



The Impact of Social Media Towards Students English Speaking Proficiency at English Department of UKI Toraja

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of using social media on students' speaking skills at Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja. This research uses qualitative method. The purposive sampling use to obtain data from 7th semester students of English education. Data collected by interview and observation. The result of this research is Instagram social media has an effect on speaking fluency, vocabulary improvement, grammar and pronunciation. The impact felt by students experienced a significant increase in fluency, pronunciation and understanding of informal language use. The use of Instagram social media can personalize students' experience to practice speaking and listening skills and even motivate and increase self-confidence. Social media can provide a positive experience for students by offering engaging, interactive, and supportive content for English language learning, so it is worth considering using social media in education.*

Keywords: *Social media, English learning, impact, speaking proficiency, English department*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media has profoundly impacted myriad facets of contemporary life, with its integration into human existence being a pivotal factor. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp have profoundly altered the manner in which we interact, exchange ideas, and disseminate information on a global scale. The role of social media in facilitating global communication is indisputable, as it offers unparalleled opportunities for intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange (Fazil et al., 2024). Social media is not only a tool for personal communication, but also a resource that is part of education. Social media offers innovative ways of communicating, collaborating and engaging in various educational content. (Lusianawati et al., 2024).

In today's educational environment, social media has become a dominant form of communication. Given English's status as a global language, social media presents numerous opportunities for language learning. This digital medium offers English education students a versatile and valuable resource that can significantly improve their learning journey by fostering communication skills, boosting motivation, supporting academic growth, and encouraging social engagement. (Yani et al., 2024). One of the most important English language skills is being able to speak English.

Given the interconnected nature of the modern world, proficiency in spoken English is now essential. Particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), professionals frequently need to communicate with people from various cultures and navigate a wide array of professional situations (Shella Gherina Saptiany & Bayu Ade Prabowo, 2024). Social media is an online platform that allows people to easily engage, contribute, and generate content through blogs, social networking sites forums, and virtual worlds. Online media also allows us to offer many opportunities to improve speaking skills. (Fikni et al., 2024).

As the role of social media increases, its ability to promote interactivity, support personalised learning, provide multiple learning resources, and extend the learning environment offers many new potentials and opportunities. The use of social media in teaching can be a significant innovation. (Huang et al., 2024). This is pretty common, given that social media has become a major platform for online interaction. Features like live chat, video calls, and interactive posts make it easy for users to communicate in real time and in a natural, unfiltered way. Social media is also great for helping learners recognize different accents, slang, and cultural aspects that are really important for improving speaking skills. It's not just that it allows us to communicate with people all over the world in ways we never could before, but it also gives new linguistic phenomena to grow. (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2024).

In Indonesia, the application of social media for language learning has garnered significant attention in recent years. The integration of social media as a contemporary learning media can facilitate the enhancement of learning materials through the introduction of creativity and interest. As indicated by extant survey data, Indonesia is among the top ten countries with the highest rates of social media usage worldwide, with a multitude of social media platforms being utilized (Prasetyo et al., 2024). While social media has played a role in students' information-seeking behaviors, it is unclear whether its use has contributed to the enhancement of their English language abilities within the context of campus life. A similar situation is observed at UKI Toraja, where the vast majority of students utilize social media. It is now a fundamental aspect of daily life to engage with

social media as a means of social interaction and for entertainment. These factors have an effect on the manner in which students learn and the outcomes of their learning.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in examining the type of social media used by students in the English department, with the aim of understanding the purpose of its use and whether it has an impact on English proficiency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Accordingly, the researcher has elected to undertake a study entitled "The Impact of Social Media on Students' English Speaking Proficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research findings on the implementation of ICT-based instruction in speaking for intercultural communication supports the recent studies by emphasizing the positive implementation of technology on student engagement and language skills development. Nurzhanova and Issimova (2022) started that lecturers must carefully select specific content areas that align with the learning objectives. The topics covered should reflect significant cultural aspects that students will encounter in real-world situations. This may include discussions on cultural norms, values, communication styles, and etiquette relevant to various cultures. By preparing these topics, lecturers ensure that students gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in intercultural interactions, which is essential for effective communication which Nurzhanova and Issimova's argumentation align with this research findings.

The foundational importance of intercultural communication lies in its ability to foster understanding and collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In ICT-based instruction, lecturers prioritize this skill to prepare students for global interactions. By defining clear objectives, lecturers guide the planning phase, emphasizing why intercultural communication is critical in today's interconnected world. This focus helps students appreciate the relevance of cultural awareness in both personal and professional contexts, thereby enhancing their motivation to engage with the subject matter (Meng, 2024).

