



Degree of Exposure to Internet Slang Language and the Essay Quality of English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners

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Abstract

The way we communicate and the nature of language have changed dramatically due to computer-mediated communication through social networking sites (SNS). Online slang, particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, has been under-explored in bilingual situations. This quantitative correlation study examines the relationship between English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' exposure to internet slang language and essay quality in 130 participants. The study aims to explore the implications of online slang usage in bilingual situations, highlighting the need for further research in Internet Linguistics. The current study found a significant association between the degree of exposure to internet slang, specifically in terms of time spent and online jargon, and the respondents' essay quality. Since SNS can create platforms that allow for participation while also facilitating observation and habit formation, it is vital to be aware of learners' second language development, as it can be a valuable tool for language instruction. In conclusion, internet slang does not hinder the second language development of the students; it merely transforms it.

ARTICLE INFO

Date Received: 01-01-2023

Date Last Revised: 10-21-2023

Date Accepted: 12-28-2023

KEYWORDS

Internet Slang Language
English as a Second Language
Essay
Social Networking Sites

Introduction

Technology has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, shaping our lives and redefining how we interact, conduct business, and educate ourselves. Computers and the internet have had a transformative impact on modern society, facilitating communication, cultural understanding, access to information and resources, collaboration, and our overall way of life. Computer-mediated communication via social networking sites has dramatically changed people's ways of communicating and the nature of written and spoken language (Mahdi, 2014). Social networking sites allow us to connect with people from all over

the world, regardless of distance or time zone. They are primarily text-based but also enable us to share photos, videos, and other multimedia content, making communication more expressive and engaging.

The rise of social networking sites has led to the development of new forms of language, such as internet slang and emojis. These forms of language are often more informal and playful than traditional language, reflecting the unique culture of social networking. Naseem (2018) found that 91% of the population uses slang words, with millennials using slang in social media

communication primarily for socializing rather than academic objectives (Amir & Azisah, 2017; Rezeki & Sagala, 2018). This rapid evolution of human society has significantly impacted language, as argued by Herring (2003). Internet language encompasses many genres or registers used in various circumstances, and it does not correspond to a single language. It originated from the dominance of English on the internet, but today's terminology is restrictive due to the rise of other languages online (Crystal, 2021; 2011). Internet slang usage is driven by the need for condensed conversations (Muhartoyo & Wijaya, 2014; Yeo & Ting, 2017), leading to unconventional interactions with a blend of formal and slang words (Baron, 2010).

Internet slang has gained popularity as more people use social media and online platforms to communicate. It refers to the use of informal phrases and expressions not considered standardized in everyday social contact. Additionally, Zubenko (2016) characterizes slang as a phenomenon that has always existed in language but has long been dismissed by many language practitioners. While slang is a way for young people to identify with each other (Cheshire, 2017), older individuals often criticize it due to a lack of understanding (Jabali, 2016). In short, slang is an essential aspect of adolescent communication, providing a youthful sense of self-expression and fostering a sense of community among young people.

However, concerns have been raised about the impact of internet slang on language development, particularly among young people. Zhou and Fan (2013) found that young people spend an average of 4 hours per day using internet slang on social media platforms. Kilicer et al. (2017) reported that students who spend more time on online activities, such as social media and playing online games, are more likely to use internet slang in their writing. Excessive use of internet slang has been linked to negative effects on language development in adolescents, particularly in their ability to use formal language (Dounia, 2016). Ochonogor et al. (2019) found that students who use a lot of internet slang in their writing tend to have lower grades in their academic classes and lower English language proficiency scores (Abdullah, 2020; Wong, 2021).

Crystal (2021) notes that internet slang is increasingly used in online communication, both

in formal and informal contexts, such as chat rooms, social media, and online games. Kim et al. (2019) found that Facebook is preferred over Twitter among ESL learners due to its perceived ease of use, longer text format, and broader range of features. Liu et al. (2019) discovered that online activities, such as social media and online gaming, play a significant role in the development of new internet slang terms. Akbulut and Sarac (2019) established that adolescents who spend more time on online activities are more likely to use Internet slang in their everyday speech. However, the relationship between online activities and Internet slang is complex and multifaceted (Chang & Wu, 2019).

