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1. Introduction

This thesis is a study within applied linguistics that aims to focus on investigating what social media language spelling patterns pupils in VG1 English use in second language (L2) learner texts. Furthermore, the paper aims to understand what the pupils' beliefs are about the influence from social media language on their learner texts.

Social media is any medium of communication that allows users to communicate and share content on the internet with other people in their network (Lantz-Andersson, 2016, p. 50). With regards to spreading information, exchanging knowledge and to communications, social media have been modifying and updating our everyday life. In addition, it has become an agent of changing language teaching and learning over the years. As argued by Pikhart and Botezat, our writing practices have changed significantly since the end of the twentieth century, due to the increasing use of text messages, e-mails, and different social media platforms (2021, p. 1622). There are numerous studies regarding the impact of social media language on the academic writing of pupils of different levels, as there is constant research going on regarding the phenomenon, for instance Rou, Yunus and Suliman's (2019) study that will be discussed in section 2.2.1. This study aims to contribute to the discussion. The current study will investigate on how social media language affects and impacts current secondary school pupils in context of orthography and spelling in learner texts, specifically.

In the past couple of years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of and exposure to social media has increased due to social distancing (Pikhart & Botezat, 2021, p.1621). Pikhart and Botezat (2021) provide relevance for the current study and may be seen as an indicator of what the findings in the current study may be. Prior to doing much of the research, it was believed that the research would find that the pupils' written language would show clear signs of being influenced by social media in their learner texts. The research questions are as follows: What social media language spelling patterns do pupils in VG1 English use in second language learner texts? What are the pupils' beliefs about the influence from social media on their learner texts?

2. Theory

The importance of the awareness of spelling is reflected in the competence aims of the current English subject curriculum. One of those aims is to "use knowledge of grammar and text

structure in working on one's own oral and written texts" (English subject curriculum for Knowledge Promotion, 2019, p. 10). It is important to know that spelling has an important role in learning English language skills and is therefore, according to Schonell (2014), an essential part of developing literate readers and writers. Another aim, from the current English subject curriculum, that supports this argument is that the pupils are expected to "express oneself in a nuanced and precise manner with fluency and coherence, using idiomatic expressions and varied sentence structures" (LK20, 2019, p. 10). These curriculum aims are thus relevant for this study, as its aims are to try to answer if pupils are influenced by social media spelling patterns and use them in their learner texts.

2.1 Definition of terms

2.1.1 The Language of Social Media

Britannica (Robins, 2021) defines language as a system of conventional spoken, signed, or written symbols that human beings express themselves through, as members of a social group and participants of its culture. Depending on the social, economic, and political situation, language naturally evolves, adapts, and changes over time. Every generation has its own variation of expressions that contribute to the identity of that time, as well as different social groups. With the invention and rise of social media, one can say a new "language" has been developed. While the grammar of language has not changed, the uses to which it is put has (Crystal, 2018, p. 96). It is hard to define exactly what social media language is, as there is no specific definition made, but it may be explained as the way in which humanity and its language has adapted to the rise of social media (Crystal, 2011, p. 2-3).

2.1.2 Definitions of language features frequently found in social media language use.

The following language features are frequently used in social media context: semantic shift, abbreviation, contractions, and initialism (Crystal, , 2011, p. 57-60).

Semantic shifts are quite frequently seen the new social media language and have been increasing over the past few years (Meyerhoff, 2019, p. 64). Semantic shift are gradual changes to the meaning of a word or a phrase, that usually results in a radically different meaning from the original usage. Semantic shift does not need to necessitate structural reanalysis of the word or phrase. That is, a verb might stay a verb, but its meaning might be severely weakened or changed over time (Meyerhoff, 2019, p. 335-336). Words like *queen*, *ate*, and *slay* are only a few examples of words that are now being used with a different

meaning than its originally intended use. Take *slay* for example; its original use was to express killing someone or something in a violent way. On social media today, it is used to express that someone has greatly impressed or amused you. Many of the words that have gone through a semantic shift are so new, they have not yet appeared in proper dictionaries. They are, however, found in the urban dictionary. The urban dictionary is an online volunteer-driven dictionary for slang words and expressions, where they record both new and already existing words and their meaning (MIT Technology Review, 2018).

