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Artículo de Investigación

The role of social media in the writing skills of first-year high school EFL students

El papel de las redes sociales en las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera de primer año de bachillerato

O papel das redes sociais nas habilidades de escrita dos alunos do primeiro ano do ensino médio que estudam inglês como língua estrangeira

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RESUMEN

Con el objetivo de determinar los cambios en el desempeño de la escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera de estudiantes de primer año de Bachillerato tras la implementación de una intervención estructurada mediada por redes sociales, se llevó a cabo una investigación preexperimental de un solo grupo con 34 alumnos de primer año de Bachillerato de la Unidad Educativa Simón Bolívar. La intervención abarcó un total de ocho clases en las que se llevaron a cabo tareas de tipo Instagram, Facebook y WhatsApp, tanto de retroalimentación docente como entre pares y en relación a la revisión. El rendimiento escrito se evaluó a partir de una rúbrica analítica detectada acorde a A2 (Content, Organisation y Language; 0-15) y las percepciones se recogieron a partir de una adaptación escolar de 18 ítems del SMU-EW. Debido a la circunscripción de puntuaciones y en atención a un alto número de empates se utilizó la prueba de rangos con signo de Wilcoxon. La puntuación total pasó de M=12.53 (DE=1.05) a M=13.00 (DE=0.65), cambio medio=0.47, W=10, p=.006. Content y Organisation mejoraron significativamente, mientras que Language no mostró cambio detectado (M=3.85 en ambos momentos, p=1.000). Doce (35.3%) alumnos mejoraron su puntuación total, veinte (58.8%) no presentaron cambio y dos (5.9%) presentaron la consiguiente disminución de puntuación. Behavioral Intention obtuvo la media perceptiva más alta (M=4.09) y Facilitating Conditions obtuvo la media más baja (M=3.81). Los resultados son en parte congruentes con las investigaciones acerca de la escritura mediada en redes sociales y la retroalimentación; no obstante, el efecto techo observado en Content y la no existencia de cambio en Language obligan a interpretar la mejora como algo focalizado y no extendido. La intervención estuvo relacionada con una mejora grupal estadísticamente significativa, pero modesta, centrada en Content y Organisation. La no existencia de grupo de comparación y la necesidad de una segunda calificación externa e independiente limitan las inferencias causales y de fiabilidad entre evaluadores.

Palabras clave: Escritura en inglés; redes sociales; retroalimentación; Bachillerato; EFL.

ABSTRACT

With the aim of determining changes in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing performance of first-year Baccalaureate students following the implementation of a structured social media-mediated intervention, a one-group pre-experimental study was conducted with 34 first-year Baccalaureate students from Unidad Educativa Simón Bolívar. The intervention comprised eight instructional sessions that incorporated Instagram-, Facebook-, and WhatsApp-based tasks involving teacher feedback, peer feedback, and revision activities. Writing performance was assessed using an A2-level analytic rubric (Content, Organisation, and Language; 0-15), while students' perceptions were measured through an adapted 18-item school version of the Social Media Use for English Writing (SMU-EW) scale. Due to the restricted score range and the high number of tied scores, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed. Total writing scores increased from M = 12.53 (SD = 1.05)

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to M = 13.00 (SD = 0.65), with a mean change of 0.47, W = 10, p = .006. Content and Organisation improved significantly, whereas Language showed no detectable change (M = 3.85 at both measurement points, p = 1.000). Twelve students (35.3%) improved their overall score, twenty (58.8%) showed no change, and two (5.9%) experienced a decline. Behavioral Intention obtained the highest perceptual mean (M = 4.09), whereas Facilitating Conditions obtained the lowest (M = 3.81). The findings are partially consistent with previous research on social media-mediated writing and feedback. However, the ceiling effect observed in Content and the absence of change in Language suggest that the improvement was focused rather than generalized. The intervention was associated with a statistically significant but modest group improvement concentrated in Content and Organisation. The absence of a comparison group and the need for an independent second rating limit causal inferences and inter-rater reliability.
Keywords: EFL writing; social media; feedback; secondary education; digital writing.
RESUMO

Com o objetivo de determinar as mudanças no desempenho da escrita em inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL) de estudantes do primeiro ano do Bacharelado após a implementação de uma intervenção estruturada mediada por redes sociais, realizou-se uma pesquisa pré-experimental com grupo único envolvendo 34 estudantes do primeiro ano do Bacharelado da Unidade Educativa Simón Bolívar. A intervenção compreendeu oito aulas nas quais foram desenvolvidas atividades baseadas no Instagram, Facebook e WhatsApp, incluindo feedback do professor, feedback entre pares e atividades de revisão. O desempenho na escrita foi avaliado por meio de uma rubrica analítica de nível A2 (Content, Organisation e Language; 0-15), enquanto as percepções dos estudantes foram coletadas por meio de uma adaptação escolar de 18 itens da escala Social Media Use for English Writing (SMU-EW). Devido ao intervalo restrito das pontuações e ao elevado número de empates, utilizou-se o teste dos postos sinalizados de Wilcoxon. A pontuação total passou de M = 12,53 (DP = 1,05) para M = 13,00 (DP = 0,65), com mudança média de 0,47, W = 10, p = 0,006. Content e Organisation apresentaram melhorias significativas, enquanto Language não mostrou alterações detectáveis (M = 3,85 em ambos os momentos, p = 1,000). Doze estudantes (35,3%) melhoraram sua pontuação total, vinte (58,8%) não apresentaram mudanças e dois (5,9%) tiveram redução na pontuação. Behavioral Intention apresentou a maior média perceptiva (M = 4,09), enquanto Facilitating Conditions registrou a menor (M = 3,81). Os resultados são parcialmente consistentes com pesquisas anteriores sobre escrita mediada por redes sociais e feedback. Contudo, o efeito teto observado em Content e a ausência de mudança em Language indicam que a melhora foi focalizada, e não generalizada. A intervenção esteve associada a uma melhora grupal estatisticamente significativa, porém modesta, concentrada em Content e Organisation. A ausência de um grupo de comparação e a necessidade de uma segunda avaliação independente limitam as inferências causais e a confiabilidade entre avaliadores.
Palavras-chave: Escrita em inglês; redes sociais; feedback; ensino médio; EFL.

