



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH QUALITY IN MILLENNIAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

In millennial era, many young generations use social media for various purposes. One of them is for improving their English quality. This study aims to know the social media applications mostly used by the students, the English skills can be improved and the reasons why they use social media for improving English quality in millennial era. The participants are 30 students of Class B, second semester of English Education Department in IAIN Kudus. In collecting data, this qualitative research used observation, interview and documentation. Based on the data, there are three results. First, the social media applications mostly used by the students are youtube, instagram, facebook, and line. Second, the students' English skills can be improved by social media in order are listening, speaking, writing and reading. And, they use social media for improving English quality in millennial era because it is fun, interesting, easy to use/access, effective, simple and informative.

Keywords: *social media, English quality, millennial era*

INTRODUCTION

The word 'media' is often heard in teaching and learning process. The existence of media in a learning process cannot be separated. The word media comes from Latin word "medius" which is literally interpreted as the middle, the introduction or the intermediary which means being in two positions between the teacher and the language (Rosyada, 2008: 7). Teacher uses media as a means to teach which can stimulate students to learn. In teaching and learning process, teacher may select various kinds of media. The media chosen by the teacher depends on his needs and purposes in teaching. The teaching and learning process will be interesting if the teacher use the

appropriate media which can attract students' attention. Teachers should have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the learning media as stated by Hamalik in Arsyad (2009: 2), which includes:

- a. Media as a communication means for the effectiveness of teaching and learning process;
- b. The function of media in order to achieve educational goals;
- c. The details of learning process;
- d. The relationship between teaching methods and educational media;
- e. Value or benefits of educational media in teaching.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that media has a significant role in teaching and learning process. Media can help students to receive the lessons or knowledge easily. In addition, learning foreign language like English really needs media as a tool to learn. In learning a language, a learner should comprehend about grammar, memorize new vocabularies, and practice how to pronounce the words correctly and so on.

The difficulties in learning language as stated before can be solved by using a tool which is called media. One of media which can be chosen is internet. Nowadays, the advance of technology should be utilized properly by all of the people especially students. Internet which is as an example of technological advances can be utilized for learning. Internet can be used for learning English. Students may get many English lessons from internet such as grammar, vocabularies, idioms, and so on.

The existence of internet cannot be separated from the development of information and communication technology. Internet stands for interconnection-networking. Internet can be used for many purposes including educational purposes. Internet also brings a great influence in many aspects. By using internet, everyone can interact each other wherever and whenever. Furthermore, nowadays people are getting easier to access internet. Internet can be accessed easily by using mobile phone. So, they do not have to use computer anymore to access internet.

Due to the development of information and communication technology, the use of mobile phones is increasingly widespread. It can be seen that almost everyone has a mobile phone including children. Many children are currently very active in internet. By using internet, the children can access a lot of applications such

as websites, games, YouTube, blogs, and social media. Unfortunately, many parents give a freedom to their children in using mobile phones and accessing internet without being supervised.

Children and teenagers dominate the use of internet and social media in the world. Social media becomes one of applications which is mostly accessed by people especially teenagers. Social media is a convergence between personal communication in the sense of sharing between individuals (to be shared one-to-one) and public media to share to anyone without any individual limits (Meike and Young in Sari, 2017: 5). Sari (2017: 5) also defines social media as a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves as well as interact, work together, share, communicate with other users, and form a virtual social bond. So, it can be concluded that social media is a medium to interact, communicate, and share with friends or everyone in the world by using internet.

Social media is an interesting application so that many people like it very much. It provides convenience for people or users to communicate, interact, and connect each other wherever and whenever. Recently, almost everyone has social media. There are various kinds of social media and each person may have at least more than two social media. Many internet users are social media enthusiasts. They can easily access the social media via mobile phone. There are many kinds of social media such as twitter, facebook, whatsapp, BBM, path, line, instagram and many others.

Since it can be accessed easily by using mobile phone, internet especially social media should be used well and wisely. Internet should be utilized for the learning process, for example English learning. Students can access the internet easily by using their mobile phones so that they can use

it for learning and improving their English everywhere and every time. As stated before that students or teenagers can get many English lessons by using internet (website, social media, etc.). Due to the widespread use of social media by teenagers, researchers were eager to know the use of social media for learning English. Furthermore, researchers were interested in conducting a study about social media for improving students' English quality in millennial era.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive qualitative research. The participants were 30 students of Class B, the second semester of English Education Department in IAIN Kudus. The English students of IAIN Kudus use various kinds of social media for learning English. They use social media to improve their English quality. This research aims to know the social media applications mostly used by the students, the English skills which can be improved and the reasons why they use social media for improving English quality in millennial era.

