

TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores using social media as an innovative tool for teaching English in resource-limited secondary schools. In the face of technological disparities and limited educational resources, particularly in underfunded or remote areas, integrating platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok presents an engaging and accessible approach to enhance English language instruction. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations involving English teachers and students in Samarinda, Indonesia. Findings show that social media increases student motivation, participation, and comprehension through authentic content and multimodal interaction. Teachers observed that learners responded positively to creative, structured activities delivered via social platforms. However, significant challenges were identified, including unequal access to the internet and devices, digital distractions, and insufficient teacher training in educational technology. Despite these barriers, both teachers and students acknowledged the potential of social media to enrich the language learning process when supported by effective instructional strategies. The study recommends teacher training on digital pedagogy, infrastructure improvement, and the development of clear guidelines for integrating social media into formal education. Ultimately, the research contributes valuable insights into how familiar digital tools can support English language learning in contexts where traditional resources are scarce.

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Introductions

The rapid growth of social media has fundamentally transformed education, particularly in the teaching and learning of English. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube offer creative ways to engage students, provide authentic language exposure, and create a dynamic learning environment. However, besides that (Al-Qaysi et al., 2020) says the integration of social media in English language teaching also presents challenges, including digital distractions, privacy concerns, and the need for digital literacy among both teachers and students. This study aims to explore how the use of social media impacts the effectiveness of English language teaching and to identify creative strategies to overcome these barriers.

Numerous issues have been brought to light by recent research about social media usage in the classroom. For instance, Sofi-Karim et al., (2023) noted that the main obstacles were internet distraction, privacy difficulties, and teachers' and students' lack of digital literacy. The research also emphasizes that if appropriate pedagogical

tactics are not used, excessive reliance on social media can result in superficial learning (Alshabeb, 2020). The results of this study imply that while social media has many benefits, its use in learning is not without challenges.

Additionally, the quick development of social media platforms presents English teachers with new difficulties. According to Guan et al. (2018) Educators frequently find it difficult to stay current with emerging trends and technology, which can hinder their capacity to use these resources in the classroom. Furthermore, (Abdel et al., 2025) noted that social media's unstructured character can occasionally clash with formal education's regimented setting, causing a gap between students' online pursuits and their academic objectives. These difficulties highlight the need for a more thorough comprehension of the obstacles that English teachers have when integrating social media into their lesson plans.

Despite these developments, further study is required to create and improve creative approaches that can handle the particular difficulties of teaching English on social media. By investigating and suggesting novel approaches that can be used to solve these issues, this study aims to add to the expanding corpus of knowledge. By doing this, this study hopes to give teachers useful resources and methods for successfully incorporating social media into their lesson plans, which will ultimately raise the standard of English language instruction.

Furthermore, this research is also important for educational practitioners, especially English teachers, as it provides innovative strategies in integrating social media into learning. Social media sites, for instance, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc., have developed into effective teaching tools for English because they provide students with access to real-world language and interactive dialogue. The following advantages are highlighted by recent research: firstly, as stated by (Alshabeb, 2020) that Authentic Language Use, i.e., social media, allows students to communicate in the real world, which improves writing, speaking, and listening skills. For example, YouTube exposes users to various accents and dialects, while Twitter promotes concise writing. Secondly, Collaborative learning, i.e. (Yuan Ju, 1970) argues that peer-to-peer communication is made easier by applications such as Facebook Groups and WhatsApp, which allow students to practice their English in a group environment. Third, according to (Anwas et al., 2020) cultural exposure, i.e., students are exposed to various cultures through social media, which increases their motivation to learn English and cross-cultural competence.

Social media has many benefits, but integrating it into ELT is not without its challenges. Recent research has identified the digital divide. (Jandrić et al., 2020) suggest that, particularly in low-resource settings, unequal access to technology and internet connectivity continues to be a major barrier. This gap reduces the potential of social media as a teaching tool for all students. Furthermore, according to (Kircher & Kircher, 2024) Overload distraction is caused by the relaxed atmosphere of social media, students may become distracted and pay less attention to their academic work. In addition, students may be overwhelmed by the amount of information available online. Privacy and security issues that arise when using social media in the classroom, educators must address issues including cyberbullying, data privacy, and exposure to inappropriate content (Raffaghelli & Manca, 2019). And many teachers are not equipped or confident enough to successfully incorporate social media into their lesson plans, resulting in under-use or misuse of this resource.

