

# UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

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## Abstract

Nowadays, many students use social media not only to communicate and get entertainment, but also to learn. Since students often use social media to learn various things, English-related content is one of the things that often be on their search. By using the social media, students are able to find various English content that may allow them to learn new things about English. This study aims to find out students' perceptions of using social media for learning English. The participants of this study are five eight-semester university students majoring in English Education. The researchers used a qualitative descriptive method with a questionnaire as the instrument. The results show that learning English from social media is quite effective; especially useful for interacting and communicating; increasing their ability to read, write, listen, and speak; and probably best to be alternative media to learn English but not being the primary source because social media could be a distraction while studying.

**Keywords:** Students' Perception, Social Media, Learning English

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an essential communication tool in the recent internet era. There are many kinds of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, etc. These kinds of social media are easy to be signed up for free. That is why almost all students are familiar with and have used social media. Social media is an internet-based platform that creates and shares information through words, videos, and photos (Handayani, Syafei, Utari, 2021). According to Yang (2020), there are four main purposes for using social media applications, namely entertainment, socialization, informativeness, and academics. Therefore, in addition to communicating and getting entertainment, nowadays many students use social media to learn. This is because social media provides an advantage in disseminating learning content or information efficiently, quickly, and in real-time (Ibrahim, 2016). Students also use social media a lot to absorb learning and information shared by professionals and teaching staff willing to share knowledge using social media. Since students often use social media to learn various things, English-related content is one of the things that often be on their search (Ismail et al., 2019). In the context of EFL, the use of social media provides several opportunities to develop students' English skills because it has many resources for learning English (Arif, 2019). Social media has become multimedia that can provide various types of content that cannot be provided directly by textbooks (Yohanna, 2020). By using the social media, students are able to find various English content such as videos or posts that may allow them to learn new things about English. This not only provides a new learning environment but also increases student motivation in learning English (Sobha, 2017). Besides that, through social media all students can communicate with their friends and other people around the world. Considering the fact that English is an international language and the most widely used in social media to communicate with each other, it is an advantage for students to add and exchange information

or knowledge (Rao, 2019). Moreover, they can also improve their English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

Several studies have been conducted on how social media and the internet have provided students with a more engaging and interactive learning experience, including in learning English. Erzad and Suciati (2018), in their research, found that social media can improve students' English skills such as listening, speaking, writing and reading since they are fun, attractive, easy to use/access, practical, simple, and informative. Another research, Arif (2019) investigated the use of social media for English language learning that showed positive attitudes; the students stated that social media played important roles to improve their English language skills. Then, Desta (2021) found that social media platforms have many advantages in improving students' English skills in their own teaching and learning practices. Thus, they agree that the use of social media plays a dominant role in improving English skills. Based on the explanations above, researchers are interested in knowing students' perceptions of using social media for learning English. Therefore, this study examines students' perceptions by considering their attitudes, motivations, and opinions regarding social media usage in learning English.

## METHOD

The researchers used a qualitative descriptive method to explore students' perceptions regarding using social media to learn English. Qualitative research aims to comprehend the phenomenon about the subject of research, such as the behavior, perception, motivation, activities, and others in a descriptive narration that used various natural methods (Moleong, 2011; cited in Royadi, Susiana, and Khumaida, 2019). Five students from the eighth semester majoring in English education in Karawang were purposively selected as participants. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), purposive sampling is a common procedure used in qualitative research that identifies key informants or person who have specific knowledge about the topic being studied. The researcher decided the criteria for participants depending on the purpose of the study. It means that the researcher chose the partisipants according to the need and purpose of the research. In this study, the researcher determined that the participants were students who liked to learn English using social media. To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used a questionnaire through a Google form containing several questions as a data collection technique. Then, the data obtained were analyzed descriptively and the results were presented as an explanation of words supported by the data presented in the form of a table.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

**Table 1.** What kind of social media do you use the most to learn English?

No.	Response
P1	Twitter
P2	YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram
P3	Duolingo and Instagram
P4	Twitter and TikTok
P5	Instagram and TikTok

Based on the Table 1, the social media that are often used to learn English are Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and Duolingo.

