Degree Thesis I

Bachelor's Level

English as a Second Language Acquisition through Social Media Usage

Proficiency acquisition in the Swedish Upper-secondary ESL classroom

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Abstract

Via a systematic literature review, this thesis investigates the possible benefits of employing social media as a learning tool in English as a second language classroom. The thesis is focused on the motivation for learning, potential grammar and vocabulary gains as results of using social media at the upper-secondary level. This systematic literature review is relevant since the current Swedish upper-secondary school's curriculum promotes technology implementation and at the same time social media has become an everyday feature of many students' lives. In order to measure the possible benefits of social media, this thesis uses a modified version of Koole's (2009, p. 27) *The Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education* (FRAME) model, which originally was used to determine the optimal way for learning on a mobile platform. This thesis adapted that model and altered it to be applicable for social media platforms instead of mobile devices. The literature review found relevant peer-reviewed studies for this topic through a scholarly education database. The age of the participants in the chosen studies vary from 15-19 years old, and all the chosen studies focus on English as a second language in relation to an education system. The reviewed studies show that social media usage is mainly beneficial for motivation to enhance English vocabulary and grammar proficiency. However, social media usage does not show any significant benefits for grammar proficiency and vocabulary gains when students engage with social media. Although motivation to partake on various social media platforms in ESL does show that students tend to have a desire to expand their ESL knowledge. This review study is in agreement with the reviewed studies regarding the potential benefits of social media for ESL. The reviewed studies on their own were inconclusive as to *why* social media usage was beneficial. By comparing all the studies result, this literature review thesis promotes the idea that it is the social factor from engaging with social media that is the main reason that motivates students to acquire further ESL knowledge in a school setting or extramurally. Thus, the thesis suggests that an integration of social media in the Swedish upper-secondary school should be taken into consideration due to its proven motivational benefits.

Keywords: ESL acquisition, motivation, proficiency, social media, FRAME model, upper-secondary school.

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1. Introduction

The usage of English as a second language, henceforth ESL, has been facilitated by technological advancements worldwide. In the 20th century, cinema, the television, and the radio were all contributors to the spread of English as a *lingua franca*. However, those outlets lack the element of interactivity, as one-way media forms. These media forms were the most prevalent for a long time, but the introduction and the spread of the Internet in the 1990s changed the ways of spreading English. In the last ten years or so the world has seen the introduction of what is known as 'social media' – websites or applications wherein users can interact with one another on a global arena. Cross-language communication on these global websites is often made possible by a *lingua franca*, English. Being able to interact in English was previously confined to a classroom setting during school for the students, but this is now changing. Social media plays a huge role in everyday life these days – Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram are just some examples of popular social media platforms. Many Swedes interact with social media on a daily basis, especially the younger generation, aged 16-25. Even though proper grammar and vocabulary are often overlooked in the social media space, the act of writing or reading on any social media is still communication outside the traditional classroom, which could impact students' motivation in ESL learning, as they have a personal interest in using English outside the ESL classroom.

There is no mention of grammar and vocabulary proficiency as aims or knowledge requirements in the syllabus for the English subject in the Swedish upper-secondary school (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b). The direction of the Swedish curriculum leans more towards that "the upper secondary school should provide a good foundation for work and further studies and also for personal development and active participation in the life of society" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012a, p. 8). The syllabus for the English subject in the Swedish upper-secondary school states that an aim of the English subject is to "[…] develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that [students] have the ability, desire and confidence to use English […] (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 1). This desire, or motivation, is something that the Swedish upper-secondary schools should take into extra consideration given the current state of language acquisition theory. It is proven that motivation plays an integral part for students when they learn a second language and that a personal end goal for the individual student is also important.

The possibilities to actively utilise ones English knowledge outside of a classroom setting, but still use it inside the classroom has thus never been as easy as it is today. In theory, this accessibility of interaction should impact ESL acquisition positively, but it is not clear whether social media really has the possibility to enhance motivation, grammar, and vocabulary proficiency for students in Swedish upper-secondary school, or whether it something worth integrating into a school milieu because of its strong connection to students' everyday life. This thesis uses a modified version of Koole's (2009) *The Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education*, FRAME, model[1] adapted to focus on applications or programs used on a piece of technology instead of the technology itself, to examine learning on social media applications as the theoretical model for a systematic literature review. The theoretical model should help the thesis analyse the possibility of measureable grammar and vocabulary proficiency by engaging with social media for L2 ESL students, and if engaging with social media has any motivational implications for students ESL learning.

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[1] See Appendix 2 for the original model or "3. Theoretical Perspective" for a more detailed explanation of the original and modified model.

1.1. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this systematical literature review is to investigate whether incorporation of social media in the Swedish upper-secondary school can be beneficial to learning English, due to its close connections with students' extramural activities. To help the review reach a conclusion, two research questions are posed that will help determine if there are any proficiency gains achieved using social media, and if engaging with social media has any ESL acquisition implications in the studies used for the literature review:

- What proficiency gains regarding grammar and vocabulary can be seen in ESL students who engage with social media?
- How is motivation related to proficiency gains from social media usage?

2. Background

This section aims to define the terminology of 'motivation' and 'proficiency', explaining social media as platforms, and illustrate an increasingly digitalised world. The concept of English as a global language, *lingua franca*, will also be explained, and why English became a global language. The evolution of second language acquisition theory will also be brought up as the theory's current state and findings have relevance to the use of social media. Furthermore, phrasing in the syllabus for the English subject in the Swedish upper-secondary school will be examined, and the relevance of grammar and vocabulary knowledge in the Swedish syllabus for the English subject will be examined.

2.1. Definitions

This segment aims to clarify two different terms that are essential to this thesis. The terms that need to be defined are motivation and proficiency. Proficiency in this thesis relates to grammar and vocabulary proficiency, as these are the main focal areas of the literature review.

2.1.1. Definition of Motivation

The definition of the term 'motivation' is based on Koole (2009) and Ortega (2008), as both definitions complement each other. Koole (2009) defines motivation as: "A learner's willingness or ability to adopt new information may be affected by […] [a] desire to accomplish a task" (2009, p. 30). The key phrase here is 'desire to accomplish a task', as this relates to the use of social media in an ESL setting. The 'task' in this thesis would be to: *participate/engage with social media in an ESL setting*. Ortega (2008) has a very similar definition, but stresses the point of further learning: "Motivation is usually understood to refer to the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it […]" (2008, p. 168). These two complement each other to form a definition suitable to this thesis, as they facilitate both a desire to participate/engage with social media in an ESL setting and a desire to further the learners ESL skills.

2.1.2. Definition of Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency

'Proficiency' is defined by Merriam-Webster's definition: "Proficiency: advancement in knowledge or skill" (2018a, web). To limit this broader definition, the two categories of language, grammar and vocabulary fluency, will be measured. The thesis definition refers to an increase of a person's correctness in grammar usage and more diverse use of the person's

vocabulary from the time the reviewed study began until they were concluded. This timeframe allows measurements on whether or not any notable changes can be observed over a study's time-frame. The definition will henceforth read as: 'advancement in knowledge or skill in vocabulary and grammar proficiency over the course of the reviewed studies'.

2.2. Social Media and the Increasingly Digitalised World
The term 'social media' is broad. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as: "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Merriam-Webster, 2018b, web). This definition of 'social media' will be used for this thesis. By that definition, many websites and applications may fall under this categorisation of social media. The most commonly used and recognised social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. Another term for 'social media' is 'social networking sites', often abbreviated to 'SNS' in academic settings – these refer to the same thing.

The technological advancement that is the most relevant to social media is Internet access and device availability. Sweden found itself as an early adopter of the Internet almost from the start: "In the year 1991 the world's first website was launched on the www [world wide web] and that year over 100 .se-domains were registered." (Internetstiftelsen i Sverige, 2010, web). By 1997 this number rose to over 46 000 (Internetstiftelsen i Sverige, 2010, web). Today, 98% of the Swedish population are able to access the Internet (Davidsson, Palm, and Mandre, 2018, p. 9). This report also shows a substantial increase in smartphone and tablet availability over time, up from 27% and 5% in 2011, to 90% and 70% respectively in 2017 (Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 9). These trends underline the notion that we in Sweden are in a digitalised world, in terms of devices and accessibility, and it has happened quickly – over the span of seven years. The report highlights the level of *daily* usage of three popular social media applications: Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. The highest percentage of users is in the age-bracket 16-25, with 71-73% of them using these platforms on a daily basis, with signs of a slow increase (Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 50). A positive trend in usage is also shown for Swedish citizens in general – in 2011 53% of the population used social media and in 2018 that number was up to 83%. These numbers show that the Swedish population, especially the younger generation, is heavily engaged in social media on one or more platforms.