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Introduction

Writing in any foreign language is a multi-faceted act, which involves creating ideas, fulfilling requirements of tasks, organizing data, searching for lexical and grammatical units, and controlling the text for a given audience. As a result of this shift in the view on writing, research on L2 writing has transitioned from a one-dimensional understanding of writing as a unified score to a conceptualization based on writing process, feedback, and genre (Kang & Han, 2015; Scherer ***et al***., 2024; Zhang & Plonsky, 2021). It is especially important for school-age foreign language learners, who develop both their linguistic resources and their writing competence. Ecuadorian studies have shown that writing is a continued difficulty for learners for various reasons, namely the students' ability to write correctly, fluently, and ensuring the logic of their writing (Galeas ***et al***., 2024; Montoya Guerrero, 2024; Pullaguari, 2025). Therefore, the assessment of interventions should be defined not just by the increase in the quantity of writing, but by the success of the conveyance of information, the proper structuring of writing content, and the improvement in the usage of language.

Writing through social media can be viewed as a way to give learners such additional possibilities for writing which writing on paper alone cannot provide them. Various studies that have been conducted (Zainuddin and Md Yunus, 2022; Mohamad ***et al***., 2023; Nguyen ***et al***., 2026) point at some benefits of using social networking sites in the process of writing at the same time indicating that these benefits vary depending on the tools used by learners.A general analysis of collaborative mobile-assisted language learning also lists writing, WhatsApp, mobile instant messaging, and motivation among the main components of this field (Guo ***et al***., 2024), whereas

the technology-based cooperative language learning proves to be more effective if the interventions are prolonged (Liu ***et al***., 2024). Such overviews put a question of technological determinism: it is a matter of not whether a platform is efficient in itself, but of what pedagogical practices can be applied through the platform and what set of conditions makes those practices instructional. Research on networked writing has previously demonstrated that computer-mediated environments are capable of changing participation and composing practices in comparison with traditional classrooms (Braine, 2001), while blogs have proved to provide similar opportunities for drafting and interaction (Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010).

Platform-based evidence strengthens this apprehension. WhatsApp-based writing is associated with improvements in accuracy, interaction and learners' involvement (Andújar, 2016; Alghamdy, 2019), and writing through Facebook is associated with increased fluency, idea organization, collaboration, and motivation (Dizon, 2016; Klimova & Pikhart, 2020). However, Dizon (2016) shows that progression in fluency is more prominent than in lexical richness or grammatical accuracy, therefore showing that digital writing does not improve all aspects equally. Facebook-enabled e-portfolios are associated with writing progress and student engagement, yet their effectiveness strongly depends on task design and prolonged engagement (Barrot, 2016, 2021). Similar results can be found in studies conducted with blogging and Edmodo, where the key factor of educational use is structured peer response and social interaction instead of just having the platform (Ciftci & Kocoglu, 2012; Ma'azi & Janfeshan, 2018; Shih, 2011). The mechanism most commonly associated with writing improvement is feedback. Meta-analysis shows that online feedback has a general positive impact on ESL writing quality, and that the effect is moderated by the source, type of education, and task genre (Lv et al., 2021). Peer feedback has also confirmed its efficiency, especially in revision, content and text-related problems (Huisman et al., 2019; Vuogan & Li, 2023), but its efficiency highly depends on the training the students have received and the clearness of its comments. The previous research had already shown that computer-mediated peer review is able to change the scope and orientation of comments and revisions (Liou & Peng, 2009; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Tuzi, 2004). The trained peer review is connected with better revision (Min, 2006), and giving feedback can also influence the revision process of the reviewer (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). Later studies thus viewed online peer feedback as cognitive as well as affective, influenced revision, reflection, responsibility, motivation, and attitude (Cao et al., 2022). This notion of feedback as process, rather than correction, is consistent with Keh's (1990) classic process model of feedback, as well as the theories that behavioral literacy can be changed by peer-feedback practice (Weng ***et al***., 2024).

According to Kang and Han's (2015) research, a positive meta-analytic effect on L2 written accuracy was established; however, learning context and task conditions play a significant role in explaining the results. In a similar vein, Lim and Renandya (2020) present moderate effect and highlight that proficiency serves as a key moderator. In this respect, the existing literature indicates that different types of feedback, such as instructor feedback, peer feedback, automated and mixed feedback, target various aspects of writing and therefore have varying levels of effectiveness (Scherer ***et al***., 2024). Automated writing evaluation leads to the creation of average positive outcomes, though meta-analysis indicates that better results were achieved for vocabulary and overall quality than for grammar (Ngo et al., 2024; Zhai & Ma, 2023). Thus, it is necessary to state that no change in the assessment of language-related variables does not mean failure of intervention; it may indicate the temporality of time, focus of feedback and difficulty of achieving grammatical control. It is evident from the studies that electronic feedback uptake depends not on receiving comments but on learners' understanding and interpretation of feedback (Ene & Upton, 2014) and automation of writing assessment was regarded as a supplement rather than a substitute for traditional educational mediation by Latin American researchers (Parra G. & Calero S., 2019).

Also, collaborative and digital writing shows that revision is socially mediated. Classic studies devoted to peer revision demonstrate that learners do negotiate meaning, assess the options, and make selective revisions rather than just follow all the comments blindly (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996, 1998). Explorations into the use of peer and teacher response indicate varying outcomes (Miao et al., 2006), whereas peer response via blogging can prove effective in promoting L2 writing revisions if the online interactions are instructional (Pham & Usaha, 2016). Recent research on the use of Google Classroom and Google Docs has shown positive findings on the uptake of feedback, collaboration, and writing skills achievement, notwithstanding issues with disparities in participation and the need to provide support (Ly, 2023; Sa'diyah & Nabhan, 2021; Siguencia Zúñiga et al., 2026). The aforementioned studies show that digital writing spaces can work effectively when guiding the experience with clear grading criteria and revision options. While young learners can greatly benefit from the feedback designs based on digital modeling in their writing, what matters is that these could lead to an increase in the cognitive load (Criado ***et al***., 2026).

The Latin American and particularly Ecuadorian context further stresses the need to generate local evidence. Estrella (2018, 2023) describes where Ecuadorian students seem to be doing well with Facebook and other social media platforms in English, while Montoya Guerrero (2024) shows improvements in digital storytelling among first-year EFL learners in high school. Pullaguari (2025) applied WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram in his lessons with tenth-grade Ecuadorian students. He reports about improvement achieved through these channels as well but mentions worries regarding access and intervention duration. Lastly, Barriga Perugachi (2025) and Chicaiza Llambo and Chiliquinga Toapanta (2025) both briefly summarized similar findings, while Benitez-Correa and Gonzalez-Torres (2025) demonstrated that short-form social video can be a useful tool in Ecuadorian EFL teacher education. The importance of collaboration in writing projects in Ecuador is emphasized through the use of Google Docs, indicating that the use of information technologies does not merely consist in their application, but requires careful pedagogical management (Siguencia Zúñiga et al., 2026). All studies contribute to the existing evidence base, but the studies presented differ by the level of education making it clear that research on writing at secondary schools should continue.

