

THE STRATEGIES OF LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA IN INFORMAL DIGITAL LEARNING OF ENGLISH (IDLE) IN UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract

This research explores the ways of students' learning English with social media using a qualitative approach with single case study design. This research aims to identify the students' experiences and strategies in learning English using social media in outside of formal learning. Research was conducted on two of eighth semester students in the Islamic University of Malang. The instrument in collecting data are interviews and documents analysis in the form of screenshot photos. The findings showed that students are known to learn languages using social media support that is more flexible and interactive, which greatly help students in their educational process. Furthermore, the students' strategies of learning English using social media have found in several ways. The main strategies found are setting goals, finding relevant content for learning, and managing users' language settings. Those findings can help students to use social media as an online platform that useful for their learning. However, despite these strategies, there are still challenges that need to be addressed in order to fully maximize the potential of social media in the language learning process. the next researcher may consider the result of this study. Thus, they can conduct longitudinal studies to understand the long-term impact of social media use in informal English learning. This research only provides a glimpse of the experiences and strategies used by students.

Kata kunci: English Language Learning, Social Media, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

The improvement of social networks and technological progress go hand in hand. Social media includes a vital and transformative role in many sectors function in the modern era, particularly in the fields of communication, business practices, and education (Williams, 2020). As stated in Singh and Guruprasad (2019), social media makes easier to interact with a large number of people, expanding social circles, and making distance and time less of an issue. It also makes it easier to express oneself, and information can be disseminated quickly and at a lower cost. Likewise, social media make knowledge sharing easy and invisible for the individual to partake their studies and gests, unite, and produce knowledge, whether it grounded operations include online converse forums, wikis, and blogs (Mondahl & Razmerita, 2014).

Nowadays, this is simpler for language learners to associate with local speakers of the language they are learned utilizing their social media with web, which can offer assistance progress their language abilities. The rise of the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) has made it easier for people all over the world to communicate with one another and this has taken language instruction to a new level (Bahrani & Sim, 2012). Increasingly, social media is used a lot in education to help students learn in their own way. Students are known as digital natives since they

have been raised using computers, video games, digital music players, video cameras, cell phones, and other digital tools (Prensky, 2001) as stated in (Karjo, 2020). They want instant feedback, to have a say in their education, and are used to receiving information quickly and multitasking. It makes a social media as media digital become a popular tool for language learning among students. Thus, social media can be really good for learning (Karjo, 2020).

Social media are very important for both learning at school and learning outside of school. Digital media can help people learn informally by giving them access to information and resources that they do not get from regular ways (Degner et al., 2022). In addition, digital media allows students to share information using pictures, sounds, and a mix of virtual and real worlds (Davis, 2016). It allows students to learn informally and communicate with others. Informal learning is a style of learning where casual learning happens without a plan, but it is a big and important part of how people learn. In contrast, formal language learning is organized, intentional, and happens in school (Bahrani & Sim, 2012). To become successful self-regulated learners, students may require practice. In addition, they may be interested in having more freedom from the traditional way of teaching, in which the teacher has full control, so that they can use the language in their daily lives (Altawil, 2016).

According to what other studies have found, students learning English as a second language view informal digital learning of English (IDLE) such as engaging in gaming, watching videos on YouTube, and utilizing social networking platforms positively. This form of learning aids in improving their English proficiency and boosting their confidence (Anggraini et al., 2022). All students prefer watching videos and listening to English songs on YouTube for informal language learning. As stated in Nissak et al. (2020), the advancement of digital technology such as the internet and worldwide web has made it possible to utilize YouTube for language learning. Smartphones are ideal for idle moments due to their portability and user-friendly features.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the use of social media as learning digital tools outside formal learning. Related to Al Arif (2019) reported that students often turn to Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as resources for improving their English skills. These are the most popular social media platforms for learning. The students think that using social media can help them get better at English. Furthermore, Ismail et al. (2019) reveals that most of students perceived social media as highly beneficial, convenient, and cost-effective. They also mentioned that social media can be accessed everywhere, anytime, and every day, which makes it convenient for language learning. Other study on Malaysian university students, students can improve their writing, reading, communication, and learning skills through the use of social media (Ismail & Shafie, 2019). Moreover, Slim and Hafedh (2019) explore how social media can help you learn new words and improve your vocabulary skills. Moreover, students can build networks with native speakers and communicate with them to improve their language skills. However, social media can be bad for learning languages because people use slang and short words. This might make it harder for students to read and write well (Zhou, 2022).

