
Pre-service EFL Teachers' Perception of Utilization Social Media in Teaching Learning Process

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Abstract

Social media is a technology that can be used to socialize between users. Despite the varied functions of social media, it also serves as a learning medium with advantages and disadvantages for certain pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. This research aims to identify the pros and cons of using social media in teaching English, understand pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions regarding learning through social media, and compare social media as a learning medium with other online learning platforms. This research involved five pre-service EFL teachers from a high school in North Sumatra. The researchers used a qualitative methodology, designing the study to conduct interviews with participants and focusing on their responses to obtain meaningful results. The researcher recorded all conversations during the interview session as part of the data collection process. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are the most popular social media platforms with strong categories. There is what has a higher presentation value than other types of social media. According to the pre-service EFL teachers involved in this research, the use of social media in English language teaching is considered easy, convenient, flexible, creative, and fun. These positive aspects highlight the benefits of social media on the teaching and learning process in the context of English language teaching. These challenges include issues such as lack of access to technology, concerns about privacy and security, or difficulties in maintaining professional boundaries on social platforms.

Keywords: EFL Pre-service Teachers', Perception, Social Media, teaching strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0, humans cannot be separated from technological development. (Hikmahanto Juwana, 2002) stated that human life is always closely related to technological advances. Thus, technology has become a primary need, especially nowadays. In other words, the necessity of technology cannot be denied. Technology has developed and produced many tools that are helpful in education, especially in learning English. There is growing interest in utilizing technology in learning (Garret, 2009). Previously, many attempts and practices of computer use helped language learning. Therefore, a term has been coined: computer-assisted language learning. Later, another term, mobile, assisted language learning, has shown its existence as a concern and interest increasingly interested in the latest devices, smartphones. Using smartphones to help the language learning process improve fourth skills has become popular because these handheld computers are rapidly produced worldwide.

Language learning has become increasingly important in our globalized world, as more and more people need to communicate with those who speak different languages. With the rise of technology, social media have emerged as a popular and accessible way for people to learn writing, listening, speaking, and reading another language. According to Voorn and Kommers (2013), social media serves as a virtual platform for connecting groups of individuals who produce user-generated content in an effort to foster cooperation and communication. As a result, social media provides a forum for communities of people engaged in online connections to share information, expertise, and viewpoints (Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari, 2016). Social media is an online social structure made up of people who are connected by kinship, shared interests, intimate relationships, financial exchange, socio-cultural beliefs, and knowledge-centered collaboration, among other relationships (Gingerich & Lineweaver, 2014; Onivehu, Adegunju, Ohawuiro & Oyeniran, 2018). Other platforms that are included in this structure are Facebook, which is used for managing profiles and friends, Instagram, which is used for sharing photos, and YouTube, which is used for sharing videos (Buzzetto-More, 2013a; Jones & Graham, 2013; Onivehu, Adegunju, Ohawuiro & Oyeniran, 2018).

Social media plays a crucial role in learning, aiming to enhance students' comprehension of materials and transform abstract concepts

into tangible realities. Incorporating social media as a teaching tool proves effective, maximizing efficiency and streamlining the overall learning experience in the classroom. Using social media in education aids students in articulating information and messages through various presentations, thereby facilitating and enriching the learning processes and outcomes.

According to a preliminary study, students enrolled in the English Education Study Program had no interest in reading English books at the library, conversing with friends about various English-language issues, or learning the language through other media like watching TV or instructional videos. Nonetheless, the data indicated that most students enjoy using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to look up English phrases and terms they may utilize. Occasionally, the pupils can converse with their friends using the words and sentences. These are the terms that frequently surfaced on social media. Additionally, the fact that social media settings are primarily in English could potentially contribute to this.

This study primarily aims to investigate the perspectives of pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors on the utilisation of social media in the process of teaching and learning. The researcher is inspired to do this research due to the recognition that teachers utilise social media as a means of instruction, encompassing activities such as daily class discussions, explanations, presentations, assignment distribution, task allocation, and examinations. This text explores the types of social media that are used by teachers and the advantages and difficulties they face in using social media in English teaching.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media

Social media refers to the utilisation of internet-based and mobile technology to convert communication into a two-way interactive conversation. It includes a range of online platforms such as magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, videos, ratings, and social bookmarking (Baruah, 2012).

