Student Perspective in Using Social Media As a Tool in English Language Learning

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Abstract—Social media has great potential to support student-centered learning as they are flexible, interactive, and resource–rich in nature. One of its drawbacks is the quality of online instruction that lead to unfavorable perception and perspective of the students. The objectives of this research are to analyze the students' perceptions and perspectives in using social Media as a tool in English Language learning. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the students of the English Department, Faculty of Education, Islamic University of Riau. Research finding revealed that social media is very practical and useful for getting general information, knowledge and to increase their language competency.

Keywords — social media, student, perspective, language

I. INTRODUCTION

Language educators have long used the concepts of four basic language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. These four language skills are sometimes called the "macro-skills". The four basic skills are related to each other by two parameters: the mode of communication, oral or written and the direction of communication, receiving or producing the message. Listening comprehension is the receptive skill in the oral mode. When we speak of listening what we really mean is listening and understanding what we hear.

Reading is the receptive skill in the written mode. It can develop independently of listening and speaking skills, but often develops along with them, especially in societies with a highly-developed literary tradition. Reading can help build vocabulary that helps listening comprehension at the later stages, particularly.

Writing is the productive skill in the written mode. It, too, is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the language skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words. Speaking is often connected with listening. Gillet and Temple [1] also emphasize the close relationship between listening and speaking in this way.

Listening cannot be separated from the expressive aspects of oral communication. It is impossible to "teach listening" separately from speaking, or to set aside a portion of the instructional time for listening instruction and ignore it the rest of the time. When children develop their communicative powers they also develop their ability to listen receptively.

Learning language now should not have been as difficult as it was in previous time as there are many technologies and facilities as learning media become available to help learn English. For example interactive social media and virtual web-based communities is gaining popular everyday as the number of web-based courses, colleges, and schools continues to increase significantly [2,3]. Their popularity also increased because the process of teaching and learning can take place independence of place and time and more importantly they have many advantages by allowing for a more interactive, personalized, and independent learning experience [4]. Digital devices also have been used not only to complement established education aids but also to develop new ways of learning [1].

Web based learning environments have great potential to support student-centered learning as they are flexible, interactive, and resource–rich in nature [1]. Unfortunately, although web-based learning environments have unlimited prospects for educational use, they do however have some drawbacks - namely the implementation problems and challenges that are confronted when it comes to meeting all students' instructional needs [2,3]. The sources of these problems may have been the low quality of online instruction, the nature of the non-linear attributes of the web based learning environments and diverse learner profiles and characteristics. This research is mainly focus on the first problem – the quality of online instruction – that lead to unfavorable perception and perspective of the students toward the learning process. In analyzing these two variables, this research used social media as a mean to deliver particular subjects of English and focusing on perception and perspective of the students.

The word perception means "the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses, the way in

which something is regarded 10 understood." Perspective at least has two meaning, first is the art of drawing solid objects on a two dimensional surface so as to give the right impression of their height, width, depth, and position in relation to each other when viewed from a particular point. The second meaning of perspective is a "particular attitude toward or way of regarding something or a point of view toward something" [5]. In this research we use the second meaning that is the opinion, the attitude or the view point toward something – in this case toward the social media.

11 Social media is website and application or computer-mediated technology that enable users to create and share various content, information, ideas, interest and various expression through communities by 3 ing virtual network or to participate in social networking. From this definition the core component of the social media are the technology and the application that enable people to connect each other.

15 Social media is also defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to social networks, blogs, internet website 13 internet forums, and wikis. It could be concluded that media is communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated which includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet. Therefore, lecturers need to learn how to select the instructional media in the learning process [6]. Kustandi and Sutjipto concluded, "learning media is a tool that can help the learning process and serve to clarify the meaning of the message, so as to achieve the learning objectives perfectly [7]. Similarly, learning media is defined as everything that can convey and deliver the message from the source in a planned manner so as to create a conducive learning environment.

In development of technology, lecturers and students need to be creative facilitators and users of the technology. They have to be able to facilitate the teaching and learning activities in the class by presenting the appropriate use of technology. By knowing the perception and perspective of the students toward the use of social media in teaching, they could improve the teaching material in order to increase the quality of teaching. There are a large number of technology products today that can be used by teachers/lecturers in the class. Social media is one of the important ones [8].

