concerning this phenomenon and hypotheses were made about how modern technologies can affect directly or indirectly the process of writing academically among students. The aim of this study is to make a clear difference between texting and formal writing. Also, make students aware about the importance of writing whether in their personal or educational life. The present study is set out to determine the students' attitudes towards formal essays mostly in exam papers as well as the functions of social media and how they can affect their formal writing.

The current study also aims at studying the phenomenon of texting and its negative impact on students' academic writing. The researcher thinks that the reasons that lead students to use the form of texting in writing are the lack of concentration, forgetting the form of some words and unconsciousness. The results obtained were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, and revealed that most students view that texting impact their writing according to some major reasons which are gaining time, forgetting the form of the words, using it unconsciously and simplicity.

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ABSTRACT

Writing is a very difficult and complex process. It requires some important skills in order to make it clear and acceptable. It has never been an easy task to achieve especially for second language learners. As a productive skill, it is a crucial skill to master in order to be successful in one's academic pursuits. Due to its importance, it is an important skill cultivated in an English language classroom at BS level. Within the globalization, new trends of using social media or social networking sites have been recently highlighted. Social media influence peoples' lives in many aspects including education and English language learning. The Pakistani society is not an exception since Face book among other social media is more and more used, especially in the daily interactions of students among them the BS level students of The IUB. Social media were blamed firstly concerning this phenomenon and hypotheses were made about how modern technologies can affect directly or indirectly the process of writing academically among students. The aim of this study is to make a clear difference between texting and formal writing. Also, make students aware about the importance of writing whether in their personal or educational life. The present study is set out to determine the students' attitudes towards formal essays mostly in exam papers as well as the functions of social media and how they can affect their formal writing. The current study also aims at studying the phenomenon of texting and its negative impact on students' academic writing. The researcher thinks that the reasons that lead students to use the form of texting in writing are the lack of concentration, forgetting the form of some words and unconsciousness. The results obtained were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, and revealed that most students view that texting impact their writing according to some major reasons which are gaining time, forgetting the form of the words, using it unconsciously and simplicity.

DEDICATED TO

Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

Who is forever a torch of guidance and

Knowledge for humanity as a whole!

And

Our beloved Quaid Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Who taught us unity, Faith and Discipline!

Moreover to,

My affectionate and loving Husband

And

My Worthy Supervisor: **Sir Safdar Bhatti**

Who encouraged me at each step of life

To face the challenges bravely!

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Throughout history and the development of the written word, literacy has been continually evolving. With each new development certain elements fade away as others become the norm. The evolution of literacy certainly goes hand-in-hand with the advent of emerging technologies. Dating back to the fifteenth century, the development of the printing press necessitated a growing need for literacy as the written word became widely available and an integral part of society. In brief, the technology drove the literacy. Currently, literacy has come to be defined by the technology used to transfer and disseminate it. The language of an email differs from that of a text message. Though formal writing is present in the 21st century it may not necessarily be the same formal writing present 50 years ago. However, everything is not radically shifting away from conventional writing. While changes in literacy and technology clearly affect the public in general, there seems to be much debate over the beneficial or adverse effects on the youth, particularly their academic performance. The wide variety of technology available today allows for a plethora of literacy variation. Students ranging from elementary school through college are pulled in different directions with various technologies. They text message in terse, almost cryptic, language, read lengthy print texts, peruse websites and still write formally. The writing style of texting and IMing is almost like a different language than that of traditional formal writing. Historians agree that writing existed five hundred years ago as due to the need of recording information about different domains in life. It is one of the most important language skills which represents the development of expressing human desires by letters and different other symbols. Basically, writing is defined by the English Oxford Dictionary as: "A sequence of

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letters, words, or symbols marked on a surface". Many definitions were given to writing, for Nunan (1989: 36), "Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate communication by means of conventionally visible marks." It means that writing is a very difficult concept which requires some important rules that must be followed in order to communicate. In the past, society considered writing as a preoccupation of the highly cultivated people but this point of view has changed when writing became an extremely important tool for people with different kinds and levels all over the world. The ability of writing makes the communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds easy and effective. In fact, the importance of writing is not only limited to the transfer of information, but also to the exchange of knowledge in order to build a new one. Writing is a very difficult and complex process. It requires some important skills in order to make it clear and acceptable. It has never been an easy task to achieve especially for second language learners. Pakistanis seem to become more and more open to English. Ever since English became the language of globalization, most of the world's societies begin to use it necessarily in trade, commerce, education, politics…etc. Pakistan is not an exception since English is considered as the second foreign language taught in schools. Many students every year choose the language as a branch of study at university. However, some problems were noticed concerning writing in English. In exam papers, classroom presentations or written home works, students seem to be not aware about the rules and the skills which are important in writing academically. Social media were blamed firstly concerning this phenomenon and hypotheses were made about how modern technologies can affect directly or indirectly the process of writing academically among students of universities especially EFL students of The IUB. The aim of this study is to make a clear difference between texting and formal writing. Also, make students aware about the importance

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of writing whether in their personal or educational life. The present study is set out to determine the students' attitudes towards formal writing mostly in exam papers as well as the functions of social media and how they can affect their formal writing.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study seeks to address the effects of technology, specifically text messaging and use of social media, on the ability of BS level students to write a formal essay. While several studies have been conducted using elementary and high-school-aged students, there is a clear lack of research regarding higher education and the effects of certain technologies on literacy and the ability to write formally. With this scenario, the researcher decided to conduct a research on **"Texting, Social Media and Literacy: Writing in BS Classroom".**

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the background of the research, the main objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the factors and situations that can cause students' poor written skills.
2. To record students' current written communication skills.
3. To find out the strengths and weaknesses during the application of texting strategy.
4. To adapt and recreate what type of activities based on social media.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study answered the following questions:

RQ1. What are the students' habits of using social media?

RQ2. Does texting improve the written skills of the students?

RQ3. What are the strengths and weaknesses for applying social media strategy at BS level?

RQ4. What are the factors which lead significant decrease in students' written skills?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study is to seek out any correlation between student's texting and social media habits and their ability to write a formal essay. This research will hopefully provide insight into the current level of literacy for BS level students by revealing trends related to the student's texting and social media habits and their writing ability. Ideally this research can aid in future

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freshman English instructors and course curriculum through a more thorough understanding of student's literacy and reading and writing habits.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was delimitated to The Islamia University, Rahim Yar Khan Campus. Only BS level learners of Ist semester enrolled in Spring-2019 and the teachers of the selected department were focused in this study. Only the impact of social media for improving students' writing skills was taken into account.

Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TEXTING AND LITERACY

A rather new phenomenon in the whole realm of communication, texting has quite literally exploded as a global means of communicating. With its inherently terse linguistic qualities, the trend of texting inevitably leaves many asking if or how it is affecting literacy as we know it. In addressing this issue this literature review will cover the demographics of a texter, the way in which literacy has been redefined, technology literacy as it relates to education and the implications of texting. Texting does not seem to be a passing fad or trend, but a new form of communication that is continually finding its way into new facets of everyday life. While it certainly has aided the evolution of literacy it is seemingly not necessarily a bad thing. However, many of the empirical studies only cite the effects of texting on the literacy of pre-teens through 18 year olds. While literacy at this level is important and developing, it is also not truly refined literacy. How has the existence of texting affected truly scholarly writing, or even just higher level writing such as that of collegiate undergraduates? It seems that the major concerns of society are with texting and youth rather than texting and academia or texting and the professional world. For now it may be safe to assume that the 20-plus generation has had the proper benefit of a text-free education, but what about in five years, or ten years? Will literacy be the same then with the foundations of literacy changing currently? Students today are pushed more and more into a fast-paced digital world through e-mail, texting and social media playing integral parts in their daily lives. The majority of college campuses require students to use the internet for everything from admissions, financial aid and registration to day-to-day class work, research and campus announcements. The importance of being tech savvy is no doubt key in

achieving academic success (Goode, 2010). Many campuses, like the University of Wisconsin-Stout, pride themselves on being laptop campuses. These campuses encourage professors to utilize computer technology throughout their curriculum. The digital divide quickly draws the line in the sand between those who will succeed and those who will struggle. However, at what point does technological knowledge and the ability to navigate multiple literacies simultaneously no longer promote academic prowess but hinder it? Is it truly advantageous for students to be able to master multiple literacies throughout their academic career, or does this extreme trend of multitasking only lead to "master of none?

2.2 TECHNOLOGY, LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Being that texting seems to be prevalent among school-aged children it is natural that educators would seek to find a correlation between texting habits and school performance. In a study done by Beverly Plester, Clare Wood and Victoria Bell (2008) they explore the texting habits of 11-12 year olds and the effect they have on the student's written language skill. As described in the article *Txt msg n school literacy: does texting and knowledge of text abbreviations adversely affect children's literacy attainment?* Plester et al. (2008) relate the study in which students were asked to translate between Standard English and text messages. The study determined that children with high textism aptitude scored high on verbal reasoning and concluded that "good writing attainment was associated with greater use of textisms" (Plester et al., 2008, p.1). In the end the research concluded that texting does not correlate to decreased written language skills for 11-12 year olds. Additionally, a ten-year study in the UK found that "children who are fluent at text messaging have better literacy skills than youngsters who do not use mobile phones...[s]cientists discovered that rather than destroying their use of English, texting improves children's ability to recognize rhymes and speech patterns" ("Children Text," 2011).Citing many of the same concerns and findings as found in the Plester et al. study, Steve Vosloo (2009) shares

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in his piece *The effects of texting on literacy: Modern scourge oropportunity?* How teachers are using the texting trend in their classes citing the example of"Cindi Rigsbee, a sixth- and seventh-grade reading-resource teacher in the USA, shows her learners texts from Old English, Middle English, contemporary English from the time of *JaneEyre*, and a MySpace page" (p. 4). Vosloo (2009) goes on to note how "other teachers havecontrasted IM lingo with Shakespeare to demonstrate how English has evolved" (p. 4). Vosloo (2009) stresses many of the positive effects of texting on language and learning. From this perspective texting is seemingly something to compliment and expand literacy in the classroom. While it is encouraging to know that texting is not detrimental to the writing of pre-teens, the level of writing done at this age is not something to be classified as scholarly writing demonstrating an acute grasp of the English language such as that possibly expected by a college student.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDUCATION

Even college professors are playing into the new andevolving literacies in order to reach the students on their level. In the March 25, 2011, publication of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Tushar Rae discusses Princeton professor Jeff Nonokawa and his use of Facebook with his college students; "He started posting essays ontopics that he thought his students might need or enjoy and on topics he was personally curious about." The students really appreciated the essays, one student said, "Jeff's use of social media could serve as a useful lesson for faculty and administrators who wonder about how to incorporate new technologies in the classroom, and who don't always seem to do so as successfully and smoothly as we young people might like." At the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Professor Daisy Pignetti uses Twitter with her freshman English students in addition to the online course management tool, Desire 2 Learn, utilized by the university. Using Twitter, Professor Pignetti asked students to tweet responses to assigned readings as a springboard into larger class discussion. Students were encouraged to use Twitter

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to contact their professor with any questions as well as checking in for announcements, extra credit opportunities and links relevant to the class focus. Overall, the student response was quite positive with many noting how the professor seemed more accessible and like a "real person" since she was using social media as a part of the course (Pignetti, 2011).

