STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract: Significant growth of social media use has created powerful impact on English language learning. This study examines the EFL learners' perspectives on using social media through social communication for English language learning purposes to understand better how English learners perceive social media. For this purpose, 338 (158 males and 180 female) learners from 19 towns in East Java participated in a survey and responded to the questions of (1) what preference of social media used by different genders and (2) how is their perception toward the influence of social communication in social media on their language learning. Based on the findings, the students positively perceive the use of social media in learning English. Among many social media platforms, both male and female students share a similar preference; WhatsApp and Instagram are social media that EFL learners commonly use. The activities they prefer is dealing with receptive skills as they listen to songs or watch videos. Furthermore, both male and female students shared similar perceptions of the influence of social media on their English language skills, although there is a slight difference.

Keywords: *gender, social media, social communication, students' perspective*

INTRODUCTION

The internet is a compulsory need in today's daily life; some people use it to support their work, look for entertainment, learn, and socialize with others through social media. Social media has been used by many people in the world, including students as the generation who are growing up in the digital world (Abu-Ayfah, 2019). Many studies revealed that university students use social networking the most of any age group of students (Azizi et al., 2019). They spent most of their leisure time accessing social media that indirectly change how they communicate by interacting through social media, watching movies or videos, listening to songs, etc. Furthermore, Hafner (2019) states that social media facilitates collaboration and the creation of multimodal writings that can be easily shared among online communities of readers and writers globally.

Not only students, some teachers also have benefited from teaching in an informal but constructive environment by utilizing social media. Due to subject requirements, students may access YouTube for subject-related materials and blogs,

Pinterest or Wiki tools, or Facebook or other social media tools for their learning practice. Hamat & Hasan (2019) mention that research on Social Networking Services (SNS) or social media on the effectiveness of SNS for language acquisition appear to focus mostly on instructor-led or classroom-based approaches. Whereas students actually experience learning the language while they communicate through social media, although without the teacher's instruction.

According to Bexheti et al. (2014), there are several reasons to use social media in the classroom, as follows: (1) Its content promotes teaching and learning on a lifelong learning scale; it promotes fairness and inclusion, and it raises the bar for Higher Education institutions to improve the quality and availability of their course content; (2) Social media allows students to create digital content on their own and publish it online, expanding a vast resource of user-created content from which students and teachers can benefit collaboratively, while also encouraging more active and proactive approaches to learning; (3) Social media is a network that connects students and teachers, allowing them to share their knowledge while also having access to specific and targeted knowledge in a given field of interest.

According to the theory of language as a socially constructed communication technology, language acquisition may not be an individual project in the first place. Everything about language suggests that it is a collaborative initiative: children construct and develop their language in collaboration with others, including their parents and other adults, but also, and far more significant than commonly assumed, with their peers (Dor, 2015). Thus, social communication through social media may affect their English learning as revealed by Pitaloka, et al (2020). Based on their study, it is gotten that the pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers indicated a significant impact of social media usage on their English language acquisition. Furthermore, the impact of social media use on the growth of English vocabulary was found to be most pronounced among EFL teachers. However, some teachers also reported significant effects on other English skills, including reading, listening, writing, communication, and contextual understanding.

There are several social media which are popular among students, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Telegram, etc. Those social media have affected the students' social communication (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019; Hamat & Hassan, 2019; Kolhar et al., 2021), for example students who are socially addicted are unable to pass the time without monitoring and updating their statuses and engaging in other activities. However, social media also bring many positive impacts to the language acquisition.

Some studies have focused on social media. Akyuz et al. (2012) investigated student teachers' social network usage patterns and attempted to identify the types of social and educational activities they engaged in on these networks. The research was conducted on five student teachers from various departments at Ankara University's Faculty of Educational Sciences. Content analysis was used to examine the data. According to the findings, the most valuable social network for teacher candidates is Facebook. Student teachers use social media for entertainment, sharing, social responsibility, education, and communication. The most common way people communicate on Facebook is by exchanging personal information. There was sharing of various data such as videos, photos, songs, and poems at the same level of commonality of use. Participants believe social networks are safe and secure as long as they are confident in their security settings. The study also found that social

networks improve social interaction among their users depending on the type and goals of usage.

