

A Descriptive Analysis: Grammatical Exploration in Social Media Posts

Heart Missy M. Algabre, Denise B. Ayo, Leah Mae T. Cascara, Glendell Vince B. Saligumba, Angela Gracia D. Samillano, Jose G. Tan, Jr.

Bachelor of Secondary Education, University of Southeastern Philippines, Tagum, Davao del Norte, Philippines

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90600016>

Received: 22 May 2025; Accepted: 28 May 2025; Published: 26 June 2025

ABSTRACT

The rise of social media as a leading platform for day-to-day communication has greatly influenced how individuals use language, particularly in informal digital contexts. This study used descriptive analysis in evaluating grammatical inaccuracy observed in user-generated posts on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Using a descriptive research design, frequent grammatical inaccuracies were categorized into themes including spelling, capitalization, punctuation, tense shift, sentence structure, and subject-verb agreement. While many inaccuracies appear involuntary and done unconsciously, some exhibit changing language practices shaped by digital culture. The study draws attention to the need to balance linguistic correctness with the evolving nature of communication in the digital age and reshapes language learning and usage.

Keywords: social media posts, grammatical exploration, grammar analysis

INTRODUCTION

In a global perspective, a study conducted in Indonesia, titled “Grammatical Errors in Social Media Caption” by Yuliah et al. (2020), emphasized the importance of media and its usage whether for entertainment consumption or marketing purposes. They highlighted that written language represents an individual in both online and offline communication. Since there are no editors to monitor social media caption, errors such as spelling, punctuation, and grammatical mistakes may be evident in these posts. Common errors identified include subject-verb agreement issues, sentence fragments, spelling mistakes, parallelism errors, preposition misuse, and incorrect use of the passive voice. This emphasizes the need to prioritize grammatical precision, knowledge, and comprehension in social media content whether in entertainment-based contexts or marketing captions. Poor grammar can undermine credibility, affect audience perception, and dilute messaging effectiveness.

In the national context, the study conducted by Corral (2017) in Sorsogon, Philippines, found many problems caused by the students’ use of English on social media posts, mainly grammatical errors due to their first language’s interference and intralingual factors. The study identified that the most common errors committed were confusing tense/verb forms, incorrect application of subject-verb agreement, as well as improper use of preposition, which suggest an inability to grasp basic rules of grammar. Such errors are commonly rooted from overgeneralization and incomplete rule application, coupled with false hypothesis construction about English structure, an interlanguage development phenomenon. The students apply their native rules (like Bisakol or Filipino) to their English usage. Given that communication on Facebook is informal and in real-time with very few edits or much teacher feedback, such factors further enhance those inaccuracies. Consequently, those patterns hamper not just effective acquisition of the language in question but also emphasize the complication of transferring formal language into informal digital contexts.

In the Davao Region, errors in social media posts among students is a very common phenomenon. Pascual (2019) pointed out that while students are frequently and conveniently exposed to the languages concerned, students greatly struggle with their correct application, notably that of grammar and vocabulary. In addition, the findings

have indicated that the insufficient grasp of intermediate grammatical rules might be attributed to a lack of real environment use of the language and the undue exposure to social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present segment shows a literature review on this study. It therefore presents the most recent research analyzing the causes, habits, and outcome of grammatical mistakes in different social media sites.

Several studies focus on social media's rapid and laid-back nature as a primary factor in the increase of the users' grammatical mistakes or errors. In particular, Sihotang et al. (2021) recognized that social media users often prioritize rapidity and economy of expression which oftentimes resulted in omissions and deviation to the standard. Platform restrictions (e.g. character limits on Twitter and Instagram's emphasis on images) motivates users to resort to overtly shortened grammatical expressions. Here, directness without regard for etiquette leads (Panjaitan & Patria, 2024; Herlina et al., 2024). The rise of slang and non-standard English also unveils the trend of an increasing divide between informal and formal communication (Ojetunde, 2019; Herlina et al., 2024).

Expanding on that, various researchers have identified some common grammatical errors that tend to appear on social media posts or texts. According to Sain et al. (2022), over 40.1% of errors were incorrectly used punctuation signs, specifically exclamation marks, which are frequently used incorrectly. Another common mistake is capitalization errors or the opposite, lowercase letters when standard capitalization is required. From a spelling perspective, Puspitasari (2024) noted that young users tend to use phonetic abbreviations which are more aligned with the casual nature of communication online. Additionally, a study by Tumanggor et al. (2021) revealed that there is a wide range of common mistakes made by users, including issues with verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, use of articles, contractions, and pronoun usage. The students' ability to apply grammatical concepts such as differentiating between singular and plural forms, using comparative degrees, and recognizing when to use gerunds or infinitives, demonstrates their grasp of English language rules. Even in the presence of numerous errors, students carelessly post without regard for proper grammar. According to Wiraldi et al. (2020), such confidence came from having limited vocabulary and not being as familiar with the rules of grammar.

