



The Role of Social Media Platforms in Enhancing English-Speaking Skill at Eleventh Grade Students of Senior High School

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| <p>Received: 2025 -04-03 Revised: 2026 05-01 Accepted: 2026 05-02</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Social Media; Speaking Skills; Platforms Digital; English Language</i></p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10048</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Khairun Nisya khairunnisya.2024@student.uin.ac.id English Education, Faculty of Languages, Arts, and Culture, Yogyakarta State University</p> | <p><i>This study aims to explore the role of social media in supporting students' English-speaking skills at SMAN 1 Suela. The study is grounded in the limited exposure to English-speaking environments in rural areas and students' low confidence in daily English communication. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, the research involved nine eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations and analyzed using an interactive model involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that students utilize social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, with YouTube and TikTok being the most dominant for speaking practice. Students engage in activities including watching and imitating English videos, practicing pronunciation, creating video content, and expanding vocabulary. The use of social media contributes positively to vocabulary mastery, pronunciation improvement, and increased speaking confidence. However, challenges such as content distractions, limited internet access, and speaking anxiety remain significant barriers. Overall, social media serves as an accessible and contextual medium for informal English-speaking practice, particularly in rural educational settings.</i></p> |

1. Introduction

Mastering English-speaking skills is a fundamental objective in English language learning. Speaking is not merely the act of delivering messages; rather, it involves the ability to organize ideas, emotions, and intentions effectively in communicative interaction (Akram & Kumar, 2017). To communicate successfully, learners must construct meaningful expressions by integrating vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency (Richards, 2017). As English functions as a global lingua franca that connects nations and cultures, speaking proficiency plays a crucial role in broadening students' educational and professional opportunities (Rao, 2019). Furthermore, speaking competence contributes significantly to students' quality of life and academic advancement (Gasani et al., 2025). Therefore, enhancing speaking ability is not only a linguistic objective but also a strategic educational necessity.

Despite its importance, many students still encounter significant challenges in developing speaking skills. Limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments, particularly in rural areas, restricts opportunities for real communication (Gasani et al., 2025). Students often experience psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes, which hinder active participation in speaking activities (Syahbani & Apoko, 2023). In addition, limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient practice time, hesitation to speak, and low motivation remain dominant obstacles (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Laoli et al., 2025; Machfudi & Afidah, 2022). These conditions indicate that conventional classroom instruction may not fully address students' speaking needs, especially in contexts where English is rarely used outside the classroom (Arfiandhani, 2019).

In response to these challenges, the emergence of social media in the digital era offers alternative opportunities for language learning. Social media platforms are widely used for communication, education, and interaction (Tiryakioglu & Erzurum, 2011). In Indonesia, internet growth has expanded rapidly in both urban and rural areas, particularly in access to social media (Priyadharma, 2021). Social media provides spaces for interaction, collaboration, content sharing, and feedback from peers and even native speakers (Reinhardt, 2019). Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Skype, and Facebook have been widely utilized to support English-speaking development (John & Yunus, 2021a; Kryvka et al., 2022; Makodamayanti et al., 2020). The flexible and accessible nature of these platforms enables students to practice anytime and anywhere, creating a more conducive and motivating learning environment (Ansari & Khatoon, 2024; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

Empirical studies report that social media can improve students' fluency, confidence, and motivation in speaking English (Jin, 2024; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019; Sun et al., 2017). However, most previous research has focused on higher education contexts. In contrast, studies on secondary school students, particularly in rural areas, remain (Muslem et al., 2022; Yulia & Prasetyawati, 2022). This gap

is significant because students in rural settings often face challenges such as limited exposure to English-speaking environments and restricted access to learning resources. In this context, social media offers potential as an accessible tool to support speaking practice. Nevertheless, previous studies tend to emphasize learning outcomes and provide limited insight into students' experiences, the platforms they use, the speaking activities they engage in, and the challenges they encounter.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring the role of social media in improving the English-speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Suela. This study uniquely explores rural students' lived experiences in using social media for speaking development. Specifically, it seeks to (1) examine how social media supports speaking development, (2) identify the types of platforms accessed by students, (3) describe the speaking-related activities performed, and (4) analyze the challenges faced in utilizing social media for speaking practice. Grounded in communicative language learning principles and technology-enhanced learning perspectives, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions.