In conducting this research, the researchers used observation, interview and documentation to collect the data. After collecting the data, the researchers analysed the data as follows: (1) transcribe the interview, (2) identify the various kinds of social media used by students, (3) identify the students' English skills improved by using social media, and (4) identify the reasons why students use social media for improving English quality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social media is an online medium that allows its users to easily participate, share, and create a work. Nowadays, the type of social media that develops in the community quite a lot. The types of social media that

develop today include Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, YouTube, Blogger, and others. Social media brings a combination of the scope of cyberspace elements in online service products such as blogs, discussion forums, chat rooms, emails, websites, as well as community power built through social networking (Juju and Sulinta, 2010: 1). Hamid et al (2016: 2) classified the most popular social media in some categories. They are weblogs or blogs (i.e. Blogger and WordPress), social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter and MySpace), photos and videos (i.e. Flickr and YouTube), online encyclopaedia (i.e. Wikipedia), online bookmarking (i.e. Delicious), virtual social worlds (i.e. Second Life) and virtual game worlds (i.e. World of Craft).

Now, social networking can be called as the favorite communication media among students. Social network is defined as a web-based service that enables individuals who use it to do some things like constructing a person's profile to the public in a series of tied systems and coordinating information with people who are connected as friends. Moreover, in the current Internet era, social networking media has created a new public space, even further away, a new public sphere for the community, including the students who take part in the community groups. Students have a big role in the development of social media today. Each student is estimated to have at least one type of social media account and most of them have some or all social media accounts.

Nowadays, social media become a vital requirement for the students. However, social media are free, without rules, and not controlled, can cause abuse, especially by the students. Such abuse may be the use of self-defeating social media or the use of social media which is dangerous for others. One of

them is for criminal acts, such as fraud, kidnapping, persecution, humiliation etc.

Apart from the negative side of social media usage, it is also useful in teaching and learning process. Most student or associations already have Facebook or Twitter accounts or groups. These accounts are used to share information related to lectures and or activities of the organization. Social media facilitates student learning facilities, as means of brainstorming and discussion among students, and as an online student forum. The use of social media for positive things can familiarize relationships between users and also has a positive impact in real life.

Another positive value of social media is the various articles or papers that are shared through social media can be a means of learning for students. Students who want something practical can take advantage of social media without going to the library, buying books, photocopying books, or borrowing books. Students can access lecture materials through social media appropriately. There are also lecturers who already use social media facilities as a means of learning. Lecturers distributed lecture materials through social media to students so as to facilitate students in accessing or obtaining material.

Social media cannot be separated from English language because most of them use English language in its application or features. This is indirectly so effective to learn English. Moreover, if the students want to learn English more, they can use social media because they can find the examples of the written and spoken English language there. The useful one is being able to find and know the way native speakers using English language. For that reasons, they can study the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It is supported by Hayati (2015) who said that learning English

through social media is more fun because there are various features that stimulate the users' thinking to stay happy and not bored. For learning English, she proposes some ways. First is changing the account language settings to English. Language in account settings is a bridge for the users in understanding the various commands in it. With account language in the form of English, it will get them to speak English indirectly. By doing it, it is possible that they will be so proficient in English. The second way is trying to write status using English language. Mastery of vocabulary is one of the important things in learning English. And, vocabulary mastery training can be done through writing the status because the users will find new vocabulary that they do not know yet. And the last way is following groups that serve or use English. By joining the English group, the users gradually will also feel free in the atmosphere of English in the group.

For learning English as a second language, Mubarak (2016: 125) said that both teacher or lecturer and the student must have good preparation if they want to use social media for learning English. After conducting his research, Mubarak (2016: 126) proposes some suggestions so that the English learning process using social media can be maximum. They are:

- a. Students are asked to use social media like Facebook and WhatsApp in learning English;
- b. Teacher asks the students to use social media so they can build social relationship with students who use or speak English;
- c. Teacher must give explanation, suggestion or tell the experiences so the students will get clear information and feedback;

- d. Teacher and students must make a deal to learn English through social media effectively;
- e. Teacher must be familiar with the safety policies when he shares the students' data;
- f. Teacher must have a role as facilitator so it can be said that the class or group is in the form of students-centered learning.

Backer (2010) also emphasized that integrating new technologies into assessment is useful to students whose experience with the new technology. However, not all students are able to use the technology and it requires further work when the teacher wants to implement new technology. It means that the best preparation must be ready before to avoid the various problems in learning process.

The components that must be fulfilled in preparing the English learning process using internet or social media are integration, computer capability, and teacher activity. First, the most important thing in an English education program is that the program should be integrated, not as an additional program. Teachers should be directly involved in the program, such as providing homework and classroom interactions. Second, students do not always have expertise in using computers, but some of them can share each other so they can study together. And, teachers must actively motivate students to use the internet.

The trend to use social media among university students is always increasing day by day and most of them use it for interactions and communication. Nevertheless, a big number of the students use it for academic or learning purpose. Related to the use of social media for learning English, there were some previous studies which discussed it.

The first is research from Hussain (2012) entitled *A Study to Evaluate the Social Media Trends among University Students*.

