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**The Impact of Excessive Chat rooms Use on EFL Students Linguistic  
Competence: Case Study of First Year Students of English in Mohamed  
Kheider University-Biskra**

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## Dedication

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainer of the entire world

I dedicate this work.

To my beloved parents whose enduring love guided me all along

I humbly dedicate this piece of research to my beloved family specially my mother whose guidance was always been a key to success for me in my life and whose love and prayer enabled me to do something worthwhile in life.

My treasured brothers and sisters: amine, sofien, mammoun & Lina, and to my youngest sister nourhane chiraz whom I am truly grateful for having in my life.

My dear family, teachers, colleagues and friends.

All people who left a touch in my life.

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## **Abstract**

The present dissertation is an attempt to investigate the impact of chat rooms in enhancing EFL student's linguistic competence mainly writing skill. There was a dissatisfaction from teachers about the quality of students' academic writing. EFL students at Biskra University generally are affected by the excessive use of what we call "Netspeak". Hence, this thesis aims at finding out to what extent the excessive use of chat rooms can affect students' linguistic competence. Therefore, it is hypothesized that If EFL learners excessively use chat rooms, in a way or another, their linguistics competence would be affected. This study is based on a quantitative research approach with a case study investigation at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. In order to collect data for this descriptive study, questionnaires have been distributed to both first year LMD students of English (a sample of 60 students chosen randomly) and 10 teachers of different courses. After the analysis and interpretation of the data, the obtained results revealed that the excessive use of chat rooms affect students linguistic competence negatively. Thus, we can conclude that our hypothesis has been confirmed. In essence, raising students' awareness on the importance of linguistic competence is highly recommended since it is as an essential part in EFL learning.

**Key words:** linguistic competence, chatrooms, first year LMD students

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

**APA:** American Psychological Association

**CALL:** computer-assisted language learning

**CMC:** computer-mediated communication

**EFL:** English as a foreign language

**GJs:** grammaticality judgments

**Ibid:** Ibid (The same previous source)

**LF:** Logical Form

**LMD:** License / Magister / Doctorate

**MALL:** mobile-assisted language learning

**P&P:** Principles and Parameters

**Q :** Question

**SLA :** Second Language acquisition

**SMT:** social media technology

**SNSs:** social networking sites

**TGG:** Generative Transformational Grammar

**UG:** Universal grammar

**%:** Percentage

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

Social media used for online communication influences both spoken and written language forms. A technological detonation has formed several opportunities for learners to communicate throughout the world. The internet has created a means of communication. For instance, learners use chat rooms to communicate with a great number of people all around the world; this use of chat rooms predisposes an environment of learning in which it allows learners to communicate and discuss different topics, as well as it offers an opportunity to interact and exchange ideas and cultures with others and create new relationships, it also provides real-time feedback. However, an excessive use of chat rooms may affect English learners in a negative way, especially at the level of their linguistic competence. For instance, learners use abbreviations, short form of words and highly colloquial kind of language in their formal writing unconsciously due to their excessive use of texting language. They make several mistakes in grammar, punctuation and capitalization.

Every day, people from around the world use chat rooms, the uses of chat rooms have widespread from gaming and daily conversations to applications used in education, business, medicine and even customer service. Many researches have been done in the area of chat rooms. For instance, the research led by Dr .Jo Mayand and professor Salah Troudi from the university of Exter,UK found that students benefitted from day to day conversations with people who speak English as a first language in a chat room setting. Accordingly, Licklider (1997) claimed that people can communicate online with others who have similar goals and interests, thus their life will be enriched and communication will be more productive and more enjoyable then, in the other hand, some studies ,however, had different approach by looking to the disadvantages of the chat rooms. Randall (1997) For instance, mentions that problems have actually been existed, the chat users will not use their real identities for communication because of this,

Randall argued that such a behavior makes people difficult to switch back and forth between these two identities.

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

Due to the lack of intra-net or digital library that contains all the researches done in the universities on the Algerian territory, learners face difficulties in their own researches which pushes them to use chat rooms to get serious, new and more reliable findings in different fields and topics and the more time they spend on these chat rooms, the bigger the effect on their linguistic competence is. This effect can be of two sides, positive and negative effect.

## **2. Aims of Study**

The aim of the present study sought to

- find out to what extent the excessive use of chat rooms can affect students linguistic competence.
- highlight examples of good practices in relation to the use of chat rooms among learners' linguistic competence.
- Investigate the negative impact of chat rooms on learners' linguistic competence.

## **3. Research Questions**

1. To what extent chat rooms excessive use affect EFL's learner's linguistic competence?
2. What are the disadvantages of the excessive use of chat rooms on EFL's learner's linguistic competence?
3. What are the possible guidelines that can be suggested to English students and teachers concerning a beneficial use of chat rooms to enhance their linguistic competence?

## **4. Research Hypothesis**

From the previous questions it is hypothesized that If EFL learners excessively use chat rooms, in a way or another, their linguistics competence would be affected.

## **5. Research Methodology**

### **5.1. Sample Population**

The population used in conducting this research is from first year LMD students of English affiliated in Mohamed Kheider university of Biskra. Two classes are chosen around 70 students, they are randomly chosen. In addition, ten (10) teachers from the department of English who teach different courses have been chosen to provide the researcher with their valuable thoughts through responding to the questionnaire.

### **5.2. Data Gathering Tools**

The research methodology in the present study will be quantitative, the tool that will be used to gather the required data is a questionnaire to students to measure their number of years using computers, type of internet connection, gender, age, time spent at these devices, and their involvement in activities. In addition to a questionnaire sent via email to English teachers at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University in order to collect their opinions and attitudes about the topic.

### **5.3. Procedure of Analysis**

A quantitative study will be used to analyze the data, which will be provided as answers to the questionnaires that will be given to students and teachers.

## **6. Structure of the Study**

The dissertation will be divided into two main parts: theoretical part, which includes two chapters and practical part with one chapter.

- Chapter one: the dependent variable starting with general definitions and types of this area, giving an overview of the development of chat rooms, then getting into the details.

- Chapter two: the independent variable provided the definition of linguistic competence and the different aspects of linguistic competence.

-Chapter three: the practical part, fieldwork and data analysis

**Chapter one:**  
**social media and students**

# Chapter one: social media and students

## Introduction

This chapter is specifically introduced to present social media and the most important elements that are related to it including its definition, the concept of chat rooms and its types. After that, the present chapter tackles some internet and social media notions such as its history, impact and contributions. Moreover, it discusses different types of social media and its advantages and disadvantages on users. It also highlights the relationship between social media and students' learning. Finally, the chapter involves social media impact on English language learners.

## 1.1. Concept of Social Media

### 1.1.1. Definition of Social Media

The term social media has been defined in different ways, it was first known in 1994-1995, when the first web-based social networking site, Geocities, was founded (Goble, 2012; Kithcart, 2011). afterwards, in 1997, AOL instant messenger and Sixdegrees.com were launched; however, social networking sites really hit when *Friendster* launched in 2002, and a year later *LinkedIn* and *Myspace* were launched. Then, the most popular site, Facebook, was launched in 2004, followed by another well-known social media technology, Twitter, in 2006 (Goble, 2012; Kithcart, 2011). Facebook has become the most successful social media because of its features platform that set itself apart from other social media (Goble, 2012), and that made the word, social media, become well known. The emergence of social media sites has gone through different stages in a chronological order of years until it became well known and used by the majority of people.

The two terms *social media* and *social networking* are used interchangeably. Social media refers to social software in the form of web sites and other online communities such as

## Chapter one: social media and students

social networking and microblogging created by a large group of people (known as users) to share information, ideas, personal messages, conversations, or to develop social and professional contacts (Social media, n.d.). According to (Davis III, 2012) defined social media technology (SMT) as web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share ideas or existing content in various forms of communications in digital environments. Therefore, the main use of social media is to be in touch with people to share with them different aspects: cultures, ideas, traditions, thoughts, and even learn from them.

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Heinlein (2014, p.1). Define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that is built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. Safko and Brake have agreed with the concept proposed by Kaplan and Heinlein, as they have referred social media to “activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media”. It is a mobile, web-based technologies that create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content, which has introduced substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information and has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, 2go, BB chat etc.

According to Lieb (2009) defined social media as follows: “Social media is digital, content-based communications based on the interactions enabled by a plethora of web technologies” (p. 56). (Dewing, 2010, p. 1) Defined social media as follows: “The term social

## **Chapter one: social media and students**

media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities”.

The usage effect of these social media, according to Nielsen (2012) is that, students Continue to spend more time on the social media than any site and that the total time spent on social media across mobile devices increased by 37%, which is an estimate of 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011.

Social media is generally defined in (Merriam) as: “forms of electronic communication as web sites for social networking and micro blogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content such as videos”. In fact, there are many definitions of social media concept because it is a vague term covering a large rang of websites.

### **1.1.2. The History of Social Media**

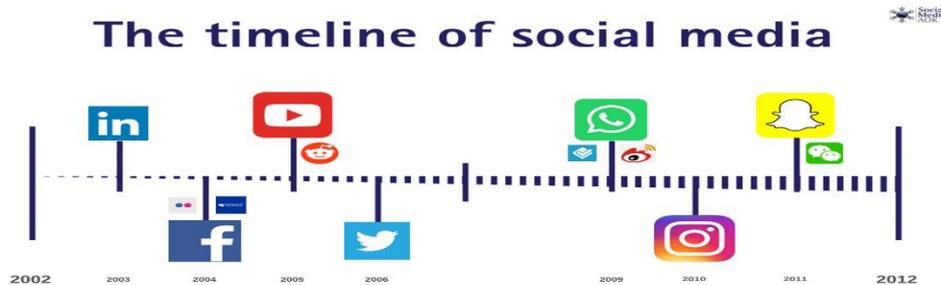
Technology began to change very rapidly in the 20th Century. After the first super computers were created in the 1940s, scientists and engineers began to develop ways to create networks between those computers, and this would later lead to the birth of the Internet.

The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. By the 70s, networking technology had improved, and 1979’s UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter.

By the 1980s, home computers were becoming more common and social media was becoming more sophisticated. Internet relay chats, or IRCs, were first used in 1988 and continued to be popular well into the 1990’s.

## Chapter one: social media and students

The first recognizable social media site, Six Degrees, was created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging sites became popular; creating a social media sensation that is still popular today.



*Figure 1: social media history*

### 1.1.3. Social Media Today

After the development of blogging, social media began to explode in popularity. Sites like Myspace and LinkedIn gained prominence in the early 2000s, and sites like Photobucket and Flickr facilitated online photo sharing. YouTube came out in 2005, creating an entirely new way for people to communicate and share with each other across great distances.

By 2006, Facebook and Twitter both became available to users throughout the world. These sites remain some of the most popular social networks on the Internet. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare and Pinterest began popping up to fill specific social networking niches.

Today, there is a tremendous variety of social networking sites, and many of them can be linked to allow cross posting. This creates an environment where users can reach the maximum number of people without sacrificing the intimacy of person-to-person communication. We can only speculate about what the future of social networking may look in the next decade or even

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100 years from now, but it seems clear that it will exist in some form for as long as humans are alive.

### 1.1.4. What are Social Media?

The social media is one of the greatest technological creations in the history of man. The term “Social media” is defined as the application that allows users to converse and interact with each other; to create, edit and share new forms of textual, visual and audio content, and to categorize, label and recommend existing forms of content (Selwyn 20129). Social media therefore denotes to the wide collection of Internet based and mobile services that connect people together to communicate, participate, collaboratively interact, discuss and exchange ideas and information on an online community.

The term social media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities. According to Michael dewing (2010), the kinds of internet services commonly associated with social media include the following:

- **Blogs:** short of “web log,” a blog is an online journal in which pages are usually displayed in reverse chronological order blogs can be hosted for free on websites such as word Press, Tumblr and Blogger.
- **Wikis:** a wiki is “a collective website where any participant is allowed to modify any page or create a new page using her web browser. One well-known example is Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia that makes use of wiki technology”.
- **Social bookmarking:** social bookmarking sites allow users to organize and share links to websites. Examples include reddit, stumbleUpon and Digg.
- **social network sites:** these have been defined as “web-based service that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system

## Chapter one: social media and students

articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

- **Status-update services:** Also known as, microblogging services, status-update services such as twitter allow people to share short updates about people or events and to see updates created by others.
- **Virtual world content:** these sites offer game-like virtual environments in which users interact. One example is the imaginary world constructed in second life, in which users create avatars (a virtual representation of the user) that interact with others.
- **Media-sharing sites:** these sites allow users to post videos or photographs popular examples include YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram.

These categories overlap to some extent. Twitter, for example is a social network site as well as a status-update service. Likewise, users of the social network site Facebook can share photographs, and users of the media-sharing site Pinterest can follow other people.

### 1.2. Students' Exposure to Social Media

A direct relationship exists between Social media usage and the academic performance of students in learning English. However, the negative side of technological evolution has resulted in problems such as the delay of real values of life especially among students with a strong effect on the way they speak and write English Language in recent times.

Online social networking sites focus on building and reflecting social associations among people who share common interests and or activities and with so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting online with friends and acquaintances. Many students are now addicted to the online rave of the moment with special interest on Facebook, Twitter and

## Chapter one: social media and students

WhatsApp which has drastically affected their English Language ability as a result of word coinage and abbreviations of English words.

