

EXPLORING EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED SPEAKING PRACTICE IN INFORMAL DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

¹*Muh Saeful Effendi, ¹Prayudha

¹English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author Email: muh.effendi@pbi.uad.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 2026 Revised: July 2026 Accepted: September 2026 Published: October 2026	<i>Speaking remains one of the most demanding skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, and Indonesian university students often have few opportunities to practice it beyond the classroom. Social media is increasingly used informally for language exposure and practice, yet little is known about how EFL learners themselves experience and regulate this practice for speaking development. This study explores how English Education students at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan use social media informally to support their English-speaking practice and how they regulate their own learning while doing so. Using a qualitative descriptive design, a 39-item closed-ended questionnaire was used to screen and describe the social media use of fourth-semester students enrolled in the Speaking in Academic Context course, from whom seven students were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews based on their regular, independent use of social media for English speaking practice. Data were analyzed thematically through familiarization, coding, categorization, and interpretation. Students perceived platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp as supportive of their speaking practice, offering authentic input, opportunities for repetition, and features for interactive, real-time communication, and reported perceived improvement in pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and confidence through self-regulated strategies. However, students also described irregular engagement, cognitive fatigue from an abundance of content, and difficulty transferring online practice to face-to-face communication. These findings indicate that social media can usefully complement formal EFL instruction, provided teachers guide students in selecting reliable content, sustaining consistent practice, structuring interaction, and reflecting on their own learning strategies.</i>
Keywords Social media; EFL speaking skill; Informal digital learning; Learner autonomy; Technology-enhanced learning;	
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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, English functions as the leading language of cross-border communication and, as of April 2019, was the most widely used language online, representing 25.2% of internet users worldwide (Giannakouloupoulos et al., 2020). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and plays a growing role across education and professional life. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most demanding for EFL learners (Rao, 2019), and Indonesian students face compounding obstacles in developing it: limited opportunities to interact in English outside class, anxiety about being evaluated while speaking, pronunciation patterns that diverge from Indonesian phonology, insufficient

exposure to authentic spoken input, and a reluctance to speak for fear of making mistakes. Universities carry a responsibility to help students overcome these obstacles as part of producing competitive graduates (Santosa, 2018). Speaking allows learners to convey thoughts to listeners and interlocutors, and involves generating, receiving, and constructing meaning rather than simply exchanging words (Dewan & Sharma, 2025). Because English differs structurally from Indonesian, and because opportunities to practice remain limited in many classrooms, students need additional, low-stakes spaces in which to speak (Rao, 2019).

Social media is a group of internet-based applications built on the ideology and technology of Web 2.0 that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Islam & Chitran, 2019), with platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, X, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Telegram widely used for educational purposes (Abdulaziz Al Fadda, 2020; Nida et al., 2020; Widiantari & Dewi, 2023; Yu et al., 2023). Several features of these platforms respond directly to the speaking-related barriers described above: audio-visual content and replay functions allow learners to revisit input as many times as needed for pronunciation and listening practice; voice notes and video calls create low-pressure opportunities for spoken output outside a graded classroom; user-generated content invites students to produce, not only consume, English; and direct interaction with international users extends practice to authentic, real-time communication. Social media is popular among students and recognized as a primary means of communication for digital natives (Williams et al., 2012), a generation that has grown up using the internet, smartphones, and social media from an early age (Nahdiana et al., 2024).

Research conducted by (Han, 2022) discusses skills in general, without considering the challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds, and the report states that the results indicate a positive attitude towards social media as a tool for learning English, particularly for developing speaking skills. Research conducted by (Ding & Sazalli, 2024), discusses the use of social media by EFL students to improve their speaking skills through the TAM model. This model is used to understand the technical aspects, such as the extent to which students use it and its perceived usefulness. To understand the acceptance factors of using social media in speaking skills, this study employs a quantitative approach by adopting the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for analysis. This study focuses more on the general use of social media than on the experience of learning speaking skills. Research conducted by (Nilayon & Brahmakasikara, 2018), focused on the use of social media to support speaking skills, utilizing specific platforms such as YouTube and Facebook to practice speaking skills outside of school hours. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The research conducted surveys and interviews and dug deeper into information about social media in English-speaking fluency.