Similar upwards trends in Internet usage are seen across the globe. According to Statista (2018a, web), in 2005, 1,024 million people had access to the Internet, and in 2017 the number was 3,578 million. That is roughly a 250% increase over the span of 12 years. The World Bank (2018, web) reports a global population of around 7.53 billion, thus roughly 47.5% of the population in 2017 had access to the Internet. Social media usage worldwide sees similar trends in an increase, albeit not as rapidly as in Sweden (Statista, 2018b, web). Statista (2018b, web) puts the figure somewhat lower than for Sweden but recognises a steady increase: "In 2017, 71 percent of Internet users were social network users and these figures are expected to grow" (Statista, 2018b, web). With a steady increase in social media usage, its relevancy will continue, with greater numbers of students in upper-secondary school being even more engaged and exposed to social media in the coming years.

2.3. English as a Global Language

English is considered 'the global language', the 'lingua franca', of the modern world: "English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries […]" (Crystal, 2003, p. 5). It has not always been English that has been the 'global language'; for over a millennium Latin was classified as such (Crystal, 2003, p. 7). Moreover, a truly global language is a new occurrence. In previous times a 'lingua franca' was more geographically and politically bound (Crystal, 2003, p. 12). The *need* for a 'lingua franca' is understandable for global communication, but the choice of English needs to be explained. As Crystal (2003) points out, the factors that dictate what language is most dominant is not the number of speakers, but rather economical, technological and cultural forces (2003, p. 7). From a historical context, British colonisation played a huge role in laying a foundation for English spreading to North America, the Caribbean, parts of Africa and Asia by the sheer number of speakers (Crystal, 2003, p. 29-39). As to the cultural and economic forces, a major factor was the implementation of organisations such as the UN, UNICEF, and the World Bank. Academia and business' was also a driving force in this development, mostly for the ease of cross-cultural communications (Crystal, 2003, p. 80-83). More recently, American culture has spread all over the world in a short span of time and with it the English language (Crystal, 2003). The TV, radio, and cinema, lead to the spreading of culture originating from English speaking countries.

Today, English can be seen as a second language in Sweden rather than a foreign language. The course English in Swedish upper-secondary school, more specifically English 5, is part of the foundation subject of the upper-secondary school (gymnasium.se, 2018, web). The English subject does not fall under the categorisation of the 'Modern Languages' in the curriculum. The 'modern languages' are in a subject-category, and not categorised as a foundation subject (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018c). This distinction can, however, be seen as pedantic or superfluous: "[…] though in an increasingly globalised world with Internet access this difference [between second and foreign language definition] is becoming less meaningful […] (Allan et al., p. 119). However, in the context of the structuring of the Swedish curriculum for the upper-secondary school, making this distinction is still applicable, since English is considered a foundation subject, whilst a voluntary foreign language such as German is not.

2.4. History and Theory for Second Language Acquisition

Learning a second language is considered a far greater challenge than learning one's mother tongue. In most cases, the mother tongue is learnt 'naturally' when a person grows up in the environment – family and surroundings – where the language is spoken. Acquiring a second language is often more 'unnatural' than the mother tongue, usually in a classroom setting (Allan, Bradshaw, Finch, Burridge & Heydon, 2010, p. 115). Due to this discrepancy, rigorous scientific efforts have been made in order to understand the science behind language acquisition, and multiple theories and approaches have been put forward (Allan et al., p. 119-121). This area in linguistics is in constantly evolving. The field of language acquisition has gone through many changes throughout history (Allan et al., 2010, p. 119-120). Changes were made over time due to previous practices being proven ineffective (Allan et al., 2010, p. 120). Currently, the focus lies on a mixture of behaviourism and structuralism called 'audiolingualism', which encourages, reinforces and emphasises correct sentence and grammar patterns (Allan et al., 2010, p. 120). The focus lies on four core skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing (Allan et al., 2010, p. 120). The purpose of learning a second language in school has also been altered throughout time. These days, the idea of situation-based teaching

is the norm, as it aims to fill a *functional* role wherein students learn specified thematic vocabulary such as ordering, shopping, apologising, etc. (Allan et al., 2010, p 120). A shift has been made from mimicking communication through translation or repeating what a teacher said, to actual communication, as it is proven to be the most efficient way of learning. This, in turn, may lead to added motivation for the students – since a purposeful goal with ESL is present. However, in a school setting, this is still 'artificial communication' as students are not actually in real situations 'at the supermarket' or 'on a holiday trip' when learning such vocabulary.

The motivation factor seems to be an important part of modern language acquisition. Estling Vannestål (2009) claims that "to talk in English with someone who does not know Swedish, or to write to a real recipient may heavily increase the motivation for language-training" (Author's translation; Estling Vannestål, p. 69). Estling Vannestål laments that 'real communication' is lacking in the Swedish classrooms, but states that real communication is on the rise outside school: "Nevertheless, considerably more children and teenagers these days communicate in English in their spare-time, via different message-boards, chat-sites among others" (Author's translation; 2009, p. 69). This form of language acquisition is considered to be most effective, the learner-centred approach: "The target language is increasingly seen as the means of achieving other goals […], rather than as a body of knowledge to be memorized" (Allan et al., 2010, p. 121). This shows that second language acquisition has the potential to be enhanced when a tangible goal is present by talking to native speakers in real situations. Thus social media has the *possibility* to affect the students' learning since such opportunities will occur quite often.

2.5. Digitalisation in the Swedish Curriculum

Digitalisation was recently recognised and implemented by the Swedish National Agency for Education in their official documents. The implementation of said digitalisation was made official on the 1st of July 2018: "[The new amendments] should strengthen the pupils' ability to use and understand digital systems and services, as well as garner a critical and responsible approach to media" (Author's translation; The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018a). The new amendments to the official documents were done on behalf of a directive from the Swedish government in 2017, stating that all of the Swedish curricula should be revised to "clarify the school's mission-statement and strengthen students' digital competence" (Author's translation; Regeringskansliet, 2017, p. 1). In explaining what the new amendments meant in practice, two representatives from the Swedish National Agency for Education, Olof Andersson and Maria Skoglöf, stated the following regarding digitalisation:

- Being able to understand how digitalisation affects society and the individual.
- Being able to use and understand digital tools and media.
- Have a critical and responsible approach to digital technology.
- Being able to solve and translate ideas into actions in a creative way using technology. (Author's translation; The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018a, web)

This interpretation of the digitalisation in practice is how a student should be able to incorporate or use technology and digital tools in both school and life in general, and also think critically about digital information. The 'critical thinking' of these changes is connected to students being able to discern false information from the truth, which is a necessary skill given the rise of 'fake news'. Social media is full of 'fake news' that aims to spread false, skewered or altered fact disguised as legitimate news. Students should be given enough education, information, and

training in distinguishing false information from facts. The terms 'technology' and 'digital tools' in this context are broad and could be utilised in a school setting in a multitude of ways, such as presenting an assignment digitally or have a discussion on how the Internet in general affects globalisation. Social media is part of digitalisation, as it could be one of the technologies/digital tools that affect the individual. Teachers should be able to incorporate both social media and the critical aspect of the new amendments simultaneously, as they both are closely linked together and occupy the same space.

There were no demands for digitalisation in the English courses in the directive from the Swedish government for the upper-secondary school, as compared to the course-syllabi for other core subjects in compulsory school: math, civics and Swedish (Regeringskansliet, 2017, p. 4). Even though no changes were made to the syllabus, there is room for digitalisation. In the English course-syllabus for the upper-secondary school, under the 'Core content' heading for English 5, the phrase 'various forms' – in relation to presenting student's work and material – is present (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 3). It is up to the teachers and the schools on a municipal level to define and infer what 'various forms' could entail for their own students, which may or may not include technology or social media. This could lead to schools with better technological infrastructure or more computer literate teachers who can incorporate digitalisation to a higher degree than those who lack such expertise. The official documents leave a phrase like 'various forms' open for interpretation rather than a strict guideline of what can and cannot be done within any given course in a subject throughout the upper-secondary school.

2.6. The Role of Grammar and Vocabulary Knowledge in the English Subject for Upper-Secondary School

Teaching of grammar and vocabulary in the course-syllabus for English in the upper-secondary school are not explicitly mentioned in the body of the text as knowledge requirements (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 1-14). The lack of any mention of grammar learning in the syllabus for the upper-secondary school can be justified by looking at the syllabus for the compulsory school for the English subject, where grammar is explicitly mentioned in the 'core content' from grades 4 to 9 (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018b, p. 36-37). Students in upper-secondary school are expected to already have the required grammar knowledgebase when they first enter the upper-secondary school.

