Learning English through Social Media: Experiences of EFL Student Teachers at One Islamic University in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Social media use in learning English offers unlimited benefits for English learners as it allows collaboration, communication, and resource sharing among its users. However, there has been little information on EFL student teachers' lived experiences of using social media for learning English, especially in Islamic University in Indonesia. The aim of this study was to delve EFL student teachers' perceived experiences of using social media for learning English. This study employed qualitative inquiry, especially phenomenology. There were 10 pre-service EFL student teachers who voluntarily became participants of the study which were recruited by using purposive sampling. Data collection used interview and documentation. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively with several steps, namely preparing and organizing the data for analysis, exploring and coding the data, building description and themes, representing and reporting qualitative findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings. The findings showed that students employed some ways of learning English through social media. This study also provides some implications for future research, students, and educators.

How to Cite:

INTRODUCTION

The pervasiveness of technology has remarkably brought enermous changes in many fields of life in a positive manner including education realm. Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) argue that education field in all over the world is now obviously experiencing a revolution resulted from the evolving technologies such as the web 2.0 and the arival of web 3.0 which enable students to generate content, exchange thoughts and share knowledge. Generating content, exchanging thoughts, and sharing knowledge can be easily done today with the help of social media. Social media, as a product of technology advancement, offers myriads of advantages when it is incorporated in learning. Chen and Bryer (2012) explain that the open-access social media sites help students to explore more information and experiences than what they would obtain if they are in a closed environment alone.

Social media nowadays are also getting its popular place in higher education context. Kot, Tan, and Dragolea (2017) state that social media use in univeristy context has been a more common topic among researchers and publications since it can serve as an effective approach of collaborative learning in education. Justus (2017)(Justus, 2017) also add that adopting social media, mobile/wireless and Web 2.0 technologies in tertiary education level facilitates student engagement both in local and global context to develop new knowledge through innovative strategies.

Social media itself has received various definitions from experts. Social media can be defined as "a group of Internet-based applications build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition to this, Mubarak (2016) state that any websites or other online platforms, such as social networking or micoblogging which is created by users for having conversations, exchanging ideas, information, and messages, or having social and professional contacts can also be defined as social media.

The adoption of social media for language learning has also been practiced as it offers a great number of advantages. Brick (2012) argue that social media use for learning language enable learners "to share knowledge through peer-reviewed activities and enable them to network internationally through language exchange". He also adds that social networking sites promote learning personalization and autonomy due to unlimited access to the site regardless time. In other words, learners can choose what and how to learn English which match their personal needs by communicating with other users from around the world.

In terms of learning English through social media, Alghasab and Alfadley (2018) explain that social media can foster English learning as it allows its users to participate actively, collaborate and share thoughts, ideas, information and messages to other users. The basic principle of social media, which is social interaction among users, goes together with language theory (i.e: from cognitive thory to socio-cultural theory), which puts emphasis on collaboration and social interaction in developing knowledge. Using this theoritical assumption, social media can be used as tool to learn English. In addition, in a study conducted by Ismail et al. (2018) in Indonesia, students reported that using social media as a means of English learning offered them numerous learning sources and an easy accessibility regardless of time and places. Furthermore, Depew (2011) suggests that social media can promote power of speech as it users can have online talk about numerous topics with native and other second language speakers.

A review of the literature shows that many quantitative studies have been conducted on the use of social media in educational field (Sari, Hayati, and Suganda 2019; Sakkir, Rahman, and Salija 2016; Al-Jarrah et al. 2019; Sivagnanam and Yunus 2020; Anwas et al. 2020). The findings of these quantitative studies indicate that social media can be used for learning English. In this respect, Chen and Bryer (2012) argue that understanding what individuals do on social networking sites is a potentially valuable information source for teachers and researchers. Alnujaidi (2017) also suggests that a research on how students use their social networking sites in various educational levels and informal learning context should be done. In this respect, there has be little research conducted using qualitative inquiry which investigates lived experiences of social media users for learning English, especially in higher education level in South Sumatera, Indonesia. This research gap invited us to conduct this current study to have deeper understanding of the unique, in-depth, rich, and individualistic lived experiences of EFL student teachers in Indonesian context with regard to the social phenomenon of how the EFL student teachers use their social media for learning English . Therefore, the research question of this present qualitative study is: "What are EFL student teachers' perceived experiences of using social media for learning English?".

