

STUDENTS' SOCIAL MEDIA PREFERENCES AS SECONDARY LEARNING SOURCES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH (A SURVEY ON ACEH ENGLISH MAJOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS)

Katiara¹, Mulyadi Syahputra², Said Miftahul Fahmi³

^{1, 2, 3}Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena, Jl. Tanggul Krueng Lamnyong, Banda Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia
Email: tiarakatiara03@gmail.com

Article History

Received: 23-06-2026

Revision: 09-07-2026

Accepted: 11-07-2026

Published: 13-07-2026

Abstract. This study aims to examine the preferences of undergraduate English students in Aceh in utilizing social media as a secondary learning resource in English learning. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with data collection techniques through questionnaires distributed to English students from several universities in Aceh. Data were analyzed descriptively to identify the types of platforms used, the purposes of use, and students' perceptions of the benefits of social media in language learning. The results show that social media plays a significant role as a supplementary learning resource outside of formal classroom learning. The most frequently used platforms include WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, and X, which are used for vocabulary development, listening and speaking practice, reading improvement, and writing skills. Students tend to choose platforms that are easily accessible, interactive, flexible, and provide authentic English content. These findings confirm that the use of social media encourages the development of digital literacy and student learning autonomy. This study provides an empirical contribution to the development of technology-based English learning strategies and serves as a reference for educators and educational institutions in integrating social media more effectively in the learning process.

Keywords: Social Media, Preferences, English Learning

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji preferensi mahasiswa program sarjana jurusan Bahasa Inggris di Aceh dalam memanfaatkan media sosial sebagai sumber belajar sekunder dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris dari beberapa universitas di Aceh. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk mengidentifikasi jenis platform yang digunakan, tujuan penggunaan, serta persepsi mahasiswa terhadap manfaat media sosial dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial berperan signifikan sebagai sumber belajar pelengkap di luar pembelajaran formal di kelas. Platform yang paling sering digunakan meliputi WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, dan X, yang dimanfaatkan untuk pengembangan kosakata, latihan keterampilan menyimak dan berbicara, peningkatan kemampuan membaca, serta keterampilan menulis. Mahasiswa cenderung memilih platform yang mudah diakses, interaktif, fleksibel, dan menyediakan konten Bahasa Inggris yang autentik. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pemanfaatan media sosial mendorong berkembangnya literasi digital dan otonomi belajar mahasiswa. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi empiris bagi pengembangan strategi pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris berbasis teknologi serta menjadi rujukan bagi pendidik dan institusi pendidikan dalam mengintegrasikan media sosial secara lebih efektif dalam proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Sosial Media, Preferensi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris

How to Cite: Katiara., Syahputra, M., & Fahmi, S. M. (2026). Students' Social Media Preferences as Secondary Learning Sources for Learning English (a Survey on Aceh English Major Undergraduate Students). *PEDAGOGIC: Indonesian Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 6 (4), 2041-2058. <http://doi.org/10.54373/ijset.v6i4.6651>

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of students' daily lives, functioning not only as a communication medium but also as an informal learning space. In the context of English language learning, social media provides easy access to authentic content that supports learning beyond the classroom. Avivah et al. (2021) note that social media significantly influences young people's activities, particularly through short video content that shapes perspectives and learning habits. For undergraduate students majoring in English, social media offers exposure to real language use that can complement formal instruction.

The rapid development of digital technology has changed how students access information and engage in language learning. Social media platforms enable learners to interact with videos, texts, discussions, and audiovisual materials that support vocabulary development, pronunciation, listening comprehension, speaking confidence, reading, and writing skills. In Indonesia, where social media usage is widespread, platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Telegram, and X are frequently accessed, creating opportunities for self-directed and flexible English learning. Previous studies indicate that social media can foster engagement and collaborative learning (Putri & Ramadhan, 2020), increase learners' confidence, particularly among introverted students (Astuti, 2021), and require strong digital literacy to ensure effective and critical use (Riyanti et al., 2023).

Despite the growing body of research on social media in language learning, studies focusing on students' platform preferences within specific local contexts remain limited. In Aceh, little empirical evidence explains which social media platforms English major students prefer, what types of content they use, and how these platforms support different language skills. Existing studies often examine single platforms in isolation or adopt broad perspectives that overlook regional and contextual factors (Growing Science, 2023). Moreover, limited attention has been given to understanding social media as a deliberate secondary learning source that complements formal university instruction.

Several studies have confirmed the pedagogical potential of social media in English learning. Research by Silaban and Marpaung (2024) highlights TikTok's effectiveness in improving vocabulary and pronunciation, while Mustadi et al. (2021) show that blended learning through social media creates a more flexible and less intimidating learning environment. Studies by Selcuk and Jones (2022), Abbas et al. (2019), and Muzakky (2023) further demonstrate that platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram support collaborative learning, vocabulary acquisition, and listening and speaking skills.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on undergraduate English department students in Aceh and examines their social media preferences as secondary learning sources for English language learning. The study aims to identify the platforms and content most frequently used, explore students' perceptions of benefits and challenges, and analyze how social media supports the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. By addressing this focus, the research seeks to contribute context-specific insights into technology-enhanced language learning and inform educators and institutions in aligning instructional practices with students' digital learning habits.

METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative research design to examine undergraduate English major students' preferences in using social media as secondary learning sources for English learning. The participants consisted of English department students from several universities in Aceh, selected using a convenience sampling technique based on their availability and willingness to participate. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered online to ensure accessibility and efficiency. The questionnaire was designed to capture several aspects, including students' demographic profiles, types of social media platforms used, frequency of use, English learning activities conducted through social media, perceived benefits for language skill development, and reasons for choosing particular platforms. The instrument employed a combination of multiple-choice items and Likert-scale statements to allow both categorical and attitudinal data to be obtained. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity and relevance to the research objectives.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize students' responses and to identify dominant patterns of social media usage related to English learning. This analytical approach enabled the researcher to present a clear overview of students' platform preferences, learning purposes, and perceived contributions of social media to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, without attempting to establish causal relationships.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Data

All respondents met the research criteria because they confirmed that they were English Education students and used social media to support their English learning.