Today most youths and students possess Facebook accounts. The reason most of them perform badly at the university and especially in English grammar related subjects might not be far-fetched. While many parents are so quick to blame the poor quality of teachers, they might have to think twice, if they have not heard about the Facebook frenzy (Oche & Aminu .2010). In (Obi, Bulus, Adamu & Sala'at 2012), it was observed that the use of these sites also affects students' use of English and grammar. Olubiyi (2012) noted that these days' students are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy with Instagram, messenger, or Facebook chat, even while lectures are going on. Since most times, these chatting just buzzed in at unexpected times, the only way is to quickly respond without delay is by using short abbreviations to save time and space. Because they are used to short forms and abbreviations in their chats, they forget and use the same in the classrooms, they use things like 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The etc.

As a result, students are beginning to lose touch with the correct way of using English grammar because they are fast adapting to the ungrammatical way of writing and communication especially among their peers. Therefore, the problem with it is that they see no reason why they cannot continue using it as long as it is acceptable and understandable to them. In fact, they see you as not trendy or being archaic if you are unable to flow in those terms and slangs. The question that seems unanswered is how long will this continue or are we going to adapt to this new system of writing and speaking English Language?

It is highly worrisome to know that students we are hoping to be the future of our tomorrow are already using their precious time that should be used for meaningful learning and

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innovations today, for making friends and associations via the social media platform that may not only distract them from their studies but also mar their future reality. Hence, most students' academics suffer setback because of distraction from these social media and erode their ability they once had to employ good English grammar in communicative events.

### **1.3. The Evolution of Social Media**

People think that the evolution of social media began with the appearance of Facebook, twitter, Myspace, but indeed, they started long before. In the late 1990s, as broadband internet became more popular, websites that allowed users to create and upload content began to appear. The first social network site (sixDegrees.com) appeared in 1997 .this site which do not work anymore. From 2002 onward, a large number of social network sites were launched. Some such as Friendster –enjoyed a surge of popularity, only to fade. Others developed niche communities: Myspace, for example, appealed to teenaged music aficionados. By the late 2000s, social media has gained widespread acceptance and some services gained huge numbers of users. For example, in November 2012, Facebook announced it had 1 billion users worldwide. In July 2012, twitter had an estimated 517 million users. A number of factors has contributed to this rapid growth in social media contribution. These include technological factors such as increased broadband availability, the improvement of software tools, and the development of computers that are more powerful and mobile devices; social factors such as the rapid uptake of social media by younger age groups; and economic factors such as the increasing affordability of computers and software, and growing commercial interest in social media sites. Since then a new age of social media sites came to take place at the present time.

### **1.4. Attributes of Social Media**

With attributes that can affect the way people interact online, social media open up new ways for collaboration and discussion. One of these is persistence, meaning that a great deal of

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content posted on social media sites may remain there permanently by default. Other characteristics are replicability (content can be copied and shared) and search ability (content can be found easily using online search tools). The characteristic of accessibility is also important: social media can be used anywhere, at any time, where an internet connection is available. These attributes shape the dynamics of social interaction online. For example, the “invisibility” of the reader raises questions about the context, appropriateness and even comprehensibility of a communication. Moreover, just as it is difficult to know who might be reading content posted on social media site, the identity and motives of those who post content are not always clear. For example, there have been instances of companies using social media to market products through fake blogs or sponsored postings on social media sites.

### **1.5. The Impact of Social Media**

There is no gainsaying the fact that social media has completely changed the way people interact globally. In one sense though, it has led to positive changes in the way people communicate and share information; however, it has a dark side, which seems to be so gloomy than its bright side. Social networking can sometimes result in negative outcomes, and some with long-term consequences even as terrible as death. The preoccupation of students with the various social media networks these days is quiet alarming. It is very rare to see a student without an internet enabled mobile device while walking on the road and even in the university environment. However, the reason may sound genuine, but the negative impact on the long run is unimaginable because this will only give them unrestricted and unguarded freedom particularly if its internet enabled device; however, there are always two sides to a coin; good or bad, left or right, up or down. To ascertain the negative impacts of the social media on student's life, considering its positive influence on them will give us a good basis to make an informed conclusion. (Silver Emerald International Schools and Aina Oladele Emmanuel, n.d.p.19).

## Chapter one: social media and students

### 1.5.1. Characteristics of Social Media

Social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all characteristics. According to Tesorero (2013), social media is about and characterized by:

- **Participation:** Interested people are encouraged to provide their contributions and feedback.
- **Openness:** Voting, making comments and sharing information are to be encouraged. Thus, most of social media are open to participation for everyone.
- **Conversation:** Social media shifted from the traditional media about transmitting or distributing information to an audience "broadcast" to "two-way conversation".
- **Community:** Communities are now able to form rapidly and communicate effectively thanks to social media.
- **Connectedness:** This characteristic is one among many reasons that made social media flourish.

### 1.5.2. Forms of Social Media

It is necessary to summarize some general types of social media in order to set boundaries between what belongs to social media and what is not. According to Mayfield (2008), there are seven types of social media claiming that innovation and change are common:

- **Social Networks:** People use these sites to create personal web pages, share content, and communicate with friends, such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter.
- **Blogs:** Mayfield said that "Blogs are online journals, with entries appearing with the most recent first" (p.6). He believes that blogs are the best-known types of social media.

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- **Wikis:** By wikis, people are able to add or edit data. The best-known wiki is the online encyclopedia, labeled as Wikipedia.
- **Podcasts:** Through subscription, people can find audio and video files by services like Apple iTunes.
- **Forums:** These websites are areas for online conversation and discussion around particular subjects. They have gained a great popularity among web users because they are powerful elements of online communities.
- **Content communities:** “Communities which organize and share particular kinds of content” (ibid), such content communities tend to form photos (Flickr), videos (YouTube) or bookmarked links (del.icio.us).
- **Micro blogging:** Like Twitter, they are “ social networking combined with bite sized blogging, where small amounts of content are distributed online and through the mobile phone network”(ibid).

### 1.6. Advantages and disadvantages of social networking sites

Social networking sites have many positive aspects that are coupled with negative aspects that are considered dangerous. Therefore, some researches were conducted for the purpose of identifying the advantages and disadvantages of SNSs. Akashdeep Bhardwaj summarized both the positive and negative features of social networking sites like the following:

#### 1.6.1. Advantages of SNSs:

##### 1.6.1.1. Education:

In the educational domain, social networking sites help teachers and students to better communicate and collaborate with each other. In addition, it assists them to access online

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resources; hence, it helps them to learn better and faster. Moreover, learning through using SNSs reduces absentees among students and consequently improving their grades. With social networking sites, educational subjects and assignments can be discussed on social sites.

### **1.6.1.2. Politics:**

Social networking sites can increase people's contribution in voting that results from seeing their friends shared their posts in SNSs; furthermore, to attend political meetings. In social movements, social networking sites are considered to be an easy and fast method of mobilizing people and sharing information.

### **1.6.1.3. Awareness:**

The dissemination of information using SNSs is faster in comparison to any other media. Additionally, the inaccessible resources for academic investigations are now available and accessible with SNSs. These new media motivate individuals to change themselves. "SNSs provides a platform for the students to learn and discuss outside the formal classroom setting, therefore it also encourages students not to use materials only for the academic purpose, it also encourages them to use it in their everyday life (p. 500)."

### **1.6.1.4. Social Benefits:**

Socially, social networking sites enable people to communicate with their friends and to establish and maintain those relationships; helping them find and keep in touch with friends who are geographically far.

### **1.6.1.5. Job Opportunities:**

Social networking sites are greatly helpful in connecting and finding job opportunities. In other words, employers can find candidates for the job and unemployed find work faster. In addition, they have made the existence of thousands of e-commerce jobs.

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### **1.6.2. Disadvantages of SNSs:**

#### **1.6.2.1. Applications access User Data:**

The social networking websites or applications oblige users to allow the access to their apps for list of things i.e. the access to the public profile information including: user name, profile picture, friends list, family and relationships information, games being played, the liked pages and the favorite movies and books, music, etc.

#### **1.6.2.2. Detriment to Work:**

Social networking sites allow students to copy and cheat when submitting assignments. In addition to that, light users of SNSs will have better grades than heavy users. Those electronic social platforms cause harm to employees and prospects, that is, the accounts of the prospective employees are to be checked by the employers in terms of poor spelling, grammar, racism, health references to alcohol, drugs, religious content, etc. and which may count against them.

#### **1.6.2.3. Lack of Privacy:**

One feature of invading privacy is that while creating an SNS profile, people, young people in particular, usually do not read conditions required to join those social platforms; consequently, they give out their personal information. Moreover, online advertising policies are considered to be an invasion of privacy since liking these brands means giving access to personal information and preferences to those companies.

#### **1.6.2.4. Users Vulnerable to Crime:**

In this virtual world, users are vulnerable to crime. The authorized sharing of intellectual property, ransom ware, hacking, identity theft, and phishing are the widespread problems that users may face. Similarly, sharing personal information helps criminals to commit crimes.

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### 1.6.2.5. Waste of Time:

The sustained browsing, commenting, posting and chatting can distract the user, draw him deeper into browsing, and make him forget his basic tasks.

### 1.7. Positive and negative aspects of SNSs in Education:

The process of investigating the positive and negative aspects of social networking sites was and still the interest of many researchers. As cited in Tharinee Kamnoetsin (2014), the nine studies discussed the positive and negative impacts of Facebook as a social networking site. Those studies indicate that English language learners gain new vocabulary by using Facebook. Furthermore, those nine studies end with numerous conclusions concerning the positive impacts of Facebook.

Those conclusions can be summarized in six points; **(1)** fostering interactions between the instructors and learners through providing a possibility for collaboration and cooperative learning (Shih, 2011), **(2)** encouraging students to cope with their linguistic limitations as well as helping them to express themselves more freely (Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011; Shih, 2011; Wu et al., 2011; Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Yunus, Salehi & Chenzi, 2012), **(3)** the unique, flexible, and fun environment of Facebook assists in minimizing student's stress (Shih, 2011; White, 2009; Yunus et al., 2012), **(4)** creating motivation (Kabilan et al., 2010; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011; White, 2009; Wu et al., 2011; Yunus et al. 2012), **(5)** establishing confidence (Kabilan et al., 2010; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011; Wu et al., 2011; Yunus et al. 2012), **(6)** assisting EFL to learn the organization of English grammar, structure, vocabulary, content and spelling and developing students' writing skills and learn from one another through posting and commenting on Facebook (Hiew, 2012; Kabilan et al., 2010; Omar et al. 2012; Shih, 2011; Wu et al., 2011; Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Yunus et al., 2012).

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However, those studies have not only found positive aspects, but also negative aspects. Facebook, as a social website, has three disadvantages that are: (1) these websites are not appropriate for formal learning (Kabilan et al., 2010; Shih, 2011), (2) they distract students' attention (Yunus & Salehi, 2012), (3) because of the students will use informal forms of language, and then committing grammatical errors (White, 2009).

### **1.8. Students addiction to SNSs:**

In the 21st century, the internet, especially social media, have obtained crucial importance in human life. Besides, it has a great influence on the way individuals communicate. Social networking sites, as the most important type of social media, attracts the attention of different segments of society despite their different ages and interests. Moreover, many studies and researches revealed that young people show a great interest in social media. In other words, the fact that there is an increasing use of social media by young people is undeniable.

One kind of internet addiction is social media addiction (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012). Internet addiction can be referred to the excessive use of internet, which can destroy people's lives in different aspects. As cited in Nusayba. K (2014), Hazar set three major factors in social media addiction: (1) cognitive content addiction, (2) emotional addiction, and (3) behavioral addiction. She added that the social platforms provide virtual spaces for people to perform their different social activities, which may cause a shift from face-to-face social interaction to interacting through social media. For Nusayba. K (2014), people are attracted by the different kinds of content that are published in those virtual websites and which lead them to spend more time and then getting addicted to the Internet.

Social media addiction is a term that is used to describe a person's state when he spends much time in using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. and which can negatively influence his daily life, school life or his social relationships. (Md. Hasnain Ahamad,

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Beplob Chandra Das). Moreover, the American Psychological Association explained addiction as compulsive behavior that leads to negative effects. The APA (American Psychological Association) stated some types of addiction like drugs, gambling, video gaming, overeating, etc., this addiction will become harmful habits that will affect people's daily activities negatively and keeping them away from other important activities.

According to (Greenfield, 1999; Kim & Kim, 2002), there are forms of addiction that are independent of physical substances: food addiction based on behavior, game addiction, computer addiction, television addiction, shopping addiction, and internet addiction. The latter was defined by LaRose & Eastin (2002) as habits that begin when the “gratification sought” starts to influence users and then preoccupying them. In recent years, social network addiction was discussed along with internet addiction such as in Pavlicek (2013), who defined a social media addict as the one who uses social media excessively. Das & Sahoo, 2011; Karaiskos, Tzavellas, Balta, & Paparrigopoulos, 2010 assert that social network addiction is a category of internet addiction or technology addiction because of the online messaging and gaming, and interactional activities by users through using the internet by staying connected and perform those activities.

Additionally, Ruggiero (2000), internet users choose online activities which can satisfy their needs; entertainment, information, and social interaction. Moreover, Students uses social media for any reason. There are five motives identified by Nyland (2007) that induce students to use social media. He stated students use social media to meet new people, to entertain, to maintain relationships, and use them for social events and media creation. Similarly, these motives were found by study carried out in the University of Education Winneba in 2013. This study identified that students use social media to connect with old friends and family members, to find new friends, to obtain or share learning materials, to receive an update of events, to post information and to spend time away.