2.4 IMPLICATIONS OF TEXTING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

There is no doubt texting, along with web 2.0 technologies, is changing literacy. It seems, however, that this is not necessarily to the detriment of society. Kate Baggott (2006) reiterates this in her article *Literacy and Text Messaging* by saying, "There is simply much more pressure to know how to read than in the past when it comes to conversation, shopping, or work" (p. 1). People are reading constantly whether it's recreational reading of lengthy novels, little snippets off a website, an e-mail message for work, or short brief text messages. Baggott also touches on youth and texting citing associate professor Eric Paulson noting, "they can text 'IMHO' on their cell phones, write 'my opinion is' in a school essay, and read "it is my belief that your scar hurts when Lord Voldemort is near you' without getting discombobulated" (p. 1).

Changing literacy necessitates a need for maintaining multiple literacies as demonstrated by this example. The discernment and analytical reasoning skills necessary for accomplishing this are invaluable to students as they mature in their linguistic skills and begin to enter the "real world."

Though texting does not seem to have negative implications relating to literacy, texting and technology in general also provide an endless distraction to easily side-tracked students. Matt Richtel (2010) elaborates on this trend in his article *Growing Up Digital, Wired forDistraction* noting the Kaiser Family Foundation's revelation that "half of students from 8 to 18are using the Internet, watching TV or using some other form of media either "most" (31 percent) or "some" (25 percent) of the time that they are doing homework" (p. 2). Is the younger generation really that good at multi-tasking, or are there some implications of this technology boom? Richtel

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(2010) discusses how literacies are not necessarily negatively affected, but grades are as students struggle to balance their virtual world with their real world.

2.5 THE NATURE OF WRITING

Comparisons were made between the spoken and the written language, Daniels and Bright (1996: 2) say that "language is a natural product of the human mind, while writing is a deliberate product of human intellect, language continually develops and changes without the conscious interference of its speakers, but writing can be petrified or reformed or adapted or adopted at will."

They made a clear distinction between the spoken language and the written one. The spoken language existed a long time before the written language. People were interested only in the spoken language in communicating with each other especially in the twentieth century and concentrated mostly on the oral approach believing that this latter is the origin of the written language. As a result, writing was neglected for many years. In teaching language, this negligence was claimed by many linguists like De Saussure and Chomsky.

One of the reasons behind this obvious negligence is the fact that writing is difficult to teach and learn. Hess (2001) said that writing is the most problematic to teach in such classes¡± and that is ¡°the most challenging of the four skills to master. For Nunan (1999: 217) "producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language. It is something most native speakers never master. For second language learners the challenges are enormous, particularly for those who go on to a university and study in a language that is not their own."

He thought that this operation is hard to achieve in both first and second language for many people while Byrne (1998: 1) states that "writing requires some conscious mental effort."

Some skills should be mastered in order to produce a good piece of writing. In addition, focusing on applied linguistics in the past and implementing theories of scientific linguistics on the spoken

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language led also to the negligence of the written one. The fact that the written language is the orthographic representation of the spoken one helped also giving more interest to the latter.

The writer should use the writing skill in order to form a correct understandable paragraph or text. In this view, Nunan (1989) said that writing cannot be just a pen and paper. On the other hand, teachers have to rate their students. Writing according to the format, content, sentence, and structure, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Although the spoken language appeared before the written one and in addition to the fact there are a lot of spoken languages without their written form, both are skills of the language which need the same amount of interest.

2.6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WRITING SYSTEM

2.6.1 The writing system

Writing was defined in relation to writing system by Daniels and Bright (1996: 3) as follows "Rather, writing is defined as a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer. By this definition writing is bound up with language."

The term writing system has two different meanings; one refers to the general ideas of writing (script), the other to a specific language (orthography). Coulmas (1999: 560) defined the writing system as "a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way."This definition considered as a primarily sense of this term. This means that the writing system can be used both for referring to the general way of writing which can be also called script and also for speaking about the type of writing which is a language specific. Here more explanation about what is already mentioned.

2.6.2 The Script

The oxford dictionary defined the term "script" as follows:

. Handwriting as distinct from print, written characteristics

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. Printed type imitating handwriting

. Writing using a particular alphabet

Script has been defined by Coulmas (2003: 35), as "the graphic form of the units of a writing system." This means a physical forms, letters, symbols. "The Roman alphabet is a well-known example of a script, in fact a single type of writing system includes different scripts, for example the alphabetic writing system has many scripts such as the Roman alphabet, Greek". Some authors like Daniels and Bright (1996) and Sampson (1985: 20) used the terms "script" and "writing system" as synonyms, Coulmas (2003: 35) gave a clear distinction between the three saying that. The term script is reserved for the graphic form of the units of a writing system. Thus for example, the Croatian and Serbian writing systems are very similar, but they employ different scripts, Roman and Cyrillic, respectively. Some scripts are thought by their speakers to be intrinsically related to their language, while others are perceived as serving a variety of languages. The Korean, Yi, and Cambodian scripts are examples of the former, and Roman, Arabic and Devanagari exemplify the latter. The terms writing system and script are distinguished from orthography, which refers to the standardized variety of a given, language-specific writing system.

For more explanation, the example of the English and Russian writing systems is taken; they are both Alphabetic but have different scripts: the first uses the Roman script and the second uses the Cyrillic. Furthermore, the English and Spanish are alphabetic and use the same Roman script but they do not have the same orthography and spelling.

2.6.3 Orthography

The Oxford dictionary defines orthography as follows "the conventional spelling system of a Language". Coulmas (2003: 35) defines it as "the standardized variety of a given, language

specific, writing system". It is agreed that orthography is language specific, that is to say, every language has its own and unique orthography.

Orthography in some points used to replace the term writing system referring to the set of rules used in a particular language for spelling, punctuation, called "the English writing system", "the Japanese writing system" etc., and "in this sense a writing system is language specific" (Coulmas,1999: 560) Coulmas begins his entry in The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing System (1996: 379_80) as follows:

"Orthography: Correct spelling and that part of grammar that deals with the rules of correct spelling. Orthography is a normative selection of the possibilities of a script for writing a particular language in a uniform and standardized way. All orthographies are language specific. As the most visible and most consciously learned linguistic subsystems, orthographies are often codified by official decree. In alphabetically written languages, the aspects of writing most commonly codified by means of orthographic rules are grapheme-phoneme correspondence, word division, hyphenation, capitalization, and the spelling of loan words. Punctuation is sometimes also subsumed under orthography¡¦ from this, many explanations can be derived. Orthographies are language specific. Every language has its own orthography which deals with the correct spelling and punctuation.

2.7 TYPES OF WRITING SYSTEM

As mentioned before the term "writing system" can be used to refer to both "a writing system for a particular language" and to the "general use of writing system". Writing system in the second sense has three main types: logographic, alphabetic and syllabic.

2.7.1 Logographic

A writing system that is based on logograms is called logographic system. A logogram is word represented by a picture or a symbol. It can also be called ideograms or hieroglyphs. The

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American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language defined logograms as "a written symbol representing an entire spoken word without expressing its pronunciation; for example, for 4 read "four" in English, "Quattro" in Italian, .../arba'a/ in Arabic. Also called ideogram, logograph.

2.7.2 Syllabic

Syllabaries are writing systems whose signary is based on the syllables of a particular language. Daniels and Bright (1996: 49) define syllabary as "a type of writing system whose characters denote syllables, with no deliberate graphic similarity between characters denoting phonetically similar syllables." Some famous examples of syllabic system are the Mande syllabaries, Bamum (syllabary of Cameroon). The syllabic system considered to be more efficient in teaching a language. In the syllabic system, individual symbols represent distinct syllables.

2.7.3 Alphabetic

The alphabetic writing system was defined by Daniels and Bright (1996: 39) as "a type of writing system that denotes consonants and vowels", a mostly used alphabetic writing script is the Roman script or as called the Latin script. Jensen (1970: 520) said that "The Latin alphabet" became the script of the western half of the Roman Empire, and through the agency of Roman Christendom it finally came to be the sole script of the majority of Europe (the only exceptions being the eastern and south-eastern areas using the Greek-Slavonic alphabet)." The alphabetic writing system is that type which deals with the consonants and vowels of a language. Unlike the syllabic system, each symbol in the alphabetic system represents a phoneme.

2.8 COMPONENTS OF THE WRITING SKILLS

Learning to write in English is such a complex difficult task to achieve; it should be restricted to a set of rules and criteria. An effective piece of writing should include according to Starkey (2004: 2) organization, coherence, clarity, with accurate language and word choice.

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2.8.1 Organization

In the writing process, organization is considered to be the first thing to do. Ideas, information and goals should be organized first in head before start writing in order to form an entire plan about the target text or the paragraph. Organization helps the writer preparing easily for the piece him/her willing to write. The reader also benefits from this point (organization) in understanding the ideas of the writer and the aim behind this operation. According to Starkey (2004) organization helps the readers to show how the points are linked together and how they support your thesis. Starkey (2004:2) states that "the direction and purpose you get from organization helps your reader to believe what you are saying and to willingly follow your lead". Organization requires a set of techniques that make the piece of writing understandable and clear and give it the value of the writing process. A wide important technique called the pre-writing which includes free writing and brain storming. For Starkey (2004), the prewriting technique in organization is the planning of the work which comes after reading and gathering the information from the prewriting. For Galko (2002: 10) "brainstorming is to let your ideas flow without judging them" which means that the brainstorming technique is very important in developing and improving one's writing. According to Galko, free writing is what comes to your mind without stop with focusing on a specific topic. While "free writing" might better be called "flow writing" for Starkey (2004: 10), because the most important aspect to this prewriting technique is the flow, or momentum, that comes when you stay with it".

2.8.2 Clarity

Clarity is one from the most necessary criteria in the writing process. The purpose behind writing a text or a paragraph is to reach a response from the readers, therefore the writer should be clear and should make his information easy to understand to convey his/her message . Writing is not a pen and paper it goes beyond that trying to create a new knowledge sometimes.

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Starkey (2004) mentioned four fundamental elements in making writing easy and accurate:

1) Eliminate ambiguity: the writer should avoid using ambiguous words or phrases which may have different meanings in order to help the reader understand the target easily.

2) Powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs: the writer should be aware that the powerful adjectives and proverbs effect strongly on the reader's point of view, so he/ she should be selective when concerning the right adjectives, adverbs and words.

3) Be concise, according to Starkey (2004: 15) "there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, using the active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible."

4) Avoid unnecessary repetition: repetition of words, information and ideas can destroy the clarity of the written piece sometimes.

Clarity can be neglected from students sometimes because most of them think that the information they give is sufficient enough to make the reader understand the idea, this is probably the most common mistake they commit while writing. However, clarity has never been something that should be neglected or misused when producing a piece of an understandable writing.

2.8.3 Coherence

Coherence is a very important skill in writing. Murray& Hughes (2008: 45) agreed that "coherence is perhaps the single most important element in any kind of writing". Kane (2000) and Creme and Lea (2008) confirmed that coherence has a great role in making a good piece of writing. Murray & Hughes (2008: 45) observed that "a good writer sticks their ideas together so that they act as a links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structures break down".

Coherence makes the ideas linked together so that the reader can understand easily the content of the writing. In writing academically, all of the writing skills should be included correctly, each in

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their natural place. Coherence is one of these necessarily skills which cannot be missed in academic writing, many students don't pay attention to the mess that can be found in a text or a paragraph which is clear from the coherence criteria.