Table 1. Respondents data

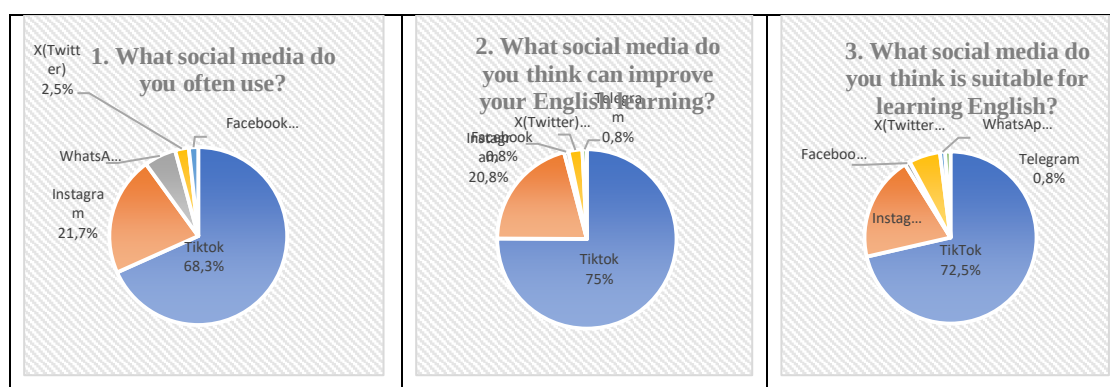
University	Frequency	Percentage
Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena	39	32,5%
Universitas Syiah Kuala	36	30,8%
Universitas Muhammadiyah	16	13,3%
Universitas Abulyatama	9	7,5%
Universitas Serambi Mekah	8	6,7%
UIN Ar Raniry	11	9,2%

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on their universities. The highest percentage of respondents was from Universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena (32.5%), followed by Universitas Syiah Kuala (30.8%). Meanwhile, 13.3% of the respondents were from Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, 9.2% from UIN Ar-Raniry, 7.5% from Universitas Abulyatama, and 6.7% from Universitas Serambi Mekkah. These results indicate that the study involved students from various universities in Aceh, ensuring that the data represented different educational backgrounds within English Education programs.

Analysis of Students' Preferences of Social Media

Social Media

Social media refers to internet-based platforms that allow users to create, share, access, and interact with digital content in the form of text, images, audio, and videos. The results in this category are based on questionnaire items that measure social media criteria, capturing how these platforms are used by students to support their English learning activities.

**Figure 1.** Criteria of social media

Based on Figure 1, the results of the first question indicate that TikTok emerged as the most preferred social media platform among undergraduate students of the English Department in Aceh. Out of 120 respondents, 82 students (68.3%) reported using TikTok most frequently for learning English. This was followed by Instagram with 26 students (21.7%), WhatsApp

with 7 students (5.8%), X (Twitter) with 3 students (2.5%), and Facebook with 2 students (1.7%). None of the respondents selected Telegram as their primary platform for English learning. The results of the second question show a similar pattern. A total of 75% of respondents stated that TikTok could improve their English learning. Instagram was chosen by 20.8% of participants, while X (Twitter) accounted for 2.5%. Facebook and Telegram were each selected by only 0.8% of respondents. These findings suggest that students perceive TikTok as not only popular but also effective in supporting their English learning. Likewise, the third question revealed that 72.5% of respondents considered TikTok the most suitable social media platform for learning English. Instagram ranked second with 20%, followed by X (Twitter) at 5%, while Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram were each selected by only 0.8% of participants.

Overall, the average results of the three questions show that TikTok dominated students' social media preferences with an average percentage of 71.9%, followed by Instagram at 20.8% and X (Twitter) at 3.3%. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Telegram received minimal responses. These findings consistently indicate that TikTok is perceived as the most frequently used, most beneficial, and most suitable platform for learning English, likely due to its engaging short-form videos, ease of access, and abundance of English-learning content.

Interactivity

Interactivity refers to the degree to which social media enables students to engage in communication related to English learning, including discussing topics, posting comments, asking questions, and receiving feedback.

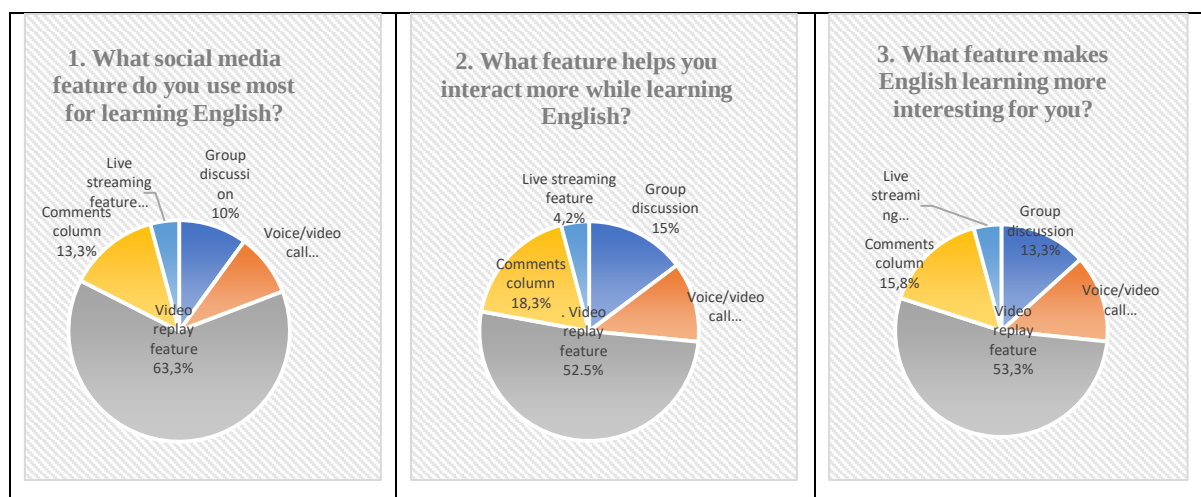


Figure 2. Criteria of interactivity

Based on Figure 2, the interpretation of the interactivity data shows a clear dominance of the video replay feature across all three questions. This feature was consistently identified as the most frequently used, the most helpful for interaction, and the most interesting for learning English. Overall, video replay achieved the highest average percentage (56.4%), indicating that students strongly prefer interactive features that allow them to revisit learning materials at their own pace.

