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Title

**The Effect of Social Media on Teenage EFL Learners'
slang: Case Study of First Year Student at the Department
of English in MMUTO**

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my family members,

My dear friends,

And everyone who has supported me when I needed it.

Malha

I dedicate this project to all my family members for all the sacrifices they took,

My friends for their continuous support,

And all the teachers for their guiding and efforts.

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Abstract

The present research examines the influence of social media on the use of slang among teenage EFL learners at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. It aims to measure the frequency of the use of slang, the extent to which social media promotes this latter, and students' attitudes towards its impact on their language choice. To reach these objectives, we have designed a 13-item questionnaire and distributed it to 25 EFL first-year learners. The research methodology involves a mixed-methods approach that merges quantitative and qualitative methods. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Method and Qualitative Content Analysis, relying on Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse to interpret the findings. The results show that EFL learners use English slang very frequently, and that social media platforms promote slang among teenagers to a great extent. Additionally, we found that learners have positive attitudes towards the influence of slang on their linguistic behaviours. They are aware of their implementation of English slang in their daily conversations and the risk of its misuse and misunderstanding.

Key words: Computer-Mediated Discourse, English as a Foreign Language Learners, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, Slang, Social Media.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

API: Application Program Interface

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

CMD: Computer-Mediated Discourse

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

H: Research Hypothesis

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

QCA: Qualitative Content Analyses

Q: Question

SNS: Social Networking Sites

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General Introduction

Statement of the problem

The digital revolution has influenced all parts of human life. A.K. Sharma, Dr. Boopathi believe that “The transformation of the entire world is influenced by the digital revolution as it impacts each and every aspect of human life” (2022, p.29). One major feature influenced by this revolution is communication, with the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc., where users are exposed to diverse linguistic forms, including formal and informal expressions. That is, the digital revolution has contributed to the emergence of new language forms.

Language, according to Ferdinand de Saussure, is a continually changing communication medium (1916). This statement suggests that language is constantly evolving. The process of language evolution has been accelerated as a consequence of the rise of social media, thus leading to new vocabulary, expressions, and diverse ways of communication that came into existence. Besides, social media have contributed to the spread of the English language across the globe. This, in turn, affected the non-native English communities’ cultural and linguistic identities.

The evolutionary process of language has resulted in the emergence of slang. This latter is an aspect of language that also faces evolution; it exists within any language and plays a crucial role in expressing emotions and identity. Slang consists of informal expressions shared among certain groups. In the digital era, with global exposure to social media, which is nowadays dominated by the English language, new slang terms like lit, sus, vibe check, etc., have emerged and spread rapidly through online platforms into the real world, and are used frequently by the youth worldwide.

Over the years, researchers have extensively investigated how social media influence language learning and usage. For example, Throne, S. L., Black, R.W., and Sykes (2009) explained that online interactions foster an informal environment where users, especially

teenagers, acquire new vocabulary and expressions through direct engagement. In the same context, Androutsopoulos (2011) has demonstrated that digital interactions considerably shape how individuals use slang, particularly in non-academic settings. David Crystal (2011) also studied this phenomenon; he concluded that the dissemination of slang nowadays spreads faster, primarily due to the internet, making casual language more prevalent within online communication. While these studies focus on the dynamics of digital communication, they have slightly neglected to investigate how non-native English speakers, especially in countries like Algeria, adopt slang from social media and how they integrate it.

Algeria is a multilingual country, and its linguistic landscape was described by Benrabah (2014) as a complex interplay of Arabic, Amazigh, and French, with English emerging as a new force in the linguistic repertoire of young Algerians, particularly teenagers. He stresses how socio-cultural backgrounds contribute to shaping linguistic choices, especially among younger generations. The surge in the popularity of English is largely attributed to social media exposure, American music, and movies. Recently, it was recognized as an official second language, supplanting French, which has long been the dominant foreign language in the country. Benrabah (2014) notes that with the rise of English, there has been a shift in the way Algerian youth use language. He believed that English is starting to influence how young people interact with each other, particularly through adopting slang words and expressions from American pop culture, while Arabic and Kabyle remain their preferred languages. Many students in Algeria interact with influencers using English and participate in online discussion clubs; consequently, they incorporate English slang into their usual conversations in a natural way. This results in code mixing, where English slang blends with Arabic, French, and Kabyle, to form a distinctive hybrid style of exchanging ideas.

An investigation conducted by Laidoun and Langadi in 2021 for Master's students in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (MMUTO) proved

that social media platforms serve as an informal learning environment for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. These platforms offer the ability to practice the authentic English language easily through listening to songs, watching YouTube videos, and partaking in conversations with native and non-native speakers of English. This means that, unlike formal teaching, which focuses on structured writing, social media promote the experience of spontaneous interactions, exposing EFL learners to non-standard and more relaxed language varieties.

While this trend is increasingly growing, research on the informal use of English slang is limited. Most studies emphasize formal English learning, neglecting its usage in informal settings. Only a few studies have investigated the influence of social media on Algerian students' use of slang, focusing only on how their formal language is affected. This may make us question how EFL learners in Algeria collect English slang from social media, and how it shapes the way they communicate in online and real-life contexts.

This research mainly focuses on first-year students of the Department of English at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, studying the frequency of their utilization of English slang, the specific sources from which they acquire it and to what extent these sources promote slang in real-life and online contexts, and how this new adoption influences their linguistic behaviors according to them. More simply, this study will help us understand how social media changed the way teenage EFL learners at MMUTO interact both online and in real life, and what their views are concerning this change.

Aims and Significance of the Study

This research investigates how EFL learners at MMUTO collect English slang from social media, and how it shapes the way they communicate in online and real-life contexts. It analyzes the way these students acquire, use, and perceive English slang through their exposure to social media platforms. In addition to that, it investigates whether the final results confirm

whether social media exposure promotes English slang among users or not. By examining the experiences and perceptions of first-year students of English, this research clarifies:

- The commonness of English slang usage in informal online and real-life interactions.
- The extent to which social media promote English slang among teenage EFL learners.
- EFL learners' perceptions concerning the impact of English slang on their linguistic choices.

In short, this study is a source of information for scholars researching language evolution and language varieties. It offers the necessary knowledge for EFL educators to understand their students' linguistic habits. It might also enlighten learners about how social media affect their linguistic behaviors.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study fills the research gap: **what is the effect of social media on the use of slang among EFL learners at the Department of English at MMUTO**, by answering three main research questions:

- Q1:** How often do EFL learners in the Department of English at MMUTO use English slang terms in their daily lives?
- Q2:** To what extent do social media promote English slang use in Algerian EFL learners' online and face-to-face informal conversations?
- Q3:** What is the attitude of EFL learners towards the effect of English slang on their linguistic behaviours?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, the following hypotheses are presented:

- H1:** EFL learners frequently encounter and use English slang both in social media and their daily interactions.

H2: Social media promote English slang only in EFL learners' online settings.

H3: EFL learners have positive attitudes towards the effect of social media on their linguistic behaviours.

Research Techniques and Methodology

To achieve the aim and objectives and answer the research questions, we have adopted a mixed-method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection and data analysis procedures. The only data collection tool used is a questionnaire containing diverse open-ended and closed-ended items, designed for first-year students at the Department of English at MMUTO. The questionnaire was administered in Google Forms, and posted online, more specifically in groups of first-year students of English at MMUTO. Our sample consists of twenty-five (25) students selected randomly to ensure a diversity of perceptions, after the pilot test process with five students. Qualitative data is analyzed using **Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)**, whereas quantitative data is analyzed relying on **the Statistical Method**. The results are discussed sticking to the theories of **Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse**.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation follows the traditional model that is composed of four chapters, a General Introduction, and a General Conclusion. This **General Introduction** aims at clarifying the content and the topic of this study, asserting its academic significance. The first chapter, **Review of Literature**, explains the main concepts, unfolds the theoretical framework, and reviews the previous studies related to the topic of our research. The second chapter, **Research Design and Methodology**, describes the methods followed, the data collection process, including participants, the tools used, and data analysis procedures. The third chapter, **Presentation of the Findings**, presents the results obtained from the data analysis process. The last chapter, **Discussion of the Findings**, deals with the interpretation of the findings through

the lens of the analytical framework to give clear answers to the research questions. In this chapter, the working hypotheses are either refuted or confirmed. Finally, the **General Conclusion** summarizes the outcomes of the research, mentions the limitations of the study, and suggests further research related to this topic.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

The present chapter reviews the literature associated with the subject of our inquiry. It starts with broad explanations about what we mean by “social media”, the theories that allow the categorization of social media platforms, and then refers to each widely used platform. Subsequently, it digs into the evolution of language, which is the main cause of linguistic variation. In another section, language varieties are explored, including slang, which was deeply defined and categorized since it is the main topic of this research. This part also explores the different types of slang. Then, it studies the influence of social media on slang.

This chapter aims to introduce the analytical framework to be used: **Herring’s (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse (CMD)**. The last section introduces this framework and dives into how Herring classified online language by considering medium and situational factors.

1.1. Social Media

The modern era has led to the emergence of digital communication, which is the process of sending a purposeful, measurable, and widely accessible message to a recipient that is likely to provide feedback (EL-Astal & EL-Youssef,2025). As a response to the rise of digital communication, the world’s media developed a new form known as social media.

1.1.1. What is Social Media?

Social media have been a topic of discussion for many scholars, and to this day, they did not come into a clear and sufficient definition. However, some other researchers have attempted to define this term after analyzing the different features and history of social media. For instance, Taprial and Kanwar affirmed that social media can be referred to as “All web based applications which allow for creation/exchange of user-generated content and enable interaction between the users” (2012, p. 8). Kaplan and Haenlein added that social media is “a group of

Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (2010, p. 61). The definitions suggest that social media are a set of platforms, whether applications or sites, that allow users to create and share content and provide feedback.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) advocate for two theories in the field of media research to categorize social media platforms: Media Presence theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) and Media Richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986).