By understanding Effective Teaching Methods in the planning phase, Solnyshkina and Qizi (2023) further shared that the choice of teaching methods is crucial in facilitating speaking and cultural communication skills. Lecturers are responsible for selecting strategies that align with their educational goals. Effective methods may include task-based language teaching (TBLT), role-playing, discussions, and the integration of technology such as AI tools for language practice. These methods not only engage students but also simulate real-life scenarios where intercultural communication occurs. By employing diverse pedagogical approaches, lecturers can cater to different learning styles and enhance students' speaking proficiency.

The implementation of ICT-based instruction in speaking for intercultural communication is crucial for fostering understanding and collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Lecturers emphasize this skill to

prepare students for multicultural interactions, defining clear objectives to highlight the importance of intercultural communication which in line with the research conducted by Wang (2025) who stated that cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part of modern society. Practical English teaching, as an important tool for intercultural communication, plays a key role in cultivating talents with international vision and intercultural communication ability.

The rapid advancement of mobile technology offers unprecedented opportunities for educational innovation that in line with Chen and Mei (2024) who stated that Mobile device-based learning models are highly attractive due to their convenience and widespread use. Advancements in real-time speech processing technologies provide new tools and methods for intercultural communication education, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning through interactive and personalized experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative research used study case approach with document analysis, observation and interviews to collect data. This study used the qualitative descriptive method because this research aimed to provide deeper and more comprehensive insights related to the impact of social media on students' English-speaking skills so that this research uses descriptive qualitative research as the right approach to describe the phenomena that occur to students. This research uses a purposive sampling approach by selecting respondents from UKI Toraja 7th semester students who are able to speak English. This study uses data analysis techniques from Miles & Huberman to analyze interview data from respondents consists of four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to find out the impact of social media on students' speaking skills, this study uses semi-structured interviews to explore data in depth.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study, conducted at the English Department of Toraja Christian Indonesia University, investigated the impact of social media on the English-speaking skills of seventh semester students. Data collected through interviews revealed some key findings regarding students' use of social media and its perceived influence on their language skills. The most frequently used social media platforms among university students were Instagram and YouTube. Students reported using these platforms due to factors such as peer influence, ease of access, wide reach, and availability of interesting content. Notably, the majority of participants indicated using social media as a tool for learning English, particularly by seeking out educational videos that focus on speaking skills. They found this content interesting and customizable to their individual learning needs.

The type of content accessed on social media reportedly plays an important role in skill improvement. Engaging videos, movie clips and interactive content were cited as helpful in practicing and improving speaking. While entertainment content contributed to vocabulary expansion, students expressed a desire for more specific and structured material designed for purposeful speaking practice. Most students consider social media to sometimes facilitate their learning, with its effectiveness depending on the specific content they encounter. A common practice was to follow content creators and mimic their language.

Exposure to native English speakers through social media is consistently reported to have a positive impact on students' speaking skills and fluency. The language used by native speakers is often considered easier to understand and learn. In addition, interaction on social media, especially through comments on posts, was found to contribute to improved communication and writing skills. Students generally found the exposure to informal English on these platforms useful and easy to understand.

In terms of motivation, the majority of students reported feeling more motivated to learn English through the flexible and relaxed environment offered by social media compared to the traditional classroom setting. However, one participant did not find social media to be a motivating factor for language learning. Regarding grammar, most students indicated that exposure to informal language on social media did not negatively impact their attention or understanding of correct grammatical structures, and some even learned grammar from educational content.

Despite the benefits, a significant challenge identified was the ease of being distracted when using social media for learning. The abundance of interesting content and notifications often distract students' focus. Regarding confidence, students generally did not experience a drop in confidence when speaking English online. However, a distinction was made regarding academic assignments; some students reported feeling less confident when asked to create and upload English videos for coursework. This study revealed a tendency among university students to engage more in online interactions, such as commenting, rather than participating in face-to-face conversations for English practice. Numerous students reported a paucity of opportunities for face-to-face interaction and frequently imitated native speakers' pronunciation due to an absence of interlocutors.

This section presents a discussion based on the findings of this research in relation to previous studies. The findings of this research explain the various impacts of social media on the speaking abilities of 7th-semester students at UKI Toraja as a means for learning and practicing to improve their speaking skills.

1. Most frequently used social media and reason

This study uncovered the motivations behind students' use social media habits. Although not a primary research objective, these reasons were found to be consistent with widespread trends and supported by prior studies. From previous research, the most frequently and most widely used social media is social media Instagram the reasons for using social media are in line with previous research such as access to information, easy to use, as a medium of entertainment that gives them experience and slightly facilitates them in practicing speaking English Abedi et al., (2023). Following in-depth interviews with the subjects, the researcher identified several significant impacts of social media usage on their English-speaking skills. The participants utilized social media both as a tool for practicing English and as a means to fill their spare time, resulting in both positive and negative impact on their speaking abilities.

2. Impact of media social for learning

This study explores the dual impact of social media on students' overall speaking skills. The research findings show that social media provides an experience as an English learning medium that is able to improve English speaking skills such as.

