

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL
INTERACTION AMONG CHILDREN AGED 5-8 YEARS**

By

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A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction Among Children Aged 5–8 Years

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1. Source of population: Dhaka
2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
 - a) Physical risk to the subjects (no)
 - b) Social risk (no)
 - c) Psychological risk to subjects (no)
 - d) discomfort to subjects (no)
 - e) Invasion of privacy (no)
3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)
 - a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
 - b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
 - c) Physical risk (yes)
 - d) Sensitive questions (yes)
 - e) Benefits to be derived (yes)
 - f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
 - g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
 - h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (yes)
4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)
 - a) from study participants (yes)
 - b) from parents or guardian (yes)
 - c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)
5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:
 - a) Proposal
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 - c) Questionnaire or interview schedule

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the role of social media in language development and social interaction among children aged 5–8 years in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The children are exposed to short reels, Youtube videos, gaming platforms and other interactive social media platforms which may influence their language development and interaction style. Semi-structured In-depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted with five parents (P1–P5) and five teachers (T1–T5), and four children were observed using observation checklists in their natural house settings to support data triangulation. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and the perceived influence of social media on language and social interaction.

The findings reflect a shift in their communication patterns where children use coded language and gesture-based communication. Both parents and teachers expressed concern regarding social media dependency and its influence on pronunciation, sentence formation, and communication style. Teachers observed reduced attention span and quick transitions between tasks, along with clustering and exclusion among children. Positive influences were also reported by both parents and teachers, where educational content can encourage effective learning and create a new identity with shared knowledge. The study highlights the importance of balanced parental mediation and contextualised pedagogical practices along with the need for digital literacy awareness among parents and teachers. It contributes to the understanding of evolving linguistic practices in a multilingual urban environment.

Keywords: Social media exposure; language development; social interaction; early childhood; digital slang; multilingual code-switching

Dedication

I dedicate my work to my parents, who supported all my dreams, ambitions, and the decision to explore my curiosity in this field. They encouraged my transition from being an Economics graduate to pursuing the ambitious dream of becoming an ECD practitioner. They gave me the beautiful environment to nurture my curious mind, perspectives and to think beyond boundaries.

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List of Acronyms

ECD	Early Childhood Development
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
EF	Executive Function
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

Chapter I: Introduction and Background

Introduction

Social media have become a part of this new generation of children aged 5–8 years old, known as Generation Alpha. This is a crucial and sensitive period for language development and social interaction, and significant brain development also occurs during this time (UNICEF, 2024). Internet based language and contents influence the language and communication style of the children (Alroqi, 2023). Additionally, the communication environment of the children, the digital interactions influence their language development and social interaction (Romeo et al., 2018). Consequently, children are immersed in a digital ecosystem that shapes their patterns of interaction and language development.

Apart from their mother language, they adapt to viral social media trends and communicate using code languages, gestures, and emojis, which, as a result, impacts their language development and social communication skills (Alroqi, 2023; Common Sense Media, 2022). These changing patterns show that children in today's generation are learning to speak and communicate in a non-conventional way, and they might face speech delays while expressing their emotions more vividly and informally (Madigan et al., 2020). Appropriate stimulation is essential to support the overall growth of a child. Traditionally, children's communication skills and language development occur through in-person interactions with parents, educators, peers, and caregivers, such as through storytelling, role play, or engaging in play-based activities (Children & Screens, 2021).

They are exposed to visually rich content on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook Reels that shape their interaction styles, which differ from traditional learning methods (UNICEF, 2017;

Common Sense Media, 2022). They do not belong to the generation of storybooks or long, sustained conversations and have reduced verbal communication with their parents (Choi & Radesky, 2022; Madigan et al., 2020). They are more confined to their own digital world and do not express themselves in their traditional language because of personalized algorithms, and the conversational turns are not evident (Common Sense Media, 2022; Romeo et al., 2018). Children frequently use coded expressions like “bet,” “no cap,” “brain rot,” “rizz,” “skibidi,” “yeet,” and “sus,” which often require immediate translation or contextual understanding. This creates an additional layer of understanding in which adults must first decode the meaning and then respond. If adults fail to adapt to these trending patterns, they may be perceived as outdated or disconnected from the contemporary communication trends.

From a Vygotskian perspective, language development and learning are shaped by the culture and environment surrounding the child. In sociocultural theory, Vygotsky emphasized that children learn communication through quality interactions with adults within their zone of proximal development (ZPD), supported by scaffolding and positive experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). The environment and culture not only shape communication but also contribute to cognitive development.

Hence, understanding these patterns and the changing generational modes of communication and online engagement is essential for developing educational tools and adapting methods for implementation both at home and in educational settings. This research will identify existing gaps, explore the teachers and parents' perspectives, conduct an in-depth analytical study on this issue, and take a holistic approach to the newly introduced code language used in today's world.

Statement of the Problem

Children aged 5–8 years, belonging to Generation Alpha, are increasingly exposed to global social media trends and content that influence their linguistic development (Siregar & Rofiq, 2023; Dobransky & Hargittai, 2024). They are exposed to diverse linguistic models, including slang, informal speech, and mixed communication styles using code languages (Adhi & Masykuroh, 2025; Putri et al., 2025). Children at this age are engaged in watching YouTube videos and scrolling through reels on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook, often using their parents' devices or their own (Common Sense Media, 2022; UNICEF, 2017). They play online games such as Roblox, where they communicate with global players using code languages (Siregar & Rofiq, 2023). The games themselves frequently contain content that uses informal speech or slang (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2024). These short-form online contents influence their language development and social communication skills (Choi & Radesky, 2022; Madigan et al., 2020).

In their early learning years, they experience prolonged screen exposure, which reduces face-to-face interactions. They internalize digital slang and code languages learned from social media content and imitate them at school or in public places. They often struggle to differentiate formal and informal communication contexts and use code language and shortened forms of words such as “sigma,” “bruh,” “I’m cooked,” or “skibidi” (Siregar & Rofiq, 2023; Dobransky & Hargittai, 2024).

Bangladesh represents a bilingual context in which English and Bangla are used interchangeably (Hossain & Ahmed, 2024). This leads children to mix both languages and create hybrid code languages. French is also taught in some schools and institutions, making it a multilingual context

(Ethnologue, 2022; IWGIA, 2022). The presence of three languages in some environments has resulted in children developing code languages that mix multiple linguistic systems (Kuzyk et al., 2020; Smolak et al., 2019). One contributing factor to this trend is the lack of digital literacy awareness among parents and limited parental monitoring or restrictions on screen time (Children & Screens, 2021; Marcos, 2024).

As a result, these changing patterns might affect the relationship between parents and children, with reduced quality conversations as children develop their own “digital world” with coded language (Common Sense Media, 2022). This change is mostly reflected among urban middle- and upper-middle-class families who have access to smartphones and tablets and have less supervised screen time (Hossain & Ahmed, 2024). This also contributes to educational disparity among children who do not have access to digital resources (Marcos, 2024).

Moreover, this shift may influence the use of the mother language, as children may not speak it properly and blur traditional linguistic structures (Choi & Radesky, 2022; Madigan et al., 2020). They develop their own humor and communication style, which is difficult to understand unless the interlocutor has seen the same content or is aware of the current trends (Dobrinsky & Hargittai, 2024; Siregar & Rofiq, 2023). Their mimicry of the adapted language is reflected in their daily lives through gestures and communication with friends and family (UNICEF, 2017). One of the biggest challenges resulting from this phenomenon is the difficulty of integrating and adjusting to traditional social settings and maintaining academic language proficiency (Hossain & Ahmed, 2024).

Purpose of the Study

In Bangladesh's context, the influence of social media-driven code languages on children's language development and social skills is underexplored, creating scope for further research and gap identification in this field. This study will explore the influence of social media on the language development and social interaction of children aged 5–8 years.

The aim is to explore social media engagement and how children use words learned from platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, interactive gaming sites and Instagram Reels while interacting with others and how this affects their language development. In addition, this study will explore parents' and teachers' perspectives on the code languages adopted by children and how there might be a shift in their language development and social interaction pattern.

An exploration of these aspects will help to understand the influence of social media on linguistic patterns and language development in both academic and social context. Through the findings, the study intends to inform educators, policymakers, and parents about the challenges and opportunities created by social media and its implications on current and future generations.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to explore parents' and teachers' understanding of the role of social media on language development and social interaction among children aged 5-8 years.

Specific objectives:

- To identify the social media platforms that children aged 5–8 use and the types of content they engage with.

- To understand how language patterns and expressions from social media are reflected in their communication.
- To explore the attitudes of parents and teachers towards children's social media use and social interaction.

Significance of the Study

This study explores the emerging language patterns of the 5–8-year-old cohort. This generation has been born into a world of digital devices and is heavily influenced by social media, which has, in turn, affected their language use and social interaction (Patel et al., 2025; Naik et al., 2025). Generation Alpha, the first cohort raised entirely within a digital ecosystem, has adopted abbreviated forms of language, digital slang, and expressions originating from platforms such as YouTube and TikTok (Bansal & Mamidi, 2025; Putri et al., 2025). Understanding this evolving linguistic pattern is crucial to guiding their social interactions and helping educators and parents adapt appropriate strategies to support children's language development (Naik et al., 2025).