➤ **Media Presence Theory**

This theory allows the categorization of different social media platforms based on the degree of their social presence, which is referred to as the acoustic, visual, and physical contact they allow between users. This is influenced by the intimacy and the immediacy of the medium, meaning the media that allow more interpersonal and asynchronous communication, such as video and phone calls, have higher intimacy and immediacy than the media that allow mediated and synchronous communication like emails, online posts and comments, and mass media (Television, Newspapers, Radio, online articles, etc). In short, the Media Presence Theory proposes that the higher the intimacy and immediacy, the more effective the communication.

➤ **Media Richness Theory**

This theory, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty. According to Kaplan and Haenlein, “media differ in the degree of richness they possess—that is, the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval— and that therefore, some media are more effective than others in resolving ambiguity and uncertainty” (2010, p. 61).

Finally, social media are increasingly gaining power, as the total number of internet users increased to 4.9 billion in 2021 (Sharma & Shanmugaboopathi, 2022). However, the increase and decrease of social media use only depend on the user. Some individuals waste their

time making virtual friends rather than living their actual realities. Others, however, devote only short periods of their time to online chatting, then socialize with their mates in real life for the rest of the time (Matusitz, 2007).

1.1.2. Social media platforms

In these current days, there are countless social media platforms, also known as social networking sites (SNS). Boyd and Ellison define SNS as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, 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” (2007, p 11). Although they claimed that the networking function is not a primary practice among social media sites, it is still possible.

The most relevant social media platforms, especially among teenagers, are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.

1.1.2.1. Facebook

Facebook was first launched as a social networking site dedicated only to college students. Back then, it was necessary to own a university student email in order to get access to Facebook (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This platform was first released for Harvard students and later made available to other educational institutions. In 2005, it expanded to include high school students and different corporate professionals, then to everyone. As for its functions, Boyd and Ellison categorize it under the term SNS. Now, it is a widely used application where users can chat privately in Messenger, make video calls, and share their ideas and opinions in public comments and posts.

1.1.2.2. YouTube

“Founded by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, former employees of online commerce website PayPal, YouTube’s web-site was officially launched with little public fanfare

in June 2005” (Burgess &Green, 2009, p.1). YouTube aims to remove the technical difficulties to the widespread sharing of video online. It does so by offering a simple, integrated interface through which users can upload, publish, and view streaming videos without high levels of technical knowledge, and within the technological constraints of standard browser software and modest bandwidth. YouTube is one of the leading contributors to language spread, as users are exposed to various forms of different languages through videos and live streams with a few clicks (Burgess & Green, 2009).

1.1.2.3. Instagram

Instagram is a social media application that was first launched on the 6th of October 2010 in the App Store. In 2013, it witnessed huge popularity as the number of users increased to 150 million, and nowadays the number of users is in the billions (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020). They referred to Instagram as a multifaceted platform, as it serves different purposes. They explained that Instagram is an application that can be installed on phones; a series of programs and algorithms; a gigantic database of images, videos, captions, comments, geolocative tags, location tags, likes, emojis, etc.; a collection of personal data; an application program interface (API) which enacts rules to allow different apps, platforms and partners to access, add or remove data from the Instagram database; and finally, a history of updates that influence how Instagram works over time.

1.1.2.4. TikTok

TikTok nowadays is considered one of the most popular platforms, especially among teenagers. Y. Wang (2022) defined it as a music video-sharing mobile application that debuted in the fall of 2016, it is also the most downloaded social media platform in the IOS app store. He claimed, “It enables users to create and browse short video clips ranging from 15 seconds to 60 seconds in length, allowing them to share all genres of videos online” (p.588). The author related the popularity of TikTok to many reasons, such as the personal preference algorithm,

stating that TikTok algorithms model personal preferences to suggest appropriate content. He explained, “By defining the categories and labels of TikTok short videos, as well as the refined push algorithm, the videos favoured by the audience are more accurately distributed into the app of the audience” (pp.588-589).

1.1.2.5. Snapchat

Snapchat, unlike other social media platforms, is more ephemeral. It was first released in 2011. Snapchat does not reveal what posts or reels your friends interacted with, or who they are friends with (Rettberg, 2018). In short, Snapchat is believed to be the best option in terms of privacy. The author claims that Snapchat has reminded scholars of the two sides of the digital: the immediate and the archival. Most social media platforms function based on the archival side by storing texts, pictures, and other content. Snapchat, on the other hand, focuses more on the immediate, as it deletes previous texts and sent pictures that are not saved after a certain period.

To conclude, we can say that the platforms introduced here, which represent the digital revolution, are believed to contribute to the evolution of linguistic forms through online trends, for instance.

1.2. Language Evolution

Language is an inherently dynamic system that constantly evolves in order to meet the different linguistic needs of the speaker. It undergoes various changes in syntax, phonetics, semantics, and vocabulary (Keidar & al. 2022). The authors claimed that “the meanings of words and the frequencies in which they are used are not static, but rather evolve over time” (p.1). Wardhaugh and Fuller added, “A living language not only varies, it changes” (2015, p. 7). Blank (1999) believed that language evolution might be linked to phonetic convenience and sociocultural changes (as cited in Keidar & al. 2022). Nowak and Krauker (1999) suggest that the evolution of language plays a key role in modern human history, changing how information is communicated. These two scholars attempted to formalize the laws that govern the evolution

of human languages. The laws involve signal-object association, word formation, and simple syntax or grammar emergence. This evolutionary perspective highlights how language adapts and transforms over time, responding to social shifts, cultural values, and communicative needs (Namvar, 2014).

However, researchers still do not have enough information about the origins of language evolution, and some of the questions they asked remain unanswered. Hausser et al. affirm that “the most fundamental questions about the origins and evolution of our linguistic capacity remain as mysterious as ever” (2014, p.1). In the same context, Keidar et al. added, “Languages are continuously undergoing changes, and the mechanisms that underlie these changes are still a matter of debate” (2022, p.1).

Finally, this evolutionary process of language can be considered as the main cause of language variation. The following section reviews some of the important language varieties that may appear as a consequence. These varieties demonstrate how speakers adjust their language based on identity, social group, or communicative context.

1.3. Language Varieties

Language varieties refer to the different forms of language used by a specific speech community, depending on the formality level, like standard English; region or social group, like lower-class New York City speech; and setting or function, like legalese (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). The statement suggests that a language variety is a general term for any different language form or linguistic expression. Varieties develop for reasons such as differences in geographical territory or belonging to distinct professional groups that adopt a language variety only understood by the members (Nordquist, 2019). Wardhaugh added, “variation is an inherent characteristic of all languages at all times, and the patterns exhibited in this variation carry social meanings” (2015, p.6).

The following concepts are among the most discussed varieties of language in the field: dialects, sociolects, pidgins and creoles, jargon, and slang.

1.3.1. Dialects

A dialect is a regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary. Dialects can be geographically based, like regional dialects, or associated with specific social groups, like social dialects. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller, “dialects are nonstandard and subordinate to languages” (2015, p. 28). They explained that dialects are often seen as less prestigious than standard language varieties. As a result, speakers of dialects may be unfairly judged inferior to speakers of the standard variety. Dialects are regarded as subcategories of standard language but “with none of its power” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p.38). More simply, this prejudice transferred from the way the dialect is viewed to the way its speakers are treated.

1.3.2. Sociolects

A sociolect is a language variety used by a specific social group, defined by factors such as age, class, ethnicity, race, cultural background, religion, place of living, income, gender, or education level (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). This variety reflects the speaker’s social identity, beliefs, and cultural background. Studies in social dialectology, a branch of linguistic study, show how social identity can affect the speech regardless of the geographical barriers of the speakers (Wardhaugh & Fuller,2015).

1.3.3. Pidgins and Creoles

Pidgins are over-simplified linguistic varieties that develop for the sake of communication between communities that do not share a common language (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2025), typically in trade and colonization. A pidgin occurs when two or more languages make contact. Baker defined it as “speech-forms which do not have native speakers, and are therefore used as a means of communication among people who do not share a common

language” (1996, p. 1). They explained that the development and degree of sophistication of a pidgin depend on the intensity and type of communication purpose of its users.

Creoles, however, are fully developed language forms that started as pidgins and then became the first language of a community, gaining more grammar rules, vocabulary, and functions for everyday life (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). A creole is a developed, more sophisticated, and official version of a pidgin.

It is generally difficult to distinguish between creoles and pidgins; however, creoles are believed to have native speakers, unlike pidgins (Baker, 1996). Yet, some pidgins tend to acquire native speakers over time.

1.3.4. Jargon

Generally, Jargon refers to a distinct terminology of a group, profession, or special activity. Nash and Walter write that “jargon denotes the terminology of some profession, occupation, or pursuit. Every activity has its occupational terms, many of which cross the bounds of technical usage and enter into common parlance” (1993, p. 4). This means that jargon is a variety of language that belongs to a specific field. Nevertheless, some of the terms are used in general settings, as they become more relevant beyond their original context nowadays.

1.3.5. Slang

Slang is a subset of informal language that represents linguistic innovation and cultural changes; it often emerges inside specific social groupings (Keidar et al., 2022). This implies that slang adds to the dynamic nature of language by contributing to lexical innovation and semantic changes. Sun and Xu (2022) defined it as “a type of informal language commonly used in both day-to-day conversations and online written text” (p.1). They provided empirical evidence of slang's evolving meanings, noting that “communicative need and semantic distinction play a role in the variation of slang meaning yet their relative importance fluctuates

over the course of history” (2022, p. 1). This proves that slang often functions as a tool for expressing and reinforcing identity, especially among younger generations.

