
Indonesian University Students' Perceptions on the Use of Social Media for English Language Learning

Fenny Yutika Seli^{1*}

¹Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Media Nusantara Citra, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: fenny.yutika@mncu.ac.id

Article History

Received: December 07th, 2023

Revised: December 21th, 2023

Accepted: January 18th, 2024

Abstract: The use of social media is not only for communicating and enjoying leisure time but also for learning many things. Since that, English-related content has been one of the things that often be on their search. Various educative content can be found on social media. This study aims to find out the students' perceptions on the use of social media for English language learning. The participants of this study are 98 university students in Jakarta. A descriptive qualitative method was used. The data was obtained by using a questionnaire and interview. The results showed that Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are the most preferred platform for learning. The students have positive perceptions on the use of social media for English learning because social media is easy to access, fun, stress-free, and reinforces their independence. In addition, the most skill that can be learned from social media are reading.

Keywords: English Language Learning, Social Media, Students' Perception, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

Social media use has met rapid growth since the increased evolution of internet technology. They become very popular and play an important role in all domains of our lives, especially in education. Nowadays, social media is widely used by the young generation in Indonesia (Yohanna, 2020). Teenagers today believe that using social media is an obligation, impacting the current generation's lives. Additionally, social media has significantly impacted education at all levels thanks to its limitless learning opportunities. In the last ten years, social networking use has exploded. 65% of American people, or close to two-thirds, utilize social networking sites (Siddhartha et al., 2020). In-depth research studies have shown how the emergence of social media has changed a variety of aspects of people's lives, including work, politics and political debate, global communications patterns, communities, news consumption, teen life, parenting, dating, and even people's levels of stress. Furthermore, previous research reported that 89.7% of internet users in Indonesia are students, and 97% of internet users have accessed social media content (Indonesia, 2019). Therefore, youngsters are very familiar with social media.

The Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated this. During this situation, the number of people who used the internet increased. Almost whole aspects must use the internet, such as working, shopping, schooling, and so on. In University life, the lectures must go on and it forces students to utilize their devices more frequently. Apart from studying, their gadgets are used for entertainment using the social media they have.

The popular social media used by teenagers are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, and so on. YouTube is the most popular site that is used to communicate among students followed by Twitter then other social networks e. g. LinkedIn, Instagram, and What's Up then Facebook (Oueder & Abousaber, 2018). In Indonesia, social media is used by 170.0 million people. As of January 2021, social media usage in Indonesia was 61.8 percent of the total population (Nurrahmi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the WhatsApp social media platform is the most used social media by Indonesian students, namely 99.6%, Instagram 98%, and YouTube 87.2% (Andriani & Sulistyorini, 2022). This indicates a significant increase in social media usage in Indonesia. However, most students in Padang, Indonesia (86%) use social media as a medium of

communication, rather than as a means of seeking information and social interaction.

According to Chou (2014), social media has some characteristics such as interactivity, platform quality, and knowledge-sharing mechanism. Through social media, students can do a lot of things. One of them is students can learn many things, including the English language. In the EFL context, the use of social media provides some opportunities to develop students' English language skills. English is one of the languages that is frequently used in social media since it is seen as an international language that is used by people all over the world to interact. Students often use social media including Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook for English language learning. The social media which are mostly used by students in learning English is Instagram (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019).

Moreover, one of the things that often be on their search is English-related content (Ismail et al., 2019). By using social media, students can find various English content such as videos or posts that may allow them to learn new things about English. The use of social media can facilitate its users to develop four English skills. For example, one video on Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube can cover listening and speaking skills to be learned or practiced. Another example is one photo on Instagram that can consist of captions and comments that can be read by students. They can write some comments also.

Apart from its popularity, the use of social media also has positive and negative impacts on English language learning. According to undergraduate Saudi users, Muftah's research study (Muftah, 2023) looked at the impact of social media platforms on learning English during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicate that Saudi L2 students find social media platforms useful for improving their competency, with specific emphasis on how favorably they affect L2 writing, vocabulary learning, and communication skills. They also stated that they utilize a variety of social media sites, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc., and that they see social media as a tool for both communication and education. It is safe to infer from these results that social media can significantly benefit improving English language learning.

Meanwhile, the drawbacks of using social media in English language learning are addiction and distraction. Addiction and distraction are the

main issues with social media use among students (Siddhartha et al., 2020). Social media can negatively impact pupils because it may divert their focus away from the learning process. Social media might serve as a distraction, which is a downside.