According to research, it has been found that rich quality contents can enhance children's vocabulary and language development, however, excessive screen time can reduce quality child-adult interaction and become an obstacle in acquiring the traditional language (Patel et al., 2025; Naik et al., 2025). Social interaction patterns are impacted during the formative years, making it essential to understand these changing linguistic trends (Vygotsky, 1978; Naik et al., 2025). Such understanding can guide educators in designing curricula that align with the evolving generation, adapting to their communication patterns while integrating traditional language structures effectively (Putri et al., 2025; Bansal & Mamidi, 2025).

The study is also important for raising awareness among parents regarding the communication patterns and language styles adopted by their children, emphasizing their role in monitoring screen time and filtering content to minimize risks. Furthermore, the research will benefit policymakers in developing adaptive strategies and policies that reflect changing learning styles and linguistic trends.

In the Bangladeshi context, this study is particularly relevant, as the use of slang or coded language is persistent in bilingual and multilingual environments. Emojis, slang, and hybrid code languages are now part of daily communication. Expressions like “bhallagena” and “same vibes” illustrate how children express emotions and choose their social circles. These trends reflect the characteristics of a smart, digitally influenced generation, though sometimes at the cost of modifying traditional linguistic patterns. However, research related to code languages and their influence on language development and social communication skills remains scarce and the scholars think that further investigation is required to understand and explore more (Marcos, 2024; Guellai et al., 2022).

Hence, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon and its role in children’s identity formation within a global social media environment. Research previously conducted has shown that children’s digital experiences contribute to their identity formation and communication styles (UNICEF, 2017; Dobransky & Hargittai, 2024). It will provide valuable insights into children’s adapted linguistic and communication skills through observation of their behavioral patterns and the perceptions of parents and teachers. Overall, it will serve as a guide for parents, teachers, and policymakers to make better-informed decisions and develop a clearer

understanding of social media's influence on language development and social interaction among young children (UNICEF, 2017; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016/2022).

Research Questions

1. How do parents and teachers perceive and evaluate the impact of social media on children's language development and social interactions?
2. How does social media exposure influence the language development and social interactions of children aged 5–8 years?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities that are observed among students due to the influence of social media ?

Operational Definition

1. **Social media exposure:** Social media exposure is the access to the digital platforms that allows people to interact, communicate and share contents through digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok etc. (UNICEF, 2017). The engagement includes both active and passive consumption of online contents. In this study, social media exposure refers to the engagement of children with different online platforms like Youtube, instagram, facebook, tiktok, online games that allows them to communicate, interact and learn words and different expressions.
2. **Code language/Digital slang:** These are the informal expressions, abbreviations, memes, words and internet based vocabulary that emerged in digital communication platforms (Crystal, 2011). These expressions create a peer identity and encourages bonding within children and a sense of belonging. In this study, it refers to the words, expressions, gaming

terminologies, acronyms and trending meme based communication used by children aged 5-8 years old.

3. **Language development:** Language development is the process through which children, from early childhood to adulthood, learn to use language, acquire the knowledge to communicate, perceive and produce. This includes the development of grammar and vocabulary and using them effectively in accordance with social context (Owens, 2016). In this study, it refers to the way children aged 5–8 years acquire vocabulary, the influence on their pronunciation, and construct phrases, and how these are influenced by social media.
4. **Social interaction:** According to Vygotsky, social interaction is the process through which people communicate through verbal and non verbal behaviors in social context (Vygotsky, 1978). In this study, it refers to the reciprocal interaction of children with the adults and their peers at home and in their classroom environments.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In early childhood , language development is a crucial process which is influenced by cultural context, social interaction and the environment exposure. In recent years, these are influenced by the exposure of social media contents and have changed the ways in which children communicate using coded language. Children aged 5-8 years old are rapidly adapting to the changing language patterns and integrating the emerging words and expressions into their life. This literature review explores the existing research on the role of social media platforms and digital eco system in the language development and social interaction. It would also address the existing theoretical frameworks, literature gap and the studies conducted in the context of Bangladesh.

Social Influences in Early Language Development and Communication

In the early years, language development occurs through social interaction and meaningful conversations with adults and caregivers. Neuroplastic changes in brain regions related to language, as well as vocabulary growth, have been linked to “conversational turns” between children and adults (Romeo et al., 2018; Lawton et al., 2023). In the current digital ecosystem, children are frequently exposed to short reels, memes, and videos (including game-related content such as Roblox), which influence their communication patterns and alter their media algorithms (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024). From a Vygotskian perspective, social media can be understood as a new platform for mediated learning and interaction, which may either enhance or reduce traditional language development.

The Relationship Between Linguistic Development and Media Consumption

There is a documented relationship between screen time and children’s language outcomes. In a research study, it has been found that greater overall screen use, including background television, tends to be associated with weaker expressive language skills, whereas co-viewing and high-quality content can mitigate some of these risks (Madigan et al., 2020). Policy guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) similarly emphasizes that moderate, co-engaged media use can support learning, but unregulated or excessive exposure may contribute to developmental concerns, including potential delays in language development.

Changes in Communication Style and Linguistic Patterns Due to Social Media Culture

UNICEF’s *State of the World’s Children* report (2017) highlights that the digital ecosystem plays a major role in shaping children’s lives, offering both creative opportunities and developmental

risks. For language development, children's engagement, their way of interaction with others and the consumption of media plays an influential role (Al-Harbi, 2015).

Social media differs from traditional media because it offers a participatory culture. Children do not only consume content, they also imitate linguistic styles, create content, and adapt digital dialects (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2024). In preprimary and primary settings, children have been observed using slang, abbreviations, and meme-driven expressions such as “skibidi,” “rizz,” and “no cap” (Fox 5 NY, 2024). These patterns reflect the influence of online communities on their everyday speech. They are exposed to viral content and meme culture, and according to a sociolinguistic study on Gen Alpha language, it has been found that they use new digital slang and coded language (Adhi & Masykuroh, 2025).

Code Languages and Practices in Multilingual Contexts

Code-switching is a common phenomenon in multilingual societies like Bangladesh. Research has shown that children may use code-switching to fill lexical gaps or to express identity, indicating rule-governed linguistic behavior rather than confusion (Kuzyk et al., 2020; Smolak et al., 2019). Yow and Tan (2016) found that code-switching exposure does not necessarily hinder language development; instead, it can enhance metalinguistic awareness.

Generation Alpha's digital code languages have taken hybrid forms that combine multiple languages and styles. These innovations are not inherently harmful but may impact scaffolding and the richness of conversational practices that are crucial for language development. Thus, it is imperative to evaluate whether the introduction of new words and digital expressions promotes creativity or results in a loss of meaningful interaction in the early years (Siregar & Rofiq, 2023).

Parental guidance in the context of social media practices

The role of parents is important in shaping the child's social media experience and can moderate the influence of social media on language development and social interaction.

Three primary strategies of media mediation theory are distinguished: active mediation, restrictive mediation and covieing strategy that can be implemented (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Valkenburg et al., 2013). Active mediation encourages the discussion and explanation of the contents with the children whereas restrictive mediation limits access and regulates screen duration. Co-viewing strategy implies shared engagements with the children without imposing explicit restrictions. Each of the strategies would be implemented differently depending on the developmental implications according to research. Language development is supported by active mediation and co-viewing than restrictive mediation strategy. According to Nikken and Jansz(2014), children analyse and contextualize social media when parents engage in conversations related to social media. The importance of conversational turns in the early stages during childhood is also emphasized by Romeo et al. (2018) as it is found that there is a relationship between strong neural activation in language related brain regions with interaction with caregivers or parents. Hence, as the face to face interaction is replaced by screen exposure, this as a result might reduce the opportunity for expressive language development. There is a negative relationship between screen time and expressive language skills in early childhood as reported by Madigan et al. (2020). The study reflects that the social media exposure is not detrimental rather depends on the communicative environment of the child. A balanced social media engagement is required and guided media and co-viewing is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In this contemporary time, parenting in the social media era requires negotiating parenting instead of dominant control. There is an increased pragmatic approach, creating boundaries and guidance in the inevitable social media's presence in the life of the children (Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2020). The parental mediation theory can be further extended to socioeconomic factors, digital literacy and parental beliefs which can construct the mediation practices (Clark, 2020). Bangladesh's multilingual context, not only screen time has to be regulated but linguistic influences from social media platforms would be crucial too as English is dominated. Behavioral regulation challenges are also associated with excessive media use (Domoff et al., 2019). These are interconnected with family relationships and the way parental control strategies would be applied.

The role of social media in peer bonding and social identity formation

Social media creates a space for identity formation and peer bonding where children can engage and construct shared meanings. This phenomenon is conceptualised as participatory culture by Jenkins (2009) and he says that the individuals are active contributors and reinterpret social media contents. Internalisation of shared expressions, gestures and phrases taken from online platforms can take place from early childhood. Peer recognition and social visibility is constructed by digital spaces and they create their own social identity through shared language and cultural references (Boyd, 2014). Most of the research is based on adolescents but it is also suggested that children are getting engaged with participatory culture as they are spending time on shorts, video games and meme based communication (Nesi et al., 2018). As a result, they are having increased interaction in the social media platforms, through games and Youtube instead of face to face social contexts. Children replicate patterns through imitation, gestures and expressions observed in short

videos, gaming platforms or interaction with peers. This identifies the new pattern of social media bonding replacing the conventional one. The digital knowledge that they possess and the online references can serve as a social capital within peer groups (Nesi et al.,2018). Hence, social media exposure not only has risks but also is a potential route to collaborative peer bonding and identity creation.

