

# Students' Perception on the Use of Social Media in Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to find out the students' perceptions of using social media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The descriptive qualitative method and the random sampling technique were used in this research. The participants in this research were 52 students third-semester students of the English Education Department at the University of Mataram, and the instruments used were questionnaires and interviews. The result of this research showed positive perceptions. The positive perception is that they think social media are helpful and make it easy to learn English because social media are easy to access anywhere and everywhere, and the negative perception is that students think social media are effective but sometimes often create misunderstandings. Kinds of social media that students often use are YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Those applications are chosen because of their popularity and their ability to provide an endless amount of English input to them. The ways students use social media to learn English are by communicating with their friends to practice their language or joining the English group from their account, watching videos, listening to songs in English, and they also follow some accounts to learn English. The last advantage, after using social media to learn English, is to improve their English skills, especially vocabulary, grammar, etc. The challenges identified are truthfulness/or validity of information from social media, and the frequent distracting content that makes students forget their original intent of learning when using the social media

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

## INTRODUCTION

People learn and find information in different ways. There is still a group of people who like to read books, but there is also a group of people who prefer to obtain knowledge through audio-visual means. Moreover, because studying with does on campus is not as intense as it used to be, it forces students to find fun ways to learn self-taught at home. Furthermore, the English language mastering does now no longer simply consist of study room experience (Balcikanli, 2011).

The creation of social media in Indonesia has brought some changes to Indonesian people nowadays. People are living in a global world and everyday adopt the new technologies, information, Language and so on. If they don't, they will be a human with lack of technology. Digital social media such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are very popular among young generations.

In Indonesia, students are very familiar with social media because it is not only used as a communication tool but also a social, work and learning need. In developing and emerging countries, many people have adopted the use of social media in the learning process. Much research has been done by a number of researchers to identify the use of technology among students, including the use of social media. With social media students can develop their knowledge of anything, including their ability to speak English, as well as to assist students in their learning process. Students use social media tools for many purposes such as access to information, group discussion, resource sharing and entertainment. The students will develop their new grammar, vocabularies, or even improve their listening and writing skills. They will read the post-caption and photos on Instagram, the tweets that are posted on Twitter, the conversation with the native speakers

by having chats on WhatsApp, or watching the videos delivered in English that are available on YouTube (Al-Rahmi, Othman, & Musa, 2014).

The students open social media for entertaining and also learn English. The students think that open social media has many kinds of resources such as video, photos, caption and others. For this reason, the students using social media for learning English makes the students easy to learn and has a lot of benefits.

According to Erzad & Suciati (2018) in their journal paper "Social Media for Improving Students' English Quality in the Millennial Era" social media can help students hone their English skills in the following areas: The four skills are listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Additionally, it has been found that students in the millennial period use social media to enhance the quality of their English because it is entertaining, fascinating, simple to use, and instructive.

Learning is a process to get knowledge of a subject or skill through study, experience and instruction. Learning English is a process of getting knowledge about English skills (Brown, 2010). The students of English Education department must master English well. Learning English is one of important thing for English majors. Most of the students of English Education Department learning English with technology resource as internet media.

Therefore, this study conducted to find out the Perception on the Use of Social Media in Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the third semester students' of the English Department at the University of Mataram.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive qualitative method to know the students' perception of using social media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Kriyantono (2014) states qualitative research aims to explain phenomena in depth through complete data collection, the population and sample in this research are limited because qualitative research does not prioritize the number of population or samples. The researcher used the Questionnaire and interview to reveal the students' perceptions of using social media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the third semester students of English department at University of Mataram.

The population of this study is the student third semester English Department University of Mataram. Actually, there are 7 classes in the third semester, which consist 245 students. In each class, there are 30-35 students. In this study the researcher used random sampling. This study used fifty-two participants taken randomly as the sample from the third semester students of English department at University of Mataram.

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data. A questionnaire is one of technique in collecting data that consists of questions for the aim of gathering information from participants. This study used online questionnaire using Google form. It is close ended questionnaire. There are four categories of the questionnaire and they are Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The interview is the common instrument that used in qualitative research, and in doing the interview, there is communication between the interviewer and interviewees but the interviewees are not allowed to ask the question to the interviewer. In this research, the semi-structure interview chose to collect the data. The researcher chooses this type of interview because the questions can be developed based on the participant answers and their current situation. The researcher interviewed ten students to explore students' perception about the use of social media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the third semester students' English department at the University of Mataram by using WhatsApp. The questions in the interview validated to ensure the validity and reliability distributed to the respondents.

After collecting data from the questionnaire and interview, both data need to be analyzed. The data from the questionnaire were put into a table and summarized in form of frequency and percentage. The frequency and percentages result copied from Google form result. Then the researcher interpreted the data on the table. Meanwhile, the data from interview analyzed by using flow model by Miles and Huberman (1994), three stages in the data analysis used they are; Data reduction, Data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The questionnaire showed student's perception on the use of social media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The questionnaire consisted of two parts and nineteen statements.