Furthermore, social media has affected not just the precision or correctness of grammar but the construction of new forms as well. Anyanwu et al. (2024) noted that informal use of grammar on Facebook and Twitter allows for utterances to have grammatical and semantic errors. Additionally, other scholars have claimed that though non-standard grammatical forms are untraditional, they do express creativity. Instead of being an indicator of carelessness, such forms creatively integrate intonation, humor, wit, and personal traits that project individuality (Panjaitan & Patria, 2024). Regardless, some researchers argue that the unrestricted use of such language in formal settings greatly weakens students' comprehension of important rules of standard grammar (Kadiri et al., 2018; González & Chang, 2024).

These reviewed literatures indicate that social media grammar mistakes arise from a blend of social and technological influences. They arise in predictable patterns, and their existence holds advanced meanings regarding how grammar is understood and used in the digital age. These factors are important when examining and analyzing how users—particularly students—create meaning and identity in informal online settings.

THEORETICAL BASIS

This analysis is anchored on the Error Analysis Theory, developed by Stephen Corder in 1970. Error Analysis Theory helps predict the errors and the reasons why these mistakes are commonly seen in foreign language users, it also emphasizes the learning process; it explains the error usually seen in social media captions period. It recognizes that learners often create their own evolving linguistic system, and it allows facilitators to identify the language development stages learners undergo (Wardoyo et al., 2023). Error Analysis Theory allows the educators and the researchers to gain insights and predict patterns that may indicate misunderstandings of the language structure, and it creates a bridge for improvements. Allowing the teachers, facilitators, and researchers to create an effective medium for learning correct grammatical structure, language awareness, editing and proofreading skills and it also helps social media users improve their communication skills.

To further support the main theory, the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner developed in 1979 is defined to be the study of the interconnectedness of personal and social identity. This theory explains how people translate their position in social media contexts and the social group they belong to; this affects their perspective, their beliefs and their actions or behavior (Ellemers, 2025). Social identity perspectives and beliefs shape personality in social contexts, incorrect social media captions, even if it is involuntary or accidental, presents a person's social identity, group membership and social context, and a person's authenticity. It is a rich site for analyzing how language reflects and creates social identities in digital spaces.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the data effectively, this analysis utilized a descriptive method to assess grammar errors found in social media posts. This method is well-suited for identifying and describing the kinds of language or grammar mistakes users commonly make in online platforms. It gives the researchers the leeway to retain the form of these errors, which aids in comprehending how people actually use language in casual, and informal contexts. Hence, the analysis hopes to identify the recurring and distinctive patterns of grammatical errors prevalent in digital communication.

DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of the gathered data from social media platforms. The errors identified were classified into emerging themes; (a) spelling; (b) punctuation; (c) capitalization; (d) tense shift; (e) sentence structure; and (f) subject-verb agreement.

Spelling

Spelling refers to the arrangement of letters in the correct sequence to form words. When a word is spelled correctly, it follows the accepted sequence of letters defined in the language. Knowing how to spell is important in order to convey thoughts and messages clearly and accurately. Good and correct spelling is crucial for maintaining clarity and understanding.

PP1: "Jung Hae In unsint a messij."

PP2: "I cant breath"

PP3: "do you belive in miracles?"

The word "unsint" spelled wrong and should be spelled unsent, which refers to a term used when deleting a message online. Meanwhile, 'breath' (a noun) is incorrectly used instead of the word 'breathe' which is a verb. The correct version of this sentence is: "I can't breathe." Lastly, the word 'belive' should be spelled as 'believe.'

In the context of errors in social media captions, spelling is one of the most frequent errors noticeable. As cited by Omongos and Villarin (2023), in correct spelling can distort a word's meaning, which in turn can negatively impact the clarity and effectiveness of the entire phrase or utterance in which it appears. Additionally, a study of Karali et, al. (2021), revealed that spelling errors were casually caused by missing vowels.