In selecting media [10] some criteria should be considered as follows: 1. In accordance with the objectives to be achieved, 2. Right to support learning content that are facts, concepts, principles or generalizations, 3. Practical, flexible, and survive. Media chosen should be able to be used anywhere, anytime with the equipment available in the vicinity, as well as easily removed and taken anywhere, 4. Teachers' skill. Whatever the media, teachers should be able to use them in the learning process, 5. Grouping target. Effective medium to large groups is not necessarily equally effective when used in small groups or individuals. There is an appropriate medium for the type of large groups, medium groups, small groups, and individuals, 6. Technical quality. For example, a visual on the slide should be clear and fine information or messages to be conveyed and not be interrupted by other elements that form the background.

The objectives of this research are to investigate the use of social media and analyze the students' perceptions and perspectives in using Social Media as a tool in English language learning at English Study Program.

Research results about social media have actually shown that the great majority of students have a Twitter account (49.03%), the most popular social network among community diploma college students in King Khalid University. Other than twitter are MySpace, Live mocha, Video, Babble, Busuu, Unilang, Lang-8, Palabea, Italki.com, voxSwap, Myngle and English Baby (23.23%) and Google+ (18.71%) [9].

With regard to the use of social media for learning foreign languages, 66.9% of the surveyed students reported that they use this online tools to enhance their foreign language skills. The students were also asked to choose the social media network technologies that they use to boost their language skills. Results showed that most of the students like video sharing websites and Chat Tools. This implied that the students generally prefer to use a platform thoroughly which they can not only learn a language but also interact with friends, collegues and family [9].

To investigate the impact of social media on students' foreign language learning skills, the students were asked to select the four major language skills - listening, speaking, reading or writing. Based on the percentage ratings associated with each language skill reported to be improving is listening. Of those who participated in the survey, 45% said that listening is the most noticeable skill. Listening is usually considered as the weakest skill of most language learners. Easy access to the rich database of audio and video materials on social media certainly contributes in enhancing this Listening Language skill [9].

Based on data collected from 120 students, this research measures the effective contribution of Social Media Networking (SMN) in foreign language learning skills. Results of the research demonstrated that most of the students claimed they favor the use of these internet-based applications as these help them improve their four language skills. Given these educational benefits, the reseacrhers can stipulate that social media tools are capable of enriching the language learning experience. Therefore, the researchers recommend that educators use these online social communities whether they work in fully online, blended, or face - to- face language learning environments [9].

In teaching language skills, some lecturer has used technology but it is just used to introduce the material only. It is not really used as a medium in whole teaching and learning process. In this research, the writer will use social media as medium in teaching language skills as the solution of these problems faced by the students. In other word media also serves as a teaching tool.

In learning English, social media has offered opportunities for learners to share information, create conversations and develop their own content of interest conveniently. They may share their knowledge or their assignment from blogspot to other students or leacturer. In facebook, they can create conversation and also share everything. In google classroom, they can get information about the course in one semester. There are many examples

of these platforms (blogs: wordpress, blogspot, microblogs: Twitter, Posterous, Tumbler, wikis: Wikipedia, Scholarpedia, Social networking sites: Facebook, Edmodo. Academia, Linkedln, photosharing sites: Instagram, Cymera, instant messaging: Whatsapp, WeChat, Line, video-sharing sites: Keek, Youtube and many more that have benefits billions of users from all over the world.

From the education perspective, many scholars have found that these platforms especially the social networking sites have enormous potential that can encourage critical engagement in discussion as well as harness peer feedback throughout the learning process [11]. In this research the writers are interested in investigating and describing the students' perceptions and perspective toward the Social Media as a tool in English language learning.

The use of instructional media at the stage of learning orientation will greatly assist the effectiveness of the learning process and the delivery of the message and the content of learning at the time. In addition to the motivation and interests of students, learning media can also help students improve comprehension, presenting interesting and reliable data, facilitate the interpretation of data, and condense the information". That's why in this research, the writers want to know the perception in using them as tools in teaching and learning English.