Another aspect is online jargon, informal words, or phrases used in online communication. In Hong Kong, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers often use social media as a teaching tool in their English classes, finding it a simple and convenient way to enhance English language skills (Tso, 2019). Boylu and Kardas (2020) reported that teachers and students generally support the study and teaching of slang phrases, with students seeking to acquire slang words for various reasons. On the contrary, ESL students did not believe that their regular online communication activities affected their ability to use English punctuation and spelling correctly (Shaari & Bataineh, 2015).

While some research suggests positive impacts of internet use on language skills, such as improved listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar (Abdullah, 2020), concerns persist about the negative effects of internet slang on language development. Students employing chat elements, including inaccurate spelling, punctuation mark abuse, and overuse of abbreviations, may see a decline in their grammar competence (Jones, 2016; Rankin, 2010; Ujang et. al., 2018; Wilson, 2018). This raises concerns about less exposure to proper English, affecting the capacity to communicate effectively in English.

Despite the potential drawbacks, the fascination young people have with internet slang and online platforms motivated this study. The research aimed to determine ESL learners' degree of exposure to internet slang and its possible connection with their essay quality. Specifically, it addressed the following research questions: 1) What is the degree of exposure of ESL learners to internet slang language in terms of time spent,



online activities, and internet jargon?; 2) What is the essay quality of ESL learners who are exposed to internet slang language?; and 3) Is there a significant association between the degree of exposure of ESL learners to internet slang language and their essay quality?

Theoretical Framework

As proposed by Albert Bandura's social learning theory, learning occurs within a social context through cognitive processes such as observation and modeling (Bandura, 1989). According to the study, people learn by engaging with one another in their immediate surroundings as well as through the virtual world known as the internet or social media. It was also observed that both physical and virtual community connections had an effect on the mind and that technologies such as social media have a role in creating the life and culture that exist in today's communities, which then supply social learning environments (Bandura, 1989). As a result, social media provides platforms that facilitate both active involvement and passive observation. According to researchers, virtual channels for information transmission and social persuasion, such as social media, have a significant impact on human belief systems.

Social media is a ubiquitous tool among students worldwide, wielding a significant influence on their behavior, cognition, and various facets of their lives. The psychologist Albert Bandura has outlined three key stages through which social learning happens, as it does not occur spontaneously. One must first pay attention to behavior before one can mimic it. Motivation relates to vicarious reinforcement, comprising learning by observing the consequences of others' actions.

According to the concept, the most significant component in understanding how we learn and adapt to certain activities is the degree of our learnability in a social environment. The theory of mind describes how people understand others' thoughts and feelings, and it plays a critical role in determining whether there is a significant link between ESL learners' exposure to internet slang language and the quality of their essays. The findings of this study will serve as a valuable resource for individuals by providing insights into how their use of social networking sites influences their language, particularly in writing.

Methodology

Research Design

Given that both quantitative and qualitative research on Internet slang has been explored and applied, the researcher opted for a study using the correlation method within a quantitative design. Baraceros (2016) defines quantitative research as the process of measuring data and presenting research findings in numerical forms indicating the number or frequency of something.

The correlation method was specifically chosen for this study to assess the relationship between the degree of exposure of ESL learners to internet slang language and its potential connection with their essay quality. Creswell (1996) notes that the correlation statistical test is employed in correlational study designs to characterize and assess the level of relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores.

Participants of the Study

The study was conducted at a private senior high school in Batangas. The researcher employed simple random sampling to select 130 Grade 11 students enrolled in the Reading and Writing Skills (RWS) course during the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The choice of locale was based on its relevance to the research topic and the availability of suitable participants. Grade 11 students were chosen because they are more likely to be enrolled in related courses; Grade 12 students often pursue more specialized subjects.