These studies establish that social media can support speaking development, but they stop short of explaining how learners themselves experience, regulate, and sustain that practice. What remains underexamined is how students transform passive viewing into active speaking practice, which platform features support meaningful interaction, how students regulate their own learning across platforms, and why practice gained online may or may not transfer to face-to-face communication. The present study addresses this gap by examining, from students' own accounts, how they use social media informally to develop their speaking skills and how they regulate that process, moving the research problem beyond whether students own social media accounts to how they use them intentionally for oral-language development. This study therefore examines students' informal use of social media platforms for speaking practice at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: What social media platforms and content do students use to support their English-speaking practice, and what benefits and challenges do they report?;

And What self-regulated learning strategies do students employ when using social media to develop their speaking skills?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive design. Two instruments were used: a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire served a screening and descriptive function only, identifying which fourth-semester students actively and independently used social media for English speaking practice and providing a general picture of their platform preferences; it did not generate the qualitative data analyzed in this study. The semi-structured interviews were the primary data source, allowing participants to describe their experiences, strategies, and challenges in their own words. A qualitative descriptive design was chosen over phenomenology or case study because the aim was to produce a comprehensive, straightforward summary of students' everyday experiences and strategies rather than to uncover the essential structure of a lived phenomenon or to examine a single bounded case in depth. This design corresponds to the research questions, which ask what platforms, content, benefits, and challenges students report, and what self-regulated strategies they use (Priharsari & Indah, 2021).

Research Participants

The population for this study consisted of fourth-semester students enrolled in the Speaking in Academic Context course in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan during the 2023 academic year. The screening questionnaire was distributed to 25 students enrolled in the course. From these respondents, seven students who reported regular and independent use of social media for English speaking practice were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews, using regular, independent social media use for speaking practice, outside formal coursework, as the selection criterion. The seven interview participants (Students 1–7) had all studied speaking in a formal classroom setting for at least three semesters prior to the study and reported using social media informally for English learning before enrolling in the Speaking in Academic Context course. Interviews were conducted in person and audio-recorded with each participant's permission.

Instruments

The screening questionnaire consisted of 39 closed-ended items addressing students' ownership and frequency of use of specific social media platforms, the types of content they engaged with, and their use of interactive features such as video calls and voice notes. Because all items were closed-ended, the questionnaire did not itself produce qualitative data; its role was limited to identifying eligible participants and building a general profile of platform use that informed the interview guide. The semi-structured interview guide comprised open-ended core questions organized around four thematic areas: platforms and content used, interactive features and real-time communication, self-regulated learning strategies including repetition and content creation, and perceived benefits and challenges of social media for speaking practice, with spontaneous probing questions used to elicit elaboration and concrete examples. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, to allow participants to express themselves naturally, and lasted approximately 30 minutes each. As the primary instrument in this qualitative study, the researcher's own interpretive role is acknowledged, and reflexive notes were kept throughout data collection and analysis to help monitor and minimize potential bias arising from the researcher's own assumptions and familiarity with the research setting.

Data Collecting Technique

Data collection proceeded chronologically. Following ethical clearance and participants' informed consent, as described in the Informed Consent Statement, the researcher distributed