Slang was also defined by Namvar as “the use of highly informal words and expressions that are not considered standard in the speaker’s dialect or language” (2014, p.127). According to him, it is a result of “socio-cultural changes and advancement, technological development and mass media, the process of acculturation and globalization, evolution and natural development of language” (p. 132).

Linguists Bethany K. Dumas and Jonathan Lighter propose that words and phrases are considered slang if they meet at least two of the following criteria:

1. Its presence will markedly lower, at least for the moment, the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing....
2. Its use implies the user's special familiarity either with the referent or with that less statusful or less responsible class of people who have such special familiarity and the use of the term....
3. It is a tabooed term in ordinary discourse with persons of higher social status or greater responsibility....
4. It is used in place of the well-known conventional synonym, especially in order (a) to protect the user from the discomfort caused by the conventional item or (b) to protect the user from the discomfort or annoyance of further elaboration.(1978, p. 6)

The lifecycle of slang terms is primarily influenced by their adaptability across contexts. Stewart and Eisenstein (2018) assert that “words that appear in more linguistic contexts grow faster and survive longer” (p. 1), indicating that the spread and longevity of slang depend only on its ability to transcend its original social context to enter broader usage.

Allan and Burridge, in their book *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language* (2006), suggested that slang terms can be divided into different categories. Other research, such as Tufail, Asgher, and Dr.Ali’s (2024), relying on the previous work, has categorized slang into five types: fresh and creative, Flippant, Imitative, Acronym, and lastly clipping (or abbreviations). These types are further explained in the next page.

➤ **Fresh and Creative Slang**

Fresh and creative slang terms are defined as words invented to convey humour or to emphasize something, by using reiteration of words or phrases in a playful or demeaning way to convey a new meaning. For example:

To yeet (a term used to express excitement or to throw something forcefully): “he **yeeted** his phone across the room”.

To ghost (to cut off communication in a sudden way): “he ghosted her after the second date”.

➤ **Flippant**

Flippant slang is described by Allan and Burridge (2006) as slang that consists of two or more words that do not share the same denotative meaning. It is one of the least commonly used slang words. It is used in a playful or demeaning way to convey a new meaning. Examples of this type of slang are: **Kick the bucket** (to die), **Answer nature’s call** (to go to the toilet).

➤ **Imitative**

Unlike fresh and creative slang terms, which are original, imitative slang terms are not. They are terms that imitate or borrow from existing words or phrases, and apply a new style and meaning to them. Examples for this type of slang term are:

Crib (the term is derived from crib: the bed of a baby, and can mean apartment or house). This word was borrowed and repurposed.

Moolah (the term is possibly derived from “mula” or a dialect variation, it means “money”). This word tries to mimic the sound of the word money.

➤ **Acronyms**

Acronyms are slang terms that are generated through taking the first letter of every word of the phrase and combining them. Examples for acronyms can be:

Yolo (the short form of the phrase ‘you only live once’).

Idk (the term is created through taking the first letter of every word in the utterance ‘I don’t know’ and combining them).

➤ **Clipping**

Clipping slang terms are abbreviations of already existing words. For example: **Collab** (an abbreviated form of the word ‘collaboration’), and **A pic** (this term is abbreviated from the word ‘a picture’).

1.4. Social Media’s Influence on Slang

EFL learners absorb and normalize slang through repetitive exposure to diverse online spaces. They use it as a linguistic tool for social inclusion, to express themselves, and to form their identity in informal conversations. This section will explore how social media mainly influence the language variety mentioned above (slang).

The recent diffusion of new words and expressions across communities was accelerated thanks to social platforms. Keidar et al. (2022) argue that the viral nature of online content extends the semantic shifts and the rapid frequency dynamics of slang. Hashtags, memes, and viral trends contribute to the lifecycle of slang, as certain terms gain sudden popularity and spread very quickly. This accelerated cycle opposes the slow and localized slang evolution in the pre-digital era. This was then confirmed by Kulkarni and Wang (2017), they stated that online platforms enable the creation of new slang expressions at a global level unlike traditional face-to-face interactions.

Moreover, social media expose teenagers to the ground for the globalization of English slang, especially in non-native contexts like Algeria. Terms once limited to specific regions now cross different linguistic and cultural barriers. In this same context, Zhou and Fan (2013) note that American slang has been widely adopted in non-English speaking contexts due to the influence of global social media platforms. This phenomenon has induced blending local and global slang, resulting in a hybrid linguistic form that is more adapted to local communicative

needs. Online platforms have invested in the surge of linguistic innovations and cross-cultural borrowing that contribute to the dynamic nature of slang (Keidar & al., 2022). This dynamic environment enables teenagers to adapt foreign slang, particularly in English, to their local needs and create a special sociolect that reflects global and local influences.

Finally, online platforms play an essential role in lowering the affective filter associated with learning non-standard varieties of English, which encourages informal interactions. The employment of slang now extends to a global network where an increasingly evolving social setting links members (Kulkarni & Wang, 2017). This, particularly, is attractive to young EFL learners eager to align with global youth culture and online trends.

1.5. The Analytical Framework

This section is the most prominent part of the chapter, for the analytical framework is the cornerstone of any research project. Its primary purpose is to collect, structure, and condense the evidence that will support the research results, meaning it helps confirm the findings rather than interpreting the data (Kilroy & Fincham, 2023). These scholars defined the analytical framework as “the model used by a team to synthesize all the key information gathered during the data collection phase. This information may have been acquired via interviews, focus group sessions, validation workshops, surveys, and even desk reviews” (p. 4).

Our investigation adopts **Herring’s (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse** as the main analytical framework to confirm our findings. This framework is specifically chosen to properly analyze how social media shape the use of English slang among Algerian young EFL learners. This model is widely recognized in the field of computer-mediated communication (CMC). It offers a well-structured way to analyze online language by considering technological features (medium factors) and social interactional elements (situational factors) that are believed to influence CMD. Each influence comes with facets describing different aspects of online communication. These categories are explained

further below to understand the frequency and the contexts of the use of slang in informal spaces. We have attempted to select only the relevant facets to our study, since Herring clearly stated that the researcher has to deal only with the categories that support their analysis. She confirmed, “It is also possible to apply the scheme selectively, by assigning values to only those categories or facets that are relevant to the analysis” (2007, p.4).

1.5.1. Medium Factors

According to Herring, medium factors describe the technological features of the social media platform itself. These factors help discover in what ways social platforms affect communication, and under what circumstances. These include:

➤ Synchronicity

Herring (2007) believes that it is an important dimension to compare between CMC systems (social media platforms). Asynchronous platforms like email do not oblige both communicators to log on to exchange messages. Whereas in synchronous systems, both the sender and the receiver are required to be logged on at the same time for the communication to happen. Yet, some mediums like instant messaging applications break these boundaries to have intermediate synchronicity. They allow users to read missed real-time messages later. For instance, users of WhatsApp and Messenger can send and receive messages quickly, though not always instantly, and the receiver can reply whenever they want. The data lead us to the assumption that this facet may influence how slang is used, for example, students may use more playful or fast-language forms in rapid and informal chats than in delayed replies. This point will help us understand whether real-time chatting encourages more slang use than delayed posting.

➤ Persistence of Transcript

It refers to “how long, relatively speaking, messages remain on the system after they are received” (Herring, 2007, p. 6). Emails are believed to be persistent, as they remain stored

in the system until the sender or the receiver deletes them. Chatting is relatively less persistent compared to e-mailing, but both are more persistent than spoken language (ephemeral). Similarly, on platforms like Facebook or Instagram, messages, posts, and comments persist for a long time, which can make users more cautious with the language they use. However, temporary content like Stories or Snapchat messages that are ephemeral (less persistent) might give birth to a more creative, risky language.

1.5.2. Situational Factors

These factors describe the social and contextual aspects of communication. They provide information about the participants, like the relationship between them, the topics discussed, the communication purpose, the language used, and the setting of interaction.

➤ Participation Structure

It refers to the number of active participants in the communication situation, whether the communication is public or private, and the degree of anonymity of users. In this context, Herring concluded that public CMD is believed to be less polite than private CMD. Interactions can be: One-to-one (private messages), One-to-many (semi-private), or Many-to-many (public). According to this, we may assume that slang is more likely to develop in one-to-one or group chats where users feel relaxed and informal. This dimension will lead us to determine where EFL learners freely use slang online, whether in public, semi-private, or in private spaces and what social platforms they prefer.

➤ Participant Characteristics

It describes the general backgrounds of the users, such as age, gender, education, linguistic background, status, beliefs, etc. Herring believes that these characteristics play a role in language choice in online contexts. The multilingual background of Algerian EFL students and their youth identity can somehow affect their use of slang, especially in English, as a means to sound trendy or international.

➤ **Purpose**

It is divided into two types: group purpose and goals of interaction. Group purpose refers to the general purpose of the CMC systems, while the goals of interaction are what individuals intend to achieve through CMC. Social media is often used for entertainment and connection, which encourages slang usage. Informal purposes generally invite a more colloquial language variety, like slang. This dimension can help us identify whether slang appears more in fun, social contexts than in academic or formal ones.

➤ **Tone**

Herring affirmed that it refers to how speech acts are performed; it can be described by “the degree of seriousness, formality, contentiousness, and cooperation” (2007, p.21). Accordingly, slang tends to occur in informal and emotional tones, as in memes, jokes, or expressive posts.

Finally, these selected dimensions offer insight into how slang emerges, functions, and evolves in digital settings, especially within multilingual younger communities.