Despite its challenges, social media has sparked a variety of creative ELT techniques. (Ansari & Khan, 2020) Say that gamification is used to make language learning engaging and inspiring, websites such as Duolingo and Quizlet incorporate gamification components. These resources are particularly useful for practicing grammar and expanding one's vocabulary. So is microlearning, where English is taught in small, digestible chunks through short-form information on websites such as Instagram and TikTok (Jandrić et al., 2020). This method is particularly popular with younger learners. Lastly, virtual exchange programs are social media that facilitate global collaboration, and children can engage with peers from other countries thanks to social media's ability to foster international collaboration (Jandrić et al., 2020).

In the context of teaching English through social media, accessibility means how easily students can access the learning platforms, tools, and resources used. Thanks to the widespread use of mobile phones, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become highly accessible and affordable learning tools for students around the world. According to (Ansari & Khan, 2020) One of the biggest advantages of social media is that it can be accessed anytime and anywhere, provided there is an internet connection. This means that students are no longer bound by time and place. For example, they can practice writing on Twitter during their lunch break, watch learning videos on YouTube while travelling, or join discussions on Facebook groups from their homes. However, accessibility is not just about being able to access, but also about access. Although social media is widely distributed, not everyone has the same opportunity to use it. (Ahmed, 2020) said that some students, especially those living in remote areas or from low-income families, may struggle because they do not have adequate devices or a stable internet connection.

To address this issue, several platforms have introduced lighter and data-saving features, such as offline mode on YouTube or lightweight applications such as Facebook Lite. Teachers can also play a role by choosing the platform that best suits students' needs and providing learning resources that can be accessed or downloaded without having to be connected to the internet all the time (Jurado et al., 2010). For students, the benefits are huge. They can learn English anytime and anywhere according to their schedule and needs. In addition, with the many free or low-cost learning options on social media, learning English becomes much more affordable. Meanwhile, according to (Jandrić et al., 2020) said that high technological capabilities are needed because social media platforms are designed to be easy to use. With this, students from various backgrounds, including those living in remote areas, can still be reached. Even from a distance, they can still interact directly with their teachers and classmates.

Distractions and information overload are two major concerns when using social media to teach English. Videos, advertisements, notifications, and posts from friends or celebrities are just a few examples of the varied and constantly updated information that social media is designed to capture users' attention. (Allam & Elyas, 2016) argue that almost all students may be distracted from the material they are supposed to be learning as a result of this. For example, students may be tempted to view other unrelated entertainment content on YouTube while they are there to watch an instructional video. Social media also provides users with access to a wealth of information. Users are inundated with a variety of content on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, including news, opinion, and entertainment. Students may experience cognitive overload as a result of having too much knowledge to absorb. As such, students may find it difficult to separate information that is relevant to learning English, such as new vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation tips. Reduced focus and learning efficacy are the result of these distractions and information overload. Instead of concentrating on the subject matter, students may spend more time looking at unrelated materials as stated by (Warrick, 2021). Furthermore, students who are overwhelmed with information may experience stress or confusion, which decreases their motivation and learning outcomes. (Chun et al., 2016) said instructor can offer suggestions on how to use social media to study efficiently, including setting time limits and concentrating on specific subjects. To save students from having to do research, teachers can offer a list of accounts or hashtags related to English learning. To reduce distractions, utilize features such as "focus mode" or "notification restriction." Set a well-defined learning plan with precise objectives so that students are aware of what to search for and study.

For social media to be successfully incorporated into English language teaching, teachers must be prepared. (Ubaedillah et al., 2021) revealed that many teachers feel unprepared or do not have the skills necessary to use social media successfully, even though social media provides many opportunities to enhance learning. (D'Souza et al., 2017) said that these difficulties include a lack of institutional support, discomfort with technology, and a lack of training. First, many educators do not have adequate training on how to use social media as a teaching tool. For example, they may not understand how to use Facebook groups or YouTube live streams for collaborative learning, or how to create engaging instructional videos for platforms such as Instagram or TikTok.

Teachers may be reluctant or unsure about using social media in the classroom if they do not receive this training. Second, some educators may be uncomfortable with new technologies or inexperienced with social networking sites that are popular with students. As a result, learning may be less effective, and teachers and students may become more distant (Boy Jon et al., 2021). For example, teachers may find it difficult to design engaging and relevant learning experiences if they are not familiar with using basic tools such as hashtags, filters, or analytics. Third, teacher readiness may also be hampered by a lack of support from educational institutions. As stated by (WilliamsWilliams, 2020) Teachers may find it difficult to incorporate social media into their lessons without resources such as ongoing training, access to technology tools, or supportive policies. For teachers to overcome the pedagogical and technical barriers that arise, this support is essential.