Executive Function and Cognitive Processing in the Context of Social Media Exposure

Executive function is a set of mental skills that help a child to stay focused and pay attention and which also helps them to control their behavior which as a result helps them to achieve a task (Diamond, 2013, p. 136). During the early childhood period, these skills develop and 5-8 years is a sensitive period that helps to shape the attention span and cognitive flexibility (Diamond, 2013). Social media introducing short videos, reels, gaming contents creates high stimulation and immediate rewards. The exposure to such contents have raised concern among researchers as it might reduce the attention span and children may enter the fast paced media environment (Lillard et al., 2015). It is also reported that children with increased screen time have weaker expressive language skills and attention span (Madigan et al.,2020).

Sociocultural Theory and Language as a Cultural Tool

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky emphasizes that learning and development occur within a cultural context and through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, language is an essential tool for social communication and not merely a cognitive skill. This competency is acquired through scaffolding, dialogue, and participation in meaningful conversational activities within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

Nowadays, social media can be understood as a cultural tool for communication and may be conceptualized as a mediational tool that facilitates interaction. Children transmit socially coded language, gestures, and meme-based expressions through social environments. They adapt and reinterpret these expressions, which shape their social interaction skills and form sociocultural practices. The presence of coded language should not be viewed as a linguistic disruption but rather as an evolving cultural system when examined from a sociocultural lens (Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, social media acts as a cultural medium that transmits and interprets language, influencing children's negotiation of identity and their sense of belonging (Vygotsky, 1978).

Ecological Systems Theory and Layered Environmental Influence

The understanding of the role of social media in the developmental ecology of children is further supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. This theory proposes that the development of the child occurs within a particular system, and social media belongs to the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Social media platforms are outside their immediate settings, and exposure to social media content shapes children's experiences to develop language and their interaction patterns. Through the exosystem, they learn symbolic references, coded languages, and gesture-based communication (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological complexity arises in urban multilingual contexts like Bangladesh, where English, Bengali, and additional third languages like French are introduced, and children incorporate digital slang within any language based on their preferences and contextualization. So, the framework proposes that there is an interconnected system where child development occurs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This development ranges from the microsystem to the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). So, this social media interaction is incorporated with existing linguistic and cultural systems and does not function independently.

Therefore, ecological systems theory helps to understand social media as one of the components of environmental influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Existing Knowledge and Research Gaps

Existing research has demonstrated an inverse relationship between higher screen exposure and language outcomes, although co-viewing and high-quality content can buffer some negative effects (Madigan et al., 2020). Conversational turn-taking has been identified as essential for both language and cognitive development (Romeo et al., 2018; Lawton et al., 2023). Furthermore, digital language adaptation from social media content begins in the early years and tends to gain momentum and fluency as children move into later primary and adolescent stages (Common Sense Media, 2022).

However, limited research has focused specifically on children aged 5–8 years regarding their social media engagement and the use of slang, hybrid codes, and memes, and how these contribute to their linguistic development (Guellai et al., 2022). There is little evidence about how such digital language practices affect multilingual contexts, in-class communication, and academic vocabulary. Additionally, there is a scarcity of studies that consider the perspectives of parents, teachers, and children themselves regarding social media exposure and the use of digital code languages. This gap underscores the need for research focusing on the shift in language patterns and its implications in early childhood and would also help to understand the knowledge or perceptions of parents' and teachers' on this.

This is an important research in Bangladeshi context as there is a research gap in this field of exploring and having evidence on the integration of digital slang or influence of social media and

digital language, coded words in daily social interaction or language development (Hossain & Ahmed, 2024). The existing literature in Bangladeshi context focuses on exposure to bilingualism or influence of digital media. However it did not yet explore the emerging linguistic trends. For instance, the use of memes, expressions or gestures in social interaction, especially for the 5-8 years old cohort. Furthermore, the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers and parents are not explored concerning the exposure to social media. Hence, it reflects the need to conduct a localized research that would help to understand the practices within Bangladeshi context.

Chapter III :Methodology

Research Approach/Design

An exploratory qualitative study was conducted to assess the perspectives of teachers and parents and to explore the emerging linguistic patterns associated with social media exposure in a natural context. The qualitative approach was chosen as it will help to understand and analyse these issues in a deep, contextual way, which cannot be completely understood using quantitative measures.

Children were observed for a minimum of two hours across three consecutive sessions. These observations helped to make interpretations and understand the influences of social media on their social interaction and language development. This approach further allowed the researcher to explore themes through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observations. Hence, instead of a statistical approach and interpreting numerical values, through interpretations and studying different themes, the linguistic phenomenon and interaction pattern was explored in order to gain insights through descriptive thematic analysis. This would help to inform educators, parents, and policymakers to use the findings and develop relevant policies or curriculum accordingly.

Although in the research question, the term “impact” and “evaluate” was used, however, this study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach. Here, participants observed patterns and perceived influence was referred to using the term “impact” and it was not used to measure the causal relationship. Similarly, the term “evaluate” was referred to the adaptive strategies and interpretations of parents and teachers concerning the role of social media in the children’s language development and social interaction. Hence, this study does not aim to establish casualty rather explores the perceptions of the participants in a natural context.

Research Participants

In this study, five parents, five teachers, and four children aged 5–8 years participated. The children attend a French language institute, Alliance Française de Dhaka and come from different schools across Dhaka. All the teachers work as language instructors at the institute. They all come from diverse backgrounds and hence in order to gain a range of perspectives, the participants were selected from the language institute. As educators work with language learning, it further helps to have deeper insight into analyzing changes in linguistic patterns and language development, as well as how code languages from online platforms influence language learning and social interaction.

Although the sample size was small, it was appropriate for this qualitative study as it aimed to generate detailed insights rather than generalizable findings.

Research Site

The study was conducted in Dhaka city at Alliance Française de Dhaka, a French language institution attended by children from both middle and upper-middle-class urban families. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and the children attended different schools.

The interviews of the parents were conducted in the participants' homes, in a quiet environment to ensure focus and maintain ethical standards during the data collection process. The IDIs of the teachers were conducted at Alliance, at their workplace. Observations of the children took place at their home.

Data Collection Methods

To ensure depth and triangulation, data for this study was collected from multiple qualitative sources: IDIs of parents and teachers and observations of children. There were several steps for the data collection.

Step 1: Development and validation of tools

At first the tools were developed and validated. The tools were created based on the research objectives. There were two methods: IDIs and observation, which were developed. Consent forms were created for both parents and teachers before conducting the interview.

Step 2: Contact the participants and schedule meetings

First ethical approval from BRAC IED was taken. Then the potential participants were contacted personally through calls and face to face meetings were organized. 4 students aged 5-8 years old from different classes were selected through the teacher and communicated. They were observed at their home, in a natural setting and parents were requested for an interview. They were explained regarding the purpose of the study, ethical considerations and participants requirements. Interview dates were organized according to their availability and observation of the children were scheduled accordingly.

Step 3: Conducting In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Parents and teachers were interviewed and each IDI was approximately 30-45 minutes and took place in the participants' home. The audio was recorded with permission to ensure accuracy and allow detailed transcription and analysis. The questions were translated to Bangla for some participants to allow the participants to respond comfortably. It was a semi structured interview having both open ended and structured questions on different themes related to language use, social interaction and influence of social media. Before conducting the interviews, the consent forms were reviewed, and signed. The parents were explained the objectives, data collection process and the duration for the interview.

Step 4: Observations of social interaction and linguistic patterns

A structured observation checklist was used, and the observations took place in the home environments of children. There were three observation sessions, each lasting around at least 2 hours. The main focus of the observation was to notice any changes in their interaction patterns, use of digital expressions, and language use with their family members, siblings, or peers. The checklist included researcher prompts in case the child did not engage in sufficient activities or was conscious due to the researcher's presence. It also aimed to look into gestures or references to social media content during communication. It was an active observation which included intervention with prompts and questions to clarify certain behaviors.

Step 5: Journaling, documentation and reflection

The researcher maintained a reflective journal and recorded and documented the personal observations, and reflected on the possible biases and outcomes throughout the research process.

Step 6: Preparing the data analysis and transcription

The data was organized for coding and the recordings were transcribed for thematic analysis in the data analysis part.

Data Analysis

The data was collected using in-depth interviews (IDIs) of the parents and teachers and observations of the students, which was used to formulate and analyze using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring patterns and anomalies in the narratives. There were several steps followed in order to analyze the data.

Step 1: Data organization and preparation for the analysis

All the data were compiled and the interviews were transcribed. The child observations were gathered and summarized. The observations checklists, journal reflections and field notes were organized into a unified dataset for effective analysis.

Step 2: Data familiarization

The interview transcript, observation notes, reflections were re-read to gain an overall understanding and finalizing the key ideas, themes and coding.

Step 3: Initial Coding

The researcher identified recurring patterns of interaction, vocabulary used, and actions through gestures, memes, or meaningful statements that were connected to their language use and social media exposure, and all these were manually coded. IDI transcripts, responses from the

observation checklist, the reflective journal, and informal field notes were coded manually. For instance, if they were using slang, it was coded as “digital slang,” “loss of expressive expressions,” or “shortened phrases.” If words like “sigma teacher” were used, it was coded as “code language use during class.” During interactions with other children, if the child used repeated catchphrases and talked about gaming content like Roblox or influencers, it was coded as “exposure to online content.”

