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The impact of social media on english proficiency among politeknik hulu Terengganu students

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, social media is important in everyone's daily life, including students at tertiary level. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are not just for socializing and entertainment but also serve as important tools for communication and education. The extensive use of social media offers a special chance to explore how it affects different areas of students' lives, such as their academic success and language abilities. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on the English language proficiency of students at Politeknik Hulu Terengganu. A series of surveys were utilized to gather information from 76 participants enrolled in the Communicative English 3 course (DUE50032) during their last year of study. The information was examined with the help of SPSS version 20.0. The results showed that a majority of participants acknowledged the impact of social media on their English skills, particularly in writing, reading, listening, and speaking, with an average rating of 3.5. It concluded that students have positive views on the impact of social media activities, as well as perceiving social media as a constructive learning tool, that led to positive influence of social media engagement on their English proficiency.

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Introduction

Nowadays social networking has become a vital element in students' everyday lives regardless of the level of study. At the tertiary level, students are more exposed to digital platforms as many of them use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube for pleasure, communication, and even for their study. Although the use of social media in helping students' language development is still a matter of debate, the positive influence brought by the platform cannot be denied. Some might claim that social media hinders the development of proper language use but there are others who see social media as offering opportunities for the students to use the English language more widely. The study is intended to evaluate the impact of social media usage towards English proficiency among Politeknik Hulu Terengganu students. It is also to provide input into how different social media activities affects students' four main skills of English, which are reading, speaking, listening and writing. The significance of this research is to identify the benefits and drawbacks of social media as to help the teachers recognizing suitable learning strategies when incorporating social media activities in the language classroom. Integrating digital platforms for educational purposes could make the teaching and learning process to be authentic and in line with the trend.

There are various references from previous studies that explained the general effects of social media on students' academic performance either negatively or positively. Junco (2021) clarified the relationship about the frequency of social media use as being closely related to the decline in student academic performance. Välisalo and Ranta (2016) also mentioned that the widespread use of colloquial language in social media has affected students' formal writing skills. Blattner and Fiori (2009), however, saw the positive side of this platform, especially Facebook, which was claimed to have potential as a learning material through the social interaction offered. Alm (2015) stated that social media has helped students improve listening skills and also improve vocabulary through the use of social media in learning. In addition, there are several studies, as Lai (2019) and Kabilan et. al (2010) that focused on the challenges of ensuring that social media is able to be an effective language learning tool, namely the need for guidance and support when using the platform, as well as concerns about the quality of the language, potential distractions and dependence on the use of informal language.

In general, this study expresses the impact of social media on the mastery of English Language among Politeknik Hulu Terengganu students. Although it is said to open up opportunities for language practice, it also presents challenges that need to be overcome by language teachers. Future studies need to focus on strategies to reduce the negative effects of social media on the ability to use the correct language and also look at the long-term implications of using social media in the language learning process.

Method

The research utilized a quantitative approach with 76 participants from the Communicative English 3 course (DUE50032) at Politeknik Hulu Terengganu (PHT). A series of surveys has been created, comprising of 2 parts. The demographic details of the students are found in the initial part. The next section contains three constructs. Construct A examined the relationship between PHT students' English proficiency levels and their use of social media. The focus of construct B was identifying the types of social media actions that either positively or negatively affect students' language skills, whereas Construct C emphasized on how students view social media as a means of enhancing their English proficiency. The respondents were asked to rate twenty-one statements using a Likert scale ranging from one to four, including options for strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability index. The questionnaire's reliability was validated through a pilot study with 10 samples, yielding a result of 0.975. The value acquired indicates that the survey is valid. A descriptive analysis of the data involved utilizing both the average and the deviation from the mean. The mean scores are interpreted based on Table 1.