Teachers may not fully utilize social media platforms to interact and collaborate, instead using them only to share content. As stated by (Jandrić et al., 2020) if teachers are unable to use social media to create engaging and relevant learning experiences, students may become less motivated. Prepared teachers may miss out on the latest developments in digital education, such as gamification and microlearning. Therefore, the strategy is to conduct instruction on social media learning, covering topics such as content creation, interaction management, and evaluation of learning outcomes. Create a teacher-learning community where educators can exchange resources, advice, and experiences related to the use of social media in the classroom. Resources such as internet connection, technological gadgets, and policies that are friendly to social media integration should be provided by educational institutions such as schools. Encourage educators to try new platforms and techniques, and give them the freedom to make mistakes and grow from them (Alshabeb, 2020).

Numerous previous studies have a similar focus on teaching English by using social media. However, some similarities and novelties exist in each topic, which are related to the time. The study concludes (Alenezi & Brinthaupt, 2022) that while social media can increase student motivation and engagement, teachers must carefully choose the right platform to mitigate these challenges and ensure effective learning outcomes. The journal's results and findings demonstrate that using social media platforms in the classroom offers several benefits, including flexibility, effectiveness, ease of use, and an interactive and enjoyable learning experience. However, students also face challenges, such as monotonous learning activities, boredom, difficulty expressing creativity, negative responses, and erratic schedules. Students felt that social media provided additional support and resources for their studies. The findings also highlight the importance of cultural practices in shaping students' perceptions and use of social media for educational purposes (Al-Sharqi et al., 2016).

The students perceived the social media videos to be pertinent to the course material, which improved their comprehension of the courses. (Al-Sharqi et al., 2016) Students in a prior study also stated that social media can help them comprehend the content more easily and finish assignments more quickly when utilized for English language learning. According to the study, when learning content was delivered through instructor-produced videos rather than generic social media content, students were more inclined to interact with it (Simanjuntak et al., 2021). According to the most recent studies and conclusions, teaching effectiveness and evaluation validity are greatly increased when digital applications are incorporated into English language instruction. According to the study, digital tools offer creative ways to change conventional teaching strategies and enhance student learning. The survey also showed that while there are difficulties in putting these digital tools into practice, there are also a ton of opportunities for student engagement and learning facilitation (García Quijano, 2014).

(Weinmann et al., 2024) said that it can be concluded that in previous research, the use of social media in English language teaching provides benefits such as flexibility, effectiveness, and interactive learning experiences, which are in line with the focus of this research. It also emphasizes the benefits of social media in increasing student motivation and engagement. However, both studies identified challenges such as boredom and difficulty expressing creativity, although the previous study emphasized the importance of teachers choosing the right platform to minimize these challenges. According, (Hikmah & Aimah, 2025) said that the insufficient investigation of social media use in teaching English as a second language in secondary schools with limited resources, particularly in South Africa, is the research gap noted in the publication. Although social media use in education has been studied, not much of it has particularly examined the efforts and tactics employed by English teachers in this difficult setting. Additionally, (ERARSLAN, 2021) said that the little is known about how these educators get past the limitations of scarce pedagogical assistance and technical tools to successfully incorporate social media into their lesson plans.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

To investigate the effects of social media integration on student engagement and learning effectiveness in English language teaching, this study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The selection of this approach is grounded in pragmatism, a research paradigm introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce and later developed by William James and John Dewey. Pragmatism emphasizes that the research question should determine the methodological approach rather than adherence to a single paradigm (Creswell & Angeles, 2011).

It supports methodological flexibility and values practical outcomes, allowing researchers to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of complex educational phenomena. The research will be conducted in several high schools where the English subject is taught as a second or foreign language. Classroom observations and focus group interviews with students will further explore behavioral engagement, participation, and motivation. The study will include semi-structured interviews and open-ended surveys for the teachers and for the students. This qualitative data collection will help identify technological, pedagogical, and psychological barriers, such as internet access, digital literacy, distractions, or privacy concerns. Data will be coded and analyzed thematically to uncover common patterns and context-specific issues. In detail, the analysis of research questions one and two uses quantitative methods, while the study of research question three uses qualitative methods, in line with the pragmatic stance that the nature of the research problem should guide the choice of method (Biesta, 2010).

