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# Enhancing Writing Engagement in the EFL Context: Social Media Intervention Using Instagram

## Fortalecimiento de la Participación en la Escritura en el Contexto del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera Mediante una Intervención Pedagógica con Instagram

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## Abstract

This article presents a perspective on how Instagram was used as a pedagogical tool to enhance a group of Chilean students' engagement in EFL writing. This qualitative study involved eight third-year students from a higher education institution in Chile. The data tools included pre- and post-intervention tests, an analytic rubric, two Likert scale surveys, and a focus group. The results showed a significant difference between the participants' pre- and post-intervention test scores. Additionally, the findings highlighted the positive impact of Instagram on the different writing engagement dimensions assessed: affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social dimensions. As a conclusion, teachers may consider incorporating Instagram as an effective pedagogical tool into their teaching strategies to create more enjoyable and relevant tasks and to enhance the students' level of writing engagement in more contextualized communicative situations, which can be significant for them.

**Keywords:** EFL writing, Instagram, pedagogical tool, writing engagement, writing engagement

## Resumen

Este artículo presenta una perspectiva del uso de Instagram como una herramienta pedagógica para mejorar el compromiso de un grupo de estudiantes chilenos en la escritura del inglés como lengua extranjera en Chile. Este estudio cualitativo involucró a ocho estudiantes de tercer año de una institución de educación superior en Chile. Los datos se obtuvieron por medio de pruebas de intervención pre y post, junto con una rúbrica analítica, dos escalas Likert y un grupo focal. Los resultados mostraron una diferencia significativa entre los puntajes de los participantes en las pruebas de intervención pre y post. Además, los hallazgos resaltaron que Instagram tuvo un impacto positivo en las diferentes dimensiones del *engagement* evaluadas en la escritura. Es decir, dimensiones afectivas, conductuales, cognitivas y sociales. En conclusión, los profesores podrían considerar la inclusión de Instagram como una herramienta pedagógica efectiva en sus estrategias de enseñanza para crear actividades más atractivas y relevantes y fomentar el compromiso de los estudiantes en tareas de escritura relacionadas con situaciones comunicativas contextualizadas y significativas para ellos.

**Palabras clave:** escritura, herramienta pedagógica, inglés, Instagram, lengua extranjera

## Résumé

Cet article présente une perspective sur l'utilisation d'Instagram comme outil pédagogique pour améliorer l'engagement d'un groupe d'étudiants chiliens dans l'écriture de l'anglais comme langue étrangère au Chili. Cette étude qualitative a porté sur huit étudiants de troisième année d'un établissement d'enseignement supérieur au Chili. Les données ont été obtenues à l'aide de tests pré et post-intervention, ainsi que d'une grille d'évaluation analytique, de deux échelles de Likert et d'un groupe de discussion. Les résultats ont montré une différence significative entre les scores des participants aux tests pré et post-intervention. En outre, les résultats ont souligné qu'Instagram avait un impact positif sur les différentes dimensions de l'engagement évaluées dans l'écriture. C'est-à-dire les dimensions affectives, comportementales, cognitives et sociales. En conclusion, les enseignants pourraient envisager d'inclure Instagram comme un outil pédagogique efficace dans leurs stratégies d'enseignement afin de créer des activités plus attrayantes et pertinentes et d'encourager l'engagement des élèves dans des tâches d'écriture liées à des situations de communication contextualisées et significatives pour eux.

**Mots clés :** écriture, outil pédagogique, anglais, Instagram, langue étrangère

## Resumo

Esse artigo apresenta uma perspectiva do uso do Instagram como uma ferramenta pedagógica para melhorar o compromisso dum grupo de estudantes chilenos na escrita do inglês como língua estrangeira no Chile. Esse estudo qualitativo envolveu oito estudantes de terceiro ano numa instituição de educação superior no Chile. Os dados foram coletados por meio de provas de intervenção pré e pós. Junto com uma rubrica analítica, dois escalas Likert e um grupo focal. Os resultados mostraram uma diferença significativa entre as pontuações dos participantes entre as provas pre y post. Além disso, as constatações ressaltaram que o Instagram teve um impacto positivo nas diferentes dimensões afetivas, comportamentais, cognitivas e sociais. Em conclusão, os professores poderiam considerar a inclusão do Instagram como uma ferramenta pedagógica efetiva nas suas estratégias de ensino para criar atividades mais atrativas, relevantes e fomentar o compromisso dos estudantes em tarefas de escrita relacionadas com situações comunicativas contextualizadas e significativas para eles.

**Palavras chave:** Escrita, ferramenta pedagógica, inglês, Instagram, língua estrangeira.

## **Introduction**

In a globalized world, where English is considered a lingua franca, “the need to master it confidently requires knowledge of the target language as well as the development of strategies and language skills” (Fodil-Cherif, 2021, p. 1). In this regard, without a doubt, the writing skill development is occasionally left behind because of its complexity. Hidayati (2018) claims that “teaching writing skill in English, which involves developing linguistic and communicative competence of learners, is considered a challenge” (p. 21), and therefore it causes students’ reluctance to get engaged in writing, leading to fatigue, decrease in motivation, failure, high level of anxiety, less effort, low interest (Şenel, 2018). Considering these factors, teachers must adopt effective strategies aimed at fostering students’ engagement and confidence in writing.

In the context of the Chilean tertiary education system, the development of writing skills is essential for both academic and professional growth. To accomplish these language proficiency objectives, every Chilean higher educational institution should follow its own specific subject syllabus to develop this skill effectively and set specific proficiency levels of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001). However, in the Chilean EFL classrooms, limited exposure to writing tasks hinders educators from effectively improving students’ writing skills, leading to insufficient focus on this skill development.

