

The Use of Social Media and Wikis in Teaching Writing Skills

A Review Article

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Abstract—The use of technology has reached its potential stage in teaching and learning. Particularly, ELT teachers and learners are mostly involved in utilizing social media platforms and Wikis in the process of teaching and learning in their classrooms. The current study aims to find out the impact of using social media and Wikis on the writing skills of learners in a number of studies covering the years 2010-2018. Thus, the Google Scholar database was used for finding out relevant literature within the purpose and limit of the current study using the search terms of ‘technology and learning’ in the search button. The methodology used for the present study is PRISMA diagram 2009, which is a systematic way of finding out relevant and available literature. In the final stage, 17 articles were selected for the analysis purposes, and the literature was then classified into different themes to find out the impacts. The results of all 17 articles show that using social media and Wikis played a significant role in improving the writing skills of learners. Thus, it is recommended for both teachers and learners to utilize different social media and Wiki platforms in the process of teaching and learning.

Keywords—Technology; Social Media; Wikis; Writing Skills.

1 Introduction

Teaching and learning are considered as two complicated and changing fields. It is because of the current trends in the field of technology that have changed not only the ways of teaching but the methods of learning as well. Thus, it is a new era of combining technologies, and numerous apps and technological tools have been utilized in teaching and learning environments [1]–[5]. Hence, both teachers and learners need to cope with these trends where they teach and learn, respectively. As in the study of [6], it is stated that academic institutions are changing their pedagogical methods in the process of teaching and learning from the traditional (teacher-centered) to the modern (students-centered) techniques. This change is currently even more fluid with the use of

technologies in teaching and learning. Therefore, students and teachers can interact from anywhere, at any time using various types of technologies and technological platforms. Arani (2018) investigated the impact of using Skype for improving the writing skills of the students. The study found out that using Skype in this process noticeably helped learners to improve their writing skills. It means that using Skype resulted in the students to improve their writing skills. Fattah (2015) also found out that using WhatsApp resulted in sound effects on the writing skills of the students. The researcher conducted an experimental study in a systematic way to represent the problem statement and results of the study after data collection, which again shows the positive effects of using online platforms on students' writing. Rusli et al. (2019) conducted a study to find out the influences of using social media on the writing skills of ESL students. The findings of their study reveal that using social media for the purpose of improving students' writing skills is both challenging and effective. They stated that the training of teachers should be taken into account while using social media in teaching and learning.

Accordingly, teachers who have the ability to use social media for their students in terms of writing will give better results while compared to the ones untrained on how to use social media. Rong and Noor (2019) also conducted a study regarding the effectiveness of Digital Storytelling Tools on the performances of students. The results of their research show that they observed a definite improvement in students' achievements while compared the treatment marks of the groups. Similarly, in the study of [3], it is stated that the use of Quick Response (QR) codes has become an excellent tool that shows the combination of mobile-based technological learning practices in the process of teaching and learning. To add more, game-based education is also a good initiative nowadays, particularly for the younger learners to not only enjoy the learning environment but to have social interactions, cooperation and excitement as well [4]. The studies of [2]-[5] also show the potential of using mobile educational apps for children during classroom activities. It is not the only need and requirement of today's 21st century, but this type of learning is also the willingness of the learners of the current generation.

The focus of the current study is on the impact of using social media and Wikis on the writing skills of learners covering the years 2010-2018. Writing is one of the crucial skills that most of the time, students need to improve it by using different ways of practicing and exercising. Besides students, teachers also use various ways of improving their students' writing skills and capabilities. The current study reviewed numerous research studies conducted in the period within these eight years and the impact of using social media and Wikis technological platforms on the writing skills of students. As researchers consider the skill of writing as of the vital one to be mastered, this study was conducted to find out the impact of social media and Wiki on the writing skills of learners. The process of selecting articles was performed using the PRISMA statement that ensures the quality relevance of literature. After the screening and identification processes, researchers categorized the themes resulted from the literature and associated them with the focus of the current study.