From his research, the project survey showed that 83% of New Zealand citizens used internet; out of which 80% used it for communication, 33% used it for instant and fast messaging, 25% used it for playing online games and 50% joined as the members of social networking sites (Hussain, 2012: 640). Meanwhile, related to the reasons of using social media by university students, Hussain (2012: 643) showed the data 92% of the users community used social media for getting enjoyment and 73% used it for searching and making friends. However, there was academic use of social media as 76% used it for sharing their learning experiences and research findings, 59% shared academic programs or activities, 92% used for getting the new information related to their studies, educational developments/opportunities and current affairs. 87% used it for academic networking at national and international level, but 80% used social media for killing the time. the preference of students to use different types of social media. In his research, Hussain (2012: 646) also found the types of social media which are preferred by the university students. 90% of them were preferred to use Facebook, and 53% LinkedIn, whereas 25% used twitter, and 26% had their own web-blog; however, 64% joined Google Groups for their academic and social purpose.

The second previous study is from Mahadi (2016) entitled *The Impact of Social Media among Undergraduate Students: Attitude*. In that research, Mahadi (2016: 472) analysed the impact of social media on Art students' attitude from Art and Design Faculty in University Technology Mara. And, finally the research result showed that most of students are involved in social media actively and they do realized the effect of social media to their daily life, especially their attitude.

The next previous study is from Sutherland et al (2018) entitled university student social media use and its influence on offline engagement in higher educational communities. In their research, there were 106 participants. They were undergraduate students. In that research, they wanted to know the use of social media for the undergraduate university students and to analyze the influence of the usage of social media on the students' offline engagement in higher educational communities. Moreover, the result showed that most students never or rarely used the social media to facilitate offline engagement, especially in their academic communities.

Meanwhile, this study was conducted to know the social media applications mostly used by the students, the English skills can be improved and the reasons why they use social media for improving English quality in millennial era. And, the participants were the English Education Department students in IAIN Kudus. From the previous studies mentioned above, it can be compared clearly that this research is different with them.

Since the social media has become popular among students, the students of English Education Department IAIN Kudus often use the existing social networks to communicate with their friends. The role of SMS (short message service) which used to be a practical and inexpensive tool to communicate is now beginning to shift to social networking media. For example, even if they have friend's mobile number, they start talking/communicating more often with their friends through social networking accounts. All information is shared in cyberspace, from unimportant thing (telling daily activities) to important thing (information of certain events). Social networking is like a lifestyle for them. If they do not use social media in a day, it seems it is not complete.

In the result of the interview, the students also said that they often use social media to study English in this millennial era. Moreover, they are new students or the first academic year students (second semester) from English Education Department so learning English using social media is very useful for them. In IAIN Kudus, English Education Department is categorized as new department or study program so the students studying in this department do not have the seniors who can help, share or teach them everytime and everywhere. Therefore, they must have big struggle to study English. And, social media do help them in learning English. From it, they can find and study the materials about English, the English songs, how the native speakers using English, and so on. By accessing the social media, they can practice English everytime and everywhere. They feel so lucky because they live in millennial era where they can find or access everything fast and easily. Based on the data, the students of English Education Department use various social media applications. They are youtube, instagram, facebook, line, whatsapp, messenger, google, pinnterest and wattpad. Nevertheless. The biggest number of applications mostly used by the students are youtube, instagram, facebook, and line. 40% of students use youtube, 35% use instagram, 16% use facebook, 5% use line, and 4% used whatsapp, messenger, wattpad and pinterest. Youtube is as the social media mostly used by the students because they can study from the native speakers. From the video in youtube, the students can imitate or practice, get knowledge and so on. If this result is analysed based on Hamid et al (2016) category above, the researchers can say that the category of popular social media mostly used by the students is social networking sites., then followed by photos and videos.

Related to the English skills which can be improved by social media, the students can find various applications used to study and improve their English skills, whether it is listening, speaking, writing or reading. From various social media, students can find the learning sources, like video of English song, tutorial, monologue, dialogue, or written information or knowledge. From these sources, they can study all English skills. These applications can support their English learning process, whether when they are in class or out of the class. So they can use them by the lecturer's guidance or autonomous by themselves. Based on the data, if the students' English skills improved by social media arranged in order, the researchers get the result: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

In this millennial era, everyone prefers the easy, fast, and practical thing. The students of English Education Department IAIN Kudus also try to have such criteria in their academic scope. They do not want to have or bring the heavy things. They want to study easily and well whenever and wherever. The existence of social media do support their academic purposes. Therefore, many students said that they are so lucky because they live in millennial era where everything can be

accessed fast and easily, including the learning sources from social media. They use social media for improving English quality because they feel that is fun, interesting, easy to use/access, effective, simple and informative.

CONCLUSION

In this millennial era, students cannot be separated from the information and technology development. One of them is social media. English Education Department students of IAIN Kudus use it for various purposes. One of them is for academic purpose. That is used as learning sources, whether when they are in class or outside of class so they can learn English by the lecturer's guidance or autonomously (by themselves). After analyzing the data of the research, the writers conclude three results. First, the social media applications mostly used by the students to improve their English are *youtube*, *instagram*, *facebook*, and *line*. Second, the students' English skills can be improved by social media in order are listening, speaking, writing and reading. And, the students use social media for improving English quality in millennial era because they are fun, interesting, easy to use/access, effective, simple and informative.

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