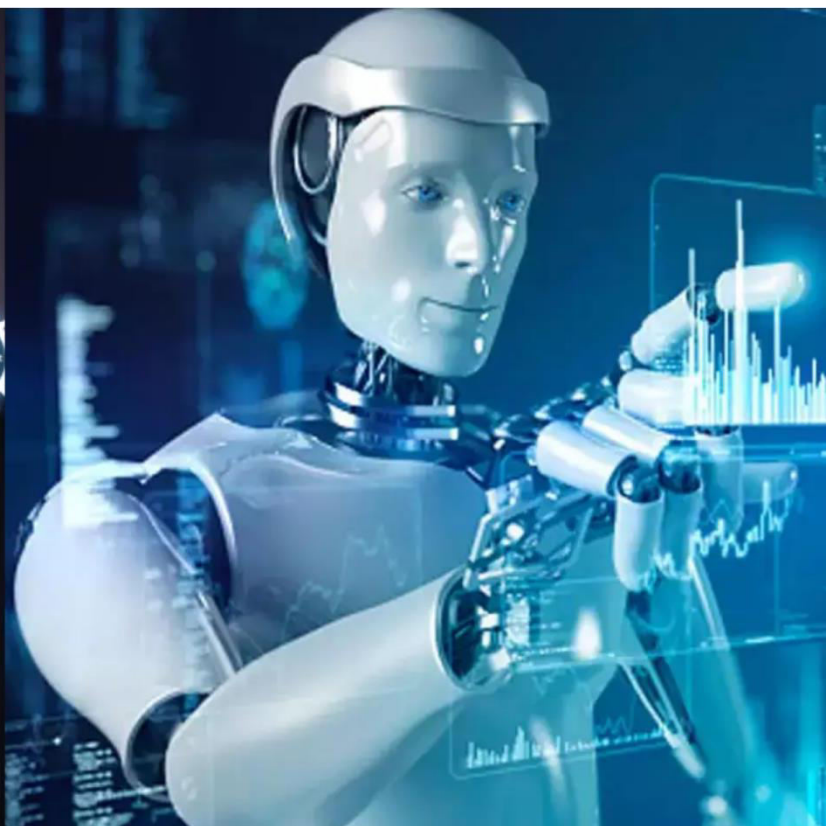




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The Influence of Social Media Literacy and Language Acquisition Skills on Students' Language Proficiency

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ABSTRACT: This study was conducted to determine the influence of social media literacy and language acquisition skills on the language proficiency of Grade 12 Senior High School students under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strands during the Academic Year 2025–2026. The participants were 132 students selected through stratified random sampling from a population of 199 Grade 12 learners. Data were collected using researcher-made questionnaires on social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and language proficiency. The independent variables were social media literacy and language acquisition skills, while language proficiency served as the dependent variable. The statistical tools were mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Multiple Regression Analysis, with all inferential tests set at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the students had a high level of social media literacy. The students demonstrated a high level of language acquisition skills. The students displayed a high level of language proficiency. There were significant positive relationships among social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and language proficiency. Social media literacy and language acquisition skills both significantly and positively predicted language proficiency.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Literacy, Language Acquisition Skills, Language Proficiency, Senior High School Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a central platform for communication, learning, and information exchange, making social media literacy an essential skill for students in the digital age. Social media literacy refers to the ability to critically evaluate, engage with, and effectively use digital platforms, enabling students to identify credible information and communicate effectively online. At the same time, language acquisition skills remain fundamental for academic success and social development, particularly as global communication increasingly depends on multilingual competence. Studies such as Cabillon (2023) suggest that regular engagement with English content on social media improves learners' confidence and perceived language ability, highlighting social media's role as an informal environment that can support language development. However, questions remain regarding how social media literacy and language acquisition skills jointly influence students' overall language proficiency.

Language proficiency, defined as the ability to effectively read, write, speak, and understand a language, plays a crucial role in educational achievement and future career opportunities. Previous studies indicate that social media provides authentic language exposure, interaction opportunities, and multimedia content that can support language learning, yet research has often examined social media literacy and language acquisition separately. In the Philippine Senior High School context, particularly among HUMSS and TVL students, there is limited empirical evidence explaining how social media literacy may strengthen or limit the impact of language acquisition skills on overall language proficiency. This study addresses that gap by examining how these two competencies interact and contribute to students' communication abilities in academic and social settings, providing insights for educators and curriculum developers seeking to integrate digital literacy with language education.

