



The Use of Cell Phones in Accessing Social Media by Students During Learning Process in English Classroom

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Abstract:

This study investigates a phenomenon in the educational world: using cell phones during teaching and learning in English classes. Cell phones here are referred to as inappropriate use, not as a supportive device in teaching and learning, reducing students' attention span. This research was conducted in 2 high schools, one in Lombok City, West Nusa Tenggara, and one in Banjarbaru City, South Kalimantan. Fifteen students were involved in this research as respondents, and 2 English teachers as informants. Random sampling was used to determine the research sample. Interview techniques were used to collect data. The research results indicated that all respondents used cell phones to access their social media accounts during the teaching and learning process in the class, ranging from 5 minutes to 30 minutes in 1 lesson to reduce boredom in class. A negative impact of using cell phones is that this action can divide and reduce students' attention to the lessons, which can ultimately reduce students' understanding of English subjects. The study recommends that teachers be aware of this phenomenon and always activate the students by presenting appropriate teaching methods and materials.

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Introduction

Social media has become integral to our daily lives, with people constantly connected and engaging on various platforms. It influences various aspects, including communication, entertainment, and education (Dewi & Rizal, 2023). This is in line with Ilankoon & Chandrasena (2022) who state that social media impacts various aspects of society, including education.

Social media has revolutionized how we communicate and gather information, but its effects on learning have been debated. Some believe that social media can enhance learning by providing access to information and facilitating collaboration among students. Others, however, believe that excessive use of social media can be a major distraction and hinder academic performance. Negative effects of social media on education include reduced learning and research capabilities, reduction in real human contact, time wastage, low grades, and loss of motivation (Boahene et al., 2019).

According to various research studies in the field of online social networks, it has been revealed that these sites are impacting the lives of the youth and society significantly (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022). In education, social media can have positive and negative impacts on the learning process.

As a positive impact, social media can enhance learning by providing access to a wide range of educational resources and content (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022). It allows students to collaborate with peers, share ideas, and engage in discussions. Research suggests that the strategic use of social media in the classroom can benefit student learning (Bermudez et al., 2016; Pratiwi & Wiedarti, 2020; Siddig, 2020). Social media can enhance collaboration and communication among students. They can engage in online discussions, share their work, and receive peer feedback, fostering critical thinking and learning. It can be a powerful tool to enhance the learning process in several ways (Mohd Yusoff & Abdul Hamid, 2022). Social media can be used to share valuable information with students, collect information from around the world, and facilitate collaboration among students. This allows students to access vast information, engage in discussions, and work together on projects, potentially enriching the learning experience. In recent years, the use of social media in the learning process, particularly in the English classroom, has gained significant attention and importance (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube offer unique opportunities for both teachers and students to engage in collaborative learning and enhance their English language skills (Acharya & Mohanty, 2014), as the positive impact of technology in the learning process is recognized by researchers (Boahene et al., 2019). These platforms provide a platform for students to share and discuss educational content, interact with experts in the field, and collaborate on projects. Overall, the impact of social media on the learning process is multi-faceted. It can have positive and negative effects, depending on how it is utilized (Zsila & Reyes, 2023). Here, social media has the potential to positively impact the learning process by providing access to information and resources, facilitating collaboration and discussion among students, and improving engagement and motivation.

While negative impact, excessive use of social media can lead to distractions, reduced attention span, and decreased academic performance. As a result, educators and students must strike a balance between the use of social media and academic

pursuits to ensure that the potential benefits of social media are harnessed while mitigating the risks (Barton et al., 2021). However, the excessive use of social media can also have detrimental effects on the learning process. Some of the negative impacts include distraction, reduced attention span, and lower academic performance. Regarding reducing attention span, research and constant exposure to social media can reduce the ability to focus on tasks for extended periods, negatively impacting academic performance (Khairi & Ghani, 2019). Additionally, the time spent on social media can be at the expense of time dedicated to studying, reading, and completing assignments, ultimately leading to a decline in academic achievement (Badri et al., 2017; Feng et al., 2019; Iqbal, 2018; Mohd Yusoff & Abdul Hamid, 2022; Takeddin et al., 2022). However, it is important to recognize that excessive use of social media can also negatively affect academic performance, such as distractions and reduced attention spa (Khalaf et al., 2023).