Punctuations

Punctuation refers to a tool that permits a writer to let the receiver or audience know where the sentences end, where there is a short pause or a long pause, and also to show if the writer is questioning, explaining, or providing some extra information. There are various punctuation marks in English grammar, namely: period, comma, colon, semi-colon, apostrophe, quotation marks, hyphen, dash, parentheses, slash, exclamation mark, question marks and ellipses.

PP2: "I can't breath"

PP5: "i been so unbothered I dont even charge my phone at night anymore"

PP6: “Its time for giving back”

PP10: “im nothing without them”

PP12: “Happy teachers day maam”

The clauses above consist of punctuation related flaws. The words cant, dont, its, im, and teachers are missing an apostrophe. It should be “can’t”, a contraction of the word “cannot”; “don’t” is a contraction of “do not”; “its”, for it is—which refers to a pronoun and not a possessive noun; I’m, a contraction of “I am”, and Teachers’ which refers to—teachers owning the day or the said celebration.

Punctuation mistakes are usually seen in social media captions, mainly due to the informal writing habits that impact online platforms heavily. Users often neglect proper writing practices, resulting in common incorrect punctuation marks—such as unnecessary or misplaced exclamation points—along with incorrect capitalization and the omission of periods. These frequent errors significantly reduce the understanding of the text and can lead into misinterpretation or confusion among readers (Sain, 2022). Social media continuously plays a very important role in modern communication; it becomes constantly crucial to prioritize grammatical accuracy in digital writing. Additionally, according to Nurfausyahbani et al. (2023), a strong knowledge and comprehension of grammar rules is not only important but also a vital factor in acquiring clear, efficient, and productive interaction throughout social media platforms.

Capitalization

Capitalization is when we use capital, or big letters in writing. It usually follows specific grammar rules. For example, we capitalize the first word in the sentence, the names of people and places, days of the week, and the word “I.” These rules help make writing clear and organized.

PP3: “do you belive in miracles?”

PP5: “ i been so unbothered i dont even charge my phone at night anymore”

PP7: “i want to say thank you for those who greeted me in personal and through internet.”

PP 10: “i’m nothing without them”

PP 12: “Happy teachers day maam”

PP 14: “I Hope there’s Frozen 3, and more frozens Please”

The word ‘i’m’, ‘do’, and ‘i’ must be capitalized since it is placed at the beginning of the sentence. The phrase “teachers day maam” must be capitalized because it’s a proper noun. The correct sentence should be “Happy Teacher’s Day, Ma’am.” Proper nouns should always be capitalized.

On social media sites like Reddit, Discord, and Facebook, capitalization has evolved from a grammatical norm into more of a tool to convey emotions like happiness, excitement, urgency, and anger. Additionally, according to Chan and Fyshe (2018), because of mainstream use on such sites, such usage for capitalization have also made its way through other platforms that gives users the ability to write texts, with gaming in particular. Wright (2018) also explains that digital communication has changed a lot, often bending or ignoring the original rules, in this case the original purpose of capitalization.

Tense Shift

Tense in grammar indicates the time when an action happens. It determines whether an event took place in the past, is occurring in the present, or will occur in the future. There are three main tenses—past, present, and future—each of which can be further divided into four aspects: simple, continuous (progressive), perfect, and

perfect continuous. Mastering verb tenses enhances both written and spoken communication, allowing speakers and writers to express themselves accurately and avoid confusion. This can be found in the excerpts below:

PP4: “every person had his proper gift from the God...”

PP5: “i been so unbothered...”

PP8: “Honor or not we all deserve to be congratulate!”

As shown in the excerpts, social media posts often contain tense and verb errors. In PP4, the phrase “every person had his proper gift from the God”, “had” should be “has” to reflect a present truth. Similarly, in PP5, the phrase “i been so unbothered.” Authors Gnana Priyadharshini and Ragupathi (2024) mentioned that auxiliary verbs like ‘have’ and ‘has’ play an essential role in creating perfect tenses in English. Meanwhile, in PP8, the phrase “we all deserve to be congratulate” contains a grammatical error related to verbs and voice. The verb “congratulate” is used in its base form when the past participle “congratulated” is required. In this context, the sentence is written in the passive voice, the passive constructions require the use of a past participle following the verb ‘to be’ (in this case, it should be “to be congratulated”).