2. Participant

This research is conducted among English teachers who teach English at the senior high school level in Samarinda, particularly in the Samarinda Ulu district. The number of participants was limited based on area, as Samarinda Ulu is an urban area. Due to its demographic characteristics, teachers in this region are indirectly required to be more familiar with technological developments at a faster pace compared to those in remote areas. This study also specifically selected English teachers as participants as well as the respondents, because the advancement of technology has had a particular impact on the use of tools or applications, especially translation tools, which are now widely available in various apps.

The research aimed for several English teachers purposively selected to complete the questionnaire and the interview session. Due to the total number of teachers is less than 20 teachers, therefore, the researcher will use the total population as the sample for getting quantitative data. However, for the qualitative data, the researcher will select teachers to participate in semi-structured interviews based on their questionnaire answers. Specifically, the teacher who has the highest and the lowest score will be selected as the participant in the interview.

In addition, students will be included in this data collection, who will be selected based on their previous experience in using social media for language learning and their willingness to participate both as respondents to fill in the questionnaires and in the interviews. The table below will explain the name of the school in Samarinda Ulu District, namely:

Table 1. Number of English Teachers

No.	School's Name	Number of English Teachers
1.	SMA Negeri 1	4
2.	SMA Negeri 3	4
3.	SMA Negeri 5	3
4.	SMK Negeri 2	6
5.	SMK Negeri 17	2
	Total	19

Meanwhile, to complete the qualitative data, the students will be involved. They will be given a list of interviews to complete the data. For selecting the students who will become participants, the researcher will decide.

3. Instrument

Simultaneously, data was collected through questions in a Google Form distributed via WhatsApp. Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire about their use of social media and the challenges and innovations they perceived in teaching with social media. This part of the interview included several questions, including five questions about the most common types of social media used in English language teaching and five questions about the use of social media in English language teaching. In about 20 to 30 minutes, each participant was asked these questions. The researcher recorded all conversations during the interviews as part of the data collection process.

4. Data Collection

The data for this study will be collected through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. It consists of 9 questions for the questionnaire aimed at English teachers. Interviews to gain more depth about teachers' and students' perspectives. The researcher will use open-ended questions to gain more insight. 6 questions for teachers and 4 questions for students. To measure the data, the researcher used a Likert scale to collect data (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree).

5. Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaire, which consists of closed-ended questions, will be evaluated using descriptive analysis, while interview questions will be conducted to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data will be analyzed to get some descriptive data. For the qualitative data, there are three steps for taking the data, namely data preparation (preparing the interview), triangulation, and data interpretation. For the quantitative data, once the data has been collected through the questionnaire, the researcher will determine the appropriate respondents to interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Questionnaire

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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1.	The use of social media (such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube) in English learning increases students' interest.	0	5,3	63,2	31,6
2.	I feel more motivated to learn English when using social media as a tool.	0	10,5	73,7	15,8
3.	English content on social media helps me understand the material faster than traditional methods.	0	5,3	78,9	15,8
4.	I find it difficult to focus on learning English through social media because of the many distractions (notifications, advertisements, etc.).	21,1	31,6	36,8	10,5
5.	Inequality of internet/gadget access hinders the utilization of social media for learning.	5,3	21,1	47,4	26,3
6.	Training teachers on the use of social media will help overcome challenges in learning.	0	5,3	52,6	42,1
7.	English learning via social media needs to be designed with structured guidelines/tasks to be effective.	0	0	42,1	57,9
8.	Student collaboration in social media groups (such as discussions on WhatsApp/forums) improves language comprehension.	0	5,3	68,4	26,3
9.	Teachers should choose specific social media platforms (e.g. YouTube for listening) according to the learning objectives.	5,3	5,3	42,1	47,4

Student Perceptions Based on the Questionnaire

The questionnaire given to students included 9 statements, each rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). The responses reveal a generally positive attitude toward using social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube in learning English. A large majority of students—63.2% agreed and 31.6% strongly agreed—felt that using social media increases their interest in learning English. No students strongly disagreed, showing that most learners find social media engaging and motivating.