This is the case of a group of third-year students enrolled in an Intermediate English course at a Chilean higher education institution, where the teacher-researcher worked, who were expected to achieve an A2-B1 proficiency level (CEFR) according to their Intermediate English course syllabus. These students appeared highly motivated to learn the English language, but they demonstrated a reluctant attitude towards the development of writing skills, which was reflected in their poor academic achievement in written assignments. Their reluctance was evident in their average writing scores, which were consistently below passing marks. Moreover, when given a writing task, many students hesitated to start and frequently left assignments incomplete. These struggles stemmed from finding writing assignments intimidating and experiencing a feeling of failure that impeded the appropriate development of their writing ability.

To deal with these learners’ reluctant attitude and their low level of academic achievement in the writing assignments, this action research study sought to examine the contribution of the social network Instagram as a pedagogical tool to enhance third-year higher education students’ writing engagement in writing captions.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **The Development of Writing Skills in the EFL Context**

Learning a foreign language implies developing different skills to master the language confidently. Thus, language learners must focus on the development of receptive skills: listening and reading, as well as productive skills: speaking and writing. While all four skills are essential, writing

plays a crucial role in academic and professional success. According to Fodil-Cherif (2021), “writing is considered to be the most needed skill in academic and professional contexts” (p. 1). In other words, writing serves as a vital form of communication, allowing writers to convey their emotions, ideas, and arguments. Beyond its communicative function, Klimova (2013) highlights that “writing as a productive skill helps to express one’s personality, foster communication, develop thinking skills, make logical and persuasive arguments, give a person a chance to later reflect on his/her ideas, prepare for school/employment, and provide and receive feedback” (p. 9). This underscores the multifaceted nature of writing, positioning it not only as a tool for expression but also as a key cognitive and professional skill.

Although writing is a crucial skill for acquiring any language, it is the most challenging skill in the language learning process (Rao, 2019, p. 199). Therefore, it causes students to show reluctance to get engaged in writing assignments. This brings about students who give up just before starting to write or postpone the task since writing encompasses a multitude of processes to reach the final product (Fodil-Cherif, 2021, p. 2). Nonetheless, Şenel (2018) suggests that when students and teachers are highly motivated to write, the writing lessons become more pleasurable, thereby improving academic achievements, and mitigating negative factors such as anxiety, fear of failure, and reluctance to write.

Despite these challenges, writing offers numerous advantages for English language learners. Rao (2019) points out that writing facilitates the development of learners’ critical thinking abilities. Additionally, it serves as a means of retrieving old and almost forgotten memories while encouraging learners to express their thoughts and opinions effectively. As a result, writing empowers learners to develop their cognitive abilities, reflect on their experiences, and effectively communicate their ideas to others.

## **Writing in the Chilean EFL Context**

In the Chilean educational system, English is a compulsory subject taught from the fifth grade of primary education until students finish their secondary education. Therefore, the four language skills are expected to be achieved in this national context, and students should reach a B2 proficiency level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. According to the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2016), writing skills development emphasizes “developing these abilities in simple and contextualized communicative situations that are personally relevant and have clear purposes” (p. 48). In higher education in Chile, students are expected to produce a variety of texts while following the steps of the writing process, as mentioned by Fodil-Cherif (2021), these steps may include planning, drafting, and revising.

## **The Multidimensional Nature of Writing Engagement in the Classroom**

Student engagement significantly contributes to fostering learners’ positive attitudes and behaviors among students, as well as enhancing their academic success and increasing a sense of ownership over their learning process (Oliveira, 2012). According to Abubakar et al. (2017), the level of students’ engagement is commonly regarded as one of the most accurate indicators of learning and personal development. Therefore, promoting learners’ positive attitudes, behaviors, and academic

success is essential, considering the growing need for intrinsic motivation and meaningful connections within the learning environment.

In today's educational context, the notion of writing engagement has gained relevant attention among teachers who make a great effort to enhance and develop their students' writing abilities and boost their involvement in different writing activities. Ives et al. (2022) present writing engagement as a multidimensional construct including affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social components with the potential to support students at all stages of the writing process in equitable and culturally responsive ways. Additionally, this construct influences one's intentional and thoughtful involvement in writing-related activity (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). By recognizing writing engagement as a multidimensional construct, it is possible to get a deeper understanding of the complex factors that influence an individual's active, meaningful, and purposeful involvement in writing-related activities that would eventually lead to enhanced writing experiences and outcomes.

## **The Role of Technology in Increasing Students' Writing Engagement**

In this new, more modernized and digital world, new technologies, activities, and ways to communicate have emerged, and educators have implemented them in the classroom to create a more engaging learning environment. Technological advancements offer plenty of possibilities to make teaching engaging and enhance productivity in terms of improvements. Accordingly, Ruggiero and Mong (2015) mention that teachers appeared to value the availability of technology as a powerful tool for enhancing education and making it more authentic for the students. Moreover, Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020) emphasize that integrating technology into the classroom enhances learning experiences and promotes a student-centered methodology by creating an environment that prioritizes students' needs, interests, and active participation.

The authors state that writing tasks inside the classroom often lack connection with real-life activities relevant to students. Therefore, grabbing students' interest in writing tasks beyond the classroom can foster their engagement, as they can address specific target audiences and establish a meaningful link between their writing and their own experiences. Accordingly, Kelly (2015) states that Instagram emerges as a technological tool with the potential to boost students' writing engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as it offers a platform for students to actively participate and connect their writing to the broader world. Hence, Instagram offers students opportunities and support to refine and develop their writing skills. By using this platform, teachers can access its full potential to enhance students' writing skills and create a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

## **Social Network Instagram as a Valuable Pedagogical Tool**

Instagram has become extremely popular nowadays, with an average of two billion monthly active users worldwide (Dixon, 2024). Sharing information on this free social media app has turned out to be incredibly meaningful for the users, considering that they can reach anybody, anywhere in the world. It has proved to be a new form of communication using videos and pictures. Its numerous technical features such as hashtags, geotags, stories, reels, and interactive stickers (e.g., polls, questions,

and quizzes), are motivating for users since they can create filters, upload photos, add descriptions, and share live videos with friends (Hu et al., 2014). Moreover, Instagram is a tool that offers accessibility to a wide range of users. Therefore, it may be effectively integrated into language learning activities (Prasetyawati & Ardi, 2020). On this ground, writing skills can be exploited effectively through this social media. Supporting this idea, a study carried out by Sirait and Marlina (2018) clearly states that Instagram is a convenient, easy-to-use, and accessible tool. Similarly, Khalitova (2016) argues that Instagram serves as a language learning resource that is readily accessible to students quickly and conveniently, primarily through its mobile application.