Social media has profoundly impacted various aspects of human life, with education being one of the most notable areas of influence. Since social media platforms first emerged, they have been increasingly

integrated into educational environments, offering new ways to facilitate learning and interaction among teachers' and students. Gikas and Grant (2013) explored how social media tools are utilized for learning purposes, highlighting their role in fostering collaboration and engagement. For example, platforms like Facebook and Twitter are used for discussions and sharing educational resources, while YouTube provides a vast repository of instructional videos.

Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013) documented a noticeable increase in the adoption of social media tools within educational settings. Their study revealed that blogs and wikis were among the most popular social media tools used for educational purposes. Blogs allow students to publish their writing and receive feedback, while wikis enable collaborative projects and knowledge sharing. These tools support various aspects of learning, from improving writing skills to fostering teamwork. Greenhow and Lewin (2016) argue that social media has the potential to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning within the context of digital culture. Formal learning typically occurs in structured environments like classrooms, whereas informal learning happens outside of these traditional settings, often driven by students' interests and interactions with digital content. Social media facilitates this bridging by providing platforms where students can engage with educational material in a more flexible, self-directed manner. This integration helps to connect classroom learning with students' everyday experiences and interests, making education more relevant and engaging.

In summary, social media's integration into education has transformed how learning is approached and experienced. By incorporating tools like blogs and wikis and by bridging formal and informal learning contexts, social media has expanded the possibilities for student engagement and collaboration. The ongoing evolution of social media continues to shape educational practices, offering new opportunities for enriching the learning experience.

Mason and Rennie (2007) and Ajjan and Hartshorne (2008) conducted research that suggests the possibility of employing social media in education to improve student involvement and critical thinking. Grosseck (2009, p. 479) highlights the diverse educational functions of social media, such as curating and gathering teaching materials, assessing and analysing student advancement, producing informative and formative presentations, organising time and scheduling, coordinating

collaborative project development, utilising digital storytelling, maintaining student e-portfolios, and more. Mazman and Usluel (2010) contend that learning platforms and social networks have effectively enabled greater involvement, cooperation, and the exchange of information and resources

Additional studies on the utilisation of social media in education suggest that integrating social media into teaching and learning settings can lead to novel methods of investigation, communication, collaboration, and self-expression, as well as have beneficial impacts on cognitive, social, and emotional aspects (Gao, Luo., & Zhang, 2012; Greenhow et al., 2011; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Pimmer et al., 2012). DiVall and Kirwin (2012) found that including social media in the learning process enhances peer support and facilitates discussions on content. In addition, social media can enhance the effectiveness of learning languages across different cultures (Mills, 2011) and support efforts to express digital identity and can change the way students engage, collaborate, and learn. In his educational research, Ghani (2015) found that Facebook can facilitate reading, writing, and debate activities.

2.2. Perception

According to Angell (2015), perception is how individuals think about something in their environment. A perception is produced by starting with their eyes, then catching inputs and producing physiological processes to bring forth perceptions. According to Haire (1956), perception is the process of identifying and comparing information to memories stored in a person's brain. It is a subjective opinion formed by a student based on their experiences, and people's perspectives can vary. Physiological processes, such as needs and motivations, influence perception, and they are subjective, making them neither correct nor incorrect. Altman (1985) describes perception as the process by which inputs are selected to be meaningful, emphasizing the role of stimuli in shaping perceptions. Sharma (2015) notes that different stimuli activate sensory organs, leading to sensations that are then interpreted in various areas of the brain, constituting the process of perception.

Perception involves two key processes: sensation and interpretation. Additionally, prior experience plays a crucial role in perception, as individuals who have encountered something before may recognize it more quickly than those who have not. In the context of this study, it is

suggested that teachers and students may have diverse perspectives on using social media in English instruction, highlighting the subjective nature of perception in shaping opinions on educational practices.

3. METHODS

This study used qualitative design as the research methodology. According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative method is a tool for investigating and comprehending the intentions of individuals or groups that define a social or human situation. Participants in this study were five EFL pre-service teachers in one of the senior high school in North Sumatra. The research used interviews as the instruments. The researcher conducted interviews with five respondents after obtaining informed consent and ensuring voluntary participation from the respondents. This interview explores teachers' perceptions of using social media as a medium for teaching English in the classroom.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews will analyze using the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). This model consists of three main activities: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification. These activities provide a systematic approach to analyzing qualitative data. Because the main focus of this study was the content of the participants' responses rather than how they supplied the information, no prosodic components that occurred during the interviews were transcribed. The interviews were painstakingly recorded and translated into English. Then, all transcriptions were checked, re-read, and thoroughly examined through description, line by line. The researchers then began to identify and categorize emerging themes or trends pertinent to the study by repeatedly reading the transcriptions from beginning to end.

