

English Students' Perceptions of the Use of Social Media in English Language Learning

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to explore the perceptions of students majoring in English Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka towards the use of social media in English language learning. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research involved 40 final semester students who actively use social media as a learning tool. The results showed that social media, such as YouTube and TikTok, contributed significantly to improving students' English skills, especially in the aspects of listening and reading. The study concludes that social media has great potential as an effective English language learning tool, provided that these challenges can be overcome through structured strategies. The findings provide insights for educators in integrating social media into the curriculum to create a more dynamic and responsive learning environment.

Keywords: Social media, English language learning, student perception, educational technology

1. INTRODUCTION

In a global context that is increasingly connected through technology, social media platforms have helped and changed various

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Citation in APA style: Amalia, N., & Zuhad Ahmad. (2025). English Students' Perceptions of the Use of Social Media in English Language Learning. *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education*, 6(1), 14-26.

Received May 12, 2025; Accepted Jun 22, 2025; published Jun 28, 2025.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32505/jades.v6i1.11338>



aspects of human interaction, including education. In the internet era, social media has become important in social interaction (Handayani et al., 2021). One of the beneficiaries of these technological advances is English language learners, who have found new ways to complement their mastery of the language by utilizing social media. Social media provides a fun learning resource that makes students interested in learning English language skills by using social media (Handayani et al., 2021).

Traditionally, language learning occurred mostly in classrooms, relying on textbooks, explanation, and exercises. However, the emergence of social media platforms has brought a sense of enthusiasm towards language learning. By using the social media, students can access or find various English content such as videos or audios that may allow them to learn many things about English (Sopyan Yuniar & Purnamaningsih, 2022). With platforms such as YouTube, Tiktok and Instagram, students now can easily access a variety of language content that transcends the limitations of traditional learning methods. In the English learning context, the use of social media provides some opportunities to improve students' English language skills (Al Arif, 2019). Additionally, social media has significantly impacted education at all levels because of its limitless learning opportunities (Seli, 2024).

The appeal of social media lies in its versatility as a learning resource. English learners can interact with native language materials such as articles, videos, podcasts, and conversations posted by native speakers or advanced users. Social media will also improve students' understanding and communication skills through conversations held with native English speakers (Natasa & Solusia, 2024). This exposure not only improves their language proficiency, but also fosters cultural understanding and contextual understanding, thereby enriching their overall language learning experience. Social media is used by students for various purposes, for example to access an information, discussion, as a source of learning and even an entertainment (Aryanti et al., 2024).

One of the important features of social media is its ability to encourage collaboration and communication between users. Social media allows users to have fun conversations and share information (Akram & Kumar, 2017). English students can utilize social media platforms to connect with mates, educators, or people from around the world. Through the use of interactive media, it is hoped that students' interest in

participating in the learning process can increase (Geubrina, 2021). Through forums and group chats, they are also can engage in discussions, share insights, seek feedback, and participate in collaborative learning activities.

Despite its various benefits, integrating social media into language learning is not without challenges. Issues such as the authenticity of online content, digital interference, privacy concerns, and information overload require careful consideration. Additionally, gaps in internet access and technological literacy can exacerbate inequalities in educational opportunities. Therefore, while recognizing the potential of social media as a valuable tool, it is crucial to address these challenges and design strategies to maximize its efficacy in facilitating English language learning for students in various contexts.

By understanding the opportunities and challenges that come with such a paradigm, educators and policy makers can harness the transformative power of social media to foster more dynamic and effective learning environments for English language learners around the world. Through an exploration of English language learners' perspectives on the utilization of social media for language learning, it is expected to contribute to the innovative approaches to language education in the digital era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Include the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to your topic. A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works. This research uses previous research as a reference in writing. Previous research can also be used as a comparison material in seeing the originality of this research. The first research was written by Rahmawati Dwi Handayani, Muh Syafei, Aisyah Ririn Perwikasih Utari in 2021, with the title 'English Students' Perceptions of the Use of Social Media in English Language Learning'. This research showed that social media is not only a communication tool but also a rich learning resource. Students used platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to gain access to various contents such as learning videos, photos, quotes, and other texts.

