

EXPLORING THE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EFL COMMUNICATION: LECTURERS AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Abstract

This study was a descriptive qualitative study investigating the perceptions of EFL lecturers and students regarding the use of social media in EFL teaching and learning. It involved five lecturers and 67 EFL students of a state-owned university in South Sumatra as its research respondents. Two Likert-scale surveys were used to collect data and the data were analyzed using google form. Research findings showed that social media use in EFL teaching and learning was perceived favourably by both lecturers and students. They agreed that using social media to teach and learn English could help students become more proficient communicators, both in written and spoken forms. Their opinions regarding the usage of social media in EFL instruction may have been influenced by a number of factors, including the digital literacy of the lecturers and their background as educators who saw social media as an integral part of their pedagogy. Students' familiarity with social media platforms may have also played a role in shaping their perceptions. They typically have good thoughts on social media use in EFL classes since they used them regularly in their daily lives and are aware of their benefits.

Keywords: communication skills, lecturers' perception, social media, students' perception

Introduction

These days, the internet is essentially a computer-based tool that allows people to interact with one another and form, offer, or share ideas, information, and images/records with friends and family who live far away. It is anticipated that at this time, the web-based social network will require a lot of proactive and creative work. Universities frequently employ a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and WhatsApp, for their students' educational purposes (Saba, 2022). The practical perceptions of the diverse dynamic users of Facebook, WhatsApp, and other internet-based applications, as well as the consequences of previous analytical study, make this evident. These factors have a significant impact on students' capacity for learning at the school level (Dweikat, 2019).

The majority of minors enrolled in school use a variety of internet-based applications for social interaction, ubiquity, and English language acquisition. Many observers are concerned that excessive use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Skype, might

lead to addiction and lethargy in the most socially liberal countries. Some users of these platforms are even known to be anti-social in real life. Social media use on a daily basis, even for kids or students, can lead to tension when dealing with real life, anxiety when confronting an exam, and a lack of confidence when interacting with others in class (Alsunni & Latif, 2021).

A web-based lifestyle necessitates familiarity or ability in multiple languages in English. It does, however, require specialised work in the four fundamental language skills—speaking, reading, writing, and standardisation. What else genuinely develops English jargon and competency structure? The ability to give EFL students the freedom to try standardising, speaking, and carefully reading is the most crucial component of a web-based living resource for English language acquisition (Cong-Lem, 2018). This works seamlessly whether at home, on the go, or outside.

Taking advantage of advances makes life easier. The internet is one of the most amazing technological developments that has altered the globe, and it has a significant influence. Online tools are used by people for daily tasks like reading the news, communicating with friends, and studying. Individuals or students must deal with electronic correspondence on a regular basis via chat, SMS, and e-mail on mobile devices (tablets, laptops, and smartphones). Social media serves as a platform for interpersonal communication, and online writing enables people to communicate without geographical or temporal restrictions. By means of customary and societal connections, such as family, environmental factors, and circumstances. Additionally, our shared viewpoint, harmony, and meetings are what bind us together (Azadi et al., 2018).

Social media is widely used by students and even instructors, who find it to be an efficient tool for promoting learning. The integration of social media in educational settings has garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Voorn and Kommers (2013) emphasized the importance of utilizing social media to enhance collaborative learning among introvert students in higher education. Their study highlights that introvert students perceive social media as a valuable tool for increasing collaborative learning performance and self-confidence, preferring online communication over face-to-face interactions. This underscores the potential of social media to cater to diverse learning preferences and facilitate more effective communication among students. Shi et al. (2020) delve into the potential drawbacks of excessive social media use among university students, particularly in relation to academic performance. Their study identifies information, communication, and social overloads as key stressors that can lead to technostress and exhaustion, ultimately impacting students' academic outcomes. By shedding light on the negative consequences of social media overload, this research underscores the importance of promoting a balanced approach to technology use in educational settings. Jin (2023) explored the impact of incorporating interactive elements of YouTube within social media-integrated writing activities for EFL learners. The findings reveal that integrating YouTube commenting and engagement can significantly reduce writing anxiety and enhance writing proficiency among EFL students. This highlights the potential of interactive social media platforms to create engaging and effective learning environments for language learners. Alazemi et al. (2023) further extended the discussion by investigating the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) through the Telegram app on academic engagement, emotion regulation, willingness to communicate, and academic well-being among Iranian EFL learners. Their study demonstrates that incorporating social media platforms like Telegram alongside traditional learning management systems can significantly enhance students' academic outcomes and overall well-being.