The learning of grammar in the English syllabus is instead embedded and covered on a general level: "Through teaching students should also be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language […]" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 1). For example, the 'Knowledge Requirement' for grade 'E' for the course English 5, regarding oral and written interaction in the English syllabus highlights this: "[…] students can express themselves in **relatively** varied ways, **relatively** clearly and **relatively** coherently" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 4). This sentence from the syllabus also highlights the students need to be able to express themselves in varied ways by way of their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. For the grade 'A', it is even more apparent that both a good vocabulary and good grammar knowledge is important to fulfil the requirements: "[…] students can express themselves in ways that are varied, clear, coherent **and structured**" (p. 6). The student would have to be more proficient in English grammar in order to accomplish level 'A'. This would also be true for vocabulary, as being able to be 'varied' would imply the use of a broader vocabulary, for example to use synonyms instead of repeating the same word multiple times. One of the aims for the English subject is being able to form "[s]trategies for

contributing to and actively participating in discussions related to societal and working life" (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 4). The writing of the English subject syllabus can be seen as a reflection of current second language acquisition theories, as this field has gone from the passive writing-focused subject to an active communicative subject (Allan et al., 2010), which is what the current syllabus is requiring of the students.

A strict focus on grammar is not included in the course-syllabus for English, yet grammar plays an important role in communication. Grammar proficiency is not the most vital part in conversations. Studies such as Ellis (2012), have found that when a native speaker converses with a non-native speaker, a special 'foreign-talk' register is often used (Ellis, 2012, p. 116). Such a register helps to push the conversation along so all participants are able to understand one another (Ellis, 2012, p. 116-117). Poor vocabulary could, however, be an issue in conversations. Even if the non-native speaker does not use the correct grammar pattern, in most cases a native-speaker would be able to interpret or understand what this person is *trying* to say. Lacking specific words or phrases is however more detrimental, as it could be difficult to talk about a specific topic or item without knowing the correct word. Grammar proficiency does however impact L2 students' ability to progress faster in their L2 proficiency: "Simply put, instructed learners progress at a faster rate, they are likely to develop more elaborate language repertoires and they typically become more accurate than uninstructed learners" (Ortega, 2008, p. 139). A firm structural grammar base does also enable the L2 learners to correct themselves, which in turn may put them even further ahead: "[…] when learners self-corrected as a product of focus and form, learning was enhanced" (Ellis, 2012, p. 253). This indicates that grammar knowledge is required to some extent for communication. From an upper-secondary school point of view, it manifests itself in the form of achieving a higher grade than 'E'. Since the expectation of fluency and cohesion is required for an 'A', it would require a solid grammar background.

3. Theoretical Perspective

This thesis will use a modified version of the FRAME-model[2] (Koole, 2009, p 27) as the theoretical perspective to analyse the role of social media in ESL acquisition. The original FRAME-model, *The Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education*, is a model that takes into account the 'Social' (S) 'Device' (D), and the 'Learner' (L) perspective. These three components will determine the effectiveness of 'Mobile Learning' (DLS)*,* and to what degree it could be beneficial (Koole, 2009, p. 38). The social aspect is the processes of social interaction and cooperation "enabling [individuals] to exchange information, acquire knowledge, and sustain cultural practices" (Koole, 2009, p. 31). The device aspect is determined by its capabilities – physical, input, output, speed, storage and amount of errors (Koole, 2009, p. 28-29). The learner aspect includes: cognitive abilities, memory, prior knowledge, emotions, and possible motivations (Koole, 2009, p. 29).

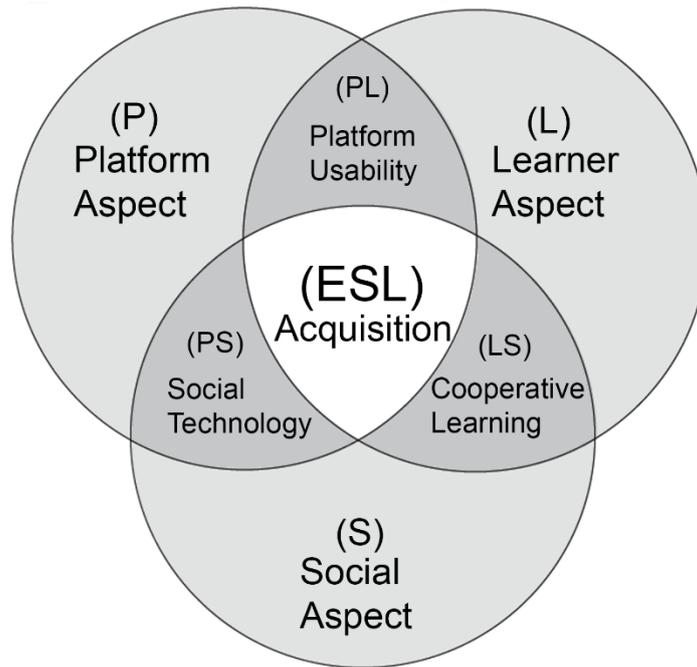[2] See Appendix 2 for the original FRAME model.

Figure 1. The modified FRAME model, based on Koole (Koole, 2007, p. 27).

For this thesis, the 'Device Aspect' has been changed to the 'Platform Aspect' as it better refers to social media as platforms, instead of devices such as phones or tablets. The original definition dealt with factors such as device storage, speed and usability. The modified model instead focuses on ease of use, layout/style and available functionality. The original definition of 'Mobile Learning' has instead been replaced by '(ESL) Acquisition', to better reflect the thesis' topic. 'Cooperative Learning' has replaced the original 'Interaction Learning' to better reflect the chosen studies, although the meaning is still the same – learning through interaction with peers and/or other students. This modified model serves as a basis to build a literature review on, taking into consideration that the social aspect is a key part of *social media*. The *learner* aspect is not modified as its original definition is well suited for this context. The goal of using this modified FRAME model is to see the connections between the three different aspects and whether or not they work in unison to achieve the end-goal of '(ESL) Acquisition'.

4. Methodology and Material

The method used for this thesis is a systematic literature review (Eriksson Barajas, Forsberg & Wengström, 2013, p. 26-28). A systematic literature review "strives to identify all available evidence that is relevant to any given theme" (Eriksson Barajas et al., 2013, p. 28). This thesis can be considered a *limited* literature review, as *all* available evidence was not included. This section explains the process of retrieving relevant studies that were used for this thesis. The chosen literature will briefly be presented in short form detailing participants, methodology and country of origin. A more detailed presentation of the chosen literature is presented in Appendix 1. Lastly, the limitations that were encountered by the retrieval of the literature will be mentioned.

4.1. Method

To retrieve the relevant literature for this systematic literature review the database ERIC[3] was used. Only peer-reviewed literature was sought, which was accounted for in ERIC by limiting the searches to only retrieve peer-reviewed literary sources, this was done by ticking a box. Predetermined search-terms were created, tested and after some trials, put into phrases that could garner the most accurate and relevant literature for the thesis. These search terms were combined together in order to get the desired results. Searching for just 'Social Media' or 'English (Second Language)' separately would have retrieved too many non-relevant results. The different phrases, such as 'Social Media', were retrieved via the database's thesaurus instead of manual input for better accuracy. The table below gives a detailed listing of the used search terms and phrases used, the number of results, abstracts read and subsequently the number of literary sources used for the systematic literature review:

Table 1. Full list of search terms, phrases and the database used, and the subsequent process of screening.

DATABASE	SEARCH TERM(S)	RESULTS	ABSTRACTS READ	USED IN THESIS
ERIC	((DE "English (Second Language)") AND (DE "Social Media")) AND (DE "Grammar")	9	8	5
ERIC	((DE "English (Second Language)") AND (DE "SNS")) AND (DE "Grammar")	172	5	2
MANUAL	Recommendation[4]	-	-	1
TOTAL		181	13	8

From the number of initial results retrieved, the number of search terms that was present on the given studies were put into consideration. The Boolean operator[5] 'AND' was used in-between the different search terms so the result would retrieve literature that had all of the desired search terms. By putting terms and/or phrases in parenthesis, the searches of the actual phrases and/or terms are executed first, and then the Boolean 'AND' operator is taken into account. 'DE' for these searches refers to an exact search for the given term(s) within the parenthesis, which will alleviate randomness in a replication of the thesis literature collection process.

The abstracts of the papers that were considered the most relevant for this thesis were then read and thus further screened for relevancy. If the modified FRAME model *could* be applied to the presented findings in the abstract, the full paper was read. Notes about the chosen material were written down in a separate document that summarised their methodology, material and findings. These notes were then condensed down further into a table, containing just the

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[3] See Appendix 3 for a link to the database.
[4] Recommended by the supervisor.
[5] See https://libguides.mit.edu/c.php?g=175963&p=1158594 for an explanation of the different Boolean operators.

relevant findings that would be applicable to this thesis. See appendix 1 for the summation of all the papers in the aforementioned condensed table.

4.2. Material

The chosen material looks at various ways that social media can or could have implications for ESL grammar or vocabulary proficiency gains for students' education in school, as well as motivational factors for ESL learning on social media. This short list presents the names of the studies, number of participants when available, and country of origin, as a brief presentation of the studies' methodology used for the limited systematic literature review.

Kasuma's (2017) *Four Characteristics of Facebook Activities for English Language Learning: A study of Malaysian University Students' Needs and Preference* uses a content analysis on a Facebook group set up for their study, wherein 22 classes at a University in Malaysia were able to participate and interact in English on an L2 ESL basis. The content analysis is supplemented by voluntary semi-structured interviews with participants.