2.8.4 Word Choice

The writer is required to pick their word attentively. According to Starkey (2004) the word choice displays the learner's style of choosing the lexical items and structures in order to convey his message. Starkey believed that there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing his words: denotation and connotation. Denotation is "literal meaning of the word" Starkey (2004: 22), it means that the writer should be sure about the correct meaning of the word. The confusion may stem from words that sound or look similar (but have very different meanings), words and usages that sound correct (but in fact are not considered Standard English), or words that are misused so often that their wrong usage is thought to be correct. Connotation is concerned about the writer's feelings, opinions, suggestions which can be positive, or negative, or neutral. The writer should be selective concerning the words because any mistake can be taken as a misunderstanding from the reader that can annoy or insult him/her. That means being aware of inclusive language, and avoiding slang, clichés and buzzword" (Starkey; 2004: 24)

2.8.5 Mechanics

"The term 'mechanics' refers to the appearance of words, how they are spelled and arranged on paper" Kane (2000:15) According to Starkey, the writing mechanics include grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Brooks and Penn (1970: 20) state that "for one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean the rules of grammar and punctuation."

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2.8.5.1 Grammar

The writer should be aware about the grammar rules and the way to use them appropriately such as: pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc.

.Pronouns: according to the oxford dictionary a pronoun is used to replace a noun that has already been mentioned or that is already known, often to avoid repeating the noun.

. Adjectives: a word naming an attribute of a noun, such as sweet, red, or technical

. Adverbs: are words that describe the verbs

. Prepositions: a word governing, and usually preceding, a noun or a pronoun and expressing a relation to another word or element in the clause, as in the man on the platform, she arrived after dinner. , . what did you do for it ?. oxford dictionary)

2.8.5.2 Capitalization

Capitalization is necessary both for specific words and to start sentences and quotes Starkey (2004). Capitalization is very important in writing academically; the writer should be restricted to the rules of capitalizing and should give them an importance as much as he/she gives to another writing skill because most of the students nowadays write only to get a degree not taking into consideration that these types of mistakes they commit while writing academically especially neglecting the skills which are very important in creating a clear and understandable texts and essays can stick to them all the way of their educational and maybe professional career.

2.8.5.3. Punctuation

It is necessary part in English academic writing. With proper punctuation your writing will be more polished and technically correct, and you will convey your voice more directly, Starkey (2004). Murray & Hughes (2008: 185) state that punctuation indicates pauses and sentence boundaries also help the reader understand what is written. Capitalization and punctuation are very important in writing as Murray & Hughes (2008: 185) said "they indicate pauses and

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sentence boundaries and also eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make the work easier to read and understand and will therefore help it make a more favorable impression on your readers."

2.8.5.4 Symbols of punctuation

Here are some symbols of punctuation that are necessary when writing essays:

. **Full stop (.):** is used to indicate that the sentence is ended

. **Comma (,):** is used to make pauses, separate sentences or words, give different examples

. **Exclamation mark (!):** used to express a strong feeling within a Sentence like anger, fear...

. **Question mark (?):** used in a sentence to ask a question.

. **Semi-colon (;):** the use of the semi-colon is generally difficult to use, it is used to join two connected sentences.

. **Colon (:):** used when listing.

. **Apostrophe ('s):** used to indicate possession.

. **Quotation marks (" "):** used when quoting someone's speech.

. **Hyphen (-):** used to link words together.

.**Brackets ( ):** always together and used to point out an idea that doesn't belong to the main sentence.

. **Slash (/):** is used instead of, or.

2.9 SOCIAL MEDIA AND LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Bringing social media into the classroom is controversial among researchers, although there is increasing support in recent research. A study concerning the perspectives of using technology and social media for literacy instruction by Jia, Snow, and White found that the view among urban adolescents is, "teens, including many language minority students with diverse literacy skills, are true believers in technology and play an active role in contributing to the mainstream teen culture fueled with technology influence" (2015). The study also confirms the rate at which teens learn to use and embrace social media and technology is much faster than adults. It seems students are very open to using technology in the classroom for literacy, and already have the basic skills to do so, even among low socioeconomic students in urban settings.

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Similarly, social media has been proven to increase the literacy skills of adolescent English Language Learners, even without structured use in the classroom. Social media promotes communication in both their home language (which better develops their base skills) along with English Language Learners' reading, writing and communication skills in English as well (Stewart, 2014). For teachers who combat the idea of using social media due to students' inability to use it in strictly academic ways, a large study in Denmark found students were successfully able to use the social media site Facebook without management by a teacher both in and out of the classroom. The study by Aaen and Dalsgaard (2016) finds that "students blend the personal, social life with academic schoolwork in one space within the Facebook groups. This conclusion challenges the conception from current research on Facebook that students have a discomfort with the blending of social life and schoolwork"(p. 172). They also discover that over 50% of the posts in the student-led Facebook groups were directly related to schoolwork (with many others simply being school related posts about events in the school, etc.), showing that students can independently lead a Facebook group with peers and effectively use it for academic work. Similarly, a study by Greenhow and Lewin concludes that using social media academically "helped to shape the learning activities; thus, aspects were self-determined and also socially determined as they predominantly worked in groups" (2016, p. 17). Students are taking responsibility of their own learning, and helping to create the work they completed, creating a strong sense of agency. Yet the support of using social media for academic purposes remains controversial. One literature review on the topic states that "recent studies have pointed to how teachers' and institutional use of social media platforms such as Facebook can contribute to 'context collapse' where previously clear hierarchies and modes of interaction between teachers and students are challenged and some- times re-formulated" (Selwyn & Stirling, 2016, p. 4). The

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boundaries of teacher to student relationships can be made unclear to students when interacting so closely on social media. Additionally, research has also found that the wealth of information and communication social media and the Internet bring can actually push struggling readers farther behind, as they lack the literacy skills to effectively participate on digital platforms (Alvermann & Harris, 2016). It seems that the research and perspectives on the use of social media for academic purposes with students remain widely disputed. Since current research reflects both positives and negatives surrounding the use of social media and its impact on adolescent literacy development, I seek to find perspectives on how both students and teachers feel on the matter. One aspect that researchers mutually agree upon is the need for an increase in students' literacy skills, including new and multimodal literacy practices (Jia et al, 2015; Aaen & Dalsgaard, 2016; Bulut et al, 2015; Wendt, 2013). Educators must find a way to bring literacy instruction into their content area due to the Common Core. These lessons must also target their "new literacy" development. With social media being such a prevalent force in adolescent lives, my study aims to see how both students and teachers feel about social media, its impacts on ALD, as well as if they feel it could be used in an academic way to help improve adolescent literacy skills across the board. In addition, while there are studies on urban teens (such as Jia et al, 2015), little research has been done surrounding rural/suburban adolescents' perspectives surrounding social media and literacy. Educators can't afford to ignore or trivialize the complex social, intellectual, and emotional functions of media and popular culture in the lives of young people. In order to reach today's learners and educators need to be responsive to students' experience with their culture- which is what they experience through television, movies, YouTube, the Internet, Face book, music, and gaming. When we learn more about students' choices, the first thing we'll notice is how different our students are from us. When it comes to

media and technology, every two years brings a new set of changes in the landscape of their daily life. Even if we're only a few years older than our students, there may be important differences because technology tools are changing so very rapidly. That's why educators need to gain the latest information about the media and technology choices students make at home (and at school) each day. Kids are using media and technology from before breakfast until bedtime and beyond. They're sending text messages, listening to music, updating their social media profiles, and playing video games at the same time, squeezing in 200 hours of media and technology use into each month. Contrary to popular opinion, most teens ages 12 to 19 are *not* abandoning movies and television for the Internet; when they go online, they're updating their Face book profiles and watching YouTube videos but generally not creating videos, blogs, podcasts, or computer programs. Only 8% of teenagers use Twitter, for example. Despite all the attention given to teens and online media in the news media, television programs and movies continue to be significant sources of entertainment in the lives of young people. A Nielsen study in June 2009 shows that only about 3% of the 100 hours per month that teens spend using television is done online. Actually, teens watch more TV than ever, up 6% over five years. And teens actually spend about one third less time online as compared with adults, using the Internet about 11 hours a month as compared with adults, who spend 29 hours monthly online. Way back before cable television and online video streaming brought us a 500,000-channel universe, it was easy for 20th-century teachers to integrate discussions of favorite TV shows into the classroom—after all, there were only three or four networks. Back then, discussions about mass media emerged naturally as a result of shared exposure to celebrities, politicians, athletes, and musicians. Of course, teachers still have viewing experiences they can share with their students. Many teens and teachers love *American Idol,* for example. Both teens and teachers may watch sports as well as local and national news.

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But today, the media worlds that students inhabit are often very different from the preferences of educators, parents, and other adults. Teachers and students are both "using the Internet," but they are having very different experiences when online. When teachers use the Internet, for example, it's often to check e-mail or surf the web for information related to career, health, or hobbies. When teens use the Internet, the purpose is for socializing or entertainment, generally by playing games, watching videos, searching for and listening to music, and interacting with friends through social networks like Face book or My space. As important as digital media and technology are in the lives of children and young people, research shows that 80% of teens have little to no interaction with parents or other adults about their use of media and technology. So most young people get very little opportunity to have serious conversations with adults about the complex mix of entertainment, socialization, and information that is a substantial part of everyday life. But it is through digital media, mass media, popular culture, and technology that we will get most of our information and entertainment across the span of a lifetime. Shouldn't students get some meaningful opportunities to analyze and evaluate the way these messages and experiences work in contemporary culture?

The word *media* has only been used to refer to communication since the 1920s, when it started to be used as the plural form of *medium,* which was used to mean "an intervening agency, means, or instrument." The term was first applied to newspapers, then radio, and then television. Now we use it to include many types of digital communication, including websites, e-mail, and social networking. (Because it's a plural form, we say, "Media are. . . .") These days, media are usually categorized in four formats: print, visual, sound, and digital media.

Categories for defining media types have become blurry as more and more of our media are expressed in digital forms. For example, an audio book represents the convergence of print,

sound, and digital media forms. Online social media bring together elements of both mass communication and interpersonal communication. Every day, it seems, there are new digital media resources and tools that attract the interest of K–12 educators. That's because a vast network of designers and creative professionals are generating lots of new tools for online media, hoping to change the world or just strike it rich (by creating the next Face book, Wikipedia or even just a new puzzle video game for the cell phone, like Angry Birds). Some of these new tools have enormous potential for education. For example, VoiceThread (www.voicethread.com) is a way to collaboratively comment on images. Jing (www.jingproject.com) is a tool that lets you make a digital file of still or moving images on your computer screen. Every week, new products and services are being introduced for use at home, too. For some educators, being first to use a new technology tool is a personal obsession. For many others, this holds little attraction or appeal. But because we use many types of media routinely as part of everyday life, most people have a love–hate relationship with print, visual, sound, and digital media and technology. These perspectives come from our roles as individuals, as parents, as educators, and as citizens. And because our attitudes about media and technology will inevitably shape our decisions about using media in the classroom, it's important to reflect on our own beliefs and attitudes and consider what matters most to us.

Were Tony to interview his teacher and her school colleagues about their attitudes about digital media and technology, he might find these diverse views:

•• Print media are superior to digital media.

•• Cell phones are like having a computer in your pocket.

•• The celebrities and athletes we see in mass media are a form of cultural glue that holds our society together despite our different backgrounds.

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••Digital technology lets anyone be an author!