II. METHODS

The research has been conducted at English Department, Faculty of Education, the Islamic University of Riau Indonesia in 2017/2018 academic year. We used questionnaires and interviews for collecting quantitative and qualitative data from student respondents. In this survey we use 12 closed questions to explore the students' perceptions about the use of social media in the classroom. Each question has 5 alternative answers, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". In addition to closed questions there are also open questions to give the students the opportunities to declare their opinion about the use of social media in the classroom. Data and the answers then are classified according to the topic and are analyzed using qualitative method in three steps: data managing, data interpreting and transcript analyses.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that most of the students have been using social media since they know how to use the communication gadget. There are many types social media they use but the most common and popular ones are WhatsApp and Instagram as shown in Fig 1. These two social media are used by 64% of respondents while other social network, Line, Youtube, Facebook, Google class, Duolingo and Edmondo are used only around 9%, 8%, 6%, 6%, 4% and 4% respectively by the respondents.

WhatsApp and Instagram are the most popular messaging and voice over IP Service for sending voice calls, text messages, video calls, images, documents and user locations. More than 1 billion people use WhatsApp to stay in touch for free through messaging or calling in over 180 countries in the world.
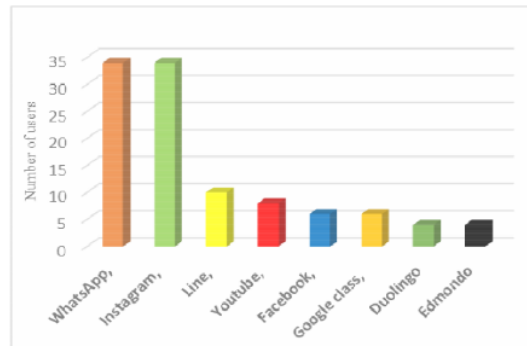

Fig. 1. Types and Percentage of Social Media Used by the Students

According to the students, social media are very useful in helping them learning to improve their skill in English. This is because social media can be accessed easily and handy, unlike the conventional internet that need computer and internet connection.

There are many reasons why the students use social media. As shown in Fig 2, the dominant reasons are to improve their general information and general knowledge, each account for 41%. The rest of the students answer that social media can improve their English skill and can be fun for the users; each account for 9%. In addition, the use of social media as medium for learning English give them the flexibility in term of time, variation of sources that can be accessed and the easiness to access from many places. With the advance of communication technology the use of social media from time to time is expected to be increasingly easier and user friendly.

Social media have been influencing students quite significance in every aspects of human life, including in learning of English. Most of social media or information technology equipment use English as a default language. Many students also use English as their means of communication because this language has been preinstalled in the gadget at the first place.

In this research we analyzed the students' perception and perspective in using social media such as Instagram, What Ups, You tube, and Face Book as tools in English Language Learning at English Study Program.

Based on research results there are 67 % of student respondents stated that social media has improved their vocabulary through many ways. The rest of the students (33 %) said that the social media enable them to share the information to others. This become possible as the students have ample opportunities in exploring the media through internet and share the information to other friends and groups.
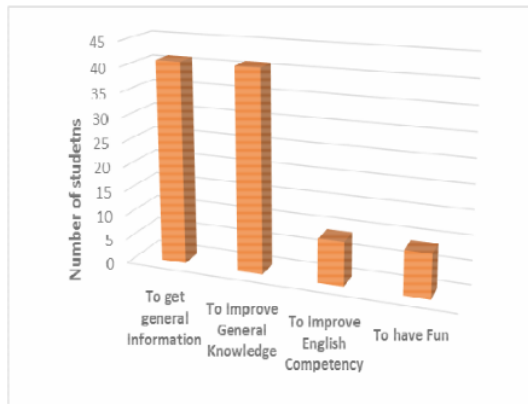
Fig. 2. The Purpose of Using Social Media by Students

The use of the social media has brought a big impact on the people life, either positive and negative ones. Among other positive impact of social media are: easy and more efficient in distributing news, easy to make contact with people across the world and long distance communication with single touch with social networking. More importantly are the availability of abundance of information on the internet with finger tips access from everywhere in the world. Internet has become a must equipment, smart book or a big encyclopedia. They can update knowledge and access the relevant information for them

Most of the students (93%) enjoy to use social media in helping their learning process. This is because the internet or social media provide almost everything they need in the learning process. Only 7 % of the students are not happy with internet because not all information they need are available in the sites they are browsing.