When it comes to motivation, 73.7% of students agreed and 15.8% strongly agreed that they feel more motivated to study English when social media is involved. Only 10.5% disagreed, with no one strongly disagreeing. This means social media has a strong influence on students' willingness to learn. Social media also helps with understanding English material. About 78.9% agreed and 15.8% strongly agreed that they learn faster through social media compared to traditional methods. Only 5.3% disagreed. This suggests that students see digital content as more effective and easier to grasp. Despite the positive feedback, some issues were reported. Over half of the students (21.1% strongly disagreed and 31.6% disagreed) said they struggle to stay focused due to distractions like notifications and ads. However, 36.8% still agreed they could focus, and 10.5% strongly agreed. Another concern is unequal access. About 47.4% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed that not all students have the same access to the internet or digital devices, which limits the ability to benefit from online learning. Only a small number disagreed (21.1%) or strongly disagreed (5.3%). Most students believe that teachers need training on how to use social media effectively in teaching. 52.6% agreed and 42.1% strongly agreed with this idea. This shows strong student support for improving teachers' digital skills.

All students agreed (57.9% strongly, 42.1% agreed) that learning through social media should include structured tasks or clear guidance. This means students don't just want fun content—they want direction and purpose in their learning. Students also think collaboration helps. 68.4% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed that working in social media groups (like WhatsApp or forums) improves their understanding of English. Only a few students (5.3%) disagreed, showing that most enjoy and benefit from peer interaction online. Finally, students believe it's important for teachers to choose the right platform based on what they want to teach. For example, YouTube is useful for listening practice. In total, 42.1% agreed and 47.4% strongly agreed with this, while only 10.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In general, students have a strong and positive view of using social media

for learning English. They say it helps them feel more interested, motivated, and better able to understand lessons. They enjoy working together in online groups and appreciate content that fits their digital habits.

However, there are still problems. Some students get distracted easily, and not everyone has access to the internet or devices. Because of this, students believe teachers should be trained to guide social media learning effectively. They also want clear instructions and well-planned activities when using digital platforms. These findings suggest that while social media offers great potential in language learning, it needs proper support, planning, and accessibility for all students to succeed. Meanwhile, from the teachers' perception, which was represented by 7 teachers who answered the interview session, the researcher explained it into several parts. The table below states the initial of the teacher and their institution level.

Table 3. The answer from the teacher's perception

No.	Initial	Institution
1	Ms. H	Vocational High School
2	Mr. HR	Vocational High School
3	Ms. L	Vacational High School
4	Ms. G	Senior High School
5	Ms. A	Senior High School
6	Ms. D	Senior High School
7	Ms. S	Senior High School

Teachers' Use of Social Media in English Classes – A Simplified Overview

Teachers in East Kalimantan are using different and creative ways to bring social media into their English classes. One of the most common tools is YouTube. Many teachers use videos from movies, songs, or educational channels to make lessons more fun and easier to understand. For example, Ms. L from a vocational high school uses YouTube videos to start class discussions and encourage students to think critically before diving into the main topic. Teachers also use platforms like Quizizz and Kahoot to create interactive quizzes. Ms. H finds these tools useful for both before and after lessons because they help check student understanding and keep them engaged. Meanwhile, Instagram and TikTok are used occasionally for more creative tasks. Students might write English captions or record short videos that demonstrate grammar or vocabulary in action. Teachers have seen clear improvements in how students participate and enjoy learning. Compared to old-fashioned lectures, using social media helps students feel more involved. Ms. Arin from a senior high school said that visual content helps her students understand difficult reading materials more easily. Ms. H noticed that when students can instantly see their quiz scores and compare with friends, they become more motivated to do well. These modern tools match students' daily use of technology, making learning feel more natural and enjoyable.

However, using social media in class is not without problems. One big challenge is technology. Many schools deal with slow or unstable internet, power outages, or students who don't have enough data on their phones. To solve this, Ms. L downloads videos ahead of time, and Ms. G uses WhatsApp to send materials when other apps don't work. Classroom distractions are another issue. Some students open games or unrelated apps during lessons. To manage this, Ms. S sets clear rules, like asking students to keep their phones visible on their desks. Privacy is also a concern some students feel uncomfortable sharing their videos online. To help with this, Ms. G asks students to submit their work through private platforms like Google Drive instead. To support students with limited internet or devices, teachers use creative solutions. They prepare printed materials or download videos for offline use. They also organize group work so that students can share devices. Mr. D from a senior high school believes that being flexible is key he often prepares lessons in different formats so that every student can join in, no matter their situation.

