

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE FOR GENERATION Z AT IAIN KERINCI

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Abstract

In the digital age, social media has become a very important communication platform, especially for Generation Z. This study explores the importance of writing skills in English in the use of social media among IAIN Kerinci students. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data was collected through interviews with eight students majoring in English Education. The results showed that students of the English education study program argued that writing skills in English play a significant role in effective communication, self-image building, and career opportunities. Students feel that writing in English enhances their credibility and expands their professional network. However, there are various challenges that hinder the development of their writing skills, such as fear of grammatical errors, lack of confidence, and minimal exposure to English content. This study highlights the need for institutional support to improve students' writing skills through structured learning strategies and social encouragement. The findings contribute to the understanding of the relationship between digital literacy and language skills in both academic and professional contexts.

Keywords: *English writing skills, social media, Generation Z, digital literacy*

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly advancing digital age, social media has become the primary platform for communication and social interaction, especially among young people. Generation Z, having grown up with technology and the internet, spends a significant amount of time on various social media platforms to share information, interact, and express themselves. In this context, the ability to write in English has become crucial.

The ability to write in English has become an important competency (Sari et al., 2022; Suhaimi et al., 2021). In the era of globalization, the ability to write English for social media use is very important, especially for young people who are increasingly connected to the world through social media (Anwas et al., 2020; Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Jiang, 2018; Suppiah et al., 2022). Generation Z, born in the late 1990s to early 2010s, is known as a generation that is very familiar with digital technology and social media (PrakashYadav and Rai 2017; Hernandezet al 2020; Cilliers 2017; Dolot 2018). In Indonesia, including IAIN Kerinci, social media is not only used as

a means of communication, but also as a platform for building personal identity, professional networks, and sharing information and knowledge.

In the context of higher education, especially at IAIN Kerinci, the ability to write in English has its own added value. Students who are able to write well in English can be more effective in conveying their ideas and thoughts, not only in an academic setting, but also on global social media platforms (Aizawa et al., 2023; Elola & Oskoz, 2017; Warschauer et al., 2023). Using good English on social media allows students to interact with a wider audience, access international information that available on various digital platforms, and open up opportunities for global collaboration and networking (Lakhal, 2021; Puspita Dewi, 2022).

Khaliq and Jamil (2022); Puspita and Nadia (2022); Jiang (2018) state good writing skills are essential in the digital age, especially in the use of social media. Social media, being the primary means of communication for billions of people around the world, requires its users to convey messages clearly and effectively (Flowerdew & Li, 2009). When one is able to write well, the message conveyed becomes easier to understand, reducing the risk of misunderstandings that can arise from the use of ambiguous or inappropriate language. Furthermore, writing that is structured and free from grammatical errors not only reflects professionalism, but also enhances an individual's credibility and reputation in the eyes of the audience (Lasut & Kumoiois, 2023). However, the reality on the ground shows that not all students have adequate English writing skills. Many students feel less confident to express themselves in English on social media (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019; Asafo-Adjei et al., 2023; Janrey, 2022; Khaliq et al., 2022; Lasut & Kumoiois, 2023). This is due to various factors, such as lack of practice, limited access to English learning resources, and lack of encouragement to use English in everyday contexts (Asafo-Adjei et al., 2023).

The ability to write in English, the most common language used on social media, opens up opportunities to interact with international audiences, build wider networks, and access and share information more effectively. In addition, good writing plays a role in countering the spread of hoaxes and misinformation, by presenting accurate and reliable information (Rahman & Anita Aulia, 2024). In the professional world, this skill is becoming increasingly important, with many employers evaluating potential employees based on the content they write on social media. Therefore, good writing skills not only support effective communication and a positive self-image, but also open up a wide range of career and development opportunities in an increasingly competitive digital world.

Studies have shown that English writing skills play a crucial role in Generation Z's use of social media. According to a study conducted by Cambridge University Press, good English writing skills enable individuals to communicate more effectively on global social media platforms, opening up opportunities to interact with international audiences and expand their professional networks (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019; Anwas et al., 2020; Asafo-Adjei et al., 2023; Elola & Oskoz, 2017; Lakhal, 2021; Puspita Dewi et al., 2022; Rahman & Anita Aulia, 2024). Another study emphasized that students who are proficient in writing in English tend to be more confident in expressing their opinions on social media, which in turn increases their participation in global

discussions and strengthens their critical thinking skills (Warschauer et al., 2023). In addition, research found that English writing skills also contribute to building a more professional and credible self-image on social media, which is especially important in this digital age where online identities are often the primary representation of oneself (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019). Thus, English writing skills not only enrich Generation Z's social media experience, but also give them a competitive advantage in their education and careers.