Specifically, the researcher randomly selected 130 Grade 11 students from the entire population of Grade 11 students at the school. This method ensured that each student had an equal chance of being selected, thereby guaranteeing that the sample accurately represented the entire population.

Research Instruments

Two instruments were used in this research. The first instrument was a self-created online survey questionnaire, which underwent validation and necessary edits. A five-point Likert scale accompanied each statement, enabling students to express their opinions effectively on each



assertion. Valuable feedback from a doctorate holder in educational management, a master's degree holder in teaching the English language, and a registered psychometrician significantly contributed to ensuring the reliability and validity of the aforementioned research instrument.

The second instrument was an assessment rubric based on the Sajedi and Shehadeh (2014) rubric, adapted from the Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) rubric. This assessment encompassed the overall quality of the essay, considering aspects such as content, organization, development, cohesion/coherence, structure, vocabulary, and mechanics. The Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) rubric, known for its comprehensiveness, serves as a tool for assessing ESL students' writing proficiency at all levels. It is both reliable and comprehensive, allowing different teachers to use it consistently to assess the same writing samples and yield similar results. This rubric addresses all major aspects of ESL writing proficiency, aiding in identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, tracking progress over time, and providing constructive feedback to enhance their writing skills.

Data Gathering Procedure

In data collection, the researcher sought permission from the school administrators to conduct this study. Subsequently, communication with the participants occurred through a Facebook Messenger group chat. The data gathering took place in two phases: (1) the distribution of an online survey questionnaire through Google Forms; and (2) essay writing, comprising two key stages: (1) a 60-minute lecture focusing on how to plan, write, and proofread essays. This stage also included a discussion of guidelines and suggested themes for essay writing; (2) a 30-minute online orientation, emphasizing contemporary social challenges in the Philippines. This approach aligns with Wong's (2017) findings, indicating that students taught a specific essay-writing strategy in a 60-minute session were able to write essays effectively. It's important to note that the current study involved students already familiar with the essay writing process. Lecture notes and sample essays were provided, and participants were permitted to share and use online resources, including links, as cited in references.

The essay writing session lasted for 60 minutes. Two studies have found that students

can produce essays of equal quality in 60 minutes as they can in 90 minutes (National Council of Teachers of English, 2019; Burgess, 2005). In addition to the researcher, each essay was evaluated by two raters who were aware of the essay collection methods. The researcher assured respondents that their answers would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.

Statistical Analysis

The researchers employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (lowest) to five (highest), to record the scores and percentages of the respondents' responses. The scale is as follows:

Option	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Always
4	3.50-4.00	Often
3	2.50-3.49	Sometimes
2	1.50-2.49	Seldom
1	1.00-1.49	Never

The questionnaire data were examined using descriptive statistics, contributing to the determination of frequencies and percentages for each item. The students' presentation scores were obtained through the evaluation rubric assessing their use of internet slang. The weighted mean formula, as outlined by Arkin and Colton (1971), was then applied to derive the mean scores for the students' presentations. To assess essay quality, the Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) Paragraph Writing Scale was utilized, with two additional ESL teachers, besides the researcher, serving as essay judges. The researcher and the interraters engaged in discussions on how to grade the essays using the instrument (Table 1).

Additionally, to determine if there is a correlation between the degree of exposure of ESL learners to internet slang language and their essay quality, for all statistical analyses performed, the researcher used and calculated it through IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL). Specifically, the Chi-square test of independence/association with a significance level set to 0.05 was used to examine the degree of exposure in terms of time spent and essay quality, while Pearson Correlation was used to examine the correlation between the degree of exposure in terms of online activities and internet jargons and the essay quality of the ESL learners.