When planning activities, teachers try to balance clear instructions with room for student creativity. Most of them follow a step-by-step (scaffolding) method: they show students examples first, then guide them to create their own work. For example, Ms. L shows videos made by previous students before asking her current class to make their own. Teachers like Ms. A use viral or trending content to keep students interested. Some assignments also help students learn digital skills. For instance, Mr. Hr encourages his students to use CapCut (a video editing app) while writing how-to instructions in English. This way, students improve both their language and tech abilities. These tools help teachers create modern and engaging lessons that connect school learning with students' everyday digital lives. Teachers in East Kalimantan are proving that social media can be a powerful part of English education. Despite facing technical and classroom challenges, they continue to find ways to use these platforms effectively. Their efforts show that with creativity, flexibility, and structure, social media can bring real improvements to language learning even in schools with limited resources.

Table 4. The answer from the students' perception

No.	Initial	Gender	Institution
1	Dk	Male	Senior High School
2	An	Male	Senior High School
3	Ft	Male	Vacational High School
4	Fz	Male	Vacational High School
5	Kv	Male	Senior High School
6	Dy	Male	Senior High School
7	Hn	Female	Vacational High School
8	TL	Female	Vacational High School

Students' Views on Social Media for Learning English

Students from different high schools in East Kalimantan have shared a range of opinions about using social media for learning English, especially when compared to traditional book-based methods. Many students find social media more interesting and practical than textbooks. DK, a senior high school student, mentioned that platforms like Netflix and Instagram offer real-life English through movies and international content. She feels this is more fun and useful than just reading from a book. Anand, also from senior high school, prefers learning through video games like Minecraft and visual novels. He says they expose him to everyday English in a way that feels natural and not boring.

While social media has benefits, students also face problems when using it to learn English:

1. FZ from a vocational high school talked about poor internet and annoying ads on YouTube that interrupt learning.
2. FT, from the same school, said that it's hard to get help right away if something is confusing in an online video.
3. Kv from senior high school mentioned difficulty understanding different English accents in videos. He finds that books explain grammar more clearly.
4. TL pointed out that it's easy to get distracted while using social media, and some students feel embarrassed to practice English online for fear of being judged.

To make social media more effective for learning, students had several ideas:

1. Use subtitled movie clips and songs to improve listening and vocabulary.
2. Dy suggested using TikTok's short videos to build vocabulary in a fun way.
3. Anand proposed using games to keep learning interactive.
4. TL said influencers with clear pronunciation could be good role models.
5. Kv recommended adding better subtitles to educational videos for better understanding.

Interestingly, HN from vocational high school shared that he doesn't enjoy English and often uses translation apps. Even though he knows they aren't perfect, he finds them easier to use than asking for help or trying to understand on his own. These student responses highlight a clear generational preference for learning that is multimodal, using videos, audio, games, and real-time content. They enjoy content that is interactive and available on demand. However, their experiences also show the importance of balance. While digital tools can be engaging, students still need structure, clear explanations, and guidance especially when they face challenges like confusion, distraction, or poor internet.

In conclusion, the best approach may be to combine the strengths of both traditional and digital learning. Social media can offer fun, real-life learning experiences, but it should be supported by teacher involvement and structured lessons to help students stay focused and succeed. Teachers identified several key challenges when integrating social media into English lessons. A major issue is technical infrastructure, including unstable internet connections, frequent electricity outages, and limited access to devices. For example, Ms. L from vocational high school mentioned how power disruptions often interrupt lessons, while Mr. D from senior high school noted that some students lack proper devices. To address these problems, many educators download materials in advance, (Mr. A, a senior high school) Or use low-bandwidth platforms like WhatsApp (Ms. G, senior high school) to ensure accessibility.

Another significant challenge is student distraction, as learners often veer off-task to browse non-educational content. Ms A from senior high school observed that students sometimes open unrelated apps instead of focusing on assignments. To counter this, teachers implement structured rules, such as requiring phones to remain visible on desks during activities (Ms. H, vocational high school) or designing projects with clear

accountability, like uploading assignments with school-specific hashtags (Ms. L). Additionally, teachers struggle with content suitability. Finding materials that are both age-appropriate and pedagogically valuable can be difficult. Ms. A emphasized the importance of selecting trending yet relevant content to maintain student interest. Meanwhile, privacy concerns also arise, as many students hesitate to share their work publicly. Ms. G addressed this by using private platforms like Google Drive for submissions instead of public social media.