The national curriculum gives another reason for the creation of digital communicative writing as they consider English to be a means of social communication. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education supports the idea by stating that the best way for people to learn languages is not through acquiring knowledge, but through using language for communication (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016, p. 3). This principle can be successfully integrated in tasks that involve digital tools used for structuring the information in a way that would help to summarize, describe, target an audience, give feedback and revise what has been written. Pedagogical research carried out in classrooms indicates that students may be more open to writing with the help of multimodal resource due to using digital tools such as Instagram captions and Facebook scaffolding (Gunantar & Transinata, 2019; Majid & Stapa, 2017; Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021). Nevertheless, the presence of familiarity among the students may have both positive and negative effects on writing process.

While the studies in literature are increasingly recognizing the learning potential of social media in the area of English writing, the evidence in literature is still lacking methodological uniformity. Different studies have looked at Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, blogs, and multi-platform environments within secondary and higher EFL/ESL contexts, but they are rather different in terms of treatment length, age of students, the genre of writing, feedback mechanisms, assessment measures, and research design. What is equally important is the fact that what is often called “intervention with social media” includes different educational interventions simultaneously, for example, consistent writing, existence of authentic or semi-authentic audience, feedback by an instructor or peers, collaborative revision, lexical support, and interaction outside the classroom. As a result, one cannot conclude that enhanced writing skills can be referred to the particular technological tool being applied. In order to clarify these distinctions and to define the most valid empirical trends, Table 1 summarizes 30 studies on social media-mediated writing with a focus on Ecuadorian and Latin American data.

Table 1 Critical evidence matrix of empirical studies on social-media-mediated English writing

No.	Study	Country/context	Platform / design	Main findings	Critical relevance to the present study
1	Jin (2025)	South Korea; university EFL	Facebook; experimental pretest-posttest; N = 61 (31 experimental, 30 control)	Facebook-facilitated peer feedback process succeeded in yielding better results in terms of writing proficiency than traditional methods and minimizing writing apprehension.	Substantial experimental evidence confirms that social media writings influence performance and emotions amongst learners, but the current university intervention study covers a longer treatment period of 15 weeks and much more intensive characterization of social media writing.

2	Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi (2024)	Morocco; secondary-school EFL	WhatsApp; true experimental; N = 66	The WhatsApp learning community produced better results than the control group in writing overall as well as in content & ideas, organization, vocabulary, language accuracy, and mechanics.	This study serves as one of the best international comparisons because the authors focused on secondary school students and analyzed their writing by means of different criteria.
3	Lagos-Monsalve & Cisterna-Zenteno (2026)	Chile; higher-education EFL	Instagram; intervention study; n = 8; pre/post tests, rubric, Likert scales, focus group	It is well established that pre- and post-writing test scores vary significantly and that Instagram leads to constructive writing engagement on several levels.	This paper presents recent South American results and emphasizes the need to make a distinction between the actual performance and engagement.
4	Wichadee (2013)	Thailand; undergraduate EFL	Facebook peer feedback; one-semester intervention; n = 30	Although writing drafts improved after Facebook-mediated peer feedback process, the feedback put more emphasis on content than grammar.	The findings are relevant since they confirm that higher level aspects of writing are transformed in much easier way than language.
5	Rodliyah (2016)	Indonesia; university EFL	Closed Facebook group; four-month e-dialogue journal case study; n = 15	Students were positive about the enhancements they made in their vocabulary and grammar thanks to peer feedback.	The results of this paper prove the importance of controlled use of social media among audiences and communicators rather than types of platforms.
6	Awada (2016)	Lebanon; university EFL	WhatsApp; experimental pretest-posttest control-group design; N = 52	WhatsApp instruction was more efficient than traditional methods in terms of critique writing and motivation.	This study supports the idea that the academic and emotional roles of WhatsApp matter, at the same time showing that the treatment needs to be continuous and genre-specific.
7	Shahzadi & Kausar (2021)	Pakistan; university ESL/EFL	Facebook; mixed methods; survey + one-group pre/post + focus group	The Facebook platform was identified as one of the factors that contributed to the successful writing performance of students.	This article helps to have a clear distinction between the writing performance and perceptions of students.
8	Martínez Lirola (2023)	Spain; university EFL	Facebook; exploratory qualitative-descriptive study with quantitative error analysis	The researchers considered the Facebook as a means of developing writing competence in English.	The article broadens the scope of findings beyond the test result limitations and emphasizes the social aspect of the digital writing process.
9	Alouch, Ganapathy, & Ai Lin (2021)	Malaysia; tertiary ESL	WhatsApp; classroom writing intervention involving emails, paragraphs, and essays	WhatsApp allows students to take part in extensive language activity outside school hours.	This article supports the claim that mobile messaging can provide learners with more writing opportunities, but the context used in this paper does not relate to the present situation.