Table 1*Paragraph Rating Scale Adopted from Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992)*

Components	Score Criteria
Content	
27-30	Excellent to very good: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis; relevant to the topic assigned.
22-26	Good to average: some knowledge of the subject; adequate range; limited thematic development; mostly relevant to the topic; but lacks detail.
17-21	Fair to poor: limited knowledge of the subject, minimal substance; poor thematic development
13-16	Very poor: shows little or no knowledge of the subject; inadequate quantity; not relevant, or not enough to rate
Organization	
18-20	Excellent to very good: fluent expressions; a clear statement of ideas; solid support; clear organization; logical and cohesive sequencing.
14-17	Good to average:adequate fluency; main ideas clear but loosely organized; supporting material limited; sequencing logical but incomplete.
10-13	Fair to poor: low fluency; ideas not well connected; logical sequencing and sequencing development lacking.
7-9	Very poor: ideas not communicated; organization lacking, or not enough to rate.
Grammar	
22-25	Excellent to very good: accurate use of relatively complex structures; few errors in agreement, number, tense, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions
18-21	Good to average:simple constructions used effectively; some problems in the use of complex constructions; errors in agreement number, tense, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions
11-17	Fair to poor: significant defects in use of complex constructions; frequent error in number, tense, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; fragments and deletions; lack of accuracy interferes with meaning.
5-10	Very poor: no mastery of simple sentence construction; text dominated by errors; does not communicate, or enough to rate.
Vocabulary	
18-20	Excellent to very good: complex range; accurate word/idiom choice; mastery of word forms; appropriate register
14-17	Good to average: adequate range; errors of word/idiom choice; effective transmission of meaning
10-13	Fair to poor: limited range; frequent word/idiom errors; inappropriate choice, and usage; meaning not effectively communicated
7-9	Very poor: translation-based errors; little knowledge of target language vocabulary, or not enough to rate
Mechanics	
5	Excellent to very good: masters conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indention, etc.
4	Good to average: occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indention, etc. which do not interfere with meaning
3	Fair to poor: frequent spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph errors; meaning disrupted by formal problems
2	Very poor: no mastery of conventions due to frequency of mechanical errors, or not enough to rate



Ethical Consideration

With the informed consent of the administrators of a private high school in Batangas, this research was conducted with the assurance of voluntary participation from the student respondents. Furthermore, the researcher ensured the confidentiality of all gathered data.

Results and Discussion

Degree of Exposure of ESL Learners to Internet Slang Language

Table 2 shows the number of participants (n) and the percentage (%) of participants (N=130) who spend different amounts of time on internet slang language. The data indicate that the majority of participants (54.62%) spend more than 4 hours a day on internet slang language. This is followed by 20.77% of participants who spend 3-4 hours a day, 13.85% who spend 2-3 hours a day, and 10.76% who spend 1-2 hours a day on internet slang language.

Table 2

Degree of Exposure of ESL Learners to Internet Slang Language in Terms of Time Spent

Variables	Participants (N=130)
1-2 hours	14 (10.76%)
2-3 hours	18 (13.85%)
3-4 hours	27 (20.77%)
More than 4 hours a day	71 (54.62%)

This information aligns with the findings of Zhou & Fan (2013), who asserted that young people spend an average of 4 hours per day using internet slang on social media platforms. Kilicer et al. (2017) also reported that students who spend more time on online activities, such as using social media and playing online games, are more likely to incorporate internet slang into their writing. These findings suggest that internet slang language is a significant aspect of many people's lives, particularly among young individuals. It is crucial to be aware of the potential impact of internet slang on language development, both positive and negative.

Table 3 presents the degree of exposure in terms of online activities. The data show the results of a survey of ESL learners regarding their online activities and their mean scores on each activity. The overall mean score is 4.061, indicating that ESL learners are generally involved in a variety of online activities. The top five most popular online activities among ESL learners are: using slang, abbreviations, word or language combinations, and emoticons in daily conversations (4.531); using internet terminologies, memes, emoticons, and acronyms (4.346); following and joining different pages, groups, and vlog sites (4.608); using private and group messaging (4.538); and learning new words, meanings, and vocabularies through online platforms (4.423). These activities are all relatively informal and involve the use of a variety of communication styles. Crystal (2021) found that internet slang is increasingly being used in online communication, both in formal and informal contexts. This suggests that ESL learners are using online platforms to connect with others and to learn about different cultures in a relaxed and fun environment.