Hamada's (2012) *A Facebook Project for Japanese University Students: Does it Really Enhance Student Interaction, Learner Autonomy, and English Abilities?* makes use of a mixed-method approach, a questionnaire for the study's 13 participants in a Japanese University, and data-analysis via written assignments (on Facebook), examining interactions, autonomy and English grammar, proficiency, and vocabulary gains.

Amin et al.'s (2016) have 100 participants, 65 males and 35 females at a University in Malaysia in their study *The Practice of "Grammar Naziness" on Facebook in Relation to Generating Grammar Learning: A Motivation or Demotivation in Updating Statuses in English on Facebook.* This study uses a Likert-scale questionnaire regarding these students attitude towards learning grammar on Facebook and if they felt motivated or not towards being corrected on their mistakes by peers.

Gonzalez-Vera (2016) *The E-generation: The Use of Technology for Foreign Language Learning*, sent out a questionnaire about social media usage, its potential benefits and preferred platforms to learn English to 200 students aged 18-19 at a university in Spain.

Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) use a mixed-method approach with a questionnaire, diaries, various tests and grades in their study *Out-of-School Digital Gameplay and In-School L2 English Vocabulary Outcomes.* This study consists of 80 participants aged 15-16, 44 females and 36 males in Sweden.

Dizon's (2016) *A Comparative Study on Facebook vs. Paper-and-Pencil Writing to Improve L2 Writing Skills* examines if there are any differences in grammar and vocabulary proficiency between using Facebook or pen-and-paper in a school setting. This is a comparative study between two groups with a total of 30 participants, 17 males and 13 females at a university in Japan.

Villafuerte and Romero (2017) *Learners' Attitudes towards Foreign Language Practice on Social Network Sites* use a quantitate approach with a Likert scale questionnaire measuring attitude towards English language learning on social media. A

total of 200 participants, 75 females and 45 males participated from both a University in Spain and one in Ecuador.

Ventura and Martín-Monje's (2016) *Learning Specialised Vocabulary through Facebook in a Massive Open Online Course*, uses a mixed-method approach with quantitative techniques – student tracking on Facebook and an online course – and qualitative techniques with observations and questionnaires[6]. 657 students from a University in Spain participated.

4.3. Limitations

Due to the time-restricted nature of this thesis, it can be considered a *limited* systematic literature review as all available data are not able to be examined and reviewed. Separate searches for the term 'vocabulary' were not made for the data collection. The chosen studies included research regarding grammar *and* vocabulary in their studies, so no separate searches regarding 'vocabulary' were found necessary.

Another limitation of this systematic literature review is the age groups of the participants, as they do not correlate to the exact age of Swedish students in upper-secondary school. Studies examine social media on age-groups outside the Swedish upper-secondary school, mainly at the age of 18-26, but also some older adults since anyone over the age of 18 can attend university. That fact should have little impact, as the focus lies on whether or not social media has benefits or not on younger ESL learners grammar and vocabulary proficiency in relation to their school performance. The age groups are still in the categorization of younger people, and also the age group most active on social media (Statista, 2018b; Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 9). Villafuerte and Romero's (2017) age group deviates somewhat from the other studies age-group, as some of their participants are older than 26. But the majority of their participants falls within the 16-26 age-group (Villafuerte and Romero, 2017, p. 149). The last limitation that should be mention is that Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) examines *gaming* rather than social media. This study was chosen in an attempt to find out whether or not social media stands out in terms of grammar and vocabulary gains compared to another common digital platform, such as gaming.

5. Results

This section will present the findings from the limited systematic review of the chosen literature by applying the theoretical perspective, the modified FRAME model, to the chosen studies. The three categories of the modified FRAME model provides the organisation of the different sub-sections.

5.1. The Social Aspect

Perhaps the most notable aspect in the modified FRAME model is the social aspect, as this aspect sets social media apart from other types of media due to its possibilities for peer-to-peer interactions. The social aspect seems to be the main reason why social media has such

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[6] Questionnaires are categorised as a qualitative approach in this study. Generally, it is considered a quantitative approach.

penetration amongst younger ESL learners, and the social nature of these social media platforms have more implications for ESL acquisition amongst the three aspects of the modified FRAME model.

5.1.1. Motivation

Amin et al. (2016) show that respondents felt it was beneficial to be corrected by other learners who possessed more knowledge, with the caveat that it was done in a pedagogical and constructive manner. (Amin et al., p. 99). The respondents' expressed the desire for a 'public way' of being helped on Facebook, meaning that the 'grammar-Nazi' should comment on the person's feed instead of privately messaging them, since this would benefit *others* because other students could then learn from the original mistake(s) (Amin et al., p. 99). Kasuma (2017) finds that the active participants, the ones that posted and commented in the established Facebook group for the study, felt a boost in confidence and *motivation* to use English in a public space since a social component to the Facebook group was present. Similarly, Gonzalez-Vera (2016) and Hamada (2012) find that the younger generation is motivated to use social media *because* of the social aspect since this generation feels the need to be able to interact and participate. Hamada (2012) stresses the *motivation* for social interaction as a way to improve and continue learning English as a second language. Hamada (2012) is interested in social media as a way to enhance interactions and autonomy for English as a second language. The results from that study show that the students were *motivated* to continue learning English as a way to participate, by being able to read/understand and write posts and/or comments on social media sites. One participant in Hamada (2012) claims that: "I got in the habit of looking up words in a dictionary and learning new expressions" (Hamada, p. 107), as an answer to what way the students saw benefits in using a social media for their second language. Gonzalez-Vera (2016) shows via a questionnaire that was conducted, that participants had the same sentiments as the participants in Hamada (2012). They felt a 'need' to pursue additional English language knowledge in order to be a part and participate with various social media.

Villafuerte and Romero's (2017) study shows that different social media can be used to *motivate* reading, writing and speaking practices in English as a second language: "SNS [Social Network Services] allow learners to produce their own content […] and practices. Such active participation stimulates learners' creativity and collaborative abilities […] during their studies" (p. 145). This highlights the positive features of the social interactions that social media is able to facilitate, thus leading to more motivation to improve one's language abilities. Villafuerte and Romero (2017) highlight that different forms of social media platforms are able to motivate different language skill areas. What all these studies (Kasuma, 2017; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Hamada, 2012; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017) have in common is that the research shows that social media in itself is more of a *facilitator* to *motivate* increased *learning*, rather than something solely used for learning or training. The results show that the actual *learning* comes as a byproduct of motivation to partake on the social media platform(s).

5.1.2. Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency

A form of cooperative learning amongst ESL learners is brought up in studies as a positive aspect within the social media space in regards to grammar and vocabulary proficiency. Amin et al. (2016) use the term 'Grammar Nazi' to define learners on Facebook that are willing to help out their peers: "a "teacher" (a grammar Nazi) feels it is his duty to correct the errors made by a "learner". […] other Facebook users who perform unofficial duty as grammar Nazi think they have a responsibility to correct." (Amin et al., p, 84). Amin et al. find that this form of

cooperative learning has a positive effect on grammar and vocabulary. Amin et al.'s (2016) study suggest that social media – Facebook – *may* be beneficial in ESL acquisition in terms of vocabulary. Ventura and Martín-Monje (2016) share a similar view on the grammar acquisition, claiming that the usage of social media groups does show that grammar and vocabulary abilities were enhanced when students could interact and help one another cooperatively. Sundqvist and Wikström (2015), conclude that students that actively play videogames[7] showed *some* lexical improvements over students who did not play videogames, although not being able to prove causality, they claim there is a clear pattern (2015, p. 73).

Other studies also show a weak link between social media usage and an increased vocabulary. Kasuma's (2017) research uses social media as a platform to learn in a more academic context. Kasuma (2017) points out that barely 50% of the participants in the study were actively writing and posting (p. 158), but speculates that the other 50% of the participants were also learning: "the abundance of silent readers or pedagogical lurkers, rather than producers of knowledge and content [were present]" (Kasuma, 2017, p. 158). It is implied that the passive participants still learn because they are able to read what their active peers are posting. This is backed up by interviews, where passive participants found the usage of a Facebook group's social aspects as a benefit to their communicative abilities. Dizon's (2016) findings also show that social media has a *potential* to support L2 language learning, particularly when it comes to promoting meaningful communications and learner interactions (Dizon, 2016, p. 1250). Dizon's (2016) findings show that the Facebook group in that study only had *slightly* more improvements in grammar and vocabulary proficiency compared to a pen-and-paper group that did the exact same tasks (Dizon, 2016). This study was conducted in such a way that social media, Facebook, was used for an academic purpose, similar to Kasuma (2017), as an individualised examination tool, rather than a way for students to interact with peers. Gonzalez-Vera (2016) claims that 64% of the participants in that study used and engaged in English activities on websites and social media, mainly to motivate learning but also for improving their ESL abilities, though to what extent improvements were made is not stated (2016, p. 56). Hamada (2012) is also ambiguous when it comes to how many *actual* improvements were made, claiming that the Facebook project helped them improve their English abilities one way or another (Hamada, p. 106). A more tangible result concerning the vocabulary is seen in Ventura and Martín-Monje (2016) wherein that study shows that 95% of the participants that used the study's own Facebook group saw improvements in their vocabulary. However, only 39% of the participants deem this improvement as 'significant' (2016, p. 126).