Although some researchers have conducted research, it is still very limited, especially research related to the importance of English writing skills for social media use seen from the perspective of students. This research is here to fill the gap, so that it can provide comprehensive information related to the importance of English writing skills for social media use for students, especially at IAIN Kerinci.

Based on pre-research interviews conducted on Monday, May 13, 2024, with several students majoring in English at IAIN Kerinci's Tarbiyah faculty, various challenges regarding English writing activities on social media were highlighted. One student, A, expressed hesitation to write in English on social media due to fear of making mistakes and being criticized or laughed at. Another student, S, mentioned the lack of time and opportunities to practice English writing outside the academic context, noting that while they have many writing assignments, there is rarely time to write for themselves or on social media. Additionally, student B pointed out the lack of access to good reading materials and online learning platforms, emphasizing the need for more campus support. Dian, another student, shared that peer ridicule discourages her from writing in English on social media, making her prefer writing in Indonesian.

These issues provide a compelling basis for researching the importance of English writing skills in social media usage among Generation Z at IAIN Kerinci. The significance of English writing skills in the context of social media engagement among Generation Z at IAIN Kerinci offers a multifaceted avenue for exploration. As digital natives, Generation Z individuals are inherently immersed in social media platforms, utilizing them as primary channels for communication, information dissemination, and self-expression. Within this digital landscape, proficiency in English writing not only facilitates effective communication but also shapes perceptions, influences interactions, and amplifies one's digital presence.

Understanding the dynamics of English writing proficiency in social media usage among Generation Z students at IAIN Kerinci is crucial for various reasons. Firstly, it reflects their adaptability to global communication standards, considering English's dominance as the lingua franca of the internet. Secondly, it underscores the intersection of language, technology, and culture, as social media platforms serve as virtual spaces where identities are constructed, ideologies are exchanged, and cultural nuances are navigated. Additionally, investigating the nexus between English writing skills and social media usage can shed light on educational practices, pedagogical approaches, and digital literacy initiatives tailored to meet the evolving needs of Generation Z learners. By delving into these issues, researchers can unveil insights that inform policy-making, curriculum development, and instructional strategies aimed at fostering effective

English writing skills within the context of contemporary digital communication platforms among Generation Z students at IAIN Kerinci. This study aims to explore the perspectives of IAIN Kerinci students regarding the importance of English writing skills in the use of social media, providing in-depth insight into students' views, challenges faced, and strategies used to improve English writing skills on social media. This study also aims to explore the importance of English writing skills for generation Z at IAIN Kerinci, identify the obstacles faced by students as well as strategies to improve skills, and provide recommendations for curriculum development and English language training programs. In addition, this study contributes to the literature on the influence of language skills on the use of social media and the adaptation of young people in Indonesian higher education to global demands, with the hope of facilitating effective communication and increasing students' confidence in using English on social media.

The study's comprehensive approach not only explores students' perceptions and experiences but also offers actionable recommendations for curriculum enhancement and language training programs. By bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application, this research aims to equip students with the linguistic tools required to thrive in an interconnected world. Based on the above background, researchers are interested in conducting research with the title:

—The importance of English writing skills in social media usage for generation ZII.

METHOD

Research Type and Design

This research was a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) stated that the phenomenological approach was an effort to understand human experiences as perceived and explained by the individuals themselves by emphasizing the exploration of the essence and meaning of certain phenomena as experienced by participants, using in-depth interviews, observation, and sometimes other methods to collect rich and detailed data. Gay et al., (2012) added that the phenomenological approach in qualitative research aimed to understand individual experiences from their own perspectives without including the assumptions of the researchers.

Based on the research design above, the researchers examined phenomena related to students' perceptions regarding the importance of English writing skills in social media usage for Generation Z at IAIN Kerinci. The qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach was chosen because it was considered relevant to explore students' perceptions of the importance of English writing skills in the use of social media among Generation Z at IAIN Kerinci. This approach enabled a deep understanding of individual experiences without incorporating the researchers' assumptions, thereby providing rich insights into their views and experiences.