Conclusion

The current chapter has reviewed the literature related to the subject of our inquiry. It is divided into five important headings. The first one is labelled **Social Media**. In this section, we defined social media according to different scholars and explored its two well-known theories: Media Richness Theory (1986) and Media Presence Theory (1976), which allow users to categorize different social media platforms. We also expounded on the frequently used social media platforms. The second is entitled **Language Evolution**, where we discovered what language evolution is and how it adapts to social, cultural, and communicative needs. The third heading, titled **Language Varieties**, is linked to the previous section, as the evolutionary process of language is what caused linguistic variation. Here, we emphasized non-standard linguistic varieties to introduce slang and its different types. The fourth section, **Social Media’s**

Influence on Slang, explores how digital media contributed to the spread of slang. Finally, the last section presents the analytical framework that our data analysis process will rely on. It starts with defining an analytical framework, then introducing **Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for CMD**. The next chapter will present the methodology used in our inquiry.

Chapter Two:

Research Design and

Methodology

Introduction

The current investigation explores how do social media influence the use of slang among first-year EFL students at the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. To obtain plausible results, we need to follow a certain approach. This chapter outlines the research method followed, data collection instruments, data analysis techniques, the population and sampling, as well as the data analysis procedures and the ethical values taken into consideration.

2.1. Research Method

The present study opts for a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to gather and analyze the necessary data. Creswell, Fetters, and Ivankova affirm,

This form of research is more than simply collecting both quantitative and qualitative data; it indicates that data will be integrated, related, or mixed at some stage of the research process. The underlying logic of mixing is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient in themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. When used in combination, both quantitative and qualitative data yield a more complete analysis, and they complement each other.(2004, p. 1)

This method is particularly appropriate for investigating how and why students employ and extract slang from social media, because it provides both measurable patterns and in-depth interpretations of the data. A case study design is applied to focus on the first-year student community in a real-life context.

2.2. Population and Sampling

The population of this research consists of first-year EFL students enrolled in the Department of English at MMUTO during the academic year 2024/2025. We chose young students who are new entrants to the academic English language and highly exposed to online platforms, where slang is believed to be commonly used. Besides, they represent a multilingual

and internet-dependent generation. This makes them the most suitable participants for studying recent language behaviours in social media spaces.

A sample of 25 students was selected randomly from the population. This sampling method was chosen to ensure fairness and variability (to give all of the students in the population an equal chance of participation). These participants were randomly selected from classroom attendance lists. The small, yet manageable, sample was adequate to collect the data needed while keeping the analysis viable. In addition to that, factors such as time limitations and participant availability were taken into consideration.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

To obtain comprehensive data that would equally allow us to confirm or refute the hypotheses, we employed a questionnaire as the only data collection tool. This instrument was chosen over the other tools to focus more on participants' opinions, views, and experiences. Ranganathan and Caduff define a questionnaire as “a data collection tool consisting of a series of questions or items that are used to collect information from respondents and thus learn about their knowledge, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior” (2023, p. 1). It is a data collection tool that enables a clear and consistent data analysis. It can be used by anyone easily and reaches diverse populations; however, some limitations must be considered, such as low response rates and difficulties in ensuring the sample accurately represents the target population (Kuphanga, 2024).

Our questionnaire includes closed and open-ended questions and is administered via Google Forms in social media groups. It is divided into five sections: demographic information, social media habits, slang use, language use and identity, and opinions. The items are deeply related to the analytical framework and the research questions to obtain clear answers at the final stage. Before sharing the questionnaire, it is utterly crucial to pilot-test it with students selected from the population.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

The piloting procedure of the questionnaire was conducted on May the first, 2025, with a small group of five students from the sample. Its main purpose is to test its relevance, appropriateness, and ensure clarity and practicality by getting feedback before engaging with the larger sample (Wadood, Akbar, & Ullah, 2021). The final version is shared in the selected student's Messenger, Snapchat, and WhatsApp groups on May the fourth, 2025. Seven days were given to complete the survey, with periodic reminders to ensure their participation.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected are analyzed relying on two important data analysis procedures: **The Statistical Method** to examine the quantitative data and **Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)** to interpret qualitative data.

➤ The Statistical Method

As mentioned above, this study has adopted the Statistical Method to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended items of the questionnaire. It is an essential statistical approach used to calculate certain percentages and determine frequencies. This technique is particularly effective for transforming raw numerical data into simple proportions. It basically works by relating three known values to determine an unknown new value. The Oxford English Dictionary simply defines it as “a method of finding a fourth...” (the Rule of Three), that is, calculating three values to determine a fourth one.

In our research, the Statistical Method is applied as follows:

$$X = \frac{Z \times 100}{Y}$$

X is the calculated percentage (the fourth or the unknown value), **Z** is the value of similar answers, **Y** is the total number of participants, and **100** is the percentage (%).

After the calculations concerning these quantitative data, the results will be displayed in the form of diagrams, precisely histograms and pie charts.

This method was selected because we believe it is the simplest, most accurate, and very useful in our research, which prioritizes descriptive insights over complex inferential statistics. Besides, the number of participants is limited to 25, and this makes the Statistical Method perfect for working with them.

➤ **Quantitative Content Analysis**

QCA is a technique used to analyze textual data. “It is a generic form of data analysis in that it is comprised of an atheoretical set of techniques which can be used in any qualitative inquiry in which the informational content of the data is relevant” (Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p. 2). In other words, this method does not rely on a specific theory; it uses simple techniques like coding and categorizing for data analysis, focusing on the content in detail rather than interpreting it through theoretical and numerical lenses. Our analysis follows a thematic coding approach, where student responses from open-ended questions are read carefully and grouped into common categories. Finally, we were able to interpret the answers in the form of clear texts.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

This research strictly followed ethical principles to ensure the respect of the participants involved. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained. Every individual was informed about the nature and purpose of this investigation, their right to refuse or withdraw at any level without any potential consequences, and the confidentiality of their responses. Additionally, we ensured their anonymity and explained to them that the data collected will be used only for academic purposes and stored securely. We also took into consideration cultural sensitivity by making sure no participant felt offended or uncomfortable while responding to the questionnaire. Finally, all participants were treated equally with respect and dignity throughout the study. In short, all the procedures adhered to all the ethical standards.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the methodological design of the study. Using a mixed-methods case study approach supports the Faceted Classification Scheme of Herring (2007). It uses the results obtained from the questionnaire to understand the influence of online communication on the use of English slang among Algerian EFL learners. The next chapter will present the findings in detail.

Chapter Three:

Presentation of the

Findings

Introduction

This chapter is empirical. It attempts to present the results of the current investigation, which aims to analyze how Algerian EFL learners acquire, use, and perceive English slang through their exposure to social media. It presents the findings of the questionnaire distributed to twenty-five participants chosen randomly from the population of first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO.

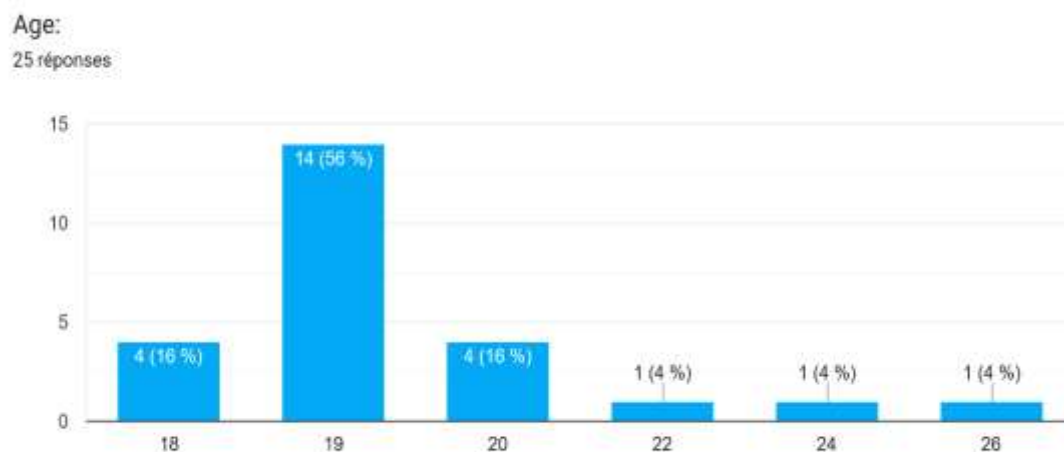
Results of Students' Questionnaire

The following results have been obtained from the questionnaire and presented in histograms, pie charts, and texts for greater clarity.

Section One: Demographic Information

Q1: How old are you?

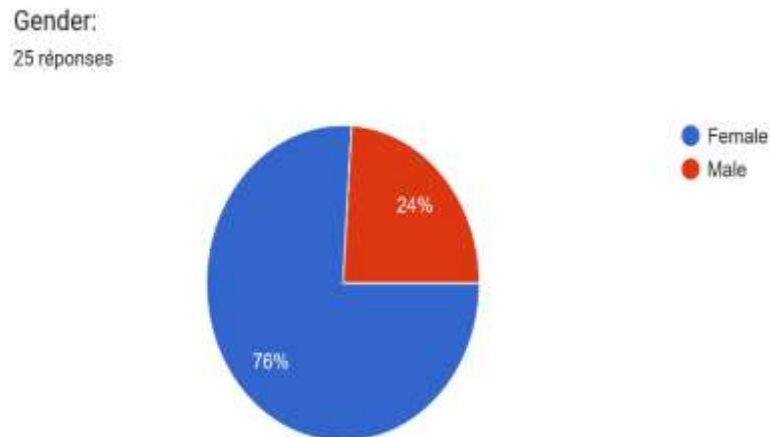
Diagram 1: Participants' Age



This diagram represents the age of the 25 participants. The majority (**56%**) are nineteen years old, **16%** are eighteen, and another **16%** are twenty. The rest (twenty-two, twenty-four, and twenty-six) represent **4%** of the sample each.

Q2: What is your gender?