According to research (Kim, 2022), students were spending more time on social media and playing online games than they were studying. Furthermore, a large number of the test results were lower than before because of how much time students are spending on social media and games. It means the lower they got the score, the more struggle they must learn.

Also, lack of sleep or a disturbed sleep schedule is another result that is frequently linked to social media use in students. Students can now engage in social interactions outside of normal working hours. Those three negative impacts are related to each other. When students become addicted to social media, it will affect their academic performance and health.

Therefore, social media also has an essential role for students because it is one of the media they use most often daily. Besides communicating, social media can also be used to learn many things, including English. Thus, the purpose of this research is to find out what types of social media are most often used by university students, their perception of using social media for English language learning, and the skills and knowledge in English that can be improved by using social media.

METHOD

In this study, the writer uses a descriptive research methodology. According to Sugiyono (2013), descriptive research is any study that describes a phenomenon, symptom, or condition using qualitative or quantitative methodologies. The reason the writer chose descriptive research is that it analyzes students' perceptions while the writer interprets the findings. The writer employed interviews and questionnaires as instruments. There were twenty-five statements on the research questionnaire. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) are the alternate responses. Semi-structured interviews are used by the writer as instrumentation. Depending on how the interview goes, the writer's list of nine essential questions can be altered.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The close-ended questionnaire utilized in this research was able to provide valuable insights as to how students perceive the use of

social media for English language learning in Indonesia; 98 respondents answered all 25 questions spread across three major categories regarding the students' perception of the use of social media for English language learning.

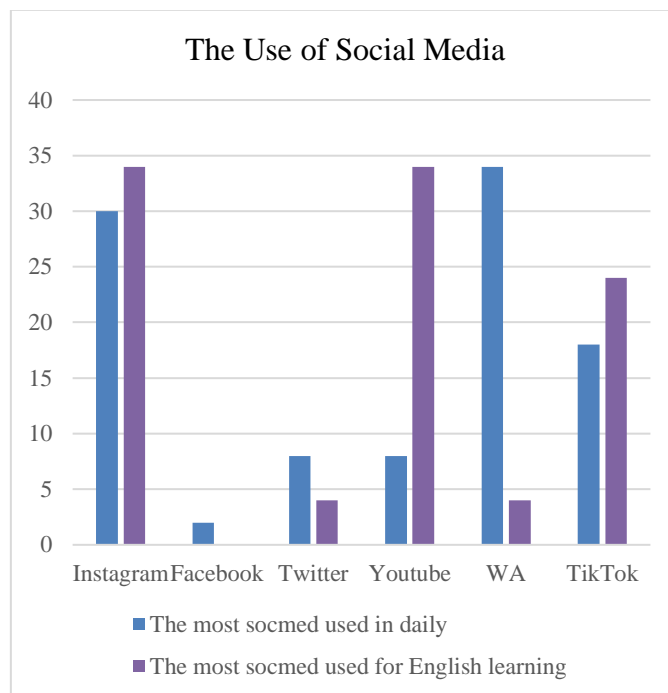


Figure 1. The Social Media Used for Daily and Learning English

Based on Figure 1., the social media that are often used to learn English are Instagram and YouTube. Meanwhile, Whatsapp is the most used daily. There are 34% of students used Instagram, 34% used YouTube, 24% used TikTok, 4% used Twitter, and 4% used Whatsapp for learning English. For daily life, they used Whatsapp (34%), TikTok (18%), YouTube (8%), Twitter (8%), and Facebook (2%).

Furthermore, based on the questionnaire results, the students mostly used social media for

3-4 hours a day and they do it every day. Their main reasons for using social media are to know the latest information (52%), to communicate with each other (18%), to entertain themselves (18%), and to learn new things (8%). Therefore, they use social media mostly to get updated news or information. Surprisingly, they are not interested in learning new things by using social media.