5.2. The Platform Aspect

The platform aspect determines what type of proficiency gains are made possible in connection to the platform used. Some platforms will be better suited for immediate interactions, whilst some social media platforms could be better used for grammar and vocabulary proficiency via reading or listening. It is possible to compare and contrast the different results shown in studies to garner tangible evidence regarding the importance and relevancy of a well-utilised platform.

5.2.1. Motivation

The platform aspect can play a huge role in engaging and motivating its users to further their ESL acquisition. One motivating factor for the participants, in all cases young people, is a

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[7] Videogames in this study are examined for its interactive elements, akin to social media; reading, listening and talking/writing with fellow players.

willingness to accept social media, and the fact that many of them use social media platforms (Davidsson et.al, 2018, p. 50). This is brought up in virtually all of the studies, and Kasuma (2017) serves as a good example to illustrate this point when discussing the increase of participants in the conducted study: "The big number of members accumulated in a short period of time indicates the students' interest in engaging with social media technology to improve their English language skills" (Kasuma, p. 157). This *could* be an indication that the platform itself is of interest for these students.

The design of a platform such as Facebook enables the learners to explore and interact with a wider user-base which in turn seems to increase motivation to further expand on one's English abilities to partake and understand English in a broader context (Hamada, 2012; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016). Hamada (2012) shows that the areas of writing and reading – grammar and vocabulary – are affected in the study conducted with Facebook, whereas Gonzalez-Vera (2016) shows that participants use YouTube for listening. Participants in Gonzalez-Vera (2016) claimed that listening to music or conversations on YouTube improved their pronunciation and vocabulary, and participants also claimed that Facebook helped them improve writing and reading. This shows that the way a platform is designed will likely help the users in their ESL acquisition in different language areas[8] (Allen et al., 2010, p. 120). Similar trends on how different social media platforms are important are expanded upon in Villafuerte and Romero (2017). In that study, the most popular social media platform amongst the participants is YouTube for ESL *practicing*. YouTube is mainly used for passively *listening* to English rather than actively *writing* or *reading* – which is better facilitated on social media platforms such as Facebook which main focus lies on communication. This is the case, even though YouTube has comment sections that enables communication, yet it is first and foremost a platform for uploading and/or viewing videos.

In this context, motivation and interest are factors in wanting to expand one's English knowledge, and different social media platforms help facilitate various areas of English language improvements. The importance of the platform's role in ESL acquisition is found in Dizon (2016). That study used the platform as an individualised examination tool rather than utilising the social aspects. The social aspect enables and facilitates peer-to-peer interactions with peers and/or native English speakers which many of the other studies were able to incorporate. When studies facilitated peer-to-peer interaction, those studies garnered the most favourable results in relation to social media usage in grammar and vocabulary proficiency, and fostered motivation for further learning. Dizon's (2016) participants show the least amount of positive attitudes among the studies towards using a social media platform as a tool for ESL acquisition due to not facilitating the platforms full potential.

5.2.2. Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency

From the grammar and vocabulary perspective, the way a social media platform is designed seems to have implications. Facebook's design in the context of writing and reading enables improvements for one's grammar and vocabulary, which is shown in the results in Amin et al. (2016):

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[8] Listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The respondents of the present study mostly view positively the function of Facebook as a tool for generating grammar learning as they admit that this social networking site offers the opportunity to Facebook users to correct someone's grammar errors in their English statuses on Facebook, which […] indicates a collaborative learning of grammar can be promoted probably through the functions of Facebook such as comment box, emoticons and so on. (p. 100)

The participants in Amin et al. (2016) stress that the *functions* of Facebook enable collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is more suited to Facebook for English learning, rather than person to person. A response to a comment does not have to occur in real time, giving a respondent time to think through their comment or look up relevant information before making a statement on someone's grammar errors. Not taking full advantage of a platform may have negative implications on ESL acquisition. Dizon's (2016) usage of Facebook did not fully utilise the platform aspect since the platform is used as an individualised examination tool, quite similar to writing a document in a program such as 'Word'. No promotion of interaction between students and/or peers was encouraged, essentially eliminating the possible benefits social media has to offer for ESL acquisition. Dizon's (2016) results show that no significant improvements in regards to grammar and vocabulary improvement were made by the participants for that study (Dizon, p. 1256-1257).

5.3. The Learner Aspect
The learner aspect in the modified FRAME model determines whether or not any actual knowledge is gained or not. This aspect of the modified FRAME model is blending in with the other two aspects, as this is the aspect that determines if the *learner* is able to *learn* through the social or platform aspect.

5.3.1. Motivation
Prior knowledge is an important part of the learner aspect in the modified FRAME model, and it is brought up in the literature (Dizon, 2016; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Ventura and Martín-Monje, 2016; Hamada, 2012). The level of prior knowledge is related to the aspect of motivation, since insufficient knowledge in English may push users to seek out *more* knowledge (Hamada, 2012; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016). The findings point towards a 'desire' to learn English for one's *own* sake as motivation (Hamada, 2012; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Amin et al., 2016); whilst others (Dizon, 2016; Kasuma, 2017) approach ESL acquisition for social media with an academic angle. Kasuma (2017) points out the difference in formal and informal learning interests, namely the gap between what a syllabus might ask of students in an ESL context and what the students perceive as 'learning English'. This highlights the difference between *personal end goal* and the *syllabus end goal*. The studies that highlight a personal end goal (Hamada, 2012; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Amin et. al, 2016) appears to garner the most favourable attitudes towards learning ESL via social media usage.

The platform itself is important in enabling the learning aspect of the modified FRAME model. Villafuerte and Romero (2017) show that the most popular social media for learning amongst their participants is YouTube for ESL *practising*. YouTube is used mainly for *listening* to English to improve both grammar and vocabulary, rather than actively *writing* or *reading* – which may be better facilitated on a platform such as Facebook. Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) share similar thoughts, that the platform – different interactive games – is the main contributor to motivation. In this context, motivation or interest is a factor in wanting to expand one's English knowledge, and different platforms help facilitate different end-goals. The idea

of strictly learning via social media as a tool for education is shown to not have any significant results. Dizon (2016) and Kasuma (2017) use social media for ESL acquisition as an academic tool rather than a social platform. The main sentiments from participants in these studies were that they lack motivation and interest to further their knowledge when using social media in a strictly academic situation.

5.3.2. Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency

Engaging with different social media platforms has grammar *and* vocabulary benefits for learners in the learner aspect, as these platforms act as an outlet to either write, read, speak or listen – depending on what social media platform is used. Three of the studies aim at examining proficiency for ESL learners on a social media platform (Dizon, 2016; Hamada, 2012; Kasuma, 2017). Coincidently, these three were the ones that found the least benefits in using social media when looking at grammar and vocabulary proficiency, and when using social media as a platform tied to the school activities. Other studies (Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Amin et al., 2016; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017; Ventura & Martín-Monje, 2016) did notice an increase in the participants' grammar proficiency in ESL when they were active on social media more freely outside of a teacher controlled environment. Even though Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) examine gaming and extramural gaming, they present similar arguments as the studies examining social media outside a school setting (Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Amin et al., 2016; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017; Ventura & Martín-Monje, 2016). Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) find that there are measurable, although small, increases in grammar and vocabulary proficiency among students that are actively engaging with English outside the classroom.

6. Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate whether an incorporation of social media in the Swedish upper-secondary ESL classroom can be beneficial due to its close ties with student's everyday life. This thesis argues that incorporation of social media into the upper-secondary school could indeed be beneficial due to it having a motivational factor that drives students to further knowledge seeking. The coming sections will further discuss the posed research questions and show why this thesis argues that incorporation could be beneficial.

This thesis has also shown that a modified version of Koole's (2009) FRAME model can be applicable to ESL acquisition into a social media context. There are however some factors that play a bigger role in how the learners are able to achieve ESL acquisition in this digital space. This section of the thesis will discuss the results in relation to the two research questions and try to establish whether motivation from a social aspect, wanting to socialize with peers and people, or the learner aspect, motivation to learn in and of itself, are equally important or if one or another is more important.

6.1. Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency by Engaging with Social Media

The first research question for the thesis was:

- What proficiency gains regarding grammar and vocabulary can be seen in ESL students who engage with social media?

These studies showed no pattern of any *significant* grammar or vocabulary gains for students who interact or engage with social media. Although some studies did find some positive

grammar and/or vocabulary gains from interacting with social media, though these gains were quite small. There are however proficiency gains by engaging with social media. These could perhaps be due to some surrounding factors outside of the social media space, such as willingness to learn, and by looking at a longer timeframe than the studies set out to do.