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### 1.9. What is Netspeak?

The diversity of the new forms of communication like Skype, Facebook, Twitter, Viber, WhatsApp, and other mobile application is due to the rapid development of new technology. Those new forms influenced and changed the language used for developing a new language form called "Netspeak". This new developed language is the language that is widely used on social networking sites and which has its specific features. The term "Netspeak" is an alternative to many other terms such as "Internet language" (Crystal, 2004).

The Netspeak is generated from the spoken language, which develops rapidly and becomes a communication tool with its own principles. It erases the boundaries between formal and informal communication. It is attractive due to its simplicity and creativity in shaping the message. In online conversations, less attention is paid to grammar and punctuation. The messages are not typed incorrect and formal forms. According to Baron (2001, 20) and Mann and Stewart (2000), Netspeak encompasses of emoticons, flaming, abbreviations, acronyms and new modification on words and sentences. In the same sense Crystal emphasis the way people chat claiming that individuals write down messages in the same way that they are uttered while conversing using a set of abbreviated terms including acronyms (Crystal, 2001).

The Netspeak can be defined as "Electronic Discourse or E-discourse". It is a new variety of language, which leads to other crucial variations in the structure of the written language. For Davis & Brewer (1997), the term "electronic discourse" refers to written talk which means the writing that replaces the voices. They define E-discourse as:

According to Lee (2001, 2006) & Smith (2003), in E-discourse, users employ different means to convey their feelings as well as their facial expressions. They created some linguistic devices such as onomatopoeia e.g., "lol" that stands for "laugh out loud", and "btw" for "by the way". They use also the keyboard symbols to express smiley faces e.g., :-)

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used in e- discourse to make up for the absence of paralinguistic features at the communication time. Additionally, some researches that have been done in the field of E-discourse, Ferrara, Brunner, & Whittemore, 1991; Murray, 1990; and Werry, 1996 pointed out several techniques of the economic language used in E-discourse including abbreviations, clippings, orthographic reduction, and shortenings ellipsis. (As cited in AbuSa'aleek, A. O., 2015)

### **1.10. What is The Concept of a Chat Room?**

Social media is an electronic platform that is accessible to all people who have an internet connection. Recently, with the rapid development of new technologies, social media has become the most preferable channel of communication. There is no doubt that those developments have influenced people's daily lives. Moreover, people use social media for reading, communicating, making research or shopping.

There are different kinds of social networking like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Myspace. Each one of those platforms has its specific features but certainly, they all share some common features. They are free, global, and easily accessible. (Suneetha & Kumar, 2012) as cited in (Meriem. N, Nassera. D, Imene. K, 2016).

#### **1.10.1. Definition:**

Chat rooms is the term used for describing any form of conferencing that can range from the varieties of online chats with the strangers to having fruitful discussions with the known ones. The basic concept of a chat room is to share any information via text to the other group or individual and hence can reply to multiple people in the same conversation. In other words, a concept is an advanced form of the instant messaging service that is meant for only one on one conversation and has also included some of the other technology like working microphone and webcam.

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(Wang, 2005, p. 40) Stated,

*While language is for communication, the internet has broken down communications distance barrier. Therefore, students can build up partnerships with learning peers in target languages through the internet. The main ways of communication on the internet include e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, and bulletin boards. With yahoo messengers, students can not only send instant messages, but also have audio and video conversations that greatly motivate and improve their speaking and listening abilities.*

The use of technology in English as a foreign language (EFL) in learning and teaching has included mobile phones, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), computer-assisted language learning (CALL), CDs, DVDs, films, data shows, iPads, iPods, intranet, Internet, multimedia, etc. These types of technology can be regarded as effective tools in the educational operation.

### 1.10.2. Online Chat Rooms

Online chat rooms appear to be an activity in which many young adult Internet Users take part as well. Online chat rooms are a form of mediated communication technology in which users, like instant messaging, are able to communicate with others in real time but also add the possibility of conversation with many people rather than just a single person. Users enter a chat room, which may be for people with a specific interest, such as knitting, or for people of a certain age, such as those 50 years or older. Once in the chat room users are able to carry on a conversation. Fifty-three percent of Internet users ages 18-24 have participated in online chat rooms at some point and 8% of this population engage in the activity daily (Rainie, 2000). Rumbough (2001) found that 37% of the college, students he surveyed have joined a chat room to interact with other people at some point with 5.8% of those doing so daily. According to Janice Kathleen Recchiuti (2003), while the numbers of college students using online chat rooms as a daily activity is not as high as those using e-mail and instant messaging

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daily, large percentages of college students have participated in chat rooms and the gratifications they seek from this particular form of CMC is worth studying.

Facilitating Person-to-Person Interaction. Another important reason for focusing on e-mail, instant messaging, and online chat rooms has to do with the technologies themselves. E-mail, instant messaging, and online chat rooms are conceptually similar technologies in that they allow interpersonal communication to occur through a mediated channel. Each of the channels allows people the ability to communicate with others and convey information without actually having face-to-face interactions, but they are able to convey the same sort of information that they may have done in a face-to-face setting. Other forms of CMC, such as bulletin boards and newsgroups, are technologies that are geared more towards person to-group interaction; whereas, e-mail, instant messaging, and online chat rooms allow more person-to-person communication. Studying technologies that are more person-to-person in nature brings the study of CMC into the realm of interpersonal communication, which has just recently begun to explore the effect of CMC on relationship development and maintenance. Most of the earlier work done with CMC has been in an organizational setting, focusing on the effect of CMC on relationships within organizations (Stafford, Kline, & Dimmick, 1999) rather than on how it affects the everyday, personal relationships of users and what reasons they are using it.

### **1.10.3. The Ideal Features Of Chat Rooms**

According to Adm (2020), the following are some of the ideal features of the chat room that is desired to be the best one for the users:

- Getting the services of a customizable interface for the chats done by the users, under the condition of up gradation from the free account to the premium one
- Having separate applications for the mobile devices and thus adds further to the convenience of the users

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- Having the requisite support version for different web browsers for the PC users in order to have a smooth communication for them
- Offers the option for a pre-chat where the clients can join later for the conversation and also read the chats even when the user is offline
- Offers the option for sending a live notification to the other online user on the availability of the former and thus adds more to the effectiveness of the chats
- Does not abide by any of the geographical restrictions and thus implements the concept of international chat rooms for a stronger bonding amongst the international users

### **1.11. The Concept of Free Chat**

According to Adm (2020) in the current age of the internet, the concept of free chat has been spreading like a wildfire. As per this chat room, most of it is exclusively meant for adult chats where two strangers can communicate with each other via instant messenger or video conferencing software supported by that platform. The basic norms of the chat room are kept as simple as possible and the adults do not require offering any confidential information to begin their conversation. Ideally also called, this platform is highly used by the single adults desiring to have someone's company to spend quality time and cope up with their loneliness.

#### **1.11.1. The General Rules and Regulations**

How so ever freedom does free chat offer to its users, accordingly to Adm (2020) there are certain civil norms that need to be followed by everyone and the following elucidate the same:

- Minimum age of 18 years for all kinds of adult chats.
- Posting of only legalized and civilized content in the conversations, without hurting anyone's sentiments.

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- No sharing of any sensitive information on the chats.
- No harassment to a particular user or using someone else's identity to do so.
- No spamming of other's chat rooms and not violating their code of conduct for using the services.
- Strictly no exchange of money on the forum.

Thus, it can be concluded that the concept of the chat room is highly beneficial for certain individuals and thus it needs to be used in that manner only.

### **1.11.2. What are the Advantages of Chat Rooms?**

The chat rooms are used for many years. It is a way that helps you connect and socialize with the rest of the world. In today's times, even businesses are using chat rooms to connect with their clients and the other potential customers that they have. Business chat has made its place in almost every company out there.

According to Adm (2018) apart from this, there is teen chat room, which mainly has the involvement of teenagers. Here are a few benefits of the chat rooms, which are mentioned below

#### **1.11.2.1. Brainstorming:**

The chat rooms tend to be a safe and secure place for the employees in a company, where they can meet and have their session of brainstorming. Based on the credentials of a user, there can be some restrictions for the chat rooms and only specific employees will be let in certain chat rooms. When employees are working together on a certain project, they can come together and have a discussion in the chat room of the company and the plus point is that they do not have to leave their desk or travel to any far off distance to do so.

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### **1.11.2.2. An increase in productivity:**

When the employees do not have to make their travel to places or leave their desks, they will not have to close down any program. This actually results in being more productive as they can be answerable to the situations that need attention. Once the chat has been ended, the employee is already at his or her desk and they can get back on working on their regular task immediately.

### **1.11.2.3. The customer support:**

Live chat rooms have increasingly become more common on the business websites since they provide instant answers to the questions asked by various customers. In addition, customers prefer to use the option where they can chat instantly rather than having to deal with the annoying long delays over the phone call or email communication. The customer support representative are being assigned to the live chat feature and thus they help the customers who can ask the questions and chat with a real person during specific operating hours. When customers are catered well, that actually helps in the improvement in the customer relations and helps in improving the business.

### **1.11.2.4. Distance training:**

In business when you need to gather all the employees together, it can really be a difficult task. Also for the businesses that get in professional of experts, the cost of the training can be costly. With the help of chat rooms, it is easier to schedule the option for the training of the employees and it will be less expensive. The trainers can be on hand through chat at different points through the entire week for the employees so that they can access the training at a more convenient time.

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Apart from this, there are other reasons why chat rooms are being used like in case of the teen chat; it is more of a fun interaction with people across the globe! It can help relieve from the daily stress from school or college work.

### **1.12. Chat Rooms The New Way Of Interaction**

Chat rooms for students are a great way of connecting with different people belonging to different avenues and cultures. Student's chat rooms offer everyone the chance of chatting with old friends as well as gives them a chance to make some new friends. Students are able to chat with anyone they want, even somebody you know who is far off. Some of these students chat rooms offer a good platform to communicate about things that you cannot share with anyone; most of the students today are unable to discuss about their various problems with their loved ones due to which they register in different chat\_rooms to make friends. Even to discuss topics about lessons and projects or role-playing they use chat rooms to make things clear and do a plan to work in it to finish their homework. However, some students use these chat rooms only to enjoy and pass time on these devices.

#### **1.12.1. Some examples of chat rooms:**

##### **1.12.1.1.Instagram**

Instagram is a mobile application where users can post photos and videos with attached captions. In response to these posts, other users are encouraged to like, comment, and engage with one another. As discussed, Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media platforms (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; NORC, 2017). However, since it is relatively new, very little research has been conducted on the specific effects that this form of social networking may have on users. As outlined by de Vries, Moller, Wieringa, Eigenraam and Hamelik (2017), Instagram differs greatly from other social networking sites, especially Facebook. The literature indicates

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that the “centrality of images” on Instagram sets it apart from other forms of text-based social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Further, as outlined by Johnson and Knobloch Westerwick (2016), image-based social media posts have demonstrably different effects on users’ moods than text-based social media posts. While studies on Instagram are limited, studies on Facebook and Twitter on English language learning have flourished.

### 1.12.1.2. Facebook:

Facebook is a social platform that was created in 2004 by Harvard student “Mark Zuckerberg”. It is among the most popular social networking sites. Facebook.com is a website that allows individuals to create an account after providing the necessary personal information about the user including the name, date of birth, gender, and email address. After that, the user needs to choose a password in order to get account access. The Facebook account includes two important pages the home page and the profile page Caers et al. (2013).

The first page is the profile page or the ‘wall’, is the page where users present themselves. It is shaped of a small profile picture and a large cover photo at the top of the page. It contains also the name of the user in addition to some of his basic information. In this page, there are also few buttons that refer to the user’s friends, photos, and the pages he likes. The second page is the so-called "home page". In this page, the user is informed about some status updates and other activities, which are done by their friends. The information showed on this page are automatically and chronologically presented Caers et al. (2013).

According to the Arab Social Media Report (2012), by the end of March 2012, Facebook dominates, with over 901 million ‘monthly active’ users worldwide, of which 500 million access the Facebook platform through their mobiles. Moreover, 500 million Facebook users have daily access and the proportion of 80% of users is located outside North America.

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### **1.12.1.3. Twitter:**

Twitter is a microblogging service that was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July 2007. It is an American social networking service. In this, social platform users post and interact with messages that are known as "tweets". Twitter users have the ability to follow others or to be followed. As opposed to the other social networking sites like Facebook, the relationship between the users of Twitter, the follower and the followed, does not require reciprocation. (Haewoon Kwak, Changyun Lee, Hosung Park, and Sue Moon). In other word, Twitter users are not obliged to follow back to each other.

According to some statistics that are done by ASMR (Arab Social Media Report) in 2012, Twitter has reached 500 million marks in February 2012. The active users are about 140 million users who generate about 340 million tweets per day. The same report showed that 60% of the active users access to Twitter to produce tweets, whereas the rest that shapes 40% just log in to get news and information. It also revealed that 70% of users of Twitter live outside of the United States of America and 57% of users access to Twitter from their smartphones and mobile devices.

### **1.12.1.4. WhatsApp:**

WhatsApp is a mobile application that is popular among smartphones and mobile devices users. It allows its users to send and receive messages with zero cost with others who use this application. The WhatsApp social network is different from other social networking sites. It is unique in several ways. It allows users to privately and freely send messages to each other through their smartphones.