2 Research Methodology

The current technological trends in mastering a language caused both teachers and learners to be adaptable to these changes. Thus, understanding the impact of these technological trends, mainly social media and Wikis, persuaded researchers to review various studies in this focal aspect of teaching and learning. Therefore, the current research examines the previous literature within the purpose of the study and covers the past eight years. For the inclusion and exclusion of articles within the aim of the study, researchers used the PRISMA statement to perform the whole process. The PRISMA 2009 statement is a systematic way that allows researchers to find out the most relevant studies within the purpose of a study. Hence, the current study considered only the published journal research articles and is limited only to these types of literature. Researchers used the Google Scholar database for finding out the relevant literature. The reason for using this database is that a large number of literatures can be found through Google Scholar when compared with other databases like SCOPUS, Cross Reference, and others.

2.1 Literature research

Researchers use different databases to find out relevant literature on their related topics. In the case of the current study, the researchers used Google Scholar as the primary database for collecting the data within the keywords ‘technology and learning’ of the study. The total number of the studies were 4,760,000 in the first attempt to search without limiting in the years. After that, the result of studies decreased to 1,470,000 in the second attempt of limiting within the years 2010-2018. After that, the researcher used the advanced search of Google Scholar and limited the keywords and the research articles within these years. This attempt resulted in 1,780 of research articles for the keywords within the limited years. After that, the researcher saved the search results in ‘My library’ of Google Scholar and exported in Excel file for further sorting and analysis. Then, different sorting methods were used to specify the research articles within the limit and the focus of the current study. After these sorting and screening, 60 articles were purified for consideration and further analysis. However, in these 60 articles, only 17 articles were selected for the analysis to find out the use of social media and Wikis and their impact on the writing skills of learners. See Figure 1. for the identification and inclusion processes.

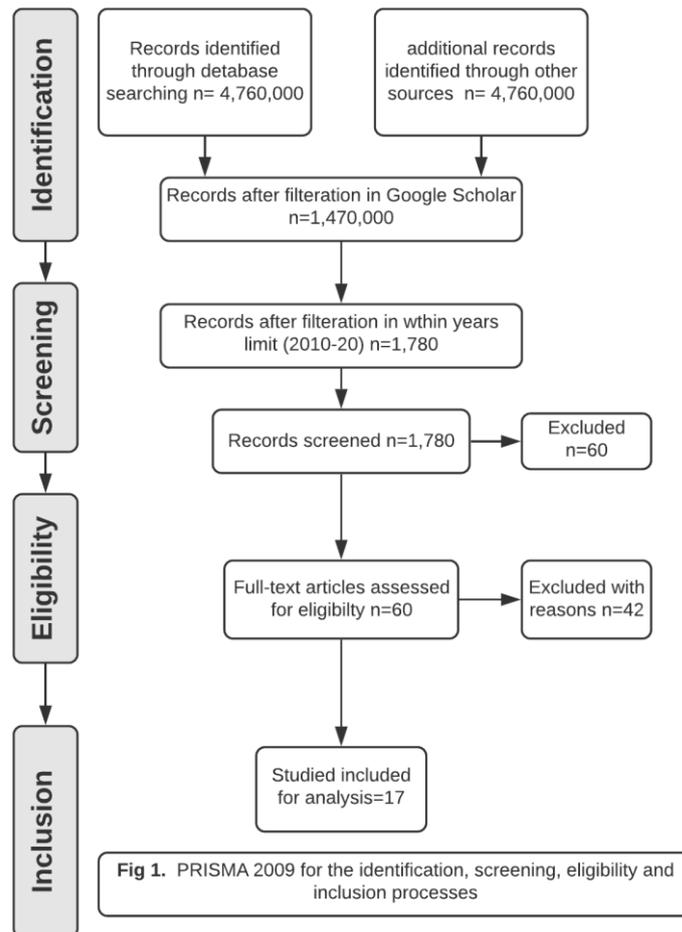


Fig. 1. The literature procedure using PRISMA guidelines

2.2 Eligibility and inclusion criteria

In these stages, researchers applied various types of sorting to look for the papers relevant to the purpose of the study and to include them for analysis. In this case, the articles that were focusing on other fields such as Sciences, Life Sciences, and Medical were excluded, and the articles considered for eligibility of the current study were in the field of Social Sciences. The articles reviewed were in full-text access and as well as within the focus of the impact of technologies on the writing skills of learners in different contexts in literature. Thus, after different screening and eligibility processes, only 17 of the papers were considered for this study. Although there were other articles

within the keywords searched in the database, but the current study only examined the papers published during 2010-2018 years in different journals globally.