the 39-item screening questionnaire through a Google Form link to fourth-semester students enrolled in the Speaking in Academic Context course. The questionnaire remained open for 24 hours and was used to identify students who used social media independently and regularly for English speaking practice. Based on the responses, seven students meeting this criterion were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. Each interview was conducted in person, in Indonesian, lasted approximately 30 minutes, and was audio-recorded on a mobile phone with the participant's permission. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and, where quoted in this article, translated into English by the researcher; transcripts were anonymized using numerical identifiers (Student 1–Student 7) and stored securely, accessible only to the research team, consistent with the Data Availability Statement. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, questionnaire and interview data were triangulated: questionnaire responses were used to contextualize and cross-check the platform and content preferences participants described in their interviews (Kumar et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, comprising six stages: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, construction of candidate themes, review of themes against the coded extracts and the full data set, definition and naming of themes, and production of the final analytic narrative. Verbatim transcripts were read repeatedly for familiarization, after which initial codes were generated inductively from participants' own accounts, allowing patterns to emerge from the data rather than being imposed by pre-existing categories. Related codes were grouped into candidate categories, which were reviewed and refined into the two main themes and constituent subthemes reported below. Questionnaire responses were not coded thematically; they were used only to inform participant selection and to provide descriptive context for the interview findings. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis, the researcher used triangulation between questionnaire and interview data, reflexive attention to her own assumptions as an English Education researcher, and deliberate attention to accounts that diverged from the dominant pattern, such as the students who reported that songs and short videos were not helpful, so that these were represented rather than dropped from the analysis. Transcription accuracy was prioritized not because it reveals an objective truth about participants' experiences, but because accurate transcripts are necessary for interpretations that remain grounded in what participants actually said (Eftekari, 2024).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The findings are organized into five themes that together answer the two research questions. Platform and Content Preferences and Interactive Affordances describe which social media platforms and features students used and why (Research Question 1). Self-Regulated Speaking Strategies and Perceived Benefits describes how students used these platforms to practice and what benefits they reported (Research Questions 1 and 2). Barriers to Transfer and Sustained Engagement reports the challenges students associated with this informal practice (Research Question 1). Table 1 summarizes these themes, the platforms and features involved, and representative evidence.

Table 1
Summary of Findings Themes

Theme	Subthemes	Platforms / Features	Representative Evidence
Platform and Content Preferences	Platform ownership; content type (educational videos, vlogs, casual	YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook	"I watch YouTube more often because the videos are longer." (Student 2)

Theme	Subthemes	Platforms / Features	Representative Evidence
	dialogues)		
Interactive Affordances	Video calls; live streaming; voice notes	Video call apps, Discord, WhatsApp voice notes	“Video calls or voice notes are quite helpful because they allow real-time interaction.” (Student 1)
Self-Regulated Speaking Strategies	Repetition/rewatching; content creation; pronunciation imitation	YouTube, TikTok, Google Translate, dictionaries	“I usually repeat it 5–6 times to understand the correct pronunciation in context.” (Student 4)
Perceived Benefits	Vocabulary gains; fluency; confidence	All platforms; Discord for camera-off practice	“Roleplay on Discord was enjoyable. I felt more confident because the camera was off.” (Student 7)
Barriers to Transfer and Sustained Engagement	Irregular engagement; face-to-face confidence gap; content overload	Short-form platforms (TikTok, Instagram)	“I didn’t feel confident when speaking directly because people could see me.” (Student 7)

Platform and Content Preferences

The researchers began the data collection process by identifying the types of social media platforms currently owned by students on their devices. This information was considered necessary as a basis for understanding the digital environment that shapes students' initial exposure to English-language content and for exploring how students utilize these platforms in developing their speaking skills through social media. Most of the students use more than one social media platform, with Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube being the most commonly owned and accessed. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and X (formerly Twitter) are also present, but are used less specifically for learning speaking skills. However, the most frequently used platform for learning to speak through social media is YouTube, as mentioned by the majority of respondents. Some students also choose TikTok and Instagram, while one student mentioned using Facebook. Overall, YouTube is the most dominant platform used by students for English speaking practice.

“I watch YouTube more often and TikTok.” (Student 1, 2, 3, 7)

“I prefer TikTok and Instagram.” (Student 4)

“For speaking practice, I mostly use Facebook.” (Student 6)

YouTube is the primary choice because it is perceived as offering more comprehensive and structured content. TikTok and Instagram are chosen for their short, easily accessible, and varied videos. Meanwhile, Facebook is considered effective because they allow direct interaction with users from abroad. This selection suggests that students not only consider entertainment but also utilize the educational features of each platform to enhance their speaking skills.

“I watch YouTube more often because the videos are longer. I also use TikTok because the algorithm brings up similar content.” (Student 2)

“Now I mostly use YouTube for learning vocabulary and TikTok for short video sources, even though they are easy to forget.” (Student 3)

“I prefer TikTok and Instagram because there are many reels or short videos. The information is varied, not boring, and can be accessed while doing other things.” (Student 4)

The types of content used by students are highly varied, ranging from educational videos and presentations to vlogs, and casual dialogues. Students choose content that aligns with their learning objectives and personal preferences. Some focus on improving formal

structure and vocabulary, while others prefer a lighter, more enjoyable approach to familiarize themselves with spoken English usage.