Diagram 2: Participants' Gender

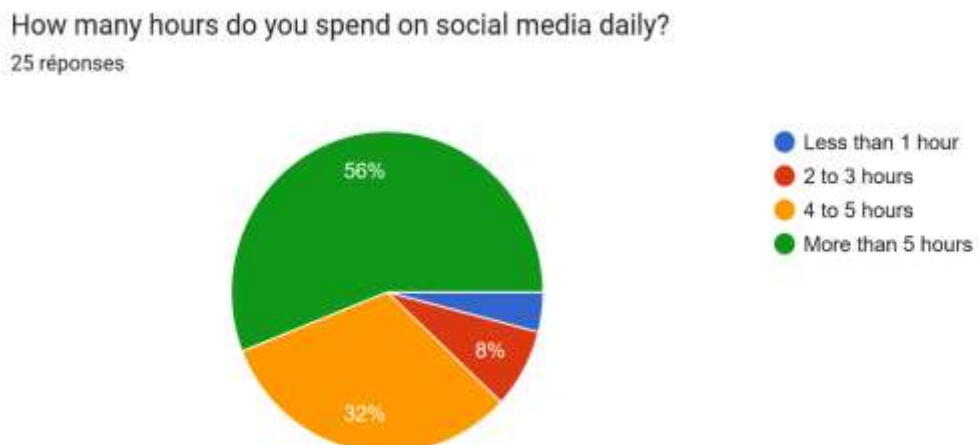


This pie chart shows that most (**76%**) of the participants are females, whereas the rest (**24%**) are males.

Section Two: Social Media Habits

Q3: How many hours do you spend on social media daily?

Diagram 3: Hours Spent on Social Media Daily



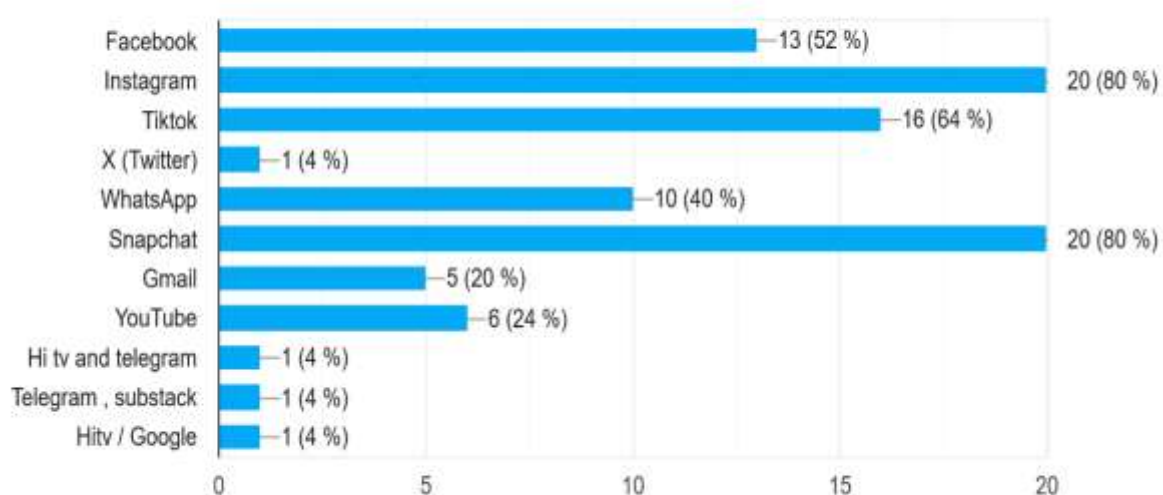
The pie chart in the previous page displays how much time the participants spend on social media on a daily basis. It shows that the greater part of them (**56%**) uses social media more than five hours a day. **32%** use it for four to five hours, **8%** use it for two to three hours, and the last **4%** use it for less than an hour.

Q4: Which platforms do you use?

Diagram 3: Hours Spent on Social Media Daily

Which platforms do you use? (you may select more than one)

25 réponses



The histogram demonstrates the most used platforms among the participants. Both Instagram and Snapchat are the most used platforms, they are used by **80%** of the participants each, then comes TikTok with **64%**, Facebook with **52%**, WhatsApp with **40%**, YouTube with **24%**, and Gmail with **20%**. Lastly, X(Twitter) comes with the smallest portion of **4%**. Others suggested platforms like Hitv (a streaming platform that offers a variety of TV shows and movies, with a main focus on Asian dramas), Telegram (a social media platform launched in 2013), Substack (an online platform that enables content creators to share their work with the audience), and Google.

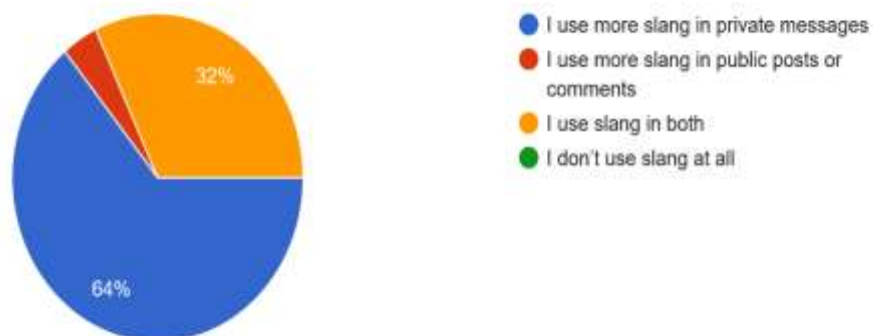
Section Three: Slang Use

Q5: Which of the following describes how you use slang online?

Diagram 5: Where do EFL Learners Make Use of Slang

Which of the following best describes how you use slang online?

25 réponses



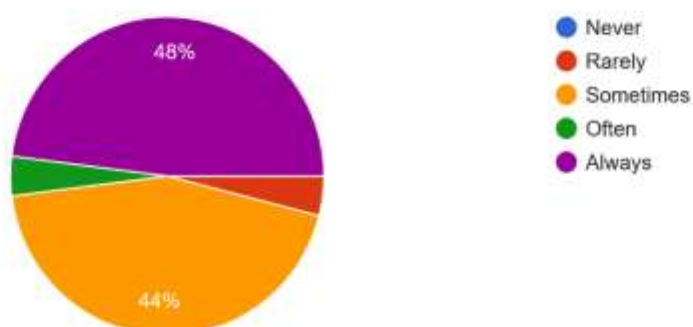
The pie chart above portrays how EFL learners tend to make use of slang online. The vast majority of the participants (**64%**) prefer to use slang in private messages, **32%** use it in both private messages and public posts and comments. However, only **4%** tend to use it in public posts and comments, and none of them stated that they do not use slang online.

Q6: How often do you use English slang in your social media messages?

Diagram 6: The Frequency of Slang Use

How often do you use English slang in your social media messages?

25 réponses



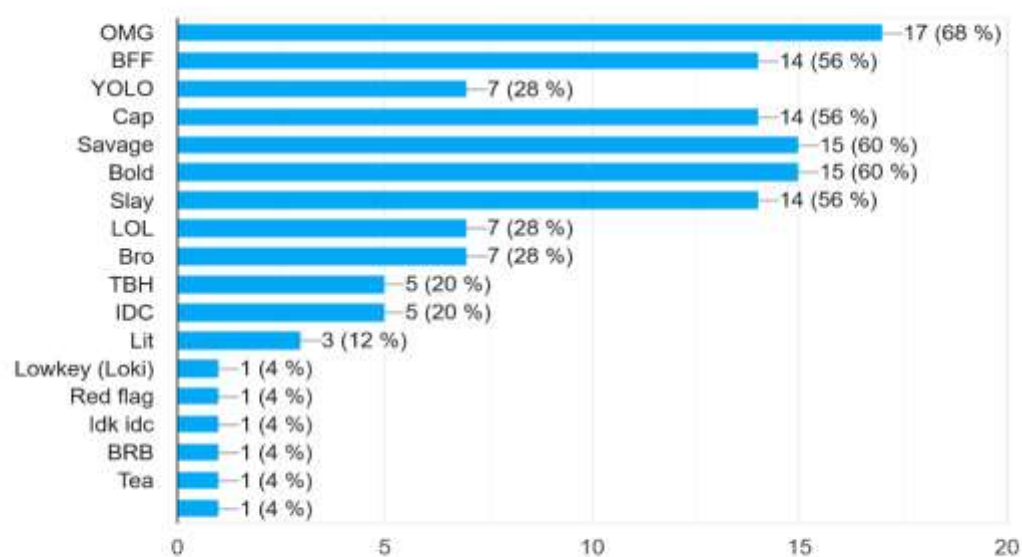
The pie chart in the previous page (Diagram 6) represents the frequency of slang use online. **48%** of the participants said that they always use slang, **44%** use it sometimes, **4%** use it often, and another **4%** rarely use it. However, none of them claimed that they never use slang.

Q7: Which of the following slang terms do you recognize or use?

Diagram 7: Popular Slang Terms among EFL Learners

Which of the following slang do you recognize or use?

25 réponses

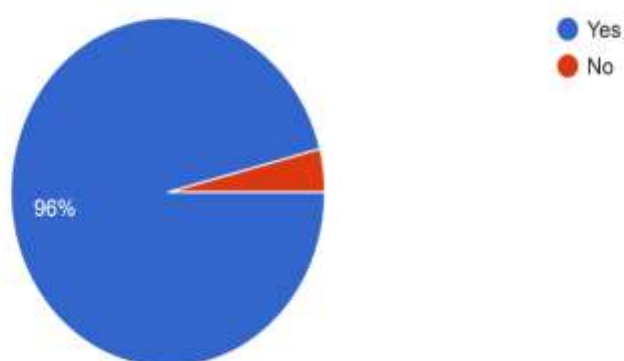


The histogram above represents the well-known slang terms among teenage EFL learners. It shows that among 25 participants, the most recognized slang term is **OMG** (oh my God) by **68%** of the participants, then comes **Savage** (brutally honest) and **Bold** (daring) with **60% each**. **BFF** (best friend forever), **Cap** (lie), and **Slay** (look amazing) with **56% each**. **YOLO** (you only live once), **LOL** (laughing out loud), and **Bro** (brother) were moderately recognized (**28% each**). While terms like **TBH** (to be honest) and **IDC** (I don't care) were recognized by **20%** of the participants, then comes **Lit** (amazing) with **12%** users. Other common terms, such as **Loki/Low-key** (secretly), **Red flag** (a warning sign, often used in relationships), and **Tea** (a gossip), were suggested by **4% (each)** of the participants.