The study is grounded in several theories explaining the relationship among these variables. Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes that language learning develops through interaction and communication, which social media platforms facilitate through authentic engagement. Multiliteracies Theory, introduced by the New London Group, expands literacy beyond traditional reading and writing to include digital and media literacy, highlighting the importance of critical engagement with digital content. Second Language Acquisition Theory, particularly Krashen's

Input Hypothesis, explains that language develops through meaningful exposure and interaction, while Cognitive Load Theory suggests that learners with stronger social media literacy can better process digital information and focus on meaningful language learning. Together, these theories explain how social media literacy and language acquisition skills may collectively shape students' overall language proficiency.

The main aim of this study was to investigate how social media literacy and language acquisition skills influence students' language proficiency. Specifically, the study sought to examine the following questions:

1. What is the level of social media literacy among students?
2. What is the level of language acquisition skills among students?
3. What is the level of language proficiency among students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and students' language proficiency?
5. Do social media literacy and language acquisition skills significantly predict students' language proficiency?

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Social Media Literacy

Social media literacy is a multidimensional skill that involves critically evaluating information, responsibly creating and sharing digital content, and engaging ethically in online communication, extending beyond traditional media and digital literacy. According to Livingstone et al. (2021), it encompasses critical, creative, and ethical abilities needed for safe participation in digital spaces, while Polanco-Levicán and Salvo-Garrido (2022) describe it as a combination of cognitive, socio-emotional, and technical competencies that allow learners to critically evaluate and responsibly create content. Similarly, UNESCO (2018) highlights media and information literacy as essential for accessing, evaluating, creating, and sharing information ethically. In language learning, platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook provide authentic communication opportunities that improve vocabulary, listening, and communicative competence, as emphasized by Fitriah and Saukah (2022), as well as Aslan et al. (2025). Grounded in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and Connectivism, studies by Gao and Zhang (2022) show that critical engagement with social media enhances language proficiency; however, challenges such as distraction, misinformation, unequal digital access, and excessive code-switching, discussed by Junco (2015), Van Dijk (2020), and Tandoc et al. (2018), highlight the need for balanced digital literacy instruction and responsible online engagement.

Language Acquisition Skills

Language acquisition skills refer to the natural and often subconscious process through which learners develop the ability to understand and produce language through meaningful exposure, interaction, and communication rather than through formal memorization of rules. According to Gass and Selinker (2020), language acquisition occurs through meaningful interaction that allows learners to internalize linguistic patterns naturally, while Nation (2019) explains that it involves the development of receptive and productive skills such as listening, reading, vocabulary development, grammar internalization, and pattern recognition. Krashen (2018) emphasizes that acquisition develops when learners are exposed to comprehensible input appropriate to their proficiency level, whereas Ellis (2015; 2021) highlights the importance of cognitive processes, feedback, and meaningful engagement in developing communicative competence. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman and Long (2018) note that language acquisition is shaped by exposure, interaction, motivation, and prior linguistic knowledge, while Lightbown and Spada (2019) found that authentic communication leads to greater fluency and accuracy than rote memorization. Supporting this, studies by Paglinawan and Bragat (2024) confirm that acquisition-oriented skills such as listening comprehension, reading exposure, communicative interaction, and meaningful practice are essential foundations for long-term language proficiency and effective communication.

Language Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to an individual's ability to use language accurately, effectively, and appropriately in communication through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Council of Europe (2020), global frameworks such as the CEFR provide standards for measuring language ability, while ETS (2024) and IELTS (2023) assess communicative competence through academic and real-life language use. UNESCO (2019) defines language proficiency as not only mastery of linguistic forms but also the ability to participate effectively in multilingual and multicultural societies. Similarly, Bachman and Palmer (2017) explain that language proficiency includes