The least popular online activity among ESL learners is using tweets, retweets, and replies to trending topics (3.515), as ESL learners are not as familiar with the fast-paced and often complex nature of Twitter conversations compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook. This is supported by the study of Kim et al. (2019), who explored social media preferences among ESL learners and found that Facebook was preferred over Twitter due to its perceived ease of use, longer text format, and broader range of features. Overall, the survey results suggest that ESL learners are actively engaged in a variety of online activities, likely helping them improve their language skills, learn about different cultures, and connect with others from around the world.

Table 4 presents the results of a survey on the frequency of the use of internet jargon. Survey participants were asked to rate how often they use each jargon, and their mean scores were calculated. The most frequently used internet jargon includes SS, jk, memes, FYI, and TBA. This suggests that these jargons are well-known and widely used among the survey participants. On the other hand, the least frequently used internet jargons are YOLO and photobomb, indicating that these terms are not as well-known or widely used as the others.



Table 3*Degree of Exposure of ESL Learners to Internet Slang Language in Terms of Online Activities*

No.	Online Activities	Mean Score	Verbal Interpretation
1	I use slang, abbreviations, word or language combinations, and emoticons in daily conversations.	4.346	Often
2	I use internet terminologies, memes, emoticons, and acronyms.	4.531	Always
3	I post status and use hash tagging.	4.046	Often
4	I enjoy writing and reading posts from my newsfeed/ timeline/wall in sharing my thoughts and ideas.	3.962	Often
5	I share reels and stories on my social media.	3.962	Often
6	I use private and group messaging.	4.608	Always
7	I follow and join different pages, groups, and vlog sites.	3.754	Often
8	I use tweets, retweets, and replies to trending topics.	3.515	Often
9	I use photos such as internet memes and watch videos such as vlogs.	4.538	Always
10	I make creative usernames online.	3.577	Often
11	I learn new words, meanings, and vocabularies through online platforms.	4.423	Often
12	I use online terms because I can relate to them and it is more convenient and fun to use.	4.046	Often
13	I am aware of grammatical errors and misconceptions online.	3.885	Often
14	I participate in actual, real-time, relevant conversations taking place online, and practice the target language.	3.900	Often

The overall weighted mean score was 3.452, indicating that the participants generally use internet jargon sometimes. The majority of respondents in SNS choose their preferred language as the default language (Thurairaj et al., 2015), as it can be a fun and expressive way to communicate with friends and family online. This suggests that the survey participants generally use internet jargons in some contexts but not in all. Overall, the findings from this survey imply that internet jargon is a common part of the language used by many people. However, it is important to be aware of the context in which internet jargon is used, as it may not be appropriate in all situations.

Essay Quality of ESL Learners Who Are Exposed to Internet Slang Language

Table 5 displays descriptive statistics based on the results of the 130 essays evaluated using the paragraph rating scale. It illustrates the overall quality of the essays produced by the respondents.

Out of the 130 essays, 63 were rated as 'Passed,' while 67 were rated as 'Failed.' The data indicates that 48.46% of participants successfully completed the written task, while 51.53% failed the test. The significant number of students who did not pass suggests that there are opportunities to enhance the preparation of ESL learners for essay writing in formal academic settings. It can also be inferred that each respondent may have individual attributes and levels of exposure that influenced their writing performance.

Link Between the Degree of Exposure of ESL Learners to Internet Slang Language and their Essay Quality

Tables 6 to 10 present descriptive statistics derived from the results of the online survey and the evaluation of 130 essays using the paragraph rating scale, employing Chi-square and Pearson Correlation analyses.