The second research was written by Fhebbly Novit Aryanti, Muhammad Amin, Lalu Thohir in 2024, with the title 'Students' Perception on the Use of Social Media in Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)'. This research found that social media such as YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp are became the main platform used by university students to learn English. This research confirms that social media provides key benefits such as social media allows students to learn anytime and anywhere. It encourages self-directed learning and also the use of social media helps students improve vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, as well as listening, reading, writing and speaking skills.

However, this research also identified some challenges in using social media for English language learning. These challenges include Information available on social media is often unverifiable, which can lead to misunderstandings or false information and concerns regarding the use of personal data on social media is a concern for some students. The third research was written by Nurrahmi Nurrahmi, Maemuna Muhayyang, Geminastiti Sakkir in 2022, with the title 'Students' Perception of the Use of Social Media For Learning English During Covid 19 Pandemic'. This research highlighted students' perceptions of the use of social media in English language learning, especially receptive skills such as listening and reading. This research showed that university students have a positive perception of social media as an English learning tool. Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are the top choices due to their accessibility and availability of diverse learning resources in English.

3. METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method to explore and understand the perspectives of English language education students about the influence of social media use on their English language skills. This method was chosen because it provides researchers with the opportunity to gain in-depth insight into the experiences and subjective perspectives of the participants. Descriptive research often allows researchers to provide an accurate picture of an occurrence. The participants in this study were active students majoring in English education at Prof. Dr. Hamka Muhammadiyah University. By using purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected 40 students who fit the predetermined criteria. The predetermined criteria will ensure that the

participants are in accordance with what is needed by this research. The criteria are an active student majoring in English in the 8th semester, active users of social media and have used social media to support the learning process. This study used questionnaires that contained closed-ended questions. This study used online questionnaires by using Google form and the questions are focus on the topic of the use of social media and the perception of its impact. The content included personal data (participants) such as age, gender and year of study, frequency of social media use and perceptions of the impact of social media on English language skills especially speaking skills.

The initial stage of this procedure begins with distributing questionnaires through student groups using google form, the raw data was then processed using descriptive qualitative methods. Descriptive method is a method that describes actual and realistic phenomena through samples that have been collected (Rukajat Ajat, 2018). These activities are estimated to take approximately 1 week. The data collection process in this study was conducted using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The collected data was analyzed and summarized in the form of tables. These tables displayed the percentage and frequency of responses for each statement provided in the questionnaire. The analysis begins with calculating the frequency of each response category for every statement. This is followed by determining the corresponding percentage to present a clear and proportional representation of the data. The summarized results in tabular format aim to provide a comprehensive overview of respondents' perspectives, making it easier to identify trends, patterns, and dominant responses.

Subsequently, the summarized data was interpreted and discussed in detail to highlight key findings and their implications in the context of the research objectives. This structured approach ensures that the data analysis process is systematic and yields meaningful insights.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research involved 40 students majoring in English education at Prof. Dr. Hamka University. The majority of respondents were female (80%), and all were 8th semester students.

1. Popular Platforms for English Learning
Table 2. Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
YouTube	20	50%
TikTok	11	27,5%
Instagram	5	12,5%
Twitter/X	4	10%

The data shows that the most frequently used social media platform for English language learning is YouTube (50%), followed by TikTok (27,5%), Instagram (12,5%), and Twitter/X (10%). This data is supported by a statement in the Journal of Digital Education which states that "students find it easier to understand video-formatted materials and information than classical learning or only from books as a source" (Dewi Pitaloka et al., 2022).

2. Frequency and Types of Content Utilized

Table 3. Frequency of Social Media Usage for English Learning

Frequency	Percentage
Never	0 (0)
Rarely (1-2/week)	12,5% (5)
Sometimes (3-4/week)	40% (16)
Often (almost daily)	25% (10)
Always (daily)	22,5% (9)

Most respondents use social media to learn English with some frequency. A total of 40% stated that they use social media 3-4 times per week, while 25% use it almost every day, and 22,5% use social media every day.

