

Research Article

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The Influence of Brand Value on English Language Acquisition: The Role of Social Media, Peer Interaction, and Community Exposure

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Abstract

Background/purpose. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of brand value, social media, peer interaction, and community exposure on English language acquisition among students in Kosovo. Given the increasing importance of English proficiency in education, the research focuses on how popular brands and informal social environments influence language learning beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Materials/methods. This paper is based on research by Booyse et al. (2024), Ho et al. (2025), and Yasa et al. (2025). Using descriptive statistics, a questionnaire was administered to 400 students in grades six to nine across four schools, two in Prishtina and two in Gjilan, to gather perspectives from both urban and rural communities.

Results. The findings indicate that brand and social factors play a significant role in shaping students' motivation, exposure, and proficiency in English as a second language. Social media supports informal language learning, peer interaction fosters motivation through competition, and community exposure, especially in urban areas, supports English use beyond the classroom.

Conclusion. In conclusion, these results highlight the importance of integrating social factors into language education strategies to enhance second-language acquisition in primary schools.

1. Introduction

The main purpose of the study and its significance lies in the fact that English has become a global language, widely spoken, written, and understood across many parts of the world. As a result, many individuals around the world strive to learn English as a second language (ESL) to enhance their academic, professional, and social opportunities. Proficiency in English can open doors to better job opportunities and greater access to better education (Crystal, 2003, p. 4).

The brand image reflects the unique attributes and value propositions that distinguish a brand in consumers' minds. A strong brand image is crucial for achieving a competitive advantage, as it fosters customer loyalty and reduces price sensitivity. Research confirms that a well-established brand image enhances market positioning and creates long-term value for businesses. For institutions and firms, brand image serves as an intangible resource that can offset limited financial and physical resources, particularly in competitive markets such as the craft industry (Yasa et al., 2025; Jusufi & Qorraj, 2025).

English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to the learning and use of English by individuals whose first language is not English. It is designed to help individuals improve their English speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. It can be taught in various settings, including schools, language institutes, online courses, and self-study. The primary goal of ESL is to help non-native speakers acquire the skills necessary to communicate effectively in English (Ellis, 1994, p. 6).

However, acquiring English presents multiple challenges. One of the challenges associated with learning English as a second language is mastering its grammar and syntax (Osmani, Sejdiu & Jusufi, 2022). English grammar can be complex and confusing for many non-native speakers, especially those from language backgrounds with entirely different grammar structures. In his foundational work, Spolsky (1989) highlights that grammar acquisition presents not only cognitive challenges but also requires structured instructional input and intensive practice lasting throughout the learning process. Moreover, to overcome these challenges, ESL students often require intensive study and practice, as well as the guidance of an experienced teacher (Elturki, 2014).

2. Literature Review

Importantly, language learning is not a purely individual process; it is deeply embedded in social contexts. Spolsky (1989) argues that while social factors may not always directly determine language acquisition outcomes, they significantly influence learners' attitudes, motivation, and opportunities for practice. Montero et al. (2014) further emphasize the need to consider sociocultural aspects alongside grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, particularly in second-language teaching.

This study focuses on the role of specific social factors in shaping English language acquisition among primary school students in Kosovo. In particular, it investigates the impact of social media, peer interaction, and community exposure, while also considering contextual variables such as urban versus rural settings. These factors are crucial in determining students' access to English, their motivation to learn, and the frequency and quality of their language practice (Rrustemi & Jusufi, 2021).

The rise of social media has had a significant impact on how English is used and acquired. Through social media platforms, people can connect with others who speak English and access many resources, such as videos, articles, and online courses, making it easier to learn English, regardless of geographic location. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram provide informal language learning opportunities, giving students access to authentic, real-time English input and interaction (Anderson & Lord, 2016).

Peer interaction, especially when shaped by healthy academic competition, can motivate learners to improve their performance. Classroom dynamics, including the desire to outperform classmates or collaborate in group activities, have been shown to encourage greater participation in language tasks.

