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THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILL

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Abstract

The growth of technology has impacted to almost all sectors including education. It is a common phenomenon where people use technology in their life and it cannot be separated with the use of social media integrated in teaching and learning process. This study aims to review some previous studies and theories related to the impact of social media to enhance students' English skills for students. As it is known, English is the standard language of 53 countries and more than 44.000 people talking with English language. The rapid growth of technology has impact to the improvement of English skills, especially in this Covid-19 pandemic. Students learn mostly uses online platform to study such as E-mail, Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc. It is found that students face difficulties in learning English through online learning. The massive use of social medias give impact to students' English skills. Social media provides faster and more update news for the people and it is also easy to be accessed by everyone, including students. The social media used in online teaching and learning are such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, etc. After reviewing some theories and previous studies, it can be concluded that social media is able to enhance students' English skills in fun way when it is implemented in classroom setting.

Keywords: English language skill, social media, students

Introduction

In the digital era, the role of soacial media is crucial for social communication. Even in education development, students are already accustomed to the existance of social media. As it is known that social media is an internet tool that enable people to share everything related to themselves. As stated by Handayani, Syafei and Utari (2020) that social media is a platform and technology that is based on the internet that allows for the development and sharing of information. Besides, social media also used by people to communicate virtually. Furthermore, it is also utilized as learning media for the students. According to Hudson (2017) the term social media social media assigns to programs and websites which is created to give effective, quick, and in-the-moment material sharing.

The rapid growth of technology makes people easy to access the information through their smartphones or gadgets. Boyd and Ellison (2007) argue that in the past few years, social networking sites (SNSs) have experienced substantial growth. According to data from We Are Social (2020), there is 160 million people or 59% from completely population 272,1 million Indonesian population are the active user of social media. Based on this data, the social media users in Indonesia are very active. Facebook is the most popular with nearly 1.9 billion active users worldwide (Chaffey, 2017). Not to mention, the emergence of social media these days make people easy to communicate. From students point of view, social media is very important for their learning development. Especially in this pandemic era, students should learn by online system. Students and teachers can use various online learning platform as their learning tool in the process teaching and learning. It aimed to give an enjoyment activity but they can learn something new through the application.

In developing a language, students need interesting media, technique, and method to be able to absorb the materials well. The existence of technology in a learning language activity cannot be separated. Media used by teachers as a means to deliver the teaching materials. Hamalik in Arsyad (2009, p.2) stated in their study that teachers should have broad information and comprehension of the media utilized in learning, which includes:

- a. Using media as a communication tool can help teaching activities more successful;
- b. The role of media in achieving objectives in education area;
- c. Information about the learning activity;
- d. The connection between instructional strategies and educational media;

It is obvious from the discussion above, media plays an important part in the educational process. A language student should have a solid understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students' difficulties in leaning language can be overcome using learning media. To answer the challenges, internet is one of the medias that can be used by students to learn the language. Furthermore, nowadays internet is very easy to be accessed by people. It is due to the growth of information and communication technologies is to, everyone has their own mobile phone including students. Students can improve their English skill by utilizing social media applications. Recognizing that students utilize the social media frequently, the researchers aim to analyze the performance of social media for learning English. In this millennial era, the researchers interested in exploring a phenomena on social media application to improve students' English language proficiency.

Method

This library-based research reviewed some previous studies, research, or literature that discussing the meaning of social media, the role of social media to enhance students' English skill, and the benefits of social media in educational practices. The articles were analyzed and synthesized to obtain the relation among those theories.

Discussion

Social media definition

The meaning of social in Oxford dictionary relates to activities in which people meet each other for pleasure. Moreover, social is the connection between two person or more than two. While the definition of media based on Oxford dictionary is the principal media such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet through which enormous numbers of people obtained information and amusement. Furthermore, Sari (2017, p.5) defines social media represents a combination of one-to-one, private contact between individuals with public, open communication that is accessible to everyone. Besides, Sari (2017, p.5) also states social media is an online platform that allows users to post information about themselves and engage in conversation with other users to forge a virtual social connection. While according to Handayani, Syafei and Utari (2020) social media is a tool and platform for online information sharing. It is clearly stated that social media also enable students to obtain information and knowledge. The research conducted by Baruah (2012) stated that social media refers to a platform for obtaining news, ideas, and other things. Besides, according to Michael (2012;11) the phrase "social media" refers to internet-based platforms and internet applications that enable users to engage in online community building, content creation, and trade. There are many kinds of social media such as Twitter, Telegram, YouTube, Facebook and etc (Monica and Anamaria, 2014). Thus, it can be concluded that social media is a way to communicate, share and engage with other people or the entire globe online.