••Media and technology firms are giant corporations just out to make money.

••Cell phones are essential today, but they do interfere with real life.

 ••Making your life public on Face book makes you feel like a celebrity.

••Media are a tool of political power: By controlling information and entertainment, you control the world.

Students have lots of things to say about this because media and technology are so important to them. Some are using genres and formats that many of their teachers and parents don't even recognize (web comics, discussion boards like 4chan, and fake Wikipedia sites, for example). Some teens will have thought deeply about media and technology in terms of the positive and negative functions, while others just take it all for granted.

When teachers and students are asked to reflect on their perspectives to prioritize the dimensions of their relationship with print, visual, sound, and digital media, they clarify their values. Such reflection is a vital part of participating in contemporary society today, and it is the first step in the pedagogy of digital and media literacy education.

2.10 ESSENTIAL DIMENSIONS OF DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY

The essential dimensions of digital and media literacy include these five elements:

1. ACCESS: Finding and sharing appropriate and relevant information and using media texts and technology tools well.

2. ANALYZE: Using critical thinking to analyze message purpose, target audience, quality, veracity, credibility, point of view, and potential effects or consequences of messages.

3. CREATE: Composing or generating content using creativity and confidence in self-expression, with awareness of purpose, audience, and composition techniques.

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4. REFLECT: Considering the impact of media messages and technology tools upon our thinking and actions in daily life and applying social responsibility and ethical principles to our own identity, communication behavior, and conduct.

5. ACT: Working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace, and the community, and participating as a member of a community at local, regional, national, and international levels.

This five-part process is fundamental to how we learn and communicate today. One metaphor for digital and media literacy is to consider it as a huge constellation of stars in the universe: Each star reflects different skills, habits of mind, and competencies. But because this literacy constellation is so vast, educators often focus on just one part of the universe. Or else they may paint a picture of the whole night sky in a once-over-lightly fashion. As I see it, the digital and media literacy universe has five distinct dimensions that spiral together in an interconnected way.

1. **The Access Dimension: Using, Finding, and Comprehending**

Access is the first step in literacy—learning how to find, comprehend, and use symbolic resources. In preschool, we may sometimes need to teach a basic access skill for using books. For example, we teach children how to hold books, open them, turn the pages, and notice the relationship between the words and pictures. Decoding printed words into meaning through comprehension is another kind of access skill. Access is always media-specific: each media form has a distinctive group of things you need to know in order to make sense of it. When it comes to using a computer, there are numerous such kinds of basic competencies involved. For example, to contribute to a wiki or blog, people need to understand file management, how to edit, and how to use formatting tools. To find information online, there's another set of specific skills, including generating appropriate keywords and selecting appropriate search engines. To par-

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ticipate in online social networks, you may need the ability to interact socially using avatars, or the ability to adapt material from one context and use it in another, or to use multitasking to get things done. And while you may be able to acquire some of these access skills on your own (just by messing around), you'll go farther with a knowledgeable person nearby available to help you out when needed.

Consider how access competencies are part of our curriculum:

••**Using Technology Tools:** Do students get to use technology tools for finding information, problem solving, self-expression, and communication? Do assignments progressively deepen their capacity to use tools well? Or is going to the technology lab simply a matter of following directions on a worksheet? Or worse, is it a break from real learning?

••**Gathering Information:** Do you model effective strategies for finding information from diverse sources? Do you give students opportunities to work independently? Do you give students choices? Or do you make most of the selections on their behalf?

••**Comprehending:** Are students challenged to make sense of texts? Do you create a learning climate where students' multiple interpretations are respected, valued, and shared? Or do you do most of the work of interpreting and explaining?

These skills embody the new Common Core Standards where research activities and information texts are emphasized, both through short, focused projects and longer-term activities. But the access dimensions of digital and media literacy can be intimidating. People can't be experts at everything. Library media specialists are masters of online database searching tools. Many social studies teachers know how to find historical documents using online archives. Most English teachers have mastered the finer points of word processing software. The technology teacher often knows how to use a lot of different software tools for creating websites and sharing ideas.

But don't ever feel guilty or inadequate about access skills you have or the skills you lack. There's no way most of us can keep up with the changing pace of technology. Most of us tend to learn the access skills we need to use on a day-to-day basis. Feelings of guilt and inadequacy may contribute to the kind of avoidance that can discourage exploration and experimentation. Since that's the case, both teachers and students need time to play with new tools, messing around and exploring so that they can continue to develop particular access skills when they need them.

2 Analyze: The Critical Thinking Dimension

An important dimension of the literacy universe is the capacity to analyze messages, considering the author, purpose, and point of view to understand how they are constructed and the assumptions that underpin them. When we evaluate, we consider the value and worth of ideas by reflecting on them within a social, political, historical, economic, and cultural context. Canadian high school teacher Rick Shepherd talks about helping students develop an informed, critical understanding that involves examining the techniques, technologies, and institutions involved in media production; being able to critically analyze media messages; and recognizing the role audiences play in making meaning from those messages.

Good questions are keys to stimulating analysis and evaluation competencies. But vocabulary and background knowledge are also needed to situate knowledge and ideas within various contexts. For example, consider a teacher who is exploring the essential question: Why do humans share stories? To get at this question, students might analyze a recent news story like Google's decision to digitize library books to make out-of-print books more widely available. To do this, it would help to have a solid understanding of the role of technological change in the publishing industry, the cultural and economic structure that has made Google so profitable, and even the relevant provisions of copyright law. A different teacher might take on the same theme

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of why humans share stories and use it to analyze the spoken word movement in hip-hop poetry. To accomplish this, a good understanding of the characteristics of performance art would come in handy. Knowledge about the golden era of rap and the role of artists like Public Enemy and De La Soul would support practices of musical analysis. It could even be useful to know about the earliest traditions in spoken word poetry: Homer, the famous poet of ancient Greek culture.

As is obvious, the more we know, the deeper our questioning becomes, and the more likely that our analysis and evaluation will lead to gaining new information through a path of interrelated questions and discoveries. It is this fundamental process that leads to the creation of new knowledge.

Consider how analysis and evaluation competencies are part of our curriculum:

••**Asking Good Questions:** Do you ask open-ended questions that have no right or wrong answers? Do students' answers matter in your classroom? Do their questions matter?

••**Gaining knowledge:** Do your assignments and activities promote curiosity? Do students get to apply and use the knowledge they are gaining? Or is this knowledge mostly just a matter of memorizing what's needed to pass high-stakes tests?

••**Contextualizing:** Have you framed your curriculum around an essential question, one that touches hearts and souls, one that helps to define what it means to be human? In doing this, do students get to explore how political, social, economic, and cultural contexts shape the way we send and receive messages? Or are students only vaguely aware of the value of what they are learning?

Some educators shy away from activities that involve analyzing and evaluating because these competencies inevitably involve issues of *values and ideology*. The practice of analysis always has an embedded point of view. When teachers' values are substantially the same as the school and community values, this isn't generally a problem. But when teachers work in communities where families have values that are different from their own, analysis and evaluation practices can activate students' questioning in ways that make some parents and school administrators uncomfortable.

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For example, in some communities, parents and teachers may have a shared concern about how materialistic values lead some young people to be obsessively concerned about brand names and other status symbols. But in other communities, a focus on the negative consequences of materialism might be seen as un-American or even elitist and snobby.

There's no doubt about it: A focus on analysis and evaluation is an essential part of the reading process, because as Robert Scholes explains, it enables students "to situate a text, to understand it from the inside sympathetically, and to step away from it and see it from the outside, critically."

3. Communicate: The Expressive Dimension

Today, the shape of writing has changed, as students compose for meaningful purposes and real audiences, not just to complete a homework assignment, explains Troy Hicks, author of *The Digital Writing Workshop.*13 Young people are composing on computers, and they are using video, sound, and interactivity. English teachers must help students pay attention to the discourse norms that exist in different contexts and communities. For example, students can learn that it's OK to use smiley emoticons when sending an e-mail thank you note to Aunt Laura but not OK to use them when writing an e-mail to the school principal. Digital composition is also increasingly collaborative, as teams work together to conceptualize, rehearse, perform, and edit elaborate video productions that require people with a range of different talents and abilities. Rhetoric is the term generally used to describe the process of helping students to speak and write effectively. Today, we can see how the principles of rhetoric are at work in helping students to acquire *textual power,* a term used by Scholes to describe the interconnection between analysis, evaluation, and composition. Every teacher must consider how communication and composition are part of their teaching goals:

••**Expression in Multiple Modes:** Do students get to use different genres, including narrative, persuasive, and expository forms? Do they get to use image, language, sound, graphic design, performance, and interactivity to get their message across?

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••**Authentic Audiences:** Do students get to use literacy practices in ways that are meaningful forms of communication? Do they "talk back" to texts? Or do they primarily summarize and reproduce the ideas they encounter? Does their work reach real audiences, or is it created as an exercise for the teacher to grade and return?

••**Content and Form in Relation to Purpose and Audience:** Do students get to shape a message's content based on their purpose and intended target audience? Or do students learn only standard forms, like the lab report, the research paper, the worksheet, or the five-paragraph essay?

4. Reflect: The Social Responsibility Dimension

All communication involves ethical and social values. We are constantly making choices about how to treat people whenever we interact socially. We are aware of how other's expectations for us may shape our own behavior. Nearly every secondary educator has heard stories about or personally experienced adolescents who may have made some poor choices when it comes to texting and social media. And even with school filters, some students manage to find ways to play online games in the computer lab on the sly, when the teacher's not looking. Throughout life, we all make choices whether or not to apply social responsibility and ethical principles to our own identity, our communication behavior, and our conduct. Today, the Internet creates complex new ways for people to interact socially. Some characteristics of digital media—the instantaneousness, for example—may encourage impulsive behavior. A student may take a picture of a friend, and when he sees that the picture looks stupid (perhaps the kid has one eye closed and one eye open), impulsive action may lead to the photo being shared on Facebook. And because it's sometimes difficult to predict the consequences of an action, the student may find that the photo has been interpreted in many different ways. The friend may be annoyed, angry, or delighted. Others who see it will make their own judgments, too. Privacy, copyright, fair use, attribution, and new forms of sharing offer other opportunities for rich conversations

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about ethical issues. Issues of representation come into play when people use digital images of themselves and their peers to represent their personal and social experiences. There's no doubt about it. What we do online affects our identity, our self-esteem, our relationships, and our future. Teachers can support students' ethical, social, and emotional development when they do the following:

••**Encourage Multiperspectival Thinking:** Do students get to imagine the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of others? Are they encouraged to move beyond either–or thinking? Do they get safe opportunities to share their feelings and listen to others? Do they practice building empathy by reflecting on the experience of standing in someone else's shoes?

••**Predict Consequences and Use Hypothetical Reasoning:** Do students get to investigate the genuine conflicts they experience each day in the world outside the classroom? Do they get to apply reasoning skills to the challenges of daily life, especially in relation to social relationships?

••**Talk about Power and Responsibility:** Do students get to examine how social status, hierarchy, respect, and power are exercised through communication practices, including praise, criticism, rumors, and gossip? Do students get suspended from school when they engage in poor judgment or do they get to reflect with their peers and their teachers on how their own communication behaviors shape the way they are treated by others?