"I usually watch educational videos like 'How to be a Good Moderator', 'MC', or 'Presenter.'" (Student 1)

"Fun educational videos, like casual dialogues between two people that are humorous and not monotonous." (Student 4)

"Short animated films about conversation, or learning English through movies." (Student 2)

Interactive Affordances

The researcher asked students for their opinions on the use of live streaming, video call and voice notes features on social media platforms for direct English speaking practice. Most students responded that such interactive features are pretty helpful, especially in providing opportunities for two-way communication. The majority of students believe that video calls are more conducive to developing speaking skills because they enable real-time two-way conversation. Conversely, live streaming is considered less effective due to its limitations in terms of interaction and the inability to replay it. However, the audio quality is a crucial aspect in learning to speak through social media. Students realize that even a slight lack of clarity in sound can change the meaning of a sentence entirely and cause miscommunication.

"Video calls or voice notes are quite helpful because they allow real-time interaction." (Student 1)

"Video calls or live streams are effective because they are accessible anytime, even with different schedules." (Student 3)

"It's effective but not 100%, you can't rewind live streams, so missed parts are gone." (Student 4)

"Live streaming isn't that effective due to a lack of interaction, but video calls are better because they enable two-way communication." (Student 6)

Self-Regulated Speaking Strategies and Perceived Benefits

Register preference

In an effort to explore students' experiences in-depth as they develop speaking skills through social media, researchers focused on aspects that influence their level of understanding and comfort during the learning process. One aspect explored was students' preferences for types of content that are easier to understand, whether in the form of everyday conversation or formal material. The findings revealed that the majority of students find it easier to understand everyday conversations than formal English material. This is due to early exposure to the language used in daily contexts, whether through family, friends, or experiences in elementary school.

"Both are possible. Usually, the subject matter covers methods and theory, while everyday conversation focuses more on practice." (Student 1)

"I understand everyday conversation better because it has been taught since elementary school, where we were introduced to everyday conversation. In high school, formal English is rarely taught." (Student 3)

"I understand everyday conversation better because my dorm mates are from the same department, so everyday language is more comfortable. In my understanding, what's important is how we practice it or apply it." (Student 4)

"Of course, everyday conversations, because I have understood them since childhood, because my family taught me everyday conversations in English. Additionally, the games I play also use everyday language." (Student 7)

Repetition as a strategy

To explore students' strategies for understanding English-language content on social media, researchers inquired about their habits of rewatching or replaying certain parts of videos. Most students have the habit of rewatching or repeating content as part of the learning process. The frequency of repetition varies, ranging from two to six times depending on the

needs and complexity of the material. Students tend to repeat parts of the video to understand pronunciation, new vocabulary, or the overall context of the sentence. This habit suggests that repetition is a crucial strategy for strengthening understanding and speaking skills through digital content.

"I repeat a lot, especially when I have speaking assignments, I usually repeat it 5–6 times to understand the correct pronunciation in context." (Student 4)

"I rarely rewatch; I prefer to watch until the end, and if I don't understand, then I replay from the beginning. Usually, only twice." (Student 5)

"I usually rewatch twice, as long as I understand the meaning and how to use it, that's enough." (Student 7)

Content creation

Besides consuming English-language content, the researcher also asked whether students had ever created and shared their content in English through social media. This question aimed to determine the extent to which students were not only recipients of information but also active producers of content using English expressively. Most students have created English-language content, whether in the form of assignment videos, vlogs, or short quotes on social media. However, most of them only create content for academic assignments, not for routine or personal initiatives. This indicates that students are capable of creating English-language content.

"I have created English-language content for assignments, such as vlogs." (Student 1)

"I uploaded videos on YouTube for class assignments, discussing my hobbies, skills, and talents." (Student 4)

"I have posted class assignments on social media, usually about hobbies." (Student 6)

Real-time voice and video interaction

To gain insight into students' experiences of communicating directly in English, researchers examined the use of voice and video call features on social media platforms. The focus of this question is to determine the extent to which students utilize real-time interactions outside of formal learning environments, as well as how these experiences influence their confidence and fluency in speaking. The majority of students have utilized voice or video call features on social media as a means of practicing speaking. Platforms like Discord have become a popular alternative because they offer convenience and flexibility in communication, including the option to turn off the camera.