This research underscores the transformative potential of social media in facilitating language learning beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. In conclusion, the literature review highlights the diverse ways in which social media can be leveraged to enhance oral proficiency development among EFL teachers and students. From facilitating collaborative learning to reducing writing anxiety and enhancing academic engagement, social media offers a myriad of opportunities for innovative language instruction. By embracing the potential of social media platforms in educational settings, EFL practitioners can create more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students.

Looking at the four studies described above, it appears that no study has been conducted to investigate EFL lecturers' and students' perspective on the use of social media to enhance EFL students' communication skill development. It is then the purpose of this study, to investigate how EFL students and lecturers perceive the influence of social media use on the development of EFL students' communication skills. "How do EFL lecturers and students perceive social media as a tool for EFL students' communication proficiency?" was the research question that intrigued this investigation. The results of this study were expected to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the use of social media in EFL instruction and learning to improve the communication abilities of EFL students.

Literature Review

Issues of oral communication in EFL classroom

Issues of oral communication in the EFL classroom have been a topic of interest in recent research studies. Zheng (2019) highlighted the significance of classroom interaction in promoting effective teaching in the EFL classroom. The study focused on Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and found that communication accommodation strategies such as approximation, interpret ability, emotional expression, and interpersonal control were essential for developing interaction between teachers and students. The more accommodation strategies the teacher used, the better the interaction in the classroom was. Al-Obaydi et al. (2024) explored the impact of oral reading intervention on EFL learners in an online classroom. The study revealed a significant difference in reading comprehension test scores between the group that received the reading intervention program and the control group. The findings indicated a negative correlation between reading comprehension scores and anxiety measures, emphasizing the importance of reducing anxiety to improve reading performance in the online foreign language classroom. Chaves-Yuste and de-la Peña (2023) investigated the use of audio podcasts in improving EFL linguistic competence among secondary education students. The study found that the creation and use of podcasts were beneficial for enhancing speaking and listening skills in the EFL classroom. The results supported the hypothesis that podcasts can be an effective tool for improving EFL proficiency among students. Overall, the literature review of the research papers provides valuable insights into the issues of oral communication in the EFL classroom. From the importance of politeness strategies to the impact of technology and interactive tools, these studies offer practical implications for researchers and educators looking to enhance oral communication skills in the EFL classroom.

Technology and learning tools in EFL classroom

The integration of technology and learning tools in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has become a topic of growing interest and importance. The use of technology-enhanced language learning can bring numerous benefits to both teachers and students, but it also poses unique challenges that must be carefully navigated (Kalugina & Tarasevich, 2018).

Incorporating technology into the various stages of language instruction, including planning, lesson delivery, practice and review, assessment, and feedback, can offer significant advantages (Kalugina & Tarasevich, 2018). By leveraging digital tools and resources, teachers can provide students with more authentic and engaging learning experiences, facilitate the development of communicative competence, and foster motivation through creative modes of language expression. However, teachers must recognize that technological tools and supports alone are not the sole solution to helping EFL learners. These tools must be strategically integrated alongside other effective strategies that support language acquisition (Kalugina & Tarasevich, 2018). Accessibility, training, and the alignment of technology and curriculum are among the key obstacles that must be addressed for successful integration (Syathroh et al., 2021).