1. Social media platforms I often use (you may choose more than one option)

52 jawaban

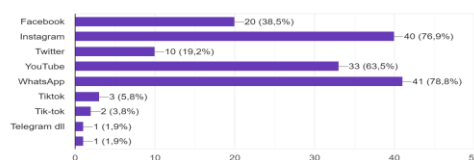


Figure 1 Social media platforms student often use.

Figure 1 display the result of the social media platforms student often use. The results indicate that the majority of the participants use WhatsApp as a social media they often use, with the highest percentage of 78.8%. Instagram is the second most-used social media platform with a percentage of 76.9%. It is also reported that only 63.5% often use YouTube. Another 38.5% and 19.2% often use Facebook and Twitter respectively. The least often used social media platforms were TikTok with 9.6%, Telegram 1.9%, and other social media they did not mention with a percentage of 1.9%.

2. Time I spend on social media per day

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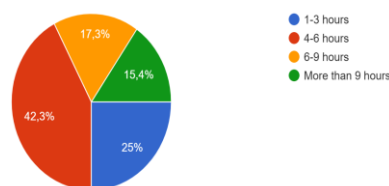


Figure 2 Time student spent on social media per day

Figure 2 shows that 25% of the students spend a moment one to two hours on social media per day, most of the students 42.3% spend about 4 to 6 hours on social media per day. Almost 17.3% of them spend 6 to 9 hours per day, and only 15.4% of the participants spend more than 9 hours on social media per day.

3. I use social media to learn English

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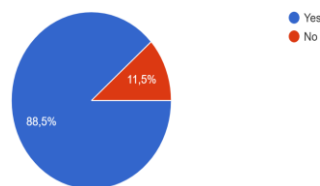


Figure 3 student use social media to learn English

Figure 3 result point out that the majority of the students 88.5% are interested on using social media in learning English as a foreign language. However, only a few students, 11.5% mention that they are not use social media to learn English.

4. The languages I use when communicating with classmates on social media (you may choose more than one option)  
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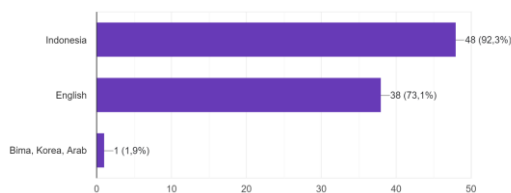


Figure 4 the language student use when they communicating with classmates on social media

Figure 4 shows most the students used Indonesian language when they communicating with their classmates on social media with the percentage of 92.3%, and only 73.1% students used English language. Another language their used is Bima, Korea and Arab with the percentage of 1.9%.

5. The way I use social media to learn English (you may choose more than one option)  
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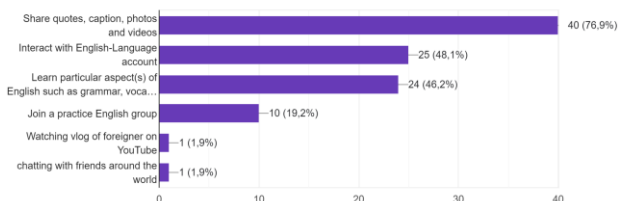


Figure 5 the way student use social media to learn English

Figure 5 shows that 76.9% of the participants use social media to learn English by sharing quotes, captions, photos and videos. Likewise, the results indicate that 48.1% of them use social media to learn English through interacting with English-Language accounts, while the students who use social media to learn English by learning particular aspect(s) of English such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. and join an English practice group are 46.2% and 19.2% respectively. Other participants use social media to learn English by watching vlogs of foreigners on YouTube and chatting with friends around the world with the same percentage, 1.9% respectively.

6. The usefulness of social media as a media to learn English  
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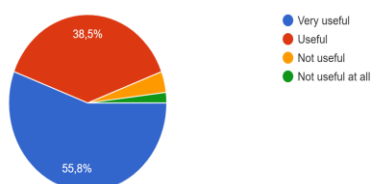


Figure 6 the usefulness of social media as a media to learn English

Figure 6 Most students agree that social media are very useful as a media to learn English with a percentage of 55.8%. Most of them agree that social media are useful as a media to

learn English with a percentage of 38.5%. Only 3.8% and 1.9% of students chose not useful and not useful at all about the social media as a media to learn English respectively.