In the study of Corral (2017), tense error was reported to be the most common grammatical errors found in students’ Facebook posts, signifying that they have a considerable weakness regarding a sound understanding of the correct use of tense. The errors stem mostly from the incorrect use of tense: that is, past, present, and future; students will often change tense within a sentence to one that is incorrect or choose an altogether wrong tense. This sequence of mistakes shows that students need more focus in instruction on verb tenses, especially on social media, an informal context where students frequently disregard grammar.

Sentence Structure

Sentence structure refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to form coherent sentences. Typically, a well-constructed sentence includes a subject and a verb that follows a logical order. When sentence elements are missing, misplaced, or combined improperly, sentence structure errors occur. These may appear as fragments (incomplete sentences that lack either a subject or a verb), run-on sentences (multiple clauses joined without proper punctuation), comma splices (independent clauses incorrectly joined by only a comma), or awkward phrasing.

PP5: i been so unbothered i dont even charge my phone at night anymore.”

This is a run-on sentence because it combines two independent clauses without a punctuation or a coordinating conjunction. A period, semicolon, or a comma with a coordinating conjunction (like “and” or “so”) can be used to separate the clauses. Also, the phrase “i been” should be corrected to “I’ve been.” Corrected version: “I’ve been so unbothered. I don’t even charge my phone at night anymore.”

PP11: “why y’all comparing two completely different kdramas”

This sentence is a fragment because it omits the auxiliary verb “are,” which is necessary to form a grammatically correct question. For a proper and complete question structure, it should be “Why are y’all comparing two completely different K-dramas?”

PP13: “i love my boyfriend so much! you guys don’t know how such a lovely man he is”

The clause “how such a lovely man he is” is awkwardly structured and does not follow standard word order in English. A more natural phrasing would be: “I love my boyfriend so much! You guys don’t even know what a lovely man he is.”

PP15: “you never fail for making me happy, i love you, iloveyou so much in every multiverse and life.”

This sentence exhibits comma splices, where multiple independent clauses are incorrectly joined only by commas. The phrase “fail for making” should also be corrected to “fail to make.” A clear version is: “You never fail to make me happy. I love you—I love you so much in every multiverse and life.”

As noted by Christanti (2020), sentence structure errors—especially run-on sentences—are among the most common grammatical issues in social media posts, often caused by combining multiple ideas without proper punctuation. Also, Yuliah et al. (2020) found that sentence fragments comprised a staggering 19% of the total grammatical mistakes in Instagram captions, which tend to happen when dependent clauses are treated as standalone or complete sentences. Wardoyo et al. (2023) categorize such errors under broader categories like omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, which account for fragments, run-ons, and awkward phrasing. In support of these findings, Corral (2017) noted that users make such frequent online grammatical and sentence structure errors because they get confused with grammar rules and are influenced by their native language.

Subject-verb Agreement

Subject-verb Agreement (SVA) refers to the grammatical rule that the verb in a sentence must agree in number and person with its subject. Thus, singular subjects require singular verbs while plural subjects require plural verbs.

PP18: “My friends supports me no matter what.”

The subject “friends” is plural, so the verb should also be plural: “support.” The -s form “supports” is only used with singular third-person subjects. Corrected version: “My friends support me no matter what.”

PP20: “She always post the funniest reels hahaha.”

The sentence violates subject-verb agreement because the singular subject “she” requires the singular verb “posts,” not “post.” The verb form does not agree with the subject, causing a grammatical mismatch. The corrected version of this sentence is: “She always posts the funniest reels hahaha.”

According to Yuliah et al. (2020), subject-verb agreement or SVA errors comprised 36% of grammatical errors in social media captions stemming from casual or promotional language. Similarly, Christanti (2020) found SVA errors to be the second most commonly occurring grammatical error in her study at 18% of all total errors. Corral (2017) noted that users were prone to make SVA errors in online compositions, often due to confusion with grammar rules and first language influence. Supporting this, Sugeng (2016) states that these errors are often the result of overgeneralization of grammar rules, where users apply one pattern to all subjects regardless of number.

CONCLUSION

This analysis was conducted to evaluate errors on grammatical use in various social media captions, carried out by users when posting statements in various digital platforms. Overall, there were twenty captions and posts from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that have been analyzed. The observed errors were also compiled and categorized into six themes.

Moreover, it is worth noting that grammatical errors in social media posts should not be neglected. Reoccurring grammatical errors may weaken the credibility of the author; people often associate correct grammar with capability and thoroughness. It is recommended that social media users take greater care in proofreading and refining their captions before sharing or posting online. Social media is often seen as an informal platform; therefore, it is important to sustain grammatical correctness and enhance credibility, trust of the audience, and strengthen a professional image.