Theoretically, it contributes to the discussion on digital-mediated speaking development in rural secondary education contexts. Practically, it offers insights for teachers and schools in optimizing social media as an accessible and contextual medium to support students' English-speaking competence.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research was conducted in a natural setting without any manipulation of variables or experimental treatment. It aimed to explore in depth students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in using social media to enhance their English-speaking skills.

The study was carried out at SMAN 1 Suela, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, from August to September 2025. The participants were eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. Initially, 15 students were identified based on their active use of social media for learning English. However, only nine students participated fully in the study due to considerations such as willingness to be interviewed, availability during the data collection period, and completeness of participation in both interview and observation sessions.

The participants consisted of both male and female students with varying levels of English proficiency, ranging from basic to intermediate. The selection criteria were adapted from Sugiyono (2013), emphasizing active involvement in the phenomenon and the ability to provide rich, relevant information. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using an interview guide to explore students' experiences in depth. Observations were carried out in several sessions during the research period, with each session lasting approximately 30–45 minutes, and were documented through field notes to capture students' actual behaviors in utilizing social media for speaking practice.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation of sources and techniques was applied by cross-checking data obtained from interviews and observations across participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3. Results

Social Media Platforms Used for Speaking Practice

The findings indicate that eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Suela utilize four main social media platforms for English-speaking practice: YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp. However, YouTube and TikTok emerged as the most dominant platforms. Interview data consistently revealed that TikTok was frequently used due to its short, engaging, and easily accessible video content. One participant stated,

"I usually use TikTok to learn English because it's easy. You can also watch short videos and see English notes" (Participant 1).

Similarly, another participant explained,

"I mostly use TikTok to practice my speaking because I can watch videos by English-speaking content creators... Usually, on TikTok, I'll immediately follow along with every word in the video" (Participant 5).

Students emphasized that TikTok's short-duration videos facilitated immediate imitation and repetition. Participant 6 added,

"Usually, on TikTok, I'll watch English videos and then imitate them little by little. Sometimes I also feel challenged to be like a content creator." (Participant 6).

These statements suggest that TikTok supports spontaneous speaking rehearsal through exposure and imitation. YouTube was also frequently accessed because of its comprehensive and structured English content. Participant 7 stated,

"I mostly use YouTube to practice my speaking skills because it's full of quality, free video content... I can also imitate how native speakers speak." (Participant 7).

Likewise, Participant 3 noted,

“On YouTube, I usually watch public speaking, native speakers, learn grammar, vocabulary, and other things.”(Participant 3).

Compared to TikTok, YouTube was perceived as offering more in-depth learning resources. Instagram and WhatsApp were used less frequently for speaking practice. Only one participant mentioned using Instagram for exposure to English content, while WhatsApp was occasionally used for voice notes in English:

“On WhatsApp, I can only practice. Usually through voice notes or chats with friends” (Participant 6).

Overall, observational data confirmed that YouTube and TikTok were the most actively utilized platforms for speaking development.

Activities Conducted Through Social Media to Improve Speaking Skills

The findings indicate that students engage in several key activities through social media platforms to improve their English-speaking skills, namely watching and imitating videos, creating content, and building vocabulary. These activities are interconnected and support students' speaking development.

First, watching and imitating English videos is one of the most frequently reported activities. Students commonly access English content on YouTube and TikTok, observe pronunciation and speaking style, and then imitate or paraphrase what they hear. As stated by Participant 5,

“Usually, I'll write voice notes to friends. I feel confident sending voice chats to friends because I often watch videos on YouTube and TikTok. So sometimes I imitate the content creators.”(Participant 5).

Similarly, Participant 1 mentioned,

“I usually watch English videos on TikTok, then I practice them again as content,” and Participant 2 stated, *“I watched it on TikTok and then imitated it.” (Participant 1).*

These responses show that exposure followed by imitation becomes a practical strategy for improving speaking performance.

Second, content creation serves as an active form of speaking practice. Students reported making English-language videos on various topics such as food reviews, daily activities, and school tasks. Participant 3 explained,

“Usually, to practice my speaking skills, I'll make a video or something in English on a specific topic.” (Participant 3).