2.3 Research methods used in these studies

Table 1. presents the types of methods that the researchers used in their studies and the percentage of using these research methods in all the selected literature.

Table 1. Methods used in the literature

No.	Method	No. of studies	Percentage
1.	Quantitative Research Method	2	11.79%
2.	Qualitative Research Method	0	0%
3.	Mixed-Method Approach	12	70.53%
4.	Experimental Research Method	3	17.68%
			Total:100%

Table 1 above presented that most of the studies selected for the current study, conducted mixed-method approach, and it makes (70.53%) of all the studies. In these studies, researchers used both numerical and descriptive data to find out the influences of using social media and Wikis on the writing skills of students. However, the remaining of the studies used quantitative and experimental methods (29.47%) for collecting and analyzing the data. No study was found in these articles to use a qualitative approach for data collection and analysis.

2.4 Years of publication

As the focus of the current study is only within the years 2010-2018, so Figure 2. shows the overall number of the papers selected for the current study and as well as the year of publication.

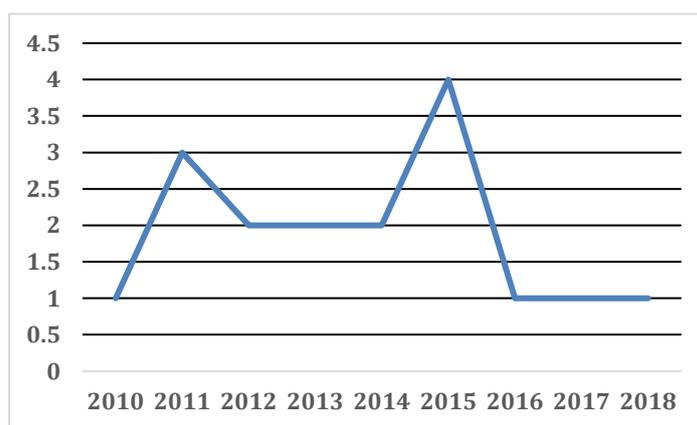


Fig. 2. Year of Publication

Figure 2. shows that most of the studies were published in the year 2015, and it is 4 articles in different journals. Secondly, it is 2011 in which 3 of the studies were published. From the years 2012, 2013 and 2014, two of the studies were published in each year. Though, the years 2010 and 2016-2018 are in the lowest category, where only one study was published in each of these years, respectively.

3 Classification of the Literature

After looking critically into all the literature selected under consideration of the current study, it seems that the selected literature is consisting of the following themes. These themes have been extracted from the empirical studies regarding the impact of the technologies on EFL and ESL students' writing skills. These two themes, including the effects of social media and Wikis on students' writing dominating among other studies and build up most of them.

The use of social media as an approach to improve students' writing skills builds most studies among identified technologies. Social media plays a significant role in the 21st century. No one can argue that social media have been playing a role in terms of communication and building awareness in different aspects of today's knowledge. This platform has attracted the educational practitioners, instructors, and teachers' attention to incorporate them into the teaching-learning process, especially in the writing subject. Different types of social media, such as Facebook, Skype, and WhatsApp, have been used to facilitate the writing process.

Another primary source of technology being used by scholars to improve students' writing skills is Wiki. The use of Wikis has been considered as an effective strategy to empower and reinforce the writing skills of students. Wikis have been identified as an effective platform facilitating the writing process in multiple studies, and the positive results of these studies prove this argument.