It was mainly introduced for texting, sharing photos, videos and voice records (Baldwin & Langton, 2001). Additionally, Miss. Tanjum Kamboj and Prof. Manoj Dayal refer to

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WhatsApp as a cross-platform instant messaging application for smartphones, which enables its users to send and receive location information, images, videos, audio, and text messages without a cost.

### **1.13. Conclusion**

This chapter is introduced to present social media in general and the most important related concepts. Starting by defining the concept of social media and its history then the relationship between social media and students' learning. It also presents the types of social media and shedding light on social networking sites, the chapter has discussed the concept of chat rooms and its features and advantages. However, now, social media has a great influence on students' academic achievements, especially in language accuracy. Most of the students are not aware that the newly developed language "Netspeak" which they are using to communicate may have an impact on their academic language. The following chapter will present the effect of the texting language that may have on students' linguistic competence mainly the writing skill.

**Chapter Two:**  
**linguistic competence and Netspeak**

## **Chapter Two: Linguistic Competence and Netspeak**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, we will provide an analysis on the linguistic competence which deals with a historical background of the term linguistic competence and its origins, the basic definition of the linguistic competence according to Chomsky, and the different stages of the developments of linguistic competence according to the modern schools of linguistic competence then it highlights the aspects of the linguistic competence and linguistic theory, then Generative Transformational Grammar (TGG) and Principles and Parameters (P&P) Theory .the chapter ends up with the difficulties and problems that students of English face on the level of their linguistic competence mainly their writing skill.

### **2.1. Linguistic Competence**

Noam Chomsky introduced his theory of generative grammar in 1957 (Taha & Reishaan 2008), and defined it as a set of rules that can be repeated to generate an indefinitely vast number of sentences with a clear structural description to each sentence (Tienson 1983). few years later, Chomsky presented the notion of linguistic competence (Tienson 1983). Chomsky argued that “an ideal speaker listener” has complete mastery of the language spoken in his or her speech community, and according to him, “every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized a generative grammar” that shows their knowledge of that particular language. (Chomsky 1965, pp. 3-8). Chomsky makes a clear distinction between the notions of competence and performance. Competence refers to the native speakers’ (ideal speaker listeners’) knowledge of the linguistic system (grammar) of their language (Canale & Swain 1980), while performance is seen as the actual language use (Chomsky 2006). However, he asserts that a number of different factors need to be taken into account in order to study the real language performance. One of these factors is the native speakers’ competence (Chomsky 1965, p. 4).Therefore, Chomsky argues that the purpose of the linguistic theory is to explain the mental processes

## Chapter Two: Linguistic Competence and Netspeak

underlying the language use, and by this he means that the study of linguistics should be concerned with competence, not performance (Barman 2014). As can be understood, Chomsky focuses solely on linguistic competence (Jordan 2004) that allows native speakers of a language to create well-formed sentence structures. However, linguistic competence cannot be seen as the only goal of language learning since the process of communication goes beyond the mere knowledge of creating well-structured sentences (Thornbury 2006).

### 2.2. Definitions of Linguistic Competence

According to Brown, Malmkjaer, & Williams (1996) Linguistic competence, also known as language performance refers to a person's subconscious knowledge of the rules governing speech in their first language. The term is also used in TEFL referring to students' competence in the target language.

According to Canale and Swain (1980), four underlying components of language define linguistic competence:

- Strategic competence – the aspect that all experts agree on as being the most important. According to Brown (1994), it is the way in which students "manipulate" the language in order to achieve their aims, and Berns (1990) describes it as the ability to compensate for imperfect knowledge of the grammatical and sociological rules, etc.
- Grammatical competence – refers to comprehension of morphology and syntax, the use of vocabulary and its mechanics, including aspects such as pronunciation and intonation.
- Competence in speech – means the ability to apply the formal aspects of a language coherently in order to keep the communication comprehensible.

## **Chapter Two: Linguistic Competence and Netspeak**

- Sociolinguistic competence – is also an important part of language learning, because formal knowledge of a language does not prepare the student for using it effectively and fluently – it is necessary to know what the likely outcome will be in social and cultural terms.

### **2.3. Modern Schools of Linguistics**

#### **2.3.1. The Rise of Structuralism**

Numerous scholars thought about the replacement of the historical linguistics by highlighting the investigation of living languages and their structure at the same time. For instance, the concept of "phoneme" which mainly means the smallest unit of sound that is capable of changing the meaning of words; it is a central notion in linguistics, which its definition differs from a school to another, so that we cannot attribute it to a specific person or school. The Neogrammarian historicism were the predominant school presented by the German domination till the First World War when linguists released themselves from the domination moreover, started new currents with different characteristics came from Switzerland with Ferdinand de Saussure, Russia with Baudouin de Courtenay, and America with Franz Boas (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

Structuralism is an approach to linguistics originating from the work of the Swiss linguistics Ferdinand de Saussure (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003). Ferdinand de Saussure is known as the father of modern linguistics and a master of discipline, which he made modern (icywarmtea, 2010). Saussure's important ideas about linguistics were compiled and published by his two students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (Saussure 1922), on the basis of notes, which have been taken from Saussure's, class lectures at the University of Geneva (Graffi, 2006 as cited in Graffi, 2015). The main goals of this book were defining linguistics and turning the tide of the linguistic view from the Diachronic or

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historical study, which had dominated linguistics in the nineteenth-century to the synchronic or non-historical study of language (Aronoff and Rees-Miller, 2003).

Saussure's emphasis was on the Synchronic study of language and how linguistic units are organized into the system of each language. He argued that the linguistic unit is a sign, which is a union of the signifier (the form, sound) and the signified (the meaning, function); the sound-meaning relation in signs is characterized by its arbitrariness and not predictable from one language to another (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003). Saussure made another distinction between language and speech in his famous dichotomy *langue* and *parole*. The former is concerned with language as socially shared and as a system, and the latter is concerned with the individual's language. The goal is that to approach the general character of language by studying the individual's speech as it reflects the language possessed by the society in general. Saussure's structuralism has had an effect on anthropology, literature criticism, history, psychology, and philosophy, modified and promoted by many scholars (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

### 2.3.2. The Prague School

Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929), born in Poland. Saussure was familiar with Courtenay's thinking as this latter was developing structuralists' ideas at the University of Kazan in Russia at the same time as Saussure was teaching in Geneva and parts of the *Cours* reflected this directly. Baudouin de Courtenay's thinking was interested in developing the concept of "phoneme". In addition, Baudouin and his students contributed all basic terminology in modern linguistics like the terms "morpheme", "grapheme", "distinctive feature", and "alternation". Courtenay's thinking survived through linguists whom he influenced and became associated with the Linguistic Circle of Prague (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

Serge Karcevskij (1884-1955) brought Saussure's thinking back with its formalist movement to Moscow Linguistic Circle when he had been in Geneva from 1906 to 1917. Later, Roman

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Jakobson (1896-1982) and Prince Nicholai S. Trubetzkoy (1890-1938) became the representatives of the Prague School of Linguistics. Jakobson, Trubetzkoy, and others developed notions in the structural linguistics which are important in current theories, like "distinctive features", "markedness", "topic", "comment", "implicational linguistics", and "linguistic areas" (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

The Prague School is best known for its contribution to linguistics as it sees language in terms of function and its most significant contribution, which is the distinction between phonology and phonetics. In accordance to Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, Trubetzkoy argued that phonology is concerned with *langue* meanwhile phonetics belonged to *parole*. Therefore, that he developed the concept of "phoneme" as an abstract unit of the sound system that is distinguished from the sounds actually produced (icywarmtea, 2010). Jakobson immigrated to the US in 1942 and he had a strong influence on the development of Generative Phonology through his student Morris Halle and through the linguist Noam Chomsky (Aronoff & Rrees-Miller, 2003).

### **2.3.3. The London School**

The London School is best known as the functional linguistics and the systemic linguistics because it focuses on the functions of language and gives great importance to contexts and the system aspect of language. The London School has a tradition of believing that various types of linguistic description may be adequate for different purposes (icywarmtea, 2010).

John R. Firth (1890-1960) contributed mainly in both fields of phonology and syntax and their relation to context of situation. Firth argued that not only words and sentences have meaning, but even the phonetic units are meaningful as well. According to Firth, the analysis of typical context of situation requires the analysis and the classification of sounds and phonemes, which is called the paradigmatic approach; meanwhile, the Syntagmatic Approach

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is concerned with the analysis of context where sounds occur. Firth's model of phonology is called "prosodic phonology"- he has brought the notion of "prosody" to be added to the phonemic entity- he meant by prosodies any other entities defined on the basis of their use on the spoken chain in addition to the other phonemic entities like accents, tones, and intonation. The occurrence of prosodies was defined by the rules of English syllabic structure (Graffi, 2013 as cited in Graffi, 2015).

M. A. K. Halliday (1925) was the student of John R. Firth, he argued that the foundational of human experience is language and he stressed that language cannot be detached from meaning. All his views and publications were from his approach, which called systemic functional linguistics (icywarmtea, n.d.). A key notion in Holliday's theory was "the context of situation" that obtains "through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other." (Halliday, 1985, p.11). Unlike structuralism, which privileges the syntactic structures, the systemic-functional linguistics suggests function and semantics as the foundation of human language and communicative task. Thus, it considers the analysis of the social context and how language behaves upon it (icywarmtea, 2010).

### 2.3.4. The American School

Linguistics in America started at the end of the 19th century, while linguistics in Europe started a thousand years ago. The American structuralism developed differently from the European one in terms of the various traditional and cultural backgrounds of each language.

The American Structuralism considered that the grammatical categories should be determined in terms of distribution rather than in terms of meaning, and the structure of each language should not be compared to the claimed universality of such categories like tense and parts of speech (icywarmtea, 2010). First, structural grammar describes all the aspects found

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in a language instead of constructing rules. Second, it aims objectivity in the sense that not all the produced grammars are comparable to any traditional grammars. Third, it emphasizes the uniqueness of each language and it does not deal with giving a sufficient treatment of meaning. Lastly, structural grammar describes all the smallest variances at any construction or use of a language (icywarmtea, 2010).

Franz Boas (1858-1942) is the founder of the American Anthropology and the American Linguistics. Boas major concern was to collect information about Native American languages and cultures. Hence, he argued the avoidness of generalizations and put emphasis on describing each language and culture in its own terms. The principle of emphasizing description and against generalization has prevailed in American Structuralism until Chomsky's insights changed the field towards generalizing, universals, and linguistic theory. Sapir and Bloomfield were the most well-known linguists after Boas (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

Edward Sapir (1884-1939) was Boas' student; he published in both anthropology and linguistics and wrote theoretical works about the phoneme. His main interest was about the Psychological-typological thought. He dealt with the morphological typologies of the last century on his 1921 book, *Language* (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003). Nevertheless, like Boas, he refused the evolutionary preconception that symbolized traditional typological studies: "all attempts to connect particular types of linguistic morphology with certain correlated stages of cultural development [ . . . ] are rubbish" (Sapir, 1921, p.219 cited in Aronoff & Rees-Miller). He rejected the conception that differences in the linguistic forms could be traced back to racial differences. Later on, he advocated the psychological orientation of the typological tradition and passed it to his student Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) who transformed it into Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which claims that speakers' comprehension and perception about the world is compelled by the linguistic categories their language presents. Sapir maintained the non-generalizing and mentalism of Boas' theory (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

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Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949) was influenced by behaviorist psychology; hence, his major concern was giving a fundamental form to the American Structuralism and making linguistics an autonomous scientific field. He accepted Boas' conception against generalizing but he opposed the relevance of "mind" that had distinguished the structural grammar of Boas, Sapir, and their students (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003). He argued that linguistics is a branch of psychology known as behaviorism which this latter is concerned with the belief that human beings cannot know something without experiencing it, that is children acquire language through a process of "stimulus-response reinforcement", and adults' language learning is also a chain of "stimulus-response". Since Bloomfield entered the behaviorist methodology to the domain of linguistics via his writings, the linguistic studies focused on accepting what a native speakers utter and neglecting about what they say about it because of the assumption that the linguistic description is based on observation (icywarmtea, 2010).

### **2.3.5. Naom Chomsky and Linguistic Theory**

It is common to talk about "the Chomskian Revolution" since 1957, when Chomsky has published his first major work Syntactic Structures that has dominated linguistics' mainstream. Chomsky's linguistics was distinct from that of his American Structuralists predecessors; unlike Bloomfield and his followers, he brought back the concept of Mentalism (Aronoff & Rrees-Miller, 2003). According to Chomsky, grammar is a theory of language, which can be constrained and tested just like any other theory in sciences; thus, its goal is to explain the native speakers' "competence" that is defined as what native speakers know about their language. Chomsky argued that speakers of language produce and infinite number of sentences most of which are new and never have been produced before, that is in terms of "Competence" would impose formal means to produce and generate novel sentences; Therefore, "Generative Grammar". Chomsky invented generative grammar in order to explain the concept of "competence" and make it formal and explicit (Aronoff & Rrees-Miller, 2003).