Q8: Do you mix English slang with your native language in real-life conversations?

Diagram 8: The Use of English Slang in Real-life Conversations

Do you mix English slang with your native language in real life conversations?
25 réponses



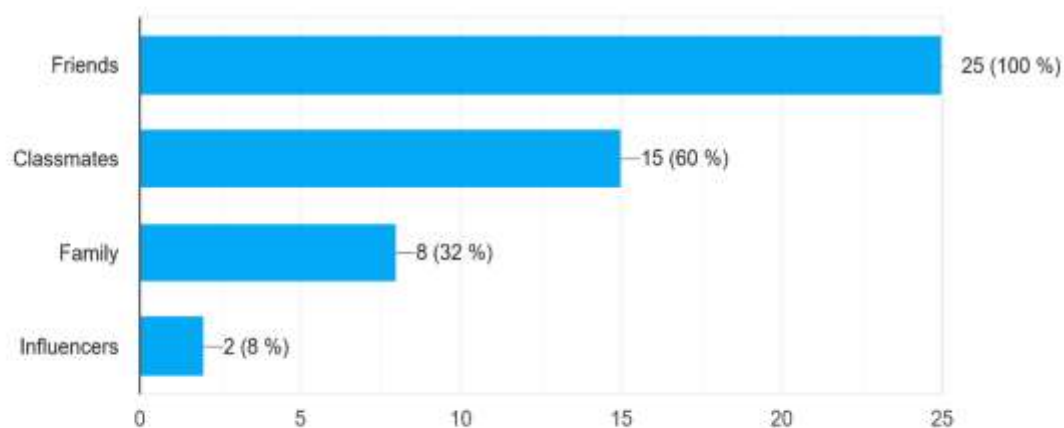
The pie chart above reveals that **96%** of the participants use English slang in real-life conversations, while only **4%** do not.

Section Four: Language Use and Identity

Q9: Who do you usually interact with on social media?

Diagram 9: Distribution of Social Media Interactions Among EFL Learners

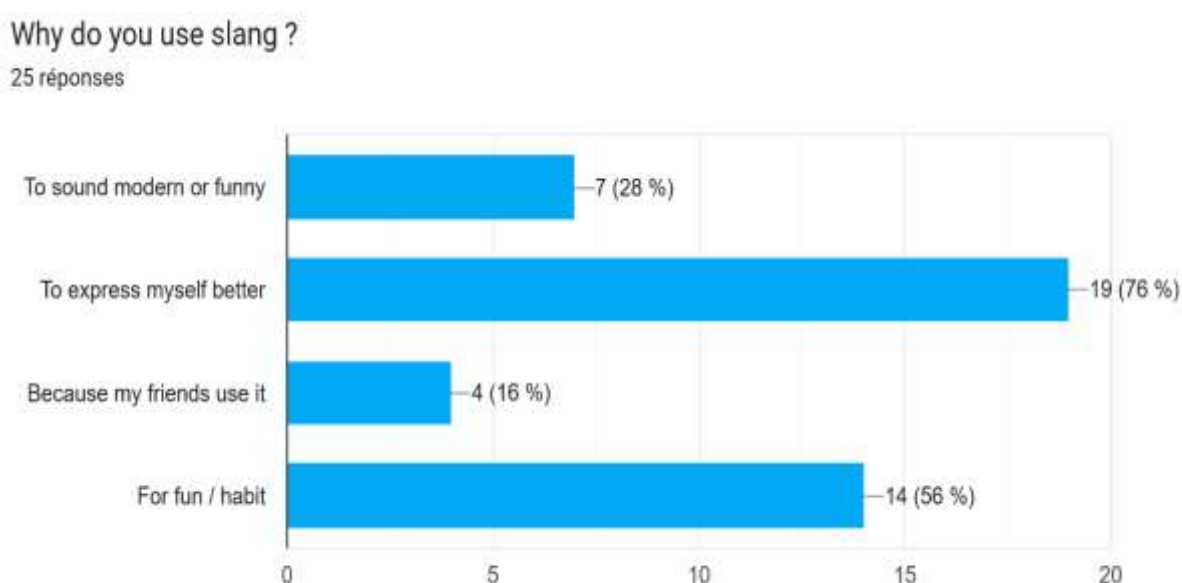
Who do you usually interact with on social media?
25 réponses



The histogram presented in the previous page (Diagram 9) shows that all the participants (**100%**) interact with friends on social media, **60%** interact with classmates, **32%** interact with family, and only **8%** interact with influencers.

Q10: Why do you use slang?

Diagram 10: The Reasons behind Social Media Use among EFL Learners



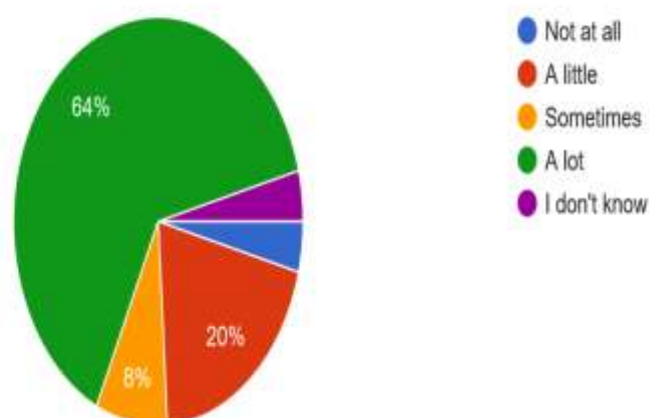
The histogram above shows that the majority of participants (**76%**) use slang to express themselves better, **56%** use it for fun or as a habit, **28%** use it to sound modern or funny, and **16%** use it because their friends use it.

Q11: Do you think using English slang online influences the way you speak in real life (your linguistic identity)?

Diagram 11: The Impact of Online English Slang on Real-Life Speech

Do you think using English slang online influences the way you speak in real life (your linguistic identity)?

25 réponses



The pie chart presented above shows that the greatest proportion (**64%**) believe that using English slang influences the way they speak in real life a lot. **20%** of them think that it does a little, **8%** think that it does influence their speech sometimes; however, half of the last **8%** think that it doesn't affect the way they speak in real life, and the other half don't know.

Section Five: Opinions

Q 12: In your opinion, how do social media influence (change) the way you speak in real life?

Most participants viewed social media as a beneficial tool to enhance their speaking abilities in English. They claimed that social media has changed their ways of speaking **“In a good way.”**, and helped them **“... get a good vocabulary.”**, and **“... be more open and confident.”** These respondents believe that social media has succeeded in ameliorating teenagers' abilities to use language. Regardless of that, many others have noticed that their speech has become more informal and abbreviated. They stated: **“It made my language more**

casual and informal”, **“I use shorter words and internet slang in real life now”**, **“I became more into shortening my sentences...”**. This suggests that most teenagers who use social media are aware of these language shifts. Another portion saw slang as a form of expressing identity or connection with others. According to them, slang **“... adds personality to what we say.”**, **“... gives some kind of confidence.”** These participants view slang as a social tool to freely express themselves and blend in with teenage peers both online and in real life.

While slang brings confidence to some, others, however, believe that it might provoke confusion and shallow interactions. A few responses have expressed concern: **“Sometimes I struggle to differentiate between formal and informal.”**, **“...we will even forget how to have grounded deep meaningful conversations.”**

Finally, some noted that slang is becoming automatic nowadays due to repeated internet exposure. A participant asserted that **“it totally changes the way I talk... it became a habit”**, and another assumed that the **“unconscious mind...”** uses slang without deliberate effort.

Q13: Any additional comments about slang use and social media?

In the participants' additional comments, most of them held positive views of social media and slang, whereas others raised concerns about it. Those who have positive views of social media stated that they feel **“comfy using it”**. Another participant believed that slang is overrated, and we do not have to be careful using it since it does not cause harm.

On the other hand, some participants have pointed out some negative aspects of slang. They advised caution when using slang **“...especially when we don’t fully understand its meaning or origin”** as it may be offensive. They stated that even though using slang is a **“fun and simple way to express yourself”**, and that it helps increase presence in society, we, as human beings, need a more grounded, deeper way of expressing ourselves. Others added that slang on social media is **“...like a whole new language”** that is not understood by everyone.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the students' questionnaire. The findings are in the form of pie charts and histograms showing and describing the percentage differences that each answer delivered. Results from closed-ended questions were sorted out in the form of diagrams using the Statistical Method. While those of open-ended questions were organized in textual forms by employing the QCA. The upcoming chapter will discuss these findings.

Chapter Four:

Discussion of the

Findings

Introduction

The present chapter discusses the results obtained from the questionnaire that was administered to first-year EFL students at MMUTO. The analysis was conducted through the lens of **Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for CMD**, which is relevant for interpreting informal online language practices. The findings are discussed, aiming to answer the research questions and assess the validity of the hypotheses presented in the general introduction.

This chapter is categorized into three primary sections; each one seeks to address one of the research questions. The first section of this chapter concerns the frequency of the use of slang among EFL learners. The second section is about the extent to which social media promotes English slang in online and face-to-face interactions. Finally, the last section discusses the attitudes of EFL learners towards the effect of English slang on their linguistic identities.