Community exposure also plays a role in second language development. Students in urban areas often have more opportunities to encounter English in their daily lives, whether through interactions with tourists, access to international media, or a more linguistically diverse environment. In contrast, learners in rural communities may have fewer opportunities to use authentic language, which can affect their learning outcomes.

Understanding how these social factors influence language acquisition is essential for educators, policymakers, and parents. It enables the development of targeted interventions that support effective language learning across diverse educational settings.

Before surveying empirical papers, it helps to clarify terms. In marketing, brand value typically refers to the perceived worth of a brand to consumers, including intangible assets such as reputation, loyalty, awareness, and associations. It could also include financial measures. English language acquisition in educational/linguistic research usually refers to the process by which learners (often non-native speakers) acquire competence in English (grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, writing) in formal or informal settings (secondary school is formal).

The intersection “brand value → English language acquisition” means investigating how perceptions of brands, brand-related motivations, or exposure to brands (or branded content) influence learners’ motivation, attitudes, exposure, or opportunities in acquiring English.

Various studies have examined constructs relevant to this question, though none directly and comprehensively address the influence of brand value on English acquisition among secondary students. Below are relevant lines of research.

Learners’ attitudes, motivation, and affective factors: The Interrelationships Between Young EFL Learners’ Perceived Value in Reading Storybooks, Reading Self-efficacy, and Proficiency. Tsang and Yeung (2024) examine how EFL students’ perceived value of storybooks relates to reading self-efficacy and English proficiency. They found that a higher perceived value of storybooks correlates with stronger self-efficacy and, through that, with better proficiency. Locating motivation for English as a foreign Language over time, the Influence of School Location and Type (Poland, 2024) explores how motivation to learn English evolves, and how school type (general/technical) and location (city vs small town) shape it. While not about brand value, these motivational/attitudinal factors are likely mediators through which brand perceptions might operate.

Textbooks, values, course content: “Scrutinizing Values-Based Education in Secondary Grade EFL Coursebooks” in Turkey studies how values (moral, cultural, etc.) are represented in English coursebooks and how those might influence learners. The premise is that what values are embedded can affect learners’ engagement or cultural alignment. This is adjacent to brand value insofar as brands also carry values and cultural meaning. “Do Brands Appearing in Textbooks Influence Students? Insights from an Exploratory Study look directly at brand mentions/logos in textbooks, not necessarily English-language learning textbooks, and how they affect recall, attitude, etc. Though this is more about marketing education, it offers some evidence of how exposure to a brand in textual materials can have cognitive or attitudinal effects.

Branding of educational institutions: Some research studies focus on how schools or colleges build a “brand image” or “brand value” (in the sense of reputation, prestige, identity). For example, Strategies of Brand Image Building at Private Institution of Islamic Education in Purwokerto discusses how brand image helps attract students and build trust. Also, Factors affecting Can Tho University’s

brand value – the approach from students looks at how reputation, training quality, etc., contribute to brand value for a university as reflected by students. It doesn't directly link brand value to English acquisition, but it may help think about how brand perceptions could influence students' effort, expectations, or identity.

Branding, peer identity, and adolescent identity: Studies in adolescent consumer behavior show how teenagers' attitudes toward brands (luxury, global vs local brands) are shaped by self-concept, peer influence, social identity, etc. For example, Children's Preferences for Global and Local Brands (Serbia) and Teen Attitudes toward Luxury Fashion Brands (France & U.S.) examine what drives brand preference. These findings are relevant because brand identity/affiliation may interact with language identity, the status associated with speaking English.

To fill the gaps, potential hypotheses or research questions, and methodological suggestions:

Hypothesis: Students who perceive English-associated brands as prestigious will show higher motivation to learn English, which will mediate better proficiency outcomes.

Does frequency of exposure to English via global brand media (advertising, packaging, social media) positively correlate with receptive and productive English skills among secondary students?

Does the brand value of educational materials (publisher prestige, institutional reputation) affect student engagement, self-efficacy, or language acquisition outcomes?

Moderation: How do socio-economic status, school type (public/private), and peer group identity moderate the effect of brand perceptions on English learning?