The use of abbreviations has also increased largely due to Twitter and the character limit that used to be on Tweets. David Crystal (2009) defines abbreviations as part of the study of word-formation, distinguishing several ways in which words or phrases can be shortened. Some abbreviations have even evolved to have new connotations past their original meaning. *LOL*, for example, originally it described the notion of ‘laughing out loud’ but now it is sometimes used at the end of a statement to soften it slightly, rarely with the intention of showing laughter. Initialism is a type of abbreviation and reflect the separate pronunciation of the initial letters of a word, such as the initialisms BBC and VIP (Crystal, 2009). Contraction refers to the action of phonologically contracting a linguistic form so that it comes to be linked to an adjacent linguistic form (Crystal, 2009). An example of a contraction is the reduction in American English of forms like *want to* or *going to*, that is reduced to *wanna* and *gonna* (Matthews, 2007).

2.1.3 Learners’ beliefs

Learner beliefs refer to a person’s subjective meaning on the relation between learning, the practicality of what is being learned, and the person’s attributes (Kalaja, Barcelos & Aro, 2017, p. 222). For example, a person’s beliefs about learning a foreign language involve subjective judgments about the nature and importance of language learning, that person’s interest in learning a new language, and their beliefs about their ability to learn a new language (Flanders et al., 1975, 131-132). Learners’ beliefs play an important role in the learners’ approaches of learning an L2. Their beliefs can impact a learners’ performance in class. For example, learners may not do their best in class if they think it is not useful for them in the future. It is therefore important for language teachers to try to identify the learners’ beliefs and approach the material in a way that makes the pupils eager to learn (Flanders et al., 1975, 511-513). For instance, as social interaction involving open-ended language is an important part of acquiring a new language, one can utilize social media in education to provide such setting. As youths are accustomed to engaging in social media, this

can help their motivation to learn a new language as well as drawing prior knowledge to develop understanding of a second language. Consequently, social media sites present casual learning contexts (Lantz-Andersson, 2016, p. 53).

As there are different approaches to studying L2 learners' beliefs, the research is said to be built on a discussion of what makes a good language learner (Kalaja et al., 2017, p. 223). In the 1970s, researchers were interested in studying what kind of characteristics in individuals promoted successful outcomes in L2 language learning. Beliefs were looked at as a good indicator of the choices learners made, and could therefore influence how they approached the task of learning an L2. This particular interest in learner characteristics and possible outcome on L2 language learning gave rise to the traditional approach. The contextual approach grew as a reaction to the traditional approach. Kalaja, Barcelos and Mario argue that the contextual approach "see beliefs as embedded in pupils' contexts and use an array of diverse methodologies to study the learning of L2s from an emic perspective" (2017, p. 224). The emic perspective, in this scenario, is the pupils' perspective, with attention to their personal meanings and interpretations. This thesis has used the contextual approach.

2.2 Literature review

This section of the study focuses on the theoretical background this research rests on, as well as examining past research studies. There are numerous studies regarding the impact of social media on the academic writing of pupils, and this study aims to contribute to the discussion.

2.2.1 Effects of Social Media in L2 Spelling Ability

There are several previous studies conducted by scholars on the possible influence of social media on pupils' learner texts, and the views on the topic are varying. The focus of the studies was on the influence of social media on our written English language, with most of them centered on spelling and punctuations. Two opposing views have been found in these studies: those where the results show that social media is influencing the pupils' learner texts (Rou, Yunus & Suliman, 2019), and those who show that the pupils are able to adapt and switch between formal and informal writing.

One previous study, by Rou, Yunus and Suliman (2019), argues that sharing and obtaining materials is the most consistent student activity when they learn through social media (pp. 292-293). The researchers randomly selected 50 Year 5 students from Malaysia as their respondents. Students were described to live in urban areas and therefore be more

vulnerable to technology devices and social media sites. The researchers used a quantitative approach to collect data and carried out a questionnaire. The results of their study showed that social media help the pupils learn new vocabulary, and that they were more likely to apply the new words they learnt in their writing assignment. The outcome of the study has clearly shown that the pupils embrace the digital way of communication and utilized social media positively and found that social media helps their spelling (Rou et al., 2019, p.293). Consequently, one can argue that social media provides a practical platform for students to learn English.