Step 4: Generating categories using the initial codes

The similar or related information found during coding were placed into one broader category reflecting similar perspectives or expressions. There were categories such as “code language use,” based on the coding of shortened expressions and digital words. The opinions of the parents were placed under “parental perspectives or concerns,” and the observations or remarks made in the class under “teachers’ observations.” Moreover, patterns of social interaction were categorized as “interaction with adults,” and trending social media influences as “social media influence.”

Step 5: Themes and subthemes development

After finalizing the categories from coding, key themes and subthemes were identified, aligning with the research questions and objectives. There were five major themes identified based on the findings.

Step 6: Review, finalize and Interpret the themes and report the findings

Using the evidence from the IDIs and observations, along with informal field notes, the data were analyzed to create evidence-based narratives.

Step 7: Establishing credibility and conformability

All the data collected from the interviews and observations were cross-checked and merged before final presentation or sharing.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools

IDI guideline and observation checklist was used as the primary data collection tools and prior to the implementation, the tools were validated by experts from BRAC IED, Brac University. The researcher engaged in reflection using a reflexive journal, documented personal biases and assumptions and examined how they might impact data analysis. This process helped to minimize bias and support confirmability. This research used triangulation to study the same phenomenon using multiple sources in order to increase the accuracy of the findings and establish credibility and trustworthiness. According to Denzin's seminal framework, triangulation can be categorized into four types: data, method, investigator, and theory triangulation. (Denzin, 1978) In this research, data and method triangulation was implemented. For data triangulation, data was collected from IDI responses of parents and teachers, observations of the students, and journal reflections. For method triangulation, different methods or tools were used, including IDIs, observation checklists, reflective journals, and field notes. Hence, the triangulation method would support credibility and trustworthiness.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was obtained from BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), Brac University before initiating the study. Following approval, data collection began. The study maintained ethical principles and ensured that participants' rights, safety, and well-being were protected. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about the study's purpose.

They had the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and parental consent was obtained for children. Teachers and parents were informed about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, participants' names were coded, and no identifying information was shared. Pseudonyms were used throughout the study. The study also ensured that children's regular learning activities were not disrupted, and they could withdraw from any activity if they were unwilling to participate. This research strictly maintained the ethical guidelines and standards given by the relevant review board of the institution.

Limitations of the Study

The interpretation and findings of the research had some methodological and contextual limitations that may have influenced the interpretation of the findings.

Methodological Constraints: It was challenging to organize the interviews and some had to be rescheduled or re-recorded due to disruptions. This was time consuming and within this short period of time, multiple interviews were rescheduled.

Observational bias: During observation, children became conscious of being observed, which may have influenced their natural behavior, and researcher prompts were sometimes required. Initially, passive observation was thought of but due to insufficient data collection, it was shifted to active observation, where prompts were included in the observation checklist. However, children were conscious and reacting according to the situation that made it challenging to have a natural observation.

Sample scope: Due to time limitations, children were not interviewed, and richer insights could have been obtained if their perspectives were included. Moreover, language patterns and generational changes are inevitable. As this study is focused on a specific population, Generation Alpha, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized but may be transferable to similar settings.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study derived from the data collected through in-depth interviews with five parents and five teachers including the results of the structured observations of 4 children aged 5-8 years. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, involving coding, categorization and theme development.

The findings are organized into five major themes aligned with the research questions and objectives.

Participant's Demographic Information:

The participants were grouped into three categories based on the research objectives: Parents, teachers and students. There were teachers and parents including male and female. The parents were aged 30 -45 years old, while the teachers were aged 20-50 years old. Among the parents, two of the mothers were homemakers and the fathers worked as an educator in a language institution in Dhaka. All five teachers were educators working at Alliance Française de Dhaka, having teaching experience of 3-15 years. All participants took part in the interview conducted.

Table 1:Demographic of the Participants

Research tool	Participants' category	Total participants	Age range	Educational background (Maximum)	Living Area	Details
IDI	Parents	5	30-45	Masters	Dhaka	2 mothers (Housewife) 2 fathers (Educators)
IDI	Teachers	5	20-50	Masters	Dhaka	3-15 years of experience 3 female teachers 2 male teachers
Observational checklist	Students	4	5-8	Primary	Dhaka	2 boys (6 and 7 years old) 2 girls (8 years old)

Findings are presented under the following themes and sub-themes that emerged from thematic analysis.

Theme 1: The perception of parents and teachers concerning the usage of social media

Sub Theme-1: Perception of Parents

Most parents acknowledged the use of social media in their daily routine. None of them reported it to be completely restricted; rather, they emphasized moderate supervision and parental control. One of them explained that *“I believe it depends on parental control and how the parents supervise their children”* (IDI:Parent, Jan 17, 2026). This reflects the parental view of responsible mediation and guided supervision. Similarly, another parent believed that a non-regulated approach would be harmful in understanding their social media consumption. He said *“As a parent, I believe that excessive social media consumption is bad and must be regulated”* (IDI:Parent, Jan 20, 2026).

Some of the parents were concerned and believed that children are dependent on social media contents and at times, without supervision, they have excessive screentime.

However, most of them reported the positive influence of social media and some of them noted that it provides them more learning resources. A parent shared his positive remark emphasizing on the importance of technology and how it helps in the child's language fluency. *"Technology has a phenomenal impact and due to the vast resources, children now speak English or any other language beautifully"* (IDI:Parent, Jan 20, 2026).

Overall, the perceived ideas reflect a combination of benefits and disadvantages regarding the use of social media.

Sub Theme-2: Perception of Teachers

Social media exposure was reported to be inevitable by all the teachers who observed its influence during class activities and peer interaction. Most of them shared the similar opinion that online games, trends frequently shape the interactions and discussion of the students in the class. Children talk about gaming characters while interacting with peers. One of the teachers shared that when they return to school after vacation and are asked about their activities that they did during their vacation, children talk about what games were played and characters explored.

"After coming from holiday vacation the students talk a lot about the games they play. They discuss different characters and sometimes they even include those characters in their classroom projects" (IDI:Teacher, January 18, 2026). This shows that online activities have an impact in the classroom setting. Most of the teachers believe that the expressions learnt in social media spread like chain reactions and affect their interactions.

“When one student starts saying something they learned online, the others immediately start repeating it. Very quickly everyone begins using the same word or expression” (IDI:Teacher, January 23, 2026). This reflects that peer influence plays a role too and can shape the childhood experience.

Several teachers also believe that social media is having an influence in their attention span and analytical thinking and students are seeking quick solutions instead of observing and reflecting on their own. *“I saw some of my students are impatient during classroom activities and want answers without solving” (IDI:Teacher, January 23, 2026).*

Despite the negative experiences. Undoubtedly, there are plenty of resources that can help a child in grasping the language better. It was also mentioned by one of the parents that understanding the children’s social environment is necessary to teach them effectively and this perspective is highlighted when one of the teachers stated: *“It is essential to understand the language or expressions my students use, otherwise it becomes difficult for me to communicate with them and teach them properly” (IDI:Teacher, January 23, 2026).* Evidently they are aware of the importance of social media knowledge and the contents that the children use to help with effective teaching.

Theme 2: Influence of social media on language development

Sub Theme-1: Emergence of Code Language and digital expression

Most of the parents and teachers reported that students frequently use trending digital words such as “sigma,” “skibidi,” “sus,” “cringe,” and “6–7,” and also follow memes and funny videos. Several teachers observed increased utilisation of these coded terms in class. One of the teachers

reported that students often accompany the phrase “6–7” with a gesture during classroom interaction.

“The students move their hands up and down and say ‘6–7’. They repeat it during class and use it while interacting with their friends” (IDI:Teacher, January 18, 2026). This indicates that they use not only the code language but it also accompanies gestures creating their own pattern. A few of the teachers observed that social media expressions replace academic vocabulary during classroom interaction. The children also have their own interpretation of the words and expressions and one of the teachers said: *“They use these words in their own way and give their own meaning to them when they talk with their friends” (IDI:Teacher, January 18, 2026).*

One of the teachers reported that they use expressions and vocabulary learned from online platforms. *“In class, I have noticed that sometimes they use brain-rot terms like ‘aura farming’ and mix these expressions with formal language when they speak” (IDI:Teacher, January 18, 2026).* Words like “aura farming”, “brain rot terms” are becoming part of their daily life. Even observational data matches with the findings from IDI’s and suggest that code language emergence is noticeable and children interact with peers and other members in their own communication style.

Sub Theme-2: Code-Switching and Multilingual Mixing

A recurring pattern of contextual language switching was observed. Several parents reported that children switch between Bangla, English, and French depending on context and people they interact with. This demonstrates the capability of the children to adapt the language according to contexts. This phenomenon is explained by one of the parents. *“At home my daughter usually speaks Bangla, but when she talks with her cousins or her school friends she sometimes switches*

to English while speaking” (IDI:Parent, January 20, 2026). This reflects that children can change their communication pattern according to their environment. However, language mixing concern was also expressed by one of the parents stating that *“there is language mixing sometimes and my child uses Bangla, English, French, (which my child is learning at Alliance) and even newly learnt words from the reels or games” (IDI:Parent, Jan 22, 2026).* So, multilingual contexts and influence of social media is also evident among children.