10	Abdul Razak, Saeed, & Ahmad (2013)	Arab EFL learners; cross-national online community	Facebook community of practice; n = 24	Students were engaged in exchanging ideas and writing inclusive texts; however, there were some issues during the implementation process.	The article presents one of the first evaluations of social media writing and how it influences participation of learners.
11	Barrot (2016)	Philippines; first-year university ESL	Facebook-based e-portfolio; N = 171	The use of Facebook e-portfolios had positive effect on writing activity although some limitations were discovered during the implementation process.	The article provides evidence on the fact that peer feedback is not the only factor involved in the process of revision.
12	Al-Jarrah et al. (2019)	Secondary-school EFL	Social media; survey; N = 132	Social media was perceived as useful for different areas of English language development by students.	Although the research confirms the relevance of WhatsApp, at the same time, it mentions that the treatment involved a number of teaching practices and not only the app.
13	Allagui (2014)	United Arab Emirates; undergraduate EFL	WhatsApp; mobile writing assignment; n = 50	Although the results of the assessment of students' writing remained rather low, some benefits were identified.	The importance of this study lies in the fact that students were from the upper secondary level, while a number of aspects of writing were studied.
14	Pham & Luong (2023)	Vietnam; university EFL	Facebook-based peer comments; experimental n = 32, control n = 40	Peer feedback provoked 45% of revisions. 55% of the revisions were initiated by students.	The article serves as one of the historical references in the studies of social media writing in Ecuador.
15	Shafiei Ebrahimi (2024)	University EFL	WhatsApp; one-group pretest-posttest; n = 40	Writing performance improved due to the use of WhatsApp in the course of a number of exercises.	The article provides Ecuadorian evidence of highly favorable outcome of the social media writing intervention and the disadvantages of implementing it.
16	Hadiantoro (2022)	Indonesia; Grade 11 EFL	Facebook; true experimental; N = 24	The use of Facebook in the educational process has yielded better results in terms of vocabulary, content, grammar, and other areas of language.	The article proves that the effectiveness of social media writing depends on the structured instructions provided by the teacher.
17	Estrella (2018)	Ecuador; polytechnic EFL	Facebook; writing-practice study	Azorean students' attitude towards Facebook turned out to be mostly positive and they reported little anxiety, although desired benefits were not achieved.	This study can be considered as an effective relative comparison to the current paper, as it includes Ecuadorian secondary scholars with A2 level of English language on the use of WhatsApp writing.

18	Estrella (2024)	Ecuador; undergraduate polytechnic EFL	WhatsApp; mixed-method persuasive-essay practice	Students accepted WhatsApp positively and found it useful; however, they considered time spent on chats a major drawback of this application.	The study provides important comparison grounded in the fact that it incorporates the same three platforms studied within school community.
19	Chicaiza Llambo & Chiliquinga Toapanta (2025)	Ecuador; Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi	Facebook + WhatsApp; descriptive qualitative; n = 20	The majority of learners had mostly positive experience of working with social media in writing processes, although they needed some support and advice.	One of the most important issues considered in this paper concerns certain issues of perception that need to be addressed properly.
20	Figueroa Ramos, López López, & Bonilla Tenesaca (2025)	Ecuador; second-year Baccalaureate; A2	WhatsApp reflective journals; quantitative pre/post intervention	It was reported that writing performance has improved after the use of reflective journals.	This paper reflects Ecuadorian experience and informs on the fact that different stimuli can be used combined.
21	Pullaguari (2025)	Ecuador; rural tenth grade; A1	WhatsApp + Facebook + Instagram; mixed methods	Although writing performance in English increased, the factors that limited the outcomes were unequal access, duration of the program, and restrictions connected with the use of cell phones.	This study also proves certain connection between Facebook and group work.
22	Barriga Perugachi (2025)	Ecuador; senior secondary students, Ibarra	Social media; mixed methods; n = 80	Most students demonstrated comfort in sharing their writing and indicated usefulness of social media for creativity; teacher methods varied according to levels.	This paper represents evidence of other studies that can strengthen the Bask country experience.
23	Guamán Condoy (2024)	Ecuador; EFL students	Facebook group; motivational stories/ videos; mixed methods	Material delivered via Facebook took two months to assist in the learning process and find out students' foreign language learning experience.	This study serves as a good relative comparison in which 8th grad students were taken involved and showed great results.

24	Granja Peñaherrera et al. (2024)	Ecuador; English-language teaching context	Facebook; descriptive/ diagnostic study with proposed strategies	The researchers analyzed the usage of Facebook in teaching English writing and tried to create motivating and collaborative activities for the learning process.	This paper informs about the Latin American issues and tests the assumption made earlier about the positive effect of revision.
25	Ochoa Luzuriaga (2024)	Ecuador; secondary education	WhatsApp; postgraduate intervention study	WhatsApp was explored as a means of educating English students and this platform was a significant mediator of the availability of areas for activities.	The results of this paper provide evidence from the Latin American context and differentiate between the perceptions and measurable performance.
26	Laverde Hernandez (2015)	Colombia; public-school Grade 8	Facebook; qualitative master's intervention	Facebook provided possibilities for active use of English-based writing and participation, as well as for confidence building through collaborative production.	Even though this study does not cover all aspects of writing and provides evidence on linguistic areas.
27	Rodríguez Rodríguez & Aguilar Cruz (2022)	Colombia; rural Grade 10	Facebook; action research	Through the multimodality Facebook enabled the learning and writing process even during the pandemic situation.	Substantial experimental evidence confirms that social media writings influence performance and emotions amongst learners, but the current university intervention study covers a longer treatment period of 15 weeks and much more intensive characterization of social media writing.
28	Gómez Delgado & McDougald (2014)	Colombia; EFL teacher education	Blogs + peer feedback	Peer feedback makes an important contribution to the students' knowledge about writing and skill.	This study serves as one of the best international comparisons because the authors focused on secondary school students and analyzed their writing by means of different criteria.
29	Bautista Zárate Mejía (2023)	Mexico; university EFL	Multiple social networks; exploratory case study; n = 10	Advanced students find social networking helpful.	This paper presents recent South American results and emphasizes the need to make a distinction between the actual performance and engagement.
30	Contreras Jordán, Almache Granda, & Sandoval Pérez (2021)	Ecuador; university EFL	WhatsApp; quantitative pre/post; experimental group n = 30	Facebook-facilitated peer feedback process succeeded in yielding better results in terms of writing proficiency than traditional methods and minimizing writing apprehension.	The findings are relevant since they confirm that higher level aspects of writing are transformed in much easier way than language.

Source. It should be noted that the studies reviewed differ substantially with respect to participants' age, educational level, intervention duration, methodological design, digital platforms, writing genres, assessment criteria, and feedback procedures. Consequently, this matrix is intended as a critical comparative synthesis and should not be interpreted as evidence that social media produce uniform effects across different educational settings.

According to Table 1, it can be concluded that the evidence on the instructional use of social networks in English language writing is rather positive, but the results differ substantially depending on the context and dimension of writing. While in some studies, general writing skills are proven to be improved, others provide findings which suggest that the benefits are much more limited and concern only issues such as taking part in writing, revising and being involved as well as students' beliefs. Based on the literature available, comments on the effect of peer feedback through Facebook and WhatsApp indicate that not all higher order writing features are influenced equally, e.g. content versus correctness. Ecuadorian studies demonstrate that the various factors such as context, context, mediation, structure of the task and time involved might influence the results. Furthermore, methodology is less reliable concerning the Latin American studies of social networks in English writing: in particular, there have been a lot of studies conducted in Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and Mexico, yet most of them are based on small samples, university students and perception data; there is a lack of studies exploring social networks' role in secondary EFL learners' writing.