Table 4. Preferred Content Types

Content Type	Percentage
Educational videos	22,5% (9)
Podcast	10% (4)
Informative posts/ articles	10% (4)
Entertainment-based content	55% (22)
Forums with native speakers	2,5% (1)

The most favoured type of content is entertainment-based content (55%), followed by educational videos (22,5%), podcasts and informative articles at 10% each.

Entertainment-based content is the most popular type of content today. In the growing digital era, the need for entertainment is not only an escape from the daily routine, but also a form of expression and social interaction. Whether it's in the form of funny videos, interesting drama series, uplifting music, or even simple yet entertaining memes, entertainment content is able to reach various groups and ages. This is supported by the statement that the exposure, effectiveness, and quality of digital entertainment content influencing the entertainment needs of the audience, especially on platforms such as YouTube, which means that digital entertainment content is highly desirable and effective in fulfilling the entertainment needs of today's audience (Mahendra et al. 2024).

Perceptions of Social Media's Role in English Learning

After analysing 40 responses from the 8th semester active English students of Prof. Dr. Hamka University, the perceptions and percentages of the use of social media as an English learning tool are presented in the following tables:

Table 5. Perceptions of Social Media in Learning

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Social media provides a variety of educational content in English language learning	62,5% (25)	35% (14)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2,5% (1)

I believe social media can help me improve my English language skills	47,5% (19)	45% (18)	5% (2)	0 (0)	2,5% (1)
Through social media the process of learning English independently becomes easier	50% (20)	42,5% (17)	5% (2)	0 (0)	2,5% (1)
I feel that the use of social media makes learning English more fun	52,5% (21)	42,5% (17)	2,5% (1)	0 (0)	2,5% (1)
I feel more motivated to learn and communicate in English after using social media	32,5% (13)	52,5% (21)	10% (4)	2,5% (1)	2,5% (1)
I will always learn English through educational content on social media independently	25% (10)	52,5% (21)	17,5% (7)	2,5% (1)	2,5% (1)

Based on the results of the perception questionnaire from 40 respondents, it was found that, in the first statement "Social media provides a variety of educational content in English language learning", a total of 62,5% of respondents strongly agreed that social media provides a variety of educational content that supports English language learning, while another 35% agreed with this statement. This shows that social media is considered a rich platform for learning materials, ranging from educational videos, articles, to community-based discussions. From the second statement "I believe social media can help me improve my English language skills", a total of 47,5% of respondents strongly agreed that social media can help improve their English language skills, while 45% agreed. This data indicates that students have a strong belief in the potential of social media to support the development of their language skills independently.

The third statement is "Through social media the process of learning English independently becomes easier", a total of 50% of respondents strongly agreed that social media makes learning English independently easier, and 42.5% agreed. With easy and flexible access, social media provides opportunities for students to learn anytime and anywhere according to their needs.

The fourth statement is "I feel that the use of social media makes learning English more fun", the majority of respondents (52.5%) strongly agreed that social media makes learning English more fun, while another 42.5% agreed. The entertainment elements inherent in social media, such as interactive and engaging content, are the main reasons behind this perception. The fifth statement is "I feel more motivated to learn and communicate in English after using social media", a total of 32.5% of respondents strongly agreed that social media increased their motivation to learn and communicate in English, while 52.5% agreed. This motivation can be attributed to exposure to relevant content and interaction with native speakers on certain platforms. The last statement of the perception statement is "I will always learn English through educational content on social media independently", 25% of respondents strongly agreed that they will continue to use social media to learn English independently, while 52.5% agreed. This reflects a belief in the continued use of social media as a learning tool, although some respondents showed doubts.

Social Media in English Language Learning Activities

Table 6.
The Use of Social Media in English Language Learning Activities

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
I often interact (comment and discuss) using English on social media	20% (8)	40% (16)	22,5% (9)	17,5% (7)	0 (0)
I often use social media (such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) to learn English	47,5% (19)	42,5% (17)	7,5% (3)	2,5% (1)	0 (0)
I use social media to look for additional materials in learning English	42,5% (17)	45% (18)	10% (4)	2,5% (1)	0 (0)
I follow accounts or pages that focus on learning English on social media	37,5% (15)	47,5% (19)	10% (4)	5% (2)	0 (0)