4.1. The Frequency of Slang Use Among EFL Learners

The results from the previous chapter showed that most of the participants in this study are 19 years old, and a smaller number of them are between 20 and 26 years old. The findings also showed that the female participants dominated the responses. These two demographic features are very important when we look at how people use language on social media. In her **Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse (2007)**, **Herring** includes a category called **Participant Characteristics** within the situational factors. This includes details like age, gender, education, and cultural background. She explains that the way people use language in online spaces is strongly influenced by these characteristics.

In this study, we deduced that **youth** plays an important role in the use of slang. Young people often like to sound modern, expressive, and connected to current international online trends. Since all of our participants are teenagers or young adults, it is evident that they employ

English slang extensively on social media and even in their real-life conversations. This finding is supported by a study by Hamvik and Mariane (2000), who found that younger people tend to use more slang than older people. This is because slang is often used to express group identity, modernity, and closeness with peers, which are all important characteristics among teenagers nowadays.

To reinforce the above-mentioned perception, we analyzed the results obtained from **Item 8** of the questionnaire, which is about whether the participants mix English slang with their mother tongue in everyday conversations. **Diagram 8** shows that 24 out of 25 students reported mixing English slang with their native everyday speech. This shows that their use of the slang acquired online is not just limited to online communication. Rather, slang now becomes part of their natural, spoken language in real life. The fact that so many students admitted their use of slang in real-life contexts supports the idea that being young and connected to the internet has a strong effect on the way users (EFL learners) speak.

Further evidence of the relationship between social identity and language use can be drawn from **Item 9** in the questionnaire, which focused on participants' regular interlocutors on social media. The results showed that all of the participants interact with friends, a great number also talk to their classmates, while far fewer mentioned communicating with family members or influencers. Notably, no one has ever mentioned that they interact with teachers, university staff, or professionals online. This suggests that the addresser (young EFL learner) prefers to interact with a socially symmetrical addressee. This finding corresponds to three critical **situational factors** in Herring's framework:

- **Participant Characteristics:** The participants share nearly the same age, the same educational background, and status as they are all young first-year EFL learners at the Department of English MMUTO. Their shared multilingual

background also contributes to their use of English slang as a means to sound trendy and international.

- **Purpose of Communication:** The purpose of communication plays a key role in the use of slang. The participants here share the goal of interaction since all of them prioritize informal socializing rather than formal and academic forms of interaction. They all prefer to interact with friends and classmates, with whom they share the same participant characteristics. And avoid any kind of online interaction with formal figures.
- **Tone:** The tone to be used with friends and classmates is certainly not the same as the one used with family and influencers, and not even close to the one that will be used with formal figures like teachers. Our participants prefer to employ a more casual, expressive, and peer-oriented tone with their mates.

We assume that young EFL learners' shared background results in reducing their need to use the standard variety of English. Instead, they feel comfortable using slang because the tone is friendly, simple, and relaxed. This variety is different from the one they use when interacting with teachers and in formal settings in general. Slang, in this case, is used to create closeness, share thoughts, and express feelings easily in more fun, emotional, and unserious contexts. From analyzing this through the lens of Herring's framework, we can say that slang is more likely to appear when students are speaking with people who share their social and educational characteristics.

Concerning the frequency of slang use, **Item 6** of the questionnaire provides direct answers. None of the participants selected the "Never" option, indicating that all respondents admit their engagement with English slang at some point. The majority of the participants reported that they always use slang, others selected "Sometimes", and a smaller portion of them

claimed that they use it often or rarely. These results show that slang is used by almost everyone, as many of them regard it as a regular part of their communication. Most students use slang either always or sometimes, but no one mentioned that they never use it. This proves that English slang is now part of the students' daily language use, especially in informal settings. This data demonstrates that the majority of EFL learners at MMUTO incorporate slang frequently, both in their virtual and real-life interactions. If we attempted to analyze this finding in terms of the **synchronicity facet**, we would find that almost all the social media used today have **intermediate synchronicity**, as interaction can happen quickly or be delayed depending on the users' availability. In other words, users on these platforms have the right to take their time thinking before they type the actual message, but they are also prompted to provide brief replies at the same time. From that, we believe that these media promote the use of short and abbreviated forms of language, like slang. People utilize abbreviated and highly expressive forms of communication on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. This happens thanks to the level of synchronicity possessed by these media; the sender feels the freedom to interact whenever they want, rather than sticking to barriers like the obligation to be logged in on social media at the same time as the receiver. EFL learners use slang in delayed and rapid chats at the same time; for them, this fast and informal language variety perfectly fits in such settings.

To conclude, the data from the questionnaire shows that EFL students at MMUTO use slang frequently. The frequent and consistent use of slang is primarily shaped by factors like age, gender, social context, the communicative tone, and the purpose of interaction. The CMD model proposed by Herring (2007) helps us understand that the participants' youthful identity, their multilingual background, the nature of their online relationships, and the tools they use (social media) all contribute to the high frequency of English slang usage.

These findings provide a clear and evidence-based answer to the **first research question**: “How often do EFL learners at the Department of English at MMUTO use English slang terms in their daily lives?”. The answer is: Slang is very frequently used among EFL learners in both online and real-life spaces. Its frequency is often shaped by age, linguistic backgrounds, peer dynamics, and the informal nature of digital communication.

4.2. The Extent to which Social Media Promote English Slang in Online and Face-to-face Interactions

To determine the extent to which social media promote English slang use in online and real-life interactions for EFL learners, we examined their social media usage, the platforms they tend to use, the slang terms they encounter, and the frequency and reasons behind their use of slang.

4.2.1. Social Media’s Influence

Through the analyzed data, we discovered that most teenage EFL learners spend more than 5 hours a day on social media, which shows that they are very active on social media. The most used platforms include Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and TikTok. Using **Herring’s (2007) Faceted classification scheme**, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook can be grouped under the same category, as they provide the same level of **synchronicity**: they all provide both synchronous (video calls, live streams, ...) and asynchronous (text messages, posts, comments, ...) communication. They are also equal in terms of **persistence of transcript**: all text messages, posts, and comments are permanent, unless deleted by the sender or publisher. Snapchat, on the other hand, doesn’t belong to this category, even though it offers the same level of **synchronicity**, it provides a different level of **persistence of transcript**: texts get deleted after a while from being seen. Messages on such platforms are less persistent,

encouraging a creative, risky, and informal language like slang. This supports the results regarding participants preferences of using slang in more private spaces where they feel relaxed.

Research conducted by Xursanovna concluded that abbreviations, short forms of words and utterances, and slang terms were regularly used by approximately 87% of participants throughout their social media communication every day (2025). Combined with our results on how often our participants use social media online (more than 5hours a day), we deduce that the amount of slang content on social media platforms increases daily, which in turn increases the probability of social media users coming across slang and using it. This shows that social media has increasingly affected EFL learners' language choice, especially among teenagers.

4.2.2. The Extent of Slang Use

The data we obtained shows that the participants do mix English slang, and they are familiar with the majority of the popular slang terms in social media. The majority of them were able to recognize the slang terms and expressions mentioned in the questionnaire, and even suggested some that were not among the options. Using Allan Burridge's (2006) framework, we can divide the slang terms recognized by our participants into multiple types. The first term which is popular among them is **OMG** (oh my god), other terms like **YOLO** (you only live once), **LOL** (laughing out loud), **TBH** (to be honest), **BRB** (be right back), **IDC** (I don't care), and **IDK** (I don't know), can be categorized under the same type of slang "**acronyms**", which are according to those authors "a phrase that is created through the combination of the first letters of each word in a sentence and pronouncing it as one word" (p.7). As for **Savage**, **Low Key**, **Bold**, **Lit**, and **Slay**, these terms fall under the category of "**creative and fresh**" slang, which is defined as words invented to convey humour or to emphasize something. **Cap** and **Red Flag** are "**flippant**" slang terms, which are reiterations of words or phrases in a playful or demeaning way to convey a new meaning. The last term that our participants managed to recognize is **Bro** (brother), this term is considered among the "**clipping**" slang terms, which are

short forms of already existing words. This suggests that slang is used and recognized by the participants to a great extent.

The findings and the stated arguments show that social media usage contributes significantly to the spread of slang, especially among teenage EFL learners. The daily high usage of social media platforms is directly linked to the exposure and use of slang in both online and real-life interactions. Teenagers, nowadays, not only recognize a wide variety of slang terms, but they also incorporate them in their daily conversations, either to better express themselves, sound modern, just for fun, or as a habit.

By using multiple frameworks and studies, we have realized that multiple slang types are popular and socially reinforced by social media. This leads us to the direct and clear answer of **the second research question**, “To what extent does social media promote English slang use in Algerian EFL learners' online and face-to-face informal conversations?”. The answer is: social media greatly contributes to the spread and use of English slang in EFL learners' online and face-to-face informal interactions at MMUTO.

4.3 Learners' Attitudes Toward the Effect of Slang on Their Linguistic Behaviors

This section discusses the students' personal opinions about how using English slang, especially the one acquired through social media, has affected their speech habits. This discussion will directly answer the third research question.

The students gave various answers in **Items 12 and 13** of the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents believe that slang ameliorates their speech, while some others are concerned that slang might make their speech too casual or even harm their language skills. To understand these versions, we used **Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme for CMD**. This framework that will help us explain how different aspects of communication, such

as who is speaking, the purpose of the message, and the tone used, affect language use. EFL learners' attitudes can be divided into three main categories:

4.3.1. Slang as a Tool for Confidence and Communication

The majority of the research participants believe that adopting slang has contributed to enhancing their speaking skills in the English language. They are convinced the slang terms they acquired on social media helped them gain confidence and feel more comfortable when speaking English in different circumstances. Some said it helped them get good vocabulary, or become “**more open and confident**”. Others described slang as something that adds personality to what they say or helps them express themselves more freely.