Thus, assessment of writing mediated by social media should not depend on one single, overall writing score. The Cambridge A2 Key for Schools framework defines Content, Organisation, and Language, which allows writing performance to be assessed on a dimension-by-dimension basis rather than one single, overall score (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2020). At the same time, Mukminin et al. (2023) created their own framework for understanding the use of social media in English writing based on five components: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Facilitating Conditions, Attitude, and Behavioral Intention, thus separating the study of students' perceptions of digital writing from their actual achievements in writing. The significance of this distinction is supported by the fact that there may be positive attitudes towards the use of technology for educational purposes; however, the positive experience might be hindered by such issues as access to technology, self-regulation, technological readiness to write with the help of technology, teacher preparedness to use modern technologies, and institutional support (Martinez et al., 2025; Pardede, 2024, 2025). Consequently, the current study studies the changes in EFL writing performance of first-year Baccalaureate students after the introduction of a structured social-media-mediated writing course while each of the three dimensions – Content, Organisation, and Language – is separately analyzed. The students' perception of the digital process of learning is also taken into account. Thus, the study aims to highlight the difference between the students' actual performance in writing and their perceptions with regard to the use of social media for writing.

Materials and methods

A quantitative classroom experimental design was used, with one group pretest-posttest design (O1-X-O2) employed in the study. The pretest and posttest writing tasks were the same and conducted with the same group of students. The absence of a control group suggests that results obtained through comparison may serve as post-intervention differences rather than definitive cause-and-effect conclusions.

The analytical sample consisted of 34 first-year Baccalaureate students from Unidad Educativa Simón Bolívar, with the data file of 34 compressed matched pretest data, 34 compressed matched posttest data, and 34 post-intervention questionnaire data all contributing to the complete records for 34 participants across three core data sources. In this work, there are no demographic variables used except for the participant codes and educational level; hence, there are no age and gender distributions provided as they can only be guessed from incomplete records.

Both pretest and posttest were carried out as parallel social media writing tasks, which were performed individually over the course of 25 minutes. They comprised around 70-90 words and called on personal information, habits, past events, and simple connectors. The prompts had different surface content but belonged to the same genre, had the same length, time, and form of language requirements. The parallel task design was intended to make simple prompt effects impossible while keeping the necessary comparability in all administrations.

Writing was assessed by means of an analytic rubric corresponding to A2 Key for Schools (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2020). They were rated according to Content, Organisation, and Language scores from zero to five, which totalled a maximum of fifteen for each score. The data set includes one complete cycle of analytic evaluation of all 68 scripts. The independent evaluation needs to be done prior to the submission of

the paper so that the assessment of the inter-rater reliability could be performed instead of deriving it. Thus, no measurements of ICC or kappa coefficient are provided here.

The intervention consisted of eight hours. The first hour was devoted to the pretest. The second hour required a summary of 40-50 words in an Instagram style. The third hour asked for describing an Instagram picture in 40-60 words. The fourth hour required creating a personal Facebook-style post of 40-60 words.

Class 5 was primarily focused on classroom feedback and revision, followed by Class 6 where WhatsApp was the platform of peer assessment and revision. In Class 7, there was an extended post (90-110 words) which integrated personal data, daily routine, the past event, basic connectors and usage of simple present and simple past. Class 8 was the posttest class. Hence, the sequence contained the aspects of repeated production performed in connection with audience in mind, mediation from the instructor, peer feedback, etc.

Post-intervention perceptions have been measured using SMU-EW. Researchers adapted the tool specifically for the current setting by creating a modified version of it meant to assess the perceptions of using SMU-EW in class. Valid scales used in this research are perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of usage (PEU), facilitating conditions (FC), attitude (AT) and behavioral intention (BI). Thus according to the scales the response options were presented on a five-point range from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. With the research data including 612 possible responses, three responses were omitted. These results were treated as missing by researchers. After that, scores of the different scales were reported using their mean values based on the responses given by the participants for each of the scales.

Thus, descriptive statistics present means and standard deviations within the dimensions. Since the scores of researched text were too high and as though being bound, it requires using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests instead of the traditional and because of the high possibility of ties in data. Thus, in the final work report it is important to ensure the presence of information regarding the previously granted consent, as well as the guarantee of data protection.

Results and Discussion

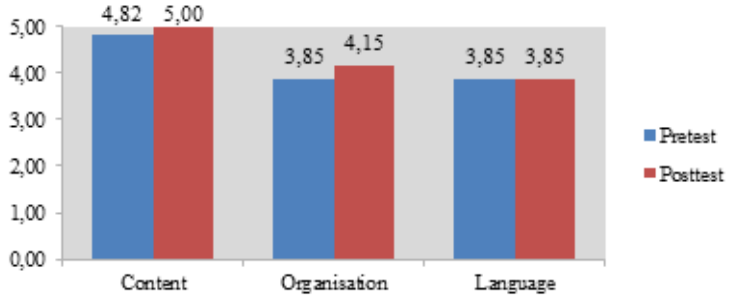
Table 2. Pretest-posttest EFL writing performance

Outcome	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	Mean change	95% CI	Wilcoxon W	p	Cohen's dz
Content	4.82 (0.39)	5.00 (0.00)	0.18	[0.04, 0.31]	0.0	0.014	0.46
Organisation	3.85 (0.44)	4.15 (0.36)	0.29	[0.13, 0.46]	0.0	0.002	0.64
Language	3.85 (0.44)	3.85 (0.44)	0.00	[-0.15, 0.15]	10.5	1.000	0.00
Total	12.53 (1.05)	13.00 (0.65)	0.47	[0.16, 0.78]	10.0	0.006	0.53

Source. Content, Organisation, and Language range from 0 to 5; Total ranges from 0 to 15. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests are the primary inferential analyses. Cohen's dz is reported as a supplementary standardized mean-change index.

The total writing performance enhanced from M=12.53 (SD=1.05) to M=13.00 (SD=0.65), leading to the mean difference of 0.47 points. The Wilcoxon test resulted in a significant statistic value: W=10, p=.006, and moderate standardized change (dz=0.53) as well. Nevertheless, the results of each dimension indicate that the total change was not uniform. Content improved from 4.82 to 5.00 (W=0, p=.014), while Organisation improved from 3.85 to 4.15 (W=0, p=.002). In contrast, Language remained the same, facing no change in values (M=3.85) (W=10.5, p=1.000). Consequently, the overall improvement of the group can be connected to better fulfilment of the task and organization rather than the overall changes in writing skills.