Research Informants

According to Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) and Gay et al., (2012) informants in the context of qualitative research refer to individuals or groups who provide information, views, or their experiences related to the research topic under study. The informants in this research are students of the English education study program who are in the 3th and 5th semesters each grade consist of four students. They are chosen because they belong to the generation Z. To determine the informants, the researchers use purposive sampling technique.

Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) and Gay et al., (2012) sated purposive sampling is a sampling technique used in qualitative research where researchers intentionally select informants or cases that are considered to have characteristics or criteria relevant to the research topic. The criteria for respondents who were sampled in this study are:

The informants are active students enrolled in the English Education study program at IAIN Kerinci.

Born between the years (2000-2010)

Own/use social media

Willing to be an informant in this research (proven by signing a letter of willingness to be an informant) the format of the letter is attached in Appendix 2.

Data Collection Technique

Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) and Gay et al., (2012) mention that data collection is a systematic process in research that involves gathering information from various sources to answer research questions. Data collection in this research was collected by using interviews and documentation. In this study, the data collection methods used by researchers to obtain data are as follows:

Interview: Guided interviews were used in this research. Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) and Gay et al., (2012) stated Guided interviews is a data collection method in which the researcher uses a series of pre- designed questions to ask each informant. The process of question and answer when conducting interviews in research that takes place orally against two or more informants and hear directly information with a predetermined direction and purpose. The kind of interview that was used in this research was a semi-structured interview. The interview allows for the flexibility to explore topics in more depth based on the interviewee's responses.

Observation is a crucial approach in research, enabling the collection of deep and detailed data on human behavior in their natural contexts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The participant observation method, in particular, offers researchers the opportunity to directly engage within their study environment, such as with students in an English education program. Focusing on the use of social media and the challenges of writing in English, researchers observe daily interactions of students, meticulously noting their reactions and identifying patterns that may influence their

writing practices. This approach not only enriches our understanding of social and academic dynamics but also yields authentic and contextual data to deepen research analysis. Based on the explanation above, the observation process in this study was carried out through the participant observation method. The researcher is directly involved in the environment being studied, namely the daily interactions of students in the English education program at IAIN Kerinci. Researchers carefully recorded reactions and patterns that could influence students' writing practices on social media.

Documentation: The documentation method is to find data about things in the form of important records that are not widely published (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This documentation is usually in the form of transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines and so on. Documents are data or information that has been documented, both in oral and written form. Documentation in this study is in the form of interview activities that researchers conducted with informants, namely students of the English education study program at IAIN Kerinci. To document the interview activities, the researcher used Handphone POCO M4 PRO, documentation in the form of photos of interview activities and recordings of interview results.

Data Analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis according to Miles et al., (2017) involves several stages:

- a. **Data Collection:** At the data collection stage, researchers conducted interviews with informants related to the focus of the research. At this stage, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with students. This aimed to explore their understanding of the importance of English writing skills on social media and the challenges they face.
- b. **Data Reduction:** The data obtained is recorded in a detailed description. From the data that has been recorded, data simplification is then carried out. The data selected is only data related to the problem to be analyzed, in this case, the interview transcripts were coded to identify relevant themes and patterns. The data was grouped into categories such as perceptions of the importance of writing skills in English and the various challenges faced. By reducing the data, the researcher can focus on the most significant information, making the analysis more focused and efficient.
- c. **Data Presentation:** The data that has been determined is then arranged in an organized and detailed manner so that it is easy to understand. The data is then analyzed so that a description of the student's perception of the importance of English writing skills for social media use is obtained.

- d. Conclusion Drawing/Verification: Conclusions are made about the results of the data obtained since the beginning of the research. This conclusion still requires verification (re-examination of the truth of the report) so that the results obtained are truly valid through consultation with the supervisor.

Data Validity Checking Technique

Triangulation is a technique used in qualitative research to enhance the validity and reliability of data by utilizing various data sources, methods, theories, or researchers. According to several experts in this field, triangulation has various approaches and applications that strengthen research findings. Miles et al., (2017) explain that triangulation involves using multiple data sources to ensure information consistency and reduce bias. In this context, researchers can collect data from interviews, observations, and documents to check the consistency of findings. Miles et al. emphasize that triangulation is not just about gathering more data but also about confirming the authenticity of data through various perspectives. For example, in a study on the importance of English writing skills in social media, researchers can compare data from interviews with students to the other students than compare with the theory.

