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English Language Exposure Through Facebook: A Study on Quality Education For 21st-Century ELT Educators

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Abstract: *This study examines Facebook's use as a medium for English language exposure among junior high school students, aiming to identify practical approaches for quality 21st-century English Language Teaching (ELT). It addresses whether Facebook sustains instructional quality, supports teacher-student engagement and motivation, and improves learning outcomes. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were gathered through structured interviews with four teachers and a Google Form survey of students at SMP Maniamas Ngabang, Indonesia, alongside a review of relevant literature. Findings show that technology-enhanced learning works best within blended learning environments that consider learners' needs and equip teachers with purposeful digital skills. Facebook shows promise as an initial vehicle for language exposure, though its effectiveness depends on sustained teacher guidance and ongoing professional development. The study recommends continuous teacher skill development and further research into contextually relevant approaches to English language teaching.*

INTRODUCTION

Exposure to technology, particularly through the various forms of social media that pervade everyday life, has become a defining feature of the 21st-century generation. As an experiential phenomenon, exposure is closely tied to the process of language acquisition, and this relationship should, in principle, open meaningful opportunities for English language learning. It therefore falls to contemporary educators to harness this potential in a structured and pedagogically grounded way. The present study seeks to utilize Facebook as a medium for facilitating English exposure among junior high school students, with the expectation that such engagement will foster both interest and motivation to improve their English language skills.

Preliminary research was conducted through classroom observation and interviews with teachers, as well as direct engagement with students at SMP Maniamas Ngabang, Indonesia. The school possesses adequate internet connectivity and the necessary facilities to support technology-enhanced learning, conditions widely regarded as essential within 21st-century educational environments. Given that no prior study addressing this specific issue had been

conducted at the institution, the school principal granted formal permission for this preliminary investigation to serve as a foundation for a more comprehensive subsequent inquiry.

The growing role of digital platforms in education has attracted considerable scholarly attention, driven by the rapid evolution of technology and the range of unresolved questions that remain in the field (Asadullah et al., 2018). Since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted conventional instruction, students have broadly shifted toward digital devices for learning (Muftah, 2024), and these platforms have proven widely applicable in meeting educational and communicative needs (Halim & Hashim, 2019). Communication through digital media has made it possible to approximate face-to-face interaction to a meaningful degree, narrowing the gap between remote and in-person learning (Vonog et al., 2021). This development underscores the importance of guiding learners, particularly digital natives, toward purposeful English learning through technology under consistent teacher support (Haleem et al., 2022). Blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online instruction, has been shown to yield strong outcomes in this regard (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019), and there is evidence that students can improve their digital reading and writing skills through participation in remote learning platforms (Rwodzi & Jager, 2021). Tools such as YouTube, digital flashcards, Memrise, and Kahoot illustrate the breadth of what is now available to educators (Satria, 2021).

Within this landscape, Facebook stands out as a particularly relevant platform for English language exposure, as its features allow educators to share instructional content, distribute reading materials, provide external learning resources, and assign follow-up tasks through posts, videos, and links (Rets & Rogaten, 2021). The platform also enables a form of social learning through visible peer interaction, drawing on emotional contagion and social observation in ways that are not always replicable in face-to-face settings (Sciara et al., 2021). Research confirms that Facebook supports meaningful teacher-student interaction (Smutny, 2020) and can develop digital literacy alongside language proficiency (Ismail & Al Allaq, 2019). Gamified elements within such platforms have further been shown to improve learner attitudes and academic performance (Yildirim, 2017). The practical advantages are well documented: enhanced engagement, convenient access, and stronger student-student collaboration through group features, shared posts, and peer discussion (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). In contexts where advanced infrastructure is limited, Facebook remains one of the most accessible options available (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Madata, 2022).

These advantages, however, must be weighed against the risks that social media poses for adolescents, including exposure to depression, cyberbullying, and online harassment (Tartari, 2015). Structured teacher guidance is therefore not optional but necessary. Age restrictions add another layer of complexity: data suggest that approximately 7.5 million Facebook users are under 13 years old (Bernike & Andersen, 2023), which means any school-based implementation requires careful oversight. In Indonesia specifically, Facebook usage declined from 68.66% to 46.84% between October 2022 and September 2023 (StatCounter Global Stats, 2023), yet it remains the country's most widely used social media platform, a fact that makes it a practical and contextually relevant choice for this investigation.