METHOD

This research aims to explore the strategies in learning English using social media, employing a qualitative approach using single case study design. A single case study emphasizes a detailed analysis of a particular unit, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the setting to understand the case. It stated in Gustafsson (2017) that single case study as an intensive study focused on a specific person, group of people, or unit, with the aim of generalizing findings over several units. The researcher used single case study to investigate students' experiences in utilizing social media for learning outside the classroom and also students' strategies of learning English using social media.

The research was conducted at private university in East Java, Indonesia, specifically at Islamic University of Malang. The participant in this study are students who are learning English as a foreign language at a private university in Malang, Indonesia. In this study, the researcher chooses two students on purpose who have been learning English through social media. The students chosen based on their English language as seen in active communication in class or outside the classroom and social media users in their daily lives and English language learning.

Researchers used an open-ended interview and documents analysis in this research. In this way, researchers got in-depth information by listening to the participants' stories to collect information about their experiences in learning using social media and strategies. The interview questions in this study adapted from a thesis by (Al Arif, 2019). However, not all questions used in this study, the main questions only used based on the needs of this research. Thus, from 11 questions in Arif' thesis, only 7 questions used and developed to ask. Besides that, the total number of interview questions in this study were 11 questions, where 4 of them were modifications and additions to questions about learning strategies using social media from researchers who had been validated by the advisor. Researcher also added documents that is screenshot photo of the student activity in using social media for learning from their phone to get more data sources and find out more information of students experiences and strategies in learning English using social media in their learning process outside formal learning.

In collecting data, Participants offered extensive and contextual descriptions of events during the interviews. Furthermore, in this study, each participant's interviewed lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted using Indonesian as participant's first language to make participant freely to respond with the information. The interviews were conducted via voice note on WhatsApp to maximize the participant's limited time. In addition, data collection through document analysis involved a systematic approach to reviewing and interpreting existing documents relevant to the case.

After collecting data, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke, (2014) which consisted of six themes as: Familiarizing yourself with the data (transcribing audio and collecting documents from participants, reading trough the text and findings initial notes), Generating initial codes (highlighting section of my transcript of data, writing down the code that found in the data), Searching for themes Organizing codes into possible categories of theme related with the objectives of this study), Reviewing themes (returned to the data set and compare the themes against), Defining and naming themes (Named the themes by giving each theme a concise and understandable name) then Producing the report (analysis of selected extracts, examining specific passages, connecting the findings to the research question and existing literature, and creating a formal report of the analysis).

Assuring the accuracy and reliability of the findings is essential. The researcher used member checking to validate the findings, by asking participants to confirm the accuracy of their reports. This process involved presenting the results to the participants and getting feedback from them regarding the accuracy of the reports. In addition, the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the research results and had the results reviewed by an expert lecturer specializing in professional identity development. This comprehensive review ensured the relevance and coherence of the research findings.

FINDINGS

1. What are the Students' Experiences in Utilizing Social Media for Learning Outside of Classroom in University Level?

The research found that there are several points in contribute to the students' experiences in learning English using social media including social media platform, learning flexibility, and social media for learning English.

Social Media Platform

Data collected from interviews showed that apps such as Google Meet, YouTube, Instagram Live, Zoom, Duolingo, and TikTok are their favorite tools for learning. Interviews were conducted for a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and preferences of these digital learning tools. (WD) mentioned that he often uses several apps to support his learning process. These include Google Meet, YouTube, Instagram Live, and Zoom.

"Google Meet or YouTube with YouTube live or Instagram live or Zoom there are even 4 applications that I often use. I like it because there are many features in it that make it easy for us to load the learning process well" WD said.

Learning Flexibility

SH noted that his study pattern tends to be flexible and unscheduled, also this flexibility exemplified by the short but intense duration of study, this flexibility not only increases efficiency in learning but also gives students the freedom to adjust their learning process to the situation and conditions.

As mentioned by SH: " Not for sure, but usually when I want to study, it's not certain, at most 20 minutes, after that, I'm already bored, so that's it."

Social Media for English Learning

Based on data collected through interviews, it is evident that social media, particularly YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Duolingo, plays a significant role in the English language learning process. WD found that YouTube is one of the social media that provides a lot of varied content or learning features, ranging from listening to songs, learning videos, and also text stories that can help in developing skills, writing, listening, grammar, and reading.