An alternative study by Cougnon, Maskens, Roekhaut and Fairon (2016) investigates the hypothesis that young people aged between 14 and 15 in France have the multi-skills required to switch between formal and informal communication in English. Samples of written texts of students across different media and communication circumstances were gathered. There were acquired three types of material: social media conversations, dictations, and spontaneous writing. The written texts ranged from the most formal, i.e. dictations, to the most informal represented by Facebook conversation, in addition to spontaneous prompted conversation. The results obtained through the dictation tests show that the students' level was relatively low, with many grammatical errors: roughly one error every five words in the initial dictation and one every six words in the final dictation (Cougnon at al., 2019). The outcome of the research therefore shows, in contrast to the latter study discussed, that social media affects students negatively in the context of orthography.

An additional study by Wilson (2018) investigates the effect of social media on the spelling abilities of 3545 students at the Federal College of Education Yola. The aim of the study was to find out the nature of effect social media have on students spelling ability and to determine the number of hours spent by students on social networking activities every day. The researcher utilized a survey as their research method, using questionnaire as the instrument which was distributed among respondents. The study demonstrated that social media platforms can have a negative effect on the spelling ability of students. It was also shown that students spend excessive time on social media. The main finding of the study was that the usage of social media affects the students' spelling ability negatively, as generalized by the research, especially when writing examination and letters. However, it is recommended by the study that more time should be spent on productive academic engagement. Moreover, they signify that institutions should come up with ways of utilizing social media academically to strengthen spelling ability (Wilson, 2018).

3. Methodology

In this section, the research design, dataset and choice of informants will be discussed. An explanation of the choices that have been made will be discussed, as well as a detailed outline of its application in the thesis.

3.1 Research design

The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of social media on spelling skills on VG1 pupils' learner texts. With that in mind, the researcher selected twelve pupils as respondents. They are from two different classes at the same upper secondary vocational school in Stavanger. The respondents have a high exposure to technology and social media sites, which makes the pupils suitable candidates for this study. The object of the research is the pupils' written texts, as well as a questionnaire survey. In this study, mixed research was used, where one moves beyond a single-strategy approach and integrates the two methods within the study. The reasoning behind the chosen research design is that it is believed to give a clearer comprehension and understanding to the topic that is investigated (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015, p. 64-66). This study will be utilizing a quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative research involves numbers, quantification, and statistics to address a research question. The quantitative part of this study is the questionnaire survey. However, it is important to understand that survey research is not always exclusively quantitative, as researchers can collect qualitative data, for instance through open-ended questions (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015, p. 27-28).

Phakiti and Paltridge (2015, p.49-51) states that qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help to understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. This type of research allows for investigations of the meanings people attribute to their way of behaving and interactions with others. The product of a qualitative approach to the research is descriptive data, which must be interpreted using methodical methods of analyzation of trends and themes. Its application in this thesis is therefore to investigate meanings, processes, and relations of social life on social media, and how this affects the orthography of the pupils. The findings will be collected through a questionnaire, which incorporate both closed- and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions are the qualitative part of the questionnaire.

The study looked at features of social media language in the pupils' learner texts. Learner texts might give insight into social media language use. In this study, the pupils completed writing composition in simple present tense, as instructed by the researcher, on the topic of "indigenous peoples", were analyzed. When analyzing the errors found in the pupils' English writing composition, there were four steps that were followed. In accordance with Ellis (2008/1994), the first step was to identify the spelling errors found in the texts. The next step was to classify the errors into categories, like abbreviations and omissions, before explaining the types of errors that were made. Lastly, the errors are drawn into a table based on the categorization of errors to arrange the number of errors. After this, the most dominant type of spelling errors will be recognized. The appendix here was carried out by using descriptive statistical analysis to find the average with this formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P: Percentage

F: Frequency of social media spelling patterns

N: Total number of social media spelling patterns

Descriptive statistics are used to show basic features of the data collected in a study and form the basis of essentially every quantitative analysis of data (Trochim, n.d.).