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Chomsky reoriented the goal of Linguistic Theory towards the characterization of Universal Grammar, which accounts for the differences among human languages in order to provide general universal properties for human languages. Finally, since theory of generative grammar began, it has evolved too many versions such as the "Standard Theory", the Government and Binding Theory", and the "Minimalist Program" in order to investigate the linguistic competence and to set general principles for it (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

### **2.4. Linguistic Competence and Linguistic Theory**

#### **2.4.1. The Linguistic Theory**

In a common sense "Linguistic Theory" is regarded as anything has been chosen to be done by linguistic theorists. Linguists were concerned about to differentiate the relationship between an analytic structure of statement and some fixed or potential corpus. Since the revolutionary linguistics, linguistic theory has been defined as "the construction of universal theory of grammar in the sense of necessary universals for linguistic 'competence'." (Silverstien, 1972, p.349). The ideal linguistic theory was the clarification of language in every respect that was linguist's major aim at all times (Silverstien, 1972).

Largely, there were issues of theory in syntax, semantics, phonology and morphology, in addition to areas of category and rule types, linguistic generalizations, Diachrony vs. Synchrony and so forth. A major controversy has detailed criteria of syntax and meaning. During that period as linguistic theory was specified by transformational generative perspective has dominated the field as the best formalized, best developed, and the best explicit framework (Silverstien, 1972).

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### 2.4.2. Descriptive vs. Explanatory Adequacy

According to Chomsky (1965), a linguistic theory requires two levels of adequacy, which are considered as descriptive and explanatory adequacy:

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...there are two respects in which one can speak of 'justifying generative grammar'. One level (that of descriptive adequacy) that grammar is justified to the extent that it correctly describes its object, namely the linguistic intuition - the tacit competence – of the native speaker[...] on a much deeper and hence much more rarely obtainable level (that of explanatory adequacy), a grammar is justified to the extent that it is a principled descriptively adequate system in that the linguistic theory with which it is associated selects this grammar over others, given primary linguistic data with which all are compatible (pp. 26-27).

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Since description is something articulated more than it is just observable, one already needs something that is similar to a theory, something that needs those property of theory: coherent, falsifiable, testable and so on; therefore, "a grammar constructed by a linguist is 'descriptively adequate' if it gives a correct account of the system of rules that is mentally presented, that is, if it correctly characterize the rules and representations of the internally- presented grammar." (Chomsky, 1981, p.33). In other words, a descriptive adequate grammar is concerned with the set of rules that are produced correctly by native speakers. Thus, descriptive adequacy deals mainly with the linguistic competence of native speakers (Cook & Newson, 2007).

On the other hand, explanatory adequacy according to Chomsky (1981): "explanatory adequacy [...] is essentially the problem of constructing a theory of language acquisition, an account of the specific innate abilities that this achievement possible" (p.33). Hence, the explanatory adequacy relates the linguistic theory with the problem of explaining what makes

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language learnable. In addition, it provides the linguistic theory with reasons about why the linguistic competence comes the way it does (Cook & Newson, 2007).

### 2.4.3. E-language vs. I-language

Chomsky's work (1986) stressed the difference between externalized (E-) language and internalized (I-) language. The E-language approach has its origins from the American Structuralists' tradition, hence it aims at collecting sentences "understood independently of the properties of the mind/brain" (Chomsky, 1986, p.20); i.e. it collects samples of language then it analyses their properties as sequences of elements. E-language approach adopts a grammar to describe the properties found in such sample "a grammar is a collection of descriptive statements concerning the E-language" (Chomsky, 1986, p.20). The linguists' goal is to discover the set of external and social facts that build up the language (Cook & Newson, 2007).

Nevertheless, the I-language approach deals with the internal properties of the mind more than the external aspects, it focuses on "what a speaker knows about language and where this knowledge comes from" (Cook & Newson, 2007. p.13); i.e. it is concerned with individual's intuition and knowledge of potential sentences rather than the sociocultural phenomena. Thus an I-language approach sets the goal of -discovering what constitutes the knowledge of language- which is the first question proposed by Chomsky (Cook & Newson, 2007).

Chomsky argued that the history of generative grammar was committed to I-language and provided a significant shift from E-language to I-language approach; "the shift of focus from the dubious concept of E-language to the significant notion of I-language was a crucial step in early generative grammar" (Chomsky, 1991b, p.10 cited in Cook & Newson, n.d.). I language approach concerned with the mental states where a grammar analyses the speakers' knowledge of language and then success was measured by how appropriately the grammar elaborates the knowledge of language in terms of the human mind's properties (Cook & Newson, 2007).

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Furthermore, the type of approach undertaken by generative theory requires the idealization of a "homogenous speech-community":

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions such as memory limitations distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristics) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965, p.03)

Chomsky's definition does not reject the significance of sociolinguistics or other domains of linguistics; otherwise, he stressed the dissociation of the linguistic theory from facts like those described by the sociocultural inquiry, which merely deals with different aspects and with different data of language.

### 2.4.4. Competence vs. Performance

The distinction between externalized language and internalized language led to another proposed notion that has been first drawn in Chomsky's (1965) namely, the difference between competence and performance. According to Chomsky (1965) competence is the "speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language"; meanwhile, performance is the "actual use of language in concrete situation" (p.04). Accordingly, Chomsky (1980) made another distinction of competence and he defined it as: By 'grammatical competence' I mean the cognitive state that encompasses all those aspects of form and meaning and their relation, including underlying structures that enter into that relation, which are properly assigned to the specific system of the human mind that relates representations of form and meaning. (p.59)

Chomsky sometimes uses the term "competence" to refer either to "the speaker-hearer knowledge of his language" or to his "knowledge and understanding" (Smith, 2002, p.38). The grammar of competence analyses the I-language in the mind, which is different from the

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application of language that is related to many factors such as the context of situation and the intentions of speakers. On the other hand, performance is concerned with the E-language collection of sentences, that is performance is any kind of data accumulated by the speakers of language such as newspapers, diaries, the work of William Shakespeare and so on (Cook & Newson, 2010). Consequently, the problem for the linguist, as well as for the child learning the language, is to determine from the data of performance the underlying system of rules (i.e. competence) that has been mastered by the speaker hearer and that he puts to use in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 4) .Chomsky argued that linguist's task is to characterize the competence, i.e., speakers' knowledge about their language, not the use of their language, i.e., performance. The distinction of our knowledge from its use does not convert the fact that our performance supplies many arguments about what our competence is; even though, it provides with some justifications about the fact that generative linguistics focuses more on competence rather than giving considerations to performance, the study of performance has been left to other disciplines like pragmatics and psychology (Smith, 2002).

### 2.4.5. Grammaticality vs. Acceptability

According to Schutze (1996), grammaticality judgments (GJs) are one of the most used Data-collection methods that linguists apply to assess their theoretical assumptions. In order to determine to which extent particular linguistic stimuli is correct in a given language, linguists expose speakers of language to a certain set of linguistic stimuli in the task that they must react wherein responses usually take place in the form of assessments. The need of GJ task in the linguistic theory is significant in terms of it provides ways to: **(a)** to assess speakers reactions to the different types of sentences that only appear in the spontaneous speech; **(b)** attain negative affirmation about the strings of words which do not belong to the language; **(c)** differentiate production problems such as unfinished utterances from grammaticality problems; and **(d)**

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separate the important structural properties of the language by reducing the influence of the communicative functions of language.

Schutze (1996) adapted Chomsky's (1965) distinction of competence/performance, in this terminology he argued that "the goal of linguistic theory, under this view, is to describe the knowledge independent of (and logically prior to) any attempt to describe the role that this knowledge plays in the production, understanding, or judgment of language" (p.20). Thus, his principal concern in his book (1996) is how we can use performance data to explore the linguistic competence. He dealt with grammaticality judgment as a part of performance data to examine their application in the linguistic theory.

One central concern has risen is that to what extent the GJ reflects the grammatical competence. As we have mentioned earlier, the contemporary aim of the linguistic theory is to investigate the grammatical competence. The grammatical competence is an abstract concept, which cannot be exploited easily; it can be only identified through the speaker hearer's performance. Henceforth, grammaticality and acceptability are often consider as synonyms in the use of metalinguistic judgments while they are actually distinct:

The notion 'acceptable' is not to be confused with 'grammatical'. Acceptability is concept that belongs to the study of performance; whereas grammaticalness belongs to the study of competence...Grammaticalness is only one of many factors that interact to determine acceptability. (Chomsky, 1965, p.11)

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The given distinction clarifies that the grammatical judgment tasks do not open a direct introspection to the linguistic competence, although GJs necessitate to be influenced by performance factors in order to judge the acceptability of the linguistic structures.

Schuzte (1996) developed a model of the judgment process in which he argued that generative strategies influence the judgment process by implicating the grammatical competence, hence if the utterances are generated so they are judged as grammatical and ungrammatical if they are not. In addition, he argued that parsing strategies cause judgment process again with the implication of the grammatical competence on which the parser is drawn. For instance, sentences including parsing difficulties such as 'the horse raced by the barn fell' are usually judged as ungrammatical even if they follow the correct structural form of the language (Bever, 1970). In the previous example, the past participial 'raced' is interpreted as the main verb, once the reader faced the verb 'fell' he/she needs to reanalyze the sentence in order to be able to parse the verb following the correct rules of language; if he/she fails in doing so, then the sentence is judged as ungrammatical. Also Schuzte (1996) claims that the judgment process is influenced by the conscious knowledge of rules which involves many components that are not included in language processing that is called the analyzed linguistic knowledge such as the grammar learned in schools.

### **2.5. Generative Transformational Grammar (TGG) and Principles and Parameters (P&P) Theory**

#### **2.5.1. Generative Grammar Theory**

According to Chomsky (1980) " when we speak of linguist's grammar as a 'generative grammar' we mean only that it is sufficiently explicit to determine how sentences of the language are in fact characterized by the grammar" (p. 220). Thus, 'Generative' lay on the explicit description of language grammar given by the linguists. When we say generative

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grammar means the precise and testable rules of the language without making any demands from the speakers' knowledge of language. Many people fell into the trap of 'Generative' like the Generative Gaff by Botha (1989) where the term has been employed as a synonym to 'productive' rather than as 'formal and explicit'; otherwise, generative grammar it is not used as an electric generator for what people produce rather it is about what they know (Cook & Newson, n.d.).

Smith (2002) stated that the fundamental purpose of the linguistic theory is to explain the process of language acquisition by decoding human beings grammar and the best theory that must be taken to specify this characterization, so a theory with transformations is to be effective. Accordingly, generative grammar states explicitly and precisely the set of phrase structure and the transformational rules in a language and how to transform those structures into others (Cook & Newson, n.d.). That is to say, transformational generative grammar is the ability to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences (Smith, 2002).

### **2.5.2. The Components of Generative Grammar**

According to Chomsky (1965), a complete analysis of phonology, lexicon, morphology Syntax and semantics is called its grammar:

First, Phonology, according to Chomsky (1965) "The phonological component of a grammar determines the phonetic form of a sentence generated by the syntactic rules" (p.16). Thus, it studies the sound patten of human language according to specific rules.

Second, Morphology studies the structure of words and how morphemes are combined together in a given language (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003).

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Third, Syntax is the basic component of grammar and it is defined as "the branch of linguistics that studies how the words of a language can be combined to make larger units, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences." (Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2003, p.265)

Finally, Semantics studies the interpretation of an expressed meaning in a given sentence, it relates the syntactic structure with a certain semantic representation (Chomsky, 1965).

As far as a grammar has to relate meanings to sounds, two levels of representation has been determined which are the Phonetic Form (PF) that is concerned with generalizations about sounds structure and pronunciation representation of a sentence; and the Logical Form (LF) that is concerned with generalizations about the semantic and the logical representation of a sentence. This relation is usually defined by the lexicon, which provides a phonological, a syntactic and a semantic interpretation of every item in the vocabulary. Therefore, "the lexicon is usually said to consist unordered list of lexical items rather than just words" (Smith, 2002, p.51), hence each lexical has properties and features which their meaning cannot be systematically determined from the lexical items of which it is associated with.

With the development of generative grammar the lexicon has given a central importance and it has been described as the locus of the variations between languages (Smith, 2002).

### 2.5.3. Principles and Parameters (P&P) Theory

In order to increase the tension of grammar explanation, there was an attempt to develop the universal principles where Chomsky 1962 in his paper the International Congress of Linguistics proposed the principle of "A over A condition" which this principle eliminated the use of rules to small unites for the logical assumptions. For example, if a category like (Noun Phrase) consisted as a part of its structure another part of the same category, i.e. another Noun Phrase, then any rule aforesaid the (Noun Phrase) need to be structured as referring to the more inclusive part. As an illustration, the example of \_ Harry stirred the stew\_ a natural

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respond might be the question \_Harry stirred what? \_ such a question maintains the same structure with the same word order of the statement, however an ordinary WH-question indicates a different word order like in Smith (2002, p.84) \_what did Harry stir? \_ It is noticeable that "what" is the direct object of "stir" in both questions, i.e. it remains the direct object however, it is separated from its verb; that is to say, "what" it has the same function as the Noun Phrase "the stew" in the first statement (Smith, 2002).

Moreover, with the emergence of Principles and Parameters Theory, the term 'generative' has been replaced and affected with another interpretation. Hence, Principles and Parameters theory claimed that human languages constituted of principles without constructing specific rules, i.e. different constructions can be held with general conditions (Cook & Newson, n.d.). Even though, it is allowed to replace the structural rules by general principles, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that languages are different from one to other. All the possible sentence structures and order may occur in different world's languages, like English word order is S(ubjet) V(erb) O(bject) and Japanese as SOV. In order to avoid making different rules for each possibility, these differences were attributed to Chomsky's notion "parametric variation" where variation specified a narrow set of rules set of all the possible variants with its association with universal principles (Smith, 2002).