Another research about perception of social media, especially Youtube was conducted by Irana, et al (2021). Particularly, they focused on examining the correlation between the habit of watching English videos on YouTube and listening mastery of the Preservice English teacher. Furthermore, Nasta et al (2022) has investigated the students' perception of the use and ease of Instagram in writing practice. The choice of Instagram as the medium is due to its popularity for teenager today, so that the students were assumed to be familiar with the features. The result of the study reveals positive perception of the use of Instagram in writing from the students' point of view.

Several variables can be related to social media in research for example the age range, education level, and gender. Lokhitasan et al (2019) is one researchers that paid attention to social media influencer viewed from different gender to emerge adults, especially on marketing. The similar study also conducted by Krasnova et al (2017) who considering the role of gender difference in the determinants of social networking site. Meanwhile, Ali et al (2021) investigated differences in social media use by men and women and their effects on students' academic success. Through their study, it is revealed that the utilization of social media platforms for communication and connection is predominantly observed among boys, whereas girls tend to employ social networking sites primarily for educational objectives. In addition, Almetwazi et al (2021) did a study aimed at examining pharmacy students' views on social media professionalism by demographic factors such gender and year in school. Moreover, Casipit at al. (2022) mentioned that gender divides as regards the use of social media, such as females tend to utilize available social media platforms more than males in the case of teachers and show more positive responses to social media use in the classroom. Generally, social media proved to hone the language skills (e.g., writing, reading) and critical thinking skills of the learners, improve communicative competence, develop vocabulary, promote language learning inside and outside the classroom, increase individual and group motivation to learn and succeed, engage students in critical, creative, and collaborative participation in transforming the textual world into a dynamic online community, create meaningful connections for authentic language situations, and support various types of learning styles.

Among the various research on the use of social media, the view from different gender have not been explored by many researchers, but there were a few which relate it with learning English through social communication in social media. Thus, this current research proposed two research questions: (1) How was preference of male and female students in using social media to learn English? and (2) How was the students' perception of the influence of social media on their English skills based on gender?

METHODOLOGY
Subjects

The subjects of the study (respondents) in this research were middle school, high school and university students from 19 cities in East Java. Research samples was taken uses Probability sampling, which is a sampling technique where the sample is not selected or, if possible, the entire population is assumed to have an

equal chance of being selected (Islamy, 2019). There were 338 respondents filled out the questioners.

Design and Procedures

This study uses a survey as a research design, specifically the Cross-sectional Survey (one-time survey). Survey research is a research method that aims to get an overview of the characteristics of the population being described by sample (Maidiana, 2021). In addition, survey research can also be used to find out views, attitudes, or perceptions of the subject (Islamy, 2019). This type of research design is considered appropriate to be used in this study because it is in line with the research objectives. Researchers wants to describe the perceptions of students learning English as a foreign language regarding the impact of social communication through social media on their English proficiency.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Two research instruments were used in this research. First, the questionnaire was used to obtain data used to answer the first and second problems formulated in this study. The prepared questionnaire consisted of 17 items questions/statements which include items related to the respondent's demographic data, respondents' preferences and habits in using social media, as well as respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of social media on language skills their English, both in terms of language components and language skills. The questionnaire rubrics can be seen in Appendix 1. The second Instrument that was used is interviews, semi-structured interviews are used to dig deeper into students' perceptions regarding the impact of using social communication social media on their English skills. Before the instruments used, both the instruments were validated first by experts and then tested.

To collect data, the researcher distributed questionnaires to several volunteer teachers and lecturers from 19 different cities in East Java, Indonesia. Volunteer teachers and lecturers provided a link to their students as participants. Participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire that collect demographic information, digital literary practices, and overall perception of social media and its impact on language skills their English. Participants were allowed to ask questions if they did not understand the scale items through WhatsApp or the researcher's email listed on the Google Form. After the data from the questionnaire results collected, the researcher conducted an interview that the interviewees were chosen randomly. The interview rubric is displayed in Appendix 2.

Data about respondents' preferences and habits in using social media was analyzed using simple frequency distribution calculations using percentages. This was done to see trends in student perceptions regarding the impact of use social media on their English language skills based on different gender. Data obtained through the interview process was analyzed thematically based on the data analysis process according to Miles & Huberman (2014) which includes data reduction, data presentation, and retrieval decision. At the data reduction stage, the researcher will select the results of the interviews and not use unnecessary data. At the stage of presenting the data, the results of the analysis are presented in narrative form. Meanwhile, the decision-making stage will be carried out after the data analysis process is complete.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The results of data collection show that 338 respondents from several regions in East Java had filled out a questionnaire regarding students' perceptions of learning English as a foreign language through social communication on social media. Among 338 respondents, 180 were female students and 158 were male students.