Creswell & Guetterman, (2019) also support the use of triangulation as a method to enhance the validity of qualitative research. They outline four types of triangulation: data triangulation (using various data sources), researcher triangulation (using multiple researchers), theory triangulation (using different theoretical perspectives), and method triangulation (using various research methods). Creswell & Guetterman emphasize that data triangulation is the most commonly used, where researchers collect data from different sources to verify the consistency of findings. For example, data on writing challenges in social media can be collected through interviews, surveys, and content analysis of social media writings.

Gay et al., (2012) add that triangulation helps identify and reduce interpretation errors by comparing data from various sources or methods. They explain that triangulation can be done through several strategies such as using data from different times, places, or different situations to ensure that findings are not limited to a specific context. In research focusing on English Education students at IAIN Kerinci, triangulation can be conducted by collecting data from students in different academic years or from different classes to ensure that findings are generally applicable.

By combining perspectives from Creswell & Guetterman, (2019); Gay et al., (2012); Miles et al., (2017) can conclude that triangulation is a crucial technique in qualitative research to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. By applying various data sources, methods, and perspectives, researchers can ensure that their findings are more accurate and trustworthy. In the context of research on the importance of English writing skills in social media, triangulation helps ensure that students' perceptions and challenges truly reflect the existing reality.

RESULTS

This study aims to analyze the importance of English writing skills in social media usage as well as the challenges faced by university students in writing on social media. Interviews were conducted with eight informants, consisting of four third- semester students and four fifth-semester students who actively use Instagram or Facebook. Based on the conducted interviews, the key findings are as follows:

The Importance of Writing Skills in Social Media Use

Based on the interviews, students recognize that English writing skills are crucial in their social media activities, particularly on platforms such as Instagram (IG) and Facebook (FB). The key points include:

Effective Communication

English writing skills play a crucial role in students' social media activities. One of the main benefits is the enhancement of global communication abilities. Most informants stated that writing in English helps them interact with people from various countries. Informant 1 stated,

"I often interact with friends from abroad through Instagram and Facebook. By writing in English, I can convey my messages more clearly and am not limited to communicating only with people from Indonesia."

The same point was expressed by Informant 3, who stated:

"I feel more confident when writing in English on social media because I can exchange information with students from other countries and learn from them."

With strong writing skills, they find it easier to understand and convey clear messages to a global audience. Additionally, proficiency in writing in English also contributes to enhancing students' self-confidence and professionalism. Several informants mentioned that they feel more valued when writing in English, particularly when sharing opinions or articles on social media platforms. Informant 5 stated: When I write in English, I feel more respected by my peers, and even some people I don't know engage with my writing, offering interesting perspectives,"

Meanwhile, Informant 7 expressed,

"Writing in English on LinkedIn or Instagram Stories makes me appear more professional. I want to work for an international company, so this helps me build a positive image."

They believe that the use of English creates an impression that an individual possesses broader knowledge and better communication skills compared to simply using a local language. Not only in the social aspect, but writing skills in English also have a positive impact on academics and career. The majority of informants agree that writing in English enhances their academic skills, particularly in understanding scientific articles and composing essays.

Informant 2 emphasized,

"When writing in English, I become more accustomed to correct sentence structures. This is very helpful when working on university assignments, especially when I have to write papers in English."

Informant 6 also added,

"I want to work abroad, so writing in English is very important. I often post formal and academic writing on social media, which has attracted the attention of several recruiters."

Therefore, writing skills in English become an important investment for students who wish to pursue careers at the international level. Additionally, the opportunity to learn and access information is another major benefit of writing in English on social media. Some students revealed that they have had the chance to join international communities that support the development of their skills. Informant 4 mentioned,

"I was invited to join an online discussion group about linguistics after writing an opinion on Facebook. From there, I was able to learn many new things that I didn't know before."

Meanwhile, Informant 8 said,

"I found many free online courses in English after I started actively writing on Twitter. Some friends on social media also recommended useful learning resources to me."