organizational competence, such as grammar and cohesion, and pragmatic competence, or the appropriate use of language in social contexts. Studies by Tuan and Nhu (2020) and Kuiken, Vedder, and Gilabert (2019) emphasize that proficiency develops through interconnected macro-skills involving fluency, accuracy, complexity, and comprehension, while Segalowitz (2016) highlights repeated meaningful practice as essential for automatization and spontaneous communication. Research by Gass and Mackey (2016) and González-Lloret and Ortega (2021) further shows that interaction, feedback, and communicative engagement are central to language development. In both global and Philippine contexts, studies such as Cantara et al. (2021), Delos Santos and Gonzales (2021), and Sebandal and Cabatic (2025) confirm that language proficiency is influenced by cognitive, affective, social, and instructional factors, with strong proficiency linked to academic achievement, career opportunities, intercultural competence, and effective communication, although challenges such as anxiety, limited exposure, vocabulary gaps, and unequal access to learning resources continue to affect learners' overall development.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the influence of social media literacy and language acquisition skills on the language proficiency of Grade 12 Senior High School students under the HUMSS and TVL strands during the academic year 2025–2026. Using a survey-correlational research design based on the approaches of Ponto (2015) and Cherry (2022), the study involved 132 randomly selected participants from a population of 199 students, determined through Taro Yamane's formula and selected using stratified random sampling as described by Frey (2018). Data were collected using three researcher-made 10-item questionnaires measuring social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and language proficiency, all of which underwent face and content validation, pilot testing, factor analysis, and reliability testing through SPSS, yielding strong reliability indices with Cronbach's Alpha values of .886, .862, and .897, consistent with the standards of Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2016). Data collection was conducted with institutional permission and strict confidentiality, while analysis utilized mean, standard deviation, Pearson's *r* correlation, and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance to determine relationships among variables and identify the predictive effects of social media literacy and language acquisition skills on students' language proficiency.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of Social Media Literacy

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of social media literacy among the students. The results revealed that social media literacy obtained a mean score of 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.55, which is described as high. This indicates that the students generally possess a high level of social media literacy. Furthermore, the relatively low standard deviation suggests that the students' responses are closely grouped around the mean, indicating consistency in their perceptions of their social media literacy.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Social Media Literacy

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Social Media Literacy	4.11	High	0.55

Note Interval. Very High - 4.21 - 5.00: High - 3.41 - 4.20: Moderate - 2.61 – 3.40:
Low -1.81 – 2.60: Very Low - 1.00 – 1.80

The findings revealed that students demonstrate a high level of social media literacy, indicating that they are generally capable of accessing, understanding, evaluating, and using information effectively across different social media platforms. Their ability to navigate digital environments reflects familiarity with online tools, responsible engagement with content, and the capacity to critically process information in digital spaces. This suggests that students are well-positioned to use social media as a valuable tool for learning, communication, and language development, as it can increase exposure to authentic language use, encourage collaborative learning, and improve overall academic engagement.

The high level of social media literacy may be attributed to students' frequent exposure to digital technologies and regular use of online platforms, allowing them to naturally develop technical and critical digital skills over time. These

findings are supported by Leaning (2019), who emphasized the importance of media literacy in helping learners critically evaluate digital information, Reddy, Shantha, and Rao (2020), who described digital literacy as a multidimensional skill developed through continuous exposure to technology, van Laar et al. (2017), who linked digital competencies to effective academic engagement, and Buckingham (2015), who highlighted that young people's interaction with digital media plays a significant role in developing critical media literacy skills necessary for navigating modern online environments.

B. Level of Language Acquisition Skills

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of language acquisition skills among the students. The results show that language acquisition skills obtained a mean score of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.57, interpreted as high. This indicates that the students generally demonstrate strong language acquisition skills. Moreover, the relatively low standard deviation suggests that the responses are closely grouped around the mean, indicating a consistent level of language acquisition skills among the respondents.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Language Acquisition Skills

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Language Acquisition Skills	4.00	High	0.57

Note Interval. Very High - 4.21 - 5.00: High - 3.41 - 4.20: Moderate - 2.61 – 3.40:
Low -1.81 – 2.60: Very Low - 1.00 – 1.80

The findings revealed that students possess a high level of language acquisition skills, indicating that they are generally capable of understanding, learning, and using language effectively. This reflects their ability to acquire vocabulary, understand language structures, and apply language knowledge in communication. Such results suggest that students are well-prepared to engage in language-related learning tasks and are likely to perform well in activities requiring comprehension, expression, and communication, while their strong acquisition skills can further support the development of overall language proficiency when reinforced through meaningful classroom instruction and interactive learning strategies.