Other interactive features played a secondary role. The comments column ranked second (15.7%), suggesting that written feedback and brief interactions support learning but are less central than repeated content access. Group discussions (12.7%) and voice or video calls (10.8%) were used moderately, while live streaming received the lowest preference (4.2%), indicating limited interest in real-time interaction. In summary, the key finding is that students value interactivity that supports flexibility and self-paced learning rather than synchronous communication. The strong preference for video replay highlights the importance of features that enable repeated exposure to explanations, which helps students better understand and retain English learning content through social media.

Satisfied

Satisfaction refers to the degree of positive feeling experienced by users after utilizing a particular platform or technology. satisfaction is influenced by the quality of learning experiences, platform usability, and the perceived benefits gained from using the technology. Intis research, Satisfaction refers to students' level of satisfaction in using social media to learn English. This is the result of questions based on satisfied criteria.

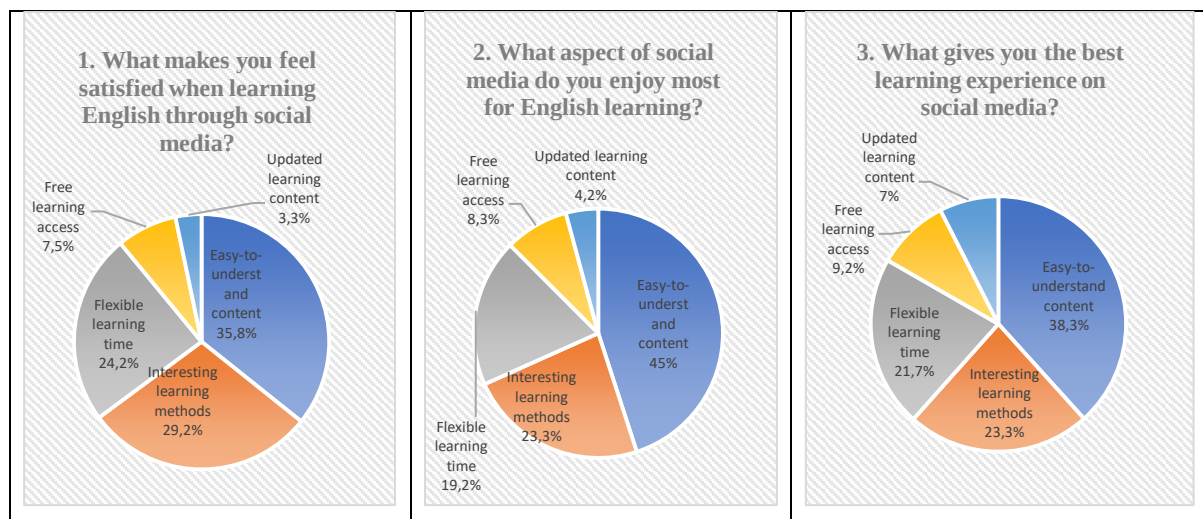


Figure 3. Criteria of satisfied

Based on Figure 3, the interpretation of the data shows a clear and consistent pattern. Across all three questions, easy-to-understand content emerged as the most important factor influencing students' satisfaction when learning English through social media. This factor received the highest proportion of responses in each question and an overall average of 39.7%, indicating that clarity and comprehensibility of materials are the primary determinants of a positive learning experience. The second most influential factor was interesting learning methods with an average of 25.3%, suggesting that engaging presentation styles support learning but remain secondary to content clarity. Flexible learning time ranked third with an average of 21.7%, highlighting the importance of time flexibility in informal learning environments. In contrast, free learning access (8.3%) and updated learning content (5.0%) were perceived as less critical.

Overall, these findings indicate that students' satisfaction with social media as a secondary learning source is mainly driven by how clearly English materials are explained. While interactive methods and flexible schedules enhance the learning experience, students place greater value on content that helps them understand English concepts easily and independently.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness refers to students' beliefs that social media helps them learn English more effectively, improves their language skills, and facilitates the learning process. This is the result of questions based on the perceived usefulness criteria.

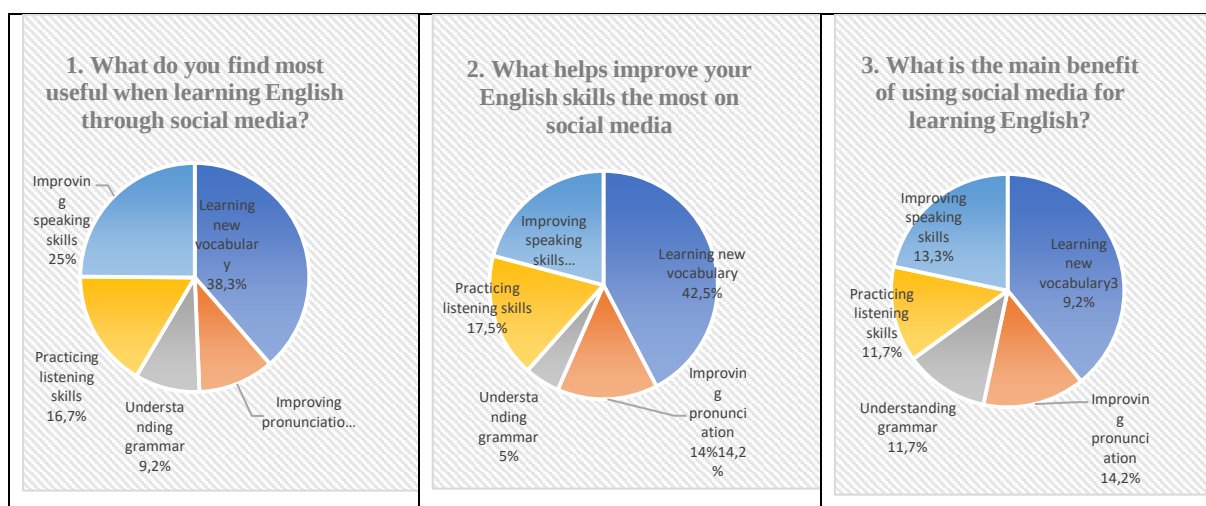


Figure 4. Criteria of perceived usefulness

Based on Figure 4, the interpretation of the perceived usefulness data highlights vocabulary development as the most important benefit of using social media for learning English. Across all three questions, learning new vocabulary consistently received the highest