Thus, writing skills in English are not only beneficial for communication and career aspects but also open new opportunities in education and personal development. Writing skills in English on social media offer numerous benefits for students, ranging from global communication, enhanced professionalism, to academic and career opportunities. The informants recognize that proficiency in English writing not only improves their communication skills but also opens various opportunities in the increasingly globally connected digital world. Therefore, enhancing English writing abilities has become a necessity that cannot be overlooked in today's digital era.

Building Image and Credibility

Writing in English on social media is not merely a communication tool, but also a strategic asset for students in building their professional image and credibility. Many students are aware that good writing skills on social media can enhance their job prospects, especially at the international level.

Informant 1 shared,

"I want to appear professional on social media, so I make an effort to write well in English."

This indicates that awareness of digital image is increasingly growing, with students starting to use social media as a platform for personal branding. Furthermore, the ability to write in English on social media is also seen as an attractive quality for potential employers.

Informant 2 stated,

"Writing in English makes my profile more attractive to potential employers."

In line with this, Informant 3 added,

"I want to enter the international job market, so I am starting to build my professional image now."

This statement indicates that students already have a long-term perspective on the benefits of writing in English, especially in building personal branding for their careers. Some students also use social media as a platform to showcase their work experience and skills to a broader audience.

Informant 4 mentioned,

"I often make posts about my work experience in English so that more people can see it."

Meanwhile, Informant 5 highlighted the importance of writing in English as part of career preparation:

"Many companies are looking for candidates who can write in English, so I train myself by writing on social media."

In other words, they view social media not just as a place to share experiences, but also as a strategic step to attract professional attention and potential employers. Beyond professional image, writing in English also plays a role in building credibility in the digital world. Informant 6 emphasized,

"I believe social media can be my professional portfolio, so I always write neatly in English." Meanwhile, Informant 7 added,

"By writing in English, I demonstrate that I have good communication skills."

Both statements highlight that social media can be a platform to showcase one's competency in communication, which is an essential skill in the modern workplace. Lastly, some students also see writing in English as a strategy to expand their reach and enhance their credibility in specific fields. Informant 8 stated,

"I want to become an influencer in the field of education, so I make an effort to write in English to appear more credible."

This shows that students are not only utilizing their writing skills for personal needs but also to build influence in the broader digital world. Overall, this study reveals that writing skills in English have a significant impact on building students' image and credibility on social media. Awareness of the importance of personal branding through social media is increasing, and many students are using these platforms as tools to establish their professional reputation. By writing in English consistently and with quality, they not only enhance job opportunities but also strengthen their position in the increasingly competitive digital world.

Expanding Networks and Enhancing Language Skills

The use of English on social media provides students with significant opportunities to expand their social networks and improve their language skills. With the ability to write in English, students can interact with people from different countries, enriching their experience of global communication.

Informant 1 stated,

"I made foreign friends because I can speak English."

This indicates that English language skills open opportunities for students to connect with a broader international community. In addition to expanding their social circle, writing in English also helps students improve their communication skills with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Informant 2 shared,

"By writing in English, I can communicate with people from various countries."

This statement is reinforced by Informant 3, who noted,

"I had the opportunity to practice the English I learned at IAIN directly on social media with native speakers."

This suggests that social media serves as an effective platform for students to apply what they have learned in class in real-life communication situations. Social media is also used as a practice space for students to deepen their English language skills.

Informant 4 mentioned,

"I use social media to help me find friends to practice my English."

Meanwhile, Informant 5 emphasized that cross-country communication has become easier with English, "I communicate with people from abroad in English."

Both statements indicate that social media provides immediate opportunities for students to interact and learn from various English speakers worldwide. Beyond the practical benefits of communication, writing in English on social media also offers students a sense of personal satisfaction.

Informant 6 shared,

"Using English on social media gives me a sense of pride."

This highlights that English language skills are not only a communication tool but also become a part of students' identity and personal achievement. Furthermore, students also use English in academic and professional interactions within the campus.

Informant 7 stated,

"Sometimes, fellow students in the English department chat with each other on social media in English."

This demonstrates that social media provides an environment that supports students in honing their skills, even among peers.

Meanwhile, informant 8 highlighted the broader benefits of international connections, "English connections with friends both domestically and abroad have a positive value for improving my English skills."

This statement underscores that the wider the social network students have, the greater the opportunity to develop practical English language skills. Overall, this study shows that social media plays an important role in expanding students' social networks and enhancing their English language skills. Through interactions with native speakers and international communities, students can refine their communication skills, gain broader learning experiences, and build connections that are valuable for their academic and professional development.