Table 4

Degree of Exposure of ESL Learners to Internet Slang Language in Terms of Internet Jargon

No.	Internet Jargons	Mean Score	Verbal Interpretation
1	ATM	3.515	Often
2	WFH	3.210	Sometimes
3	YOLO	2.216	Seldom
4	FTW	3.092	Sometimes
5	BBT/BBL/BRB	3.315	Sometimes
6	FAQ	3.538	Often
7	LMK	3.223	Sometimes
8	RT	2.977	Sometimes
9	WRU	3.354	Sometimes
10	WBU	3.254	Sometimes
11	FYI	3.838	Often
12	TBA	3.846	Often
13	“u”/“ur”	3.831	Often
14	Y	3.754	Often
15	SS	4.200	Often
16	Jk	4.346	Often
17	Memes	4.038	Often
18	photobomb	2.677	Sometimes
19	Savage	3.031	Sometimes
20	Info	3.792	Often
General Weighted Mean		3.452	Sometimes

Table 5

Essay Quality of ESL Learners Who Are Exposed to Internet Slang Language

Variables	Participants (N=130)
Passed	63 (48.46%)
Failed	67 (51.53%)

Number of Time Spent

A study of 130 students found that those who spent more time on the internet were more likely to pass their essays. The study found that students who passed spent more than 4 hours

on the internet, while students who failed spent 1-2 hours on the internet. According to Kilicer et al. (2017), students who spend more time on online activities, such as using social media and playing online games, are more likely to use internet slang in their writing.

On the contrary, Ochonogor et al. (2019) found that students who use a lot of internet slang in their writing tend to have lower grades in their academic classes. Students who use a lot of internet slang tend to have lower English language proficiency scores (Abdullah, 2020; Wong, 2021). The data suggest that spending more time on the internet allows students to access more resources and learn about the latest trends in writing and technology. This can help students to write better essays and pass their classes.

Table 6 presents the results of a chi-square test between NTS (Number of Time Spent) and EQ (Essay Quality). A chi-square test of independence was conducted to explore the association between categorical variables related to the degree of exposure in terms of the number of hours spent and the essay quality of ESL learners. In this case, the two categorical variables are NTS (more than 4 hours, 3-4 hours, 2-3 hours, or 1-2 hours) and EQ (Passed or Failed).

Based on the Table 7, the chi-square test is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates a statistically significant association between the two variables being tested. The Pearson Chi-Square test statistic is 8.356, with 3 degrees of freedom. The p-value for this test is 0.039, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. Additionally, the Likelihood Ratio test statistic is 8.690, with 3 degrees of freedom, and its p-value is 0.034, also below the significance level of 0.05. The Linear-by-Linear Association test statistic is 4.160, with 1 degree of freedom, and its p-value is 0.041, less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it is implied that there is a statistically significant association between NTS and EQ.

All three chi-square tests indicate a clear connection between the amount of time students spend on their essays and their grades. This suggests that students who spend more time on their essays are more likely to pass. Possible explanations for this association include: first, students who spend more time on the internet



Table 6*Cross Tabulation between Number of Time Spent and the Essay Quality*

No. of Time Spent (NTS)		Essay Quality (EQ)		Total
		Passed	Failed	
More than 4 hours	Count	41.0	30.0	71.0
	Expected Count	36.6	34.4	71.0
3-4 hours	Count	16.0	11.0	27.0
	Expected Count	13.9	13.1	27.0
2-3 hours	Count	4.0	14.0	18.0
	Expected Count	9.3	8.7	18.0
1-2 Hours	Count	6.0	8.0	14.0
	Expected Count	7.2	6.8	14.0
Total	Count	67.0	63.0	130.0
	Expected Count	67.0	63.0	130.0

Table 7*Chi-Square Test Between NTS and EQ*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.356 ^a	3	0.039
Likelihood Ratio	8.690	3	0.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.160	1	0.041
N of Valid Cases	130		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.78.

may have access to a wider range of information and resources that they can use to support their writing. Second, students who spend more time on the internet may be more familiar with the conventions of academic writing. Third, students who spend more time on the internet may be more likely to receive feedback on their writing from others.