7. My purposes of using social media (you may choose more than one option)  
52 jawaban

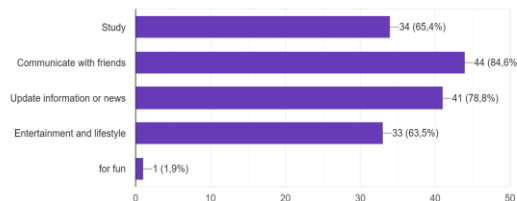


Figure 7 student purposes of using social media

Figure 7 shows that 84.6% of the participants use social media for the purpose of communicating with friends. Likewise, the results indicate that 63.5% of them use social media for entertainment and lifestyle, while the students who use these for study and update information or news are 65.4% and 78.8% respectively. The remaining 1.9% reported that they use social media for fun.

8. Language setting of my social media account is generally  
52 jawaban

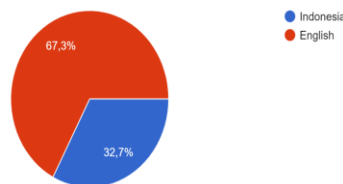


Figure 8 Language setting of student social media account generally

Figure 8 the result indicated that the majority of the participants use English language for the language setting of their social media account with the percentage 67.3%, while 32.7% of them use Indonesia language

9. I have friends from other countries  
52 jawaban

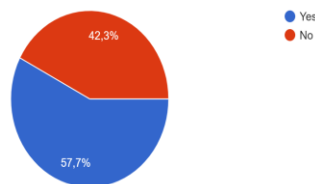


Figure 9 student have friends from other countries

Figure 9 show the students have friend from the other countries with the 57.7% and the other participants don't have any friends from the other countries with the 42.3%.

Table 1 The percentage result second part of the student' perception

No/Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10 Social media is easy for me to use for learning English.	32.7% (17)	57.7% (30)	3.8% (2)	5.8% (3)
11 I find learning English using Social Media fun and pleasing.	23.1% (12)	69.2% (36)	5.8% (3)	1.9% (1)
12 Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp) can positively affect my learning of English.	34.6% (18)	51.9% (27)	7.7% (4)	5.8% (3)
13 Social media affects my physical health	7.7% (4)	50% (26)	36.5% (19)	5.8 % (3)
14 Social media affects my mental health	5.8% (3)	53.8% (28)	36.5% (19)	3.8% (2)
15 Social media increases my confidence toward EFL learning.	21.2% (11)	67.3% (35)	11.5% (6)	0% (0)
16 Social media give me a positive impact on listening, reading, writing and speaking skill.	26.9% (14)	65.4% (34)	7.7% (4)	0% (0)
17 My personal data are prone to be misused/abused by social media.	1.9% (1)	50% (26)	44.2% (23)	3.8% (2)
18 I have a problem with signal, gadget, and mobile data.	1.9% (1)	38.5% (20)	53.8% (28)	5.8% (3)
19 I often spend much time on social media.	23.1% (12)	55.8% (29)	13.5% (7)	7.7% (4)

The percentage of students' perception from the questionnaire shows that most student agree that social media are easy for them to use for learning English with the percentage is 57.7%, there are seventeen students chose strongly agree with percentage 32.7%, then in option disagree there are 2 students with the percentage 3.8%, and there 3 students that choose option strongly disagree with the percentage 5.8%.

In the option agree with the statement I find learning English use social media fun and pleasing the higher percentage is 69.2%, furthermore 23.1% percentage in option strongly agree with 12 voters, there is one student vote strongly disagree with the percentage 1.9%, another student chose to disagree with the percentage 5.8%.

Furthermore, most students agree with the statement "Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp) can positively affect my learning of English" and the percentage is 51.9%. There are 18 students chose strongly agree with the percentage of 34.6% and 4 students with 7.7% choose the option to disagree. Only 3 students chose the option and strongly disagree with the percentage of 5.8%.

In addition, most students agree with the statement "social media affect my physical health". The percentage is 50%. Another student with the percentage disagrees with that statement. Then, the percentage of 7.7% chose the option strongly agreed with the 4 voters. The smallest percentage in this statement is 5.8% on the option strongly disagree with 3 voters.

Then, most students chose to agree with the statement "social media affect my mental health" and the percentage is

53.8%. 19 students chose to disagree with the percentage of 36.5%. There are 3 students and 2 students chose strongly agree and strongly disagree with the percentage of 5.8% and 3.8% respectively.

Students agree about social media increases their confidence toward EFL learning with the percentage 67.3%, then there are 11 students chose strongly agree with the percentage 21.2% and only 6 students chose disagree with the percentage 11.5%, the smallest vote in the option strongly disagree with the percentage 0%.

In the statement "social media give me a positive impact on listening, reading, writing and speaking", most students choose the option to agree, which is 65.4%. There are 14 students chose strongly agree with the percentage of 26.9% of the options disagree. There are 4 voters with the percentage of 7.7%, the smallest vote in the option strongly disagrees with the percentage of 0%.

Most students who chose the option agree in this statement "My personal data is prone to be misused/abused by social media" with a percentage of 50%. Most students chose to disagree with the percentage of 44.2%, and only 2 students and 1 student chose to strongly disagree and strongly agree with the percentage of 3.8% and 1.9% respectively.