"Most of the social media that I use to learn English is YouTube, because there is a lot of content or tools that we can use. Starting from listening to songs, learning videos such as grammar, and others. That's what I often use. So, I often learn listening, grammar, and sometimes also reading stories. I also often comment on the comment section. All skills can be searched on YouTube and there is everything," said WD.

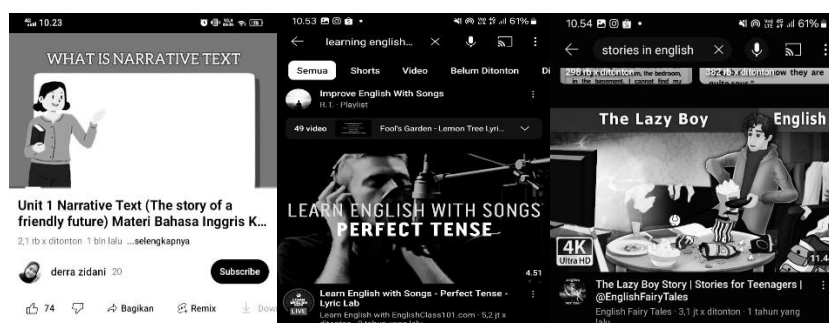


Figure 4.1 YouTube Content

Figure 4.1 explains the students' activity in English learning using YouTube. Student learning through English content that is available in YouTube such as reading English stories, listening English song, and finding several grammar materials in there. Thus, one respondent SH, a student who started using the Duolingo app in junior high school, initially chose the platform because it was perceived as an educational game that could effectively increase English vocabulary.

SH explained, "When I was in junior high school at the beginning of using the Duolingo application, it was because using it was fun like playing a game and then why I used Duolingo was because I wanted to increase my vocabulary".

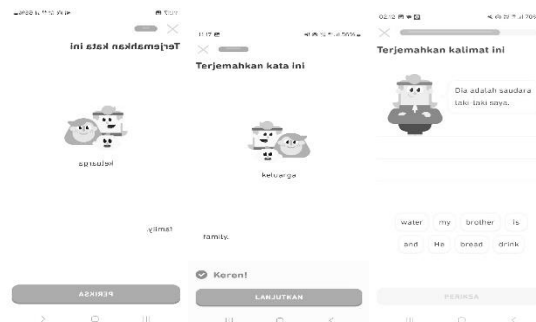


Figure 4.2 Games in Duolingo

Figure 4.2 explains the activities in learning English using Duolingo, where students find it easy to understand English learning and get a lot of new vocabulary by using games to learn. Furthermore, SH switched to using social media such as Instagram and TikTok. According to SH, the English content on these two platforms is very helpful in improving reading skills in English.

"For social media applications, I use Instagram, there are many English quotes on Instagram, so I learn to read English text from the quotes on Instagram, usually if there are sentences or vocabulary that I don't know, I open Google Translate or DeepL Translate to translate sentences or words that I don't know from the quotes on Instagram," said SH.



Figure 4.3 TikTok, Instagram and Google Translate pages

Figure 4.3 are pictures where students learn new vocabulary on the TikTok and Instagram Page which they then look up the meaning to Google Translate to understand the meaning of the sentence they found.

SH explained, "Usually on TikTok there are also quotes and then there are also videos like the lectures of from foreign Ustadz using English, well usually I learn from that too from the

contents of the lectures delivered in the video using English, I learn listening there too,” WD said. From this statement, it can be seen that Instagram provides relevant English text resources for further development of reading and vocabulary comprehension.

2. What are the Students’ Strategies of Learning English Using Social Media?

According to the participants’ statement during the interview, to tackle the effective ways in learning English using social media, they have developed their own strategies. The strategies are mentioned as setting the learning goals, finding relevant content for learning and managing user’s language setting.

Settings the learning goals

One of the main strategies often mentioned is setting clear learning goals when using social media as a learning tool. This is supported by statements from several students where setting the goals in learning can influence a student's behavior in carrying out an activity.

“Like I use TikTok now. So usually if I want to improve my listening, I learn listening. I open TikTok, then open a search that is like looking for something I can listen to for listening,” said one of the interviewees, SH.

From the statement above, students argue that without clear goals, the use of social media will be less effective and tend to lead to less productive activities. It can be seen that SH set specific goals to improve her listening skills by finding appropriate content on TikTok. This shows that clear goal setting helps students direct the use of social media for more academic and educational purposes.