It is important to note that the association between internet use and essay quality is not necessarily causal. In other words, there may be another factor causing both students to spend more time on the internet and students to write higher-quality essays. However, the results of the chi-square test do suggest an association between internet use and essay quality, which warrants further investigation, particularly regarding the nature of this association.

Table 8 displays the results of two symmetric measures of the strength of association between NTS and EQ, with significance values for both measures of association being 0.039, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the association between the two variables is statistically significant. The phi coefficient is 0.254, with an approximate significance of 0.039, considered a weak to moderate effect size. Additionally, Cramer's V coefficient is also 0.254, indicating a weak to moderate effect size.

Both the Phi and Cramer's V coefficients suggest a weak to moderate positive association between NTS and EQ. This implies that students who spend more time on their essays are more likely to pass, although other factors contribute to essay quality. It is crucial to note that the association is not strong and is not necessarily causal. This means that the amount of time spent on the internet is not the sole factor influencing essay quality. Other factors, such as a student's writing skills and motivation, are also likely to play a role.

Table 8*Symmetric Measures of Strength of Association*

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.254	0.039
	Cramer's V	0.254	0.039
N of Valid Cases		130	

Note. a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.



Online Activities

Table 9 presents a Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between the degree of exposure to online activities (DE2) and essay quality (EQ) for a sample of 130 ESL learners. The Pearson correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength and direction of the association between two variables.

In conclusion, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis suggest a weak positive correlation between the degree of exposure to online activities and the essay quality of ESL learners. However, the correlation is not statistically significant. This means that ESL learners who spend more time on online activities tend to have higher essay quality scores. However, the relationship is weak, indicating that it is not very strong. Similarly, Chang & Wu (2019) explored the relationship between internet use and English writing proficiency in Taiwanese elementary school students. Similar to the current findings, a weak positive correlation was observed, but the effect was not statistically significant. Overall, this indicates that the degree of exposure in terms of online activities of ESL learners to internet slang language does not significantly influence their written performance.

Internet Jargons

Table 10 presents a Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between the degree of exposure to internet jargons (DE3) and essay

quality (EQ) for a sample of 130 ESL learners. A correlation coefficient of 1 indicates a perfect positive relationship, while -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship. A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates no relationship between the two variables.

In this case, the Pearson correlation coefficient is .237, indicating a moderately positive correlation between DE3 and EQ. Therefore, there is a statistically significant correlation between the degree of exposure to internet jargon and the essay quality of ESL learners. ESL learners with more exposure to internet jargon tend to achieve higher essay quality scores. This may be attributed to the fact that exposure to internet jargon helps ESL learners enhance their vocabulary and writing skills. Additionally, those more exposed to internet jargon may be familiar with the latest trends in writing and technology, as supported by Abdullah's study (2020), which found that using the internet to learn and practice English significantly improves listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar skills.

The Pearson correlation analysis suggests a moderate positive correlation between DE3 and EQ. This implies that exposure to internet jargon may benefit ESL learners in improving their essay writing skills. However, it was found that students incorporate several chat elements in their official writing, including inaccurate spelling (Ujang et al., 2018; Wilson, 2018; Jones, 2016; and Rankin, 2010), punctuation mark abuse (Algouzi & Al-Ahdal, 2021), and overuse of abbreviations and

Table 9

Pearson R Correlations Analysis in Terms of Degree of Exposure in Online Activities and the Essay Quality of ESL Learners

		DE2	EQ
Internet Jargons (DE2)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.210
	N	130	130
Essay Quality (EQ)	Pearson Correlation	0.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.210	
	N	130	130

Table 10

Pearson R Correlations Analysis in Terms of Degree of Exposure to Internet Jargons and the Essay Quality of ESL Learners

		DE2	EQ
Online Activities (DE2)	Pearson Correlation	1	.237**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	130	130
Essay Quality (EQ)	Pearson Correlation	.237**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	130	130

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



shortcutting phrases, affecting their grammar competence (Wong, 2020).