The role of social media to improve students' English skills

Social media, especially English-language social media, cannot be ignored as having a eloquent impact on students' learning. Social platform development has made it easier for students to learn new things. Moreover, the desire to study a foreign language social media can aid students in improving their English. When learn a language, a student should understand grammar, memorize new words, practice pronouncing words correctly, and so forth (Handayani, Syafei & Utari, 2020). In addition, Mensah, and Nizam (2016) elobotared social connection has an impact on students' academic achievement in a significant way. It is exposed that social media is beneficial for students learning process. Additionally, Eke, Omekwu and Odoh (2014) utilizing social media can benefit students in Nigeria by encouraging virtual meetings with co-researchers, self-esteem and wellness, research and learning, building interpersonal relationships, reading and writing web skills, and other benefits. In other words, students can express their English skill and social relation from social media. Mingle and Adams (2015) said that several students found that participating and using social media resulted in an improvement in their reading abilities. Additionally, in the contemporary internet era, students have had an important impact on the development of social platform. It is anticipated that students would have at least one kind of account on social platform and utilize it everyday. Unfortunately, social media are usually free of charge and it has no rules. As a result, it can be dangerous for students due to its abuse, such as cyber criminal. Thus it still needs control and guidance from the parents and also teachers. The usage of social platform, particularly in learning English, should be

stressed by the teachers. In addition to its detrimental effects for students, social media has several roles in the educational process. The majority of students use their social media accounts to communicate with their teachers. Social media can be used in this pandemic era to facilitate communication between teachers and students. Social media assists students to learn, serves as a place for student discussion and ideation, and promotes student collaboration (Erzad & Suciati, 2018).

There are several ways to integrate social platform utilized in English learning. As stated by Hayati (2015) that learning English on social platform is more enjoyable since it offers a variety of elements that excite users' thought processes and keep them engaged and from getting bored. It can be elaborate as follows: (1) change the account language setting to English. It aims to make the students or users of social media understand the various commands in English and it is expected that they will speak English indirectly; (2) try to write a status in English. When the students accustom to write in English, they will discover new words they do not know before. It also enable to increase their vocabulary mastery; (3) follow English group or community. The students will experience the English atmosphere in the group by joining the English group. Thus it will motivate them to speak, write, read, or listen in English.

The ¹⁶benefits of social media in educational practices

Nowadays, the emergence of social media provides numerous advantages for several aspects, including academic setting. Not only used to update the information, social media also used as the educational tool especially in learning language to stimulate students' active learning. As mentioned by Lumby, Anderson and Hugman (2014) that social platform creates a new opportunity for students to participate in their autonomus learning. As it is known that students will grasp the learning goals easily or if they can engage with the learning materials used by the teachers. By coping with the learning materials, students will be more active in the process of learning. Here, active learning refers to the avid engagement of students with educational content shared on social media, increased forum participation, and collaborative learning with classmates (Martunis, 2020).

Another benefit of integrating social media into education is that it gives teachers and students flexibility in terms of where and when they can study (Henderson et al., 2015). Due of the Covid-19 outbreak, all learning and teaching activities should be carried out at home, social media is one of the solutions of this issue. The teaching and learning activity can be run by the teachers through posting the learning materials on the social media, while students can download the materials from it. In other hand, the students also still able to communicate with the teachers and their friends even discuss the materials using social media. Additionally, the lack of a physical learning environment won't be a problem any longer because all students can access learning materials online, delivering questions, and discussing some issues with their classmates to develop their understanding (Liu, 2010).

Moreover, in learning and teaching activity in the classroom the teachers should deal with the variety personalities of the students. Some of the students are tend to shy and reserved to express their opinion or ideas in the classroom. Social

media platforms can be beneficial in that they encourage and foster student engagement, especially that of students who struggle with confidence (Crabil, Youngquist & Cayanus, 2012; Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghanforoush & Khan, 2016). In social media students are free to express their feeling, including their perception toward learning materials. It is due to they do not meet face-to-face with their friends and teachers. Thus, it makes them comfort and more confident to delivering their ideas. Students also found to be more productive and creative during learning through social media. According to a different study, social websites would be suitable for learners who feel bored and disengaged during a session to express their creativity and ideas (Faizi et al., 2013; Moskaliuk, Kimmerle & Cress, 2009). For example, at first they used to only read the articles on it or write their opinion about some issues even only write the social media caption and status. However, the unconsciously it makes big impact for their language development. In other words, students utilize social media to express themselves through reading and writing, but over time, it frequently instills the independent habit of English skills such as writing and reading in them (Faizi et al., 2013).