Against this backdrop, the present study is guided by the following research questions: (1) Does the Facebook platform sustain the quality of English language education provided by 21st-century educators? (2) How does Facebook assist teachers and students in achieving English

exposure and learning motivation? (3) How does exposure to Facebook as an educational activity contribute to improved English learning outcomes?.

METHOD

This study was conducted as a preliminary investigation employing a descriptive qualitative design. This approach was deemed appropriate given the exploratory nature of the inquiry, which sought to understand how Facebook is currently used and perceived within the target school context rather than to measure outcomes through numerical data.

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

The data collected encompassed the number of junior high school student respondents, their gender distribution, and the range of social media platforms used, thereby indicating which platforms were available to support English exposure. The respondents consisted of junior high school students at SMP Maniamas Ngabang, Indonesia, together with teachers and the school principal, who were involved through interviews.

INSTRUMENT

Data were gathered using two primary instruments: a structured Google Form survey administered to students, and semi-structured interviews conducted with the teachers and school principal. The survey was designed to capture information on students' social media usage patterns, with particular attention to their engagement with Facebook. The interviews, by contrast, were intended to elicit the teachers' and principal's views on the feasibility and educational value of incorporating Facebook into English language instruction.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher administered the survey to junior high school students via a Google Form and conducted interviews with both teachers and the school principal. The Google Form link was distributed to students at SMP Maniamas Ngabang to gather data on their social media accounts, with particular emphasis on their use of Facebook.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered through the Google Form survey and the interviews were analyzed descriptively to identify the number of junior high school student respondents, their gender distribution, and the range of social media platforms used, thereby indicating which platforms were available to support English exposure.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The researcher conducted a survey, administered through a Google Form, to gather information regarding students' usage of and exposure to social media, complemented by interviews with the principal and the English teacher concerning the use of Facebook. The brief questionnaire yielded information on the population of junior high school students at SMP Maniamas, while the interviews provided clear guidance for the subsequent conduct of the study. The available school facilities were found to be sufficient to support a study involving the use of social media platforms.

With specific reference to Facebook usage in Indonesia, Figure 1 and Figure 2 present statistical data obtained from StatCounter Global Stats covering the period from October 2022 to

September 2023, showing that Facebook usage declined from 68.66% to 46.84% over this period (StatCounter Global Stats, 2023). Despite this decline, Figure 1 and Figure 2 confirm that Facebook remains the most widely used social media platform in Indonesia relative to other platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter.

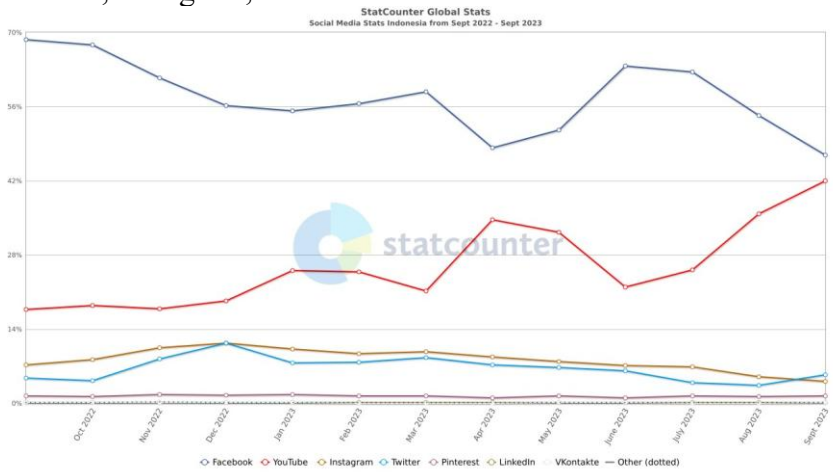


Figure 1.Trend in social media platform usage in Indonesia, October 2022–September 2023 (StatCounter Global Stats, 2023)