The high level of language acquisition skills may be attributed to students' regular exposure to English through academic instruction, digital media, social communication platforms, and peer interaction, which continuously strengthen language familiarity and vocabulary development. These findings are supported by Burgos and Anthony (2024), who found that digital literacy integration enhances English proficiency, Godwin-Jones (2019), who emphasized that emerging technologies provide authentic opportunities for communicative language development, and Reinders and Lai (2017), who highlighted that technology-mediated learning extends language practice beyond the classroom and significantly supports the development of language acquisition skills.

C. Level of Language Proficiency

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of language proficiency among the students. The results indicate that language proficiency obtained a mean score of 3.97 with a standard deviation of 0.58, interpreted as high. This shows that the students generally exhibit a high level of language proficiency. Moreover, the relatively low standard deviation indicates that the responses are closely distributed around the mean, reflecting a consistent level of language proficiency among the respondents.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Language Proficiency

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Language Proficiency	3.97	High	0.58

Note Interval. Very High - 4.21 - 5.00: High - 3.41 - 4.20: Moderate - 2.61 – 3.40:
Low -1.81 – 2.60: Very Low - 1.00 – 1.80

The findings showed that students possess a high level of language proficiency, indicating that they are generally capable of using language effectively in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This suggests that they can communicate ideas clearly, understand language input accurately, and demonstrate a reasonable degree of fluency in both academic and everyday communication. It further implies that students are already performing well in overall language use, which can positively influence their academic performance across subjects requiring strong communication and comprehension skills, while continued exposure to meaningful language activities can further strengthen their accuracy and fluency.

The high level of language proficiency may be attributed to students' continuous exposure to English through classroom instruction, academic materials, communication activities, and regular interaction with digital platforms and social media, which provide opportunities for informal language practice and authentic language exposure. These findings are supported by Chen (2025), who found that students with higher digital literacy demonstrate better academic performance through stronger self-regulation and adaptability in learning environments, and Burgos and Anthony (2024), who emphasized that digital literacy contributes significantly to language fluency by increasing learners' exposure to authentic language materials and diverse learning resources.

E. Relationship Among Social Media Literacy, Language Acquisition Skills, and Students' Language Proficiency

Table 4 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis among social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and students' language proficiency. Data revealed a significant positive relationship between social media literacy and language acquisition skills ($r = .668$, $p = .000$). Similarly, social media literacy is significantly and positively correlated with language proficiency ($r = .768$, $p = .000$). In addition, language acquisition skills are also significantly and positively related to language proficiency ($r = .714$, $p = .000$). These results indicate that all variables are significantly associated with one another, suggesting that higher levels of social media literacy and language acquisition skills are linked to higher language proficiency among students.

Table 4: Pearson r Among Social Media Literacy, Language Acquisition Skills, and Students' Language Proficiency

Variables	r	Sig
Social Media Literacy and Language Acquisition Skills	.668*	.000
Social Media Literacy and Language Proficiency	.768*	.000
Language Acquisition Skills and Language Proficiency	.714*	.000

* $p < .05$ – significant at 5% level

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between social media literacy and language acquisition skills, indicating that students who demonstrate higher competence in accessing, understanding, evaluating, and using information on social media also tend to possess stronger language acquisition abilities. This suggests that social media serves as a meaningful platform for language learning by exposing students to authentic language through posts, videos, online discussions, and interactive communication, allowing them to naturally acquire vocabulary, understand language structures, and strengthen communication skills. As students become more socially and digitally literate, their ability to critically engage with content further enhances language comprehension and learning processes.

Similarly, a significant positive relationship exists between social media literacy and language proficiency, showing that students with higher social media literacy also demonstrate better overall language performance in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. This implies that effective use of social media contributes to language development by continuously exposing students to authentic and informal language use while encouraging active participation in communication through content creation, messaging, and online interaction. Through these experiences, students strengthen both receptive and productive language skills, suggesting that integrating social media-based learning activities may enhance students' overall language proficiency and communication competence.