6.1.1. The Social and Platform Aspects as Means of Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency

Although motivation plays a role in a 'want' or 'need' to increase one's proficiency in ESL, using social media platforms by itself did not show any positive effects. There is a slight difference between the studies that examined grammar and vocabulary proficiency on social media platforms in a school setting (Dizon, 2016; Hamada, 2012; Kasuma, 2017) and the ones that did not (Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Amin et al., 2016; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017; Ventura & Martín-Monje, 2016). The reasoning for the difference found between the studies is most likely dependent on the factor of *motivation* when using social media more freely. One main reason found throughout the studies was that the participants felt a desire to understand what other peers posted in English (Amin et al., 2016; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Ventura & Martín-Monje, 2016; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017). The participating students felt a desire to understand and be a part of a greater conversation with a broad user-base. This desire is something that the Swedish upper-secondary school should capitalize on, since one of the aims of the English subject is to foster a desire within the students to use English (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2012b, p. 1). This motivation is a driving force to continued learning and expanding ESL grammar and vocabulary proficiency.

From a general social aspect, Kasuma (2017) and Amin et al. (2016) were able to show that it actually had implications for the students' proficiency levels. This can be put in the category of *cooperative learning*[9] within the modified FRAME model, and cooperative learning is actually discussed in these two studies. Amin et al. (2016) bring up the value of the platform aspect in the modified FRAME model, as Facebook *enables* cooperative learning via peer interactions. This 'self-correcting' behaviour has been proven to enhance grammar fluency in other studies (Ellis, 2012, p. 253), which is indeed the case in, for example, Amin et al. (2016). When the students were able to correct each other, and to an extent themselves, the results point towards an increase in grammar fluency. These studies are in line with what Allan et al. (2010) mention about the current state of language acquisition, because these 'real' scenarios should be the main focus when students practice their language skills (Allan et al., 2010). The Swedish National Agency for Education would indeed benefit in promoting these types of interactions, as the syllabus for the English subject states that: "Knowledge of English increases the individual's opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts […] (2012b, p. 1). In addition, Estling Vannestål (2009) points out the lack of 'real communication' (2009, p. 69) in Swedish schools. Social media has the ability to facilitate the 'real' interactions, which means that students can interact and participate with various social and cultural contexts. It is easier in a classroom setting to control the *social* context, given that a teacher might set up a Facebook group for a specific class or a specific number of students. To interact with different cultural groups can be difficult to facilitate in the classroom without the use of social media. Schools can thus facilitate cross-cultural interaction since social media is global. For example, it is possible that a class in Sweden could be linked together with a native English-speaking country, to better interact with an English-speaking country, because of the global nature of social media.

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[9] See figure 1.

Real communication can be achieved by utilising different types of social media platforms, such as Skype, which relies heavily on speaking one-on-one or in a group setting. This shows a link between what one might learn on different platforms, in terms of *platform usability*[10]. This gives credence to the platform aspects as a factor in whether or not ESL acquisition can be achieved. It is however not a binary question with either 'it will happen' or 'it won't happen', rather 'to what degree' and 'in what way'. This reinforces the view that the platform is the facilitator for learning, with various platforms enabling the *acts* of writing, reading and/or listening. Facebook, as an example, is very prolific for the areas of writing and reading due to its structure and layout. The same layout and functions also serve as a good way to facilitate the social aspect of the modified FRAME model, as it is easy to explore and meet peers (Hamada, 2012) and communicate through posts and messages in private or in groups (Amin et al., 2010; Kasuma, 2017).

6.1.2. Motivation for Learning vs. Actual Proficiency

There *is* a correlation between the social aspect and the learner aspect in terms of *motivating* one another. Establishing a clear link between actual proficiency gains and social media usage is however harder. When examining interactions within video games, Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) found that the platform showed no difference in terms of actual proficiency gain as compared to social media. In fact, the results shown by both social media and video games tend to point in the same direction. Both display very slight advancements in grammar and vocabulary proficiency, but a motivational factor that taps into the participant's desire for further knowledge. (Dizon, 2016; Hamada, 2012; Kasuma, 2017; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016; Ventura & Martín-Monje, 2016). In theory, this should not be the case. Allan et al. (2010, p. 119-120) point out that the most recent findings in the field of language acquisition is the transition from mimicking communication to actual communication, and that it should lead to 'optimal learning' by today's language acquisition standards (Allan et al., 2010, p. 120-121). Social media *should* be a great facilitator for this, and from the point of motivation it is – but maybe not from actual immediate proficiency gains point-of-view. The question of how one utilises the platform does come into play. Dizon (2016) for example used the platform Facebook solely as an examination tool. This indicates a break off from the modified FRAME model where the study separates the three categories. The learner aspect and the platform aspect is still there, but the social aspect is missing. At this point, the platform serves the same purpose as 'pen-and-paper' where students just write down their assignment via a keyboard instead of a pencil. In essence, this defeats the purpose of using social media from the modified FRAME model. However, this way of examination does have *other* implications in learning. Using it this way is a potential enabler in faster and more open communication and dialogue between student(s) and the teacher(s). However, that is outside the scope of this thesis.

6.1.3. Short or Long Term Results

Evidently the findings in these studies do not tell the whole story regarding grammar and vocabulary proficiency. The studies were conducted over a relatively short period of time, often a semester – around fifteen weeks. Using the modified FRAME model, one can argue that taking the approach of motivating students could yield better proficiency results *long term*. Even though Sundqvist and Wikström (2015) examines gaming, they show that students who had previously engaged with English in an online environment showed better results in

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[10] See figure 1.

proficiency. That principle is also highlighted in Ventura and Martín-Monje (2016), as they point out that the participants claimed that they indeed saw an increase in proficiency when active on Facebook (p. 125). However, that is based on statements made by the participants through a questionnaire and not on measurable data. The studies all agree that there are ESL acquisition benefits in engaging and using social media for learners of a second language. Yet they also tend to point out that further research on this topic is required to better pinpoint how to best utilise social media in a school environment. This field of studies is relatively young, approximately ten years old, and there are likely factors that need further examination. One of them is potentially looking at a longitudinal study, perhaps in terms of years, rather than over one semester. As stated, the motivation to participate in the social space leads to motivation in learning. Though the actual process of acquiring substantial knowledge outside a strict learning environment, such as classes or courses, may manifest *later on* rather than being something immediate. Logically, this has some merit if you compare this to language acquisition from the point of view of how schools operate. Take for example how much time is spent on any given subject throughout a student's tenure in school. That indicates in general that proficiency is gained *slowly* over a longer period of time, and learning in classes often much more intensive – homework, exams – especially when compared to the passive nature of English learning that one experiences in one's spare time engaging with social media. Compared to a traditional school length learning period, learning through social media can have an impact on proficiency. But as this is done over a short period of time, a semester, it is difficult to get clear evidence on actual grammar and vocabulary proficiency gains over a longer period of time.

6.2. Motivation by Engaging with Social Media

The second research question for this thesis was:

- How is motivation related to proficiency gains from social media usage?

The results of this thesis show that motivation is the strongest factor when it comes to grammar and vocabulary proficiency gain when using social media. Even though this thesis just discussed the small amounts of *actual* proficiency gains, the motivation to use social media can have a positive effect over a longer period of time.

6.2.1. Motivation for Future Grammar and Vocabulary Proficiency Gains

According to the research covered here the most important motivational factor is the social aspect of social media. Being able to participate, understand and interact with peers is the most motivational factor for continuing to develop one's ESL abilities. The presence of a real-world interaction is something that the latest findings in language acquisition theory are working towards (Allan et al., 2010), so from that point of view social media, and perhaps the Internet in general, is well suited to be used in a learning context. Studies analyzed in this thesis show that this is the case (Hamada, 2012; Villafuerte & Romero, 2017; Amir et al., 2016; Kasuma, 2016, Gonzalez-Vera, 2016). This could be because the ESL learners in the studies felt an urge to be a part of the current social climate of social media. This urge can perhaps be explained by the sheer number of students in upper-secondary school who use social media on a daily basis; for Sweden, the number is currently at 71-73% (Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 50). This number is expected to grow in the coming years, so it is no surprise that this age group is motivated to engage with social media since most of their peers are engaged with social media. And it is this social aspect that motivates students to participate. The results show that this motivates these students to either seek out knowledge in their attempt to understand and interact

with a broader user-base on social media platforms. These studies do have a positive outlook on social media usage in relation to English language acquisition. Though most of the studies do not highlight participants whom may be content with their ESL abilities and were instead more motivated by the social media platform itself. Since the studies focus on L2 English, social media usage in their respective mother tongue may be overlooked by the studies.