Shazali et al. (2019) concluded, in their action research study on the topic of using Instagram, that this social networking site “helps in developing students’ writing ability in terms of new vocabulary and it boosts their motivation too” (p. 96). Furthermore, writing captions on Instagram helps students express their opinions, feelings, and even motivates others to write well. Therefore, they feel greater authenticity and a clear purpose than doing the traditional written tasks (Kelly, 2015). These positive attitudes towards Instagram are because “it provides a meaningful and fun learning environment for the students as they are comfortable using Instagram in completing school tasks” (Shazali et al., 2019, p. 97).

According to Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020), writing tasks within the classroom are disconnected from activities that students experience outside the classroom, which are more closely aligned with their real-life situations. This aspect adds a unique dimension to the development of students’ writing engagement and their skills, aligning with the modernized and digitalized ways of communication in the globalized era.

In general terms, Instagram can be an excellent pedagogical tool in the process of teaching the English language, especially in “engaging students in writing tasks if used and supervised appropriately” (Shazali et al., 2019, p. 97).

## **Method**

The current investigation corresponds to an action research study since it is a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring our own teaching contexts as defined by Burns (2010).

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives were (1) to describe students’ writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts, and (2) to analyze students’ perceptions of their writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts.

To accomplish these objectives, the study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to gather and analyze data, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and aiding in answering the research question.

### **Participants**

This study involved a convenience sample of eight participants, aged 20 to 25, who were

enrolled in an intermediate-level English course from a Chilean higher education institution. The sample consisted of two males and six females, none of whom was a native English language speaker. The sample corresponded to a homogeneous group in terms of age, location, and English language proficiency. In the English classes, these students were expected to write short texts related to everyday life activities in social and professional contexts. They had been exposed to the English language for four semesters with English classes four times a week in sessions of one hour and twenty minutes each. Participants seemed to be highly motivated to learn the language; however, they had a reluctant attitude towards writing skills, which led them to perform poorly in their assignments. They were very enthusiastic when it came to the use of technology in the classroom, and they made use of technological gadgets to take notes and work in every class.

## Research Procedure

To implement the intervention, six 80-minute sessions were planned. Sessions are described below:

**Table 1.**

### *Action Plan Design*

<b>Session</b>	<b>Learning objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Data collection instrument</b>
Pre-intervention session	To set a baseline for participants' writing engagement.	- Introducing the main aspects of this study, completing the instruments.	- Analytic rubric  - Writing engagement Likert scale
1	To identify the elements of an Instagram caption from examples provided by the teacher.	- Introducing writing engagement and Instagram as a learning resource tool.  - Introducing the elements of an Instagram caption and identifying them in the provided examples.  - Identifying the elements of a caption from a post that students have created.  - Summarizing key points on Jamboard.	
2		- Accessing students' first session prior knowledge. - Exploring image captions on posts provided by the teacher.  - Writing a caption.  - Posting on Instagram and reflecting on the development of writing engagement.	

3	To write a description of an image on the social networking site Instagram.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessing students' prior knowledge on writing engagement and the contribution of Instagram.</li> <li>- Reflecting on a classmate's post to identify the elements included in their captions.</li> <li>- Writing a caption.</li> <li>- Posting on Instagram.</li> <li>- Reflecting on the activities and the process.</li> </ul>	
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussing the usefulness of Instagram to develop writing engagement.</li> <li>- Reflecting on a classmate's post to identify the elements included in their captions.</li> <li>- Writing a caption.</li> <li>- Posting on Instagram.</li> <li>- Completing the Likert scale.</li> <li>- Reflecting on the process of writing captions on Instagram to develop writing engagement.</li> </ul>	Writing engagement Likert scale
Post-intervention session	- To assess participants' writing engagement	- The last written task, which was first written on the template, was also used as the post-intervention test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analytic rubric</li> <li>- Focus group</li> </ul>

*Note:* Own work.

## **Data Collection Instruments**

Participants were informed about Instagram's safety recommendations and privacy policies. They were advised to avoid sharing personal information. Additionally, they provided informed consent, ensuring their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and that the collected data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

Regarding data analysis techniques, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the main findings from the pre- and post-intervention tests. Moreover, a thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the focus group, and the Likert scale was analyzed through measures of dispersion.

Pre- and post-intervention tests (See Appendix 1) were 60-word writing tasks that required the participants to describe an image in hard copy. The first task aimed at setting the baseline of participants' writing performance before the intervention. The post-intervention test aimed at identifying the students' writing engagement through the contribution of Instagram for writing captions. The post-intervention test was posted on Instagram, as it was also considered to be the third written activity. The teacher-researcher corrected and graded these intervention tests using an analytic rubric.

An analytic rubric was used to assess the students' intervention tests. It was adapted from the institution where the teacher-researcher worked and where this study was conducted. It was written in Spanish for this action research. This instrument was validated since it had been used at another higher education institution in Chile. The rubric considered the following four criteria with a two-point score for each descriptor:

1. The student expresses ideas according to the level.
2. The student uses vocabulary according to the level.
3. The student follows instructions to write the text according to the level
4. The student writes an original text according to the level.

The score for each descriptor ranged from not achieved (0), needs improvement (0.6), partially achieved (1.2), achieved (1.6), and totally achieved (2).