### **2.6. Problems of Students of English at the Level of Linguistic**

#### **Competence**

The mastery of linguistic competence is considered to be the foundation for successful language learning. Apparently, the majority of EFL students have difficulties in grammar such as their miss-use of grammar structures and the miss-use of punctuation, high colloquial kind of language and the use of abbreviations, which will be depicted on their writing skills in academic tasks. Due to the excessive use of chat rooms chatting habits affect negatively learners

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'writing skills, since they are unable to find the right way to use their chat conversation language to accomplish academic tasks that are devoted to academic language only, but instead they tend to acquire colloquial and abbreviated language without delay to save time and space they forget and use the same in the classrooms, they use things like 4 in place of for, U in place of You, D in place of The etc.

That is, using chat rooms to communicate usually requires learners to follow specific linguistic system based on acronyms and informal structures that greatly differ from the standard language that learners aim to learn at institutions. For instance, see below a chat message between two students:

John: I, ao r u? ( Hi, How are you?)

Paul: V fyn (Very Fine)

John: Sup: (What's up)

Paul: Sul (See you later)

As a result, students are beginning to lose touch with the correct way of using English grammar; because they are fast adapting to the ungrammatical way of writing and communication especially among their peers and the problem with it is that they see no reason why they cannot continue using it as long as it is acceptable and understandable to them. In fact, they see you as not trendy or being archaic if you are unable to flow in those terms and slangs.

### 2.6.1. Social Media Network Language Versus Standard English

Here it is a list of the common words and abbreviations used in social media network chats compared to Standard English.

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<b>Network chat</b>	<b>standard English</b>
2	To
2mr	Tomorrow
4ward	Forward
AFAIK	As Far as I know
AMA	Ask me anything
ATW	All the way
BRB	Be right back
Bestie	Best Friend
Bling	Shining
Bro	Brother
BTW	By the way
B4	Before
BFF	Best friend forever
BTAIM	Be that as it may
Dets	Details
DYD	Don't you dare
GIF	Graphics Interchange Format
Gonna	Going to

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Fb	Facebook
HRU	How are you
IAB	In a bit
IC	I see
IKR	I know, right ?
IMO	In my opinion
IMY	I miss you
IOU	I owe you
L8	Late
l8r	Later
LOL	Laughing out loud
Mysp	MySpace
Nvm	Nevermind
Obv	Obviously
OMG	Oh my gosh
PIO	Pass it on
Pls	Please
Thx	Thanks
TY	Thank you

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U2U	Up to you
Uwc	You are welcome
Unfriend	To remove a friend on Facebook
WDYT	What do you think
Whoa	Expression of surprise

**Table1: comparison between Standard English vs. network chat language**

### 2.6.2. WRITING ABILITY

It has been clearly observed and confirmed by researchers who had earlier understudy related subjects about the effects of the social media, and from this just concluded research project, that top on the list of the negative effect which has also caused a paradigm shift of some sort on the mindset of our secondary school students is the fact it has succeeded to a large extent in corrupting their ability to compose grammatically correct words and phrases in one of the most important subjects of learning; English Language.

### 2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the notion of linguistic competence according to its founder Noam Chomsky. The linguistic competence and its properties have been considered as the fundamentals and the basic aspects in acquiring a language through a set of comprehensible Principles and parameters that EFL learners must be aware of in the process of learning the target language. In addition, the linguistic competence has been explained throughout different theories and approaches to SLA in order to figure the different models of access to UG where learners use their mental states in acquiring the target language besides to their cognitive strategies, which enables them to accomplish successful learning process. Finally, it has point out the problems that the students face on the level of their linguistic competence.

**Chapter Tree:**  
**fieldwork and data analysis**

## **Chapter Tree: fieldwork and data analysis**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter demonstrates the fieldwork and the analysis of the collected data. Initially, it presents a theoretical background on the research methodology underlying the Study. In addition, In order to collect data for the research investigation about the importance of linguistic competence questionnaires have been distributed to both teachers and students. The chapter includes the description of each data collection method, data analysis and the interpretation of the results in addition to the statistical procedures. Therefore, this chapter includes with a careful discussion of the findings in order to answer the research questions, and to test the hypotheses suggested.

### **3.1. Review of the research methodology**

The review of the research methodology is an attempt to clarify the methods and techniques employed to gain data and reach results for the current inquiry.

#### **3.1.1. Research method**

In order to undertake this study, a quantitative research approach has been adopted. A descriptive method is the most convenient according to the nature of this investigation. Singh and Bajpai (2008, p. 203) announce, “A descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist”. Correspondingly, we opted for a descriptive method that it serves our main purpose which is to describe the obtained results about the impact of chat rooms use on EFL student’s linguistic competence.

### **3.2. Sample of the Study**

A sample of sixty (60) first year LMD students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra is randomly selected in order to conduct our research. In addition, ten (10)

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teachers from our department of different courses have been chosen to provide us with their valuable thoughts through responding to the questionnaire.

### **3.3. Data Gathering Tools**

The research tool used in this study is a questionnaire. It has been handed to first year LMD students and English teachers at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University in order to collect their opinions and attitudes about the topic.

#### **3.1.3.1. Students' Questionnaire**

Students' questionnaire aims at collecting the necessary data in order to explore the impact of chat rooms use on EFL learners' linguistic competence. In addition, it attempts at measure students' attitude towards the use of chat rooms.

#### **3.1.3.2. Aims of the Questionnaire**

Students' questionnaire has been chosen as a data collection tool due to the fact that questionnaires "are extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable" (Dornyei, 2003, p.1). This data collection method was used as a tool to gather more detailed information about the participants' perceptions on the impact of chat rooms use on EFL learner's linguistic competence, namely writing skill. As far as students were restricted with certain statements in the evaluation forms, the questionnaires provided the participants with the opportunity to express freely their own opinions and perceptions.

#### **3.1.3.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

For the reason that the aim of our study is to investigate the impact of chat rooms in enhancing learners' linguistic competence. It seems important to direct students' questionnaire. This questionnaire contains twenty- two (22) questions and it is divided into four sections: general information, linguistic competence, computer devices and internet usage, English

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language learning, in addition to a space for any comments and suggestions. Section one intends to gather general information about students' learning. Section two aims to get an idea about students' understanding and awareness of the importance of vocabulary in English learning. Section three, which is concerned with the use of computer devices and internet aims at investigating to what extent the participants use their computer devices, and which benefits and challenges they think computer devices may afford. Finally, the fourth section that is devoted to English language learning as it is the main core of the present study that aims at exploring to what extent the participants use their computer devices to learn and practice English, and how does chat rooms affected their level.

Part one (general information) contains two questions which seek the students' gender and their language proficiency level. Part two (regarding linguistic competence) contains four questions, which states the significance of vocabulary in English learning, vocabulary proficiency level, their way of writing on chat rooms, and the impact of chat texting on the writing skill for academic papers. Therefore, part three (regarding computer devices and internet usage) contains seven questions which states the specification of computer devices types, the amount of time they use computers, the identification of places where they get access to the Internet, the type of web sites they often visit, their reasons to connect to the internet, and the language they use when they use chat rooms. Finally, part four (regarding English language learning) includes nine questions concerning the time allotment to learn English via computers, the kind of applications they use to learn and practice English, the effect of chat rooms on their vocabulary , and the English language aspects they intend to improve.

### **3.1.3.4. Administration of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was distributed hand to hand to first year LMD students in the academic year 2019/2020 at the University of Biskra. These respondents were available in the CEIL. Some respondents filled in the questionnaire on the spot while others gave back their

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answers few days later. Eventually, we have received sixty (60) questionnaires after distributing seventy (70) questionnaires.

### 3.1.3.5. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The students were requested to complete the questionnaire by putting tick in the box that corresponds to their opinion. The results are reported as follows.

#### Part one: general information

##### Q 1. Gender distribution

Response	Female	Male
Participants	48	12
Percentage	80 %	20%

**Table 2. Students' Gender Distribution**

This question sought to know if gender affects the use of computer devices. The table 2 shows that out of 60 participants, 48 (80%) are females and 12 (20%) are males. This implies that the majority of the respondents were female. This may be because females are more interested in the field of foreign languages than males are.

##### Q 2. Language Proficiency Level

Response	Good	Average	Less than average	I do not know
Participants	25	26	4	5
Percentage	41.67%	43.33%	6.67%	8.33%

**Table 3. Students' Proficiency Level**

Table 3 demonstrates that 25 participants (41.67%) evaluated their language proficiency level as good and 26 participants (43.33%) evaluated their language proficiency as average, and

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4 participants (6.67%) evaluated their language proficiency as less than average, and the remained 5 participants (8.33%) evaluated their language proficiency as I do not know.

### Part Two: Regarding linguistic competence

**Q3.** Do you consider vocabulary as a significant aspect in your English learning?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	54	6
Percentage	90 %	10%

**Table4. Student's consideration of the significance of vocabulary**

Table 4 indicates that most participants 54 (90%) consider vocabulary as a significant aspect in the English learning, however; the remaining 6 (10%) participants consider vocabulary as insignificant aspect in English learning. Results show that the students give an importance to vocabulary because having a good vocabulary to draw from can help them write more effectively. Students need to use a more formal tone when writing – not conversational language – and to do that, they need a richer vocabulary to tap into those words they do not use when they speak.

**Q4.** How would you rate your vocabulary knowledge?

Response	Poor	good	Fair	Excellent
Participants	5	38	17	0
Percentage	8.33%	63.33%	28.33%	00%

**Table5. Student's level of vocabulary**

This question item is meant to notice the students' opinion towards their level of vocabulary. Results show that most of the students 38 (63.33%) claimed that their level in vocabulary is good. Others 17 (28.33%) said that their level is fair. Whereas, the least

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percentage 5 (8.33%) of students showed that their level is poor. However, none of them considers his level as excellent. This rate indicates that students have diverse levels and that may back to the previous knowledge or the learning methods used by students.

**Q5.** Which one of the following do you use when writing on chat rooms?

Response	Formal language	Informal language
Participants	19	41
Percentage	31.67%	68.33%

**Table6. Student's way of writing in chat rooms**

Not surprisingly, over half of the participants 41 (68.33%) reported that their way of writing in chat rooms is the use of informal language i.e. spelling errors, leave out functional words- like a, an/ the out of sentences, make excessive use of abbreviations and acronyms, while the 19 (31.67%) reported that they use the formal language i.e. Correct grammar forms, no spelling mistakes, and use of correct punctuation. The frequency of using informal language is much more than using formal language while texting, this may be due to the fact that the more types of abbreviations they know, the more they tend to use them while they are writing in chat rooms, as for the more proficient they become in using informal language as the abbreviated forms will just flow as they are typing. I.e. they will use them unconsciously.

**Q6.** Does the way of writing for chatting affect your writing skill for academic papers or exam sheets?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	40	20
Percentage	66.67%	33.33%

**Table7. The impact of chat writing on writing skill for academic papers**

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Table 7 shows that the majority of students 40 (66.67%) are affected by the way they chat in their writing skill in academic papers and exam sheet which is due to the excessive use of this chat rooms and the time spent at this devices. However, 20 (33.33%) of participants their way of writing was not affected which may back to their competency in writing. Chat rooms does influence students writing especially in the aspect of spelling and grammar. The more frequent the students' use chat rooms the more they tend to use informal language when they are offline as well. In other words, excessive use of informal language, which is full of abbreviation in chat room, lead students to use such informal written language and abbreviation inside the classroom and in their academic writings.

### Part three: regarding computer devices and internet usage

**Q7.** Do you operate on any social media?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	60	00
Percentage	100%	00%

**Table 8. Number of students who operate on social media**

As it was expected, all the students 100% operate on social media, this can be due to the fact that nowadays technology has many characteristics that are crucially important for any students (to create and maintain relationships, facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and provide information.....).

**Q8.** If yes, which of the social media do you use more?

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Response	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	WhatsApp	Others
Participants	24	07	26	03	00
Percentage	40%	11.67%	43.33%	05%	00%

**Table9. Types of social media sites used by the students**

Table 9 shows that 24 (40%) of the participants use Facebook, 07 (11.67%) use twitter, 26 (43.33%) use Instagram, and 03 (05%) of them use WhatsApp as result Facebook and Instagram are the most used social media among students. This may be due to the shape of these applications, which contain a lot of photos and posts to share with each other. Sharing and posting only readymade posts which do not involve any practical efforts in writing English may affect students writing performance in English

**Q9.**how long do you stay on social media per day?

Response	Less than 1h	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	More than 5 h
Participants	7	16	14	23
Percentage	11.67%	26.67%	23.33%	38.33%

**Table10. Students' time spend in social media**

Participants were asked to report on time spent each day in different social media sites. We notice that the amount of time spent daily on social media sites varies greatly, in fact, 7 (11.67%) of students spend less than 1 hour a day socializing. While, 16 of them (26.67%) take from 1 to 2 hours. 16 (23.33 %) of participants spend from 3 to 4 hours per day. Furthermore, most of the students 23 (38.33 %) spend more than 5hours per day in social media. We can say that the majority of student's users spend long time on these social media site. This indicates that in a way or another social media use would affect students' linguistic competence since they use it excessively as the results show.

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**Q10.** For which reason do you connect to the internet?