These students see slang as more than just funny or trendy words. For them, slang is a part of their natural communication and their identity. This matches what Herring calls the **Participant facet**, which refers to the identity, age, and background of the person communicating. In this case, the students are young EFL learners who are very active on social media. Their youth, multilingual background, student status, and digital lifestyle all influence how they use language. They use slang to sound modern, confident, and relatable.

This also relates to the **Purpose facet**, which includes the goal of the communication. The students use slang to sound casual, friendly, and funny. They are not trying to sound formal or academic, they want to connect with others their age. So, their use of slang supports their linguistic identity as young, digital, multilingual speakers.

4.3.2. Awareness of Language Behaviours

Our findings demonstrate that all of the participants acknowledged that they use English slang in real life. This suggests that their linguistic identity has certainly been affected by English slang. However, they proved to be mindful of the influence that English slang has on them.

While many students had positive views, some of them showed awareness of how slang changed their style of speaking. They said that their speech has become more informal, shorter, or too casual because of social media. For example, one participant said, **“I became more into shortening my sentences,”** and another said, **“I use internet slang in real life now.”** Some even reported that slang use became automatic: **“It totally changes the way I talk... it became a habit.”** Another added that slang use is unconscious, without making the slightest effort.

These answers show that students know that slang influences their language practices. In Herring’s framework, this connects again to the **Participant characteristics** facet because of who these students are and how they communicate with each other.

Other research, such as Meryem Belkhir’s (2018) at Khemis Miliana University, regarding English learners’ awareness of their use of English slang in their speech, concluded that EFL students are not aware of their use of English slang. Controversially, another research carried out by Kurniati and Rusfandi (2020) indicated that their participants, who were EFL learners, were indeed aware of their English slang use: the participants stated that they gained advantages by using English slang, such as improving vocabulary. This research partially aligns with our findings.

4.3.3. Concerns About Language Use

A smaller number of students expressed concern about the effects of slang. Some said they now struggle to separate formal from informal English, or worry that slang will stop them from having deep, clear conversations.

Others warned that slang can be misused when people do not fully understand the meaning or context. Some students advised that teenagers must be cautious with the use of slang, as it can sometimes be misunderstood. Another student said that slang is **“like a whole new language”**, which cannot be understood by people who are not familiar with social media trends.

These results show that some learners are worried about their linguistic identity changing in a negative way. They believe that the overuse of slang might make them lose their ability to communicate clearly, respectfully, and formally when needed.

The analysis of students' responses shows that slang plays a major role in shaping their linguistic behaviours, especially when acquired through social media. Many students feel that slang helps them speak fluently and be more confident. In other words, they believe that slang enables them to take part in this modern, online generation. At the same time, they proved that they are aware that slang can make their language too casual. Some of them are worried that it may affect their ability to use language properly in different settings, since it has become automatic and they cannot control their language practices. A few even fear that slang may weaken their language skills if used too much.

This evidence guides us to respond to **the third research question**, “What are the attitudes of EFL learners towards the effect of English slang on their linguistic behaviours?”. The answer is: EFL learners have positive attitudes towards the effect of slang on their linguistic behaviours. Most see slang as a useful part of their English learning, helping them sound modern and confident. However, few are concerned that slang may limit their language abilities or make it hard to exchange serious and formal ideas. Their linguistic behaviors are influenced by digital habits, social environment, and their awareness of how a certain language affects their speech.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and interpreted the findings of the empirical study displayed in the previous section. It is divided into three parts, aligning with the three research questions. The first part analyzed some of the relevant findings in order to answer the first research question and **confirm the first hypothesis** suggested in the general introduction “EFL learners frequently encounter and use English slang both in social media and their daily interactions”.

The second part examined the results to find an answer to the second research question and **refute the second hypothesis**, which suggests that “social media promotes English slang only in EFL learners’ online settings”. We proved that social media greatly promotes slang in both online and face-to-face communication. Finally, the third part is concerned with the third research question, and **confirmed the third hypothesis** that states “EFL learners have positive attitudes towards the effect of social media on their linguistic behaviours”. It provided an evidence-based answer that EFL learners are aware of the effect of slang has on their linguistic behaviours, presenting both positive and negative views.

General Conclusion

This case study was conducted with first-year students at the Department of English at MMUTO in order to investigate how much social media affects the common language of EFL learners, specifically those with a new English academic background.

To achieve the aim of the study, we attempted to analyze how Algerian EFL learners acquire, use, and perceive English slang through social media exposure. The research is expected to provide information concerning how commonly students encounter and use English slang in online and real-context communication; how much social media influences their language choices; and their perceptions on the influence of slang use on their linguistic identities.

To attain the objectives mentioned earlier, we asked three main research questions that were meant to be answered by following a given methodology. The research questions are:

- How often do EFL learners at the Department of English at MMUTO use English slang words in their online and face-to-face interactions?
- To what extent does social media promote the use of English slang in Algerian EFL learners' online and face-to-face informal conversations?
- What are the attitudes of EFL learners towards the effect of English slang on their linguistic behaviors?

In order to answer these questions, we used a questionnaire following the mixed methods approach and containing open closed-ended questions. The surveys were distributed to randomly selected twenty-five (25) first-year EFL students. The quantitative data obtained from the closed-ended items were analyzed following **the Statistical Method**, whereas the qualitative data were analyzed according to the **Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)**. The results are presented in the form of pie charts, histograms, and texts. Then interpreted following some principles of **Herring's (2007) Faceted Classification Scheme**.

Through the findings and interpretations, the research questions were answered as follows:

- Slang is very frequently used among EFL learners. Its frequency is primarily shaped by age, linguistics background, peer dynamics, and the informal nature of digital communication.
- Social media contributes to the spread and use of English slang in EFL learners' online and face-to-face informal interactions at MMUTO to a great extent.
- Students have both positive and critical attitudes towards the influence of slang on their linguistic behaviors. They are completely aware that their language choices might affect their linguistic identities.

To summarize, the first hypothesis was confirmed, the second was refuted, and the third was confirmed.

This research is highly beneficial for EFL teachers as it contains necessary knowledge regarding new language trends among their students, and for the learners themselves, as it shows how their language acquisition is affected by social media. Moreover, it expands on the field of Computer-Mediated Discourse, since it is a relatively new domain of study that requires equivalent expansion to technological advances, precisely with the emergence of social media platforms. For scholars aiming to engage in research concerning slang, language evolution, language acquisition, and social networking sites, it offers a valid and reliable source of information.

While this study provides valuable contributions to the area of study, several limitations must be acknowledged, as in every research that has already conducted. To begin with, the sample was limited to only 25 first-year EFL students from a single setting (Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou). This small and localized sample limits the generalization of the conclusions we drew to broader populations of EFL learners in the Algerian region. The second

limitation regards social media platforms, as we have only investigated popular platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc. However, the study did not account for emerging platforms that may also contribute to slang dissemination among teenage EFL learners. Additionally, the research did not deal with actual conversations, messages, or posts made by participants. This might not fully represent the extent and frequency of slang use. Finally, the multilingual nature of Algerian societies, where Arabic, French, Tamazight, and English coexist, created some difficulties in dealing only with the influence of English slang without considering the interference of other languages.

To conclude, if this research reaches a large number of readers and inspires them to conduct their investigation in the same field, we have attempted to suggest two interesting topics that have not been investigated before for further studies. The first one is about gender-based differences in the influence of social media on English slang usage among Algerian students. The other one concerns the impact of social media on the use of formal English among EFL learners in Algeria. These topics, if investigated in the future, will further contribute to our research and every other study concerning social media and language choice.

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Appendix

The Effect of Social Media on the Use of Slang among EFL Learners: Students' Questionnaire

Dear First-year students,

This questionnaire is part of a Master's project at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. Its aim is purely academic. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and the data will be securely stored. Please answer honestly.

Note:

Slang is a very informal language, usually spoken rather than written, used especially by particular groups of people. E.g., Chicken is slang for someone who is not very brave (the Cambridge Dictionary)

Section One: Demographic Information

1-How old are you?

.....

2- What is your gender?

- a- Female
- b- Male

Section Two: Social Media Habits

3- How many hours do you spend on social media daily?

- a- Less than an hour
- b- 2 to 3 hours
- c- 4 to 5 hours
- d- More than 5 hours

4- Which platforms do you use? (You may select more than one)

- a- Facebook
- b- Instagram
- c- TikTok
- d- WhatsApp
- e- X (Twitter)
- f- Snapchat

- g- Gmail
- h- Other:

Section Three: Slang Use

- 5- Which of the following best describes how you use slang online?
- a- I use more slang in private messages
 - b- I use more slang in public posts or comments
 - c- I use slang in both
 - d- I do not use slang at all
- 6- How often do you use English slang in your social media messages?
- a- Never
 - b- Rarely
 - c- Sometimes
 - d- Often
 - e- Always
- 7- Which of the following slang do you recognize or use? (You may choose more than one)
- a- Lol
 - b- Brb
 - c- Omg
 - d- Bff
 - e- Idc
 - f- Yolo
 - g- Tbh
 - h- Cap
 - i- Lit
 - j- Bro
 - k- Other:
- 8- Do you mix English slang with your native language in real-life conversations?
- a- Yes
 - b- No

Section Four: Language Use and Identity

- 9- Who do you usually interact with on social media? (You may choose more than one)
- a- Friends

- b- Classmates
- c- Family
- d- Influencers
- e- Other:

10- Why do you use slang? (You may choose more than one)

- a- To sound modern/ funny
- b- Because my friends use it
- c- To express myself better
- d- For fun/ habit
- e- Other:

11- Do you think using English slang online influences the way you speak in real life (your linguistic identity)?

- a- Not at all
- b- A little
- c- Sometimes
- d- A lot
- e- I don't know

Section Five: Opinions

12- In your opinion, how does social media influence (change) the way you speak in real life?

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13- Any additional comments about slang use and social media?

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