4. Materials

4.2 Dataset

4.2.1 Questionnaire survey

Bryman (2004) suggests that a key step in the quantitative research process is measurement. According to him, it is the method that links theoretical concepts with empirical research and is therefore the reason such concepts are researchable (p. 28). Brown (2001) has defined questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." (Brown, 2001, p. 6). Questionnaire surveys are one of the most common methods of collecting data in second language research, as stated by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009). They are easy to set up, extremely flexible, and can gather a large amount of information quickly which is readily processable. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009),

questionnaires are only surpassed by language proficiency tests as a research tool in the second language field.

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), three types of data about the respondents can be given from a questionnaire: factual, behavioral, and attitudinal. This study included questions that can be put into all those categories. However, the focus was mostly on the attitudinal questions that concerns attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests, and values. The digital questionnaire, comprised of 7 questions, was provided to the pupils. The questionnaire was completely anonymous and according to NSD guidelines, and therefore it was not necessary to report the study to NSD. It aimed to find out what types of social media platforms they used regularly, how much time they spend on social media, and if they believe that social media has influenced them on how they write in English. The questionnaire was comprised of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. In the open-ended questions the pupils were asked to write a short text arguing if they believed that social media influenced their writing skills in English. An example of the open-ended questions is “Why do you think social media influence the way you write in English?”. In the closed-ended questions, the pupils were asked give information on what social media platform they use and how often they use social media throughout the day.

The first five questions were closed-ended, where the pupils had to choose answers from options given to them. They were asked to state if they were on any social media platform at all, what type of platform they use and how much time they spend on any platform throughout the day. The questions were brief and clearly understood, where the English language was to their level of understanding.

4.2.2 Learner texts

The second data collection used were the pupils’ learner texts, to see whether there were features of social media language in their writing. The pupils’ assignment was to imagine they were the youngest generation of a indigenous group, such as Saami, Aborigines, or Maori, where they would write a letter to a friend and talk about their life. The hopes of this were to generate a scenario where the pupils would ordinarily write with an informal approach, but now had to be able to adapt and switch from informal to formal writing. In connection with this, it was investigated if the pupils would automatically use social media language and abbreviations if they perceived the assignment as an informal one. While on the contrary, if the pupils regarded the assignment as a formal one, they would be more careful regarding the use of social media language and abbreviations.

The purpose of the learner texts was to investigate the features of social media language to be able to answer one of the research questions, which were: do pupils in VG1 use social media language spelling patterns in their L2 learner texts? While looking at the pupils' learner text, the spelling patterns investigated were as follows: abbreviations, omission of apostrophes, initialism, and contractions. As for the collection of the learner texts, NSD guidelines were followed. The learner texts were submitted in a way that kept all the pupils anonymous to the researcher of this study.

5. Findings

In this section, the findings of the types and number of errors encountered in the learner texts will be presented. Additionally, the respondents' answers will be provided. The presentation and evaluation of the results were based on the written assignment and the questionnaire distributed to the pupils.

5.1 Findings in the questionnaire

5.1.1 Closed-ended questions

The pupils were asked if they were on any social media platform, as well as what kind of social media platform they use. All the pupils were on social media, as shown in table 5.1. As presented by table 5.2, out of the twelve respondents, most of them use Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Half of the respondents use Facebook, and only 33,3% of them use Twitter.

Table 5.1: Are you on any social media platform?

	Percent	Respondents
Yes.	100,0%	N = 12
No.	0,0%	0
Total	100,0%	N = 12

Table 5.2: Summary of what platform VG1 pupils use.

	Percent	Respondents
Snapchat	91,7%	N = 11

Table 5.2: Summary of what platform VG1 pupils use.	Percent	Respondents
Instagram	91,7%	N = 11
Twitter	33,3%	N = 4
Facebook	50,0%	N = 6
Tiktok	91,7%	N = 11
YouTube	91,7%	N = 11
Total	100,0%	N = 12

Table 5.3 shows how much time each pupil spends on any social media platform throughout their day. Every pupil spends at least more than one hour on social media a day, where most of the pupils (83,4%) spend more than two till three hours on a social media platform throughout their day.