responses, with an average percentage of 40.0%, indicating that students primarily view social media as an effective tool for expanding their word knowledge. Other language skills were perceived as beneficial but less dominant. Speaking skills ranked second (19.7%), followed by listening skills (15.3%) and pronunciation improvement (13.1%). These findings suggest that exposure to spoken English through videos and short clips supports oral skill development, although not as strongly as vocabulary acquisition. Grammar understanding received the lowest average percentage (8.6%), indicating that students perceive social media as less effective for learning structured grammatical rules.

Overall, the key finding is that students regard social media as a valuable supplementary learning resource, particularly for vocabulary enrichment. While it also contributes to speaking, listening, and pronunciation practice, its strongest perceived usefulness lies in providing frequent, contextual, and accessible exposure to new English words that support independent and informal learning.

Analysis of What Students Learn from Social Media

Learning Skill

Learning skills refer to the abilities and competencies developed through the learning process. Learning skills are the English skills that are most often learned or improved through social media. This is the result of questions based on learning skill criteria.

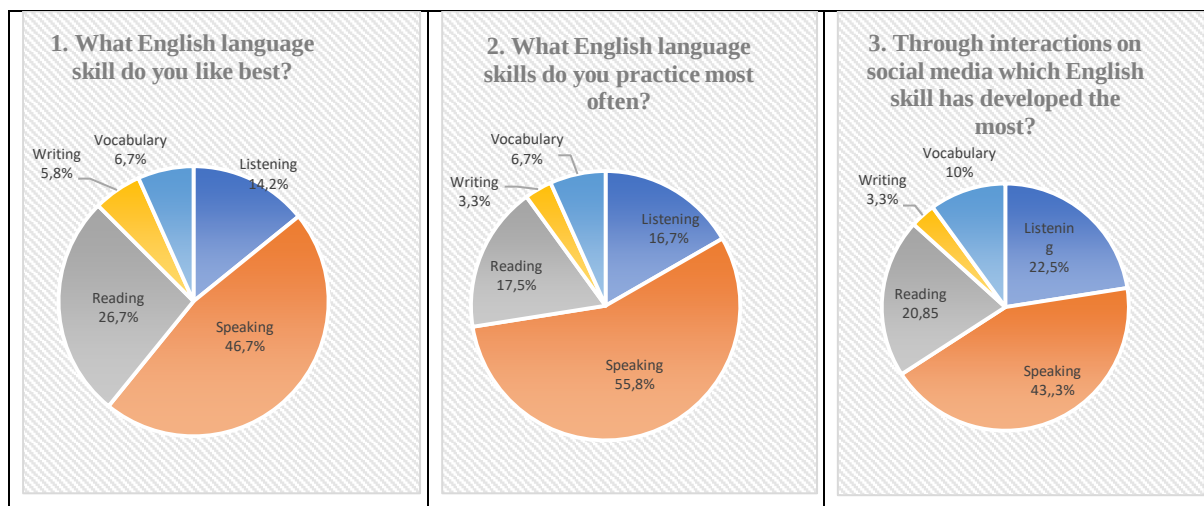


Figure 5. Criteria of learning skill

Based on Figure 5, the interpretation of the learning skill data shows that speaking is the most dominant English skill associated with students' use of social media. Across the three questions, speaking consistently received the highest responses and reached an average percentage of 48.6%, indicating that students not only prefer speaking but also practice and

perceive it as the skill that develops the most through social media. Reading ranked second with an average of 21.7%, followed by listening at 17.8%. These results suggest that exposure to written captions, short texts, and audio-visual content also contributes to receptive skill development, although to a lesser extent than speaking. Vocabulary showed a relatively low average (7.8%), while writing received the lowest percentage (4.1%), indicating that these skills are less emphasized in students' social media-based learning activities.

Overall, the key finding is that social media functions most effectively as a platform for developing productive oral skills, particularly speaking. The interactive features of social media, such as video content, comment exchanges, and conversational interactions, provide frequent and authentic opportunities for students to use spoken English. While other skills are also supported, their development is perceived as secondary compared to the strong contribution of social media to speaking proficiency.

Learning Material

Learning materials refer to the types of English materials that students most frequently access through social media. social media offers a wide range of learning materials, including instructional videos, grammar explanations, vocabulary lessons, pronunciation tutorials, reading texts, and interactive exercises. This is the result of questions based on learning material criteria.