Although Gonzalez-Vera (2016) does not show whether or not any proficiency gains were made throughout the study, it does shed some light on why the social aspect is important: "students showed their enthusiasm for technology as they associate it with fun […]" (p. 56). This is valuable knowledge, as it indicates that technology and social media can be related to *motivation* to use and learn English; a 'desire' to learn ESL since it benefits students' personal goals. Hamada (2012) also brings up the aspect of 'fun' in engaging with peers, quoting participants from that study: "I also communicated with more people on Facebook and enjoyed chatting in English" (Hamada, p. 107). Another student had a similar view: "It was fun to look into communities and get information about foreign people" (Hamada, p. 107). This indicates that the social aspect of social media is motivation enough to continue learning English, as learners' wish to understand and be a part of wider communities.

The social motivation indicates that it also leads to motivation in the learner aspect of the modified FRAME model (Hamada, 2012; Kasuma, 2017; Gonzalez-Vera, 2016), which in theory should be in line with the current findings of language acquisition theory (Allan et al., 2010). Kasuma (2017) points out that passive participants found the use of a Facebook group *beneficial* in their online communication abilities, whilst the active participants felt a boost in *motivation* to *use* English as a second language in a public space – such as on social media. This can be seen as a 'training ground' for further physical public spaces. This is what Allan et al. (2010) describe as the current state of how schools should view the role of a second language: "Communicative approaches to language teaching have changed learners from passive recipients of information […] to active agents in their own learning. The target language is increasingly seen as the means of achieving other goals […]" (2010, p. 121). Learning ESL to achieve other goals, the desire to interact with peers on social media, is seen when looking at ESL acquisition from the social aspect of the modified FRAME model.

6.2.2. Platform Motivation
The platform aspect of the modified FRAME model seems to play the role of *facilitator* to motivate rather than using the platform itself as the main motivation. The studies imply that the main draw of using and engaging with social media is the social element, though one can make a claim that the platform itself is a draw. Young peoples' willingness to accept social media platforms and how many of them participate may give valuable insight to this claim (Davidsson et.al, 2018, p. 50). This is brought up in virtually all of the studies, and Kasuma (2017) provides a good example when talking about the increase in participants in the study: "The big number of members accumulated in a short period of time indicates the students' interest in engaging with social media technology to improve their English language skills" (Kasuma, 2017, p. 157). This is an indication that the social media platforms are in the interest sphere of these students. Ultimately though it is undetermined whether the platform itself or its social aspects are the main motivational factor to potentially lead to ESL acquisition. The studies used for this literature review do not examine ESL acquisition from this point of view, which is something that future studies may be interested in exploring.

7. Conclusions

This thesis has found that the reviewed studies show no significant grammar or vocabulary proficiency ESL gains in relation to their English L2 performance by students using social media. But the reviewed studies do highlight that social media *is* beneficial for ESL L2 performance since it encourages ESL students to acquire more ESL knowledge as a by-product of a desire to be a part of the greater conversation that is facilitated on various social media platforms. With the help of a modified *Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education* model by Koole (2009, p. 27), the major contributor to *why* social media works in relation to acquiring and improving English as a second language for its users is a *motivational* element of the social aspect. However, the studies examined point out that further research on this topic is required to better understand *why* this relationship between ESL acquisition and social media usage exists. This thesis suggests that the social aspects of social media lead to motivation, which leads to an increase in the desire to further one's ESL knowledge. The platform aspect is, it seems, the least important for ESL acquisition, as it itself does not appear to be a significant factor in this process. However, it plays the role of facilitator for the aspects of the modified FRAME model. Nevertheless, it is still very much relevant to the modified FRAME model, as different social media platforms will benefit different areas of language acquisition depending on its layout and functions. That is why a platform such as Facebook can be beneficial for writing and reading proficiency, whereas a platform such as Skype is better suited for speaking, and YouTube mainly for developing listening skills. The actual grammar and vocabulary proficiency gains within the confinements of social media *have* potential, but studies indicate that the proficiency gains are marginal. However, the timespan for expected grammar and vocabulary improvements may prove to be longer than most of these studies were able to show.

The rise of social media has indeed had a positive effect on students learning English as a second language, as it is a part of their daily life for an increasing number of people. Since it is prevalent in everyday life for many, a clear motivational factor is present to engage with multiple social media platforms. The level of exposure and the possibilities of 'real interactions' with native speakers and peers is indeed a contributing factor for both motivation and actual language acquisition according to language acquisition theory. These 'real interactions' are what the most recent findings in language acquisition theory call for but within a classroom dynamic; 'real interactions' are still just replications and imitations. Social media is an easy way of experience the 'real interaction' for oneself without having to travel abroad, since it normally just requires Internet connection and access to either a phone or a computer – factors which are expected to further increase in availability worldwide in the coming years.

7.1. Implications for Swedish Upper-Secondary School Classrooms

For the English syllabus in the Swedish upper-secondary school, these findings have positive implications. Although the usage of social media is shown to only have a minor effect on proficiency gains in terms of grammar and vocabulary, the main reason Swedish schools should take notice of social media implementation is due to its motivational potential. The age group of young people, 16-26 (Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 50), appear to be already motivated to expand their ESL knowledge as a result of social motivation found on social media. Even though some of the reviewed studies had participants outside of this age bracket for the Swedish upper-secondary school, most of the participants were still within a similar age range as students in the Swedish upper-secondary school. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, approximately 71-73% of Swedes in the age-bracket of 16-26 engage with social media on a daily basis one way or another, so this age group is already heavily involved in this activity

(Davidsson et al., 2018, p. 50). The overall curriculum for the upper-secondary school is written in such a way that education should have relevance to a student's daily life, and the data presented by Davidsson et al. (2018) indicates that social media is closely connected to it. Given the proven motivational factors that drive the student's desire to expand on their ESL knowledge as a means to participate further on various social media, it is in the schools' interest to capture this desire and use it as a tool to further ESL knowledge in the classroom.

The newest amendments to various syllabi did not affect the English subject, however, there is still a possibility to incorporate social media into the education in the unaltered syllabus. Given the fact that it is currently written in an open-ended way, stating that students should show their knowledge in various ways, and aim for a desire to use English, incorporation of social media platforms can be achieved whilst still adhering to the syllabus writing. This thesis suggests that Swedish schools should capitalize on that, and incorporate social media into their regular rotation of tools used within the classroom to enhance students' motivation towards further ESL grammar and vocabulary proficiency.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summation of the literature used.

Name of literature	Author(s)	Participants	Method	Findings
The Practice of "Grammar Naziness" on Facebook in Relation to Generating Grammar Learning: A Motivation or Demotivation in Updating Statuses in English on Facebook.	Noraziah Mohd Amin, Noor Azam Abdul Rahman, Mohamad-Noor Sharipudin, Mohd Saifulnizam Abu Bakar.	100 participants. 65 males, 35 females, 18-21. Malaysia.	Questionnaire with 37 items (questions), divided into two segments: 1) Grammar learning on Facebook. 2) Feeling motivated or demotivated towards being corrected by grammar Nazis. Each item in the questionnaire was measured in terms of the respondents' level of agreement or disagreement or neutral state, using 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (SD)= 1, Disagree (D)= 2, Uncertain (U)= 3, Agree (A)= 4, and Strongly Agree (SA)= 5.	Found that respondents in their survey generally liked being corrected on their grammar mistakes on their Facebook statuses. If these 'grammar Nazis' explained themselves in a pedagogic way and were not rude, plus they also would prefer if the 'Nazis' would explain the grammar rules public, so that *other* readers could learn from their mistakes. Thus leading to increased *motivation* for improving overall ESL grammar knowledge. Promotes grammar learning and wants to encourage it in any way shape or form, as the authors study shows, grammar learning is possible on a social media platform as is valid. Claims that grammar learning strategies are not researched well enough as compared to other parts of language, thus this paper can supply information regarding utilisation of social media as platforms and a strategy in learning (English) grammar.
Four Characteristics of Facebook Activities for English Language Learning: A study of Malaysian University	Kasuma, Shaidatul Akma Adi.	Gathered students from 22 classes, first and	*Content analysis* of their a Facebook groups interaction,	This study identifies four characteristics of English language activities on Facebook. These characteristics are the ones

Students' Needs and Preference		second year at a University in Malaysia. Students took English-courses [Basic course] [No number of participant nor is gender disclosed, although it is stated that they went from 360 week one to approximately 600 by week six (Kasuma, p. 158)]	made for the study, and semi-structured *interviews*.	prover 'the most engaging/best': Teacher-led activities, teachers' presence, (group) structure and topics/content to discuss. These characteristics can thus be seen as a 'formula' for using social media in a learning context. Though it found that barely 50 % of the participants were active in writing and posting, so student activity were quite 'low' if one would use this in educational purposes. They however speculate that more participants were passively reading and learning. Passive participants via the interviews found the usage of a Facebook group beneficial in their online communication abilities, whilst the active participants felt a boost in *confidence/motivation* to *use* English as a second language in a public space – like social media. Points out differences in formal and informal learning interests. This paper points out the gap between what a curriculum might ask of students in ESL (grammar and such) and what the students themselves perceive as 'learning ESL' in their spare time, for their own benefit. This highlights the difference between *personal end goal* and the *curriculums end goal*.
A comparative study on Facebook vs. paper-	Dizon, Gilbert.	Two groups,	Comparative study in Japan	A comparative study in Japan on ESL *writing*.