5.3: How much time do VG1 pupils spend on social media platforms throughout the day?	Percent	Respondents
Less than 1 hour.	0,0%	N = 0
1-2 hours.	16,7%	N = 2
2-3 hours.	16,7%	N = 2
4-5 hours.	25,0%	N = 3
More than 5 hours.	41,7%	N = 5
Total	100,0%	N = 12

The result of table 5.4 are that nine out of twelve (75%) respondents believe that their writing in English is influenced by social media more than the rest of the respondents. Five pupils (41,7%) believe that they often get influenced by social media, while four (33,3%) believe that they are influenced a lot. The last three respondents (25%), on the other hand, believe that they are not influenced as much.

Table 5.4: Summary of the VG1 pupils’ beliefs of the way social media influence their writing skills in English.

	Percent	Respondents
1 - not at all.	0,0%	N = 0
2 - very little.	8,3%	N = 1
3 - some.	16,7%	N = 2
4 - often.	41,7%	N = 5
5 - a lot.	33,3%	N = 4
Total	100,0%	N = 12

5.1.2 Open-ended questions

While analysing the pupils’ open-ended answers, they were divided into two categories: the ones that believed that social media had an influence on their writing skills in English, and the ones who did not give a clear answer. Out of the twelve answers, nine of the pupils believed that they were in fact influenced by the language used on various social media platforms. One example from one of the answers given is as follows: “We take in a lot of our environment, so the more we are on social media and learn these new words, we are going to take them to use in our daily life”. One more example that support the argument that the pupils are aware of the social media influence on their English writing is: “Because I’m surrounded by it and therefore it affects me and why I write the way I do”.

The last three respondents who did not write why they thought the language used on social media influence the way they write in English, were mostly uncertain of the answer. Two of those respondents wrote that they were not sure, which might indicate that they are aware of an influence, they are just not certain how this influence affects their writing. Only one pupil answered that there was nothing from social media that influenced them regarding writing in English.

5.2 Findings in learner assignments

The pupils were asked to write a short letter of about 200 words as an indigenous person. This was to establish whether there would be features of social media language in the learner texts. Some of the features of social media language in their texts were omission of apostrophes, abbreviation, and semantic shifts.

Table 5.5: Frequency of social media spelling patterns in the written assignment

	Frequency	Percent
Abbreviation	8	16,3%
Semantic Shift	2	4%
Omission of apostrophe	14	28,6%
Contractions	24	49%
Initialism	1	2%
Total	49	100%

Exhibited in table 5.5, the frequency of omission of apostrophes were fourteen, which make up 28,6% of the frequency of social media spelling patterns in the written assignments. Table 5.6 show two examples from two different pupils where they have omitted the apostrophe in the written assignments.

Table 5.6: Example of omission of apostrophes found in two of the written assignments.

Incorrect	Correct
I think its easier to start from the beginning.	I think it's easier to start from the beginning.
Im living in a tent [...].	I'm living in a tent [...].

Results shown in table 5.5 show that out of the twelve written assignments collected, there were eight (16,3%) occurrences of abbreviations. One of the respondents wrote “(...) they r mostly from northern Norway”. Here, the pupil has used the abbreviation for are, leaving out the first and last vowel. A different responder wrote “oh btw, you should come visit me sometime soon!”. Here, the respondent has used the shortened form for *by the way*. Contractions occurred 24 (49%) times. Out of the 24 contractions, ten of those instances omitted the apostrophe. Initialism, on the other hand, consisting of letters pronounced separately, were only observed once (2%), this being the initialism *FYI*, meaning *for your information*. Semantic shifts were identified twice (2%), as presented in table 5.5. An example from the learner text is *queen*, used in a sentence as such: “shes the queen of this tribe.” Here, the word *queen* is not used to describe the female ruler of an independent state

like it is outside social media context, but is, in this context, used to describe an empowering woman.

6. Discussion

This section of the study discusses the main findings from the L2 learner texts and questionnaire. It presents a descriptive analysis of the results presented in chapter five. There will also be an interpretation of the research done in line with the methodology that was presented and explained in chapter three. Two research methods were employed: a written assignment and a questionnaire. The research questions address how social media language influences and affects spelling patterns in VG1 English use in L2 learner texts. In addition, the research questions address the pupils' beliefs about the influence from social media language on their English written skills. The pupils' errors and spelling patterns that may be related to social media influence, consists of five aspects: abbreviation, semantic shift, omission of apostrophes, contraction, and initialism.