"Yes, almost every day, I speak with foreigners. The questions are often the same, so I get used to them and it's easier to remember." (Student 3)

"I've sent voice notes to friends, though not frequently, only when I want to use English." (Student 5)

"Roleplay on Discord was enjoyable. I felt more confident because the camera was off, unlike when speaking face to face." (Student 7)

The majority of students stated that they felt happy, enthusiastic, and more confident when speaking spontaneously after being inspired by the content they watched. Satisfaction arose when they were able to apply new vocabulary or expressions in real conversations. However, there were also those who admitted to feeling less confident when speaking face-to-face, even though they felt more comfortable in audio-only situations such as Discord. This shows that social media is not only a source of learning material, but can also influence students' attitudes and comfort in using English spontaneously.

"I felt enthusiastic when sharing what I learned from YouTube with my friend, and my friend also responded with excitement." (Student 1)

"I felt more free to express myself and happy because I could apply the content in conversations." (Student 5)

"I didn't feel confident when speaking directly because people could see me, but I felt more comfortable talking on Discord without the camera." (Student 7)

Vocabulary development

In the process of developing speaking skills, vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect that needs to be strengthened. Most students use songs and movies as additional tools to enrich their vocabulary. Some find them very helpful for speaking, especially in terms of pronunciation and idiomatic expressions. However, some students say that such content is less effective because it is too information-dense or doesn't align with their learning style.

"I've learned a lot from movies and songs, and it affects my speaking." (Student 3)

"Songs and games help too, though not as much as videos." (Student 4)

"Songs and movies don't affect me that much. I learn more from meme discussion communities." (Student 6)

"Songs and short videos aren't very effective for me because there's too much to remember." (Student 7)

Fluency development

As part of developing fluency in speaking, the researcher asked how often students interact using English on social media and whether they feel an improvement in fluency over time. This question aims to identify the relationship between the intensity of use and the development of active speaking performance. Many students admit that they often use English when interacting on social media, for example through spontaneous conversations, making videos, or discussing with friends from abroad. With frequent use, some of them begin to feel an increase in confidence and fluency when speaking.

"I often speak English when I need to interact using the language. Activities like being a moderator, MC, or presenter in class or conducting seminars help me improve." (Student 1)

"I've interacted in English on social media, especially with foreign friends who share my hobbies like gaming. I do feel some improvement." (Student 5)

"I used to practice almost every day and noticed a big improvement in my speaking." (Student 6)

Pronunciation imitation

Apart from fluency, pronunciation is an essential aspect of English speaking skills. Researchers investigated how students imitate the pronunciation of social media content to make it sound more natural. Most students use repetition techniques as their primary strategy for imitating pronunciation. Some students rely on supporting technologies such as Google Translate, Longman dictionaries, or TikTok games. Others pay attention to the speaker's mouth movements as a guide for articulation. This strategy shows their independent efforts to adjust their pronunciation to sound more natural, like native speakers.

"First, I pay attention to the speaker's mouth movements. Then, I listen closely and try to synchronize my pronunciation with theirs." (Student 4)

"I usually repeat the words multiple times to make my speech sound more natural. I practice alone by speaking to myself or doing monologues." (Student 6)

Barriers to Transfer and Sustained Engagement

Alongside these benefits, students described three recurring barriers. Engagement with social media for speaking practice was irregular for several students, shaped by shifting motivation and available time rather than a consistent routine. Confidence did not transfer evenly across communication modes: several students who felt comfortable speaking in audio-only or camera-off settings such as Discord reported feeling considerably less confident speaking face-to-face. Finally, some students found certain content, particularly short-form videos and information-dense material such as songs, too dense or too easy to forget to translate into lasting speaking gains. Together, these barriers indicate that informal social

media exposure does not, by itself, guarantee that practice online transfers to spontaneous, face-to-face communication.