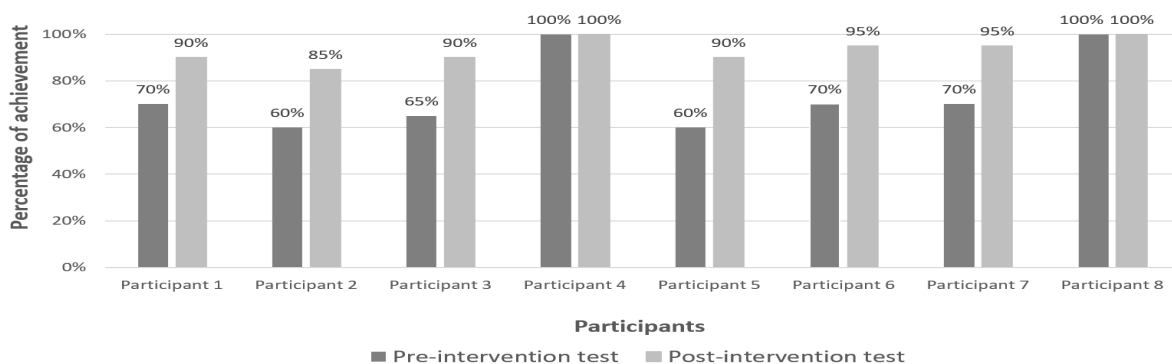
A Likert scale perception survey (See Appendix 2) was applied two times to obtain insight into participants' perceptions of their writing engagement. It was applied at the beginning, in the pre-intervention session, and in session No. 4 after using Instagram. This Likert scale survey had eleven statements categorized into the four writing engagement dimensions: Affective Writing Engagement (AWE), Behavioral Writing Engagement (BWE), Cognitive Writing Engagement (CWE), and Social Writing Engagement (SWE). The statements for the four dimensions were adapted from Rogers et al. (2022, p. 268). The items in this scale were organized into a four-level Likert scale, which went from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

A focus group session (Appendix 3), comprising seven open questions that covered the four dimensions of the writing engagement, was conducted during the post-intervention session. This Focus group was used to collect and analyze qualitative data on students' perceptions of their writing engagement when using Instagram for uploading posts. On this ground, this instrument appeared to be adequate as it is defined by Krueger and Casey (2015) as a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on an area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.

## Findings

Participants' overall performance percentages in the pre- and post-intervention tests before and after the intervention are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.**  
*Participants' Performance in Their Writing Tests before and after the Intervention*



Upon examining the data presented in Figure 1, a noticeable trend emerged when comparing the participants' outcomes of the pre- and post-intervention tests. Specifically, it became evident that six (75%) out of the eight participants demonstrated an increase in their results, while the remaining two participants (25%) kept the same results, which corresponded to the maximum score. The improvement observed among the six participants could be attributed to a higher level of writing engagement, potentially resulting from the posts they created, which were uploaded onto the social network Instagram. Regarding the mean scores and standard deviation obtained from both tests, Table 2 provides a quantitative summary of the data.

**Table 2.**

*Overall Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Test Results*

Task	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Pre-intervention test	8	4.8	8	5.95	1.31
Post- intervention test	8	6.80	8	7.45	0.42

As can be seen in Table 2, in the pre-intervention test, participants achieved a mean score of 5.95, which corresponds to an average percentage of achievement equivalent to 74%. As for the post-intervention test, participants obtained a mean score of 7.45, resulting in an average percentage of achievement of 93%. Based on the results, there was an increase of 1.5 points in the participants' mean score after using Instagram for posting their writings. This 25.7% increase may indicate a higher level of writing engagement due to the use of Instagram throughout the intervention.

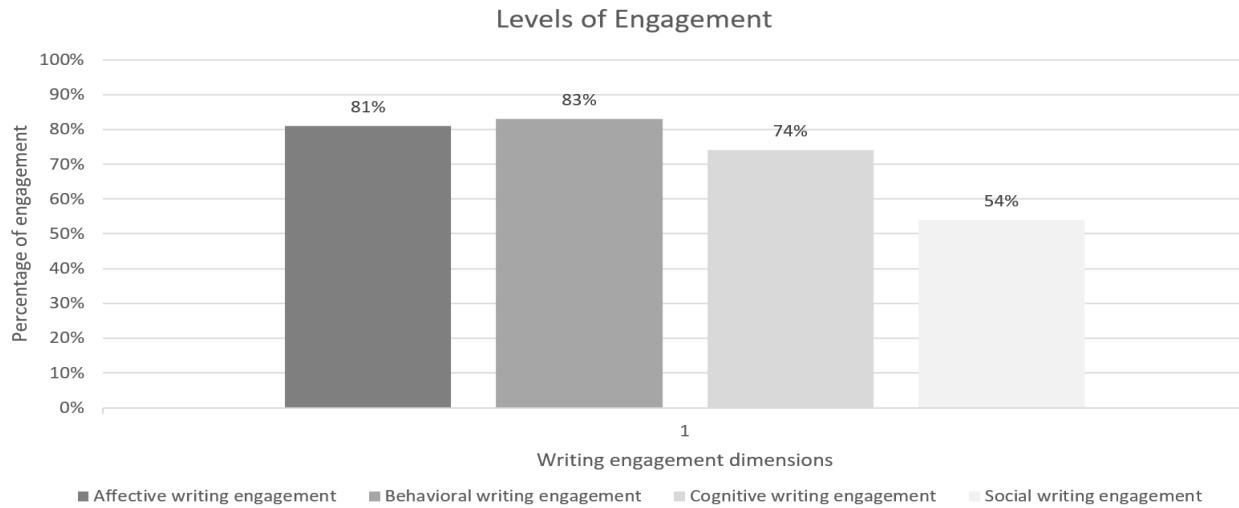
The lower standard deviation in the post-intervention test (0.42) suggested a reduction in data variability or dispersion. It indicates a more uniform or homogeneous score distribution across the evaluated criteria and implies that the students' scores in the post-intervention test were more tightly clustered around the mean score compared to the pre-intervention test. With reduced variability, the mean score became a more reliable indicator of the students' achievement, as there was less influence from extreme or outlier scores.