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Social Media

As social media has brought remarkable changes in many sectors of life including education, many experts try to define what social media is. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) social media is a web-based platform which offers its users chances to develop social networks and connections among other users who have similar backgrounds, interest, activities, and connections. Ezeah, Azogwa, and Edogor (2013) describe social media as a tool for modern communication which offers interactive features through which one user builds conncetions to ther users to share thought, experiences, images, messages and information of common interest. Mubarak (2016) adds that any websites or other online platforms, such as social networking or micoblogging which is created by users for having conversations, exchanging ideas, information, and messages, or having social and professional contacts can also be defined as social media.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) has made a classification of social media. Regarding social presence and media richness, platforms such as collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia) and blogs score lowest due to their text-based nature, and hence they offers a relatively simple exchange. On the next level are content communities (e.g., YouTube) and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) which these platforms allow for text-based communication, which enable its users to post images, videos, and other forms of media. On the highest level are virtual game and social worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft, Second Life), which try to imitate all features of face-to-face interactions in a virtual context. Concering self-presentation and self-disclosure, blogs usually have higher score than collaborative projects, as the latter is specific content domains. Similary, social networking sites facilitate more self-disclosure than content communities. Finally, virtual social worlds necessitate a higher level of self-disclosure than virtual game worlds, as the latter use strict rules that make users to act in a particular way (e.g., as warriors in an imaginary fantasy land).

Table 1. Classification of Social Media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure

		Social presence/media richness		
		Low	*Medium*	*High*
Self-presentation/ self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)	Virtual social world (e.g. Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g. YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)

Social Media Use in Education Context

There have been many literature reviews documenting the use of social media in education realm. Social media offers a platform which enable people to communicate by exchanging messages, which can also be used by people in academic settings to send and receive information and knowledge (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media platforms have the ability to build global network for academic communities as social media platforms offer direct communcation and collaboration among users. These features of communication and collaboration among people in education settings can create collaborative learning which is highlighted by social constructivism theory and computer-mediated learning (CMC) perspectives. Arshad and Akram (2018) explains that social constructivist theory emphasize the social interaction and collaboration while CMC stresses on pervasiveness without place limitation. Thus, to create a useful collaborative learning experience, social communities of practice through collaborative learning environment can be provided with the integration of social media platforms. In a study carried out by Omekwu, Eke, and Odoh (2014), undergraduates in Nigeria agreed that there are some positive sides of using social media, which encourages online meeting with co-research scholar; self-esteem and wellbeing; research and learning; interpersonal relationship; web reading and writing skills etc. It was reported that students, through social media, were able to communicate with friends, watch movies, talk about national issues like politics, economy and religious topics, and do academic purposes.

Social Media Use for Learning English

Language is used by human beings to communicate among each other. In learning English, one has to practice using it continuously by communicating with other people in English either in written form or in spoken form. Practicing English can be done by using social media as people from all over the world can communicate regardless time and geographical matter. Nasrullah and Khan (2019) in their study reported that students beleived by using social media, they noticed some improvement on their communication skills and they could have conversation with other people at any time. In addition students are in favor of using social media as it helps them learn to improve their English skills due the fact that it is accessible and handy (Ismail et al., 2018).