5. Act: Make a Difference in the World

There's a relationship between education and citizenship—which is why media literacy education includes the concept of taking action. Educational theorists like Paulo Freire and John Dewey have shaped our thinking about how the classroom can be a place where students develop needed skills for engaging in genuine *ethical democratic citizenship*. Dewey asserted that learning cannot be standardized because it always takes place against the backdrop of the learner's particular knowledge and life experiences. For this reason, he suggested that teachers tie new material to their students' individual perspectives and give them the freedom to subject it to

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testing and debate. However, there are some scholars in the field of education who use the ideas of Paulo Freire and the concept of "empowerment" to refer to a highly abstracted and politicized form of cultural criticism that is disconnected from instructional practices of the classroom, the institutions of education, or the real-world practice of democracy. This is not what I mean by empowerment. Teachers whose form of social action is to "liberate" their students by helping them see the oppressive structures of capitalism and the superiority of a particular (leftist) critique may just be employing another type of propaganda instead of encouraging true dialogue that is necessary for civic action. When students' ideas and thoughts move toward specific and concrete forms of social action, it can be energizing for young people and adults alike. When taking action is valued as a *communication competence* in Grades 7–12, students and teachers share knowledge and solve problems in the family, the workplace, and the community. Teachers create learning environments that are connected to local, regional, national, and international issues, helping students see a role for themselves as contributors to their own well-being and the lives of those around them.

••**Connect the Classroom to the World:** Do classroom activities connect to relevant social issues, debates, and controversies in the world outside the classroom? Do students take action to address meaningful real-world problems that require solutions?

••**Support Leadership and Collaboration:** Do students get to use problem-solving skills to influence more than one person toward a goal? Do they recognize how to leverage the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal?

••**Develop Integrity and Accountability:** Are students held accountable for their actions? Are situations and opportunities provided that enable students to discover how personal values like honesty and courtesy benefit the individual, the group, and the society?

2.11 ADDICTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY BS STUDENTS

Traditional media have only one-way communication in which the material only provides the information. Television is an example of this; it provides visual information but the receiver of the information cannot give feedback to the sender. However, social media are two-way communication, because people are able to communicate and send and receive messages. So, social media follow the process of communication which has various elements, which are the message, the sender, the channel (Internet) and the receiver. This may be beneficial since the receiver will be able to give feedback to the sender, then the sender will know the view of the receiver and if his message was delivered appropriately.

Yunus and Salehi, (2016), said (SM), or(SNSs) often used interchangeably, such as Face book, have called attention from policymakers and educators as to whether institutions of higher learning should adopt SNSs as a teaching and learning tool in an EFL setting (cited in Tharinee Kamnoetsin, 2014). In Pakistan social media are also becoming a fundamental part of life everywhere. It seems that people use Facebook more than any other SNSs for studying or for social reasons. In texting Pakistanis use different languages for examples: Arabic, French, and even English. This research is more interested with the use of English language by Pakistani students. Sometimes EFL learners use the English language informally in their academic writing. They use inappropriate forms or informal language in writing class, such as: „lge‟ instead of language. Some students admit that they did not realize that they should not use those informal forms in writing because they had seen it often and use it regularly, or they forget and use the same words of texting in the classrooms. Jeong (2005) noted that internet is significantly and negatively related to students‟ academic performance, as well as emotional attributes.(cited in Peter Osharive, 2015). The habit of using English in informal short forms in prevalent among English language learners (ELL), and effects students' academic writing. One participant from

Yunus et al. study's (2012) stated that using short forms and abbreviations is not a positive learning experience because students may get used to the habit and then use it in the formal writing tasks in school. Selwyn (2009) pointed out that Face book failed to improve students' writing because student use informal writing structures rather than formal writing styles. Research by Rosen et al. (2009) found that those young adults who used more language based textisms (short cuts such as LOL, 2nite, etc.) in daily writing produced worse formal writing than those young adults who used fewer linguistic textisms in daily writing.(cited in Tharinee Kamnoetsin,2014). The common features of informal writing considered inappropriate in a writing class that have been widely used on online chats or social networks sites are as follows:

1-Phonetic spelling used for transcription of standard pronunciation such as "nite" for "night", "guyz" for "guys", "luv" for "love", "wanna" for "want to",(Danet and Herring, 2007,p 97).

2-Emoticons and smileys used for conveying a feeling are: such as facing a hard situation -_-! Being happy:), being sad: (.

3-Multiple punctuation marks or letters used for a prosodic effect are such as: no more!!!!!, yes!!!!!, aaaaahhhhh, sooooo. (Crystal,2001, p. 34-35)

4-Capitalization use: all capitals for "shouting" such as "I SAID NO", asterisks for emphasis such as "the*real*answer" (Crystal, 2001, p. 35).

5-Special abbreviations or acronyms used for saving time and making it convenient, such as b4/B4 (before), lol/LOL (laughing out loud), oic/OIC (oh I see).

6-Common shortenings used for easy use and convenience are "u" (you). "I" (I), "r" (are), "thx"(thanks), "pls" (please), "tmr" (tomorrow).

These features were cited in (Tharinee Kamnoestsin, 2014).

2.12 THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BS STUDENTS

Attention has been shifted from visible to invisible friends, while important ventures like study and writing are affected in the process, students addictiveness on SNSs can cause many disadvantages in some way:

a) It is not a suitable environment or it is inappropriate for formal teaching and learning activities (Kabilan et al. 2010. Shih, 2011).

b) May affect student learning outcomes and physical and mental health because, they spend too much using it.

c) It creates students" distractions (Yunus and Salehi, 2012).

d) It creates students habit of using short forms too much or informal writing, which leads to grammar mistakes (white, 2009).

e) Can result miscommunication because the writing can be lacking in the opportunities for expression, explanation, and clarification that are found in face-to-face interaction (Zaidieh,2012).(cited in Tharine ekamnoetsin ,2014).

A negative effect of social media in terms of learning English is that it may not provide a suitable environment for formal teaching and learning (Kabilan et al, 2010, Omar et al, 2012, Shih, 2016). Because it creates student"s distraction and creates a habit of using too many short forms in writing (White, 2009, Yunus, et al, 2012).Moreover, Manan et al (2012) pointed out that engaging with social Media may also increase the usage of English poor quality because students tend to use non-standard English when interacting with each other online. Thus, the evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media, Facebook, on EFL learners' writing has been inconclusive.(cited in Tharinee Kamnoetsin, 2014).

Chapter 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the procedures followed throughout the study. It introduces a complete description of the methodology of the study, the population, the sample and the instrumentation in the study and the research design. Moreover, it introduces the statistical treatment for the study findings.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

This qualitative study focused on surveys and interviews conducted with students and teachers to determine their perspectives on social media and its impact on literacy development. The current study was descriptive in nature. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of texting and social media use on BS level students and their ability to write formally. For data collection, questionnaires were applied to students to get information about their internal and external motivation, level of interest during English classes and methodological tools applied by the teachers. Interviews of teachers were carried out in order to gather opinions based on their experiences about the problem.

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION

For conducting the study and data analysis, there are a number of data collection tools like interview, questionnaire, observation, check list etc. and each of the research tool has its own significance and is used under specific conditions and for specific type of study. Questionnaire is an efficient research instrument as it requires less time, is less expensive and permits collection of data from a much larger sample (Best and Khan, 1992). It is quite suitable instrument for the collection of reliable and quantifiable information from all members of a sample. It is easy to fill out, keep respondents on subject, is relatively objective and fairly easy to be tabulated an

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analyzed. (Dalen,1973) The researcher created a survey specifically for this study. The survey consisted of questions relating to brief demographic information and to the student's cell phone plans and habits— including whether or not they have their own cell phones and if their plan include unlimited texting—and their use of social media—Face book and Twitter—and instant messaging (IMing). The inclusion of the social media questions is to account for students whether they do not text as frequently due to their cell phone, or lack thereof, or their cell phone plans and the specifics of texting associated with that plan. So in this study, questionnaire was taken as the instrument of data collection as it is easy to collect data through questionnaire and the results of the study are usually unbiased. There is no chance of dual answering so the results are more significant.

1**:** Questionnaire for teachers working at BS level.

2: Questionnaire for students studying at BS level.

3.2.1 Questionnaire for Teachers (Annex A)

Questionnaire was used as a tool in this research for the teachers, working at BS level to assess teacher's opinions and estimates towards the impact of social media on students' writing skills. It consisted of 10 questions. All the questions were objective type questions. The main purpose of this questionnaire was to know how many teachers think that the use of texting is necessary in the classroom for improving formal writing skills of the BS level students. These questionnaires were supplied to the teachers personally. After getting the views through questionnaires, the data analysis was carried out. As researcher gave these questionnaires personally to every teacher so the received data was correct. After getting data, percentage was made and described with the help of graphs.

3.2.2 Questionnaire for Students (Annex-B)

A questionnaire which included 10 questions was also distributed among the BS level students of 1st semester of English Department enrolled in Spring-2019 at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus. The questionnaire was designed to gather the students' opinions about using social media in order to improve their writing skills.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study consisted of all the BS level teachers and students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus. The data was collected from all the BS level learners of 1st semester of English Department enrolled in Spring-2019.