Positive impact

a. Increase exposure and direct interaction with foreign speakers

The present study indicated that Instagram provides a platform for interaction with native speakers this study finds that social media platforms significantly increase language exposure for users. This aligns with research conducted by Islam (2022), which identifies engagement with English-language content on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and other social media. This exposure plays a crucial role in enhancing English language proficiency. The study reinforces the idea that social media is not only used to gain knowledge and practice but also to interact with native speakers, which can enrich the learning experience for students. This informal practice allows individuals to become more comfortable using the language in everyday situations, thereby improving their proficiency in practical contexts.

b. Impact on motivation

Additionally, the researcher discovered that social media platforms provide a higher level of motivation for self-directed English language learning compared to conventional face-to-face learning methods. The use of social media, students' personalized learning becomes more active, encouraging them to practice their

English language skills. This finding aligns with the research by Kartika et al. (2021), which highlights that interacting with people from different countries can make students more confident in using English compared to traditional classroom settings. This study supports that notion by demonstrating that students are more motivated when engaging in self-directed learning through social media and participating in discussions using the comment section features. This engagement is important because it encourages students to actively interact, supporting a more interactive learning experience.

c. Impact on grammar

Furthermore, the study revealed that exposure to informal language through social media surprisingly enhances participants' grammar usage. Despite the informal nature of social media, participants remain attentive to proper grammar and find it easier to communicate effectively. The research findings indicate that social media helps to improve vocabulary, speaking skills, and grammar. This is in line with the findings of Wootton et al. (2024), which state that the use of social media features can enhance the grammar and speaking proficiency of foreign language learners. This study adds evidence that students provide feedback on educational and interactive videos, which exposes them more frequently to educational content that uses correct grammar and enhances their skills in managing the necessary material.

Negative impact

a. Instagram is just a waste of time and a distraction

Additionally, the study highlights that social media usage has a paradoxical effect on students' English language learning. While it offers opportunities for language improvement, it also leads to distractions and decreased focus. The research findings indicate that social media can cause students to feel less focused and more easily distracted, hindering their ability to learn and improve their English-speaking skills. This aligns with the observations of Abedi et al. (2023), who state that in addition to providing access to educational content, social media also poses significant distraction risks, as students tend to be diverted by entertainment content rather than focusing on learning. This is consistent with the study's findings. The research adds cognitive evidence that students often experience focus disruptions and are easily distracted due to a lack of concentration on their studies, spending more time viewing entertainment content. It is important for students to focus on one task before moving on to another.

b. Impact on self-confidence

Moreover, excessive social media use can have a detrimental effect on students' interaction skills, leading to decreased confidence in their ability to engage in face-to-face conversations. This is largely due to the lack of direct practice in

speaking, which is essential for developing effective communication skills. There is a difference between the research conducted by Kartika et al. (2021), which states that interacting with people from different countries can make students more confident in using English compared to comparing it within the classroom. Initially, students reported feeling confident speaking English on social media; however, after the next question, half of the students expressed feeling less confident when uploading videos of themselves speaking English. This highlights the need for students to develop their confidence through social media, as both direct and indirect interactions are essential for students to practice so they can speak English more fluently without hesitation.

c. Impact on real time situation

Moreover, social media's inability to facilitate direct speaking practice is further compounded by students' lack of wise usage, ultimately hindering their ability to develop and refine their speaking skills. These findings are quite similar to the results of a study by Wati et al. (2024), which explores the use of social media for language learning. The study indicates that while positive aspects such as real-life practice, access to authentic content, and connections with native speakers are clearly evident, there are differing views regarding engagement. However, there are limitations for students, as practicing directly by merely mimicking the pronunciation of native speakers without having a conversation partner is less effective for utilizing social media as a learning medium. This highlights the importance of a targeted and tailored approach to ensure that the benefits of social media can be optimally leveraged in language education.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific examination of the impact of social media use on students' speaking skills at Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja. This study distinguishes itself from previous research by employing a self-reported approach, analyzing students' personal experiences and perceptions. The findings provide deeper insights into the effects of social media on language learning, shedding light on its potential to enhance cognitive and affective skills. Notably, this study reveals that social media use has a significant impact on English speaking skills development, offering more opportunities for practice and improvement compared to traditional face-to-face learning. The results of this study inform strategies for maximizing social media use in developing innovative, interactive, and effective language teaching practices across various educational settings.

CONCLUSION

The impact of social media use on students' speaking skills at UKI Toraja shows that social media has both positive and negative impacts on students' cognitive skills. Through student reports, the results show that more than half of the

students experienced an increase in cognitive and affective abilities, such as increased vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and motivation to learn. It is necessary to note that the use of social media can have a significant impact on English speaking proficiency with this it is necessary to consider the use of social media to learn English this can be maximized with regular direction and monitoring in order to avoid the negative impact of social media use.

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