The results of the Likert scale 1 were focused on the participants' writing engagement scores across the four dimensions assessed: affective, behavioral, cognitive, and social writing engagement. The scores and percentages indicated that students displayed the highest levels of engagement in the affective and behavioral dimensions, scoring 81% and 83%, respectively. Additionally, the cognitive (CWE) and social dimensions (SWE) of writing engagement scored the lowest levels, 74% and 54%, respectively. These results were observed at the outset of the intervention.

Despite the reported scores of 81% for AWE and 74% for CWE, these dimensions also had the highest standard deviation values of 2.05 and 2.17, respectively, indicating that participants' responses varied more widely compared to the behavioral (BWE) and social writing engagement (SWE) dimensions. Figure 2 presents the global percentages, including the maximum and minimum values, offering an overview of the range of engagement levels observed across all dimensions in the Likert scale 1.

**Figure 2.**

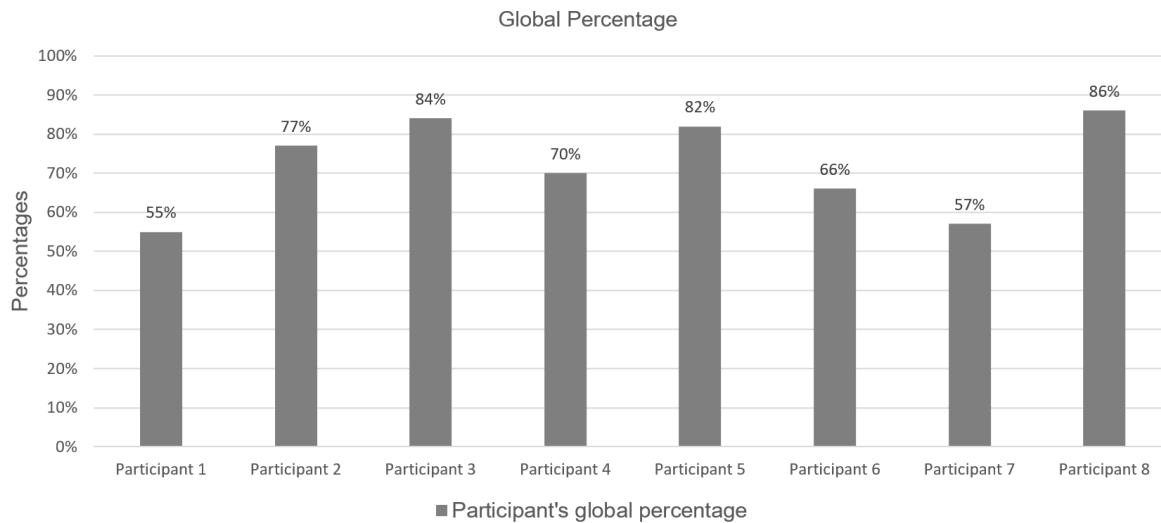
*Participants' Overall Writing Engagement Percentages by Dimensions*



It is observed that the behavioral writing engagement (BWE) was the highest dimension with 83%, followed by the affective dimension (AWE) (81%), and the social dimension (SWE) was the one with the lowest percentage (54%). These findings suggest that participants in this context exhibited some emphasis on behavioral aspects, such as participation, effort, and persistence in their writing engagement. However, the low percentage in the social dimension points to challenges faced by participants in terms of collaboration, interaction, and engagement in social activities related to writing, such as sharing ideas and participating collaboratively in writing tasks. Figure 3 shows the participants' global level of writing engagement in their writing activities.

**Figure 3.**

*Global Writing Engagement Percentage Per Participant Likert Scale 1*

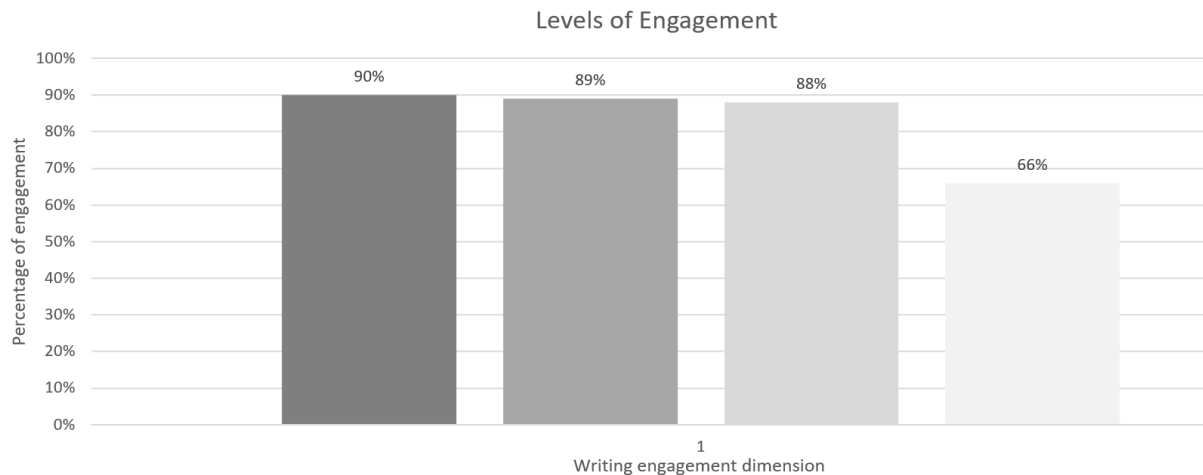


This figure shows that participants 3 and 8 exhibited the highest levels of engagement, 84% and 86% respectively, while participant 1 demonstrated the lowest level with 55%. Participants' engagement levels varied significantly, ranging from 55% to 86%, suggesting diverse levels of engagement among participants in the writing tasks. These results are depicted before the use of the social network Instagram.

The results of the Likert scale 2 revealed that students exhibited noticeably higher levels of writing engagement in the affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions compared to the Likert scale 1 scores. The social dimension (SWE) displayed a moderate level of engagement at 66%. However, this percentage showed an increase compared to the Likert scale results obtained initially. Figure 4 provides an overview of the participants' global percentages per dimension.