Discussion

These findings can be read through the lens of learner autonomy and self-regulated learning, concepts named in the aims of this study but not yet developed as a consistent analytical frame. Framed this way, students' preference for YouTube is not incidental: its longer, structured videos give learners more complete linguistic input and more time to process it, which matters for learners with limited formal exposure to English. This extends earlier survey findings that YouTube supports pronunciation and vocabulary learning (Kusuma et al., 2024; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011) by showing how students actively pair YouTube's length and structure with TikTok's algorithmic recommendations, using the two platforms for different purposes rather than as interchangeable sources of input. This finding qualifies studies that treat platform preference as a matter of general appeal (Araujo, 2024; Seli, 2024): in the present data, preference is driven by specific affordances such as length, curation, and replay that support particular self-regulated strategies, not by platform popularity alone.

Short-form content on TikTok and Instagram was valued for its accessibility but was consistently described by students as easy to forget, extending prior work on the appeal of short-form video (Maziriri et al., 2020; Khalid & Muhammad, 2012) by identifying a trade-off between convenience and depth of learning that this earlier work did not report. This suggests that short-form platforms function best as supplementary exposure rather than primary learning material, a distinction with direct pedagogical implications discussed in the conclusion. Students' activities in using social media for speaking show quite significant variation, ranging from daily activities to irregular practice. These differences reflect factors such as personal motivation, learning objectives, and time availability, which are in line with (Khofifah et al., 2023) and (Zainuddin & Yunus, 2022), which highlights that the frequency with which students use social media for speaking practice varies significantly depending on individual motivation, learning objectives, and available time, with some students practicing every day while others do so less frequently.

Moreover, Audio quality plays an essential role in the comprehension process. Students noted that clear and crisp audio allowed them to capture better intonation, word stress, and pronunciation, which are essential aspects of English speaking proficiency. The Audio-Lingual method is a teaching method used in foreign language instruction. This is in line with the opinion (Littlewood, 1981) and (Mart, 2013), which stated that the Audio-Lingual Method is a method of teaching foreign languages or second languages that emphasizes speaking and listening before reading and writing. This is why the use of the mother tongue is prohibited in Audio-Lingual Method classes. This method is based on behaviorist theory, which is used to train humans through a reinforcement system. This method is closely related to behaviorism, so repetition, practice, and habit formation are the main elements in teaching (Maaliah et al., 2017). Read through a self-regulated learning lens, students were not simply drilled by an instructor but chose, on their own initiative, which content to revisit for clearer audio and pronunciation modeling, extending the Audio-Lingual emphasis on repetition into a learner-directed, informal context.

Furthermore, interactive features in social media such as video calls, voice notes, and live streaming play an important role in developing spontaneous English speaking skills. Most students find video calls extremely useful for developing speaking skills because of the two-way interaction, which facilitates real-time communication, feedback and the building of confidence. This is reinforced by (Joko Prayudha S, 2022) and (Romaña Correa, 2015) findings that the use of video calls not only boosts students' confidence but also creates a more natural and comfortable conversation atmosphere, like talking with friends. Voice notes

also enable participants to convey information and request assistance at any time and from anywhere during their learning process. This is reinforced by the findings of (Nurazizah et al., 2019) and (Aryanata et al., 2022), which demonstrates that the use of voice notes offers genuine opportunities for students to practice speaking in a flexible, engaging, and user-friendly manner. Notably, several students associated camera-off communication specifically, rather than real-time interaction in general, with reduced anxiety, qualifying the assumption in earlier video-call research that visibility itself builds confidence (Joko Prayudha S, 2022; Romaña Correa, 2015); for these students, confidence grew instead from controlling how visible they were.

Based on the data, the author concludes that everyday conversation content is preferred and used more often than formal English. The majority of them stated that everyday language is used more often in social contexts and is easier to remember. This suggests that learning to speak in real-life contexts is preferred. This aligns with (Kadyan et al., 2019) and (Muslimawati, 2022), where fluency and contextual understanding are considered more important than grammatical perfection. The communicative approach emphasizes the use of language in real and meaningful situations, encouraging students to develop their language skills through active participation in communication.

Repetition emerged as the primary learning strategy used by students. Many students reported frequently rewatching videos and practicing pronunciation repeatedly to internalize correct usage. Repeated listening and speaking exercises enable learners to refine their understanding of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures, gradually developing fluency and automaticity in speech production. In line with (Zayraey & Katawazai, 2025) and (Mendrofa & Wijaya, 2022), stated that repetition through drilling and instructional videos provides intensive language exposure. This process helps students naturally memorize language patterns, improve their pronunciation, and increase confidence and fluency in speaking. As a result, the use of language structures in honest communication becomes more fluent and natural. This repetition functioned as a form of noticing: students replayed content specifically to isolate pronunciation and unfamiliar vocabulary, regulating how much and which material to repeat themselves rather than following an instructor-paced drill.