Table 1 <Mean Interpretation (Source: Zaki & Ahmad, 2017)>

Mean Score	Level
4.30 – 5.00	Very High
3.50 – 4.29	High
2.70 – 3.49	Moderate
1.90 – 2.69	Low

Results and Discussion

Table 2 provides an overview of the respondent's demographic characteristics. A total of 76 respondents got involved in the research. Female students made up 78.9 % of the respondents while another 21.1% of the total percentage contributed by male students. 39.5% of the respondents were coming from students of Diploma in Resort Management (DHR) and followed by 25.0% of students in Diploma in Tourism Management (DUP). Another share of percentage indicated by students of Diploma in Recreational Tourism (DRT) with 23.7% and the last section contributed by students of Diploma in Accountancy (DAT) donated for 11.8%.

Table 2 <Demographic Factors>

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	16	21.1
Female	60	78.9
Total	76	100.0
Resort Management (DHR)	30	39.5

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recreational Tourism (DRT)	18	23.7
Tourism Management (DUP)	19	25.0
Accountancy (DAT)	9	11.8
Total	76	100.0

Table 3 < Relationship Between Social Media Usage and English Proficiency Levels>

No	Item	N=76		
		Means	SD	Interpretation
A1.	I always use social media to engage with English language content (e.g., articles, videos, posts).	3.45	.57	Moderate
A2.	Using social media has improved my ability to read and understand English texts.	3.64	.51	High
A3.	Engaging in writing activities on social media (e.g., posts, comments) has enhanced my English writing skills.	3.39	.56	Moderate
A4.	Participating in voice or video chats on social media has improved my English-speaking abilities.	3.45	.53	Moderate
A5.	Listening to English audio or video content on social media has helped me improve my English listening skills.	3.59	.49	High
A6.	Using social media has increased my confidence in using English in academic and social contexts.	3.50	.53	High
A7.	Overall, my use of social media has positively impacted my English proficiency.	3.57	.52	High

Table 3 explains the mean score analysis and also the interpretation for the relationship between the use of social media and the students' level of English proficiency. The statement with the highest mean score of 3.64 is (A2) suggests a strong agreement among respondents that social media has positively impacted their ability to read and comprehend English texts. The statement with the lowest mean score of 3.39 is (A3), concluding that only some students agree that writing activities on social media contribute to improving English writing skills. Statements about engaging with English content, voice/video chat (A4) and using social media for academic/social contexts (A6) had a mean score of 3.45 to 3.50, indicating moderate to strong agreement about the support of these activities in helping English language proficiency among students. Statement (A5) has a mean score of 3.59, indicating that most students agreed that social media provides a valuable resource for improving English listening skills. Statement (A7) has a mean score of 3.57, assuming that most respondents agreed that social media has had a positive impact on improving English language skills.

These finding are in line with the latest literature reviews that highlight the potential of social media in facilitating language learning among students. Reinhardt (2019) as well as Zohoorian-Fooladi & Karimian (2020) stated that social media provides opportunities for the exposure to authentic language input, opportunities to interact and collaborate, and also provides access to various multimedia resources. Wang and Vásquez (2022) found that social media platforms are able to provide students with opportunities for meaningful communication, collaborative learning, and exposure to diverse language input, which basically supports the development of various language skills, especially the key skills of English which are reading, writing, listening and speak. Other than that, according to a study by Alsulami (2021), students' motivation, engagement, and self-confidence may all rise as a result of using social media for language learning, which at the same time can also enhance their exposure to informal learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

Table 4 displays an evaluation of mean scores for various social media activities that either positively or negatively influence students' proficiency in English. The statement (B3), which indicates that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that using social media has improved their ability to listen to and understand English Language, has the highest mean score of 3.57. This analysis can be referred to the study of Alm (2015), who regarded Facebook as a potential medium for informal language learning that indicated the progress of students in terms of their listening and reading abilities through exposure to diverse content and multimedia in the platform. The statement with the lowest mean score of 3.33 is (B6) indicating that only some respondents agreed that discussions in English on social media can develop their critical thinking

and language skills. Reading activities (B1) scored 3.55 that shows students believed that these activities could help them to improve their proficiency.