There was a similar pattern observed in the classroom settings by most of the teachers, where the children preferred gaming words and newly learned social media trendy expressions avoiding the targeted language. A teacher reported that *“while teaching French language, I have faced difficulties and have seen at times children using newly learnt words like 6-7 while interacting with their peers” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026).*

Sub Theme-3: Influence of Social Media on Pronunciation and Tone

Several parents and teachers reported changes in tone and speech patterns influenced by imitation of online characters. Few parents observed that children imitate body movements, tones, gestures from the contents that they view online. One of the parents described how the child imitates: *“He uses body movements or acts like characters imitating their tones that he sees online while having conversations with us” (IDI:Parent, Jan 20, 2026).* This shows that online characters and their way of speaking have an influence in the children’s communication pattern and noticeable tonal shifts are reported by parents. As a result, later, the child also internalized the tone and pronunciation that he saw in social media.

A few of the teachers also reported the influence of social media on pronunciation and children are more comfortable with their way of communication using gestures or symbolic expressions. A teacher stated that *“when they watch reels or videos of fluent speakers, they imitate them. It reduces hesitation and improves fluency”* (IDI:Teacher, 18 Jan, 2026). This points out the positive influence that social media has on pronunciation and tone and according to most of the teachers, social media is helping in improving their fluency, depending on the educational contents that they are viewing.

Theme 3: Influence of social media in social interaction

Sub Theme-1: Bonding and Identity Formation with Peers

All teachers reported that shared social media knowledge strengthens bonding between peers. They collaborate in classroom activities and can interact comfortably and easily if they are familiar with certain trendy words or expressions and shared knowledge. One of the teachers noted that there is a sense of connection and belonging which is introduced through social media contents. *“I have seen during tasks and playtime that they connect through shared trendy reels or expressions and they work better in a team if everyone knows the phrase”* (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026). This suggests that common shared language or words and expressions helps enhance peer interactions and establishes social connections. It was also observed by one of the teachers is that children bonds and creates their own identity easily with shared linguistic culture as one of them states: : *“The children at times laugh, vibes and enjoys life energetically when they know specific words or expressions like 6-7 or aura farming”* (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).

On the contrary, a few of the teachers differed and expressed that it may create isolation and clustering within the class where a teacher reported that students with familiar knowledge creates a group isolating others. *“I noticed children with familiar knowledge want to sit together and do the activity and there are few who are isolated” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026)*. Most of the parents agreed that shared knowledge about the social media trends and gaming platforms strengthens the bonding and creates an identity within peers. However, some of them expressed concerns related to reduced interactions at home with their family and relatives and one parent highlighted saying : *“my child does not mix with others easily and takes time to adapt” (IDI:Parent, Jan 20, 2026)*.

This means that they have created a comfort zone within a specific culture and environment

Observational findings further demonstrated that children appeared enthusiastic and interacted more lively when they shared similar knowledge about online platforms and gaming culture.

Sub Theme-2: Selective and Context-Based Communication

Most of the parents and teachers reported that children adjust their communication style depending on the context. A few of the parents and teachers observed that the children used the coded expressions selectively where one parent reported that *“I have seen my child sometimes using ‘6–7’ and similar terms with friends, but not much with me” (IDI:Parent, Jan 22, 2026)*. This shows the selective approach and the social awareness of the child to use specific words accordingly. However, some of the teachers reported that at times the children do not maintain appropriate boundaries and engage in informal conversations in the class with the teacher. A teacher said that *“I have seen in class that children often become informal with teachers while interacting and sometimes fail to recognize appropriate boundaries” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026)*. It reflects the influence of social media in classroom behaviors.

However, most of the teachers agree that during structured activities, students can control their communication pattern. Findings from observational study reflect a similar pattern where the child interacts informally mostly with peers and can control during structured tasks demonstrating social awareness.

Sub Theme-3: Communication Using Coded Gestures

Most of the teachers noticed gesture based communication in the classroom, influenced by social media trends. They use symbolic and verbal gestures in the class. One of the teachers said, *“I observed children saying ‘6–7’ and repeating it every 5–10 minutes while using hand gestures, and their peers would pick up the cue” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).*

Similarly, parents also observed communication using coded approaches where the child imitated or acted like online characters. *“My child talks about unknown characters and imitates body movements and acts like them at home” (IDI:Parent, Jan 20, 2026).* This indicates the adoption of both verbal and non verbal communication skills and children reflecting their consumed contents from social media through gestures and imitation.

Theme 4: Challenges due to social media exposure

Sub Theme-1: Attention and Concentration

Both parents and teachers reported reduced attention span as a major concern due to the exposure of social media. Several teachers said that the children are more impatient and expect quick responses during academic tasks. One of the teachers said that: *“When I give a task, instead of taking time and completing it, they ask for instant solutions” (IDI Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).* This shows that the students are having short attention span and becoming impatient in doing a task.

Several teachers mentioned reduced attention span and jumps from one activity to another within a short time.

Most of the teachers identified the pattern of the short form digital content and one of the teachers explained *“I think the exposure to '10 seconds reels’ are harmful and they get bored easily and end up scrolling from one reel to another affecting their attention span (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).* Hence, the findings suggest that short form contents in Youtube reels and other social media would have a negative impact in their classroom activities.

Sub Theme-2: Register of Academic and Non-Academic Language

Teachers reported occasional blending of gaming language with academic discourse. Some teachers noted that students occasionally use code language or gaming expressions in the classroom setting. Several teachers observed that the students have pronunciation and vocabulary distortion due to the influence of gaming expressions and one of the teachers noted that: *“I have seen that the students prefer their own interpretation of a word , familiar or unfamiliar instead of focusing on the correct pronunciation” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).* They are at times reluctant to learn and accept the contents from social media only. One of the teachers expressed the difficulty in maintaining an academic register. *“In class, I have faced difficulty in managing the tasks when instead of speaking in French, they sometimes use their own coded language” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).* In the French language class, the students communicated in gaming language and other words that were unknown to the teachers and the finding reflects that at times children mix the targeted words and borrowed language in a task. Another teacher reported that it was difficult in maintaining academic boundary sharing *“I have experienced students becoming informal sometimes and using references like ‘sigma teacher’ and combining social media language with academic language, which creates difficulties in communication” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).*

Sub Theme-3: Social media dependency and change in behavioral pattern

Several parents reported excessive screen dependency among children. Several parents are concerned that their children are invested in videos, reels which as a result affects their behavioral pattern too. *“My child is addicted when watching and it is difficult to stop once absorbed in the contents” (IDI:Parent, Jan 22, 2026)*. This is a challenge that shows consistent and prolonged social media addiction can lead to strong attachment towards online contents and later it will become harder to minimize the screentime if alternative activities are not offered.

Most of the teachers highlighted a behavioral and social dependency pattern within children that as a result influences their class participation where one of the teachers mentions that students who use social media frequently face difficulties. *“I have observed that students in my class, those who are more inclined towards social media content, tend to have lower concentration during tasks” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026)*. This suggests that engagement with social media contents can affect their performance in school and can reduce their focus during tasks.

Theme 5: Opportunities and strategies adapted

Sub Theme-1: Positive outcomes

Both parents and teachers reported positive outcomes of the influence of social media despite concerns. Some of the parents stated that it encourages curiosity and knowledge seeking within children. Apart from the positive stimulation and educational videos, several parents observed linguistic benefits that social media could offer to their children. One of them said: *“I have observed that my child’s English has improved. Now there is more fluency, and my child can use more vocabulary because most reels are in English” (IDI:Parent, January 20, 2026)*. A few of the

parents also mentioned about reels helping them to learn a third language like French as well as they follow algorithms and French or videos in any other languages also come in their feed and the child can grasp more new words in a new language. One of the parents said: *“I have observed that my child asks more questions about a topic after watching a video or reel and seems more curious. Usually when my child explores educational contents, I encourage my child to explore further”* (IDI:Parent, Jan 22, 2026).

The positive stimulations and educational opportunities are encouraged and highlighted by the parents as one of the major positive outcomes.

Likewise, most of the teachers said that there is a positive outcome related to improved communication. Children are more confident when they are following the social media trend, building their own communication pattern. One of the teachers said *“I have noticed that children in my class speak more confidently during tasks, and it helps reduce hesitation and improve their fluency”* (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026). This happens as they imitate native speakers online and practice repeatedly a word or expression. However, it was mentioned by some teachers that the positive outcomes depend on the type of content they browse and the type of knowledge they are seeking.

Sub Theme-2: Strategies of parents

Most of the parents are inclined towards the adaptation of moderation strategies instead of complete restriction of social media. Several parents highlighted the importance of parental supervision and a balanced usage. One of the parents stated that *“I believe that the use of social media depends on parental control and how you moderate their social media consumption. We*

cannot completely restrict this but we must supervise and practice co-viewing too” (IDI:Parent, Jan 17, 2026). This indicates that most of the parents are seeking a balanced approach and encouraging the consumption with supervision and are not in favour of complete restriction.

Sub Theme-3: Strategies of teachers

Similarly, the teachers also reported that adaptive strategies would be more welcoming instead of complete restriction. One of the teachers highlighted the need to establish boundaries between the teachers and the students during the academic activities. An interesting finding reported by one of the teachers present that the children use the code language consciously during structured academic tasks and stated that *“during a task, I asked them to talk about themselves and their friends and they didn’t use any code language rather stucked to academic vocabulary” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 18, 2026).* It was emphasized by some of the teachers that guidance and constructive engagement is needed and tasks in the class should be planned in such a way that do not encourage expressions or words out of context or can also integrate social media contents appropriately. One of the teachers said *“we must guide our students and ensure an integrated and planned pedagogical approach that could minimize the negative impacts” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026).* Apart from these most of them reported that understanding the students and their emerging language pattern is essential for effective teaching and supportive learning and hence the relationship between the students and the teachers must be improved as well. A teacher stated that *“I believe we should be aware of the new expressions and code languages that they are learning from social media and we should be able to decode them” (IDI:Teacher, Jan 23, 2026).*

So, the strategies suggest a balanced approach and improved communication strategies while maintaining the academic communication norms amidst the influence of social media.