Figure 1. Pretest and posttest writing performance by analytic dimension



Source. Editable Word chart. The y-axis uses the 0-5 analytic scale. Values are based on the 34 matched real pretest-posttest records.

The asymmetry of change is visible because of Figure 1. It can be observed that Content starts at the highest end of the rubric and achieves the highest group average at posttest, thus exhibiting a ceiling effect. Organisation has the widest scope and increases roughly by 0.29 points. Language, on the contrary, shows no change.

Therefore, it can be again concluded that the evaluation of an intervention should not be done by saying "writing got better"; rather, it is correct to state that measurable improvement happened only in Content and Organisation.

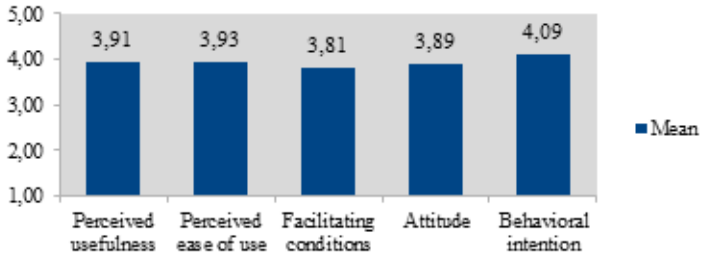
Table 3. Post-intervention perceptions of social-media-based English writing

Dimension	Items	M	SD	Cronbach α	n for α
Perceived usefulness	1-4	3.91	0.85	0.72	33
Perceived ease of use	5-8	3.93	0.66	0.56	34
Facilitating conditions	9-12	3.81	0.81	0.60	33
Attitude	13-15	3.89	0.84	0.73	34
Behavioral intention	16-18	4.09	0.77	0.62	33

Source. Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Three isolated item responses were missing and were not imputed. Alpha uses complete cases within each dimension.

All five measures of perception rated higher than the midpoint. The highest score was for the Behavioral Intention measure (M=4.09), while the next highest was for Perceived Ease of Use (M=3.93). Other measures included Perceived Usefulness (M=3.91), Attitude (M=3.89), and lastly for Facilitating Conditions (M=3.81). On the other hand, reliability of the measures differed. PU (α=0.72) and AT (α=0.73) were reliable enough for exploratory purposes, while the PEU (α=0.56), FC (α=0.60) and BI (α=0.62) measures showed lower values. Therefore, these latter measures may be interpreted only descriptively instead of accepting their high reliability among the current sample that is small and adapted.

Figure 2. Mean post-intervention perceptions by SMU-EW dimension



Source. Editable Word chart; response scale = 1-5. Means are based on the 34 real post-intervention questionnaires, with available-item means for the three cases containing one missing response

In Figure 2, we see a fairly compact positive profile instead of extreme excitement. Behavioral Intention slightly exceeds the other areas, indicating that the desire to use digital environments is higher than the evaluation of the context of their usage. Facilitating Conditions has the lowest score, which is important in terms of pedagogy: students may appreciate and want to continue with the method while experiencing limitations in their access to the technology and support, devices, or connectivity. This distinction between the acceptance of and the conditions of its usage needs to be maintained in the interpretation.

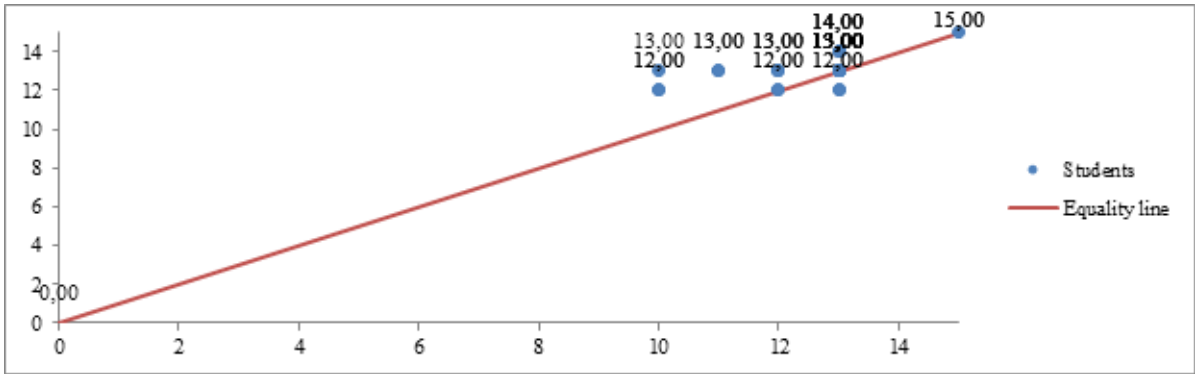
Table 4. Individual change in total writing score

Change category	n	%	Criterion
Improved	12	35.3	Post Total > Pre Total
No change	20	58.8	Post Total = Pre Total
Declined	2	5.9	Post Total < Pre Total

Source. Change is based on the 0-15 total analytic writing score.

The major group outcome went along with considerable stability at the individual levels. Out of twelve participants (35.3%), two achieved a post-test total that was higher, twenty (58.8%) got the same number of points and two (5.9%) acquired fewer points. The large number of equal scores explains why the Wilcoxon test was used instead of a mere parametric interpretation but more importantly, indicates that the average growth is the result of the scores of only some students, not of the whole group.

Figure 3. Individual pretest and posttest total writing scores



Source. Each point stands for total writing score of one individual participant on 0 to 15 score interpretation. The diagonal equality line (y = x) shows the same scores on the pretest and posttest. Points above the line show the improvement, the points lying on the line show no changes, and the points below the line show the decreased performance in the posttest.

Figure 3 demonstrates the pretest-posttest situation a little clearer than just simple average. Even though the mean score shifted significantly from M = 12.53 (SD = 1.05) in the pretest to M = 13.00 (SD = 0.65) in the posttest, the results show that the change was not uniform across all students. Most of the points are close to the equality line. Twenty students of thirty-four (58.8%) got the same score before and after testing. At the same time, 12 students (35.3%) are above the line, which indicates the higher performance on the posttest, while only two students (5.9%) got lower scores. As a result, the statistically significant difference at the group level does not mean that most students improved their scores; only that the overall score improved due to the performance of some of the subgroup of participants and even among those students who made no significant changes as a whole.