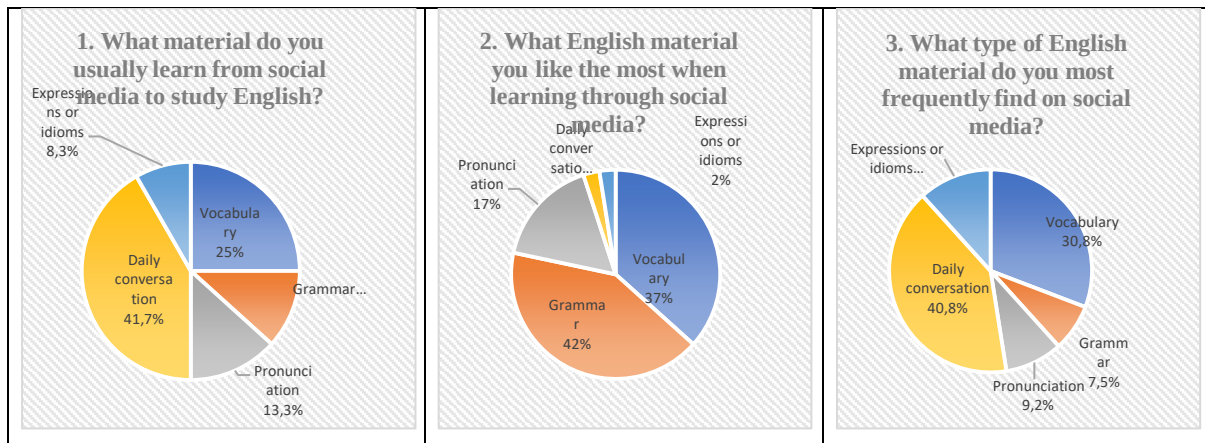


Figure 5. Criteria of learning material

Based on Figure 5, the results for question one under the learning material criterion show that daily conversation was the English learning material most frequently learned by students through social media. Of the 120 respondents, 50 students (41.7%) reported that they usually learned daily conversation. This was followed by vocabulary, selected by 30 students (25%), and pronunciation, chosen by 16 students (13.3%). Meanwhile, 14 students (11.7%) indicated that they learned grammar, and 10 students (8.3%) preferred expressions or idioms.

The results of question two reveal a different pattern. Grammar emerged as the most preferred type of English learning material, selected by 41.7% of the respondents. This was followed by vocabulary (36.7%) and pronunciation (16.7%). In contrast, daily conversation and expressions or idioms were each chosen by only 2.5% of the respondents. These findings suggest that although students frequently engage with conversational content on social media, they tend to show a stronger preference for grammar-focused materials when asked about their learning interests. For question three, the data indicate that daily conversation was the English material most frequently encountered on social media, accounting for 40.8% of responses. This was followed by vocabulary (30.8%), expressions or idioms (11.7%), pronunciation (9.2%), and grammar (7.5%). These results suggest that English-related content on social media is largely centered on everyday communication.

Overall, based on the average results of the three questions, vocabulary emerged as the most dominant English learning material, with an average percentage of 30.8%. Daily conversation ranked second (28.3%), followed by grammar (20.3%), pronunciation (13.1%), and expressions or idioms (7.5%). These findings indicate that vocabulary and daily conversation are the materials most closely associated with students' English learning through social media. Although grammar was identified as the most preferred material in the second question, its overall average remained lower because students more frequently encountered and learned vocabulary and conversational content across all three questions.

Spelling

Spelling refers to the ability to arrange letters correctly in accordance with the conventions of a language. In this study, spelling represents an English learning aspect related to how students learn and understand the correct spelling of English words through social media.

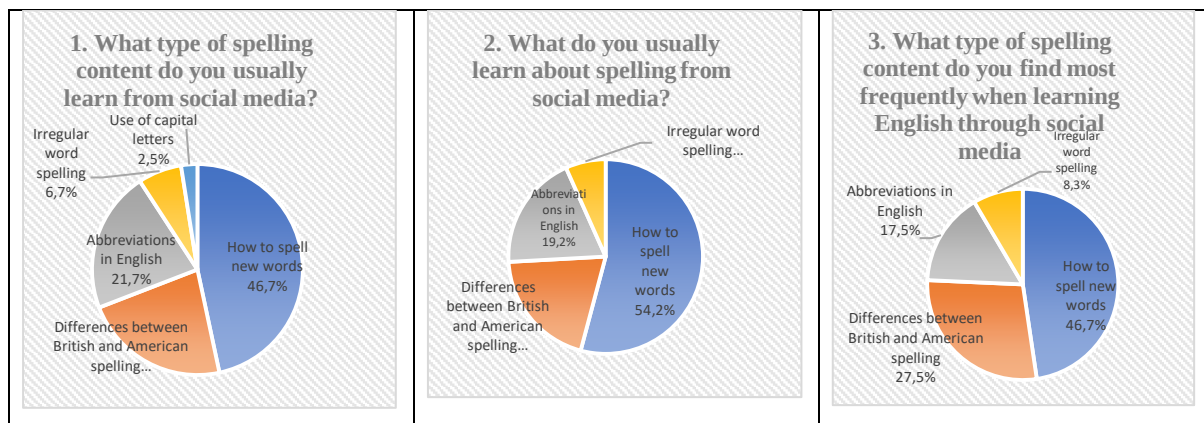


Figure 6. Criteria of Spelling

Based on Figure 6, the results of the first question under the spelling criterion show that most respondents usually learn how to spell new words through social media. Out of 120 respondents, 56 students (46.7%) selected this option. In contrast, 27 students (22.5%) reported learning about differences between British and American spelling, while 26 students (21.7%) indicated that they learned English abbreviations. A smaller number of respondents reported learning irregular word spelling (8 students or 6.7%), and only 3 students (2.5%) stated that they learned about the use of capital letters through social media.

The results of the second question further confirm this pattern. A majority of respondents (54.2%) reported that they usually learned how to spell new words via social media. In addition, 20.0% learned about British and American spelling differences, and 19.2% focused on English abbreviations. Meanwhile, only 6.7% of the respondents reported learning irregular word spelling. These findings suggest that social media plays a significant role in helping learners acquire correct spelling of newly learned vocabulary. Similarly, the third question revealed that content related to spelling new words was the most frequently encountered on social media, reported by 46.7% of the respondents. This was followed by content on British and American spelling differences (27.5%) and English abbreviations (17.5%). Only 8.3% of the respondents encountered content related to irregular word spelling.

Based on the average results of the three questions within the spelling criterion, learning how to spell new words emerged as the most dominant spelling-related content on social media, with an average percentage of 49.2%. British and American spelling differences ranked second at 23.3%, followed by English abbreviations at 19.5% and irregular word spelling at 7.2%. The use of capital letters received the lowest average percentage (0.8%). Overall, these findings indicate that social media primarily supports students in learning the spelling of newly acquired vocabulary. Although exposure to different spelling conventions and common abbreviations also contributes to spelling awareness, more specific aspects such as irregular spelling patterns and capitalization rules receive relatively limited attention.