Methodological suggestions: Mixed methods: surveys (attitudes, perceptions of brand value, exposure measures), proficiency tests, and perhaps logs of media exposure.

Longitudinal designs to see how changes in brand exposure or brand identity relate to changes in English competence. Experimental designs where brand prestige (or perceived prestige) is manipulated to examine changes in motivation or willingness to engage with English tasks.

3. Methodology

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize and describe the basic features of a dataset by providing concise numerical and graphical summaries. Common examples include measures of central tendency, such as the mean, median, and mode, and measures of dispersion, such as range, variance, and standard deviation. They organize and present data in an interpretable way, making it easier to compare different sets of information.

Descriptive Statistics is a technique that helps us collect large amounts of information. A teacher, for example, would like to show a colleague the results of the last exam in her subject. She might say: "In the last exam, the students got the following scores: 95, 63, 90, 78...." I imagine that her colleague would have left before she could show her all the exam scores that the students got in her subject. This is not a very effective way of communicating information. Descriptive statistics is a very effective way of communicating information. Descriptive statistics can help her make her communication more effective.

This study employed a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to investigate the influence of social factors on English language acquisition among primary school students in Kosovo. A total of 400 students participated in the study. The sample included 200 students from two primary schools in Kosovo's capital (Pristina) and 200 students from two primary schools in the city of Gjilan. Students were selected from grades six to nine, with 25 students per grade in each city, resulting in a balanced and diverse participant group.

A quantitative approach was chosen to enable systematic measurement of students' experiences and perceptions across social dimensions that may influence second-language acquisition, particularly across differing urban contexts.

Data were collected through a questionnaire designed to explore key social factors, including attitudes, social influence, social media, peer competition, language anxiety, and perceived personal ability. The questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). To ensure clarity and accessibility, the questionnaire was translated into Albanian, the participants' first language.

4. Results

After collecting the data, the next phase was to analyze and interpret the results. This section presents the findings gathered through the questionnaires distributed to students from four primary schools: Faik Konica, Thimi Mitko, Selami Hallaçi, and Zenel Hajdini. The data collected aimed to evaluate the impact of various social factors, including peer competition, social media, and interactions with English speakers, on English language acquisition.

One of the primary hypotheses of this research was that social media enhances English language learning among young learners. The collected data strongly support this hypothesis. A majority of students across all schools acknowledged the role of social media in improving their English.

As illustrated in Figures 1 through 4, the majority of students across all four schools acknowledged the role of social media in supporting their English language learning. Primary School "Faik Konica" recorded the highest level of agreement, with 64% of students strongly affirming that social media contributes to their language development. This was followed by "Thimi Mitko", where 49% of students expressed strong agreement. Similarly, 46% of students at "Selami Hallaçi" and 42% at "Zenel Hajdini" also strongly agreed with the statement, reflecting a consistent perception of social media as a valuable tool in second language acquisition.

These results affirm that digital platforms are becoming increasingly relevant and effective in the context of second language acquisition among primary school learners.