The concentration of scores near the upper part of the figure must also be taken into consideration while interpreting it. The participants of the study had good writing skills in the beginning. The scores were relatively high in the area of Content, where the mean score was 4.82 for the pretest and 5.00 for the posttest, showing a likely ceiling effect: The learners had no room for improvement during the intervention. Therefore, the fact that someone has the same overall score does not mean that no progress was achieved. A student could be proficient in a particular task at pretest, but they could still improve their performance in terms of getting better in fluency, vocabulary selection, sentence structuring, etc. Hence, the fact that the participants begin their study with high pretest scores needs to be taken into account when evaluating their results.

The analysis of the graph allows understanding why the posttest results of some participants were lower than pretest ones because only 5.9% of the sample had such results. Thus, the overall pattern is hardly disturbed. Moreover, getting lower marks on post-intervention writing task should not be automatically interpreted as lack of learning, since writing scores depend on various situational factors. In one-group pretest-posttest designs, one should not think about the individual score decreases, but treat them as part of the natural process of variation.

In conclusion, the current study offers very important additional information that accompanies the group analysis and leads to conclusion regarding individual participants. The results of Wilcoxon test showed a clear positive change at the level of group, however, individual results clarify where exactly this change occurred: improvement was shown by 12 participants, while the rest remained stable. Therefore, this observation highlights that there is some progress in the area of writing as a result of implementing social media writing scenario, but the overall interpretation should be more careful noting heterogeneity of progress.

Analysis indicates that total writing performance only increased marginally (from M=12.53 to M=13.00), scoring an average change of 0.47 and showing statistical significance (Wilcoxon W=10.00, p=.006). This is in line with previous research showing that social media writing or writing through technology is positively correlated with performance; however, the effect is less powerful compared with findings of other studies into successful university interventions (Andújar, 2016; Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021; Shafiei Ebrahimi, 2024). There is a theoretical reason for this disparity. Meta-analysis studies of online feedback and technology-mediated writing uncover substantial variations in online feedback effect size depending on the type of education provided, the nature of the assignment, feedback source, duration and students' proficiency level (Lv et al., 2021; Scherer et al., 2024; Ngo et al. 2024). Explored into the area of new technologies and mobile assisted language learning, studies confirm that application of new technologies produces mixed exploits depending on the circumstances (Guo ***et al.***, 2024; Liu ***et al.***, 2024; Martinez ***et al.***, 2025). Therefore, the given findings

should be interpreted only in the context of a particular setting in a relatively short intervention process rather than for implying that social media in general produces significant writing effects. The analysis shows that the most significant increase is associated with Organisation (from M=3.85 to M=4.15, p=.002), whereas the Content parameter increased from M=4.82 to a maximum of M=5.00 (p=.014). This finding coincides with previous studies on peer feedback and collaborative writing effectiveness showing that global matters such as content and sequential events come under positive influence in greater extent than local problems (Huisman et al. 2019; Vuogan & Li, 2023; Zhang & Plonsky, 2021).Previous studies on computer-mediated peer reviews had also shown that online collaboration can lead to changes not only globally, but also locally, but the frequency of such changes was influenced by the training of participants (Liou & Peng, 2009; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Tuzi, 2004). Min (2006) showed that the training in peer reviews improved the quality of revisions made, while Lundstrom and Baker (2009) stated that reviewing texts of others leads to improvement of writing skills. In this intervention, the need to perform a variety of social media tasks and getting feedback for those tasks might have contributed to increased focus on completeness and coherence of writing.

The Content results should still be interpreted in view of considerable ceiling effect. Students started with M=4.82 (on the scale from 0 to 5), so that very little improvement became possible on the scale of the Content evaluation, and 28 students out of 34 had changes of their Content evaluations. The perfect mean of the posttest evaluations suggests that students already achieved the required results in the Content dimension, at least at the time of the pre-test. The problem with ceiling effects is that they reduce variance and suppress the possibility of establishing the individual development of every student, especially given that short scales are applied (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2020). Similar studies show that the effects depend on the sensitivity of the chosen measure and on the type of the genre (Dizon, 2016; Lv et.al, 2021; Zhai & Ma, 2023). Language, on the other hand, showed no changes whatsoever: M=3.85 both in the pre-test and post-test with W=10.50 and p=1. 000.This result is especially significant because it stops us from making a sweeping statement regarding the effectiveness of the intervention. This finding is contrary to research that indicates that longer or more direct methods of intervention better lead to grammatical accuracy (Andújar, 2016; Kang & Han, 2015; Lim & Renandya, 2020), yet it is in line with the studies that show that while digital environment helps improve fluency, engagement, or organization, there may not be comparable changes in grammar and lexical richness (Dizon, 2016; Klimova & Pikhart, 2020). Meta-studies of automated writing evaluation show that grammar can be less responsive than other aspects of the process, and shorter interventions tend to have a lesser effect (Ngo et al., 2024; Zhai & Ma, 2023). The 6-class phase implemented in this case may have been enough to support task completion and organization, but the impact on language aspects may have been inadequate.

Feedback theory can help explain the discrepancy between the two domains mentioned above. Scherer et al. (2024) demonstrated that the efficiency of feedback depends on its source and whether it is aimed at superficial or deep-level characteristics of writing. Vuogan and Li (2023) also showed that peer feedback is more effective in the field of content than in language issues, whereas Cao et al. (2022) provided evidence that e-feedback can facilitate the writing process as well as stimulate reflection, responsibility, attitude, and revising process. Empirical data indicate that e-feedback works through its effect on what the writers pay attention to and what they modify, rather than guaranteeing that the writer will implement every piece of advice successfully (Tuzi, 2004; Pham & Usaha, 2016; Ly, 2023). In this manner, the current pattern agrees with a framework where social events and feedback aid in making the concepts and structure clear though grammatical growth requires some prolonged, concentrated, and individualized focus. Weng et al. also stated that practice in peer feedback can positively influence some aspects of feedback literacy without having a common positive effect on all components. In this case, the results at the level of individual learners specify the significant average group result. Just 12 individuals (35.3%) demonstrated improvement in their overall score, whereas 20 learners (58.8%) were consistent regardless of their earlier results, and 2 (5.9%) were unsuccessful. This is not contradictory to the Wilcoxon test outcome since insignificant positive changes accumulated in only a part of cases can lead to statistical significance while in other cases the scores of study participants remain similar. The same differs from some other studies conducted in the field of digital writing, where some learners gain a lot due to online interaction, while others have only limited gains based on various reasons including the previous level of effectiveness, the engagement in feedback process, the awareness of the task, and technological aspects. Digital writing research also indicates that there could be an uneven nature of collaborative process participation as the benefits of collaboration depend upon the distribution of roles and responsibilities because participation would be non-uniform. Thus, Figure 3 supports a conclusion of heterogeneous-response rather than universal-treatment.