4. RESULTS

This study used interviews to gather more comprehensive information from the participants. The interviews were done to elicit more comprehensive insights into the instructors' perspective on the use of social media in English instruction, encompassing both the benefits and drawbacks. This study included five individuals: four females and one male. Each of the participants was assigned an anonymous identity.

Different types of social media platforms led to the emergence of various social media platforms that participants utilised to teach the English language.

A. Types of social media that commonly used by English teachers

The interview was undertaken to gain a more profound understanding of the instructors' perspective on utilizing social media in English instruction, encompassing both the benefits and drawbacks. For this study, a total of five teachers were selected to participate in the interview portion, serving as representatives for all participants. Below are the responses provided by the pre-service teachers during the interview. Researchers analysed data from interviews that investigated the utilization of social media by instructors in the context of teaching English. According to the analysis, teachers are acquainted with the following categories of social media:

1. Social Networking Sites: Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn allow teachers to connect, share resources, and engage with both students and other educators.
2. Video Sharing Platforms: Websites such as YouTube and Vimeo allow teachers to find and share educational videos, tutorials, and other visual aids for teaching English.
3. Blogging and Microblogging Sites: Platforms like WordPress and Tumblr for blogging and Twitter for microblogging allow teachers to share insights, teaching tips, and reflections on their experiences.
4. Educational Forums and Discussion Boards: Online communities like Reddit or specialized forums where teachers discuss various topics related to English teaching methods, curriculum development, and classroom management.
5. Instant Messaging Apps: Applications like WhatsApp and Telegram allow quick communication and sharing of materials with students and colleagues.
6. Collaboration Tools: Tools like Google Docs, Slack, and Microsoft Teams enable collaborative work on lesson plans, projects, and other educational content.
7. Visual and Creative Platforms: Pinterest and Instagram, where teachers can find and share visual resources, inspirational quotes, and creative teaching ideas.

The research findings indicate that high school English teachers in Medan, who participated as respondents in this study, commonly use Seven different types of social media. These types are frequently utilized by teachers for various educational purposes, such as enhancing classroom activities, communicating with students, sharing resources, and engaging in professional development. The results highlight the diverse digital tools that these educators are familiar with and incorporate into their teaching practices, reflecting a broad engagement with social media in the educational context.

Several types of social media platforms have emerged as commonly utilized tools among the respondents for teaching English. The teachers frequently mentioned using applications such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. These platforms serve various educational purposes and have become integral parts of their teaching methods. During interviews, the respondents shared specific insights and experiences regarding the use of these social media platforms. They expressed how each platform offers unique features and benefits that cater to different aspects of English instruction. For instance:

1. WhatsApp

Teachers often use this messaging app to communicate with students and parents, share assignments and resources, and facilitate group discussions. Its ease of use and accessibility make it a popular choice for quick and effective communication. Line with the teachers statements:

I also created a WhatsApp group for students in the English course I teach. There, I can engage them in written conversations in English. I share learning reviews through groups. (T.1)

I use WhatsApp as additional learning media for my students, they can send assignments at any time via the group that I have provided. (T.5)

2. YouTube

This video-sharing platform is a valuable resource for accessing a wide range of educational videos, tutorials, and lectures. Teachers use it to supplement their lessons with visual content, making complex topics more understandable and engaging for students. Line with the teachers statements:

I often use YouTube as a teaching and learning medium because this platform provides a variety of useful content. I use educational videos, tutorials, and other materials to help students understand English concepts better.(T.1)

I often use videos that contain explanations of grammar, conversation examples, and cultural videos that show the context of English use in daily activities. For example, for grammar topics, I look for videos that explain rules in an interesting and easy-to-understand way. As for conversation topics, I chose videos that show simple interactions between native speakers.(T.3)

3. Facebook

As a social networking site, Facebook allows teachers to create groups and pages dedicated to their classes. They use these spaces to post announcements, share study materials, and foster a sense of community among students. Line with the teachers statements:

I use Facebook as a reference for sharing various types of content. For example, I post links to articles or videos relevant to the topic we are studying, as well as additional materials such as notes or presentation slides. I also use the Facebook Live feature to conduct question-and-answer sessions or review material before the exam. Additionally, I utilize polls to determine students' understanding of a topic. (T.1)

I use the event feature to create reminders about exams or other important activities. I have also created a special page for class projects where students can publish their work, such as writing or multimedia projects. This not only gives them a platform to showcase their work but also builds a sense of pride and ownership. (T.2)

4. Instagram

Teachers use Instagram to share visually appealing content, such as infographics, inspirational quotes, and student work. The platform's focus on images and short videos makes it suitable for promoting visual literacy and creativity. Line with the teachers statements:

One of the assignments I give is the "Daily Speaking Challenge," where students create a short video every day talking about a predetermined topic, such as their hobby, daily experience, or their opinion on a particular issue. I have also asked students to make video

tutorials or product reviews, which not only train their speaking skills but also their critical thinking and creativity skills. (T.4)

I use Instagram as a tool to enrich students' learning experiences. This platform allows me to share various types of content relevant to the lessons, such as images, videos, and stories. I also use it to give creative assignments that engage students directly. One of the assignments that I often give is the "Caption Challenge," where students are asked to create captions or descriptions for images that I upload. This trains their writing skills, especially in the use of vocabulary and proper grammar. In addition, I also ask students to create short videos in English, such as daily vlogs or book reviews, which they upload to their Instagram accounts or class accounts.(T.5)

During the interviews, respondents provided specific examples and anecdotes illustrating how these platforms have been integrated into their teaching practices. They highlighted the versatility of these tools and discussed the ways in which they enhance student engagement, facilitate communication, and provide access to a diverse range of resources.

a. Advantages using social media in teaching English

The researcher focused the analysis and discussion on understanding the instructors' viewpoints and the particular situations where they acknowledged the benefits of using social media for teaching English. Through this exploration, the study aimed to capture the nuanced opinions of teachers regarding the integration of social media into their instructional practices.

The researcher concentrated the analysis and discussion on the instructors' perspectives and the specific circumstances in which they recognised the advantages of utilising social media for English instruction. The following table illustrates several primary themes and sub-themes. There are some Advantages and disadvantages use social media in teaching English according to the teachers' : Easy to use an easy to practice, Teaching learning process more interesting, Enhanced Student Engagement. Line with the teachers' statements bellow :

It is simple to use social media to find the desired information. Social media provides access to a vast array of teaching materials, including videos, articles, and interactive exercises, which can enrich the curriculum and provide varied learning experiences.(T.1)

In general, utilizing the services of YouTube or Facebook is user-friendly. Mastering using the features of the YouTube platform for educational purposes was a straightforward task. (T.3)

The social media provided me with straightforward and accessible means to access information. I can make teaching learning more interactive and engaging, as it allows for the incorporation of multimedia content, real-time communication, and creative projects.(T.4)

The Whatsapp website is more interesting and adaptable for user interaction. I think this Platforms enable easy and timely communication between me and my students, as well as among students themselves, promoting collaboration and peer learning.(T.5)

The results of teacher interviews indicate that teachers generally find it easy to use social media for teaching and learning activities in high schools. This analysis reveals that teachers perceive social media as a user-friendly tool that can facilitate educational activities. Their positive perception suggests that they are comfortable and confident in integrating social media into their teaching practices, which could enhance the overall learning experience for students. This high perception of ease of use implies that teachers are more willing to adopt and incorporate social media in their instructional methods. Teachers also highlighted the value of social media for their professional growth, as it offers opportunities for networking, sharing best practices, and staying updated with the latest trends in education.

b. The difficulties faced by teachers' using social media in teaching English

Our research seeks to address the question, "What are the challenges in using social media to support teaching in high school?" By exploring this topic, we aim to identify and explain the various difficulties educators face when integrating social media platforms into their teaching practices. The explanation below is an excerpt from a teacher interview about the difficulties they face in using social media to teach English.