REFERENCES

1. Anyanwu, E. A., Chukwuokoro Ifeyinwa, & Robert, O. S. (2024). Emerging New Media Syntax, Violation of English Syntactic Rules, and Meaning Misrepresentations. *Deleted Journal*, 16(1), 189-206.
2. Chan, S., & Fyshe, A. (2018). Social and Emotional Correlates of Capitalization on Twitter (pp.10-15).
3. Christanti, V. (2020). An Error Analysis of Comments and Photo Captions on Social Media: A Study of YouTube and Instagram [Undergraduate Thesis]
4. Corral, J. C. (2017). Facebook Post: Error analysis on English Grammar and Usage. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 5(3).
5. Ellemers, & Naomi. (2025). Social identity theory | Definition, History, Examples, & Facts. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
6. Gnanapriyadharshini, S., & Ragupathi, K. (2024). Auxiliary Verbs as Building Blocks Integrating them into Language Proficiency Development Programs. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts Science and Humanities*, 11(S2-March), 110-113
7. Gonzales, V. P. V., & Change, Y. H. (2024). Social media as a hindrance to the writing skills of English learners. *Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar*, 8(10), 12056-12069.
8. Herlina, L., Plandi, E. H., & Nurwahidah, L. S. (2024). The influence of social media on language evolution: A Linguistic Analysis of Emerging Internet slang. *International Journal of Social and Human.*, 1(3), 190-198.
9. Idaryani, I., sari, D. K., & Rasyimah, N. (2021). Teaching method for improvement of student's grammatical knowledge. *Proceedings of International Conference on Social Science Political Science and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM)*.
10. Kadiri, G. C., Agbo, I., & Ekwueme, J. (2018). Impact of social media language on writings of the undergraduates of university of Nigeria, Nsukka. *AFRREV IJAH an International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 7(4), 46-59.
11. Karali, Y., Aydemir, H., & Sen, M. (2021). An investigation of prospective teachers' use of the Turkish language in social media.
12. Nurfausyhabani, H. R., & Setiawan, D. (2023). The influencers' language on Instagram and Twitter captions. *Jurnal Bahasa Inggris Terapan*, 9(2), 88-96.
13. Ojetunde, C. F. (2019). The Use of English on Social Media: Deviation of Variation.
14. Omongos, M. C., & Villarin, S. J. B. (2023). Semantical error analysis in the written composition of First-Year BSED-English students.
15. Panjaitan, L. L., & Patria, A. N. (2024). Social Media and Language evolution: The impact of Digital communication on Language change. *International Journal of Linguistics Literature & Translation*, 7(12), 53-57.
16. Pascual, L. P. (2019). Exposure to English linguistic environment and oral proficiency of first-year college students in Davao del Norte. 10th International Conference.
17. Puspitsari, I. M. (2024). Investigating Netspeak applied in youth interaction in X base account. *Language Horizon*, 12(1), 26-37.
18. Sain, Y., Ervin, E., & Zur, S. (2022). Young adults' punctuation error in writing English daily story on Instagram. *IDEAS Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1), 682-699.
19. Sihotang, A., Sitanggang, F., Hasugian, N., & Yunanda, F. (2021). Grammatical errors on social media. *Jist.publikasiindonesia.id*.
20. Sugeng, B. (2016). Common Grammatical Errors in use of English as a Foreign Language: A Case in Students' Undergraduate Theses. *Litera*, 15(1).
21. Tumanngor, O. B., Aswani, N. A., & Syafitri, N. W. (2021). Students' Analyses toward Grammatical Errors o Social Media Posts: Case Study in Politeknik Negeri Medan. *Foster Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2, (2) 320-330.
22. Wardoyo, A. T., Rais, B., & yunia, A. E. (2023). Error analysis in social media caption: a study on Instagram. *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy (JELPA)*, 1(1), 36-44.
23. Wiraldi, W., Iksan, M., & Jufriadi, N. (202). Improving vocabulary mastery of the seventh-year students using scattergories game in SMP Negeri * Palopo. *FOSTER Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(2), 159-167.

24. Wright, E. (2018) Pragmatic Functionality of Punctuation on Twitter. Theses and Dissertations-Linguistics.29.
25. Yuliah, S., Purnamasari, Y., & Yunita, E. (2020). Grammatical Errors in Social Media Caption. International Journal of Language & Literature, 8(2).