The use of social media can facilitate its users to develop four English skills. For the listening skill, Anwas et al. (2020) in their study reported that students' frequency in accessing English contents on social media had positive and significant correlation to their listening skill. For reading skill, Looi and Yusop (2011) identify the potential use of social networking sites in enhancing reading skill among young adult EFL learners as social networking sites encourage positive attitudes and perceptions, increase learners'

performance, and develop sense of community and enangement among learners. In addition, Min (2015), in his study, conclude "interactive English reading community can motivate students to read, improve their reading skills, and thus develop a new SNS-aided English reading model for English learners". For writing skill, Sakkir et al. (2016) in their study found that the majority of students showed a positive attitude toward and a willingness to use social media in the writing classroom. Al-Jarrah et al. (2019) also conclude that social media play a dominant role in developing writing performance of English language at school level. The use of social media in developing English language writing is helpful as social media allows English learners to learn new vocabulary and to enhance their writing skills. The last, for speaking skill, Anwas et al. (2020) in their study reported the students' frequency in accessing English contents on social media are correlated positively and significantly to their speaking skill. They add that "practicing speaking by using social media is very practical to be done since social media has a wide range of audiovisual contents" and might reduce the effects of psychological factors on speaking, as reported by Juhana (2012), such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation that might hinder students to speak English in class.

METHOD

Research Design

In this research, we employed a qualitative inquiry for the purpose of our study, which was to probe the pre-service EFL teachers' perceived experiences of using social media for learning English. Cresswell (2012) explains that a qualitative research is best used for answering a research problem which the literature might present little information about the phenomenon of the study and it requires more exploration to learn more about the participants.

According to Locke (1989 as cited in Alizadeh 2019), selecting a research method is based on the research aims and questions. As this research aims were to delve pre-service EFL teachers' lived experiences in using social media for learning, and the research question was what are the EFL student teachers' lived experiences in using social media for learning English, we adopted phenomenological study as the research design. According to Groenewald (2004) and Creswell (2006) as cited in Pecay (2017) phenomenology is used "to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each respondent by asking subjects to describe their experiences as they perceive them". In this present study, different EFL student teachers might have different lived experiences of using social media for learning English, so that the phenomenological study can facilitate to reveal the trends and patterns of their responses.

Research Site and Participants

An English teacher education program in a state Islamic university in South Sumatera, Indonesia, was the site for this current study. In a phenomenological study, the data collection does not require a large number of participants, but it involves an in-depth investigation of human experience. Nonetheless, a phenomenological study requires participants who experiences the investigated phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, Cresswell (2012) suggests that it is crucial to describe the meaning of the participants' lived experiences of phenomenon under study by carrying out in-depth interviews with 5 to 25

participants. In this current study, the aim was to reveal Indonesian EFL student teachers' experiences in using social media for learning English. Thus, purposive sampling was used. To obtain the participants at this research site, one of the lecturers informed the purpose of the study to students who were at least in their fifth semester through WA group and asked those who had more experience in using media social for learning English to be a voluntary participant. In this study, we focused on the third-year EFL student teachers as they had spent more time to learn English and passed their courses on English skills. In addition, we chose the third-year EFL student teachers since we had access to them. Among these students, 10 students who met the research criteria voluntarily contacted us as they are willing to participate in this qualitative inquiry. In this study, we created pseudonyms for the 10 partcipants, namely from ST-1 to ST-10 to conceal their real identities (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This group of EFL student teachers included 1 male and 9 females ranging from the fifth until 10 semester and aged from 20 to 24 years old.

Data Collection

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, this phenomenological qualitative design of the study used one-on-one in-depth interviews in order to obtain the EFL student teachers' lived experiences and insights of what they did on their social media to learn English. We employed one-on-one in-depth interviews as the means of data collection as it can delve large amount of rich detail in relatively short amount of time. This interviews used interview protocol which was adapted from a closed-ended questionnaire developed Alghasab and Alfadley (2018) about using social media for learning English. This interview protocol consisted of 9 questions , for example, among the questions, "how do you use your social media for learning English?", " What is your opinion about using social media to learn English?", and other qustions. In addition, probing questions such as "Can you tell your experience in more details like when you think using social media helps improve your listening skills?" or "What are the examples?" were asked to increase the depth of data collection and follow up the participants' thoughts.