6.1 Research Question One

To be able to answer the first research question, do pupils in VG1 use social media language spelling patterns in their L2 learner texts, the results from the written assignment were analysed based on the dependent variables observed which were spelling patterns that can be linked up to social media.

The rapid development in user-generated content on the internet, distinguished by social media, has led to what one can call a social media language that features somewhat less standardized language, as mentioned in section 2.1. This can cause problems for pupils who have a hard time distinguishing formal and informal writing when composing an academic text. There was a total frequency of 49 features that can be linked up to social media, displayed in section 5.5. Presumably, some of the pupils were therefore not capable of switching between informal and formal communication. This result, as well as the study by Cougnon, Maskens, Roekhaut and Fairoon (2016), support the claim that social media do have an influence on the pupils' writing, and might even affect them negatively in the context of orthography. Such results were also found in Wilson's (2018) study, mentioned in section 2.2.1.

The use of abbreviations has increased largely due to Twitter and the character limit on Tweets. In table 5.2, we can see that four out of twelve (33,3%) respondents use Twitter. As mentioned in section 5.5, there were eight (16,3%) instances of abbreviation in the learner text. It is not known if the four respondents who said they used Twitter, are the same that used abbreviation in the questionnaire and learner texts. However, there is a possibility of this, which suggests that Twitter users are more likely to use abbreviation. An example from one of the pupils' learner texts, mentioned in section 5.2, is as follows: "oh *btw*, you should come visit me sometime soon!". Here, the pupil used *btw* to express the phrase *by the way*. One can argue that this pupil has, in fact, been influenced by the features of social media language.

There were observed two different types of abbreviation in the written assignments, those being initialism and contraction. The most common one was contractions, but this cannot be solely linked to the use of social media, as they are extremely common in both written texts as well as in speech. Initialism, on the other hand, observed once in the written texts, is a form of abbreviation that is very common to use in a social media context. For example, one of the pupils used the initialism *FYI*, meaning *for your information*, in their learner text. It can be assumed that this is a feature that the pupil regularly uses on social media and has now incorporated it into their day-to-day communication. These findings show that the curriculum aims mentioned in section two has not been met, and that many of the pupils need to make sure they omit features of social media language if they are to meet these aims.

Conversely, there were quite a few features of social media language that were not found in neither the questionnaire nor in the learner texts. Some of the features not found include clippings (*biz* for business), single letter homophones (*t* for tea), number homophones (*2* for too), numeric graphemes (*2day* for today), emoticons, and repeating letters to show emphasis (*greeeeaaattt* for great). It was somewhat unforeseen that the pupils' writing did not contain some of these social media language characteristics, as many teenagers have found creative ways to communicate meaning and emphasis while simultaneously using minimal space to convey their message. This can possibly show that the pupils were aware of what type of language that should be used in an academic setting.

6.2 Research Question Two

The second research question this study aims to answer is if the pupils are self-aware of the influence they are exposed to as frequent social media users, and what their beliefs are on this topic. This is specified to when the pupils are writing an academic text.

As mentioned prior, the questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions: “why do you think social media influence the way you write in English?” and “mention a negative and a positive effect that social media has on the way you write in English”. The aim for these questions were to further understand what the pupils’ learner beliefs were. The pupils had different ways to communicate it, but they all thought that the reason social media influenced the way they write in English is because of the time they spent on social media. In addition, many of them wrote how they use new words they learn on social media in their everyday life quite a lot. This is comparable with Rou, Yunus and Suliman’s (2019) study, where the outcome of the study showed how pupils embrace the digital way of communication. Further, this demonstrates that the pupils are aware of the influence from social media, which can play an important role in the pupils’ approaches in learning a second language.

As disclosed in section 2.1.3, as these pupils spend time daily on social media, using social media to teach English can positively impact their learner beliefs and motivate them to learn a second or foreign language. The pupils can use their prior knowledge of English and become more proficient in the language through social media. When having to use English to communicate on various social media platforms, the pupils’ view on the importance of language learning and their interest in learning the language may strengthen. This plays into the pupils’ learner beliefs, which is an important part of effectively learning a language, as argued in section 2.1.3.