Observational findings on children's language use and social interaction:

Most of the children demonstrated similar patterns in using social media and how they communicate. During interaction with parents, caregivers, friends or siblings, most children used trendy digital words such as “brain rot”, “sigma”, and “aura farming”. Some children showed contextual awareness and adjusted their vocabulary depending on the person they were interacting with.

A few were interested in crafting videos and educational content instead of playing games online or watching gaming videos. While interacting with friends or siblings at home, most of them used coded languages and gestures like 6-7 or imitated online gaming characters to make people laugh. Some children showed less interest in code language and were more invested in hearing storytelling.

All children were familiar with trending games like Roblox and Minecraft and frequently used popular expressions like “sigma teacher”, “6-7”. Moreover, all children demonstrated the understanding of internet humor and responding and showing excitement to trends.

Discussion

This section presents the key findings of the study and provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the results. The findings, which were categorized into themes and sub-themes in the previous chapter, are discussed in relation to the perceptions of parents and teachers. Insights

from the literature review and relevant theoretical perspectives are also integrated to provide a deeper understanding of the findings.

Theme 1: The perception of parents and teachers concerning the usage of social media:

The first research question explored the perception of parents and teachers and findings show that both of the groups shared similar opinions regarding the effect of social media. They believe that this is an integral part and unavoidable and instead of adopting restrictive approaches, both groups believe in a moderate and diplomatic approach. This reflects that the parents and teachers are adapting more friendly attitudes and are conscious of strategic parenting and methodical educator roles.

Parents acknowledged the engagements with social media platforms like Youtube, gaming and also passively viewed reels and shorts from their parents phones and from the findings, it was found that some of them are not aware of the contents and lack digital literacy. However, co viewing strategy was also shared by them and they think a collaborative approach is required to understand the children better.

The teachers have expressed the obstacles or disruptions that can be created during code language sharing within tasks and have highlighted the importance of setting linguistic boundaries. Even lack of digital literacy was reflected within the teachers which shows a necessity of awareness of the contents and the interpretations among both parents and teachers.

All these findings resonate with media mediation theory that talks about different mediation strategies and advocates for active and co viewing strategy (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Valkenburg et al., 2013). According to Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020), in the contemporary

time, approaches should be child driven that require negotiation instead of strict parenting strategies and that is also relevant with the findings. The role of social media is perceived as a beneficial and developmental threat by both of the groups and an effective strategic approach is also suggested by them to create an inclusive environment within the social media.

Theme 2: Influence of Social Media on Language Development

This aligns with the second research question where we explored the influence of social media in language development. From the findings, it was evident that they use code languages like “brainrot”, “sus”, “cringe”, “skibidi” but that do not cause major disruption in their linguistic ability. However, it was found that it has an effect in their pronunciation, tone, accent and they imitate certain characters. It is also notable that they have linguistic awareness at this stage and their changes are reflected when they are with peers or similar knowledge sharing environments. This change is aligned with sociolinguistic research where it is found that code languages can be termed as generational markers of identity (Adhi & Masykuroh, 2025; Putri et al., 2025). There were concerns with speech and pronunciations in Bengali language as children are learning more English driven words through reels, gaming platforms and as a result Bengali language can be affected. It relates to excessive screen use which as a result causes reduced expressive outcomes (Madigan et al., 2020; Choi & Radesky, 2022). Similarly, it was found in the study that they interpret the terms in their own way in a different language, when learning a third language, they related their English code 6-7 into French and gave it a new form and came up with meanings of French words to code languages. A concern was also raised related to short form videos and children adapting expressions and words from the targeted contents which as a result reduces their analysing capability of a language in the long run. It was also appreciated by teachers and parents

that their English pronunciation is developing and they also are more aware of a third language as they get new words, listen to songs etc. Hence, this social media influence can be both a potential risk and innovative place depending on the mediation strategies of the parents and the teachers.

Theme 3: Influence of social media in social interaction

If we view this from Vygotsky's sociocultural lens, development is constructed within a cultural context, and social media has become part of children's cultural environment. Hence, their communication development during early childhood is shaped by social media exposure. However, meaningful interaction and conversational turn-taking are also required for the holistic development of a child, as supported by Vygotsky's theory.

The findings reflected that children communicated through gaming platforms, interacted via YouTube videos, and used symbolic references from digital content in their everyday conversations. It was also found that they hesitate to use code languages in front of their parents, which demonstrates their linguistic awareness but also reveals patterns in their interaction. Their awareness of bilingual code-switching during interactions indicates their ability for selective communication and adaptive language use (Kuzyk et al., 2020; Yow & Tan, 2016).

They tend to bond with peers who share similar interests. Therefore, limited communication at home and a lack of parental awareness may contribute to reduced parent-child bonding. Their interaction pattern can be described as participatory culture, as conceptualized by Jenkins (2009), which creates a space for children to construct shared identities based on common digital interests.

If we also consider Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the exosystem—which includes social media environments—plays a role in shaping children's interaction patterns. The

environment that surrounds children plays a vital role in their development, and according to this theory, their interaction and communication are influenced by the ecological systems in which they live. Social media has become an integrated part of their lives rather than a separate entity.

This raises concerns about conventional face-to-face interaction patterns, as some children appear to prefer spending time in video games rather than communicating directly with family members, friends, or cousins in person.

Theme 4: Challenges Associated with Social Media Exposure

Challenges and risks were explored through the IDIs conducted and the findings address the third research questions concerning the challenges of social media exposure. It was reported by the participants that the children have reduced attention span and prefer information that is quick to process and activities that can be completed fast. They also observed difficulty in maintaining academic registrar in some cases. The findings show the negative aspects that are concerning and align with literature where it was said that there is a negative relationship between screen exposure and attention span (Domoff et al., 2019; Madigan et al., 2020). High screen time eventually leads to a short attention span and causes the children to be impatient and have more online simulation. Teachers had reported the short form content effects which causes the child to seek answers immediately instead of thinking critically or analyzing and this is as a result of Youtube videos, short reels consumption that causes a change in their cognitive engagement pattern. Furthermore, gaming language and discussion in online platforms like discord raises concern due to the code language borrowed which can create confusion in academic settings and code switching can disrupt the language development in multilingual settings like Bangladesh where alongside native language, students learn English and other third languages like French. However, a balanced

interpretation can be made as literature suggests that the outcomes can be controlled through parental mediation and the type and quality of contents they are exposed to (Nikken & Jansz, 2014; Romeo et al., 2018). It also encourages conscious, planned pedagogical activities within the classroom which would facilitate the teachers to cope up with the challenges.

Theme 5: Opportunities and Adaptive Strategies

From the findings, it is evident that both parents and teachers agree that social media has benefits and can be used for both educational and developmental purposes which also helps to nurture their curiosity and gives them an explorative mind. They demonstrated a balanced perception which supports the literature that social engagement is not detrimental but context dependent (Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

Co-viewing and content guiding strategies were suggested by parents which showed that they are conscious about the strategies to implement and this also aligns with the active mediation strategy and co-viewing strategy discussed and found in the literature. They want to integrate their children in the global social platform but also concerned and hence techniques like parental control and adaptive mentality are considered appropriate. Similarly, the teachers have expressed similar perceptions and are in favour for contextualized teaching and adaptability with social media literary and diverting pedagogy and curriculum based on needs instead of eliminating the influence. This shows that they are responsible educators and are willing to implement effective strategies to support the linguistic development and social interaction facilitation. Hence, from the discussion, it can be concluded that, parental and adult mediation can be an essential tool in mitigating the risks instead of restructuring the social media exposure.

The observational findings further support the idea of social media's influence on children's language use and social interaction. Both the interview and observational data suggest a similar pattern in which children frequently use coded language in their everyday lives and incorporate gestures and symbolic expressions while interacting with their peers and family members. The observational data can also be examined through the lens of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where the environment and social influences play a crucial role in shaping how children interact and how their language development occurs. The observational data further provide triangulated evidence that supports the interview findings.

Conclusion

This explorative study looked at how social media plays a role in shaping the linguistic aspects and social interaction of children aged 5–8 years in the urban context of Bangladesh. The findings were interesting, where a balanced perception of parents and teachers was observed, and all participants recognized the importance of social media alongside its negative aspects. Social media has become an integral part of early childhood. However, parental mediation strategies and effective pedagogical approaches can create a linkage between emerging code language and the normal progression of language development and interaction. The study reflected the nuances and strategies that can be adapted to help stakeholders build a more responsible community for children, including the emerging social media platforms and digital ecosystem.

The findings demonstrated the use of gestures, memes, and digital slang. These incorporations are inevitable and raise concern. Several challenges were presented, including the risk of cognitive degradation, low attention span, and behavioral changes. However, it is also noted that children are often conscious in using these words and can contextualize when and where to use them.

Occasionally, there are disruptions in the academic register; however, the implications depend on the role of parents and teachers in regulating the practice.