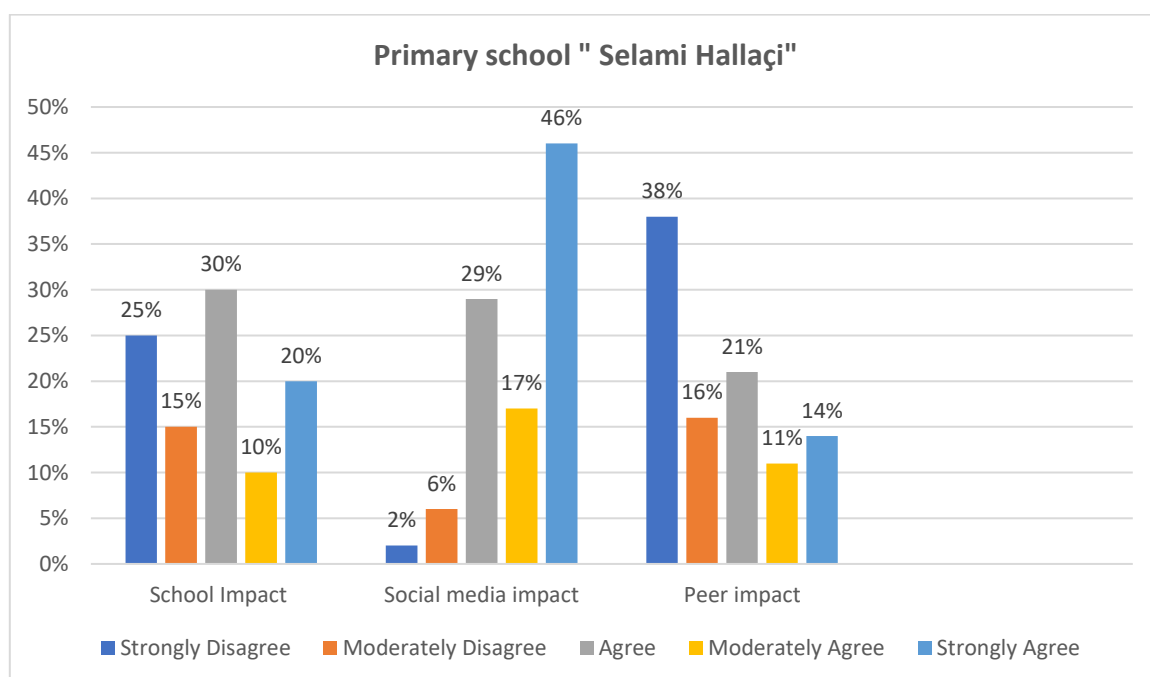


Figure 1. Data collected from the primary school "Selami Hallaçi" and "Thimi Mitko."