Then, the higher percentage is 53.8% in option disagree with the statement "I have a problem with signal, gadget, and mobile data". There were 20 students who chose to agree with the percentage of 38.5%. Then, in the option, strongly disagree there are 3 students with the percentage 5.8% and only 1 student chose strongly agree with 1.9% percentage.

In the last statement, "I often spend too much time on social media". Most students choose to agree that the percentage is 55.8%. In option strongly agree there are 23.1% percentage of the 29 voters, then the 7 students chose to disagree with the percentage 13.5%, and only 4 students chose strongly disagree with the percentage 7.7%.

## Discussion

This study attempted to explore the use of social media for learning English based on students' perception. It was found in the study that students spend more time using social media. It has become a daily habit among them. Further, students have positive perception of the use of social media for learning English. They choose YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp as the most social media applications for learning English.

The English exposure on social media comes in an environment where the students are interacting with native speakers, reading English news or lesson posted by someone, and watching English videos. The activities may positively affect their language development as they can practice their language meaningfully.

Additionally, students' responses to the questionnaire and interview in this study indicate that they are comfortable and relax while learning English on social media. Social media allows students to access English content in various forms such as text, songs, films, and even games. These various contents can be easily accessed by using any gadgets. This makes social media very flexible to be used by different individuals with different needs, potency and desires (Anwas et al., 2020). Moreover, as social media provides virtual

interaction, it reduces students' anxiety because of the enjoyable experiences provided by the media (Makodamayanti et al., 2020). As a result, learners become confident to learn and practice their English anytime and anywhere.

Another thing should be noted, students in this study agree that the features of social media motivate them to practice their English outside the classroom. The finding highlights the idea of using social media as informal language learning to supplement English learning process at school.

Regarding the explanation previously, those researchers believe that social media has many positive effects on our life. It also happens in the education field. Many studies showed the positive influence of social media in English classroom. Akram and Kumar (2018) stated that students could use social media as a socializing platform where they can exchange ideas and learn new things from many sources and developing their skills for their future. Social media are also effective ways to increase students' engagement and motivation. Some introverted students are hard to participate in the class but may feel comfortable expressing themselves on social media (Ivala & Gachago, 2016). On the other hand, some students get bored quickly in the classroom due to the materials not always exciting or relevant. Social media tools can be used to design learning activities socially and interactively, such as discussion, debate, group projects, etc. These various learning activities would enable students to learn from each other and interact with other people beyond the school walls (Faizi et al., 2013). To sum up, social media is helpful for us in many aspects. One of them is the education field. Many features of social media can be used by educators to make a learning process more creative, relevant, and efficient. Social media also allows students to collaborate, express themselves freely, and enhance their engagement and motivation to learn inside and outside school.

Jalal (2012) state challenges while using social networking face by students; first is privacy. It is has become the most concerning thing while using social media because they still do not know what their individuals' information used for. Second is real friendship. Through social media, especially social networking sites, a person has a lot of friends but the quality of these friendships is not always real. Meanwhile, data on these social media sites for a person is not always 100% honest and reliable, so there is equal potential to abuse this data for bad deeds. Having many friends through social networking sites is likely to be more harmful than good, and this will affect the use of social media in education. The last is misinformation. Students face some difficulty through social media in expressing their thoughts in writing, as many students prefer to express their ideas orally which they have done for many years through their study. Online learning requires students to use writing to express their ideas and opinions. However, in online environment, students do not perceive physical signs like inflection, body language, and tone which they usually have in face-to-face learning. Moreover, social media can be a distraction for learning. In a study conducted by Altam (2020), students confessed that they waste their time while using social media in general, because learners do not feel the passage of time when using social media especially when chatting with friends.

## CONCLUSION

Based on research findings and discussions in the third semester by English Department students at the University of Mataram, the conclusions are:

The kinds of social media that students often use include YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as the most social media applications for learning English. Those applications are chosen because of their popularity, which affords an endless supply of English input to them.

Regarding the way students use social media to learn English, students use social media to learn English by communicating with their friends to practice their language or join the English group from their account, watching videos, listening to songs in English, and they also follow some accounts to learn English.

Students perceive using social media positive perception and negative perception. A positive perception is that students assume social media are helpful and make it easy to learn English because social media are easy to access anywhere and everywhere. The negative perception is that a student thinks social media are effective, but sometimes he gets false information, and he thinks a teacher is a better learner for learning English than social media.

Most students think the advantages of using social media to learn English is that social media are easy to access and, through social media, students can improve their English skills, especially vocabulary, grammar, etc. The challenges are that it is easy to get false information from social media, and sometimes there is a lot of distracting content that makes students forget about their original goal when they learn.

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