In addition to the advantage of social media, there are also, however, some disadvantages of social media. For example the social interaction and social cohesion may become weak because of lack of direct interactions and emotional exchange among people. People may also get misunderstanding as the emotion and feeling are not easily represented by symbol and letter. What the people really feel are not easily understood by the other side. Sometime other people get the opposite meaning of what other people really mean.

Another problems are cyber bullying, cheating or even stealing information and money, security threat and addiction to the internet which sometime can be dangerous. These negative impacts of the social media have taken victims. For example, persecution done by some people as results of war in the social media.

A. Students Perception on Social Media

The first objective of this research is to find out the perception of students on the social media. Based on the survey we found that about 23 % of the students strongly agree that social media can increase their interest and motivation to learn English and 74% of students agree that the use of social media in the classroom have positive impact on the learning process. The expression they often say is

"interesting." The rest of the respondents do not agree to use social media, but the number of this category is only 3% of the total students (see Fig 2). Other students said that social media can overcome their boring and tedious. Students also stated that the use of social media is more interesting than just reading the books or listening to lectures only. Some students also expressed the importance of choosing social media that has good sound and picture quality.

The response of the students clearly show that almost all students are in favor of using social media in their learning in the classroom. Implication of this finding is that the lecturers should have considered this finding in their teaching process in the classroom and they need to learn and understand the social media as well.

B. Students Perspective on Social Media

The second research questions of this study is to find out the students' perspective in using social media as a tool in language learning. A Table 1 shows about 85% of the students stated that social media is very useful, practical, simple, easy to use and to understand, cheap, and can be used everywhere, anytime, and every day. Only small number of students (5.6%) who feel unhappy with social media. In other word social media has significant advantages or benefits for students in learning process.

They also said that they are motivated to learn more as they can access any information and knowledge and learn from the various website anytime and everywhere. They can also send questions, material and subject matters to have feedback or just to get the questions answered by people.

. Lecturers also get benefit as they can access many teaching material from reputable sites, handy and easy to use in any occasion, either in the class or outside the class rooms. From the perspective of the students, social media is not only beneficial in the class rooms but also outside of the class rooms. This advance of technology makes possible those were impossible in the past. Similarly, those are not possible today may be possible in the future.

Social media also has its own disadvantageous as stated by few respondents. Among the negative effects are: we could easily become the victim of cyber attack, bullying, addiction, cheating, criminal acts, security threats and other criminal acts. Herewith, the social media have great impact on learning purposes as well as have some drawbacks. Another respondent gives negative answer because the hatred speech on the internet. Only one respondent gives neutral answer when asked about the benefit of social media.

Another use of social media is for blended learning or the blended use of social media is for academic and non academic purposes [12]. For example, academically students can learned vocabulary, listening and pronunciation simultaneously to improve their speaking skill. Another purpose of social network is the students can use social media for searching information, looking for material for non learning, chatting and group meeting.

TABLE I.   PERSPECTIVE OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA BY STUDENTS

Perspective of using Social Media	Number of Students	%
Very useful, beneficial, happy	90	85
Useful, easy to use	8	7.5
Moderate	2	1.9
Not useful, not happy	6	5.6
Total	106	100

IV.   CONCLUSION

Based on this research result, we can conclude that learning English by using social media is more interesting to learn by the second semester English students at Islamic University of Riau. Moreover, English becomes more interesting as the sophisticated technology becomes available.

The students are more eager to learn and to increase more of their time allocation in using social media for academic purposes, such as listening and other aspect of English language. They are more interested and happy to practice and to upgrade the quality of their English competencies. Technology is available to help and give the students opportunity to do more not only in the classroom but also outside the class room.

By knowing the students' weaknesses, the lecturer should give more practices to the students in order to improve their competencies. Social media can help lecturer provide hundreds of listening materials to the students. To avoid misuse of using the phone, the lecturers also have to check every students' activity while they are learning because while they are listening they also active in using their phone. The lecturer has to make sure if they are exactly listening to their subject.

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