In this respect, 10 sessions of one-on-one interviews were carried out online using Zoom as it was in the era of Covid-19 pandemic which did not allow in-person meeting. Each of the interview was begun by the explanation of the aim and context of the research to ensure participants' responses were in the right track of the research. Each interview session lasted around 30-40 minutes and focused on discussing each participant's personal experiences in using social media for learning English. All of the interview sessions were recorded by Zoom application with the consent of the participants and transcribed by the researchers.

In addition to the one-on-one in-depth interview, documentation was also used to corroborate the data obtained from the interview. In this case, participants were asked to give screenshots of their social media activities which they had experience in using or learning English. These sceenshots did not only confirm what they had explained, but also provide more real examples of their experience of using media social for learning English. The documentation was also used for the validation of data trustworthiness, especially through triangulation.

Data Analysis

In this current study, the collected data were analyzed qualitatively following the procedure explained by Cresswell, (2012), namely preparing and organizing the data for analysis, exploring and coding the data, building description and themes, representing and reporting qualitative findings, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings.

In this respect, all interview sessions which were recorded were trancribed verbatim by converting the audio from the video into text data and organized the transcribed data along with the documentation of screenshots from each of them into a folder of each participant. The next step was exploring the data by reading the data text several times to get a sense of the data as a whole before splitting it into parts, and coding the data by making sense out of the text data, dividing it into text segments, labelling the segments with codes. The next phase was checking the overlapped and redundant codes, and building description and themes from the overlapped and redundant codes. Then, the findings were presented i the form of narrative discussions about participants' lived exerience in using media social for learning English. Next, the findings were intepreted by having personal insights, and comparing the findings to literature. The last, for the trustworthiness of the findings, this current study used triangulation through various methods of data collection (i.e.: interviews and documents), and member checking by returning back the findings to the participants and asking them about the accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

Initially, we obtained verbal consent from the head of English Education Program at the focal university. Then the participants who were willing to participate were informed of their rights and convinced that their personal identities would be concealed throughout the study process. The permission to record the video during the interview session and the screenshots of their activities on socil media was also obtained.

FINDINGS

Six major themes emerged through the qualitative data analysis by reading all transcriptions of the interviews, coding, and building descriptions, and themes for the purpose of exploring the EFL student teachers' experiences of using social media for learning English. Those six emerging themes are: (1) connecting with new friends from abroad; (2) sharing posts in English; (3) following accounts using English; (3) chatting in social media using English; (4) video calls with new friends from abroad; (5) reading posts in English; and (6) watching English videos. Participants of this study have been coded as ST1 through ST10 for the purposes of anonymity in the descriptions of each theme.

Connecting with New Friends from Abroad

The participants in this study admitted that they used several social media platforms. For the learning English, they try to find new friends on social media on purpose to have conversation about their common interest. ST-1 stated:

Yes, I use social media for learning, for example Instagram. I usually find new friends from abroad, and we just chat to talk about stuff... I follow accounts like CNN or

talkshow in US, and see people commenting there, I click (their Instagram account) and follow their profile. Then we chat through Direct Message (on Instagram)... Some of them are native and some others are not.

Using other less popular social media, compared to the ubiquity of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, ST-4 also try to build her network with people from other countries to practice her English. ST-4 explained:

I use Speaky, Ablo, and Azar to learn English deliberately because we need to use it daily in order not to forget it. I use these apps to make new friends from other countries. Then, after I find new friends, we then chat through Whatsapp. During chat, If I mispell words in English, they will correct my mistakes. I also have a friend, much older than me, in his 40s I think. He is a an English teacher, I learn (English) a lot from him. He frequently asks me to read (English) novels and he always corrects my mistakes.

Similar to ST-4 who finds new friends from social media and comunicates in English, ST-5 admitted: "*Uh huh, (on Wakie), I got new friends. Then we continued to interact on Whatsapp. Yes. We exchange our Whatsapp contacts, but all of us were girls*".