**Table 2.** Since when did you use social media to learn English?

No.	Response
P1	Since junior high school.
P2	Since senior high school.
P3	Since the first semester of college.
P4	2011 on Twitter and 2021 on TikTok.
P5	Since mid-2020.

Based on the Table 2, the participants have used those social media to learn English since their junior high school, senior high school, to their early college. It means that they have been using social media to learn English for a long time.

**Table 3.** Is social media a platform that can be used to learn English specifically or is it only used for interaction? Explain the reasons for your choice.

No.	Response
P1	Only for interaction, we are not really use formal English to communicate in real life.
P2	It can be both depending on how we use and utilize the social media because the uses of social media itself are very diverse. For example, in several social media such as Twitter and Instagram, apart from being a means to interact, these two social media can also be used to learn English specifically by following English learning accounts, men-fess accounts about English, and other English education creators.
P3	It is more dominant for interaction. There are specific limitations for learning English.
P4	Mostly used for interaction with friends from different countries as well as learning if there is good content that passes from certain learning accounts.
P5	Usually, I learn through the videos that the followed account uploads because in my opinion, short videos with shortened material really help me to remember the material and it also do not burden myself at all. The account can also help explain more through the comments section when we have questions. The point is, through this social media, I can learn English with interaction in it too.

Based on Table 3, most of the participants used the social media to learn something that mostly used for interaction and daily communication.

**Table 4.** What can you learn about English on social media and how did you learn?

No.	Response
P1	New vocabulary. If there was a new word, I will immediately translate it.
P2	I can find out various new knowledge about the English language by exploring various social media accounts about learning English which are widely available.
P3	Usually, I read English poetry posters, read English captions that people use, and follow accounts that provide English learning.
P4	There are lots. Most of the basic content is about English grammar (vocabulary, pronunciation, public speaking, etc.) to everyday culture from the West which influences the way English is used.
P5	About everyday expressions that can be used so that my English is more natural, as well as the function and how to use sentences. Usually, I learn it by watching or reading what has been uploaded, then read it several times to memorize it. Sometimes, I also saved or made notes.

Based on Table 4, the participants learn many kinds of English materials from the social media such as vocabulary, pronunciation, public speaking, how to use sentences, and even everyday expression used in daily lives. They learn those materials through watching videos, reading captions or materials, and make notes from some English account they follow.

**Table 5.** To what extent does the use of social media influence your English performance, especially to your English skills or competencies?

No.	Response
P1	The use of terms in English that native speakers usually use in their everyday life.
P2	My English continues to improve because there are new updates everyday about new vocabularies to slang in English.
P3	I can collect vocabulary that I did not understand before, understand English sentences, and know English terms or slang. So that it can affect all four skills.
P4	It is very influential, especially in speaking and understanding English reading skills. Social media also provides a lot of new vocabulary, which is very useful both in speaking, reading, and writing.
P5	I felt that my reading and speaking have progressed.

Based on Table 5, most of the participants improved their speaking and reading abilities through learning from social media, and some of them even improved on writing and listening. The improvement comes from getting new vocabularies, new terms, and new slang in English.

**Table 6.** Does being more active on social media means being more active in learning? How can you be sure that it is not the media that distracts you?

No.	Response
P1	It distracts me more because social media is not primarily for learning. Learning to use social media is an advantage.
P2	Not really. It goes back to each individual because each person uses social media for different purposes: some are for learning, some just want to exist on social media for the purpose of self-exposure, etc.
P3	I think it depends on the latest conditions from the old personal social media accounts. Sometimes, opening social media like Instagram to find out the latest news could become a big distraction to learn when using social media.
P4	I think it depends on how each person is. As for me, I don't use social media specifically to study, only on a part-time basis, but its impact on my English skills is quite significant compared to specifically studying English itself. The reason? Because learning while having fun feels more suitable for me.
P5	I do not actually use social media specifically for studying, but posts from special accounts for learning English often appear on my homepage, so I often learn from it. But sometimes if there are other posts that are more interesting, it will just distract me because I will be more interested in seeing it than studying.