Social media in EFL teaching

In the contemporary digital era, social media platforms have become an integral part of our daily lives, transcending the realms of mere social interaction and infiltrating various spheres of our existence, including the domain of education. The integration of social media in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has garnered significant attention, as educators seek to harness the potential of these ubiquitous digital tools to enhance the learning experiences of their students (Lau, 2017; Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020).

The systematic review by Ullah et al. (2024) highlighted the effectiveness of social media in improving the speaking skills of ESL learners. The authors emphasize that the adoption of social media platforms in online learning has had a positive impact on students' English language acquisition, as they were able to exploit the advantages of these applications in the classroom to enhance their language skills, capacities, and abilities (Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020). Moreover, the study conducted by Alshehri and Lally (2019) in the Saudi Arabian tertiary context revealed that the majority of the participants utilize social media to enhance their communication skills in English (Mubarak, 2016). The findings suggest that collaborative learning embedded in social media may help improve learning activities, ultimately leading to the success of learning English as a second language (Mubarak, 2016).

In the broader context, the integration of social media in EFL teaching has the potential to facilitate real-time interaction and engagement, mirroring the current trends in the digital world (Allam & Elyas, 2016; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020; Zhou, 2021). In order to help students prepare for the job market of the future, where information is interconnected through technology, teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to bring authentic interactions into the classroom setting (Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022; Mubarak, 2016; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020).

Methodology

Research design and approach of the study

This study was a descriptive qualitative study examining how EFL teachers and students perceived the use of social media to help students improve their oral communication skill. The research aimed to shed light on the potential benefits and drawbacks of integrating social media into the language learning process, particularly in the context of improving students' speaking abilities. Although this study employed Likert-scale questionnaires as its research instruments, it was still a qualitative study. As stated by Coleman et al. (1996), Likert scales can be employed strategically in qualitative research design to measure respondents' attitudes towards a discussed topic.

Research site and respondents

This study was conducted at a state-owned university in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The respondents involved in this study were 67 EFL students and 5 lecturers of the English education study program at the university. They became the respondents in this study since they had taken some subjects related to digital technology such as ICT in ELT, Instructional Design and Media, ICT-based material development, and Management of Digital Class. The five lecturers involved were all the lecturers of those subjects. The detail of the respondents can be seen in Table 1 below

Table 1. *Research respondents*

Respondents	Male	Female	Total
Lecturers	2	3	5
EFL students	12	55	67

Data collection and analysis

The instruments used to collect data in this study was in the form of questionnaires adopted from Arfiyanti (2013). It was Likert-scale questionnaires comprising options from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). There were fifteen questions in the questionnaire for students and nineteen questions in the questionnaire for lecturers to find out how they felt about using social media to help students in the English education study programme improve their oral communication abilities. Each of the questionnaire has three main sections: (1) using social media as a complement to develop oral skills, (2) using social media as a supplement to develop oral skills, and (3) using social media as a violation of oral skills development. All the questionnaires were in the format of Google Forms and the research participants were sent the links in order to participate in giving their perceptions regarding the integration of social media in EFL teaching.

The Likert-scale data of the questionnaires were analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics by a user-friendly online interface offered by Google Forms measuring respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements.

Results

Lecturers' questionnaire

Based on the data seen from Table 2, all of the lecturers had positive perceptions of the impact of social media in developing students' oral communication development. Each of their responses highlighted the above conclusion. All of the lecturers (80% strongly agreed and 20% agreed) agreed with the first statement, which discussed the instance where a lecturer let students to utilise social media for academic purposes. The focus of the second proclamation was social media as a resource for educational purposes for students. In a similar vein, all lecturers (80% strongly agreed, 20% agreed) agreed with the second assertion. The third assertion focused on the ways in which social media might expand and improve interactions between instructors and students. In this case, the statement was supported by all the lecturers (60% of the teachers agreed and 40% of the lecturers strongly agreed).