Date	Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	Twitter	Pinterest	LinkedIn	VKontakte	reddit	Tumblr	Other
2022-09	68.66	17.66	7.19	4.77	1.37	0.09	0.17	0.05	0.03	0
2022-10	67.63	18.38	8.18	4.22	1.27	0.1	0.11	0.06	0.04	0
2022-11	61.4	17.78	10.41	8.33	1.62	0.11	0.16	0.12	0.07	0.01
2022-12	56.13	19.26	11.36	11.38	1.52	0.11	0.1	0.09	0.04	0.01
2023-01	55.15	25.01	10.27	7.63	1.59	0.12	0.11	0.07	0.04	0
2023-02	56.5	24.79	9.36	7.69	1.41	0.1	0.06	0.05	0.03	0
2023-03	58.81	21.21	9.71	8.63	1.4	0.1	0.05	0.06	0.03	0
2023-04	48.22	34.63	8.69	7.2	1.04	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.03	0
2023-05	51.58	32.24	7.79	6.67	1.43	0.12	0.08	0.05	0.03	0
2023-06	63.59	21.98	7.11	6.05	1.03	0.11	0.07	0.04	0.03	0
2023-07	62.54	25.2	6.8	3.86	1.36	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.03	0
2023-08	54.32	35.78	4.99	3.4	1.3	0.11	0.03	0.04	0.02	0
2023-09	46.84	41.98	4.12	5.35	1.43	0.12	0.08	0.06	0.02	0

Figure 2. Monthly percentage share of social media platforms in Indonesia, October 2022–September 2023 (StatCounter Global Stats, 2023).

Data on grade level and gender distribution, gathered from the junior high school student respondents at SMP Maniamas Ngabang, indicate a relatively balanced representation across the junior high school population surveyed, as shown in Figure 3a and Figure 3b.

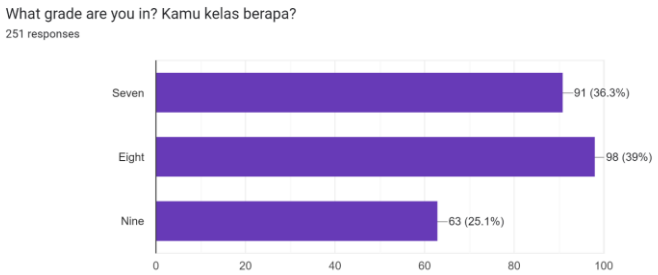


Figure 3a. Distribution of student respondents by grade level (n = 251).

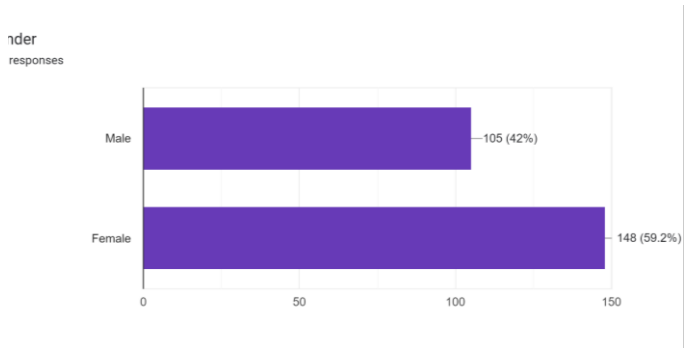


Figure 3b. Distribution of student respondents by gender (n = 250).

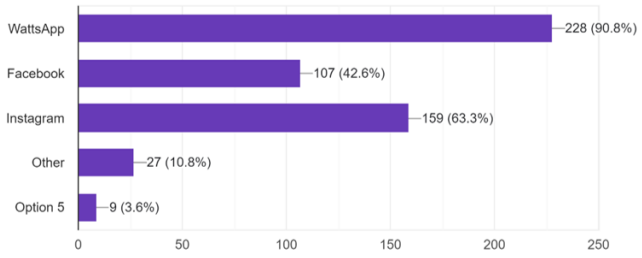


Figure 4. Social media platforms used by junior high school student respondents at SMP Maniamas Ngabang

Data concerning the social media platforms used by students reveal a noticeable disparity in usage among WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, as presented in Figure 4, with the results indicating that not all students currently maintain active use of Facebook. Consequently, students' exposure to English-language content on Facebook in this study context is likely to be shaped primarily by teacher-directed activities rather than by students' independent, self-motivated platform use. This raises questions about the extent to which findings on Facebook-based language exposure can be generalized to student populations who engage with the platform autonomously, outside structured classroom guidance. Future research may consider comparing teacher-mediated exposure with platforms more organically favored by this age group, such as Instagram or TikTok, to better contextualize findings on digital language exposure among younger learners.