3.4 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample of the study consisted of (20) teachers and (200) students of BS 1st semester of English Department who were randomly chosen from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus.

```
                        200 Students


        100 Boys                              100 Girls
                        20 Teachers


        10 Male                               10 Female
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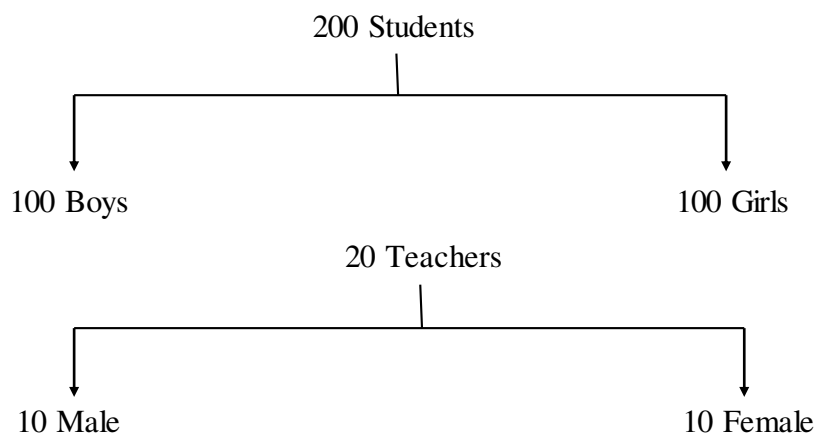
Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter shows the results of researcher's investigation which were obtained after classroom observation. The researcher has already discussed that this study was conducted to investigate the impact of social media on learners' writing skills. After data collection, the researcher analyzed the questionnaires statistically.

## 4.1 ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher gave the questionnaires to 20 teachers and they were asked to tick the option they consider right. Each questionnaire had 10 questions and these questionnaires were distributed among the selected teachers of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus.

Q#1: Do you use social media in your daily life?

1. Most of times   2. Sometimes   3.Never
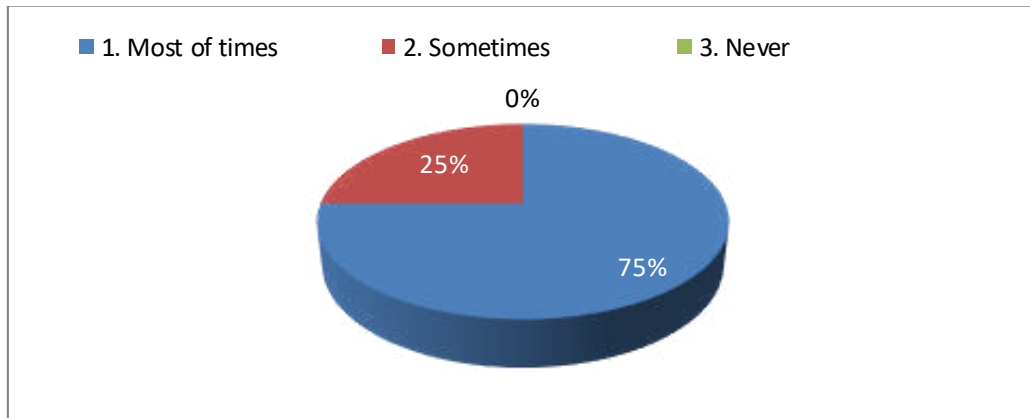
The given option and percentages:

1. Most of times   75%   2. Sometimes   25%   3.Never   0%

As it is clear that 75% teachers used social media most of time and 25% teachers used sometimes. This media, if carefully implemented, is important and compulsory for everyone.

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Q#2: Do you think that social media has a positive impact on learning process?

A: Yes   B: No
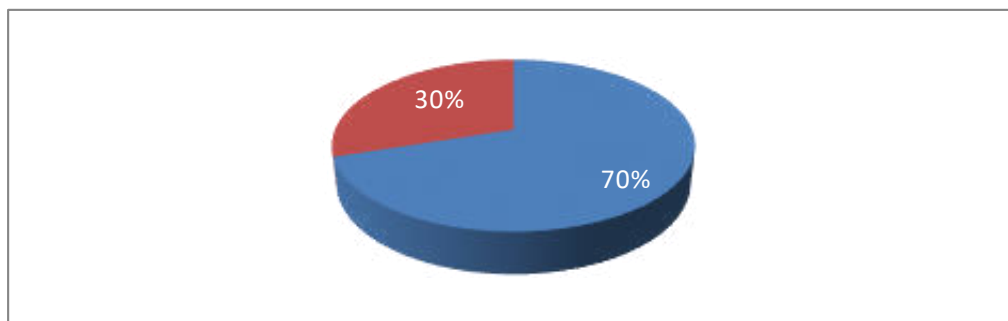
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   70%   2. No   30%

Here we can see that only 30% teachers think that social doesn't have positive impact on learning process but 70% are strongly agreed that it improves their learning process and has positive results. So it is a good sign for their written proficiency.

Q#3: Do you encourage your students to interact through social media?

A: Usually   B: Sometimes
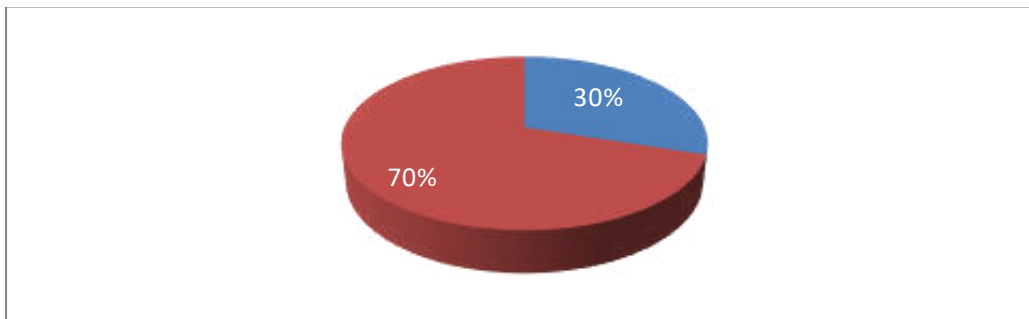
The given options and percentages:

1. Usually   70%   2. Sometimes   30%

The above chart shows that only 30% teachers encouraged their students to interact through social media sometimes while 70% usually encouraged them. The reason is untrained and incompetent English teachers. It is also a big hindrance in teaching learning process.

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Q#4: Do you have any pre-service or in-service training in ELT?

A: Yes   B: No   C: Not necessary
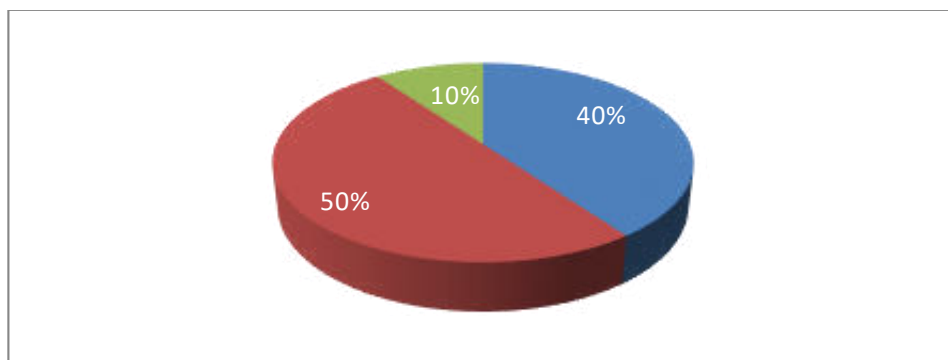
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   40%   2. No   50%   3.Not Necessary   10%

The above chart shows that only 40% teachers got training, 50% didn't get any training and 10% thought it unnecessary. So it is also a big hindrance in teaching learning process because an ignorant and untrained teacher spreads ignorance everywhere.

Q#5: Do you implement texting for the practice of writing skills?

A: Sometimes   B: Usually   C: Not at all   D: Seldom
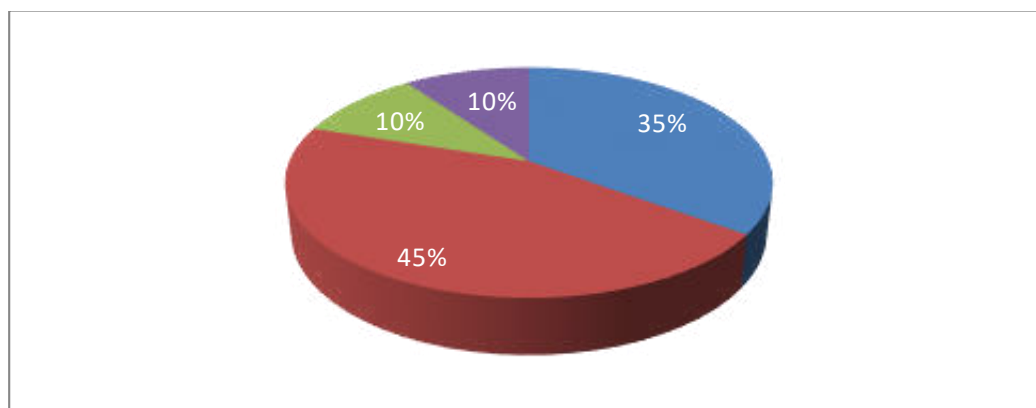
The given options and percentages:

1. Sometimes   35%   2. Usually   45%   3.Not at all   10%   4.Seldom   10%

As the above chart shows that 35% teachers used texting sometimes with students. While 45% teachers usually used it with the learners because it gave them chances to take part in such activities. Only 10% teachers seldom used this technique while 10% not at all.

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Q#6: Should texting be meaningful and purposeful?

A: Yes   B: No   C: To some extent
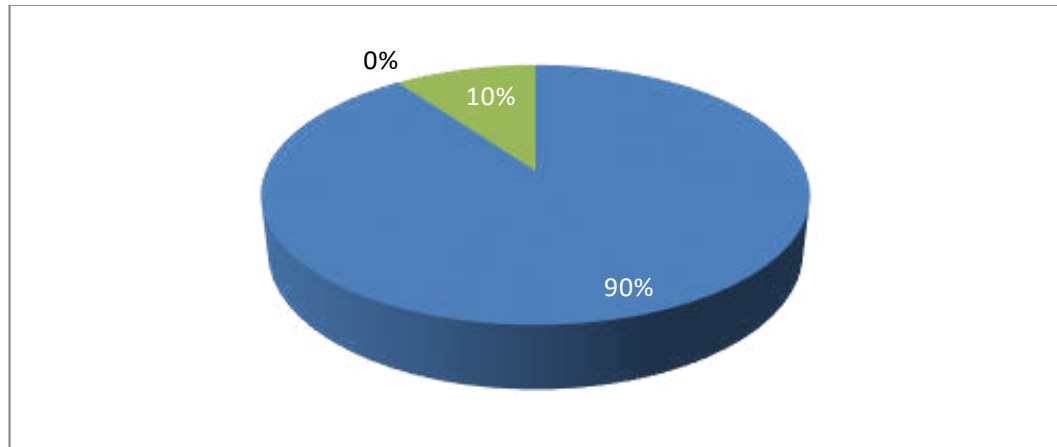
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   90%   2. No   0%   3. To some extent   10%

Mostly teachers were of the opinion that texting is extremely helpful to enable students to learn writing skills in a playful manner. They all were agreed that the writing activities should be purposeful. Only 10% teachers thought it meaningless.

Q#7: Teaching writing skills through social media makes learning everlasting.

A: Yes   B: No   C: To some extent
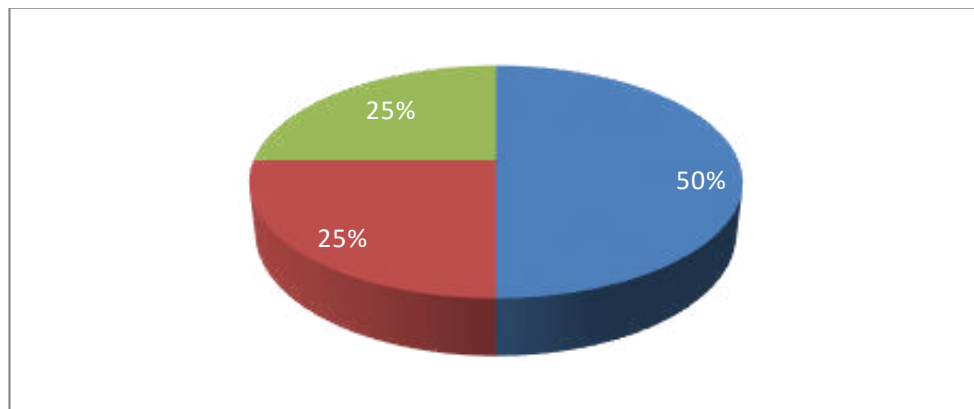
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   50%   2. No   25%   3. To some extent 25%

As the chart shows that 50% teachers gave positive response about the statement that social media makes the learning everlasting while 50% were undecided.

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Q# 8: How would you compare social media with other Medias that you use?

A: Excellent   B: Good   C: Fair   D: Satisfactory
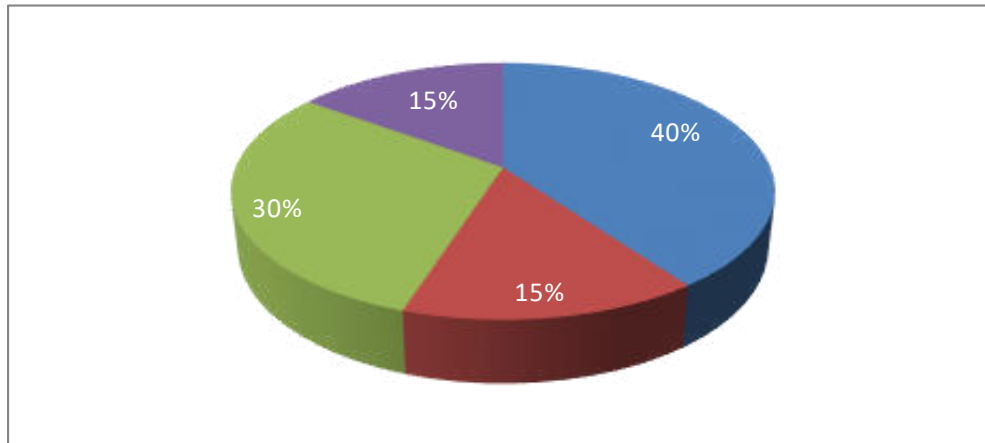
The given options and percentages:

1. Excellent   40%   2.Satisfactory   15%   3.Good   30%   4.Fair   15%

As the chart shows that 40% teachers thought it excellent while 30% consider it good but 15%

thought it satisfactory and 15% fair. So, most of the teachers favored its impact.

Q# 9 I always use internet resources in my class.

1. Yes   2. No   3. To some extent
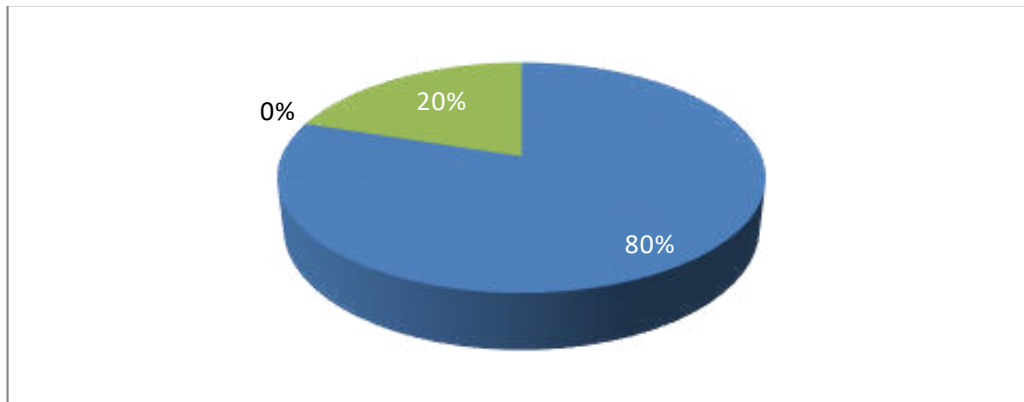
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   80%2. No   0%3. To some extent   20%

As the above chart shows that most of the teachers used internet resources up to 80% in their

classes while 20% were undecided. So all this shows that they liked social media.

Q# 10: Do you find any difficulty in implementing social media in the classroom?

A: No   B: Not at all   C: Yes, but I manage it
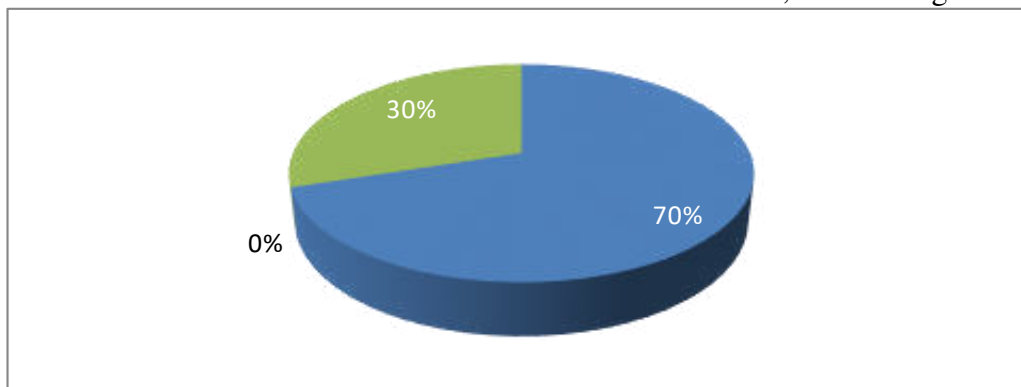
The given options and percentages:

1. No   70%   2. Not at all   0%   3. Yes, but I manage it   30%