Sharing Posts in English

Social media has a feature for its user to share their thoughts, ideas, images, videos to their community members. The EFL student teachers viewed that sharing their posts in English also a form of learning English as they write and check their sentences. According to ST-1: "*I also express my thoughts in captions or posts using English mostly. Before I post them, I check the grammar in U Dictionary to make sure that it is correct. I also consider whether the words I use is appropriate with the context or not*".

Like ST-1, ST-2 also admitted that she indirectly learn English as she uses English in her captions. ST-2 commented: "*I do not use social media conciously for learning English, but indirectly I learn English through social media. Mostly the captions of my photos in Instagram is in English... I check the grammar and spelling of my posts*".

ST-6 also added that she also often posted her thoughts in English and checked the grammar before sharing it to other users. It is implied that she, in fact, learned how to write good grammatical English sentences: "*(I update my posts) In English, Ma'am, because I feel comfortable and get the right feeling (when sharing posts in English).... I have to check whether the grammar is correct or not*".

ST-7's experience is that she was encouraged to write things in English as she read her friends' posts and eventually made her confident in writing her posts in English.

"In Twitter, in Instagram, I share my posts in English.... I am more interested in more of the writings of people, that they post. I had a friend in school back then in Qatar, and she often posted things in English, what they feel, it's like their home diary. And when I read it, it made me wanna write as well, and imitate their (writing) style. And also I like to post and that makes me more confident in posting what I feel every day in English".

Following Accounts Using English

The EFL student teachers in this study reported that they purposely followed social media accounts which taught English so that they could learn English lessons by looking at the contents. ST-1 stated:

"I want to know their gestures and the way they talk and present news. ... I can learn new vocabulary from their captions in English. I just guess the meaning from the context.... I also follow accounts which its contents teach English. They teach me idioms, slang words, and others. The way they create the content makes me understand it easily. In YouTube, I follow Mr.D account, a native speaker who lives in Indonesia. In his video contents, he shares English lessons, like grammar to its viewers".

Like ST-1, ST-5 also commented that she follows an American's Instagram account and visit his page and practice pronunciation as taught by him. According to ST-5: *"In instagram, I follow an American, Mr. Dan. If I open my instagram, and his post is on my feed, then I click and explore his other posts. I follow pronunciation, because he usually teaches pronunciation. I directly repeat after him. I practice".*

Furthermore, ST-6 also explained that she followed such account and joined challenges to learn English. ST-6 said:

"In Instagram, I follow accounts for English learning, for example BBC learning English, chris.korten, I follow and see their posts. If there is a challenge, I join it. Like the last time, there was Londo Kampung, he created a challenge of tongue twister, and I joined it, he reposted mine. I was so happy, reposted by a native speaker. Then a challenge was also given by chris.korten, I answered it. Then he gave me highfive meaning that my answer was correct".

Chatting in Social Media using English

Social media allows its users to communicate ad interact among each other through chatting feature. This feature enable the EFL student teachers develop their English as they chat by using English. ST-3 stated: *"I work in a coffee show and native speakers usually come to my class. We exchanged our social media account and chatted using it".*

In addition, ST-4 explained that chatting by using English made her confident and less anxious when she had to present something in the class. She also learned grammar when chatting. According to ST-4: *"I chat with my friends from other countries using English every day... Because I use English everyday, I am confident and not anxious when I have to deliver a presentation in my class. ... I also learn grammar from my old online teacher who always corrects me (when I make mistakes) during chat".*

ST-8 also add that she had discussion with other social media users in group chatting by using English. ST-8 reported: *"In our group chat, a fanbase for K-pop, we are from various countries, and we often discuss things of our common interests by using English".*

Video Calls with New Friends from Abroad

Up to this time, social media allows its users to have video conferencing which they can call a contact that a user has on the social media, and the people on call can see each

other on the screen. ST-4 stated that through this feature, she learned many things like grammar, speaking and listening skill. ST-4 said:

> *"I often have video call (with my friend from abroad). We talk about stuff, but there was a moment I did not understand Pasive Voice, my friend taught me. ... From the interaction, we try to listen, like "what are you talking about?". It make me get used to listen to people talking in English, but if we never interact, and listen to people talking (in English), it (listening) will be difficult. ... When I talked to a native speaker, I did not understand as he speaks very fast. At first, it was difficult, but then I learn and get used to it.... My reading skill is improved when I met this teacher. He asked me to read novels, which made me interested in reading novels. Then, he asked me which chapter were you reading now? We communicate through video call".*

ST-5 also told her experience in video conferencing to learn English especially British accent and pronunciation. ST-5 explained:

> *"For speaking, in Wakie, we used to have video call, but it was a long time ago. Thanks God, there, I interact with a native speaker from England so that he trained me to talk English by using British accent. And he corrected me. At that time, we had a topic to discuss. ... And the one who had room (in Wakie) corrected the correct pronunciation, or when our sentence was not perfect.... In Whatsapp we have video calls every day".*

Furthermore, ST-6 also confirm that she often had video calling among his foreign friends. ST-6 said: *"Uh.. In my Amigo group, with an Algerian, a Filipino, a Thai person, we often like have video call in a group of 4 or 5 people on Whatsapp".*

Reading Posts in English

On social media, people can read English texts on videos, images, and text-based posts. By reading this, EFL learners have exposure on English reading activities which make them learn English in informal settings. ST-2 stated:

> *"When I watch movie (in media social) I watch and read the English subtitle so that indirectly I practice my reading skill. And when I read captions of pictures in English, it also improves my reading skill. And if I find difficult words and I am really curious what it means, I check it up on my dictionary. ... It also adds my vocabulary knowledge. Like when I saw a post of photo with a caption "hen". I did not know what it was, but then I knew it was another name for a female chicken".*

ST-5 also explained that she had to read fast in rder to keep the pace with the communication. According to ST-5:*"We read texts on Whatsapp. Of course we read, and during communication, we have to be very fast, so we read fast, so it practices our reading skill. If reading takes long time, the communication is not smooth".*

Furthermore, ST-7 explained that reading posts in social media can enhance her reading skills as she has exposure on the same words, but with different contexts. ST-7 said:
"*Yes. Like I find new vocabulary or new meaning in a text or anything, sometimes I find that word in different text or context, like in a book or social media post. That makes me more understand what they are saying... Sometimes I find it in another caption, or I read their direct messages (in Instagram), I can understand it.*"

Watching English Videos

One of the feature of social media is video sharing which enable its users to watch videos of their interests. The EFL student teachers explained that they often watch English videos on social media which eventually enhance their English listening skills. ST-1 stated:

"I think one of the ways to improve listening is through media social. By watching videos of songs and talk show in YouTube in media social, we can listen to how native speakers talk in English because native speakers are scarce in Palembang. Listening to them through social media, I have become accostumed in listening their accent and I learn how to pronounce particular new English words for me".

ST-5 also added that by watching English videos on social media, she could acquire new English vocabulary and pronunciation knowledge. ST-5 reported:

"In YouTube, I used to watch Ellen Show to practice my listening skill. In that show, she speaks (in English) very fast, while we are accustomed in listening Indonesian people who are not native. I want to practice my listening to get used to English accent.... In Instagram, Mr. Danish, he always creates video contents about English vocabulary, intoduces the way to use the vocabulary, and we follow the way to pronounce it and know how to use it in sentences".