**Figure 4.**

*Global Engagement Percentages by Dimensions*



Notably, the percentages for the affective, behavioral, and cognitive writing engagement dimensions were tightly clustered, with high levels of engagement at 90%, 89%, and 88%, respectively. This may indicate a consistent and strong level of engagement in writing among the participants in these three dimensions at the end of the intervention, which can be explained using Instagram for uploading posts. This could be attributed to the idea that Instagram enables students to relate their writing tasks to real-life experiences. Therefore, using the social network Instagram may have helped students experience a higher level of commitment, a sense of authenticity, and a meaningful purpose when they wrote their captions rather than when they did their traditional writing activities, which were only revised by the teacher and were not published or posted anywhere.

The social dimension (SWE) displayed a lower writing engagement level of 66%. Although slightly lower, this engagement level was still higher than what was observed in the previous Likert scale survey. Figure 5 provides insights into the varying levels of writing engagement among the respondents at the end of the intervention, which emerged from the second Likert scale.

**Figure 5.**

*Global Engagement Percentages by Dimensions*

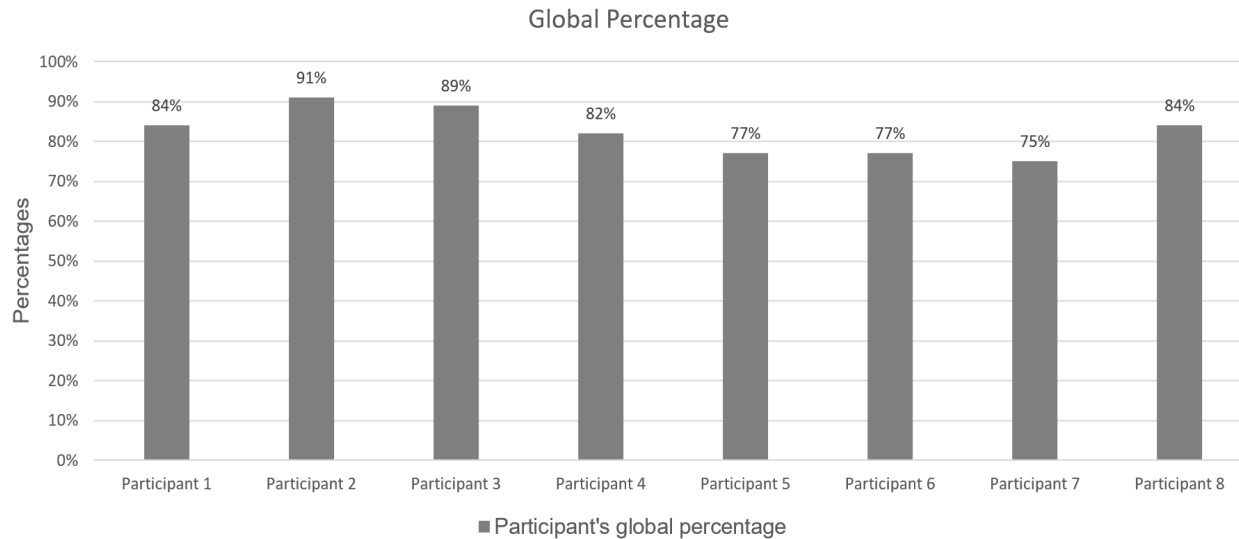


Figure 5 shows that participant 2 exhibited the highest level of engagement with 91%, indicating a strong involvement in the statements assessed. Participants 1, 3, and 8 achieved percentages of 84%, 89%, and 84%, respectively, suggesting a high level of engagement as well. Participants 4, 5, 6, and 7 exhibited slightly lower writing engagement levels with percentages ranging from 75% to 82%. While their engagement levels are somewhat lower compared to the other participants, they still indicated a moderate level of engagement in writing.

Regarding the comparison between the two Likert scale survey results, Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the writing engagement across two measurement points: the beginning and end of the intervention. The table provides insights into the participants' overall writing engagement levels within the four dimensions assessed: AWE, BWE, CWE, and SWE.

**Table 3.**

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Writing Engagement Likert Scales*

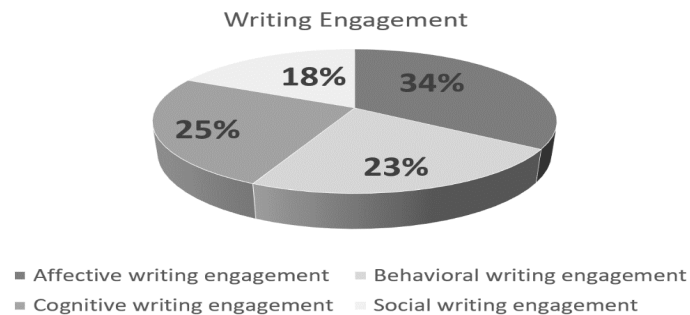
Engagement	Likert scale 1		Likert scale 2			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
AWE	9,75	81%	2,05	10,75	90%	1,16
BWE	6,63	83%	1,51	7,13	89%	1,13
CWE	8,88	74%	2,17	10,5	88%	0,93
SWE	6,50	54%	1,93	7,88	66%	1,25
Global scores in the Likert scales	31,75	72%	5,39	36,25	82%	2,49

Table 3 indicates a rise of 11.2% in students' AWE levels throughout the intervention. For BWE, the mean percentages showed a slight 7.3% increase. In the CWE, there was a considerable 19% increase. Finally, the SWE showed an increase of 22.3%. In summary, Table 3 reveals patterns and changes in the participants' writing engagement levels within each dimension and across the Likert scales throughout the intervention. The findings suggest varying degrees of improvement and consistency, demonstrated by the increase in percentage levels in different dimensions of writing engagement over time, which could be potentially attributed to the use of the social network Instagram to upload posts.

Regarding the focus group, Figure 6 presents the percentages of student references to the four writing engagement dimensions.