Analysis of The Reason Behind Students

Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the ease with which learners can obtain educational resources regardless of time and location. accessibility is one of the main advantages of digital learning because it enables students to access learning materials whenever and wherever they need them. Social media platforms can be accessed through smartphones, tablets, and computers, allowing learners to study at their own pace. Accessibility refers to the ease with which students can

access social media to learn English. This is the result of questions based on accessibility criteria.

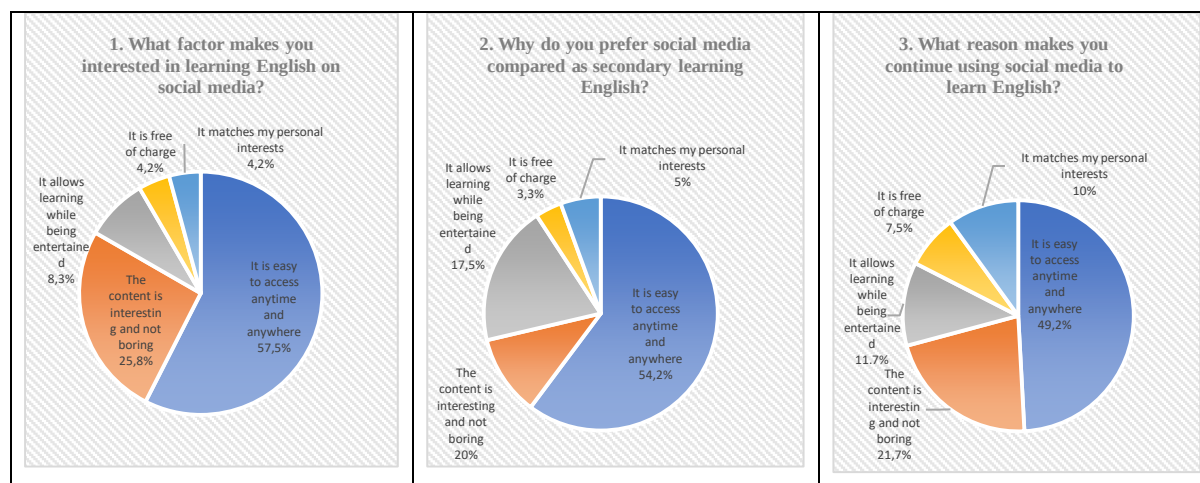


Figure 7. Criteria of accessibility

Based on Figure 7, the results of the first question under the accessibility criterion show that most respondents considered easy access anytime and anywhere as the main factor attracting them to learn English through social media. Out of 120 respondents, 69 students (57.5%) selected this option. Meanwhile, 31 students (25.8%) reported that interesting and non-boring content motivated them to use social media for learning. In addition, 10 students (8.3%) stated that social media allowed them to learn while being entertained. Free access and personal interest were each selected by 5 students (4.2%). The results of the second question indicate a similar pattern. More than half of the respondents (54.2%) preferred social media as a secondary source of English learning because it was easy to access anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, 17.5% appreciated the opportunity to learn while being entertained, while 10.0% were motivated by interesting and engaging content. Personal interest (5.0%) and free access (3.3%) were reported by fewer respondents.

The third question also revealed that easy accessibility was the main reason respondents continued using social media to learn English, selected by 49.2% of the respondents. This was followed by interesting and non-boring content (21.7%) and the opportunity to learn while being entertained (11.7%). Personal interest (10.0%) and free access (7.5%) were less influential. Based on the average results of the three questions, easy access anytime and anywhere emerged as the dominant factor influencing students to use social media for learning English, with an average percentage of 53.6%. This was followed by interesting content (19.2%) and learning while being entertained (12.5%). Overall, the findings indicate that

accessibility and flexibility are the main strengths of social media as a secondary learning source.

Enjoyment

Enjoyment refers to the positive emotions and pleasure experienced while engaging in a learning activity. Students who enjoy their learning experiences tend to show higher levels of motivation, participation, and persistence in achieving their learning goals. Accessibility refers to the ease with which students can access social media to learn English. This is the result of questions based on enjoyment criteria.