Only one pupil wrote that they did not believe social media had any influence on them, while two were not certain. As the questionnaire and learner texts were anonymous, it is difficult to know if this particular pupil used a lot of features of social media language in their texts or not. One can conclude that this pupil is either easily able to switch between informal and formal writing, or that they are simply not aware of the effect social media has on their English writing.

7. Conclusion

The present study has investigated the impact of social media on VG1 pupils on their academic written texts, focusing on orthography. The analysis of this topic has contributed to a further understanding on how social media has been an influence on pupils in VG1 and their English academic writing. It is clear from the open-ended questionnaire questions, as well as

their written assignment, that the most prominent spelling pattern that can be linked to social media influence is abbreviation.

One of the initial assumptions in this study, as mentioned in the introduction, was that there would be quite a few findings of spelling patterns that could be an influence from social media on the pupils. The present study has revealed that there is some influence of social media language on the learner texts, though not all the errors observed can be directly connected to the use of social media. It is not surprising that contractions that omit apostrophes was one of the primary features found, like *its* instead of *it's*, as it is a feature that is extremely common on social media. Another notable finding from the study was that, of all the features of social media language seen, initialism was the least dominant with just one phrase *for your information* written as *FYI*. The study has showed that, considering the findings displayed in section five, the pupils in these two VG1 classes have been influenced by social media in connection with orthography and spelling, to some extent.

As far as the second research question, what are the pupils' beliefs about the influence from social media on their learner texts, the research has revealed that most of the pupils are indeed aware of the influence they are vulnerable to when using social media. They express that they use quite a few features of social media language in their day-to-day conversations, and that these features can transfer into school assignments as well.

There has been observed limitations during the undertaking of the study, and they are as follows:

- i. Age of participants: As the participants of the study attend a vocational school, the age of the pupils varies quite a bit. Some pupils go straight from lower secondary to upper secondary, while others come back to school to finish their education. This results in a gap in ages between the pupils. However, the ages only range from 15 to 22. A study where one covers a wider age range should be conducted, to ensure quality control.
- ii. Sample size: The number of participants in this study was twelve pupils, from two classes at the same vocational course. This sample size is not substantial enough to draw a conclusion for the whole population of upper secondary school pupils. Studies including a larger sample size than this study, with more schools across Norway, should be carried out.
- iii. Using Microsoft Word: The written assignments were written on the pupils' school laptops. Due to using a technological device, there is a possibility that they had the assistance of autocorrect or other software programs. This could be why there was

fewer social media spelling patterns seen in their assignments than expected. Another study should be conducted where pupils do handwritten assignments.

- iv. Assumptions: One does not know for certain if there is a direct link between the features found and the influence of social media language. These features are, however, recognized problems regarding social media and spelling.

Because of limitations due to the scope of this study, the approach has not illuminated a greater number of participants nor a wider geographical area. If the study was done on participants that lived in more rural areas, for instance, the outcome may have been different from the result of this study. Furthermore, a more extensive study on a higher number of participants may give a better perception and insight in the influence of social media language features.

8. Literature

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9. Appendix A

This questionnaire is a part of my bachelor thesis research.

It is an anonymous questionnaire, where the questions will be deleted after data has been collected. This is a digital questionnaire, and it will not be traceable. Please do not include any information that might reveal your identity.

Thank you for your participation!

Are you on any social media platform?

- Yes.
- No.

What social media platform do you use? You can select multiple.

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- TikTok
- YouTube

How much time do you spend on social media platforms throughout the day?

- Less than 1 hour.
- 1-2 hours.
- 2-3 hours.
- 4-5 hours.
- More than 5 hours.

On a scale from 1-5, how much do you think social media influence the way you write in English?

- 1 - not at all.
- 2 - very little.
- 3 - some.
- 4 - often.
- 5 - a lot.

On a scale from 1-5, how much do you think social media influence the way you talk in English?

- 1 - not at all.
- 2 - very little.
- 3 - some.
- 4 - often.
- 5 - a lot.

Mention a negative and a positive effect that social media has on the way you write in English.

Why do you think social media influence the way you write in English?