Table 2. Findings from lecturers' questionnaire

No.	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1.	I give freedom to students to access social media to study.	0 0%	0 0%	1 20%	4 80%
2.	Social media acts as a provider of learning resources for students.	0 0%	0 0%	1 20%	4 80%
3.	Social media can increase the quantity and expand the communication between teachers and students.	0 0%	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%
4.	Students Access social media only when there is an assignment	1 20%	4 80%	0 0%	0 0%
5.	Learning Oral Skills through social media is only addition or support for face-to- face activities	0 0%	1 20%	2 40%	2 40%
6.	There is additional material for English lessons that students can access via social media	0 0%	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%
7.	When accessing social media, students gain knowledge and insight into the oral skills of English subjects	0 0%	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%
8.	I only occasionally use social networksto discuss withstudents	2 40%	3 60%	0 60%	0 0%
9.	I only suggest that students access social media to add oral skills	1 20%	4 80%	0 0%	0 0%
10.	There is already material from social media that is programmed for students to learn English	0 0%	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%
11.	Students can accessEnglish languageenrichment materialsthrough social media	0 0%	0 0%	2 40%	3 60%
12.	Students can accessremedial materialsand English lessonsfrom social media	0 0%	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%
13.	Learning English through social media is to strengthen conventional learning	0 0%	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%
14.	Assignments for English lessons that I give to students can be sent via social media.	0 0%	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%
15.	Some of the teachingmaterials for Englishlessons that I providecan be accessedthrough social media	0 0%	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%

The fourth point emphasises that students should only use social media for school-related purposes. The statement was disputed by every instructor (20% strongly disagreed and 80% disagreed). The fifth statement focused on giving students extra support through social media to improve their spoken communication skills. The majority of the lecturers agreed with the statement—40% agreed and 40% strongly agreed. The sixth comment, which said that students might find English lesson resources on social media, was acknowledged by all of the instructors (60% agreed and 40% strongly agreed). The seventh claim focused on the assumption made by lecturers that when students assess social media, they gain knowledge and understanding of the spoken skills of English courses. With respect to this claim, all lecturers expressed a positive opinion about it (80% agreed, 20% strongly agreed). According to the eighth claim, lecturers occasionally engage students in discussion on social media. This proposition was disputed by all of the lecturers (40% strongly objected and 60% disagreed). They all appeared to view social media as a means of communicating with students in a different way. The lecturers answered the opposing viewpoint on the ninth statement, stating that they solely advised students to use social media to improve their speech abilities (20% strongly disagreed and 80% disagreed).

The tenth statement focuses on the social media resources that are available to help students with their English language learning. Eighty percent of the lecturers agreed with this assumption, and twenty percent strongly agreed. As said in statement eleventh, they also had similar opinions on students having access to English enrichment materials through social media (of which 40% agreed and 60% strongly agreed). As mentioned in the twelfth statement, they also held similar views on the availability of remedial materials and English classes via social media.

The thirteenth point highlights how using social media to study English can support traditional classroom instruction. In accordance to the responses, the statement was agreed upon by all lecturers (80% agreed, and 20% strongly agreed). As mentioned in statement fourteenth, they also shared the notion that they may provide assignments to their students via social media (60 percent agreed and 40 percent strongly agreed). Finally, as indicated in statement sixteenth, they (80% agreed and 20% strongly agreed) also felt similarly about the possibility of social media access for some of the English instructional materials they gave.

Students' questionnaire

Table 3. *Findings from students' questionnaire*

No.	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1.	The teacher gave me the freedom to access social media to develop oral skills	2 3%	0 0%	31 46%	35 51%
2.	Media role as a provider of learning resources	1 1%	0 0%	34 50%	32 47%
3.	The internet can increase the quantity and expand teacher and student communication	1 1%	2 3%	30 44%	37 54%
4.	Learning English through social media to develop students' oral skills	1 1%	3 4%	27 40%	36 53%
5.	There is additional material for English lessons that the writer can access via social media	1 1%	0 0%	34 50%	32 47%