Challenges in Writing English on Social Media

Writing in English on social media provides many benefits, but it also presents several challenges for students. Based on interviews with informants, some of the main obstacles they face include fear of grammatical mistakes, lack of self-confidence, limited reading habits in English, and lack of support from their surrounding environment.

Fear of Grammar Mistakes and Word Choice

For many students, writing in English on social media is not easy because they often fear making grammatical errors and using incorrect words. This fear causes them to hesitate to write and sometimes choose not to use English in their posts. Informant 1 revealed,

"I often hesitate when writing in English because I'm afraid my grammar will be wrong."

This statement indicates that concerns about grammar structure are a major barrier for students when writing. Mistakes in grammar are seen as something embarrassing, especially if the post is read by many people on social media. Additionally, concerns about improper word choices also pose a challenge. Students often feel that their vocabulary is limited, making it difficult to express their ideas clearly.

Informant 2 shared,

"Sometimes I write a status in English, but then I delete it because I'm afraid there might be a mistake."

This shows that it's not only grammar that is an obstacle, but also the lack of confidence in using the right words in English. When students feel uncertain about the words they use, they are more likely to avoid writing in English altogether. Many students also find it challenging to find the right words or phrases to express their ideas.

Informant 3 mentioned,

"I often feel confused about which word to use to express my ideas in English."

This limitation in vocabulary is often caused by the lack of reading in English, leading to minimal exposure to words in various contexts. As a result, students tend to use simpler words that sometimes cannot fully convey their thoughts. Fear of grammar mistakes and word choice is also influenced by social factors. Some students worry that their mistakes will become the subject of mockery or criticism from others.

Informant 4 shared,

"I'm afraid if someone corrects my writing in the comment section and humiliates me."

This fear is heightened by the culture of social media, which often highlights mistakes rather than efforts in learning. A similar sentiment was expressed by Informant 5,

"I once wrote in English on social media, but a friend mocked me. Since then, I've been hesitant to write again."

This phenomenon demonstrates that the social environment plays a significant role in building or hindering students' confidence in writing in English. In addition to external factors, this fear also arises from students' self-perception that their abilities fall short of the expected standards.

Informant 6 stated,

"I feel that my writing skills are still lacking, so it's better not to write in English than to make mistakes."

In fact, making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process and can be a way to improve writing skills. However, social pressure and overly high standards make students reluctant to try and prefer to play it safe by using Indonesian instead. On the other hand, some students try to avoid mistakes by relying too much on automatic translation tools, which further diminishes their confidence in writing independently.

Informant 7 shared,

"I often use Google Translate to write, but I still feel unsure whether it's correct or not."

This reliance on tools reflects a lack of confidence in their own ability to construct correct English sentences. The lack of writing practice also contributes to the emergence of this fear. If students rarely write, they will find it increasingly difficult to improve their skills.

Informant 8 emphasized,

"I rarely write in English, so it feels harder every time I try."

This shows that without consistent practice, students will continue to face the same barriers and become more afraid to try. From the various statements of the informants, it can be concluded that the fear of grammar mistakes and word choice is one of the main challenges in writing in English on social media. This issue is not only influenced by language limitations but also by social and psychological factors, such as the fear of criticism and lack of self-confidence. Therefore, to overcome these barriers, students need to build a habit of reading in English, improve their writing practice gradually, and create a supportive environment so they feel more comfortable using English on social media.

One of the biggest challenges students face when writing in English is the fear of grammatical errors (grammar) and incorrect word choices. They are afraid that their writing might contain mistakes that could embarrass them in front of their friends or followers on social media.

Informant 1 revealed,

"I often hesitate when writing in English because I'm afraid my grammar will be wrong."

This concern was also expressed by Informant 2,

"Sometimes I write a status in English, but then I delete it because I'm afraid there might be a mistake."

In addition to grammar, choosing the right words is also a challenge for students. They find it difficult to find the right words or phrases to convey their intentions clearly.

Informant 3 said,

"I often feel confused about which word to use to express my ideas in English."

This is exacerbated by the lack of exposure to new vocabulary, which makes them tend to use limited words.

Lack of Self-Confidence

Many students who actually possess basic skills in writing in English still hesitate to use it on social media. The main factor contributing to this hesitation is the fear of criticism from others.