Participant 4 added,

"I usually create content in English, and sometimes I also record myself." (Participant 4).

Likewise, Participant 6 stated,

"Sometimes I also make videos like a content creator and post them to social media platforms."(Participant 6).

This activity encourages students to organize ideas, practice fluency, and reflect on their own speaking performance.

Third, vocabulary building is another important activity. Students often note new words encountered while watching English videos and practice using them in sentences. Participant 6 stated,

"I usually write down new words I encounter... Then, when I create content, I use that vocabulary." (Participant 6).

Participant 9 also mentioned,

"I find a lot of English vocabulary on YouTube... when I come across new vocabulary, I write it down or try to read it." (Participant 9).

These findings suggest that vocabulary acquisition through social media supports students' speaking development.

Benefits of Using Social Media to Improve Speaking Skills

The results further reveal several benefits perceived by students, including vocabulary improvement, better pronunciation, and increased confidence. Regarding vocabulary, Participant 1 stated,

"Every English video I watch has different words... I also get new words from watching English videos," (Participant 1).

while Participant 4 affirmed,

"I feel like my English vocabulary has improved." (Participant 4).

In terms of pronunciation, students reported listening repeatedly to English content and imitating correct pronunciation. Participant 2 explained,

"I watch a lot of videos and content in English... I also listen to how new words are pronounced. I listen to them over and over again." (Participant 2).

Finally, students experienced increased confidence when practicing through social media. Participant 1 stated,

"At first I felt nervous, but over time I felt more confident after the video I made was finished and uploaded." (Participant 1).

Participant 2 also mentioned,

“Sometimes I feel shy. But if I create English-language content on social media, I’ll be more confident.” (Participant 2).

These findings indicate that social media provides a supportive environment that reduces anxiety and encourages continuous speaking practice.

Challenges and Coping Strategies

Despite the benefits, several challenges emerged. The most prominent challenge was distraction from irrelevant content, particularly on TikTok. Participant 1 explained,

“Inappropriate content can ruin your learning mood because the videos you’re looking for don’t connect.” (Participant 1).

Participant 3 added,

“Sometimes the content isn’t really what I’m looking for.” (Participant 3).

Algorithm-driven entertainment con

tent often diverted students from their learning goals. Technical issues, especially unstable internet connections in rural areas, were another significant barrier. Participant 4 stated,

“The signal is slow in my village.” (Participant 4).

Similarly, Participant 3 mentioned,

“The problem I usually face is the internet signal which sometimes lags.” (Participant 3).

These limitations affected consistency in accessing learning content.

Psychological barriers also persisted. Participant 4 revealed,

“Sometimes I feel embarrassed if many people watch my videos... I’m afraid they’ll criticize me.” (Participant 4).

Fear of negative evaluation and social ridicule remained concerns in the local environment. To overcome these challenges, students employed strategies such as filtering content and skipping irrelevant videos. Participant 1 stated,

“Usually I will skip videos that are not appropriate.” (Participant 1).

Others reported switching platforms, particularly moving from TikTok to YouTube when distractions increased. Participant 2 noted,

“Usually switch to YouTube as an alternative because I can find more videos.” (Participant 2).

These strategies indicate students' awareness and self-regulation in managing digital learning environments.

4. Discussion

Types of Social Media Platforms Frequently Accessed to Improve Speaking Skills

Based on the interview analysis, social media platforms provide various features that support students in practicing English speaking skills, such as video uploads, comment sections, and direct messaging. Video-based platforms enable students to access authentic English content repeatedly, allowing them to imitate pronunciation, intonation, and expressions. Additionally, before uploading English video content, students usually practice several times, which indirectly enhances their speaking performance. Interaction through comments and messages also facilitates communication and peer support. These findings are consistent with Alghamdi & Sabir, (2019), who reported that students demonstrate positive attitudes toward using social media as a tool for English language learning, as well as Lapele, (2019) who found that social media use can positively influence students' motivation to practice speaking.

The findings further reveal that YouTube and TikTok are the two platforms most frequently accessed by students to improve their speaking skills, particularly at SMAN 1 Suela. Although previous studies by Khofifah et al., (2023) and Ubaedillah et al., (2021) identified several commonly used platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook, the present study indicates a dominant preference for YouTube and TikTok. This suggests that students tend to select platforms that emphasize audio-visual content and interactive features to support their speaking development.