Based on the Table 6, the participants were agree that social media is sometimes being the distraction itself from the learning activities since social media is not an actual learning platform, but it also depends on each individual.

**Table 7.** If given the choice, would you like the use of social media to be implemented as a whole or a large part of the formal education system in Indonesia or not? Give your reasons.

No.	Response
P1	Not for the whole, because social media is not primarily a learning media.
P2	Not to be applied in its entirety, because not all Indonesian citizens have access to create social media accounts, and there is no guarantee that this method will be effective for every individual.
P3	No. Social media has a lot of distractions, it is only suitable for self-learning, not in the formal education system, and each social media has its own limitations.
P4	Personally, maybe not. The reason? Because not everyone can fit into the way of learning that is based on social media which incidentally has many variables that make people distracted (because not everyone can refrain from the distraction).
P5	In my opinion, there are still some considerations. Returning to the nature of social media, which accommodates a lot of content other than education, even adult students are still likely to be distracted, especially for students who are still in school. Maybe learning on social media is quite effective for some students who have self-control, because they can focus more on what is their goal and don't feel there is a burden or compulsion to study.

Based on the Table 7, the participants were not agree if the social media is being implemented as a whole or large part of the formal education system in Indonesia since the social media itself was mostly used to entertain people when taking a break from their learning or work. Besides, the use of social media may be turned out into a big distraction on the learning progress since not everyone has the ability to control themselves from being distracted.

**Table 8.** University students' perceptions on some statement.

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Social media helps you in learning English independently outside the classroom.	60%	40%	0%	0%
2.	Social media makes learning English easy and simple because it can be done anytime and anywhere.	60%	40%	0%	0%
3.	Social media provides rich resources such as quotes, captions, photos, videos, and other types of resources for learning English.	40%	60%	0%	0%
4.	Learning English using social media is fun and increases learning motivation.	0%	100%	0%	0%
5.	Using social media to learn English is very effective.	0%	100%	0%	0%
6.	I will continue to use social media to learn English in the future.	40%	60%	0%	0%

Based on Table 8, all the participants agree that social media helps to learn English independently outside the classroom, makes the learning process easy and simple, provides rich

resources, and increasing the learning motivation since it is fun and effective. They also agree that they will continue to use the social media to learn English even in the future.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of the research that has been obtained, it can be seen that the social media that are often used to learn English are Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and Duolingo. The students are using those social media to learn English for interaction and daily communication purposes since there are many new vocabularies, pronunciations, daily expressions, and western slang from social media. By using social media to learn English, they can memorize new vocabulary through reading and watching lots of learning sources or content and even practicing pronunciation. In addition, they can also improve their English skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking after surfing social media and following a lot of content related to English. English is an international language used by people all over the world, therefore communicating with friends from other countries on social media is also a factor that makes their English skills improve. With the many learning resources available on social media, it makes it easier for students to learn English and increase their learning motivation. Moreover, social media that is easily accessible allows them to learn anytime and anywhere. Therefore, the students agree that learning English using social media is quite effective in helping them learn independently and they will continue to use the social media to learn English even in the future. However, although social media has many benefits for learning English and can even improve their English skills, as well as enrich their knowledge, they stated that the use of social media still not effective if it used as a primary source to learn or be included in a formal education system since the social media still have a big probability of being the distraction instead to those who can not control themselves.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted to determine students' perceptions of using social media to learn English. Thus, the results show that learning English from social media is quite effective; especially useful for interacting and communicating; increasing their ability on reading, writing, listening, and speaking; and probably best to be alternative media to learn English but not being the primary source because social media could be a distraction while studying. Overall, the participants agree to keep on using social media to learn English and improve themselves through the English content on social media.

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