Based on the results of the responses to the social media statement in English learning activities, it was found that in the first statement, "I often interact (comment and discuss) using English on social media", a total of 20% of respondents strongly agreed that they often interact in English

through comments or discussions on social media, while the other 40% agreed. This shows that social media is a space that supports the practice of using English in real situations. The second statement shows that "I often use social media (such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) to learn English", a total of 47.5% of respondents strongly agreed that they often use social media to learn English, while 42.5% agreed. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are the top choices because they provide interesting and varied content. The third statement is "I use social media to look for additional materials in learning English", a total of 42.5% of respondents strongly agreed that they utilise social media to look for additional materials, and 45% agreed. This reflects the function of social media as a supplement to formal learning resources. The fourth statement is "I follow accounts or pages that focus on learning English on social media", a total of 37.5% of respondents strongly agreed that they follow accounts or pages that focus on learning English, while another 47.5% agreed. These accounts often provide tips, exercises and materials designed to improve language skills.

Impact on English Skills

Table 7.
Impact of Social Media on English Skills

Skill	SA	A	N	D	SD
Audio and video content on social media help me improve my listening skills in English	50% (20)	42,5% (17)	7,5% (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Social media improves my reading skills in English especially when I read captions or articles on social media	47,5% (19)	40% (16)	10% (4)	0 (0)	2,5% (1)
I feel that my speaking skills have improved because I often see English content on social media	35% (14)	52,5% (21)	5% (4)	5% (4)	2,5% (1)
my writing skills in English have improved after being active on social media.	25% (10)	50% (20)	15% (6)	7,5% (3)	2,5% (1)

Based on the first statement "Audio and video content on social media helps me improve my listening skills in English", a total of 50% of respondents strongly agreed that social media improved their listening

skills, while 42.5% agreed. Video-based platforms such as YouTube and podcasts are effective tools to practice these skills. The second statement is "Social media improves my reading skills in English especially when I read captions or articles on social media", a total of 47.5% of respondents strongly agreed that social media helps improve reading skills, with 40% agreeing. Informative articles and posts often found on social media are valuable learning resources. The third statement is "I feel that my speaking skills have improved because I often see English content on social media", a total of 35% of respondents strongly agreed that social media helps them with speaking skills, while 52.5% agreed. Interaction through comments or live conversations is the main means to practice speaking. The fourth statement is "My writing skills in English have improved after being active on social media", a total of 25% of respondents strongly agreed that social media helped improve their writing skills, while 50% agreed. Activities such as creating posts, comments or messages in English are the main contribution to the development of this skill.

Challenges in Using Social Media for English Learning

Table 8.

Challenges Identified by Respondents

Challenge	SA	A	N	D	SD
I easily distracted when learning on social media	17,5% (7)	37,5% (15)	17,5% (7)	20% (8)	7,5% (3)
I feel difficult in filtering relevant educational content	7,5% (3)	32,5% (13)	32,5% (13)	17,5% (7)	10% (4)

Based on the results of the challenge statements of using social media for English language learning, it was found that on the first statement "I easily get distracted when learning on social media", 37.5% of the respondents agreed that they are easily distracted when learning on social media, while 17.5% strongly agreed. This shows that distraction from non-educative content is the main challenge in learning using social media. On the second statement, "I feel it is difficult to filter relevant educational content", 32.5% of respondents agreed that they find it difficult to filter relevant educational content, with 7.5% strongly agreeing. This highlights the need for better digital literacy to utilise social media effectively.

5. CONCLUSION

The results show that social media plays an important role in English language learning for university students. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok offer engaging and accessible content, which suits the learning preferences of the younger generation. The dominance of entertainment content as the top choice reflects the need for fun and engaging approaches to learning. However, the results also reveal challenges in using social media, such as distraction and difficulty in finding relevant content. This highlights the need for guidelines or strategies to maximise the benefits of social media in learning. In addition, the positive impact on listening and reading skills shows the potential of social media as a support tool in English literacy development. However, the lower impact on speaking and writing skills suggests the need for integration with other more direct and practical learning methods. Overall, this research reinforces the view that social media can be an effective tool for English language learning, especially if challenges can be overcome through a structured and needs-based approach.

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