TikTok is favored due to its short, engaging, and interactive audio-visual videos, which make learning more enjoyable and accessible. Its format encourages students to practice speaking creatively and repeatedly before publishing their content. Moreover, practicing through TikTok can enhance students' confidence in expressing themselves in English, as they may feel more comfortable communicating through social media rather than speaking directly in the classroom (Khofifah et al., 2023).

YouTube plays an important role in supporting students' speaking development by providing rich and meaningful language input. Through exposure to native speakers and content creators, students are able to observe pronunciation, fluency, and intonation in authentic contexts, while the combination of visual and auditory elements facilitates comprehension and imitation. In contrast, TikTok supports speaking development in a different way. Its short-form video format and algorithm-driven content encourage frequent, repeated engagement and active participation, such as creating and imitating brief spoken content.

This difference suggests that YouTube tends to function as a source of structured input and modeling, whereas TikTok promotes more spontaneous practice and output. The role of algorithms in both platforms also shapes students' digital behavior by continuously exposing them to relevant English-language content, which increases opportunities for incidental learning.

These findings indicate that the effectiveness of each platform is closely related to the types of activities it enables and the learning benefits it provides. YouTube supports comprehension and pronunciation development through observation and imitation, while TikTok enhances fluency and confidence through active content creation and interaction. This result is consistent with Saed et al., (2021), who found that YouTube contributes positively to students' speaking skills. Overall, YouTube and TikTok emerge as the primary platforms supporting speaking development, whereas Instagram and WhatsApp play a more limited role due to their less intensive support for sustained speaking practice.

Students' Learning Activities through Social Media Platforms

The second research question explored the types of activities students engage in through social media to improve their English-speaking skills. The findings indicate that students actively participate in activities such as watching and imitating videos, as well as creating their own content. These activities demonstrate that students are not merely passive recipients of information but are directly involved in observing, practicing, and producing English. Such engagement reflects the principles of sociocultural language learning theory, in which learning occurs through interaction, modeling, and technological mediation.

Students' viewing and imitation activities provide direct English input, particularly in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structure. Social media platforms offer abundant authentic English videos that are accessible and comprehensible for learners. Through repeated exposure, students are able to imitate language models and refine their speaking performance. In addition, platform features create extended opportunities for practice beyond classroom settings (John & Yunus, 2021a). This process aligns with sociocultural and constructivist perspectives, as students learn through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals, including peers, native speakers, and content creators (Gannar & Kilani, 2025). Thus, learning takes place collaboratively and independently within a technology-supported environment.

The study also found that students engage in content creation as a strategy to practice speaking. By producing and uploading English videos, students function as both learners and creators of language content. This activity encourages repeated rehearsal before publication, which contributes to fluency development and reduces nervousness. Khofifah et al., (2023) noted that content creation via social media can enhance students' confidence in speaking. Similarly, Mikum et al., (2018) emphasized that engaging and interactive media can increase students'

motivation to practice English. A supportive digital environment further enables students to speak without fear of making mistakes, thereby fostering confidence and active participation (Diasamidze & Samnidze, 2025; John & Yunus, 2021).

In addition to describing activities, this study identified several benefits of social media use for speaking development. One prominent benefit is the improvement of vocabulary mastery through continuous exposure to English content and interactions in comment sections. Reinhardt, (2019) highlighted that exposure through social media often involves interaction with proficient speakers and authentic materials, which positively influences language acquisition. Consistent exposure is a crucial factor in successful English learning (Jóhannsdóttir, 2018).

Furthermore, audio-visual features support pronunciation development, as students can listen to native speakers and repeatedly imitate their speech (Siregar, 2023). Another significant benefit is increased self-confidence and reduced anxiety, as students perceive social media as a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment (Khofifah et al., 2023; Makodamayanti et al., 2020). Overall, social media platforms provide an interactive, supportive, and communicative space that effectively contributes to the development of students' speaking skills, vocabulary mastery, and confidence.