It is crucial to note that the correlation coefficient does not indicate causation. Although students more exposed to internet jargon tend to achieve higher essay quality scores, it does not necessarily mean that exposure to internet jargon causes better essay writing skills. Other factors, such as the motivation of ESL learners or the quality of instruction they receive, may also play a role. These findings underscore the need for more research to determine the causal relationship between these variables.

Conclusions

The present study aimed to determine the degree of exposure of ESL learners to internet slang language and its potential impact on their essay quality. Scholars have made claims about the influence of the internet and social media sites on language learning. Technology can create platforms that allow for participation while also facilitating observation and habit formation. It provides channels for information transmission and socially persuasive stimuli, such as social media. In this day and age, language learners are constantly surrounded by numerous sources of influence, impacting their behavior, cognition, and other aspects of their lives, as supported by social cognitive theory.

Due to students' high engagement and participation in various online and social media platforms, findings revealed a statistically significant association between internet slang exposure in terms of time spent and a highly positive correlation in terms of internet jargon and learners' writing performance, specifically essay quality. The number of hours spent on social media daily is a contributing factor, and exposure to internet jargon and language through these platforms allows them to develop and learn new methods or techniques of writing that are distinct from formal styles, affecting their ability to write academic forms of writing in general.

Conversely, the degree of exposure of ESL learners in terms of online activities and essay quality was found to be notably low, with a negligible positive correlation and not statistically significant. It indicates that ESL learners did

not perceive their online habits as detrimental to their English proficiency in terms of written performance. However, it is important to note that correlation or association does not imply causation, emphasizing the need for more research to determine the causal relationship between these two variables.

Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, it is essential to pay greater attention to learners' language development and acquisition through suitable supervision and instructions to achieve effective communication. Understanding how learners develop their language skills, particularly in terms of their use of modern technologies and social networking sites, is crucial. While these can be useful tools for language learning, it is also vital to be aware of the associated risks.

Ultimately, the impact of internet slang on students' writing proficiency is a complex issue that depends on various factors, including how it is used and the context in which it is used. Students who can use internet slang appropriately and in the right context may benefit from incorporating it into their writing. However, students who overuse internet slang or use it in inappropriate contexts may experience a decline in their writing proficiency. With that said, internet slang does not destroy the second language development of students; it simply transforms it.

Moreover, the study did not examine the timeliness of internet slang, especially relevant during the pandemic when students heavily rely on various online and social media platforms for academic work (Liu et al., 2019). Future research should explore this aspect further. The findings of this study, especially the degree of exposure to internet slang, can contribute to evaluating writing skills. Various quantitative measures were employed in this study to document significant findings regarding the degree of exposure to online slang and its relationship to ESL learners' essay quality. However, the study has several limitations. First, the writing activity was conducted in a single session. Further research is needed, involving multiple sessions, to better understand the relationship between internet slang and the writing performance of learners across various components. Second, it appears that no



standardized instrument was utilized for the study of internet slang. The inclusion of such an instrument would have been a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge in the field of online slang. Therefore, further studies are needed to effectively evaluate the influence of internet slang language on the writing performance of L2 learners. Students exposed to a lot of internet slang may require additional support to develop the writing skills necessary for academic success. This presents a fruitful area for future research.

Acknowledgment

The researcher would like to express heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to her research adviser, Dr. Cecile Genuino, for sharing expertise throughout the process of this research. Also, to Immaculate Conception College of Balayan and Phoenix Publication Company, for their generous financial grants and constant guidance and encouragement, which were invaluable. Their support was instrumental in overcoming research challenges and ultimately achieving impactful results in the researcher's master's program and this study.

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