According to the above chart, up to 70% teachers argued that they didn't find any difficulty in implementing social media in the classroom while 30% teachers said that they manage this problem by themselves to utilize it in the classroom.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (Annex-B)

The researcher gave the questionnaires to 200 students and they were asked to tick the option they consider right. Each questionnaire had 10 questions and these questionnaires were distributed among the selected students of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus.

Q#1: Do you visit social networking sites in the classroom?
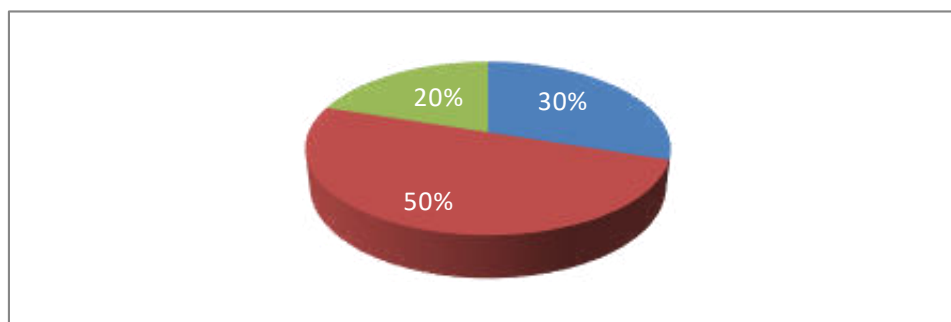
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   30%   2. No   50%   3. To some extent   20%

As the above chart shows that 50% students do not use social networking sites inside the classroom, only 30% used and 20% try to use to some extent.

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Q#2: Do you think social media is necessary to go in science, technology or business field?
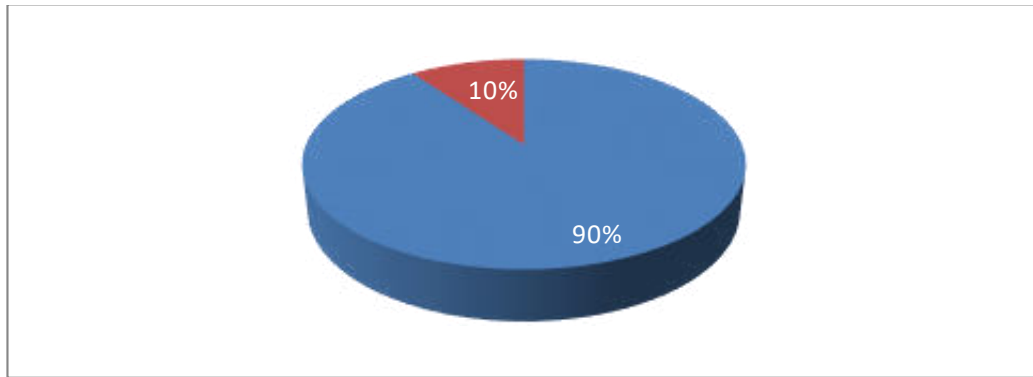
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes 90% 2. No 10%

The chart shows that 90% of the students hold the opinion that social media is very necessary to join the field of science, technology and business. As we all know, English is a global language and is spoken all around the world. So, its importance is evident. Only 10% students contradicted this view point.

Q#3: Do you practice writing skills in the classroom?
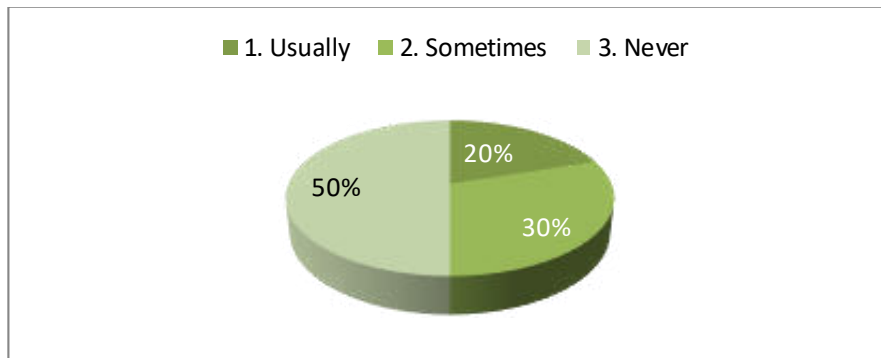
The given options and percentages:

1. Usually 20% 2. Sometimes 30% 3. Never 50%

Here, it can be analyzed with the help of this chart that 20% students practice writing skills regularly, 30% do it sometimes and 50% do not practice at all. The students lack motivation here, which results deficiency in writing skills.

Q#4: Do you find social media helpful in daily life situations?
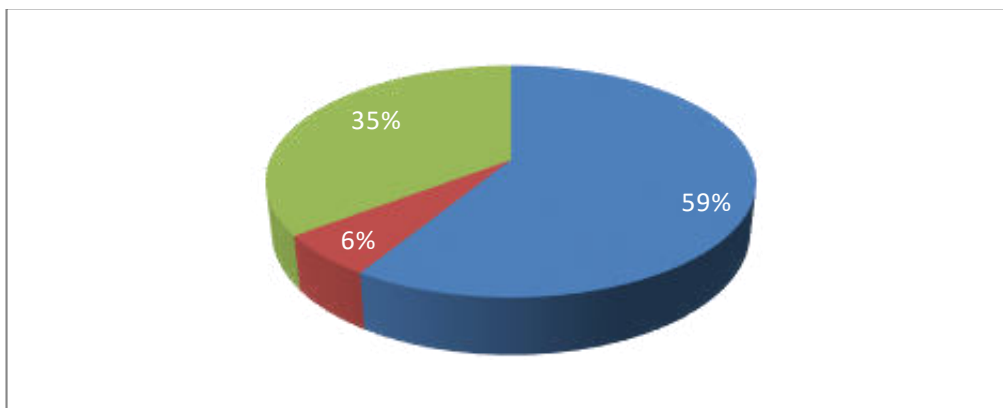
**The given options and percentages:**

    1. Yes   59%   2. No   6%   3. To some extent   35%

It can be observed here that mostly students think that social media is helpful for learning writing skills. They can use this media to improve their formal writing skills because these are extremely helpful.

Q#5: Do you try to do some effort to improve your writing skills?
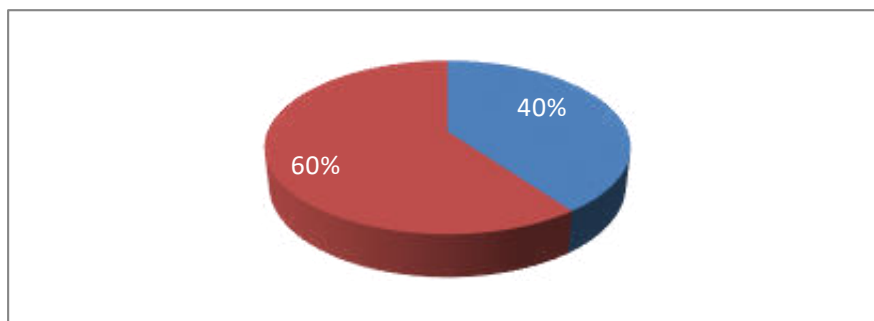
The given options and percentages:

    1. Yes   40%   2. No   60%

Here, it can be observed that only 40% students themselves tried to do some effort to improve their writing skills. 60% students did nothing for their improvement of writing skills. Here, the teacher should work hard to create motivation and interest among such students.

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Q # 6: Do you use abbreviation while texting?
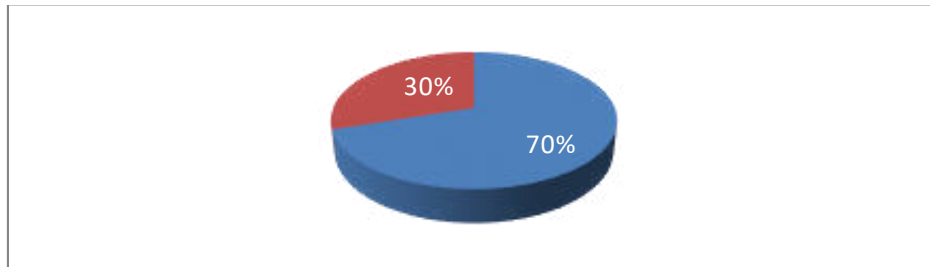
The given options and percentages:

1. Yes   70%   2. No   30%

The above chart shows that most of the students like to use abbreviations while texting.

The students like it so much because it enhances their interest in learning writing skills.

Q#7: Do you think that texting affects the students' formal writing?
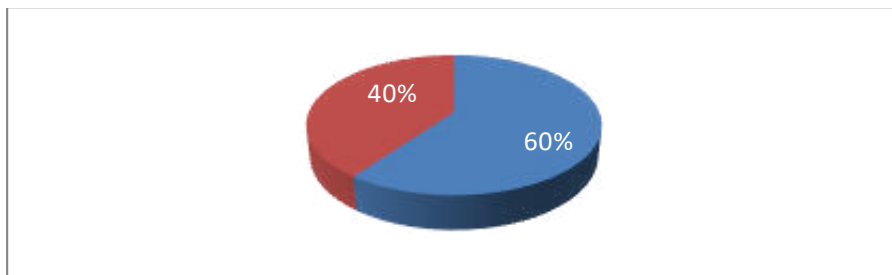
Percentages and the given options:

1. Yes   60%   2. No   40%

As the chart shows, 60% students think that texting affects their formal writing while 40% students find it to some extent.

Q #8: What do you prefer when communicating with social networking sites?

A: Face book   B: Twitter   C: IMing
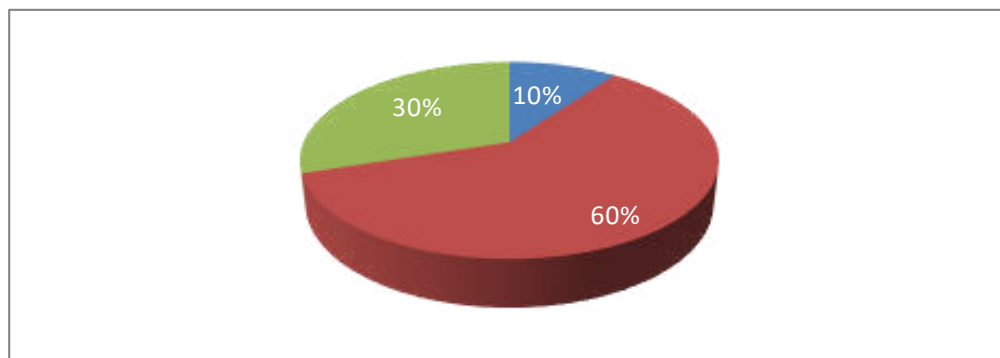
The given options and percentages:

1. IMing   10%   2. Face book   60%   3. Twitter   30%

As the chart shows that 60% students use Facebook while 30% use Twitter and only 10% use IMing. So the popularity of Facebook is much more.

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Q#9: Do you think social media helpful for your academic writing?
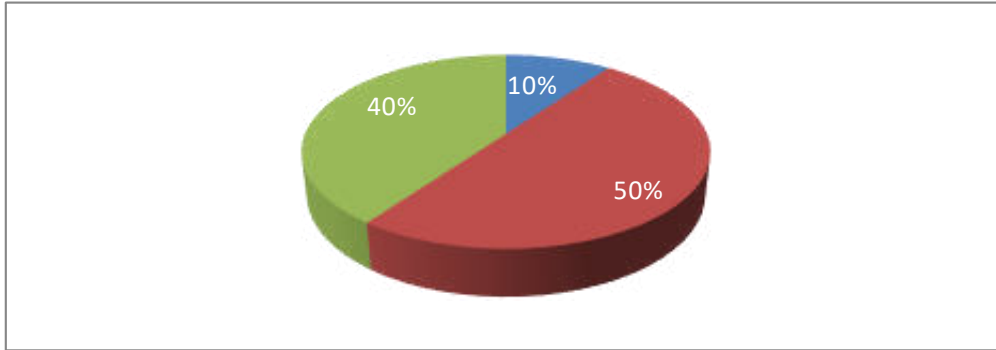
The given options and percentage:

    1. To some extent   10%   2. Yes   50%   3. No   40%

According to the chart, only 10% students think social media helpful to some extent while 50%

think it very helpful and 40% students do not think so.

Q #10 In which ways Students' Academic Writing can be affected?
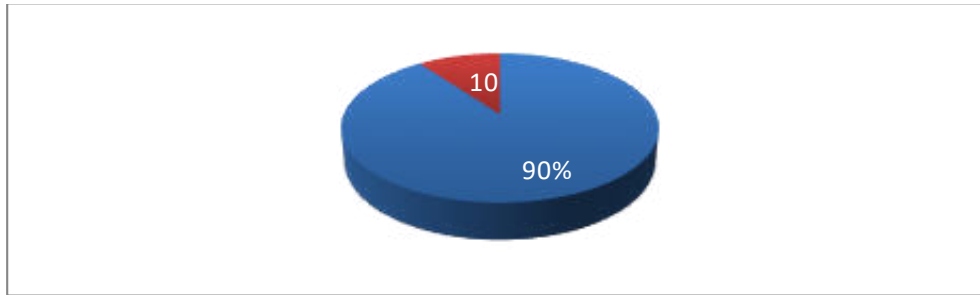
The percentage and the given options:

    1. Spelling   90%   2. Punctuation   10%

As the chart shows, 90% students think that their spellings are affected while 10% think that

their punctuation is affected.

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Chapter 5
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

5.1FINDINGS

The research findings showed that texting became a necessity among students, either for study matters or personal ones. Texting between students involve different languages but it seems that English is gaining a high status since it became the second most used language for Face book chats after Urdu. On the other hand 82% of students use abbreviations and acronyms while texting for different reasons. Some students use abbreviations to gain time, some others aim is to facilitate the process of texting. Most of students want to attract others by using abbreviations while texting, because it is fashionable, however, research findings showed that the most dominant reason of using abbreviations is to gain time and to facilitate the process of communication. Texting is a phenomenon that saves the students time and efforts that can be wasted trying to find the correct forms of the words, however, most of students agree that texting affects negatively their academic writing. Participants said through their answers in the questionnaire and according to the observation made, that texting has brought some of the negative habits into formal essays and paragraphs, students became irresponsible when writing academically. They start to neglect the rules and the form which are necessary in producing a meaningful piece of writing. In addition, they commit spelling mistakes that are used frequently when texting.