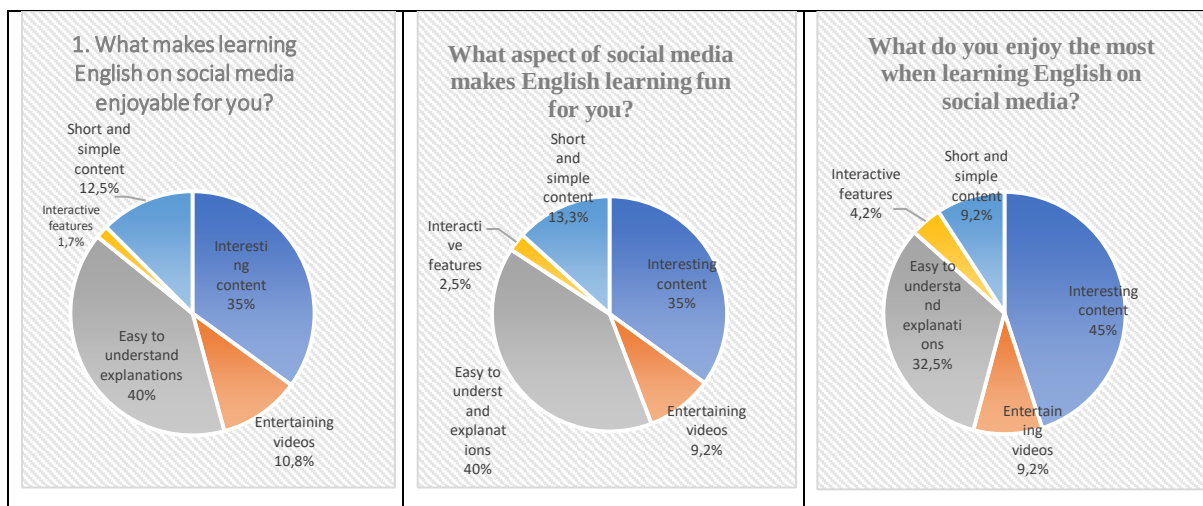


Figure 8. Criteria of enjoyment

Based on Figure 8, the findings for the enjoyment criterion show that clear and easy-to-understand explanations were the main factor that made learning English through social media enjoyable for most respondents. In the first question, 48 out of 120 students (40%) selected this option, followed closely by interesting content chosen by 42 students (35%). Short and simple content was preferred by 15 students (12.5%), while entertaining videos were selected by 13 students (10.8%). Interactive features contributed the least to enjoyment, with only 2 students (1.7%) selecting this option. The results of the second question show a consistent pattern. Easy-to-understand explanations remained the most preferred aspect, accounting for 40.0% of responses, followed by interesting content at 35.0%. Short and simple content was selected by 13.3% of respondents, while entertaining videos accounted for 9.2%. Interactive features again received the lowest response at 2.5%.

Based on the average results of the questions under the enjoyment criterion, interesting content emerged as the most influential factor contributing to students' enjoyment, with an average percentage of 38.3%, followed closely by easy-to-understand explanations at 37.5%. Short and simple content (11.7%) and entertaining videos (9.7%) played a supporting role, while interactive features were least influential (2.8%). Overall, these findings indicate that students enjoy learning English through social media mainly when the content is engaging, relevant, and supported by clear explanations that help them understand the material easily.

Cost

Cost refers to the financial resources required to access and utilize learning technologies. Compared to many traditional learning resources, social media is often perceived as a cost-effective learning alternative because most educational content is freely available. Students' perceptions of the affordability of using social media as an English learning resource. This is the result of questions based on cost criteria.

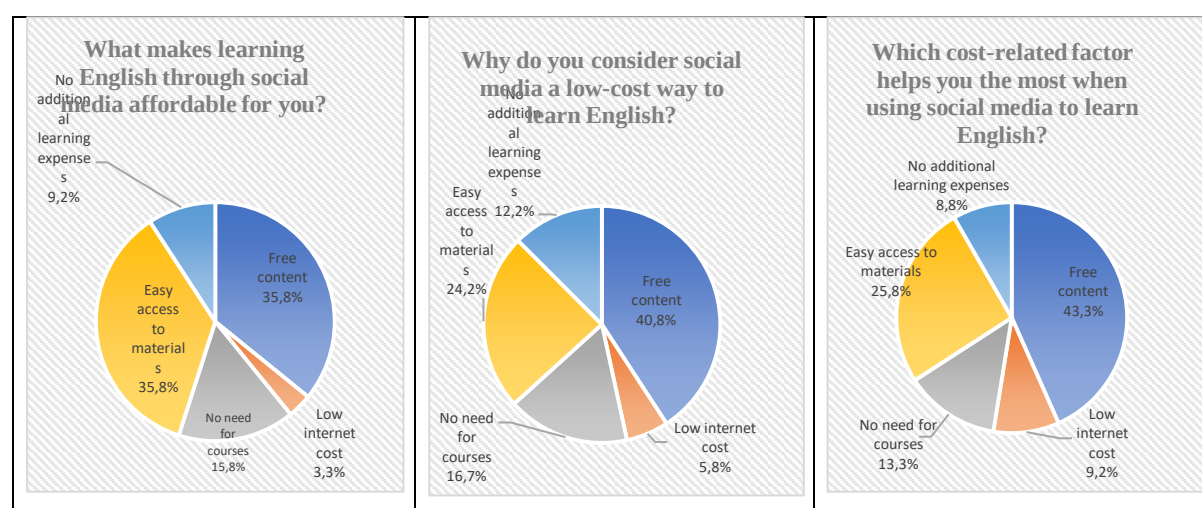


Figure 9. Criteria of cost

Based on Figure 9, the findings for the cost criterion indicate that free content and easy access to learning materials are the main factors that help students learn English through social media. In the first question, 43 out of 120 respondents (35.8%) selected free content, and the same number of students (35.8%) reported that easy access to learning materials was the most helpful factor. In addition, 19 students (15.8%) indicated that they benefited from not needing to enrol in language courses, while 11 students (9.2%) chose no additional learning expenses. Low internet costs were selected by only 4 students (3.3%).

The results of the second question show a similar pattern. A total of 40.8% of respondents considered social media to be a low-cost learning option because it provides free content. This was followed by 24.2% who stated that easy access reduced the need to buy textbooks or paid services. Furthermore, 16.7% highlighted the absence of course fees, while 12.2% pointed to fewer additional learning expenses. Low internet costs again received the lowest response (5.8%). In the third question, free content remained the most helpful factor (43.3%), followed by easy access to materials (25.8%). Overall, the average results confirm that free content is the most significant cost-related benefit, showing that students view social media as an affordable and practical support for learning English.

DISCUSSION

Students' Preferences in Using Social Media as Secondary Learning Sources for Learning English

The findings revealed that TikTok was the most preferred social media platform among English Department undergraduate students in Aceh. The majority of respondents selected TikTok as the platform they most frequently used for learning English and considered it the most effective platform for supporting their English learning. This finding indicates that students tend to prefer platforms that provide short, visual, and interactive content that can be accessed easily through mobile devices. The popularity of TikTok among respondents can be explained by its features, particularly the video replay function, which was identified as the most frequently used feature for learning English. The replay feature allows students to watch learning content repeatedly until they fully understand the material. Through repeated exposure, learners can improve their comprehension of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar explanations, and conversational expressions. This finding supports Teng's view that TikTok provides a multimodal learning environment that supports language acquisition through continuous exposure to audiovisual content.