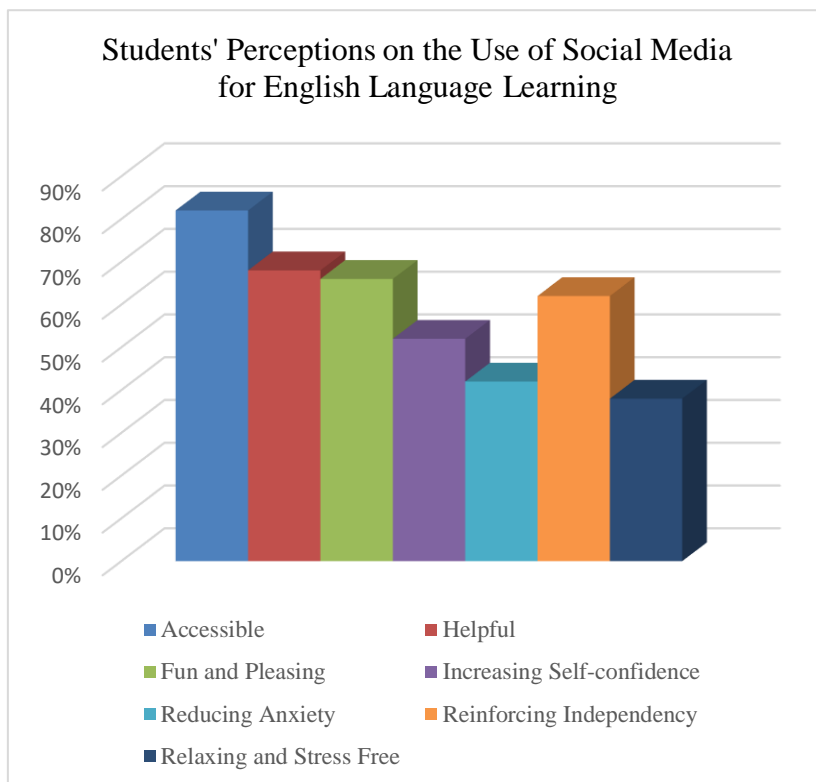


Figure 2. Students' Perception of the Use of Social Media for English Language Learning

As presented in Figure 2., the most chosen reason to use social media is accessibility, namely 82%. The other reasons such as helpful got 68%, fun and pleasing got 66%, increasing

self-confidence got 52%, reducing anxiety got 42%, reinforcing independence got 62%, and relaxing and stress-free got 38%.

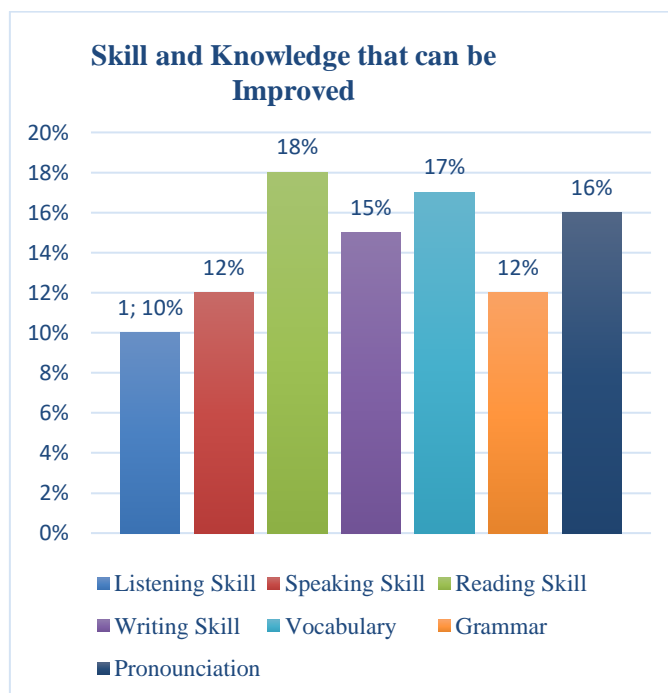


Figure 3. Skills and Knowledge that Students Can Improve by Using Social Media

Based on Figure 3., by using social media, 18% of students can improve their reading skill, 17% of students can improve their vocabulary knowledge, 16% of students can increase their pronunciation, 15% of students chose writing skill to be improved, 12% of students can improve their speaking skills, 12% of students developed

their grammar knowledge, and 10% of students chose listening skill to be improved. To strengthen the questionnaire results, five university students were interviewed. They answered 18 questions that can be concluded in 7 tables of explanations below.

Table 1. The Most Social Media Used

Students	Response
Students 1	WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok
Students 2	Instagram
Students 3	Instagram and YouTube
Students 4	Instagram, TikTok, YouTube
Students 5	Instagram, TikTok

While they were interviewed, they showed their interest in using social media. They use it almost every day, and Instagram is their favorite.

Table 2. The Goals of Using Social Media

Students	Response
Students 1	To communicate and spend leisure time.
Students 2	To find the newest information and express their thing
Students 3	To find the updated information and entertain themselves
Students 4	To enjoy the leisure time
Students 5	To communicate and see the newest information from people around

They have different objectives in using social media. Hence, they use social media to communicate with others, find the newest

information, and spend their leisure time. Then, it becomes the benefit of using social media explained below.