|		Facebook group: 16 people. Paper-and-pen group: 14. Total 30. Total of 17 male, 13 female. Convenience sampling.	on ESL *writing*. Studies fluency, lexical richness and grammar accuracy. 12 week period, with two in-class "focused 'free-writings'" a week. A total of 24. To test the participants' knowledge, three different writing assessments were administered throughout this period. One at the beginning, the middle and the end.	Studies fluency, lexical richness and grammar accuracy. Shows that social media, in an academic context, had a positive influence on language fluidity for both groups, but the Facebook group had more improvements. Though the results shows how hard it is for ESL students to have a broad(er) vocabulary. Both groups showed no significant improvements in both lexical knowledge and grammar accuracy. Though this study strengthens the notion that '*there is something here*' in terms of using SNS/Social Media in education, since it *has* some form of positive impact; but this field is still much too unexplored. States that SNS/Social Media *can promote* L2 writing skills, but this research shows that it is *not* an end-all-be-all solution. Leaning on the positive aspects. Mentions that SNS/Social Media is important/plays a central role in young people's lives, and that incorporating it in language learning may be applicable.
and-pencil writing to improve L2 writing skills				
The e-generation: the use of technology for foreign language learning.	Gonzalez-Vera, Pilar	200 participants, first year of university, students enrolled in primary education. [No gender	Questionnaire sent out to 200 Spanish students (age 18-22). Asked: -Access to and use of technologies -Their competence in	64 % of the subjects used 'English activities on websites' in relation to the question 'What type of materials do you use to learn English?' (p. 56). Albeit nothing in this study was said about improving ESL learning [as other studies have shown], it does show a positive

		distributio n given]	linguistic communication -The way in which they learn English -Their autonomy and personal initiative when learning.	attitude towards technology: "[…] students showed their enthusiasm for technology as they associated it with fun […]". This, in a sense, is valuable knowledge – as it shows that it can be related to motivation in regards to English. It is also stated that: "The quizzes done on Moodle revealed a significant improvement in all skills [Linguistics, autonomous and digital competence]." (p. 60).
Learning specialised vocabulary through Facebook in a massive open online course	Ventura, Patricia & Martín-Monje, Elena.	657 Participant s, Spain, University [No gender distributio n given]	Facebook group, looking at ESL grammar (vocabulary) increases with the help of SNS/Social Media Mixed-method approach. Quantitative techniques (student tracking in the MOOC and Facebook) and qualitative techniques (questionnaires and observation). Facebook participants were asked to fill out two questionnaires, one pre-course and one post-course.	Examines the usage of SNS/social media, a Facebook group, in conjunction with school – MOOC, looking at (specialised) vocabulary acquisition. This study shows that of the participants 95% of them that *used* Facebook saw improvements. However, 'only' 39% of these deemed their improvements as 'significant'. The participants also claimed that the way Social Media was used in this context was very appropriate and essential to learning. However, the text also points out that their might be some bias – since the Facebook group's participation was voluntary, it may skew the results, as the one's signing up for it may already be in favour of using it. The participation in the FG has had a very encouraging impact on students'

				completion rate, since more than half of those belonging to the FG continued to finish the whole course (56%), which is over 20% more than the percentage considered to be satisfactory in terms of MOOC completion, that is, around 30% .”
A Facebook Project for Japanese University Students: Does it Really Enhance Student Interaction, Learner Autonomy, and English Abilities?	Hamada, Mayumi.	13 freshmen in a English course, Japan. [No gender distributio n given]	The project was conducted as a homework assignment in this course. Questionnaire and data-analysis via written assignments on Facebook, examining interaction autonomy and English Abilities (grammar, proficiency, vocabulary).	Facebook as a mean of enhancing student interaction, autonomy and English Abilities. Though Facebook in and of itself is not very popular in Japan, only 6 % of the population use it. This form of using a SNS/Social Media in a learning context was perceived as good. 61.5% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed, averaging out to 3.7 on a 5 point scale. 85% of the students found this project helped them *improve* their English abilities. Students tended to use Facebook *outside* of this assignment, claiming that it *further* advanced their English skills/motivation – as they used it to communicate and get various types of information. These students *did not* use Facebook prior to their assignment. So, these sentiments from the participants led to an increased *motivation* in *wanting* to learn more English – which is stated that (most of them) *did* as a result of this project.

Learners' Attitudes towards Foreign Language Practice on Social Network Sites	Villafuerte, Jhonny & Romero, Asier.	200 participants. 75 female, 45 male.	Quantitative research, by the use of a Likert scale questionnaire.	This study finds that different social media, SNS, can be used to motivate reading, writing and speaking practices in English. SNS/Social Media in and of itself is more of a *facilitator* to *motivate* and increase *learning*, rather than a device used for learning. The results show that it exists a positive acceptance of SNS as an academic tool. "[…] individuals can use SNS, as tools for English language practice from the commitments of other members having the same willing[ness]." (p. 154).
Out-of-school digital gameplay and in-school L2 English vocabulary outcomes.	Sundqvist, Pia & Wikström, Peter.	Sweden, age 15-16, 80 participants. 44 female, 36 male.	Questionnaire, language diaries, vocabulary test, assessed essay, and grades.	Results shows that the frequent gamer scored the best in a PLT (Productive Levels Test), followed by moderate gamers and non-gamers. The same ranking of results followed in a VLT (Vocabulary Level Test). In essays, the frequent gamer had a slight advantage in terms of polysyllabic types, however it was deemed not statistically significant. For most of the measures, there do not seem to be a correlation between gaming and measures/outcome in the *total* sample. Though when looking at vocabulary, there *is* a correlation. In full, there are some correlations between gameplay and L2 English vocabulary, but it is deemed very

				insignificant, and rather tendency than anything else.

Appendix 2: The original FRAME model as presented in Koole (2009, p. 27).
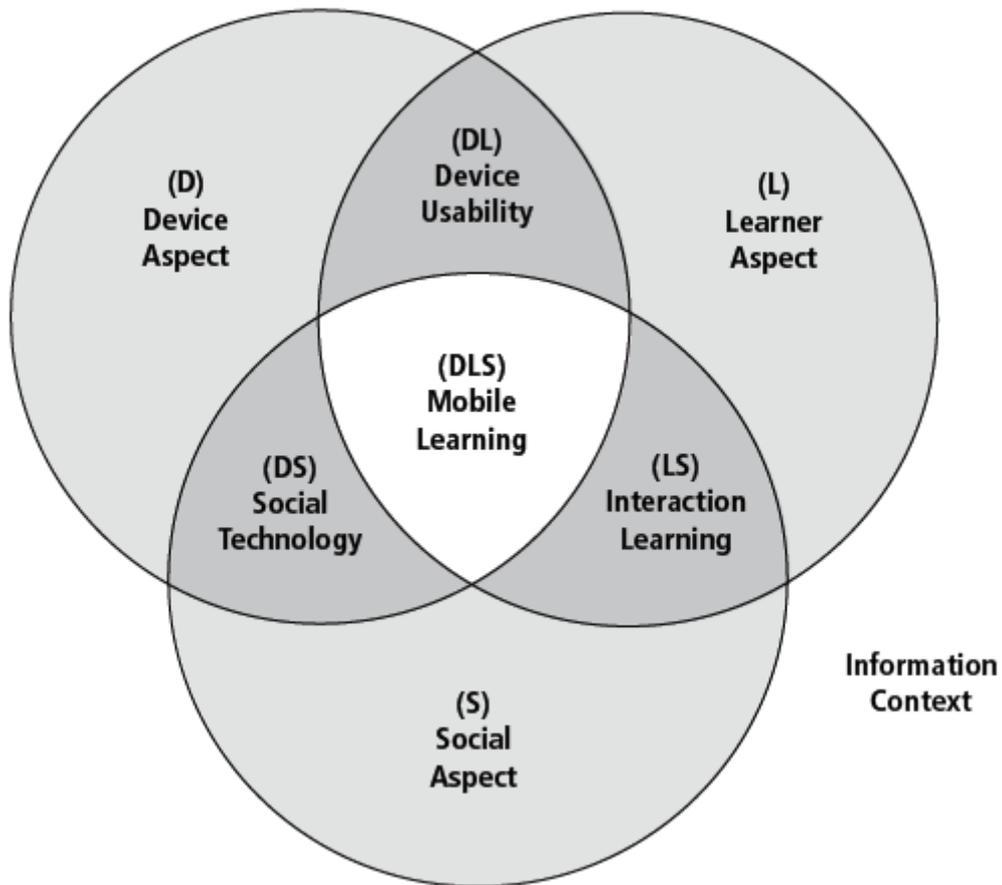
Appendix 3: Database used.

Name of database	URL
ERIC	https://eric.ed.gov/