Response	Entertainment	Social networking	Learn and practice English
Participants	26	20	14
Percentage	43.33%	33.33%	23.33%

**Table11. Students' reasons for connecting to the internet**

Table 11 portrayed that 26 of the participants (43.33%) connect to the Internet in order to entertain, while 20 (33.33%) of the participants connect for social networking, and only 14 (23.33%) connect to the internet for English learning. The results indicate that the majority of the participants connect to the Internet just for entertainment or social networking. One may relate to the unattractiveness and the disutility of the computer applications and activities, or may be they find it unimportant to learn English through web sites, or just they are unfamiliar with the habit of learning through online courses and like to be spoon fed.

**Q11.** Do you practice your English more on the internet via

Response	Chat rooms	Blogs/websites	Instant messages	emails
Participants	35	13	10	2
Percentage	58.33%	21.67%	16.67%	3.33%

**Table12. Frequency of using internet to practice English**

Table 12 shows that the majority of students 35 (58.33%) use chat rooms to practice their English, while 13(21.67%) of them use blogs and websites, 10(16.67%) of them use instant messages i.e. viber, WhatsApp , only 2(3.33%) of them use emails. Therefore, one can notice that chat rooms i.e. Facebook, messenger are the most used by students to practice English. It

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is well known that the language used in emails, website and blogs is a formal one, while the language used in Facebook, messenger and other chat rooms is most of the time informal. Results have shown that students tend to use more Facebook and chat rooms to express themselves in English, which is the wrong place to practice formal academic English. Thus, it can be said that instead of enhancing students' linguistic competence by the use of internet and technology such tools and chat rooms may affect negatively students' linguistic competence.

**Q12.** When do you access chat rooms?

Response	During free time	When I need to practice English	Meal times
Participants	49	10	1
Percentage	81.67%	16.67%	1.67%

**Table13. Frequency of using chat rooms to learn English**

Out of 60 participants, 49 participants (81.67%) reported that they use chat rooms in their free time i.e. whenever the opportunity arises, 10 participants (16.67%) use chat rooms when they needed to practice their English, and only one participant (6.67%) use it during meal times. This indicates that student's primary intention from using chat rooms is not practicing and learning English, however, it is to entertain while they are having a free time.

**Q13.** What language do you use more when communicating in chat rooms?

Response	English	Arabic	French
Participants	32	16	12
Percentage	53.33%	26.67%	20%

**Table14. Frequency of the language used by the students**

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Table 14 shows that 32 (53.33%) of students use English to chat, 16 (26.67%) of them use Arabic language which means they use their native language, and the least 12 (20%) they use French language. As it is shown on table 13, almost half students use English in chat rooms, however there is a noticeable number of students who use French and Arabic in chat rooms, a fact that may affect students English practice.

### Part four: regarding English language learning

**Q14.** How often do you use the internet to learn English?

Response	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Participants	23	29	7	1
Percentage	38.33%	48.33%	11.67%	1.67%

**Table15. Frequency of using internet to learn English**

Out of 60 students, 23 (38.33%) participants claimed that they always use the internet to learn English, 29 participants (48.33%) claimed that they often use their internet to learn English; however, 07 participants (11.67%) claimed that they seldom use their internet to learn English. Only one student do not use internet to learn English. The results show that the majority of the participants take the advantages of their internet to learn English.

**Q15.** What kind on internet applications do you use to learn and practice English?

This question sought to know the applications used by the students to learn English. Students' answers were different from a participant to another as follows. Duolingo, American English, Wellingo English, Let's speak English, speak English like native, grammarApp, hello English, azar, dictionary, 600 English words, Not surprisingly most of the participants said that they often visit Facebook, Youtube, Google, online books, viber, messenger, Google. The results indicates that all the students access to web sites to learn English. Despite the fact that most students use different internet applications to learn English which can help them to

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improve their linguistic competence, most results indicate that internet use has a negative impact on students linguistic competence as it is shown on table 16 and 18, going back to table 9 and 12. This can be due to different reasons; one of these reasons can be students' lack of appropriate techniques for a beneficial use of social media and chat rooms. According to those tables, students who frequently use the abbreviated method of writing when online, tend to practice the same method during formal writing in the classroom as well.

**Q16.** Have chat rooms affected your level of vocabulary?

Response	Yes	No
Participant	55	5
Percentage	91.67%	8.33%

**Table16. The effect of chat rooms on student's vocabulary**

Table 16 shows that most of the students 55 (91.67%) their level of vocabulary was affected by chat rooms, however; the remaining 5 students (8.33%) were not affected by chat rooms. Results show that over half of the students were affected by chat rooms. This may be due to the applications used by the students to learn and practice English.

**Q17.** If yes, how?

Response	Positively	Negatively
Participant	51	4
Percentage	85%	6.67%

**Table17. The way students they were affected**

Out of 55 students who answered with "yes", 51 (85%) of them said that they are affected positively which means that they take advantage from chat rooms by learning new words.

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Moreover, the least participants 4 (6.67%) said they are affected negatively which means they do not take any advantage from chat rooms. The results demonstrates that the majority of the students are affected positively by chat rooms.

**Q18.** Do you consider yourself addicted to chat rooms?

Response	Yes	No
Participant	31	29
Percentage	51.67%	48.33%

**Table18. Degree of students' addiction to chat rooms**

Surprisingly the results are approximate to each other 31(51.67%) of the participants confessed that they are addicted to chat rooms, however; 29 of them 48.33% confessed that they are not addicted to chat rooms. The results denote that the majority of the participants consider themselves addicted to chat rooms. Going back to table 9 most of the students spend more than 5hours per day in social media. This indicates that in a way or another social media use would affect students' linguistic competence since they use it excessively and make them addicted to these chat rooms as the results show.

**Q19.** Which aspects of English language you intend to improve when using chat rooms?

Response	Grammar	Vocabulary	Speaking	Listening	Communicative skills
Participant	06	17	17	07	13
Percentage	10%	28.33%	28.33%	11.67%	21.67%

**Table 19. The Improved English Language Aspects with Chat rooms**

Table 19 reveals that there is a slight difference between the percentages of the improved aspects that the participants intend to use. 06 (10%) of the participants claimed that they use

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chat rooms to improve their grammar, 17 participants (28.33%) for improving their vocabulary and the same percentage goes for speaking, and 13 participants (21.67%) for improving their listening. The results indicate the positive reports of the participants, wherein vocabulary and speaking take the first places among the English language aspects that students intend to improve with their chat rooms. Student's intention from using chat rooms is to enhance their linguistic competence however, they find difficulties in this. We can relate this again to lack of appropriate methods and techniques for a beneficial use of chat rooms.

**Q20.** How would you evaluate your level in grammar before and after using chat rooms?

Response	Improved	No difference	Got worse
Participant	40	17	3
Percentage	66.67%	28.33%	5%

**Table20. Degree of learning grammar before and after using chat rooms**

Table 20 reveals that 40 (66.67%) of participants reported that their level in learning grammar through chat rooms is improved, 17 (28.33%) of them reported that there is no difference before and after using chat rooms and 3 (5%) of them got worse after using chat rooms. As a result, the majority of students take advantage from chat rooms to improve their level in grammar.

**Q21.** Please, state the three best things about chat rooms

The aim of this question sought to know if the students really take advantage from these chat rooms or not. The answers of the students was different from one to another but the most mentioning are , improving grammar, vocabulary, practicing English, exchanging ideas, entertainment and pleasure, chatting with foreign people, correction errors, self-confidence get improved, know new people around the world, studying in groups. Therefore, all the

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participants take advantage from chat rooms. Despite the fact, students have the intention to learn, practice English through different applications, students have their own weaknesses, and skills that they want to develop in different ways in different applications. All we can say is that websites attract students not only to construct relationships but also to develop their English language. Students really use social media sites in their learning especially to improve their speaking and pronunciation and not particularly writing. The use of social media in education in general and EFL classes in particular can enhance the student's learning ability, using such interactive tools pays the way for the students to practice the language freely and continuously with their teachers, classmates and even with foreign people.

**Q22.** Please, state the three worst things about chat rooms

This question sought to know the things that bother the students or affect them negatively. The majority of students said that it is wasting time, spending all the time using this chat rooms, addiction we became addicted to these chat rooms, the over use of abbreviations and acronyms, spelling mistakes, the excessive use of the informal language, the impact of the informal language on the formal language, make the person isolated, affect the way of writing, depressed, disappointed, all these things affect the students negatively. Although students are aware of the disadvantages of the excessive use of these devices and their negative impact on their linguistic competence, they are still addicted to these chat rooms may be because they think that using abbreviations and short forms is easier than the formal language and they gain time when they use it. Here it is clear that there is a discrepancy between this question and the previous one in which students fell concerning the excessive use of chat rooms, i.e. students are lost between the advantages and disadvantages of chat rooms use to enhance their linguistic competence. Concerning the way of writing and the use of mechanics like punctuation, capitalization, unity and coherence...most of the students agree that this is a bad effect from chat rooms, however; they take advantage from it in which it create an atmosphere of learning and sharing ideas.

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### **3.1.4. Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **3.1.4.1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire has been designed for the purpose of collecting teachers' opinions and perceptions about the impact of excessive chat rooms use on EFL student's linguistic competence.

#### **3.1.4.2. Administration of the teachers' questionnaire**

A total number of 10 questionnaires were distributed to 10 teachers of different modules in the English Language department at Biskra University during the academic year 2020. 4 copies were eliminated because they were not handed back by the teachers; 7 questionnaires were sent via email and only 4 teachers who answered. The questionnaire was designed for the purpose of gaining valid information from experts who seem to have a vital role in guiding students through their research projects. It took four weeks to receive 10 completed questionnaires, which are needed to enrich this study with useful and valuable information.

### **3.1.5. Description and Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **3.1.5.1. Description**

The questionnaire consists of 12 items. They are either closed-ending questions requiring from subjects to opt for the appropriate answer(s) from a number of choices or open-ended questions, which require full answers and justifications for their choices. It is divided into three sections, namely, section one consists of 4 questions that tend to provide background information about the teachers' degree and years of experience. The second section consists of four (4) questions, which aim to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the use of social media. The third section contains four (4) questions related to teachers' attitudes towards students' linguistic competence namely writing skill and the influence of chat rooms on EFL student's writing skill for academic papers or exam sheets.

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### 3.1.5.2. Analysis and discussion of teachers' questionnaire

#### Section One: Background information

##### Q1: Teachers' degrees

Degree	License BA	Master	Magister	PhD(doctorate)
Number	00	00	08	02
Percentage	00	00	80%	20%

**Table21. Teacher's degree**

As can be seen in table 21 from ten teachers who participated in the questionnaire, only two teachers (20%) held PhD (doctorate) degree while the rest eight teachers (80%) held a Magister (MA) degree. The results indicate that most EFL teachers at Biskra University are of an advanced level, which contributes to students' achievements as well as the quality of outputs being.

##### Q2. How long have you been teaching at university?

Year	1-5 years	5-10 years	More
Frequency	06	03	01
Percentage	60%	30%	10%

**Table22. Teachers' experience at university**

It is noticeable from the previous table that a majority (90%) of English teachers at Biskra University had experience of one to ten (1-10) years of teaching in university. While six teachers (6) had experience of one to five years, the other three respondents had experience of five to ten years teaching. The rest one teacher (10%) have been teaching for more than ten years. This indicates that English Division at Biskra University contains a significant number

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of experienced teachers that seem to be the main indicator of teachers' qualification who have more knowledge about the learners' weaknesses and their learning needs.

**Q3.** How long have you been supervising master's thesis?

Year	1-5 years	5-10 years	more
Frequency	05	04	01
Percentage	50%	40%	10%

**Table23. Teacher' experience as supervisors**

the researcher by this question intends to collect evaluations and points of view from teachers about students' academic writing since master thesis are one type of academic writing . Table 23 indicates that respondents have a range experience of one to ten years of supervision. A half of respondents (50%) have little experience, which does not exceed five years; whereas, four teachers (40%) have sufficient experience which is more than five years, yet does not exceed ten years. In addition, one teacher (10%) has exceed ten years. The results reveal that there is a balance between novice and more experienced supervisors.

**Q4.** Do you evaluate your candidate's linguistic competence as

Response	Good	Bad	Average
Participants	05	00	05
Percentage	50%	00%	50%

**Table24. Level of candidate's linguistic competence**

Table 24 shows that there is a balance between "good" and "average" linguistic competence. Whereby 05 participants evaluate their candidate's linguistic competence as good, actually one of them mentioned that it is good but sometimes it depends on the candidates, whereas the rest

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05 participants evaluate their candidate's linguistic competence as average. From the results it is clear that there is no master two students with bad linguistic competence which means that they are qualified and competent at least in one skill and usually there is no considerations to measure the linguistic competence it depends on the candidates themselves.

**Q5.** Do you use social media to communicate with your students?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	08	02
Percentage	80%	20%

**Table25. The use of social media to communicate with students**

Table 25 shows that over half 08 (80%) of teachers use social media to communicate with their students and 02(20%) of them do not use social media to communicate with their students. Despite the fact that social media plays a great role in education it help teachers and students to better communicate and collaborate with each other. In addition, it assists them to access online resources; hence, it helps them to learn better and faster. Moreover, learning through using SNSs reduces absentees among students and consequently improving their grades. With social networking sites, educational subjects and assignments can be discussed on social sites. Still there are teachers who are attached to old methods. Since most teachers use technology and internet social media to communicate with their students this may be of a great benefit to students because students would use formal academic language when communicating with their teachers, this last may enhance students linguistic competence which can be worsen by excessive use of chat rooms as most results of the students' questionnaire have shown.