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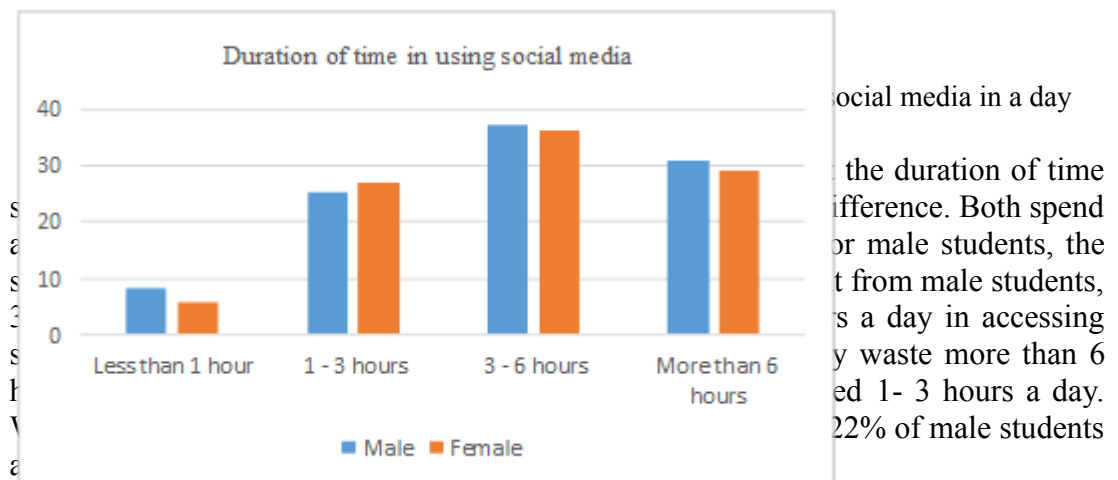|					

The preferences of male and female students in using social media for learning English

Male and female students have almost the same tendency in preference to using social media. Among many types of social media, there are some of them which commonly used by English Foreign Student in this study.

Diagram 1. used in daily life

. WhatsApp is still the most favorite one with an achievement of 93.3% for male students and 97.6% for female students. In the second position, Instagram Tis the choice of students, as many as 77.4% of male students say they use this social media and 89.3% of female students use it. Furthermore, in the third position there is a difference in preferences between male and female students, where male students choose YouTube (76.8%) while female students choose Tiktok (82.5%)T. In fourth place, male and female students both chose Twitter, with 65.2% for male students and 62.4% for females. The rest of social media used by male students are Snapchat and Discord (less than 5 %);while Telegram (25%) is utilize by female students.The second information is about the duration of time for using social media in one day, it is presented in Diagram 2 below.

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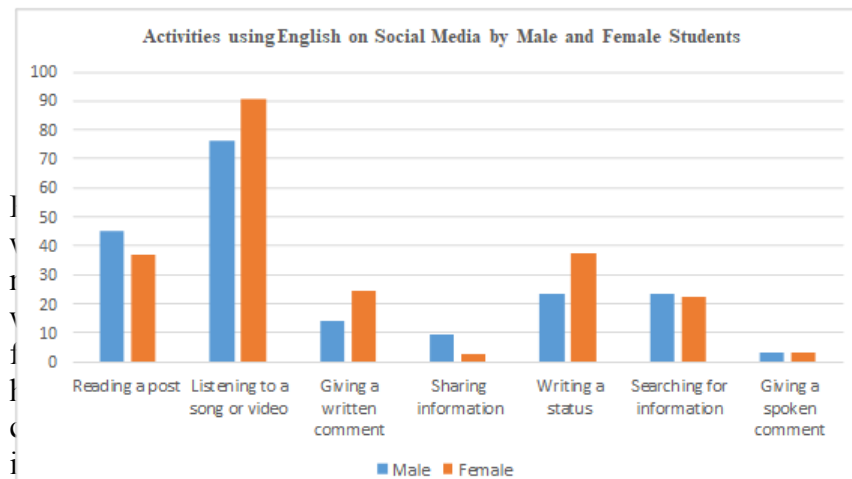
The next data obtained is information about the use of English in communicating through social media. Different results were found in this case, where more female students used English to communicate through social media than

male students. 53.80% of female students stated that they used English, either in full sentences or in the form of inserts. Whereas for male students at 33.11%

In terms of the types of English activities carried out through social media, the comparison between male and female students can be seen in the diagram below.