Overall, the study creates scope to explore further and dig deeper into linguistic patterns and how Generation Alpha is internalizing and shaping their social identity. There is a recognition of the lack of social media literacy, and parents are willing to gain knowledge and integrate social media tools in an educational way to benefit students, educators, and policy development.

Recommendations:

In order to support children's language development and social interaction, based on the findings and discussion, the following recommendations are proposed.

- **Screen time regulation:** Ensure the implementation of parental control, and limit children's daily screen time by setting moderate usage limits. It is important that parents regulate and monitor the activities of children in their early years and guide them. In Youtube and other google settings, parents can customize the settings and make the platforms child friendly including setting up duration on the time spent on digital platforms.
- **Parent-teacher collaboration:** Co-viewing of age-appropriate content and knowledge sharing should be encouraged. Parents and teachers can collaborate and share their knowledge related to practices at home and at school. In parent-teacher meetings at school, teachers can share a personality portfolio with parents based on children's behaviors (linguistic patterns and communication) and share their perspectives. Similarly, besides academic performance exchanges, they can also decide what content can be viewed at

home and at school and collaboratively contribute to children's digital communication and learning habits.

- **Curriculum design:** Include storytelling activities and media literacy in the preschool and primary curricula. The curriculum should be designed keeping the emerging language pattern and including activities that would support their development in a holistic way. It should include interactive storytelling activities and media contents that would support social interaction and language development.
- **Training and workshops:** Workshops and training can be organized monthly for both parents and teachers. This would help to create awareness concerning the influence of social media and changing linguistic patterns.
- **Policy measures:** Content filtration can be ensured by policymakers, and the social media algorithm can be managed to help regulate the use of appropriate content. Initiatives can be taken at the national level to promote awareness campaigns concerning social media literacy and child safety. Guidelines can be established, and education policies can include the importance of digital literacy in early childhood and promote age-appropriate content.
- **Future research:** Research must be conducted in order to get insight of the long term impact of social media among the emerging generations and find sustainable solutions that can help to support the children's language development and social interaction.

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Appendices

Appendix A. IDI Questions for Parents and Teachers:

IDs for Educators

1. At home, do you think the children use social media or online content more than studying? If yes then why do you think so?
2. In class, do the children refer to social media content, such as YouTube videos, TikToks, or gaming platforms? Can you give any examples?
3. Do the children use words, expressions, or phrases they have learned from social media platforms like YouTube or gaming content during class?
4. How do you think social media or online content exposure has influenced their language development? Are you aware of the code languages that the children are using nowadays that can impact their language development and social interaction? Can you share some?
5. Have you noticed them imitating characters, gestures, or behaviors they have seen online? Could you please give an example?
6. During group tasks or playtime, how do you think social media has an impact in their interaction with peers?
7. Have you noticed any differences in participation, attention span or how they communicate between children who use social media or online content and those who do not?
8. In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of social media on children's language development and social interaction?
9. What are the challenges or negative impacts that social media may have on children's language development and communication?

10. What strategies or approaches would you suggest or implement in class to reduce the negative impacts of social media?

IDIs for Parents

1. How frequently does your child use social media platforms such as YouTube or play games online?
2. What types of content does your child usually watch or engage with online?
3. Have you noticed your child using any new vocabulary, phrases, or expressions learned from social media?
4. Have you observed your child imitating any behaviors, accents, words, or sentences that they have seen or learned from social media? Could you share an example?
5. Are you aware of the code languages that the new generation is using nowadays to express their emotions? Have you heard your child using any?
6. In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of social media on your child's language development and social communication with friends and family?
7. What are the negative impacts or challenges that social media or online interaction may have on your child's language development or social interaction?
8. Have you noticed any changes in your child's attention span, confidence, or emotional expression when they use social media?
9. How do you usually monitor or guide your child's use of social media at home?
10. What advice or suggestions would you give to other parents regarding young children's use of social media?

IDIs for Educators (Bengali transcription)

১. আপনার কি মনে হয় বাসায় শিশুরা পড়াশোনার চেয়ে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া বা অনলাইন কনটেন্ট বেশি ব্যবহার করে? যদি করে, তাহলে এর কারণ কী বলে মনে হয় আপনার?
২. শিশুরা কি ক্লাসে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কনটেন্ট, যেমন ইউটিউব ভিডিও, টিকটক বা কোনো গেমিং প্ল্যাটফর্ম এসব নিয়ে কথা বলে বা এসবের উল্লেখ করে? কোনো উদাহরণ মনে করতে পারেন?
৩. শিশুরা কি ক্লাসে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া বা গেমিং থেকে শেখা কথা, কিংবা অভিব্যক্তি ব্যবহার করে?
৪. শিশুদের ভাষা বিকাশে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া বা অনলাইন কনটেন্টের প্রভাব কীভাবে পড়ছে বলে আপনার মনে হয়? এখন শিশুরা যে “কোড ভাষা” ব্যবহার করে, সে সম্পর্কে কি বলবেন? এগুলোর কোনো উদাহরণ মনে করতে পারেন?
৫. কখনো শিশুদের অনলাইনে দেখা কোনো চরিত্র, তাদের অঙ্গভঙ্গি বা আচরণ অনুকরণ করতে দেখেছেন? কোনো উদাহরণ দিতে পারবেন?
৬. শিশুদের গ্রুপ কাজ বা খেলাধুলার সময় পারস্পরিক যোগাযোগের ক্ষেত্রে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কোনো প্রভাব আপনি কখনো লক্ষ্য করেছেন? করলে, সেগুলো কি কি?
৭. যারা সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া বা অনলাইন কনটেন্ট বেশি ব্যবহার করে এবং যারা করে না—এই দুই ধরনের শিশুর মধ্যে অংশগ্রহণ, মনোযোগের সময়কাল বা যোগাযোগের ধরনে কোনো পার্থক্য লক্ষ্য করেছেন কি?

৮. আপনার মতে শিশুদের ভাষা বিকাশ এবং সামাজিক যোগাযোগে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কোনো ইতিবাচক প্রভাব আছে কি? থাকলে, সেগুলো কী কী বলে আপনার মনে হয়?

৯. শিশুদের ভাষা বিকাশ এবং যোগাযোগে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কী ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জ বা নেতিবাচক প্রভাব থাকতে পারে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

১০. এই নেতিবাচক প্রভাব কমানোর জন্য আপনি ক্লাসে কী ধরনের কৌশল বা পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগ করতে চান বা করার পরামর্শ দেবেন?

IDIs for Parents (Bengali transcription)

১. আপনার সন্তান কত ঘন ঘন ইউটিউবের মতো সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া প্ল্যাটফর্ম ব্যবহার করে বা অনলাইনে গেম খেলে?

২. আপনার সন্তান সাধারণত কী ধরনের কন্টেন্ট অনলাইনে দেখে বা ব্যবহার করে?

৩. আপনি কি লক্ষ্য করেছেন যে আপনার সন্তান সামাজিক যোগাযোগমাধ্যম থেকে শেখা নতুন কোনো শব্দ, বাক্যাংশ বা অভিব্যক্তি ব্যবহার করছে?

৪. আপনি কি দেখেছেন যে আপনার সন্তান অনলাইনে দেখা কোনো আচরণ, উচ্চারণ, শব্দ বা বাক্য অনুকরণ করছে? একটি উদাহরণ দিতে পারবেন?

৫. এখন শিশুরা যে “কোড ভাষা” ব্যবহার করে, সে সম্পর্কে কি আপনি কি অবগত? এগুলোর কোনো উদাহরণ মনে করতে পারেন?

৬. . আপনার মতে শিশুদের ভাষা বিকাশ এবং সামাজিক যোগাযোগে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কোনো ইতিবাচক প্রভাব আছে কি? থাকলে, সেগুলো কী কী বলে আপনার মনে হয়?

৭. শিশুদের ভাষা বিকাশ এবং যোগাযোগে সোশ্যাল মিডিয়ার কী ধরনের চ্যালেঞ্জ বা নেতিবাচক প্রভাব থাকতে পারে বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

৮. সামাজিক যোগাযোগমাধ্যম ব্যবহারের ফলে আপনার সন্তানের মনোযোগের স্থায়িত্ব, আত্মবিশ্বাস বা আবেগ প্রকাশে কোনো পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করেছেন কি?

৯. আপনি সাধারণত বাড়িতে আপনার সন্তানের সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া ব্যবহার কীভাবে পর্যবেক্ষণ বা নির্দেশনা দেন?

১০. ছোট বাচ্চাদের সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া ব্যবহারের বিষয়ে আপনি অন্যান্য অভিভাবকদের কী পরামর্শ বা উপদেশ দেবেন?