Table 3. The Benefit of Using Social Media

Students	Response
Students 1	To access information wherever and whenever
Students 2	To add our knowledge from the updated news
Students 3	To add our knowledge from educative content
Students 4	To add our knowledge from educative content
Students 5	To add positive value if we use for positive thing

Humans have a natural need for information. the rise of social media has made it easier than ever for people to stay informed about current events and trends because social media is

a social and engaging way to get information. Not only that, but people also use social media to find any knowledge they need.

Table 4. The Most Social Media Containing Educative Content

Students	Response
Students 1	TikTok
Students 2	TikTok
Students 3	Instagram and YouTube
Students 4	TikTok and YouTube
Students 5	TikTok

Students can use several platforms to learn. Nowadays, they have many choices, such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and so on. Four out of five students who were interviewed chose TikTok which contains the most educative content.

Table 5. Skills and Knowledge that can be Learned by using Social Media

Students	Response
Students 1	Vocabulary and Speaking
Students 2	Reading and vocabulary
Students 3	Writing, grammar, and listening
Students 4	Listening, speaking, and grammar
Students 5	Speaking, listening, and reading

The skills and knowledge that they learn from social media are based on their current needs. Besides, the equally important thing is how they used social media to learn those.

Table 6. How They Used Social Media to Learn English

Students	Response
Students 1	By searching for what we need in social media and learning from the content
Students 2	By seeing the video shown on the social media while scrolling and learning from that
Students 3	Never has the intention to learn by using social media but she will learn if there is some educative content that appeared
Students 4	By typing the topic in the YouTube search bar and also seeing some For Your Page (FYP) Video on TikTok
Students 5	Depending on the video shown on TikTok, then she finds more about that

Three out of five students never had intentions to learn English from social media. Because there is so much educative content appearing on their home page, the students felt interested in finding out more about English. It made them excited.

Table 6. Their Perception of Using Social Media to Learn English

Students	Response
Students 1	It is very helpful and easy to use, but sometimes she felt distracted due to the many sources that appeared
Students 2	Enjoyable/ not stressful and flexible
Students 3	It simplifies their life because they can use it wherever and whenever they want
Students 4	Fun and exciting
Students 5	Simple, user-friendly, and more understandable

All students agree that social media is very helpful for their academic life. Various sources can easily be found. However, one student said that the negative side of using social media to learn is there are many of distracting content which are more intriguing and fascinating.

Table 7. Their Expectation of Social Media

Students	Response
Students 1	There are more concise, meaningful, and interesting illustration contents
Students 2	More teachers to create content so that the content can be more credible
Students 3	More understandable, not too long, and has interesting content. Also, it should contain more English Cultural Contents
Students 4	It should consist of more real examples in one content, e.g: daily conversations
Students 5	More contents that relate to daily life should be better

The students focused on the content that creator made. They expected more relatable content to their daily life. In other words, they can use English not only in formal ways but also in informal situations.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions on use of social media for English language learning. As we know this research has two instruments to dig into their perceptions. They are the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. From the questionnaire. Based on the results of the questionnaire that has been obtained, it can be seen that the social media that are often used to learn English are Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Instagram and YouTube emerged as the preferred platforms for English learning, aligning with previous research highlighting the popularity of visual and interactive content (Akcaoglu & Yildirim, 2019). Furthermore, Instagram also got the highest score for the most favorite social media that is used by university students (Zam Zam Al Arif, 2019). While WhatsApp dominates daily usage, its application for learning remains marginal, suggesting a disconnect between casual communication and focused learning. The students used WhatsApp to communicate with their family, friends, and colleagues. It's interesting to note that learning is not their primary motivation behind using social media, even for those who spend three to four hours a day using it. There may be unrealized potential for educational integration when updating with current information and communication take precedence. It is related to Shah, et. Al (2020) research, that university students mostly use social media to get information and keep in touch with family and friends.