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...ale students using ...s. The activity that ...here male students ...econd activity that ...s. In contrast to the ...tudents tends to be ...ting status; in this ... terms of finding ...e preferences. An activity that looks different is giving written comments, where female students (24.40%) do it more than male students (13.91%). This is different from sharing information in English; more male students (9.27%) do it than female students (2.78%). The activity that was carried out by the two students was giving verbal comments.

Students' perceptions of the influence of social media on their English skills based on gender

In learning English, there are several language skills and components. This study seeks to reveal student perceptions in several aspects. The first is the perception that students' English skills are influenced by the vocabulary or phrases they find on social media. Both male and female students have a similar point of view. This is shown by 78.40% of male students and 89% of female students agreeing with it. This phenomenon is of course inseparable from the frequency with which students obtain input of vocabulary or phrases that are frequently used on social media so that indirectly, they also use them in communicating. This is reinforced by the results of interviews with several respondents who stated that they often get new vocabulary or terms in English through social media, for example Respondent 1 acquires vocabulary "By the Way" and "healing" from posts on Instagram which he then often uses in English skills both in written and spoken language.

The second aspect is the student's perception is that the student's English skills are influenced by pronunciation (pronunciation) that they hear on social media. Most students (male and female) feel that the pronunciation they hear through social media does affect their English skills. This tendency may have something to do with the preferences of activities carried out by students, namely listening to songs or videos in English. As stated by Respondents 2 and 4 during the interview; because they often listen to songs/videos via Tiktok and YouTube, they become more fluent in pronouncing some English vocabulary.

A different perception is revealed in the third aspect, in which male students think that their spoken English skills are affected by the use of slang in social media. While, female students assume that the use of slang in social media do not affect their spoken English skill. However, they shared the same view on the influence of slang used in social media to their written English skills. Most of them said that they often use slang in their informal writing because of social media.

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Discussion

The result revealed that all EFL learners actively use social media although there is a different result in using English in their communication, in which more female students use English in communication in social media compared to male students. They do it to connect and have social communication with others, including the teachers and mainly their peer. In line with this situation, Dor (2015) stated that everything about language suggests that it is a collaborative effort: children construct and develop their language in collaboration with others, including their parents and other adults, but also, and far more importantly, with their peers. In addition, communication is regarded as one of the learning processes which is varies depending on the time and places performed.

Different from the result of Akyuz et al. (2012) investigation that Facebook considered as the most popular social media, the preference of social media platforms may change as WhatsApp is now become the most popular social media the EFL learners use. The reason is not because WhatsApp is the best, but according to the EFL learners it is the easiest among many other social media they use. This may also be caused by the different trend that was developed at a particular period.

Viewing from different gender, the result of the study in which female students tend to be affected by the use of English slang or vocabulary in social communication through social media more than male do is in line with Lokhistan et al. (2019). They found that female respondents are influenced by influencers in social media outnumbered male. Thus, the female students may imitate their idol in using certain language style. Moreover, one of the findings of the study also support the finding of Ali et al (2021) in which most boys use social media for chatting and hanging out, most ladies use it for learning. Male students generally state that they tend to use social media just for fun without considering the academic purpose. However, the female students indicate that they also got English exposure when they use social media which indirectly affect their language acquisition.

Based on the participants' additional comments, they use social media for learning English in term of learning language components and language skills. They interact with other people around the world, allowing them to actively participate in a discussion. In line with this finding, by leaving comments on a blog or discussion forum, adding someone as a friend, and initiating communication by leaving a message, they can request more detailed explanations (Towner & Lego Muñoz, 2011). Students can use social technologies to collaborate with their peers to solve problems or to organize collaborative learning and study groups (Gray et al., 2010).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

To sum up, both male and female students have almost similar preference in using the social media in learning English. This can be seen from the type of social media used and the duration of utilizing the social media in a day. Although male and female students owned distinctive characters, they also have a parallel point of view about the influence of several aspects of language used through social media to their language skills development. It is suggested for future researchers to explore the use of social communication in social media by using another approach such as doing experimental research to enrich the knowledge in the field by considering gender as the significant factor.

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APPENDICES

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