These benefits, however, are not produced uniformly across platforms but are closely shaped by the characteristics of each platform, the types of activities performed, and students' digital behavior. YouTube tends to support vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation accuracy through longer, content-rich videos that allow sustained exposure and careful imitation. In contrast, TikTok promotes fluency and confidence through short, repetitive, and interactive activities such as mimicking, responding, and creating brief spoken content. The algorithmic system of both platforms also plays a critical role by continuously curating English-language content based on users' preferences, thereby increasing the intensity and frequency of exposure.

This creates a cycle of engagement in which students are not only passive consumers but also active participants in language use. Thus, the integration of platform features, user activities, and algorithm-driven content distribution forms a dynamic learning environment that reinforces speaking development in a more contextual and personalized manner.

The Challenges Students Faced in Using Social Media to Enhance English Language Skills

The use of social media platforms as learning tools for practicing English speaking skills presents several challenges, particularly for students in rural areas where the learning environment and infrastructure are not fully supportive. Language exposure plays a crucial role in determining the success of language learning (Jóhannsdóttir, 2018). However, optimal exposure may not always be

achieved due to various external and technical constraints that affect students' learning experiences.

One major challenge identified in this study is distraction from irrelevant content. Social media platforms provide diverse content, much of which is oriented toward entertainment rather than education (Friesen & Lowe, 2012). In particular, TikTok often exposes students to random videos that divert them from their initial goal of practicing English speaking skills. Its algorithmic system displays content based on users' previous viewing history, which can make it difficult for students to consistently access English learning materials if they frequently engage with entertainment videos. As a result, students may struggle to maintain focus on purposeful language practice. This finding is consistent with Salisbury et al., (2018) who reported that random and non-educational content frequently distracts students from academic intentions.

Another significant challenge concerns technical issues, especially unstable internet connectivity. Interviews revealed that students living in rural areas often experience slow or unreliable internet access, which limits their ability to stream videos, upload speaking content, or participate consistently in online practice. Several studies have similarly highlighted poor internet connectivity as a major obstacle to technology-based learning in Indonesia, particularly in rural contexts (Khofifah et al., 2023). These infrastructural limitations reduce opportunities for consistent exposure and practice, thereby affecting speaking development.

Despite these challenges, students demonstrate adaptive strategies to manage the obstacles encountered. When experiencing distractions on TikTok, some students intentionally shift to YouTube, which they perceive as offering more structured and educational content. To cope with connectivity limitations, students rely on personal data plans or purchase Wi-Fi vouchers to maintain consistent access to learning materials. These responses reflect not only technical adjustments but also strategic digital behavior in selecting platforms that better support their learning goals.

More importantly, these strategies indicate that students are not passive users of technology but active agents who are capable of regulating their learning environments. By consciously choosing platforms, managing distractions, and maintaining access to resources, students show a level of autonomy that strengthens the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool. This suggests that the success of social media in supporting speaking development is influenced not only by the features of the platforms but also by students' ability to use them purposefully. Therefore, despite existing constraints, social media remains a valuable and relevant medium for enhancing English-speaking skills, particularly when supported by students' adaptive and self-directed learning practices.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the role of social media in enhancing the English-speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Suela through a qualitative case study design. The findings indicate that social media functions as a meaningful supplementary learning tool that extends speaking practice beyond the classroom. Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok were most frequently utilized due to their audio-visual features, authentic content, and interactive affordances. Students engaged in activities including watching and imitating videos, practicing pronunciation, producing short video content, interacting through comments or messaging features, and expanding vocabulary through diverse content exposure.

These practices contributed to improvements in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation accuracy, speaking fluency, and confidence in oral expression. The accessibility and flexibility of social media also helped address the limited exposure to English-speaking environments in rural.

The implications of this study suggest that teachers can integrate social media as a guided learning tool to support speaking practice, particularly by designing structured activities that align with learning objectives. At the curriculum level, the inclusion of digital and social media-based tasks can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of language instruction. Furthermore, for rural education policy, the findings highlight the importance of supporting digital infrastructure and promoting the pedagogical use of technology to reduce disparities in language learning opportunities.

However, this study is subject to several limitations. The small sample size of nine students restricts the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the context-specific nature of the research, conducted in a single rural school, means that the results may not be fully applicable to different educational settings. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and to explore comparative contexts in order to strengthen the external validity of the findings.

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