5.2CONCLUSIONS

Social media are becoming an integral and fundamental part of life everywhere. Face book users are rising each day including Pakistani users. They developed a new way of texting between each

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other using different languages like English. The present study explored the negative impact of social media on BS students and mistakes done while writing informally among English language students of The Islamia University, Rahim Yar Khan Campus. The current study was set to seek answers about the formulated research questions on the phenomena of social media.

Through the two research instruments, there has been an attempt to discover some of the ways in which the BS level students make mistakes while writing formal essays, one of the reasons behind these mistakes is the negative impact of texting on them. Indeed, students when texting write the way they speak without giving importance to the academic rules such as capital letters, punctuation, etc. This lack of importance became a habit for students while writing in classes. It is agreed that social media have an important role in students' daily life whether from the personal side since they facilitate the interaction between people from all over the world or from the educational side since they provide useful information. However, this research work proved that there is another side in which social media can affect negatively on the students' educational career.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the results obtained from this study, some suggestions are recommended for students. As to make the difference between writing when texting and writing in classes, a clear cut should be done between the two, students should separate the two styles of writing from each other, as the first is simply used to interact with friends and different people and to gain time while doing so. However, the second should be written clearly using an academic style and respecting the rules (punctuation, grammar, coherence, etc.) to separate between the two styles students may join some groups of English learning on Face book, since, they use Face book approximately every day. In these groups they can learn to interact with other members formally without using abbreviations, acronyms, emoticons, etc. This will help to improve their writing skills. The researcher gave some recommendations for them to separate between texting and writing in

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class. Social networking sites and texting became a must in a world of globalization and technological invention. The present study opens the door for other researchers to make a further exploration about texting among students and the causes that leads them to use it while academic writing. Instant instructor's feedback is very advantageous in this mode of learning. It is highly recommended. It keeps the learning process streaming throughout the day. The institutions are suggested to improve the quantity of teaching and learning facilities such as book and media in the classroom. Those facilities are very important for the teacher and the students in teaching and learning process.

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Appendix-A   <u>Questionnaire for Teachers</u>

Texting, Social Media and Literacy: Writing in BS Classroom

Name: _____   Gender:

Name of Institute: _____   Age   _____

Tick the box that indicates your opinion for each statement below:

Q.1 Do you use social media in your daily life?

	Most of times		Sometimes		Never

Q.2 Do you think that social media has a positive impact on learning process?

	Yes		No		

Q.3 Do you encourage your students to interact through social media?

	Usually		Some times		

Q.4 Do you have any pre-service or in-service training in ELT?

	Yes		No		Not Necessary

Q.5 Do you implement texting for the practice of writing skills?

	Sometimes		Usually		Not at all		Seldom

Q.6 Should texting be meaningful and purposeful?

	Yes		No		To some extent

Q.7 Teaching writing skills through social media makes learning everlasting.

	Yes		No		To some extent

Q.8 How would you compare social media with other Medias that you use?

	Excellent		Good		Fair		Satisfactory

Q.9 I always use internet resources in my class.

	Yes		No		To some extent

Q.10 Do you find any difficulty in implementing social media in the classroom?

	No		Not at all		Yes, but I manage myself

Appendix- B   **Questionnaire for Students**

Texting, Social Media and Literacy: Writing in BS Classroom

Name: _____   Gender: | Female | Male |

Name of Institute:_____   Age:_____

Tick the box that indicates your opinion for each statement below:

Q.1 Do you visit social networking sites in the classroom?

	Yes		No		To some extent

Q.2 Do you think social media is necessary to go in science, technology or business field?

	Yes		No		

Q.3 Do you practice writing skills in the classroom?

	Usually		Sometimes		Never

Q.4 Do you find social media helpful in daily life situations?

	Yes		No		To some extent

Q.5 Do you try to do some effort to improve your writing skills?

	Yes		No		

Q.6 Do you use abbreviation while texting?

	Yes		No		

Q.7 Do you think that texting affects the students' formal writing?

	Yes		No		

Q.8 What do you prefer when communicating with social networking sites?

	Facebook		Twitter		IMing

Q.9 Do you think social media helpful for your academic writing?

	Yes		No		To Some extent

Q.10 In which ways Students' Academic Writing can be affected?

	Spelling		Punctuation		