Consistent vocabulary acquisition is consistently reported as one of the primary benefits of social media use. Students report learning varying numbers of new words each day, with many employing strategies such as creating vocabulary lists, crafting example sentences, and applying them directly in conversations. These findings are reinforced by (Abbas et al., 2019) research shows that social media, such as Facebook and YouTube, significantly help ESL learners acquire vocabulary through contextual exposure and repeated practice, enabling students to learn vocabulary both implicitly and explicitly. In addition, (Alharthi et al., 2020), emphasizes that social media platforms encourage active engagement and provide a variety of contexts, both formal and informal, that strengthen motivation, frequency of exposure, and vocabulary use in authentic situations.

This study aims to explore students' experiences with using social media to enhance their English fluency. Some students actively use English on social media, whether chatting, making videos, or engaging in cross-border discussions. These repeated interactions contribute positively to improving fluency and confidence in speaking. These findings are in line with the opinion (Eragamreddy, 2024), states that language exposure through digital platforms can improve communicative competence, especially if done actively. This is also reinforced by (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012) which found that social media such as Facebook or Skype enable honest communication, thereby contributing to the improvement of foreign language learners' speaking fluency.

Features such as video creation, voice calls, voice notes, and learning apps like Duolingo are frequently used by students to practice their speaking skills. These features are

seen as providing opportunities for them to practice pronunciation, express opinions, and in some cases, receive feedback, even if not directly. This aligns with the findings of (Shofi, 2020) and (Fauzi, 2016) revealed the use of multimedia features, such as video, audio, and learning applications, has been proven effective in improving students' speaking skills. This is because it helps them practice pronunciation, increases confidence, and encourages active language production. These findings are reinforced by (Lee, 2016) which emphasizes that interaction through voice and video in a digital environment creates rich opportunities for input and output, essential for the development of oral skills. Across these themes, self-regulated learning operated differently depending on the platform and feature involved, but the same autonomy that allowed students to select and repeat input did not resolve the gap between online and face-to-face speaking reported in the Barriers to Transfer and Sustained Engagement theme above.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how English Education students at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan use social media informally to support their English-speaking practice and how they regulate that process. In answer to the first research question, students reported using platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp for exposure to authentic spoken English, repeated pronunciation practice, vocabulary learning, content creation, and real-time interaction through video calls and voice notes; the usefulness of these activities varied according to platform features, learner confidence, and content density, and students associated them with perceived, self-reported gains in pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and confidence rather than directly measured development. In answer to the second research question, students regulated their own learning by selecting content aligned with their goals, repeating and replaying material to reinforce pronunciation and vocabulary, creating their own English-language content, and choosing communication modes, such as camera-off voice interaction, that matched their comfort level. At the same time, students described irregular engagement, fatigue from an abundance of available content, and difficulty transferring online practice to unscripted face-to-face communication, indicating that informal digital exposure does not, by itself, resolve the challenges of spoken interaction.

Pedagogically, these findings suggest that teachers can strengthen the value of students' existing social media use by guiding them toward reliable content, structured repetition, and explicit opportunities to practice the transfer from online rehearsal to live conversation. This study is limited by its reliance on self-reported perceptions from a single cohort at one university, which restricts how far these findings can be generalized; future research could examine a larger and more diverse sample, or track speaking development over time, to test whether these self-reported benefits correspond to observable gains in speaking performance. Taken together, the findings support social media as a complementary, learner-directed space for informal speaking practice, one whose value depends on the guidance students receive in using it well.

FUNDING

This study was conducted without any external funding. Personal resources were used for every aspect of the research, including data collecting, analysis, and report writing. The study was successfully finished in spite of the lack of funds by using readily available resources and a financially sensible strategy to collect and examine the required data

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants accept that they have been told about the study's purposes, methods, possible risks, and advantages by consenting to participate.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Due to solid commitment to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that protect participant confidentiality, the data used in this study cannot be made publicly available. This guarantees adherence to data protection laws and ethical research norms.

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