Students highlighted their own set of challenges when learning English through social media. Technical barriers, such as poor internet connectivity and limited data plans, were frequently mentioned. FZ from vocational high school described how buffering videos and intrusive ads disrupt lessons, while Hn from vocational high school admitted that he often relies on friends' mobile hotspots due to his lack of data. Some students, like TL from vocational high school, suggested downloading materials during school WiFi hours to mitigate these issues. Another common difficulty is learning quality. Many students find it hard to understand video explanations, especially when accents vary or concepts are poorly explained. FZ from vocational high school noted that without a teacher's immediate clarification, he sometimes misinterprets grammar rules. KV from senior high school proposed adding subtitles to videos to improve comprehension.

Distractions are another major hurdle. Dk from senior high school acknowledged that it's easy to switch from educational content to entertainment, such as scrolling through social media instead of studying. To stay focused, some students recommended structured tasks with deadlines or teacher-monitored activities. Finally, students expressed frustration over the lack of real-time guidance. Unlike traditional classrooms, where teachers can instantly clarify doubts, social media learning often leaves students to figure things out independently. FZ pointed out that this can lead to misunderstandings, especially when online explanations differ from classroom teachings.

Both teachers and students agree on the need for hybrid learning models that combine social media's flexibility with structured teacher support. For instance, Mr. Hr from vocational high school uses Discord for clearer audio discussions, while students like TL advocate for interactive assignments, such as analyzing movie clips with subtitles. Teachers also emphasize the importance of curated content playlists or channels with pre-approved materials to ensure quality and relevance. Gamification strategies, such as Quizizz quizzes (popular among teachers) or TikTok vocabulary challenges (favored by students), could further boost engagement. Schools could also invest in offline resources, such as media labs or localized servers, to reduce dependency on unstable internet connections. Ultimately, while social media offers dynamic opportunities for language learning, its success depends on addressing technical limitations, minimizing distractions, and ensuring accessible, high-quality content with teacher support. By combining digital tools with traditional pedagogy, educators and students can create a more balanced and effective learning experience.

Teaching Strategies: How Teachers Use Social Media in English Lessons

Teachers in East Kalimantan have found smart and structured ways to use social media in their English classes while keeping the learning meaningful. Their methods are carefully planned to make sure students stay focused and get the most from each activity. Ms. L from a vocational high school uses YouTube videos at the beginning of lessons to get students thinking and talking. This helps them warm up before starting the main topic. This method follows a step-by-step process: first, students watch a video, then they discuss it, and finally, they connect it to what they're learning. This makes sure the media has a clear learning goal and is not just used for fun. Students prefer short, engaging content, something known as "microlearning." This includes quick videos, quizzes, and fun content that fits their attention span. For example, many use YouTube to improve listening skills. This supports the idea that social media can be a powerful tool if used with purpose and structure. Students said they learn better through videos, images, music, and interactive tools, rather than just reading from textbooks. This supports the idea that learning through multiple formats (text, sound, visuals) helps students understand and remember better.

Students see that teachers play a major role in successful social media learning. Almost all agreed that teachers should be trained in both digital skills and teaching methods. This matches what other studies have found: without well-prepared teachers, digital tools may not be used effectively. This study adds important new knowledge to the research on social media in education. It focuses on schools that don't have much access to resources, showing how social media can still be used effectively with smart planning. It also shows that success depends not just on technology but on people, structure, and good teaching strategies.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that social media platforms have significant potential as tools for teaching English, particularly in resource-limited secondary schools. Consistent with the literature (Alshabeb,

2020; Yuan Ju, 1970) Students reported that platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube positively influenced their learning. A vast majority indicated that these platforms enhanced their motivation (89.5%), interest (94.8%), and understanding of English material (94.7%). This supports existing research that emphasizes the engaging and authentic nature of social media content, which can immerse learners in real-life language use and foster more dynamic learning environments.

However, the study also revealed several challenges that align with those identified in the literature. A notable 52.7% of students expressed difficulties in maintaining focus due to distractions from unrelated content on social media. Additionally, 73.7% reported issues related to internet access or device availability, underscoring the persistence of the digital divide, particularly in low-resource contexts (Kircher & Kircher, 2024; Raffaghelli & Manca, 2019). These findings echo the concerns raised by Jandrić et al. (2020) regarding unequal digital access and the limitations it poses to technology-enhanced learning. Furthermore, 94.7% of students emphasized the importance of teacher training, indicating that effective integration of social media into English instruction requires teachers to be digitally literate and pedagogically prepared an issue widely documented in the literature (Ubaedillah et al., 2021).