In general, the perception profile after the intervention was positive, but not strong. The highest mean concerned Behavioral Intention (M=4.09), followed by Perceived Ease of Use (M=3.93), Perceived Usefulness (M=3.91), Attitude (M=3.89) and Facilitating Conditions (M=3.81). Such results can be connected with the findings of Mukminin et al.In the early 2020s, researchers distinguished the usefulness, ease, conditions, attitudes, and intentions of learners as the components in the process of social network adoption (Estrella, 2023). Research has also shown that positive learner perceptions have been measured in studies based on blog, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Google Classroom peer-feedback (Ciftci & Kocoglu, 2012; Estrella, 2018, 2023; Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021; Ly, 2023). Therefore, although there are positive perceptions, it does not mean that people succeed in writing. The current research is important because it showcases that writing outcomes do not always correspond with acceptance-related measures and vice versa: participants of this study were eager to use tools despite the fact that the language dimension did not improve.

The relative low means of Facilitating Conditions should be interpreted within a proper context. Meta-analysis of mobile-assisted and social-natured learning studies highlighted such determinants of success as connection, access to devices, institutional support, computer literacy, and teacher preparation (Zainuddin & Md Yunus, 2022; Guo, et al., 2024; Martinez et al., 2025). All studies conducted in Ecuador also show that with the help of technology the issue of infrastructure and implementation is still relevant (Pullaguari, 2025; Chicaiza Llambo & Chiliquinga Toapanta, 2025). Additionally, Benitez-Correa and Gonzalez-Torres (2025) indicated that using TikTok in EFL pre-service teacher education is promising; however, their four-month research design is different from secondary school investigation.Perceived Usefulness (alpha=.72) and Attitude (alpha=.73) obtained acceptable exploratory consistency, while Perceived Ease of Use (.56), Facilitating Conditions (.60), and Behavioral Intention (.62) had lower values. The original SMU-EW was designed with use by preservice teachers of English, thus making the adaptation for younger Ecuadorians not considering age, experience, context and wording necessary (Mukminin et al., 2023). The resulting coefficients allow arguing in favor of a dimension-specific approach rather than using the total score.

Measurement caution is especially significant in technology acceptance research since similar constructs may behave differently in different populations and platforms. Three isolated cases of item answers were treated as missing items instead of being filled in, thus keeping the real dataset more transparent.

Ecuadorian findings offer both support and complicating evidence for the results. Estrella (2018, 2023) described positive students' views about using Facebook and SNS for English learning, while Montoya Guerrero (2024) mentioned some profit from the use of digital storytelling approach in the first-year high school students. Pullaguari (2025) noticed writing improvement due to using WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram in the school context but also referred to limitations of access to the resources. Galeas ***et al***. (2024) studied the preservice teachers and extensive reading, thus it is totally different from the social media use, and the results showed different development of writing dimensions: the improvement of fluency is obvious but problems with accuracy were much smaller. The most recent research on the use of Google Docs by Siguencia Zúñiga ***et al***. (2026) also pointed out that collaboration and technology use need careful guidance. These national studies back the current conclusion that digital writing is beneficial; however, it requires specific task designs, assessment dimensions, and the learner's level for achieving the desired results.

Results from various studies, apart from this article, also support this conclusion but offer a larger scope of comparison as well. On the one hand, different studies show improvement in fluency rates or overall performance of the experimental group, while no change occurs in terms of grammatical accuracy (Dizon, 2016; Shih, 2011) or writing e-portfolios using Facebook as supportive material to help learners write, by working with drafts and reflections (Barrot, 2016, 2021). Studies based on Edmodo and Instagram did report improvements in motivation within the elements of the course (Ma'azi & Janfeshan, 2018; Gunantar & Transinata, 2019; Saleh & Muhayyang, 2021). When examining the use of Google Docs and online peer-review tools for writing, it has been noticed that these technologies have their benefits for collaboration and revision, but they are not equal in terms of participation and feedback (Sa'diyah & Nabhan, 2021; Ly, 2023). In this way, the research shows that social media can be used for the mentioned purposes when they contribute to frequent writing practices, meaningful constacts with audience, and possibility of revising.

Nonetheless, one-group pretest-posttest research design remains a major limitation for the research. Civilization of the participants, use of their native language in the process of the experiment, and lack of the control group could obscure or eliminate any effects that were obtained. It should also be mentioned that the initial content score was so high, that it did not leave many chances for further improvement, while the duration of experiments was so short that it limited the prospects for development. The same is true regarding the use of one reviewer of the essay in. This piece of work should suggest ways of overcoming methodology

limitations. The new research should combine results from multiple schools and experiment with different participants. The future research should determine role played by feedback and raised activities in the process of language learning using technology (Pardede, 2024, 2025; Nguyen ***et al***., 2026).

Conclusions

According to the analysis, the application of the writing intervention via social media made it possible for 34 Baccalaureate students to significantly improve their overall performance in EFL writing. As a result, the average overall score showed the increase from the level of 12.53 to the 13.00 level, which creates a mean change in 0.47 (out of 15). However, despite the overall results, the impact of the intervention was specific to one of the dimensions.

In this regard, the results concerning the students' performance have determined the overall result of the group. Thus, only 12 out of 34 students (35.3 percent) experienced some changes; for 20 students (58.8 percent) the situation has not changed, while 2 students (5.9 percent) suffered decline in their performance. The fact that several students started from very good results in their initial performance has limited the opportunities for conducting further comparison among users.

From the pedagogical point of view, it can be concluded that the organized and structured intervention was more effective than its unstructured version. All the necessary features of the intervention were present, e.g. specific tasks and features that should be included in the writing assignments, monitoring of the results, and providing competent feedback.

The results indicate that the future research in the field should be aimed at identifying the necessary conditions for ensuring the effectiveness and reliability of the used data. The introduction of control groups, larger sample, and the use of the delayed testing would help make a conclusion about the credibility and validity of the obtained results.

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