3.1 The impact of using social media on writing skills

Writing is a vital skill for academic improvement. This skill has been considered a tough task for students, especially for those who are ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. The English language is a language that is taught as a second or foreign language in many global countries. Thus, teachers, and learners use different technological tools to improve their writing skills. Social media is one of these tools. The following Table 2. highlights the studies regarding using social media platforms for improving the wiring skills of learners.

Table 2. Social Media in ESL/EFL Classroom

Author(s)	Title	Findings
[11]	Evaluating the use of a social media tool for collaborative group writing of secondary school students in Hong Kong.	Using social media helped students to improve their writing. However, it needs the teacher's active role to be able to utilize them properly.
[8]	The effectiveness of using WhatsApp messenger as one of the mobile learning techniques to develop students' writing skills.	Results showed that using WhatsApp in writing classes has a significant effect on students writing skills and improves their performance during post-tests.
[12]	Applying a role-playing strategy to enhance learners' writing and speaking skills in EFL courses using Facebook and Skype as learning tools: A case study in Taiwan.	Students' writing and speaking were improved using these online platforms.
[13]	Effects of Facebook collaborative writing groups on ESL undergraduates' writing performance.	It was discovered that the group with Facebook collaborative meditation had scored slightly better scores compared to the face to face group. However, the scores of post-tests were not significantly different.
[14]	The impact of WhatsApp messenger usage on students' performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana.	Students believe WhatsApp messenger made communication among them easier and faster.
[15]	The effectiveness of Facebook groups on teaching and improving writing: Students' perceptions.	Using Facebook groups had helped students improve their writing skills, especially had helped them in terms of brainstorming.
[16]	Can Web 2.0 technology assist college students in learning English writing? Integrating Facebook and peer assessment with blended learning.	Peer assessment improves writing skills through using Facebook could be useful for students. Learning is also helpful through the online platform.

The findings of the articles reviewed in the current study indicate that using social media improves the writing skill of ESL/ESL learners. It was found by [13] that using social media platforms helped students to have better performance in their writing skills, where teachers play an important role in facilitating these platforms. This points out the vital role of the teacher in these processes. In another study by [14] on the use of WhatsApp messenger indicated that using this social media as a tool of learning, had helped learners to have more accessible and faster communications, showing the significant role of social media as a tool that boosts the learning process.

Furthermore, it is indicated in these studies that using social media platforms in the process of teaching and learning produced many levels of enhanced learning in students. For example, improving cooperative learning skills and brainstorming are among the factors through which students can improve their writing skills and as well as working group skills and critical thinking skills [13],[15]. Generally, studies such as [8], [16], and [12] indicated that using social media can positively affect and result in better performance in the learning process of students. The results also showed that using social media significantly affected the writing skills of learners in different contexts globally.

3.2 The impact of using wikis on writing skills

As mentioned earlier, different technological tools are being used by both teachers and learners in the teaching-learning process. Using social media is one of these tools discussed earlier. Within, using Wikis in this process is also of potential significance that educators use. Thus, the following Table 3. highlights the studies that show the impacts of using Wikis on the writing skills of the learners.