**Figure 6.**

*Writing Engagement Per Dimension*



It can be observed that the AWE achieved the highest percentage, which meant that participants found emotional satisfaction in using Instagram as a platform for self-expression as well as for enjoyment in sharing personal stories and experiences with a wider audience; the SWE dimension got the lowest score. Although this dimension had consistently been regarded as the one that achieved the lowest levels compared to the others, the results throughout the intervention revealed a significant improvement among the participants, which can be attributed to the use of the social network Instagram.

The thematic analysis results aligned seamlessly with the findings derived from the Likert scale 2 responses, which were achieved after the implementation of Instagram. In essence, this alignment underscores a coherence in the participants' engagement patterns, as identified through these two data collection instruments. On this ground, on the one hand, these instruments indicated that AWE achieved the highest scores since it allowed students to connect their writing tasks to real-world experiences, reflecting the positive emotional connection that they went through when they found writing engaging and personally meaningful.

On the other hand, there were evident signs of progress in the SWE, even though it remained the least emphasized dimension among participants. This social dimension displayed the lowest engagement percentage at 18% compared to the other dimensions, all of which surpassed 23% in the second Likert scale. However, this engagement level showed a 22.3% increase compared to the Likert scale 1. This indicated a noticeable improvement in participants' engagement with the social dimension over time, suggesting the potential for further improvements.

## Discussion

The comparison of participants' outcomes of the pre- and post-intervention tests provided valuable insights into the impact of using Instagram as a fundamental pedagogical tool to enhance writing engagement among participants. The increase in the participants' writing scores in the post-intervention test indicated that the use of Instagram can be a powerful motivator for students to improve their engagement in writing. As suggested by Şenel (2018), when students and teachers are highly engaged in writing, the writing lessons become more pleasurable, as a result, improving academic achievements, as in the post-intervention test.

Chilean students must attain English writing proficiency, focusing on skills development in simple, contextually relevant, and personally meaningful communicative situations. The findings of this study are in line with the Chilean EFL context expectations since the Instagram features, such as photo descriptions and captions, encouraged students to apply their writing skills in real-life contexts that are personally significant for them. Consequently, this study indicates that Instagram may serve as a valuable pedagogical tool to increase students' writing engagement, meeting the writing expectations outlined in the Chilean curriculum.

The integration of Instagram has been shown to have an impact on the different writing engagement dimensions:

### Affective Writing Engagement

Instagram appeared to have improved AWE, represented by an 11.2% increase throughout the intervention. The findings revealed that integrating Instagram into EFL writing allowed participants to experience a positive emotional connection in writing activities. Instagram enabled them to express themselves, enjoy writing, and share captions. Participant 3 reflected, "*A mí me pareció interesante el tema de la escritura también [...] después, con el transcurso del tiempo nos dimos cuenta de que igual era fácil y, y por lo menos a mí me gustó*" ["I found the topic of writing interesting as well [...] later, over time, we realized it was actually easy, and at least I liked it"] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 1 admitted, "*Yo, no me gusta escribir en inglés, pero le fui agarrando el gusto [...] eso fue soltando más la mano y como ir tomando más vocabulario*" ["I don't like writing in English, but I started to enjoy it [...] it helped me loosen up my writing and pick up more vocabulary"] (own translation).

Additionally, Instagram provided a sense of security and a platform for self-expression. As Participant 2 shared, "*Uno se siente como más segura de poder subir una foto de... hablando, quizás de algún tema personal, algo que quizás nunca lo ha contado ni a sus más cercanos y ocupa la red social como Instagram como para desahogarse*" ["One feels more confident in posting a photo ... perhaps discussing a personal topic, something that may have never been shared even with close ones, using social media like Instagram as a way to vent"] (own translation).

These findings suggest that Instagram can serve as a space for personal satisfaction in writing, contributing to participants' emotional fulfillment and self-expression. Hence, Instagram appeared to be a useful pedagogical tool for students, allowing them to engage in authentic language learning experiences in an environment that emphasizes students' needs and interests. As stated by Kurniawan and Kastuhandani (2016), utilizing Instagram for writing enables students to generate ideas for their

writing tasks with more authentic content, fostering engagement and motivation in their learning process.

### **Behavioral Writing Engagement**

Participants showed a positive result from the first to the second Likert scale with an increase of 7,23%, which leads us to conclude that participants invested effort and demonstrated commitment in producing their captions on Instagram. This is also supported by the students' perceptions in the focus group, where they emphasized having demonstrated extra effort and commitment since their captions would be publicly seen. As mentioned by Maulina (2018), incorporating social media into the language learning context may motivate participants to use the English language to write their captions online, which could be accessed both locally and internationally, thus enhancing their writing ability. In line with this, Shazali et al. (2019) highlighted that Instagram helps students develop their writing ability by expanding their vocabulary and boosting their motivation, too.

The fact that the participants approached the idea of writing on Instagram with the desire to improve their writing skills emphasized the notion that using this social media for writing captions was seen as more than just a casual activity. Thus, when students perceive writing tasks as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to engage deeply in the writing process. As stated by Prasetyawati and Ardi (2020), the integration of Instagram enhances the overall writing experience, creating an interactive environment for students to develop their writing skills and engage.

### **Cognitive Writing Engagement**

The findings presented a 19% increase from the first to the second Likert scale. This suggests an improvement in self-regulation and strategic growth in the study by showing a high level of commitment to the task. As stated by Ives et al. (2022), this active involvement fostered strategic growth, contributing to the enhancement of their writing skills by promoting a positive mindset, fostering consistent practice, and facilitating thoughtful reflection. This was supported by the participants' perceptions in the focus group regarding the strategies used while developing the writing tasks on Instagram, such as rereading, thinking carefully about the word usage, and asking themselves questions to ensure coherence and clarity in their tasks. Thus, these findings implied that the participants recognized the importance of these strategies and actively used them, allowing them to engage more in their written tasks.

### **Social Writing Engagement**

While there was evidence of growth in this dimension, it remained the least emphasized dimension among participants. This social dimension showed the lowest engagement percentage of 66% compared to the other dimensions, which were over 88% in the second Likert scale. However, this dimension showed an increase of 22.3% from the first to the second Likert scale, suggesting there is room for further enhancement in the future.