Accessibility was the most valued feature of social media for learning, emphasizing its convenience and affordability compared to traditional methods. Social media is one part of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The platform of social media can be categorized as mobile learning for students. They engage with one another via social media on their mobile phones, and they believe mobile learning will enable them to learn at any time or place (Ayuningtyas, 2018). Their perception of using ICT for English language learning is positive (Lizamuddin, Asib, & Ngadiso, 2019). While students perceived social media as helpful,

fun, and confidence-boosting, its potential for reducing anxiety and stress was less significant. This finding warrants further investigation, as anxiety can be a major barrier to language learning. Students reported improvements in various skills, with reading, vocabulary, and pronunciation emerging as the most impacted areas. This aligns with the strengths of specific platforms, such as Instagram's emphasis on visuals for vocabulary acquisition. Those who use social media to learn English can read, watch, memorize vocabulary, and even practice pronouncing new words as they become more familiar. Additionally, after using social media and following a lot of English-related content, students can also enhance their reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension of the language (Yuniar & Purnamaningsih, 2022).

Interviews provided deeper insights into students' diverse objectives and engagement with social media content. The discovery of educative content on platforms like TikTok, often perceived as solely entertainment-oriented, offers promising avenues for promoting language learning. Instagram and TikTok have similar features. One of them is their short-duration video feature. Instagram, is called 'Reels'. Meanwhile, in TikTok, it is called the 'For You' Page. It is supported by Novitasari and Addinna's research result (2022) that concluded "*Learning English by using TikTok can help students to improve their English skills. Learning English on TikTok is fun and stress-free. In addition, TikTok has many advantages such as easy access, varied video content, interesting content that is easy to understand, learning from native speakers, free, and many others.*" Many students reported unintentionally learning English while seeking entertainment or staying updated, highlighting the incidental learning potential of social media. This aligns with the concept of "languaging," where language acquisition occurs during everyday interactions (Kern, 2006). The demand for relatable information by the students points to the necessity for social media language learning resources that mirror casual and everyday language use in addition to traditional curricula that emphasize formal communication. They need more real examples that can be used daily.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated Indonesian university students' perceptions of using social

media for English language learning. The findings reveal a complex relationship between students' goals, preferences, and the perceived benefits of different platforms. While Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok emerge as the preferred platforms for learning, primarily due to their accessibility, convenience, and visual content, their primary use aligns more with communication, information access, and entertainment than intentional language learning. In other words, Indonesian university students express positive perceptions on the use of social media for English language learning. Despite this, the potential for incidental learning through exposure to educative content, coupled with the reported improvements in specific skills like reading, vocabulary, and pronunciation, highlights the untapped potential of social media for language acquisition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher wants to say thank you to all participants that consists of 98 students from several university in Jakarta. Researcher also wants to say thank you to Universitas Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) that have supported this research.

REFERENCES

- Akcaoglu, S., & Yildirim, S. (2019). The use of social media in foreign language learning: A descriptive study. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science*, 3(4), 597-605.
- Andriani, A. E., & Sulistyorini, S. (2022). Penggunaan Media Sosial di Kalangan Mahasiswa Selama Pandemi Covid-19. *Equilibrium: Jurnal Pendidikan*. <https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v10i1.6442>
- Chou, C.-M. (2014). Social Media Characteristics, Customer Relationship and Brand Equity. *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*.
- Indonesia, T. C. (2019). APJII Catat 64 Persen Penduduk Indonesia Sudah Pakai Internet. *Berita Teknologi*.
- Kern, R. (2006). *Languaging: Language and literacy learning in the early years*. Pearson Education.
- Kim, H. (2022). The Negative Impact of Social Media on High School Students during COVID-19. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 10(4), 325–328. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7239063>
- Muftah, M. (2023). Impact of social media on learning English language during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PSU Research Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-10-2021-0060>
- Novitasari & Addinna, A. (2022). Students' Perception on the Use of TikTok for Learning English. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 11(4), 566–579. <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt>
- Nurrahmi, Muhayyang, M., & Sakkir, G. (2022). STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEARNING ENGLISH DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC. *Journal of Technology in Language Pedagogy (JTechLP)*.
- Oueder, M., & Abousaber, I. (2018). A Study on the Impact of Social Media Usage on Student Academic Performance: University of Tabuk an Example. *American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences*.
- Siddhartha, S., Habeeb Adil, A., Mulla, M., Mulla, M., Rahman Sayed, F., Suhrab singh, K., Tripathi, S., & Zabin Eusufzai, S. (2020). Usage of Social Media among Undergraduate University Students. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*.
- Yohanna, A. (2020). The influence of social media on social interactions among students. *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.20473/ijss.v12i2.22907>
- Yuniar, M.S., & Purnamaningsih, I. R. (2022). UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEARNING ENGLISH. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 5(6), 1211–1217.
- Zam Zam Al Arif, T. (2019). THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v3i2.1921>