The difficulty is that sometimes students lack focus because they are allowed to hold cellphones, sometimes they open other applications and don't focus on learning. That's where our task as

teachers is to monitor students so that they are wise in using social media. (T.1)

The drawback of using social media is that every application we want to access requires paid internet and a strong network. (T.2)

The main challenge for me when using social media is ensuring that all students have equal access to technology and the Internet. I also have to ensure that the activities on social media that I use as a teaching medium support the learning objectives. (T.3)

There are some challenges. One of them is ensuring that the content selected is truly appropriate to the learning material. Many videos can be taken from social media, but not all of them are accurate or appropriate to learning needs. Apart from that, there are also challenges regarding time management. I also have to manage the time I use videos in class wisely so that I do not waste too much time just watching. I also have to make sure that all students have the same access, especially if they want to watch replays at home. (T.4)

The only problem is internet access, we have to buy a good internet package to use every day. (T.5)

The contribution of this study lies in its detailed description of these challenges, providing valuable insights for both academic and practical literature. By identifying and discussing these obstacles, the study aims to equip teachers with a better understanding of the complexities involved in using social media for educational purposes. This awareness can help educators make informed decisions and develop strategies to effectively integrate social media into their teaching, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for high school students.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the interview quote above, it shows that teachers have a good attitude towards the use of technology, especially social media in the English language teaching process. The data from the interview above shows that the use of social media has the potential to be used in Teaching English. In the opinion of these teachers, most middle and high school students already have cellphones so they are also used to using social media in their daily lives, and they use various social media

platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and others. Social media has many benefits for learning English and it is found that some social media posts have prospective prospects in acquiring English language skills, especially productive writing and reading abilities. As a result, social media is indeed suitable for use for various English learning activities.

The findings from the interview agreed with the previous study by Monica & Anamaria (2014); social media is a thing due to the advanced technology nowadays. There are seven kinds of social media discussed in this research: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Email, and Telegram. However, the interview result showed that this study's participants mostly Teachers used Instagram and Youtube to teach English.

Based on information obtained through interviews with respondents, social media has many benefits in learning. Some participants explained that Facebook can be used as a medium for submitting assignments and providing various results of student assignments and improving communication between students and their teachers. This proves argument by (Selwyn, 2007) that Facebook can be used not only educationally for collaborative learning purposes, but also to support student interaction as well as interaction between students and their instructors.

Further research on the utilisation of social media in education has revealed that integrating social media into educational settings can result in novel methods of investigation, communication, and cooperation while also yielding beneficial impacts on cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions (Gao, Luo., & Zhang, 2012; Greenhow et al., 2011; DiVall & Kirwin, 2012). Their research findings indicate that incorporating social media into education fosters greater peer support and communication related to multicultural topics (Mills, 2011). Additionally, it amplifies the beneficial impacts of expressing one's identity and digital literacy, especially among certain demographics.

Apart from its advantages, Social media also has some disadvantages. Pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions about the shortcomings of using social media as an application for the English language learning process social media features adult content. So teachers also have to control what students open in the learning process, and the final weakness of using social media is that it

requires strong internet media and we have to buy an internet package if we want to access social media.

6. CONCLUSION

Drawing from the outcomes of this study, the research aims to investigate the perspectives of five pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in a North Sumatra senior high school who employ social media for teaching English. The findings indicate these pre-service teachers' viewpoints regarding using social media in the teaching and learning process. The study focused on the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers in Medan who utilized various social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

The study's interview process occurred over a single day through Zoom meetings. Prior to the interviews, researchers adhered to research ethics by seeking permission. The findings from the study involving pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers indicated that utilizing social media in English teaching is deemed effective, creative, valuable, enjoyable, and fun. This is because social media facilitates easy access to information about English teaching, including video, audio, and text formats. Additionally, the features on social media platforms, such as groups, make it simpler for pre-service EFL teachers to share learning materials effortlessly. This includes conveniently sharing materials through a single click, eliminating the need to share via personal chat.

Pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers express that employing social media can enhance the quality of learning. All the teachers in the study were familiar with social media and had experience using at least one type of social media platform. Despite encountering various challenges and limitations, they generally expressed support for the use of social media in their professional activities. These challenges include issues such as lack of access to technology, concerns about privacy and security, or difficulties in maintaining professional boundaries on social platforms. Moreover, the teachers had a positive attitude towards social media and recognized its potential benefits in English Language Teaching (ELT). They were proactive in exploring different ways to incorporate social media into their teaching practices, striving to use these tools to enhance student engagement, provide access to diverse resources, and create a more interactive learning environment. The teachers' willingness to experiment and innovate reflects their

commitment to adapting to new technologies and improving their teaching methodologies.

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