In the focus group, participants discussed their experiences of overcoming the fear of judgment from others and developing a sense of community through shared writing experiences. Participant 5 stated, *“yo no lo quería compartir porque me daba cosita escribirlo mal, ...ahora no sé, encuentro que puedo llegar igual a hartas personas que están pasando por alguna situación”* [I didn't want to share it because I was worried about writing it incorrectly ... now, I don't know, I feel like I can still reach many people who are going

through a similar situation] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 7 reflected, “*Me sentí más tranquilo que con los textos de los exámenes, siendo que este lo ve más gente*” [I felt calmer than with the writings for exams, even though more people saw this one] (own translation).

Moreover, some participants initially experienced anxiety, but this was limited to the first stages of their writing tasks. Participant 4 stated, “*Al principio me dio mucha ansiedad saber que se tenía que subir a Instagram porque todo el mundo lo iba a ver [...] pero con el paso de las sesiones, como que esa ansiedad se va bajando y una se va sintiendo más cómodo al escribir y dar como más confianza*” [“At first, I felt a lot of anxiety knowing that it had to be uploaded to Instagram because everyone was going to see it [...] but as the sessions went by, that anxiety started to decrease, and I felt more comfortable writing and more confident.”] (own translation). Similarly, Participant 6 mentioned, “*Al principio si se me hizo difícil, pero ya después no como que le tomé el gusto, y se me hizo fácil al final, eso*” [“At first, it was difficult for me, but later, I started to enjoy it, and in the end, it became easy.”] (own translation).

Interestingly, this anxiety was mitigated by the constant use of Instagram. This social network developed this engagement among students, which helped them reduce their anxiety levels. This observation mirrors the findings of Şenel (2018), who suggested that high levels of engagement in writing can serve as a powerful tool to mitigate negative factors such as anxiety, fear of failure, and reluctance to write.

## **Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations**

This study suggests that the integration of Instagram as a pedagogical resource can positively impact students’ writing engagement. The results from the pre- and post-intervention tests indicate that engaging in meaningful writing activities on social media platforms like Instagram allows students to improve their writing language skills. In other words, a higher engagement in writing activities enhances academic performance by creating a genuine, meaningful, and authentic learning environment.

This social network provides a platform for students to freely express themselves, enjoy writing, and share their written captions. According to the students’ thoughts in the focus group, Instagram functioned as a space for self-expression and personal satisfaction in writing, contributing to participants’ emotional fulfillment. Consequently, these positive emotional experiences enhanced a strong connection among the students and the writing activities performed on the social network, developing their engagement in writing.

Since Instagram promoted a real, meaningful, and authentic context for learning, participants demonstrated a profound connection with the writing task by investing effort and committing to producing a well-developed written caption that resonated with their experiences and interests, fostering a deep connection with the task. Therefore, Instagram transformed the writing tasks into meaningful experiences, where participants were not simply completing their work but were actively shaping their learning environment, enhancing their overall writing engagement.

The participants used strategies to maintain coherence and clarity in their written tasks. This active involvement made participants experience a sense of enjoyment, showing a high level of commitment to the task, enhancing their writing skills by promoting a positive attitude, and enabling reflective, critical thinking, and improvement. The constant use of Instagram helped students

overcome the fear of judgment from others and develop a sense of community through shared writing experiences.

In terms of implications, nowadays, technology has transformed the traditional approaches to English teaching. In this regard, Instagram is a tremendous pedagogical resource tool for enhancing writing engagement. Therefore, educators could incorporate it into their teaching strategies to create more enjoyable and relevant tasks that may enhance students' level of writing engagement in more contextualized and relevant communicative situations. On this ground, the findings indicate that Instagram aligns well with the expectations of the Chilean educational system. Consequently, teachers could easily integrate Instagram as a pedagogical resource to meet the curriculum objectives effectively.

This action research showed that students could experience cognitive growth and self-regulation using Instagram. As a result, educators should encourage students to continue using the strategies that work best for them to persist in improving their engagement in writing.

Researchers could explore the long-term effects of using Instagram for developing writing engagement, specifically examining how sustained use of the platform influences students' confidence, emotional connection to writing, and continued engagement beyond intervention.

Future research could assess whether these effects persist over time, whether students independently maintain their writing habits, and how their overall writing proficiency evolves. Additionally, comparing the effectiveness of different social networks and investigating strategies to further enhance social writing engagement could help foster a sense of community and reduce anxiety connected to writing tasks, creating a more supportive learning environment for students.

In this study, we considered certain limitations. First, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings that emerged. The analysis would have been much stronger with more participants. Therefore, future research could include a larger group of participants to enhance the external validity of the results. Second, the duration of the study could be considered short. The improvements in writing engagement may be influenced by short-term enthusiasm rather than the effect of Instagram as a pedagogical tool. Consequently, a long-term study could help to understand if these enhancements last over time. Third, this study focused on the use of Instagram as a pedagogical tool. While the results appeared to have a positive impact on the development of the writing engagement, it would be worth considering the effectiveness of Instagram to develop other English language skills. Finally, while there is some research on students' engagement, there is little research on writing engagement, which leaves little room to fully understand and address its nuances.

## **Recommendations**

Exploring different strategies to further enhance the four dimensions of writing engagement and investigating the long-term effects of such strategies could be useful areas of study. On this ground, throughout the intervention and in general terms, students were observed tending to write longer texts as they used Instagram in their writing tasks. In other words, this showed the potential of Instagram to encourage extended writing. In this matter, future research projects should explore the contribution of Instagram not only to the students' engagement in writing, but also to enhancing their

writing fluency. The importance of understanding how students develop writing fluency through the integration of Instagram may provide useful data on how social media could shape communicative competence by fostering writing skills.

### **Statement of originality**

We declare that this manuscript is the result of original research and that it has not been published before and is not currently under evaluation in another journal.

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We do not have any potential conflict of interest to declare.

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### **Author Contributions**

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