The findings also revealed that students were most satisfied with easy-to-understand content. This suggests that students prefer learning materials presented in simple and practical ways rather than complex academic explanations. The result is consistent with the argument of Tess (2013), who stated that social media platforms are attractive learning environments because they provide flexible and accessible learning experiences that match students' learning preferences. Furthermore, the findings support Muzakky's (2023) study, which found that students prefer social media platforms with strong audiovisual features because such platforms effectively support listening and speaking development. However, while Muzakky identified

Instagram and YouTube as the most preferred platforms, the present study found that TikTok was the dominant platform among English major students in Aceh. This difference may indicate a shift in students' digital preferences toward short-video platforms that provide more personalized and engaging learning experiences. Therefore, the findings suggest that students prefer social media platforms that are accessible, visually engaging, and capable of delivering educational content in concise and understandable formats.

What Students Learn from Using Social Media for Learning English

The findings demonstrated that speaking was the most preferred English language skill among respondents. In addition, speaking was also identified as one of the most useful skills developed through social media. This result indicates that students perceive social media as an effective medium for improving their communicative competence. One possible explanation is that social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram expose students to authentic spoken English through videos, conversations, and interactive content. By watching native speakers and English content creators, students gain opportunities to observe pronunciation, intonation, and natural language use. This finding is consistent with Silaban and Marpaung (2024), who found that TikTok contributes significantly to students' pronunciation improvement and vocabulary development.

The study also found that daily conversation was the most common learning material accessed by students. This suggests that learners are more interested in practical language use than in theoretical language knowledge. Students appear to prioritize materials that can be directly applied in real-life communication situations. Such findings align with Wang's concept of secondary learning sources, which emphasizes that informal learning environments provide opportunities for learners to apply language knowledge in authentic contexts. Moreover, vocabulary learning emerged as one of the most useful benefits of social media. Students frequently encounter new words, expressions, and phrases through educational videos, captions, and interactive posts. The repetitive nature of social media content allows learners to retain vocabulary more effectively. This finding supports Abbas et al. (2019), who found that social media platforms increase learners' vocabulary acquisition by providing meaningful and engaging language exposure.

Regarding spelling content, the majority of respondents reported learning how to spell new words through social media. This indicates that social media contributes not only to oral communication skills but also to learners' awareness of written language forms. The combination of visual text, subtitles, captions, and spoken language helps students connect

pronunciation with spelling patterns more effectively. Overall, the findings suggest that social media contributes significantly to the development of speaking skills, vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation awareness, and communicative competence. These aspects complement formal classroom instruction and support students' independent language learning.

Reasons Behind Students' Preferences for Specific Social Media Platforms

The findings revealed that accessibility was the most influential factor affecting students' preferences for using social media as a learning source. More than half of the respondents reported that they preferred social media because it could be accessed anytime and anywhere. This finding supports previous studies indicating that flexibility is one of the primary advantages of digital learning platforms. Students can engage in learning activities according to their own schedules and learning needs without being restricted by classroom boundaries.

Another important finding was that students enjoyed learning English through social media because the content was easy to understand and interesting. These results indicate that students value both the quality of content and the manner in which it is presented. Educational materials delivered through short videos, animations, subtitles, and real-life examples are perceived as more engaging than traditional learning materials. This finding is consistent with Growing Science (2023), which reported that perceived enjoyment and information usefulness significantly influence students' engagement with digital platforms. The study also found that free content was the most important cost-related factor encouraging students to use social media for learning English. Respondents believed that social media enabled them to access educational resources without paying for courses or purchasing additional learning materials. This finding demonstrates that social media provides an affordable alternative for students who wish to improve their English skills independently.

Furthermore, easy access to learning materials was identified as another important reason for students' continued use of social media. This finding reflects the growing role of learner autonomy in modern education. Students are no longer dependent solely on classroom instruction but actively seek additional learning resources through digital platforms. Such behavior reflects the concept of self-directed learning, in which learners take responsibility for managing and regulating their own learning processes. In summary, students' preferences for specific social media platforms are influenced by accessibility, content quality, flexibility, and affordability. These factors collectively contribute to students' positive perceptions of social media as a secondary learning source for learning English.

CONCLUSION

Social media plays an important role as a secondary learning source for undergraduate English major students in Aceh. Students utilize various platforms to improve listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills. Platform preferences are influenced by accessibility, flexibility, interactivity, content quality, and perceived usefulness. The findings suggest that educators and institutions should recognize social media as a valuable complement to formal instruction. Through appropriate guidance and digital literacy support, social media can contribute significantly to language learning outcomes and learner autonomy. Future research should examine the long-term impact of social media use on English proficiency and explore differences across educational contexts

REFERENCES

- Abbas, A., Gulzar, R., & Hussain, Z. (2019). The impact of of social media (Facebook and YouTube) on vocabulary acquisition of ESL learners. *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends*, 1(1), 26–44. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jcct>
- Avivah, N., Yuwita, N., & Ahwan, Z. (2021). *Bad Influence Sosmed Pada Kawasan Wisata Tretes Terhadap Pola Pikir Psikologi, Life Style Generasi Muda Pasuruan (Tinjauan Teori Determinisme Teknologi)*. 11.
- Harness, J., & Getzen, H. (2021). TikTok's Sick-Role Subculture and What to Do About It. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JAAC.2021.09.312>
- Mustadi (2021). *Blended learning innovation of social media based active English during the COVID-19 pandemic*. (<https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.02.01>)
- Muzakky, M, F, (2023). *Learning English through Social Media: Exploring Acehnese University English students perceived impacts of using Instagram for English learning*
- Riyanti, A., Sagena, U., Lestari, N. C., Pramono, S. A., al Haddar, G., (2023). *Sartika Number.25-30 Road* (Vol. 13, Issue 4).
- Selcuk, H., & Jones, J. (2022). Turkish EFL Learner Perceptions of Using a Social Network Environment for Collaborative Writing. *International Journal of Smart Education and Urban Society*, 13(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijseus.297063>
- Shoufan, A., & Mohamed, F. (2022). YouTube and Education: A Scoping Review. In *IEEE Access* (Vol. 10, pp. 125576–125599). Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2022.3225419>