6.	While accessing the internet, the writer gained knowledge and insight into English subjects	1	0	36	30
		1%	0%	53%	44%
7.	I only occasionally use social networks to discuss with the teacher	40	11	17	1
		59%	16%	25%	1%
8.	The teacher only suggests accessing social media to increase oral skills	3	33	5	26
		4%	49%	7%	38%
9.	There is material from social media that English teachers have programmed into learning	1	3	19	43
		1%	4%	28%	63%
10.	I can access English learning enrichment materials through social media	1	1	28	39
		1%	1%	41%	57%
11.	I can access English lesson remedial materials from social media	2	6	16	42
		3%	9%	24%	62%
12.	English lesson assignments from teachers can be sent via social media	1	1	29	37
		1%	1%	43%	54%
13.	The teacher has provided digital English learning resources that have been developed and can be accessed through social media	1	5	18	46
		1%	7%	26%	68%
14.	Social media can replace all teacher functions	19	33	3	19
		28%	49%	4%	28%
15.	All English course assignments from the teacher can be sent via social media	3	7	20	39
		4%	10%	29%	57%

Based on the percentages of students' response as seen in Table 3, a big majority of them seem to be in agreement that social media gave impact on their oral communication development. This evidence can be seen from their response in each item of the questionnaire. The majority of students (46% agreed and another 46% strongly agreed) admitted to agreeing with the freedom given by their teachers to use social media for improving their speaking abilities, according to the percentages of responses to the first statement regarding the teacher allowing them to access it to develop oral skills.

The media's role as a source of instructional resources is emphasized in the second statement. According to the information in the table, nearly every student (50% agreed and 47 strongly agreed) agreed that media plays a role in providing learning resources. The potential of social media to improve engagement and communication between educators and students is highlighted in the third statement. Once more, the majority of students concur with the statement (44% agreed and 54% strongly agreed).

The usage of social media to improve students' oral English language proficiency is the focus of the fourth assertion. The majority of pupils, according to the research (40% agreed and 53% strongly agreed), were in total agreement with this statement. The accessibility of additional English language learning resources for students via social media was the subject of the sixth statement. The majority of students said that they agreed with this statement (50% agreed and 47% strongly agreed).

The sixth claim focuses on how using the internet to learn about English topics can be beneficial for one's education. Based on the results, nearly every student (53% agreed and 44% strongly agreed) said they agreed with the statement. The seventh claim talked about how rarely students utilise social media to connect with their teachers. The majority of students concurred with the assertion that they didn't actually utilise social media for communication with their teachers, as indicated by the findings (59% strongly agreed and 16% agreed). The less forceful recommendation made by the teachers to use social media to enhance oral language proficiency was covered in the eighth statement. According to

the findings, a majority of the students (49% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed) felt that their teachers had simply encouraged and not fully supported their usage of social media as a means of enhancing their communication skills.

The topic of the ninth statement was how English teachers should use social media resources in their lessons. According to the findings, a sizable majority of students (63% strongly agreed and 28% agreed) approved of this approach. The tenth statement talked about the resources for English language learning that were available to students on social media. The findings showed that nearly all of the students agreed with this statement (57% strongly agreed and 41% agreed).

The eleventh point talked about how students might access remedial English education resources on social media. The majority of the students claimed to agreeing with that remark (62% strongly agreed and 24% agreed), according to the statistics. The habit of teachers assigning homework to students via social media during English lessons was covered in the twelfth statement. The findings showed that a significant number of students agreed with this statement (54% strongly agreed and 43% agreed). The thirteenth point emphasises how teachers offer social media-accessible digital materials for English language students. The findings showed that a sizable majority of students agreed with this statement—26% agreed and 68% strongly agreed. The idea that social media would take over all teaching responsibilities was covered in the fourteenth statement. The majority of students disagreed with this assertion, as indicated by the findings, 49% disagreed and 28% strongly disagreed. The practice of teachers assigning homework to pupils via social media for their English classes is highlighted in the sixteenth statement. The findings showed that a sizable portion of students agreed with the statement (57% strongly agreed and 29% agreed).