Table 3. Wikis in ESL/EFL Classroom

Author(s)	Title	Findings
[18]	Exploring students' perceptions of integrating Wiki technology and peer feedback into English writing courses.	Students perceived the application of Wiki and peer feedback as a positive method to improve their writing.
[19]	Learning outcomes and students' perceptions of online writing: Simultaneous implementation of a forum, blog, and Wiki in an EFL blended learning setting.	Finally, the results of the interviews also showed that the course had helped students to overcome the challenges.
[20]	Promoting collaborative writing through wikis: A new approach for advancing innovative and active learning in an ESP context.	Students who were engaged with collaborative writing tasks gained mastery in business writing and enjoyed the challenge of this new learning experience.
[21]	Peer-feedback and revision process in a wiki mediated collaborative writing.	Accessibility to the data and enabling students and teachers to access the data and provide feedback anytime and anywhere.
[17]	Using a wiki-based collaborative process writing pedagogy to facilitate collaborative writing among Chinese primary school students.	Students' perceptions towards the Wiki-based Collaborative Process Writing Pedagogy were positive, and they perceived it as beneficial, motivating, and boosting for their writing.
[22]	Extensive writing in foreign-language classrooms: A blogging approach.	Students overall writing performance had improved participants' autonomous monitoring of their writing improved as well and promoted positive attitudes towards writing among the students through blogs.
[23]	The effectiveness of using online blogging for students' individual and group writing.	Students improve their content, vocabulary choice, style, and language mechanism in their writing skills.
[24]	A study on the integration of Google Docs as a web-based collaborative learning platform in EFL writing instruction.	Students in the course demonstrated positive perceptions about the use of the cloud-based online writing tool and having collaborative peer-editing experience.
[25]	EFL learners' use of blogging for developing writing skills and enhancing attitudes towards English learning: An exploratory study.	The results of the study prove that using weblogs in writing classes can motivate students and give them more opportunities to be written.
[26]	E-Portfolio as a corrective platform towards students' overall/componential writing performance.	Some implications for material developers highlight the useful role of EP in the process of feedback.

The previous section presented brief information about the impact of using social media on the writing skills of ESL/EFL learners. Almost all the studies outlined the positive influences of social media in the learning process. Apart from social media, there are also some studies that explore the impact of using Wikis on the writing skills

of learners. Studies show that using Wikis also improved the cooperative and collaborative skills of students. Moreover, using Wikis helped learners to master how to become problem solvers. Therefore, these studies show that through this platform, students were able to overcome different challenges in writing and other generic skills. In addition, through using Wikis, students boosted and motivated their writing competencies and skills. Besides, the availability of data and resources is one of the vital factors in learning. Therefore, Wikis helped students to be able to access the data whatever time they need and as well as to provide feedback regarding the use of it anytime. Moreover, using Wikis gave students the opportunity to build their autonomy, which is a vital requirement for the learners of the current 21st century [17]–[22].

To add more, using Wikis also helped students to be able to improve their main skills and sub-skills of language learning. As sub-skills are the building blocks for the main skills [27], so teachers need to consider them with equal focus as main skills. For example, it was quite helpful in terms of enhancing the content knowledge, the choice of vocabulary, and as well as the writing style and language mechanism, which caused the writing skills to be improved to a great extent. Furthermore, using Wiki helped students to be able to gain collaborative peer-editing experiences in the process of editing their writing scripts and as well as observing the editing of their peers. It resulted in causing shared skills to experience among students benefited each other's feedback. Writing is a crucial skill of language learning, and mastering this skill needs much practice compared to other skills. For this reason, using Wikis motivated students to have an extra opportunity to write and practice more. To add more, this prompted the writing skills of the students to be more productive than earlier. Within, Wikis significantly helped the feedback process easier for both teachers and learners, mainly the use of E-portfolios caused to make it easy for providing and sharing feedback [23]–[26].

4 Conclusion

During the period of new trends in language teaching and learning, using technology becomes one of the useful techniques for mastering the English language. Using social media and Wikis are of two types of platforms that English language teachers and learners use. Therefore, the literature indicates many benefits of using social media and Wikis and can have positive impacts on the writing skills of the learners. However, as in the study [3], researchers claimed the benefits of using different types of technologies by teachers. Therefore, researchers suggested that teachers should also consider the pedagogical aspects while designing an activity. It means that the technological use of these platforms would not be that much influential without considering pedagogy and its teaching-learning aspects. The current study focused on the use of social media and Wikis and their impacts on the writing skills of learners. The results show that utilizing different social media and Wikis technological platforms and tools not only improved the language learning skills and competencies of students but some other skills such as group working skills, critical thinking skills, cooperative and collaborative skills as well. The study only focused on the articles published within the years 2010-2018, and only the writing skill was associated with the aim of this study. Thus, the findings would

only be applicable to the writing skills of English language. The findings also showed that the role of teachers and learners is of much importance to be able to utilize technical skills properly. The research articles discussed in this study recommend both teachers and learners to consider the active role of social media and Wikis in English language learning, particularly, in terms of improving writing skills.

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