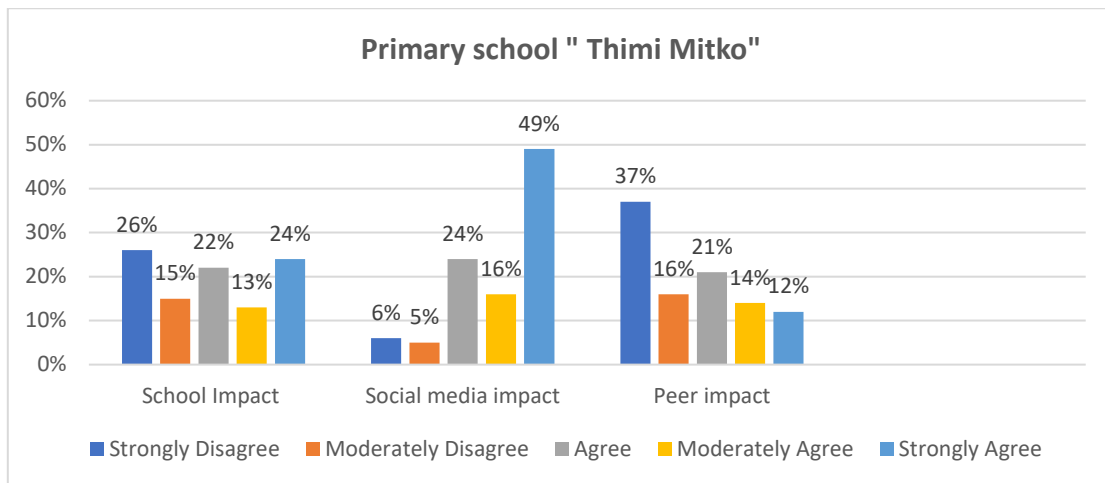


Figure 2. Data collected from the primary school

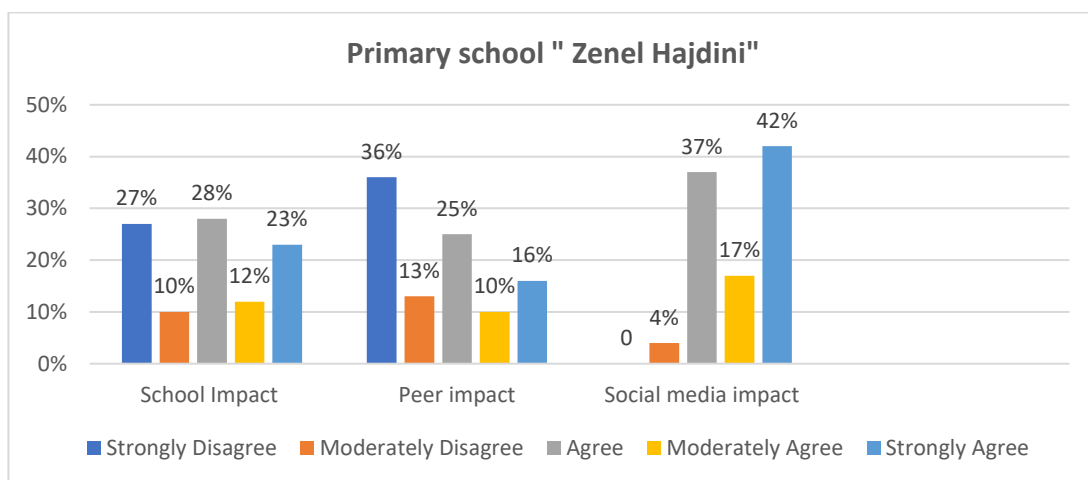


Figure 3. Data collected from the primary school "Zenel Hajdini."

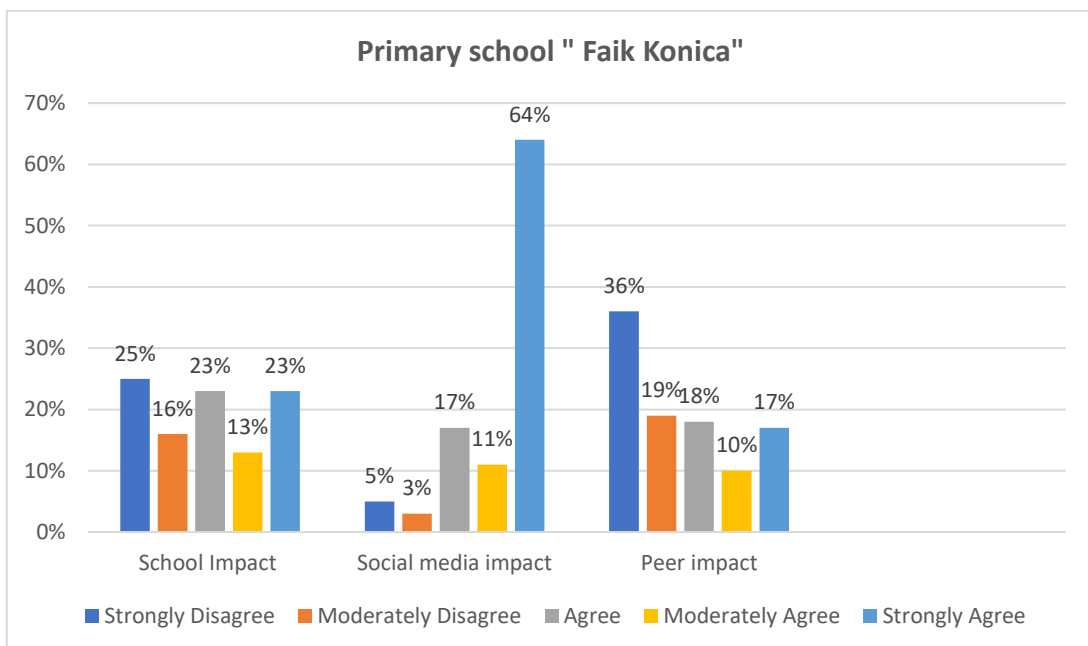


Figure 4. Data collected from the primary school "Faik Konica"

Furthermore, students were asked whether they learn English more effectively when competing with their peers. The results, presented in Table 1, indicate a generally positive perception of competition as a motivational factor across all four schools.