Finding relevant content for learning

Students, like those interviewed in this study, showed a tendency to seek out content that supports their English language learning. They reported that by following specific accounts and selecting specific videos, they were able to create a rich learning environment through social media. This is one of the effective strategies in learning English using social media.

“I also use TikTok. Usually on TikTok there are also quotes and then there are also videos like a lot in my FYP,” she said. “I often look for English videos so that the contents of my TikTok homepage also have a lot of English content that appears,” added SH.

‘Yes, like the Instagram app, there are a lot of English reels uploaded by native speaker, many Instagram accounts also share tips about English, and others. When they follow those accounts they will get English lesson content without searching anymore and it can be a strategy to learn English comfortably,” added WD

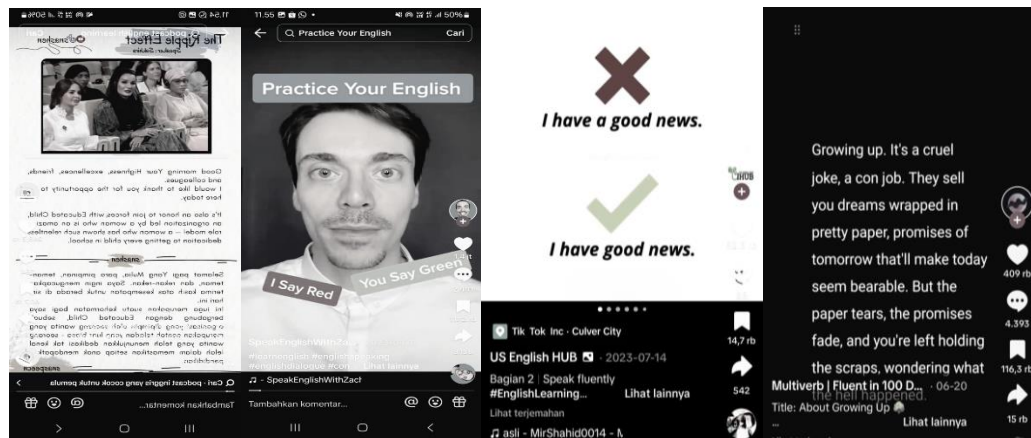


Figure 4.4 Relevant English content for learning in social media

Figure 4.4 describes some social media content related to English language learning that students might search for and follow. The words above emphasize that by following relevant accounts, students can get tips, tricks, and even interact with content uploaded by native English speakers.

Managing user's language setting

Furthermore, language customization on devices and social media platforms is also a significant strategy implemented. SH mentioned that changing the language setting on her phone to English greatly influenced the improvement of her English skills.

SH said in interview: "I changed the language settings on my cellphone to English and it had an effect on me. I got used to English words by itself"

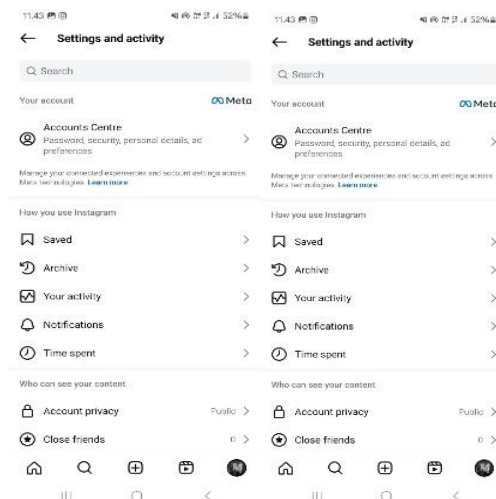


Figure 4.5 Language setting on phone and social media

Figure 4.5 explains the captured of language setting in their phone in English where this makes users more familiar with English in their daily lives, increasing exposure to vocabulary and expressions that may not be found in formal learning contexts.

DISCUSSION

Based on research results, the applications most often used by students for distance learning are Google Meet, YouTube, Instagram Live, Zoom, Duolingo, and TikTok. Students tend to take advantage of the various features of these applications to get a more interactive learning experience that suits their personal needs. It is stated in Farihah and Umamah (2021) that the increased use of mobile technology for English language acquisition is triggered by the social influence of utilizing mobile devices. Furthermore, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are applications offer rich learning resources with video content that can be accessed at any time. This is in line with the opinion of Muftah (2023) who stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram have helped people learn English. Other platform is Duolingo, this application is as a gamification-based language learning app, offers a fun and interactive approach to learning English. Students can learn through a series of exercises and games designed to improve various aspects of language skills such as vocabulary, grammar and listening comprehension (Shortt et al., 2021). The flexibility offered by online learning systems is crucial in informal learning contexts as it allows students to learn at their own pace and in a comfortable environment. This personalized approach to learning can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the learning process. In addition, online learning provides a safe and convenient platform for students to continue their education using the latest technology from the comfort of their homes (Farihah & Umamah, 2021). Muftah (2023) emphasized that the control over the own learning process provided by social media makes students more interested and motivated in learning English.