Furthermore, ST-7 stated that she formed her English accent by imitating what she watched videos on social media. She also made use of English lesson video for developing her listenning skill.. ST-7 explained:

"I always look at Youtube videos, like Ted-Ed, like a Islamic speeches, also like uh funny YouTube channel for my entertainment. And also, uhm, that really impacts my speaking, yeah my speaking, because I know the where the stress is, like the way people say things... I often watch movie, or listen to a song or audio, sometimes I know what they are saying, and they talk like very fast, and I was like "what?", and sometimes I slow down the audio or the movie just to know what they are saying, so it impacts my listening as well. Yeah, on YouTube, I sometimes like slow it down, may be 1.5 speed. Let alone, in listening, if there is a test, like TOEFL, I sometimes go to YouTube and intentionally serach for listening to audio of TOEFL and learn it at night before the test day".

Finally, the results of this study indicated that there were various experiences that EFL student teachers did on their social media for learning English. From these experiences, it can be learned that they chose the way they learned English and what they could learn. They, deliberately or not, can enhance their English skills, i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing, and English aspects like vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation by having communication and collaboration with other users of social media.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to find out the EFL student teachers' perceived experience of using social media for learning English. The results showed that they learn English through social media by: 1) connecting with new friends from abroad; (2) sharing posts in English; (3) following accounts using English; (3) chatting in social media using English; (4) video

calls with new friends from abroad; (5) reading posts in English; and (6) watching English videos.

As reported by the partcipants, they had video conferencing with their new friends from other countries through social media by using English . As they had different mother tongues, English was always used during the video conference. They shared ideas and information of their common interests using English. Though they did this in informal context, they admitted they learned English through this synchronous online communication channel. They thought that video calling activities help them to improve their speaking and listening skill. Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) reported in their study that most students agreed with the idea that social media helped develop their speaking skill, they confirmed its effectiveness in learning. In addition to this, they add that social media eliminates the problems of time and distance, offers a relaxing vibes for learners to communicate their thoughts freely without the feelings of fear, embarassment, and low self-confidence which eventually help learners to deal with their speaking difficulties and enhance their speaking skill. Brydolf (2007) also adds that learners who may be lazy to practice speaking in class feel blogs and other interactive internet platforms rewarding.

The present study also revealed that the participants developed new vocabulary by reading English posts, and captions, listening to English videos, and chatting in English. It is in line with a study conducted by Ismail et al. (2018) that there were 67 % of student respondents stated that social media has improved their vocabulary through many ways. In this respect, Benidir (2017) explains that Social media can help in learning and teaching vocabulary and can be incorporated into learners' life which can facilitate learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, it is recommended that EFL learners use social media for teh purpose of acquiring new words in order to improve their knowledge repertoire.

The participants also mentioned that they learned English by chatting in English and having group discussion of particular topics on their social media group. This conforms to the finding in Belal (2014) study which found that gorup discussion on social media could facilitate students to develop their English speaking and writing skill. In terms of learning English writing through social media, Sari et al. (2019) reported that the use of social media was significantly correlated to the EFL student teachers' academic writing mastery.

All of the perceived experiences of using social media for developing the EFL student teachers' English proficiency were not manipulated or just a coincidence. According to Vie (2007) social media offer a space for its users to socialize, and during communication learners are presented authentic language when they have interaction for various social purposes. Furthermore, they are perfect platforms for building connections with native English speakers and experimenting with learning through interactions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the focus of this current study, six major themes on the EFL student teachers' experiences of using social media for learning English were found. Those six emerging themes are: (1) connecting with new friends from abroad; (2) sharing posts in English; (3) following accounts using English; (3) chatting in social media using English; (4) video calls with new friends from abroad; (5) reading posts in English; and (6) watching English videos. All of these experiences facilitate EFL student teachers to develop their English language skills and aspects. The limitation of the study is a lack of the generalization of our findings

due to its qualitative nature. This study was conducted with a sample of EFL stident teachers in an Islamic state university, in South Sumatera, Indonesia; thus our findings may not be applicable to other students in other parts of Indonesia. Also, based on our findings on the students experiences of learning English using social media, educators can consider the integration of social media in the formal educational settings, i.e. classroom so that by studying these experiences, educators can design English learning activities using social media which are liked by students. EFL students in any educational levels are also encouraged to use social media in a positove manner for learning English.

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