Table 4 < Types of Social Media Activities That Positively or Negatively Impact Students' English Language Skills.>

No	Item	N=76		
		Means	SD	Interpretation
B1.	Reading articles or posts in English on social media has positively impacted my English language skills.	3.55	.57	High
B2.	Writing comments or posts in English on social media has helped improve my English writing skills.	3.45	.51	Moderate
B3.	Watching videos in English on social media has improved my English listening and comprehension skills.	3.57	.56	High
B4.	Being active in English language groups or forums on social media has enhanced my overall English proficiency.	3.36	.53	Moderate
B5.	Engaging in chats or messaging in English on social media has improved my conversational English skills.	3.46	.49	Moderate
B6.	Participating in debates or discussions in English on social media has helped me develop critical thinking and language skills.	3.33	.53	Moderate
B7.	Sharing content (e.g., articles, videos) in English on social media has enhanced my understanding and use of the language.	3.47	.52	Moderate

Statements (B2) and (B7) have mean scores ranging from 3.45 to 3.47, explaining that respondents reasonably agreed with the use of social media activities to improve writing skills, comprehension and general use of English language. Having a mean score of 3.36, the statement (B4) indicates a fair agreement among respondents that using social media to participate in language-focused groups or forums enhances overall English ability. Statement (B5) has a mean score of 3.46, showing that some students agreed on social media interaction helps to improve conversation skills in English. Although the use of language in social media is more in a casual context, the informal learning process through social media can still help students to improve their language proficiency as suggested by Blattner and Fiori (2009), who emphasized how social interaction on the platform can improve writing and speaking skills which gives space to students to practice the language in an informal and interesting context.

Table 5 < Students' Perceptions of Social Media as a Tool for Enhancing Their English Proficiency>

No	Item	N=76		
		Means	SD	Interpretation
C1.	I believe that using social media has significantly improved my English language skills.	3.55	.53	High
C2.	I find learning English through social media to be more effective than traditional classroom methods.	3.43	.57	Moderate
C3.	Social media keeps me more engaged and motivated to learn English compared to other learning tools.	3.50	.55	High
C4.	The accessibility and convenience of social media make it an excellent tool for improving my English proficiency.	3.51	.50	High
C5.	Social media provides a variety of resources (videos, articles, discussions) that help me improve my English.	3.54	.50	High
C6.	The interactive nature of social media enhances my ability to learn and practice English.	3.47	.50	Moderate
C7.	Engaging with peers on social media helps me learn English more effectively through collaboration and feedback.	3.49	.55	Moderate

Table 5 explicates the analysis of students' perception of social media as a tool to improve students' English proficiency. The statement with the highest mean score of 3.55 is (C1) indicating that respondents strongly agreed that social media has had a positive impact on their English language skills. The statement with the lowest mean score of 3.43 is (C2) which shows that students somewhat agreed that social media is more effective than conventional English learning methods in the classroom. The average scores for (C3, C4 and C5) fall between 3.50 to 3.54, showing a strong agreement from participants that motivation, engagement, accessibility of materials, and variety of resources on social media are crucial in enhancing their English proficiency. Reinhardt (2019) backed this up by explaining that social media platforms offer students a variety of real resources, like movies, news articles, and content made by native speakers. Students' comprehension and production skills are improved as they become more familiar with language in daily life situations. The mean scores for the statements about social media's interactive nature (C6) and peer cooperation (C7) are 3.47 and 3.49, respectively. These results indicate a reasonable level of agreement with the interactive elements of social media and the effectiveness of peer collaboration in English language learning in improving English skills.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study emphasizes how the use of social media facilitates students to improve their English proficiency. The general assessment indicates that social media is considered as a useful tool for enhancing different areas of English language skills among students at Politeknik Hulu Terengganu. While there is some debate about the extent to which social media benefits; writing, speaking, and critical thinking abilities, most respondents believed that it has positively influenced their English language skills and proficiency. While acknowledging the importance of digital platforms for everyday communication and education, it is equally critical to comprehend how these platforms affect language proficiency. This study provides balanced findings that can assist language teachers in developing efficient methods for using social media as a teaching tool by highlighting both positive and negative effects. It is because, despite the fact that social media can develop students' interests, it is also crucial to acknowledge its limitations to ensure productive utilization and prevent negative outcomes in language learning settings.

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