Social platforms have possibility to connect people all around the world. It is very potential to connect with people from various countries with different cultures and languages. In teaching and learning English, social platform can be an equipment to connect students with native speakers who live in English speaking countries or those who speak English as their second language. This opportunity allows students to experience how native speakers communicate in the real-life context. By having social media to get to know English from native speakers make students are able to immerse themselves in the culture, since culture affect the use of language in daily life (Ahmed, 2020). Social media is proven to improve students speaking skill as observed by Poramathikul, Arwedo, Abdulhakim and Wattanaruwangkowitz (2020). This is due to the easy access the students should imitate how native speaker communicate in English. Therefore, social platforms can give a great advantage for students to connect with native speakers. In this internet era, having connected to all people around the world easily is a privilege that the students have.

The purpose of implemented social platform in the teaching and learning is to make students more active and enjoy the process of obtaining the knowledge. Besides, it also one of the solutions to solve teaching and learning issues amid Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that by engaging social media will make students easier to communicate with their classmate and teachers. Social platform can be used for direct communication to reach teachers quickly in an “unformal and minimize burden in online setting” (Manca & Ranieri, 2017). The atmosphere in online learning environment is chiller rather than in direct learning situation.

Previous studies

²⁴ Several research on the use of social platform for enhancing students' English abilities have been carried out by several professionals. The results of those studies demonstrated that social platforms that students mostly utilize can help them become more fluent in English. The data of reasearch sources used by the researcher are as follow.

The research done by Erzad and Suciati (2018) underlined the use of social media for the students of English Department in IAIN Kudus. Based on the result of the study, there are three result obtained by the researchers, they are: (1) The most familiar social media platforms among students are Line, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram; (2) social media assist students to enhance student listening, speaking, writing, and spoken English skills; (3) since social media is enjoyable, intriguing, straightforward, easy to use, and instructive, students use it to enhance their English skills in the modern era.

Next, the research carried out by Handayani, Syafei and Utari in 2020. This article discuss about the kinds of social media used by fourth semester students of English Department of Universitas Muria Kudus for learning English. The findings indicated that students used Facebook, Telegram, Quora, Line, Manwha, Google, TikTok, Cake English App, and WhatsApp among other social media platforms to learn English. These social media platforms are ones that lecturers use to control the teaching and learning process and aid students in improving their English.

The study by Al-Jarrah, Al-Jarrah, Talafhah, and Mansor (2019). In this study, the researchers looked into how students saw social media in terms of its usability, utility, and attitude toward using it for activities, and they looked to see if these aspects were correlated. According to the findings, social media significantly influences how well students write in the English language at the secondary school level.

Furthermore, Poramathikul, Arwedo, Abdulhakim & Wattanaruwangkowitz (2020) draw conclusion that bilingual and multilingual speakers often utilize social media for educational purpose. From the speaking test given to the participants it can be concluded that the participants who actively communicate with native speakers using social media achieve better English-speaking skill. This statement supports the fact that social media and the Internet allows the participants to get access to speak with native speakers around the world.

Ahmed (2020) in his research finds out that social platform can be applied as an aid for English language teaching. Social media helps learners to grasp learning experience by interacting with native speakers. They can also immerse in the culture from the native speakers from English speaking countries, since culture play big role in the language learning. This situation may allow learners to experience learning English directly from native speakers at anytime and anywhere by using social media easily.

The last is the study conducted by Martunis (2020). The researcher emphasized social media's benefits for supporting Indonesian higher education institutions' teaching processes. This study demonstrates how social media use has benefited teaching and learning. However, social media also has several issues that could reduce its usefulness.

Conclusion

This discussion seeks to review some earlier research about the use of social media to improve students' English abilities. This study has discussed the different ways in which social media able to help students' English abilities. It can be summarized that social media give positive impacts to students' learning, especially English. From the previous studies, students are able maximizing social media to

help them develop their English skills. Social media can give the students input about English through video, pictures, and caption. Furthermore, students can create contents or posts in English as the output of English learning. It is due to the use of social platform in learning activity students feel less pressure and able to express their ideas freely.

Moreover, there are many kinds of social media that can be used in the teaching and learning activity such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. In addition, from social media they can learn to speak, read, write and listen to English materials. They also able to upgrade their grammar, pronunciation, and English knowledge by social media. However, the use of social media as an academic learning tool should be under teachers' and parents' supervisions. It should be emphasized that the implementation of social media in the teaching and learning process has its own goals. It assists the academicians to enhance their language development and also ease the communication between students and teachers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

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