At Primary School “Zenel Hajdini”, 56% of respondents either moderately agreed (27%) or strongly agreed (29%) that peer competition encourages them to learn English more effectively, with only 7% strongly disagreeing. Similarly, students at Primary School “Thimi Mitko” also showed a positive inclination, with 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and a relatively low disagreement rate (11% strongly, 11% moderately).

In Primary School “Faik Konica”, 48% of students reported that they either moderately or strongly agree that they are motivated to learn English through competition, while 33% expressed disagreement. At Primary School “Selami Hallaçi”, the trend was slightly more balanced: 42% agreed or strongly agreed, 33% disagreed to some degree, and 33% selected “Agree”.

These results affirm the hypothesis that peer competition positively influences English language learning. While not every student is motivated by competition, the majority response across all institutions suggests that competitive academic settings can enhance engagement and performance in language acquisition.

Table 1. The importance of competition in the learning process of English

I try to learn English more when I compete with my peers.					
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
Primary school “Faik Konica.”	15 %	18 %	19%	24%	24%
Primary school “Zenel Hajdini.”	7 %	12%	25 %	27 %	29 %
Primary school “Thimi Mitko	11%	11 %	28 %	25 %	25 %
Primary school “Selami Hallaçi.”	6%	19%	33%	26%	16%

Interaction with English Speakers and Community Influence

Students’ exposure to English speakers and their use of English outside the classroom were examined to test the hypothesis that interaction with English speakers improves proficiency.

The data regarding students' interaction with English speakers and their use of English outside the classroom revealed varied but insightful trends across the four schools. As shown in Table 2, at Faik Konica, student responses were polarized: 28% strongly disagreed, and 27% strongly agreed that they have friends who are native English speakers. Notably, 43% of students at this school strongly agreed that they use English outside the classroom. Similarly, as seen in Table 3, at Zenel Hajdini, 26% of students strongly agreed that they have native English-speaking friends, and 30% confirmed frequent use of English outside class. In Table 4, the results from Thimi Mitko were more evenly distributed: 29% of students strongly disagreed and 27% strongly agreed about having native English-speaking friends. In comparison, 28% reported regular use of English outside the classroom. Finally, as presented in Table 5, Selami Hallaçi demonstrated the strongest alignment with the hypothesis that interaction with English speakers enhances language proficiency, with 34% of students strongly agreeing to both having native English-speaking friends and actively using English in their daily lives.

Table 2. The importance of society influences the primary school “Faik Konica.”

	Society influence Primary school “Faik Konica”				
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority of my neighbors speak English	26 %	24 %	29%	14%	7%
I have friends who are native speakers of English	28 %	10%	23 %	11 %	27 %
I use English even outside the English classroom.	7%	11 %	22 %	17 %	43 %

Table 3. The importance of society is influenced by the primary school “Zenel Hajdini.”

	Society influence Primary school “Zenel Hajdini”				
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority of my neighbors speak English	43 %	22%	20%	8%	7%
I have friends who are native speakers of English	23 %	11 %	30 %	10 %	26 %
I use English even outside the English classroom.	19%	11%	31 %	9 %	30%

Table 4. The importance of society influences the primary school “Thimi Mitko”

	Society influence Primary school “Thimi Mitko”				
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority of my neighbors speak English	36%	24%	23%	10 %	7%
I have friends who are native speakers of English	29%	14%	26%	14%	27%
I use English even outside the English classroom.	26%	7%	21%	18%	28%

Table 5. The importance of society influences from the primary school “Selami Hallaci”

	Society influence				
	Primary school “Selami Hallaci”				
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority of my neighbors speak English	31%	16%	32%	8 %	13%
I have friends who are native speakers of English	34%	4%	19%	12%	34%
I use English even outside the English classroom.	16%	8%	30%	7%	34%

These findings suggest that despite limited interaction with English-speaking neighbors (with most students disagreeing that their neighbors speak English), a significant number of pupils reported using English beyond the classroom, implying exposure through digital content, peer interaction, and informal learning settings.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study examined the influence of social factors on English language acquisition in primary school students, focusing on peer competition, social media, and interaction with English speakers. The findings provide compelling evidence that these social elements play a crucial role in shaping students’ motivation, exposure, and proficiency in English as a second language.