In terms of instructional innovation, the study supports the literature's advocacy for gamification, microlearning, and creative content (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Jandrić et al., 2020). Students showed a preference for short, engaging content and expressed a need for structured guidance while using social media for learning. This aligns with the concept of microlearning, where information is delivered in small, manageable segments that are easier to absorb. Students also appreciated specific uses of platforms—for instance, using YouTube for improving listening skills, which underscores the value of targeted and purposeful application of social media tools in English language instruction.

The importance of multimodal learning was also reflected in the findings. Students reported that they could understand lessons more quickly through videos, pictures, and interactive content available on social media, which supports the literature on multimodal engagement (Al-Rahmi & Zeki, 2017; Sofi-Karim et al., 2023). These platforms combine text, audio, visuals, and animation, allowing students to absorb information through multiple sensory channels and enhancing their overall comprehension and retention. Despite the benefits, accessibility remains a major concern. While many students valued the flexibility of learning “anytime and anywhere,” a significant number still face barriers such as unstable internet connections and a lack of devices. This reflects the digital inequalities highlighted by (Ahmed, 2020) and points to a need for more inclusive policies and infrastructure to ensure equitable access to digital learning tools.

Additionally, distraction and content overload were prominent concerns, mirroring findings by (Allam & Elyas, 2016; Chun et al., 2016). With over half of the respondents acknowledging that they were often sidetracked by non-educational content, the need for curated content, time-management strategies, and digital literacy education becomes apparent. This could help learners use social media more effectively for academic purposes. Finally, the role of the teacher emerged as a pivotal factor in the success of social media integration. The overwhelming consensus among students (94.7%) that teacher training is essential aligns with literature emphasizing the necessity for professional development in digital pedagogy (Ubaedillah et al., 2021). It also suggests that students are aware of the importance of well-structured and supportive instruction in navigating social media for learning.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on social media in education by specifically examining its use in a resource-limited secondary school context, an area that has been underrepresented in previous research (Jandrić et al., 2020). While much of the existing literature has focused on well-resourced settings or higher education, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of secondary students facing infrastructural and pedagogical limitations. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions that address not only the technological but also the human and pedagogical aspects of integrating social media into English language education.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the use of social media as a tool for teaching English in a resource-limited secondary school context, revealing both its potential and challenges. The findings demonstrate that social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram can significantly enhance students' motivation, engagement, and understanding of English language content. Students reported that these platforms make learning more enjoyable and relatable, offering diverse multimedia content that supports various language skills, particularly

listening and speaking. These benefits confirm the growing body of literature that views social media as a transformative tool in language education.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also uncovered several critical challenges. Limited access to the internet and digital devices, a high potential for distraction, and the lack of structured teacher involvement were among the key barriers to effective integration. These challenges are especially pronounced in resource-limited environments, where infrastructural deficits and uneven digital literacy hinder the equitable use of technology in education. Moreover, the overwhelming call from students for teacher training highlights the need for educators to be better prepared to guide and manage social media-based learning.

In light of these findings, several suggestions are offered. First, there is a need for investment in digital infrastructure and resources to ensure that all students can benefit equally from social media in education. This includes expanding access to reliable internet and affordable digital devices in schools. Second, teachers should receive targeted training on how to effectively integrate social media into English instruction. Such training should not only cover the technical aspects but also focus on pedagogy, content curation, classroom management in digital environments, and the development of students' digital literacy.

Furthermore, schools should consider developing clear guidelines and frameworks for the use of social media in the classroom. These should promote focused, educational use while minimizing distractions and encouraging responsible online behavior. Incorporating structured activities such as content creation, interactive language games, and peer-to-peer communication can help maximize the educational value of social media. Finally, further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of social media-based learning on students' language proficiency and academic performance, particularly in under-resourced educational settings.

In conclusion, while social media presents a promising avenue for enhancing English language teaching, its successful implementation in secondary schools, especially those facing resource constraints, requires strategic planning, supportive infrastructure, and well-trained educators. By addressing these challenges, educators and policymakers can harness the full potential of social media to create more inclusive, engaging, and effective English learning environments.

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