Informant 4 revealed,

"I am afraid that someone will correct my writing in the comment section and embarrass me." Additionally, there is a concern that they will be labeled as "pretentious" by their peers.

Informant 5 stated,

"I once wrote in English on social media, but a friend mocked me. Since then, I became hesitant to write again."

This lack of self-confidence prevents many students from trying and practicing writing in English. In reality, the more they write, the better their ability to structure sentences and select appropriate vocabulary becomes. However, the fear of being criticized or judged by others makes them prefer to continue writing in Indonesian or using a mixture of languages.

Lack of Reading Habit in English

Another challenge students face in writing on social media is the lack of a reading habit in English. Reading is one of the best ways to improve writing skills, yet many students rarely engage in it.

Informant 6 admitted,

"I rarely read articles or books in English, so sometimes I struggle to find the right words when writing."

The lack of exposure to reading materials in English also impacts their writing style. Informant 7 stated,

"I often feel that my writing is stiff because I'm not used to seeing examples of writing in English."

This indicates that without a reading habit, students find it difficult to construct sentences that are natural and easy to understand. They also tend to use overly simple sentence structures due to insufficient reference material.

Lack of Support from the Environment

Another factor influencing students' writing ability is the lack of support from their surrounding environment. Some students expressed that their environment provides little motivation to practice writing in English.

Informant 8 mentioned,

"At campus, only a few friends enjoy writing in English, so I don't have many places to discuss or exchange ideas."

Additionally, there is social pressure that discourages students from writing in English.

Informant 9 explained,

"Sometimes I feel reluctant to write in English because my environment is more comfortable using Indonesian."

Without encouragement from their surroundings, students will find it more challenging to develop a writing habit and improve their skills consistently.

Discussion

The Importance of Writing Skills in Social Media Use

Based on research conducted on eight students of IAIN Kerinci's English study program who actively use social media, it can be concluded that writing skills in English play an important role

in their activities on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. This research highlights some significant benefits experienced by the students, especially in terms of communication, professionalism, and career or academic opportunities.

First, English writing skills have proven effective in expanding global communication. The students involved in this study stated that their ability to write in English enables them to interact with people from various countries. This indicates that English serves as a primary tool in bridging intercultural communication gaps. As expressed by several informants, they feel more confident and valued when writing in English, which indirectly enhances their credibility in the digital world. Moreover, these writing skills have had a positive impact on their academic and professional lives. Informants 2 and 6, for example, reported an improvement in their writing abilities for academic assignments and future career opportunities. This aligns with the findings of Al-Jarrah et al. (2019), which suggest that social media plays a vital role in developing English writing skills at both school and university levels.

Furthermore, using English on social media also helps students build their professional image and credibility. Students do not merely use social media to share personal experiences but also as a means to introduce themselves professionally to a wider audience. This aligns with their awareness of the importance of personal branding in the digital era. Writing in English on social media becomes a tool for showcasing their competence and communication skills, which are highly valued in the job market. Some informants, such as Informants 1 and 5, mentioned that they feel more respected and perceived as professionals when they write in English, which opens up greater career opportunities, particularly in international companies. According to Barhate & Dirani (2022), personal branding and English communication skills strongly correlate with the career prospects of young professionals across various global industries.

Equally important, using English on social media enables students to expand their social networks and improve their language skills. As several informants noted, social media provides them with opportunities to interact with native English speakers, enriching their cross-cultural communication experiences. It also allows them to practice their English skills in real-time, accelerating the learning process. Anwas et al. (2020) emphasize that social media can enhance language skills through direct interaction with global communities, providing a more contextual and authentic learning experience. By expanding their international social networks, students not only improve their English proficiency but also open doors to collaborations in academic and professional projects.

Overall, this study demonstrates that English writing skills on social media not only enhance students' communication abilities but also offer additional benefits in building credibility, professionalism, and expanding social networks. Given the increasingly significant role of social media in digital life, mastering English writing skills is essential for students in today's era of globalization. Therefore, improving English skills through social media should be a primary focus for students who wish to fully leverage the potential of the digital world and strengthen their position in the global market.