In the process of learning social media, students have their own ways to maximize the use of social media on it such as setting the learning goals, finding relevant content for learning and managing language setting on their phone. Setting the learning goals is a very important first step in an effective learning process. Students who set clear goals tend to have higher motivation and clearer direction in their efforts to improve their English skills. This change in motivation can be explained through the theory of autonomy proposed by Ofosu-Ampong et al. (2021), where it refers to an individual's need to feel in control of their actions and decisions. This is in line with statement from Ismiatun and Suhartoyo (2022) that what various individuals to engage with, diverse technologies utilized, and varying levels of proficiency in their usage, as each student will demonstrate the application of social learning tactics in a unique manner across both asynchronous and synchronous learning settings. Next way is finding relevant content for learning. These findings show that students who follow educational accounts regularly receive new information in a form that is easy to digest and relevant to their daily lives. It is stated in Hamat and Hassan (2019) research which states that university students use social media to read and share English content, talk to native speakers, and join language-focused online groups. Finally, managing user's language settings is another important strategy. By changing these settings, students are exposed to English in everyday situations, which helps to reinforce continuous language learning and familiarization. This is in accordance with the theory put forward by Thorne and Smith (2011), where setting up devices and social media platforms in English can play a key role in improving everyday English vocabulary and expressions for non-native speakers.

Through all these findings, it can be seen that social media provides a rich and dynamic learning environment where language is used naturally. Here educational accounts on social media such as Instagram Live, YouTube, Duolingo and TikTok, take users into a variety of linguistic environments, providing practical examples of the use of vocabulary and grammar that are immediately applicable. This is contrast with study from Safitri et al. (2022) where the students also use various strategies such as selecting interesting content that matches their interests, participating in discussions with peers or native speakers to improve their communication skill. Also another study from Al Arif (2019), which shows that participation in online discussions and language practice through social media can help students feel more interested in learning English. The results

of this study confirm that social media not only increases students' interest in learning English, but also gives them control over their own learning process. In this case, quotes and short videos posted by educational accounts provide varied and interesting learning material, so that students are more motivated to learn new vocabulary and grammar. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of social media as an informal learning tool is able to create a more interesting learning environment and can be adapted to students' needs and interests.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research results, social media has found as a good tool for learning English. There are several social media platforms that effect on students English learning process such as Google Meet, YouTube, Instagram Live, Zoom, Duolingo, and TikTok. This platform supports more flexible and interactive learning. It offers rich video learning content, quotes, and English song that can be accessed at any time, which helps improve your understanding of English. Furthermore, students' strategies of learning English using social media have found in several ways. The strategies found are setting goals, finding relevant content for learning, and managing users' language settings. Therefore, this research emphasizes the importance of a diversity of digital applications and social media features in supporting more flexible and interactive English language learning. These strategies help to create a dynamic and adaptive learning environment, enabling the integration of technology and social media in learning strategies that can maximize students' learning potential.

Suggestion for future researcher regarding the result of this study, to improve the generalizability of the results, future researchers could consider enlarging the scope of this study by incorporating a wider and more diverse sample and using different research methods. This aims to make the variety of data obtained richer and provide a more comprehensive picture of strategies for using social media in informal learning in various university contexts. Second, the future researcher should conduct longitudinal studies to understand the long-term impact of social media use in informal English learning. This research only provides a glimpse of the experiences and strategies used by students; however, long-term studies can reveal significant changes and developments in motivation, academic performance, and language acquisition.

For teacher, to improve the quality of student ability in English using social media, teachers are advised the use of social media in English language learning by directing students to credible and relevant educational accounts. teachers should encourage students to actively participate in online discussions and use social media platforms for contextualized language practice. Teachers should create a structured and balanced learning schedule between formal academic activities and informal learning through social media.

For students, it suggested that students should continue to innovate in their learning process using social media applications and features that are dynamic and appropriate to their individual learning needs. Students also should be able to make good use of their social media platforms in order to navigate the vast amount of information available on social media platforms. Student need to make sure the content that they follow is relevant and useful for learning.

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