The findings of this study offer important evidence regarding the social factors influencing language acquisition. First, the hypothesis proposing that peer competition enhances English language learning was supported, as learners demonstrated greater motivation within competitive social contexts. In a similar vein, the assumption that social media functions as a supportive tool for young learners was corroborated by higher vocabulary performance among frequent users. Finally, with respect to interpersonal communication, the results indicate that engagement with native or highly proficient English speakers plays a crucial role in developing fluency, thus confirming the study’s final hypothesis.

From the literature it was found, few direct empirical studies explicitly define “brand value” in the educational or language acquisition context (versus marketing or institutional branding), examine brand value as an independent variable predicting English proficiency among secondary students, explore how brand-related exposure (e.g. exposure to brand advertising, product names, English in branding) affects language inputs, output, and practice and look at moderation by socio-economic status, peer group, school resources, urban/rural location.

Also, while there is work on motivation, attitudes, and perceived value of learning materials (e.g., storybooks), less is known about the symbolic value of brands (e.g., brand prestige) and how that shapes language learning behaviors.

Based on what is known:

The perceived value of materials (such as storybooks) correlates with higher reading self-efficacy and higher proficiency.

Motivation, shaped by context (school type, location), plays a major role in how well students acquire English. If brand value influences motivation, it could have downstream effects.

Coursebooks and curriculum values matter: what values are embedded in the materials can impact learners' engagement. While not the same as "brand value," this suggests the importance of symbolic or value-laden content.

The data strongly support the hypothesis that social media enhances English language learning among young learners. Across all four schools, a significant majority of students acknowledged the positive impact of digital platforms on their language development, with Faik Konica recording the highest level of strong agreement (64%). This confirms that social media provides accessible and engaging environments where students can encounter authentic English input and practice language skills informally. This finding is consistent with Ellis (2003), who highlights the importance of exposure outside the classroom for effective second language acquisition.

Research has demonstrated that social media platforms provide easily accessible and engaging settings where learners can experience exposure to and practice in English. The use of social media allows learners to interact with diverse English content, ranging from videos and music to online conversations, thereby enhancing traditional instruction and increasing learner engagement. For instance, a study of first-year students at Qassim University found that social media significantly improved learners' L2 proficiency and enhanced lexical and syntactic complexity (Rawan, 2024).

Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram play significant roles in English teaching and learning, offering diverse tools for communication, collaboration, and content sharing (Ariantini, 2021).

Thus, Jones et al. (2010) argued that social networking sites serve as valuable tools for both teachers and students to support and enhance the learning process. Teachers benefit from social media through professional networking, resource sharing, and enhanced teaching strategies, which positively influence their confidence and fluency (De Jager et al., 2020). These findings collectively affirm that social media supplements traditional instruction by creating dynamic, learner-centered environments that foster continuous, informal exposure to English, ultimately supporting language acquisition and academic achievement in modern educational contexts.

Peer competition emerged as an influential motivational factor in English learning. More than half of the respondents in the chosen schools reported that competition with classmates encourages them to study and perform better in English tasks. In accordance with this, San-Ho et al. (2022) point out that interacting with peers significantly affects participants' language learning process. Interacting with their peers is a good opportunity for language development since they tend to use a lot of spoken and written language. When students compete with their peers, they are more motivated to perform well and learn more effectively. This phenomenon is known as the "competition effect" and has been studied by researchers in language learning for many years.

The effect of competition in language learning has been shown to enhance both motivation and performance in various contexts. It can be seen in many forms, such as students competing with each other to be the first to answer a question in class, participating in language contests, or working to outperform their peers on English-language proficiency tests.

Research indicates that such competitive settings can significantly boost learners' motivation and engagement. For instance, a study involving sixth-grade students found that both individual and inter-group competition in gamified vocabulary learning led to higher motivation and better performance, with group competition yielding the most substantial vocabulary gains (Liu, 2022). Similarly, adult learners in high-competition e-learning environments demonstrated greater intrinsic motivation and improved language outcomes compared to those in less competitive conditions (Ge, 2025).