**Q6.** Do you use or advise your students to use social media and different types of chat rooms in order to enhance their level in English?

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Response	Yes	No
Participants	8	2
Percentage	80%	20%

**Table26. Student’s use of social media to enhance their level of English**

The above table shows that 08 teachers do help their students to discuss and share beneficial studies that can help students to enhance their linguistic competence through social media and 02 teachers do not. The findings confirm that those who use social media advise their students to use chat rooms to enhance their level in English whereas the remaining two teachers do not advise their students to use any means of social networking to enhance their level in English. From the results, we can say that most of teachers think that Social media can be a benefit value to language users. It help students to improve their language, develop their skills, and enhance their academic achievement and that is why they advise their students to use it, however, they do not guide students to the right way to use social media in order to enhance their English. Other teachers who do not recommend using social media in learning English to their students can be aware of the bad effect such tools may have on student’s linguistic competence.

**Q7.** If no, then would you be interested in using social media as an educational tool?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	00	02
Percentage	00%	20%

**Table27. Teacher’s interest in using social media as an educational tool**

Going back to the above table, those who answered with no they consider social media a means to neither enhance student’s level nor to develop their skills as an educational tool this

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means that the teachers are aware of the bad effects of chat rooms that can affect students' linguistic competence negatively.

**Q8.** What impact do you think social media (chat rooms) would have on student's linguistic competence?

Response	positive	Negative	Helpful to practice their English	It would get them far from using academic English
Participants	04	01	03	02
Percentage	40%	10%	30%	20%

**Table28. The impact of chat rooms on student's linguistic competence**

From this table 04 (40%) teachers agree that chat rooms have a positive influence on student's linguistic competence, 01 (10%) teacher said that it has a negative impact, 03 (30%) teachers agree that chat rooms are helpful to practice their English, and the last 02 (20%) said that it would get them far from using academic English. In line to the findings of question 16 and 17 from the students' questionnaire, social media affects learners' vocabulary and language learning positively according to both students and teachers.

### Other possible answers

- Became familiar with social cultural parts of language.
- It should be used carefully.
- It would be positive if they paid attention to correctness of English language.
- It could be an interactive platform that helps students to discuss with their supervisors and colleagues the process of academic writing and to share beneficial books and previous studies.

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- Social media can open access to authentic materials and authentic audience (native speakers).

From the previous comments, we can say that teachers think that chat rooms have a positive impact on students' linguistic competence regardless to some conditions to be undertaken.

**Q9.** To what extent do you think the linguistic competence is important in EFL learning?

- It is very important.
- It is very important, in which a well-structured spoken or written discourse is highly possible.
- Very important.
- It is an essential part of EFL learning without it we cannot classify a learner as an EFL one.
- Linguistic competence is very important in EFL learning because it reflects one's ability to read, write and even speak.
- It is highly important since it is one of the aspects of language that should be mastered (one of the foundations of the language).
- In fact, linguistic competence and all the other competencies are important in the mastery of language. Concerning linguistic competence, it helps students understand and write better English projects and essays.
- They need to improve their linguistic competence in order to enhance their communicative skills and understanding.
- It is all about linguistic competence so it is hugely important.

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From the previous comments, all we can say is that almost all teachers are aware of the importance of linguistic competence to English students since it is the fundamental component of learning a language and it is very crucial for EFL learners.

**Q10.** Do you think that chatting affects students' writing skill in academic papers or exam sheets?

Response	Yes	No
Participants	08	02
Percentage	80%	20%

**Table29. The effect of chatting on students' writing skill**

Table 29 shows that most teachers (80%) think that chatting affects students' writing skill in academic papers, however (20%) of them think that it does not affect student's writing skill. Going back to the findings of question 06 in student's questionnaire Chat rooms does influence students writing especially in the aspect of spelling and grammar.

### **If yes, how?**

- Chatting affects the academic writing negatively.
- They usually use non-academic language.
- Actually, it does an awful way by time; they seek to lose all the correct way to speak any correct language.
- Only if they exchange ideas and references, but for their writing skill to be developed they need to read books and academic papers.
- Sometimes yes, particularly the spelling and grammar aspects of the language, simply because the language used in chatting is quite different and less restricted by academic

## Chapter Tree: fieldwork and data analysis

rules and principles – also it is one of the source of confusion about which style to adopt while writing and how to use it.

- Chat language is characterized by specific shorthand writing techniques where a shortcut to the meaning of the message to convey with time it becomes a habit, thus, it would strongly affect the students' academic writing.
- Students can learn new vocabulary and get instantaneous feedback from their colleagues and teachers.
- .For example they focus on fluency and not accuracy. (The use of mechanics like punctuation, capitalization, unity and coherence...) Also the use of incomplete sentences and spelling of words.

From the previous comments, it can be said that teachers are aware that the language used in chat rooms is quite different from academic language in the way of writing and even in the structure of the sentences that may affect the students' linguistic competence mostly in a negative way.

### 3.2. Conclusion

Our work revealed that students are believed to be obviously affected by chat rooms. The analysis of students' questionnaire showed that the majority of the informants share the same attitudes towards the use of social media sites, several students interact with their friends and teachers via social media sites to learn and communicate using the target language. The obtained results showed that chat rooms affect student's linguistic competence at the level of their writing skill. As for the analysis of teacher's questionnaire, it showed that all the teachers agreed on the importance of linguistic competence and considered it as an essential part in EFL learning. In general, the acquired results answered our research questions.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General conclusion**

Social networking sites are getting to be a fundamentally portion of human life they empower individuals to keep in touch and communicate with each other through creating a modern framework of texting with diverse dialects. The current study explored the impact of chat rooms in enhancing EFL student's linguistic competence at the University of Biskra. This research was divided into three chapters: chapter one is concerned with a general view of the concept of social media , definition of social media, students' exposure to social media, the impact of social media and its evolution...etc. Chapter two is related to linguistic competence, definitions of linguistic competence, modern schools, problems of students of English at the level of linguistic competence. Chapter three presents mainly the research design, data collection, and analysis, as well as, the discussion of the results.

The study results revealed that students are obviously affected by social media sites. The analysis of students' questionnaire showed that the majority of the students share the same attitudes towards the use of social media sites, several students interact with their friends and teachers via social media sites to learn and communicate using the target language. Based on the findings of the study, students and teacher's questionnaires it is obvious that chat rooms language has significant influence on the students' writing. Their level of academic writing is highly influenced by context and also the purpose. When they are interacting among their friends, the tendency to use chat language is high. Thus, when they are required to write in a formal situation, chat language overwhelm on formal language. The minimal usage of chat language is also unintentional where they use it without realizing. Chat language is used spontaneously when they are communicating with one another via computer. A high percentag

of chat language and its effects on the students' linguistic competence is being captured in this study. Therefore, the role of chat language in writing cannot be brushed aside as the large variety of chat language definitely has influenced students' writing. It takes time and vast energy to follow the development of the style of chat language as it varies from century to century, generation to generation, one social setting to another. In general, the acquired results answered our research questions

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# **Appendices**

## Appendix 01:

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is meant for purely academic purpose. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research. Therefore, you are implored to please cooperate by responding to the items contained in the questionnaire. Please, tick the appropriate box and make full statements where necessary.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

#### Part One: General Information

**Q1. Sex:** (a) Male  (b) Female

**Q2. Specify your level in English:**

(a) Good  (b) average  (c) less than average  (d) I do not know

#### Part two: regarding linguistic competence

**Q3. Do you consider Vocabulary as a significant aspect in your English learning?**

(a) Yes  (b) No

**Q4. How would you rate your vocabulary knowledge?**

(a) Poor  (b) Good  (c) Fair  (d) Excellent

**Q5. Which one of the following do you use when writing on chat rooms?**

(a)\_ Formal language (correct grammar forms, no spelling mistakes, use of correct punctuation...).

(b)\_Informal language (spelling errors, leave out functional words- like a, an/the out of sentences-, make excessive use of abbreviations and acronyms, like "LOL" for "Laughing out loud").

**Q6. Does the way of writing for chatting affect your writing skill for academic papers or exams sheets**

(a) Yes, it does  (b) No, it does not

### **Part three: Regarding Computer Devices and Internet Usage**

**Q7. Do you operate on any Social Media?**

(a) Yes  (b) No

**Q8. If yes, which of the social media do you use more?**

(a) Facebook  (b) Twitter  (c) Instagram   
(d) What Sapp  (e) Others

**Q9. How long do you stay on social media per day?**

(a) Less than 1 hour  (b) 1-2 hours  (c) 3-4 hours   
(d) More than 5 hours

**Q10. For which reason do you connect to the Internet?**

a- Entertainment  b- Social networking   
c- Learn and practice English

**Q11. Do you practice your English more on the internet via**

(a) Chat rooms (Facebook/messenger)  (b) blogs/ websites   
(d) instant messages (viber, whatsapp)  (e) Emails

**Q12. When do you access chat rooms?**

- (a) During free time  (b) When I need to practice my English   
(c) Meal times

**Q13. Which language do you use more when communicating in chat rooms?**

- English  Arabic  French

**Part Three: Regarding English Language Learning**

**Q14. How often do you use the internet to learn English?**

- (a)- Always  (b) – Often   
(c) - Seldom  (d) – Never

**Q15. What kind of internet applications do you use to learn and practice English?**

**Q16. Has chat rooms affected your level of vocabulary?**

- (a) Yes   
(b) No

**Q17. If yes, how?**

- (a) Positively (by learning new words)   
(b) Negatively

**Q18. Do you consider yourself addicted to chat rooms?**

- (a) Yes   
(b) No

**Q19. Which aspects of English language you intend to improve when using chat rooms?**

- (a) Grammar
- (b) Vocabulary
- (c) Speaking
- (d) Listening
- (e) Communicative skills

**Q20. How would you evaluate your level in grammar before and after using chat rooms?**

- (a) Improved
- (b) No difference
- (c) Got worse

**Q21. Please, state the three best things about chat rooms**

- .....
- .....
- .....

**Q22. Please, state the three worst things about chat rooms**

- .....
- .....
- .....

Thank You

## **Appendix 02:**

### **Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear teachers,

The present study is conducted to investigate the impact of Excessive Chat rooms Use on EFL Students Linguistic Competence. The researcher would be grateful if you could fill this questionnaire by giving as precise answers as you can.

Tick (✓) your answer(s) in the corresponding box (es), and make a full statement whenever necessary. Also, be sure that your answers will be completely anonymous and used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your time and for your collaboration

#### **Section one: Background Information**

**Q1.** Please, specify your degree:

(A). License BA

(b). Master

(c). Magister

(d). PhD (Doctorate)

**Q2.** How long have you been teaching at university?

(A). 1 – 5 years

(b). 5 - 10 years

(c). More

**Q3.** How long have you been supervising master's thesis?

(A).1-5 years

(b). 5-10 years

(c). More

**Q4.** Have you been supervising other theses?

(A). Yes

(b). No

-If yes: (a). Magister

(b). Doctorate

## **Section two: social media usage**

**Q5.** Do you operate on any Social Media?

(a) Yes

(b) No

**Q6.** If yes, which of the social media does you operates?

(a) Facebook  (b) Twitter  (c) Instagram  (d) What Sapp

(e) Others

**Q7.**is social media a tool that should be utilized by teachers?

(a) Yes

(b) No

**Q8.** Do you use social media to communicate with your students?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If no, then would you be interested in using social media as an education tool?

(a) Yes

(b) No

**Q9.**are you worried about the potential abuse of social media by students?

(a) Yes

(b) No

**Section three: linguistic competence**

**Q10.** To what extent do you think the linguistic competence is important in EFL learning?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q11.** In your opinion, how is the impact of excessive use of chat rooms on EFL student’s linguistic competence?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q12.** Do you think that chatting affect student’s writing skill for academic papers or exam sheets?

(a) Yes, it does

(b) No, it does not

If yes, how?

.....  
.....

Thank You

## الملخص

الأطروحة الحالية هي محاولة للتحقيق في تأثير غرف الدردشة في تحسين الكفاءة اللغوية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كان هناك استياء من المعلمين حول جودة الكتابة الأكاديمية للطلاب. يتأثر طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بشكل عام في جامعة بسكرة بما نسميه "Netspeak" التي تؤثر على مهارة الكتابة لديهم بشكل سلبي، وبالتالي تهدف هذه الرسالة معرفة إلى أي مدى يمكن أن يؤثر الاستخدام المفرط لغرف الدردشة على الكفاءة اللغوية للطلاب. لذلك، افترض إذا كان متعلمو EFL يستخدمون غرف الدردشة بشكل مفرط، بطريقة أو بأخرى، فإن كفاءتهم اللغوية ستتناثر. تستند هذه الدراسة على منهج بحث كمي مع تحقيق دراسة حالة في جامعة محمد خضر بسكرة خلال العام الدراسي 2020/2019. من أجل جمع البيانات لهذه الدراسة الوصفية، تم استخدام الاستبيانات لكل من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة الأولى من LMD (تم اختيار عينة من 60 طالبًا بشكل عشوائي) و10 معلمين من وحدات مختلفة. بعد تحليل البيانات وتفسيرها، كشفت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن الاستخدام المفرط لغرف الدردشة يؤثر سلبًا على الكفاءة اللغوية للطلاب. وهكذا، يمكننا أن نستنتج أنه تم تأكيد فرضيتنا. من حيث الجوهر، يوصى بشدة برفع وعي الطلاب بأهمية الكفاءة اللغوية لأنها جزء أساسي في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.