The literature reviewed in this study indicates that Facebook has the potential to support vocabulary acquisition and the development of digital literacy among learners. That said, age restrictions governing social media use must be carefully observed when determining which students are eligible to participate, as not all junior high school students fall within the permissible age range stipulated by applicable regulations (Bernike & Andersen, 2023). For this reason, any follow-up study will need to be scoped to a specific grade level whose students meet the relevant age requirements.

The interview data collected from teachers and the school principal further reveal a shared recognition that technology can meaningfully support English language learning, provided that its use is purposefully structured and consistently guided. These perspectives suggest that Facebook, when integrated into instruction with clear pedagogical intent, holds promise as a contextually relevant platform for English exposure, particularly given the existing evidence from studies conducted with comparable learner populations. What this implies for 21st-century educators is the need for deliberate platform selection, one that takes into account both the affordances of the

technology and the specific learning needs of the students it is intended to serve.

The survey findings indicate that social media is already a familiar and routine part of students' daily lives, even if engagement levels vary across platforms. This existing familiarity is significant: it suggests that students are not approaching Facebook as an entirely foreign environment, which may lower the affective barriers typically associated with new learning tools. Whether this familiarity can be channeled into structured and productive English language exposure remains the central question that the proposed follow-up study seeks to investigate more rigorously.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reinforce what the existing literature has long argued: that digital platforms, and social media in particular, constitute an increasingly significant component of English language teaching and learning (Asadullah et al., 2018; Halim & Hashim, 2019). The observed disparity in Facebook usage among students at SMP Maniamas Ngabang, alongside the broader national decline documented by StatCounter Global Stats (2023), does not appear to diminish the platform's pedagogical relevance. Consistent with Chugh and Ruhi (2017), the present findings affirm that Facebook continues to offer distinct advantages for teaching and learning, including enhanced engagement and improved teacher-student interaction, even as patterns of platform popularity among adolescent users continue to shift.

These findings align with prior research emphasizing that meaningful learner interaction can be cultivated through social media engagement (Sciara et al., 2021). At the same time, the present study extends this body of work by foregrounding the teacher's role as monitor, guide, and facilitator. This dimension is particularly significant in light of the risks associated with adolescent social media use identified by (Tartari, 2015) and the age-restriction concerns raised by (Bernike & Andersen, 2023). While earlier studies have largely focused on the instructional affordances of Facebook, the present study draws attention to structured pedagogical oversight as a necessary condition for the platform's safe and productive use among junior high school learners.

The contribution of these findings lies in their specific focus on junior high school students within an Indonesian context where access to advanced digital infrastructure remains limited, yet where Facebook continues to function as an accessible and practical platform (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Madata, 2022). This finding both supports and extends the work of (Rwodzi & Jager, 2021), who demonstrated the value of remote learning platforms in resource-constrained settings, by showing that comparable pedagogical benefits may be achieved through a widely available social media platform rather than through specialized educational software.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined how Facebook can serve as a medium for English language exposure among junior high school students, with the teacher functioning as monitor, guide, and facilitator throughout the learning process. The central argument advanced is that quality English language education in the 21st century requires deliberate engagement with the digital environments that learners already inhabit, and that Facebook, despite its declining overall usage, remains a viable and accessible platform for this purpose in the Indonesian context.

Consistent with the evidence from prior studies, the findings suggest that allowing students to interact through Facebook enables them to engage with course content beyond classroom hours. Through the platform, students may post questions, share resources, and discuss

ideas with peers during independent study, provided that teacher supervision remains in place. These affordances, modest as they may appear individually, collectively point toward a meaningful role for Facebook in supporting English language exposure at the junior high school level.

This study is, however, preliminary in scope, and its findings should be interpreted accordingly. Further research is needed to examine the specific conditions under which Facebook-mediated English exposure produces measurable improvements in language outcomes, and to develop pedagogically grounded frameworks that educators can apply in comparable contexts. It is hoped that this study provides a useful starting point for future researchers working at the intersection of social media, language teaching, and quality education.

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