Discussion

This study sought to understand how EFL lecturers and students felt about using social media to help EFL students in a state-owned university in South Sumatra, Indonesia, study English and develop students' communication skills. Study findings from both surveys above revealed that EFL lecturers and students had a favourable opinion of using social media to help EFL students become more proficient communicators. Almost all positive statements were approved by both lecturers and students. When negative statements were presented, they all disagreed with them. They also shared beliefs with other experts (Mubarak, 2016; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019) that social media helped EFL students enhance their other language skills in addition to their spoken communication skill.

Findings from both surveys also revealed some disparities in the opinions of EFL lecturers and students about the use of social media to improve oral proficiency in the state-owned university's English Language Education study programme. According to Manogaran and Sulaiman (2022) and Allam and Elyas (2016), these differences may have been affected by their backgrounds as lecturers. They considered social media as one of pedagogical approaches in their EFL teaching (Allam & Elyas, 2016). Their opinions regarding the place of technology in language instruction also affected their perception about the use of social media. They may have recognised social media's ability to improve students' motivation and speaking fluency and saw it as a possible supplement to more conventional teaching techniques. Furthermore, social media may have been viewed by educators as a way to offer more engaging and dynamic language learning opportunities (Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020).

EFL students' positive opinions about the use of social media for the development of oral skills were probably shaped by a number of things, including how comfortable and familiar they were with social media platforms, how important they thought social media was for language learning, and how they had previously used social media for language practice (Allam & Elyas, 2016). Social media may have been viewed by students as an additional resource to aid in their language acquisition, providing chances for more practice and exposure to real spoken language (Kelly, 2018; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020).

It is not surprising that there were minor differences between how EFL lecturers and students viewed social media in EFL instruction. They had already used social media and were accustomed to it in their daily lives. They therefore thought that employing social media to improve oral communication skills is a good idea (Lau, 2017). Furthermore, they had become quite dependent on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver instruction in their online courses. They continue to use social media in their online and hybrid course today. In other words, they were all technologically savvy and had a favourable opinion of social media since they understood how it aided in their EFL teaching and learning processes.

All the above discussion make it clear the importance to comprehend these divergent perspectives to improve the integration of social media in language teaching. Lecturers can adapt their strategies to use social media as a successful tool for oral skill development by taking into account the perspectives of both students and lecturers. This will help lecturers close the gap between traditional classroom instruction and digital language learning tools. As the results of this study clearly demonstrate that both EFL lecturers and students have positive opinions about the use of social media in EFL instruction, therefore, EFL lecturers should have included social media in their lesson plans when creating materials for their EFL classes. Apart from diversifying the instructional medium employed, social media can enhance learners' involvement with the language, boost their motivation, and encourage interpersonal relationships (Elverici, 2020; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). EFL instructors should be conscious of the obstacles and difficulties that could either help or hinder learning in online settings, though. Their preparedness and suitable pedagogical strategies are necessary for the incorporation of social media in EFL contexts (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, both EFL lecturers and students seemed to have positive perception about the use of social media in EFL teaching and learning. They shared beliefs that they use of social media in language teaching and learning can improve students' communication skills, both oral and written. Some factors may have affected their perceptions about the use of social media in EFL teaching and learning, such as lecturers' backgrounds who consider social media as one of their pedagogical approaches and their level of digital literacy.

Students' positive perceptions about the use of social media in their EFL learning may have been caused by their familiarity with the social media platforms as they have used them quite often in their daily lives. They considered social media as their language learning resource and the place to practice their oral English communication. Since this study included five lecturers and 67 students from a single study program, its conclusions cannot be applied to a larger setting. Therefore, in order to enable the generalisation of the research findings within a wider context, it is recommended to

conduct additional research with a larger number of lecturers and students from multiple study programs.

Competing interest

The authors confirm that there is no competing interest in conducting this study.

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