Competition also provides students with a clear goal to work towards, which can help to make language learning more enjoyable and engaging. When students have a clear objective, such as

winning a contest or outperforming their peers on a test, they are more likely to stay focused and maintain their motivation to learn. By providing motivation, accountability, and a clear goal to work towards, competition can help students work harder and learn more effectively. As Getie A (2020) concluded in his study, how students' classmates act and talk outside and in the classroom can positively impact peer groups' attitudes.

These findings underscore the positive motivational impact of competition, especially when it fosters a supportive and engaging learning environment. Teachers and educators can use a match to create a positive learning environment that encourages students to perform to the best of their abilities and to achieve their full potential in learning English as a second language.

7. Suggestion

The study found varied but insightful trends. Although many students reported limited direct contact with English-speaking neighbors, a substantial number nonetheless used English outside the classroom, suggesting exposure through alternative sources such as peers, digital media, and community activities. Selami Hallaçi notably showed the strongest alignment with the hypothesis that interaction with English speakers enhances language proficiency, with 34% of students strongly agreeing they have native English-speaking friends and frequently use English in daily life. This demonstrates that community and peer-based exposure can effectively supplement formal learning, bridging classroom instruction with real-world language use.

The influence of social factors on English language acquisition as a second language varies significantly between urban and rural contexts. In larger cities, such as where Faik Konica school is located, students tend to experience greater exposure to English due to the presence of diverse populations, including native speakers and international communities. This increased exposure is reflected in the data, which indicates that students in the urban setting report higher interaction with English-speaking neighbors and more frequent use of English outside the classroom. Such opportunities are less prevalent in rural areas, as evidenced by the data from Zenel Hajdini school, where the community is more homogeneous and encounters with native English speakers are limited.

Several factors contribute to this discrepancy. Students in urban areas typically benefit from greater exposure to English due to increased access to media, technology, and diverse communities, including interactions with tourists and international populations, which enrich their opportunities to practice language (Sowrabha, 2023).

This exposure is further supported by the prevalence of English in urban lifestyles and culture, which fosters informal use of the language outside the classroom. On the contrary, students in rural areas often face limited opportunities to interact with native speakers or engage with English in their local environment, resulting in reduced exposure and fewer chances to practice authentic language skills.

The findings strongly support the conclusion that geographic location and community environment play a crucial role in shaping students' English language acquisition through societal influence. The urban environment fosters more frequent and diverse language interactions, thereby enhancing learners' opportunities for authentic language input and practice. This underscores the importance of considering socio-environmental contexts when developing strategies for English language education, particularly in rural areas where exposure may be limited.

This study has shown that social factors such as social media engagement, peer interaction, and community exposure significantly influence English language acquisition among primary school students in Kosovo. These elements not only enhance learners' exposure to authentic language input

but also play a key role in shaping motivation, confidence, and willingness to use English outside formal educational settings.

Social media was found to be a particularly effective tool for informal learning, providing students with accessible and engaging platforms to encounter real-world language use. Peer competition emerged as a strong motivator, encouraging students to participate more actively and strive for better performance. Additionally, students with greater community exposure, especially those in urban areas, demonstrated more frequent use of English in daily life, reinforcing the value of authentic interaction in language development.

These findings underscore the importance of incorporating social contexts into language teaching strategies. Educators should leverage digital platforms, foster healthy competition, and promote real-life communication with fluent speakers to support learners' language development.

Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of these social factors and investigate how emerging technologies and community programs can be better integrated to facilitate English language acquisition in diverse primary school settings.

Declarations

Author Contributions. Sh.Q.: Literature review, conceptualization. F.O.: methodology, data analysis. Sh.Q: review-editing and writing, original manuscript preparation. All authors have read and approved the final version of the article.

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Data Availability Statement. All data supporting the findings of this study are derived from published and openly accessible literature, which has been properly cited in the References section.

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