Appendix B. Observation Checklist

Study Title: *The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction Among Children Aged 5–8 Years*

Researcher: Farheen Chowdhury

Observation Date: _____

Observer Name: _____

Location: _____

Child Details:

- Name/Code: _____
- Age: _____
- Gender: _____

Observation Area	Indicators / Behaviors	Spontaneous Observed	Prompt required (Observed)	Not observed	Comments
1. Use of Code Language					
	Uses trending online words like Skibidi, brain rot, simp, sus, cringe, sigma, alpha etc.				
	Mixes languages (English, Bangla or French), emojis, or playful online phrases in speech.				
	References memes, TikTok or YouTube challenges, or viral content				
2. Social Interaction					
	Shares experiences from YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or Roblox with peers or family members				
	Uses social media references to make friends/family members or any other individuals laugh or explain something				
	Negotiates or collaborates in play referencing online content or trends				
3. Language Patterns					
	Incorporates trending words or phrases naturally in conversation				
	Demonstrates new vocabulary and expressions learned online				
	Uses digital references in storytelling or explaining events				
4. Digital Awareness & Engagement					
	Talks about favorite apps, YouTube videos, or online games				
	Mimics characters, TikTok moves, YouTube trending characters or meme actions				
	Shows understanding of internet humor, sarcasm, or exaggeration				
5. Non-Verbal & Tech-Inspired Communication					
	Uses gestures or facial expressions learned from online videos or memes				
	Shows excitement or curiosity when discussing online trends				

Additional Notes / Observations: _____

Observer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Additional Notes / Observations: _____

Observer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C. Parental Consent Form (Child's Observation)

Parental Consent Form

Title of the study: *The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction
Among Children Aged 5–8 Years*

Researcher: Farheen Chowdhury

Institution: BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University

Contact: farheensjws@gmail.com (Phone: 01715080357)

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to allow your child to participate in this research study, which aims to explore how social media influences children's language development and social interactions. The study seeks to understand how children engage with social media and how parents and teachers perceive its impact on early childhood language development.

Details of Participation:

Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree, your child will be observed at their home to explore their engagement with social media and its influence on language and social interaction. Each session is expected to last approximately 2 hours with a maximum of four sessions if needed. The researcher will observe behaviors, interactions, and communication patterns, and record interviews for transcription purposes. All information collected will be kept confidential, and your child's name or identity will not appear in any reports or publications. Participation involves minimal risk, and children are free to skip any question or activity they do not wish to answer or engage in. You or your child may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Consent:

I have read and understood the information above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I voluntarily agree for my child to participate in this study.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D. Teacher Consent Form for IDIs

Teacher Consent Form for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Title of the Study:

The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction Among Children Aged 5–8 Years

Researcher: Farheen Chowdhury

Institution: BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University

Contact: farheensjws@gmail.com (Phone: 01715080357)

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in this research study, which aims to explore how social media influences children's language development and social interactions. The study seeks to capture teachers' perspectives on the influence of social media and the use of code languages among young children and social media has an impact on their social interaction and language development.

Details of Participation

If you agree, you will take part in in-depth interviews and may provide observational insights about children's language development and social interaction. The interview session will last approximately 30-45 minutes, conducted at a convenient time in person. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and your identity will not be revealed in any reports or

publications. Participation involves minimal risk, and you may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Consent

I have read and understood the information above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Teacher Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E. Parental Consent Form for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Parental Consent Form for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Title of the Study:

*The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction Among Children
Aged 5–8 Years*

Researcher: Farheen Chowdhury

Institution: BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University

Contact: farheensjws@gmail.com (Phone: 01715080357)

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in this research study, which aims to explore how social media influences children's language development and social interactions. Your perspective as a parent

is important for understanding how social media affects children's language development, social behavior, and learning.

Details of Participation

If you agree to participate, you will take part in an in-depth interview (IDI) where you will be asked questions about your child's social media use, language development, and social interactions. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and would be conducted at your convenience in person. Your responses will be recorded for transcription and analysis.

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential, and your identity will not be revealed in any reports or publications. Participation is voluntary, and you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time without any negative consequences.

Consent

I have read and understood the information above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F: Parent Interview Transcript

Participant Code: P1

Child's Age: 6 years

Date: Jan 22, 2026

Time: 7 pm

Researcher: Hello, hope you are doing well. I will be asking you several questions related to the use of social media and its impact.

P1: I am well. Ok.

Researcher: So my first question is-

How old is your child, and how frequently does he use social media platforms like YouTube or engage in online gaming?

P1: He is six years old. He watches TV for around 2–5 hours sometimes. Regarding mobile use, I personally do not encourage gaming. However, when I am busy, I give him my phone so that he stays engaged. When his father is around, he may play for about 3–4 hours.

Researcher: What type of content does he usually watch?

P1: It depends on what he wants at the time. Recently, he has become quite interested in video games.

Researcher: Which games does he usually play?

P1: Mostly Minecraft.

Researcher: Are you aware of the content shown in Minecraft or similar games?

P1: No, I do not really know the details of the content.

Researcher: Have you noticed any changes in his language use—new words or phrases learned from social media?

P1: Yes, he has used some new words at home. For example, he said “brain rot.” He also frequently mentions the names of certain cartoons.

He does not use these words much with me, but he uses them with his friends, sister, or cousins. Sometimes they discuss things that I do not understand.

Researcher: Does he use any gestures or expressions learned online?

P1: Yes, he shows “67” with his hands and mentions it with his friends.

Researcher: Do you know what “67” means?

P1: I think it is the name of an online game.

Researcher: Do you think the content he watches has impacted his language development or pronunciation?

P1: I do not see a strong impact. However, his speech is not very clear. I do not believe that this is entirely because of screen time or YouTube.

Sometimes he picks up certain words from games, but he cannot pronounce them properly. He stumbles while saying them.

Researcher: Are you aware of Generation Alpha coded language such as “sigma,” “alpha,” or “brain rot”?

P1: Not really. I did not research most of them. I only checked “67” because I was curious. When I understood it was not something harmful, I did not discourage him.

I believe my child will not stick to one thing permanently. He changes interests often. He is curious and likes exploring different things.

If I give him a phone, he plays. If I do not, he does not insist much. However, he is more connected to his father regarding these activities.

Researcher: Do you think social media has had any positive impact on his language development or social interaction?

P1: Yes, I think he is learning new words and becoming curious. He interacts well with his friends.

Researcher: Does he mimic characters from online content at home?

P1: No, I do not think he does that.

Researcher: What challenges do you think may arise from social media use?

P1: I do not think there will be major challenges in the long run because I monitor him. However, I do agree that he is somewhat addicted to games right now. I believe I can manage this later.

Researcher: Do you think learning multiple languages—Bangla, English, and French—will affect his language development?

P1: No, I do not think so. We are there as parents and will notice if anything changes.

If he mixes languages, I think it is fine as long as he communicates and interacts with us. Our mother language is Bangla, and we speak Bangla at home, so I think he will be fine in the long run.

Researcher: What if he mixes languages in academic settings?

P1: That would be negative. In school or academic contexts, he should use the appropriate language properly. I will explain to him that each language has its own use. I believe he will understand.

Researcher: What advice would you give to other parents?

P1: Every child is different. Parents should understand their own child and guide them accordingly.

In my case, I monitored what he watched from the beginning—poems, rhymes, and stories.

Later, he started choosing content himself.

Parents should guide children toward learning-related content. Social media is not entirely bad.

Children can learn rhymes, alphabets, and many other things.

If monitoring starts early, I believe it will not create major problems later.

Researcher: Alright. Thank you for your time and participating in the interview.

P1: Thank you

Appendix G: Observation Checklist Example

Study Title: *The Role of Social Media in Language Development and Social Interaction Among Children Aged 5–8 Years*

Researcher: Farheen Chowdhury

Observation Date: Jan 20, 2026

Observer Name: Farheen Chowdhury

Location: Dhaka

Child Details: Name/Code: C1, Age: 6, Gender: M

Observation Area	Spontaneous Observed	Prompt Required (Observed)	Not Observed	Comments
1. Use of Code Language				
Uses trending online words like Skibidi, brain rot, simp, sus, cringe, sigma, alpha etc.	X			During conversations, while playing games, if he noticed any discussion that irritated him like if he was naked, when will you stop playing or when will you study, he uses term like “Why act like a brain rot ? You are not sigma ”
Mixes languages (English, Bangla or French), emojis, or playful online phrases in speech	X			
References memes, TikTok or YouTube challenges, or viral content	X	X		While playing, blabbered himself in bengali, english and words like- OMG
2. Social Interaction				When asked about whether in school any sentences he uses or gestures or any new word - he said 6 7 and a meaw song and some brainrot characters that have spears.
Shares experiences from YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or Roblox with peers or family members	X			
Uses social media references to make friends/family members or any other individuals laugh or explain something	X		X	When his friend came, he started talking about roblox characters, and uncooking feature and how many dollars he has and spears and then started saying how he broke a wood or have purchased an item. Showed gestures with arms and said “orchaledon”
Negotiates or collaborates in play referencing online content or trends		X		
3. Language Patterns				When asked about a funny thing, he used 6 7 and mimimimirtai and kept laughing at himself.
Incorporates trending words or phrases naturally in conversation	X			
Demonstrates new vocabulary and expressions learned online	X		X	
Uses digital references in storytelling or explaining events		X		
4. Digital Awareness & Engagement				
Talks about favorite apps, YouTube videos, or online games	X			Minecraft, roblox
Mimics characters, TikTok moves, YouTube trending characters or meme actions	X	X		6 7, the meaw sound and the cat
5. Non-Verbal & Tech-Inspired Communication				
Shows understanding of internet humor, sarcasm, or exaggeration	X			
Uses gestures or facial expressions, learned from online videos or memes	X	X		Smirks, feels embarrassed and when the other person understands, becomes excited.
Shows excitement or curiosity when discussing online trends	X	X		

Additional Notes / Observations:

The child refuses to do any other tasks apart from playing games or watching how to play games in Youtube or fish related videos. If asked to draw or play, do it for only a few minutes and then again become impatient to watch or play games.

Observer Signature: Farheen Chowdhury

Date: 20/01/26