Challenges in Writing English on Social Media

Writing in English on social media provides numerous benefits, such as improving communication skills and expanding global networks. However, many students struggle to use written English effectively on digital platforms due to various challenges. These challenges include fear of grammatical mistakes, lack of confidence, limited exposure to English reading materials, and insufficient support from their surroundings. These factors are interconnected and significantly impact students' willingness and ability to write in English.

One of the primary obstacles students face is the fear of making grammatical errors and incorrect word choices. This fear often discourages them from writing in English, and in many cases, they prefer to avoid using the language altogether. Krashen (1982) highlights that affective factors like anxiety and lack of confidence can hinder language learning, preventing students from expressing their thoughts freely. Moreover, Brown (2007) emphasizes that errors should be viewed as a natural part of the learning process rather than a failure. Unfortunately, many students still perceive mistakes as something to be ashamed of, which further reinforces their reluctance to write in English.

In addition to grammatical concerns, students' lack of confidence plays a crucial role in their hesitancy to write in English on social media. Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular task. When students fear that their writing will be criticized or ridiculed, their confidence decreases, making them more likely to avoid writing altogether. However, research by Dörnyei (2005) suggests that intrinsic motivation and a supportive environment can significantly enhance learners' language skills. This indicates the importance of fostering a positive and encouraging atmosphere where students feel safe to practice and improve their writing without fear of negative judgment.

Another major challenge is the lack of reading habits in English, which directly affects students' writing abilities. According to Grabe and Stolle (2011), reading is essential for vocabulary acquisition and mastery of sentence structure. Without sufficient reading input, students struggle to construct sentences naturally and find appropriate words to express their ideas. Nation (2009) further explains that exposure to written English through reading enhances one's ability to understand language patterns, which is crucial for developing writing skills. Therefore, encouraging students to engage in regular reading activities can be a practical approach to improving their writing proficiency.

Environmental factors also play a significant role in students' writing development. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction is key to language acquisition. When students are surrounded by an environment that does not encourage the use of English, they have fewer opportunities to practice and refine their writing skills. Ellis (2008) further supports this notion, stating that a rich linguistic environment is necessary for effective second language learning. To address this issue, educational institutions and academic communities should create spaces where

students can engage in English writing activities without excessive fear of criticism. In conclusion, the challenges students face in writing English on social media—fear of grammatical errors, lack of confidence, limited reading habits, and insufficient environmental support—are interrelated and significantly impact their ability to write effectively. Overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes fostering a supportive learning environment, promoting regular reading habits, and shifting students' mindset to see mistakes as part of the learning journey. By addressing these factors, students can gradually build their confidence in using English on social media and improve their writing skills over time.

CONCLUSION

The importance of English writing skills on social media for Generation Z students at IAIN Kerinci cannot be overstated. These skills are essential for expanding global communication, enhancing professionalism, and opening up broader career and academic opportunities. Through writing in English on social media, students can improve their English communication skills in a practical and engaging way. Social media platforms provide a space for real-time interactions with international audiences, enabling students to experience authentic language use beyond the classroom.

Moreover, English writing on social media helps students develop critical thinking and digital literacy. When they write posts, comments, or articles in English, students learn to structure their thoughts, build persuasive arguments, and express themselves clearly. It also encourages them to engage in cross-cultural exchanges, allowing them to broaden their global perspectives. In addition, frequent writing practice on social media can significantly enhance vocabulary, sentence variety, and the ability to adapt language styles for different audiences. In the digital era, a strong presence on social media can help students create a positive digital footprint, which is valuable for future employment, scholarships, and academic recognition.

Despite the benefits, Generation Z students at IAIN Kerinci face several challenges when it comes to writing in English on social media. One of the most common obstacles is the fear of making grammatical mistakes, which often leads to a lack of confidence in sharing their writing publicly. Many students also have limited reading habits in English, which restricts their exposure to correct sentence patterns, useful vocabulary, and authentic language use. Without consistent reading, it becomes difficult for students to develop the skills necessary for effective writing.

The challenges are further compounded by an unsupportive environment where peers may mock mistakes rather than encourage learning. The fear of negative comments and peer judgment can discourage students from actively practicing their English writing on social platforms. Additionally, some students rely too heavily on translation tools without understanding the correct usage, which may result in inaccurate or awkward expressions. Lack of motivation, limited teacher guidance on using social media for academic writing, and insufficient exposure to authentic

English content also contribute to these difficulties. As a result, many students hesitate to use social media as a tool for improving their English writing skills.

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