The study also found a significant positive relationship between language acquisition skills and language proficiency, indicating that students with stronger language acquisition abilities tend to have higher levels of language proficiency. This suggests that the ability to acquire vocabulary, internalize grammar, process language input, and engage in meaningful communication directly contributes to improved performance across language domains. These relationships

are supported by previous studies, including van Laar et al. (2017), who found that digital skills significantly predict academic achievement, Godwin-Jones (2019) and Reinders and Lai (2017), who emphasized the role of technology-mediated learning in strengthening communicative competence, and Burgos and Anthony (2024), who reported that digital literacy enhances English proficiency through authentic language exposure and vocabulary development.

F. Predictors of Language Proficiency

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients showing social media literacy and language acquisition skills as predictors of language proficiency. The results indicate that social media literacy significantly predicts language proficiency ($B = 0.258$, $\beta = 0.244$, $t = 3.144$, $p = 0.002$), suggesting a positive contribution to students' language proficiency. Likewise, language acquisition skills also significantly predict language proficiency ($B = 0.605$, $\beta = 0.594$, $t = 7.652$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a stronger predictive influence compared to social media literacy.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients of Social Media Literacy, Language Acquisition Skills, as Predictors of Language Proficiency

Category	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Social Media Literacy	.258	.082	.244	3.144	.002
Language Acquisition Skills	.605	.079	.594	7.652	.000

* $p < .05$ – significant at 5% level

The findings revealed that social media literacy significantly predicts language proficiency, indicating that students' ability to access, evaluate, understand, and effectively use information from social media directly influences their performance in language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This suggests that social media is not only a communication platform but also an important factor in language development, as students who critically engage with authentic online content gain greater exposure to vocabulary, comprehension, and meaningful communication experiences. Frequent interaction with posts, videos, comments, and online discussions allows learners to practice language in contextualized and real-world situations, strengthening both critical thinking and communication abilities.

The study also found that language acquisition skills significantly predict language proficiency, showing that students' ability to learn, understand, and internalize language structures strongly influences their overall competence in communication. This implies that language acquisition skills serve as a fundamental foundation of language development, where continuous exposure to language input, vocabulary development, comprehension practice, and meaningful interaction contribute directly to improved speaking, reading, writing, and listening performance. Interactive learning experiences, classroom instruction, and regular communication practice further strengthen students' ability to acquire and apply language effectively over time.

These predictive relationships are supported by previous studies, including van Laar et al. (2017), who found that digital skills significantly predict academic and communication-related competencies, Godwin-Jones (2019), who emphasized that emerging technologies provide authentic communicative experiences that enhance language learning, and Reinders and Lai (2017), who highlighted that technology-mediated learning extends language practice beyond the classroom and increases interaction opportunities that strengthen communicative competence and overall language proficiency.

V. CONCLUSION

The research paints a promising picture of today's learners as digitally connected individuals who are not only active users of online platforms but are also highly capable of navigating social media responsibly and effectively. The students demonstrated a high level of social media literacy, suggesting that social media has evolved beyond simple communication and entertainment into a meaningful learning space where students are exposed to authentic language, diverse information, and opportunities for critical engagement. This highlights how digital environments have become an integral part of how students interact with knowledge and develop essential communication skills in the modern world.

In the same way, the students exhibited a high level of language acquisition skills, reflecting their strong ability to understand, process, and use language effectively in various learning contexts. Their capacity to acquire vocabulary, recognize language patterns, and apply communication strategies indicates that they possess the necessary foundation for continuous language growth. Consistent exposure to classroom instruction, everyday communication, and digital interactions appears to be strengthening their ability to learn language naturally and effectively. As a result, the students also demonstrated a high level of language proficiency, showing confidence and competence in speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills that are essential for academic achievement and meaningful communication.

More importantly, the study revealed that social media literacy, language acquisition skills, and language proficiency are closely interconnected, showing significant positive relationships among these variables. Students who are more digitally literate and more capable of acquiring language tend to perform better in overall language proficiency.

Among these factors, language acquisition skills emerged as the strongest predictor, emphasizing that the ability to internalize and develop language remains central to proficiency development, while social media literacy acts as a powerful support system by providing authentic exposure and opportunities for communication practice. Taken together, these findings highlight a powerful reality of modern education: when technology and language learning are effectively integrated, they create richer learning experiences that can significantly strengthen students' communicative competence and prepare them for the demands of an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

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