So, the impact of social media on the learning process is a complex and multifaceted issue. While social media can enhance learning by providing access to educational resources and facilitating collaboration, its excessive use can also lead to distractions and reduced academic performance. Educators and students need to find a balance between the use of social media and academic pursuits to ensure that the potential benefits of social media are maximized while mitigating the risks.

As educators who have been paying attention to a phenomenon that has occurred for more than two decades, the researchers feel sad about the behavior of students who always try to use their cell phones to access shared social media applications that they have while the teaching and learning process is in progress. This phenomenon is very disruptive to the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

A study related to students' use of mobile phones (Sutisna, Widodo, Anar, et al., 2020), found that almost all students accessed social media in the form of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. However, the real reason they use mobile phones has yet to be revealed. Future researchers can exploit this gap to answer why they use cell phones while lessons are in progress. This gap is the basis for researchers to conduct research regarding the reasons for using cell phones by students during the learning process.

Through pre-observations in English classes and interviews with English teachers and several students, the researchers discovered an interesting phenomenon that aroused their curiosity to reveal it. Teachers said students accessed the internet during lessons by sitting quietly and looking at their desks, known as lowering their heads. The class has indeed become calmer with the absence of interaction among students. However, after looking for the cause, it turns out that some of them are busy accessing the internet, where the use of the internet via cell phone is not for teaching and learning purposes in class but to access social media, namely WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and others. Researchers assume that if this situation continues continuously, student achievement will decrease due to a lack of student attention to subjects, which can result in decreased student understanding of the subject matter provided by the teachers.

This condition continues; even though educators have warned students not to use cell phones during the teaching and learning process in class, students will always and continue to do so, even in secret. This phenomenon aroused researchers' curiosity

to reveal why they use social media during the teaching and learning process in class, especially in English. So, researchers assume that students' use of social media during the learning process has a negative impact that can reduce students' attention span in lessons. Indeed, the excessive use of mobile phones and social media in the classroom can hurt student learning.

In this study, the researchers focus on the use of social media by the students during the learning process in the classroom, which reduces attention span. The study explores the use of social media in the learning process, particularly in the context of the English classroom. This research aims to uncover why students use social media during the learning process, especially in English classes. Moreover, researchers also want to know what social media applications students access during classroom learning. The findings from this research can contribute to teachers in English classes being able to accommodate students' needs in class so that students' use of social media unrelated to learning needs and materials can be overcome.

Research Method

This study explored why students use social media during the learning process. A phenomenological research approach was used to obtain an in-depth understanding of student's experiences and perceptions regarding the use of social media in the learning process. This approach is very suitable for use in this research because it can reveal and explain phenomena that occur through the experiences felt by individuals regarding the phenomena. A qualitative method was employed to gather and analyze data on students' social media usage and its effects on their academic performance. Random sampling was applied in this study because the research subjects had an equal chance to be participants (Robinson, 2014).

The primary data for this study were obtained from the students' answers referring to the social media used during the learning process. The data collection method used was interviewed. Fifteen students from different educational institutions were selected as participants for this study; seven students were from Lombok City, and eight students were from Banjarbaru City. They were asked open-ended questions about their social media usage and the reasons during the learning process. All participants consisted of 10 male students and five female students. Moreover, 2 English teachers were informants. 1 English teacher was from Lombok City, West Nusa Tenggara, and 1 English teacher was from Banjarbaru City, South Kalimantan. Participants and informants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

The data was collected during the even semester 2023/2024 academic year. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the students' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2014; Mortensen, 2017). In this research, an interactive model was applied to three steps of analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion. Moreover, triangulation was used to check data validity.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we will present and discuss the rise of social media used by students during English classes' teaching and learning process. Nowadays, almost all

students have cell phones (Morphitou, 2014), either from savings or gifts from their parents (Hasan et al., 2022). The primary purpose of owning a cell phone is to communicate between children and their parents when they are not together (Sutisna, Widodo, Nursaptini, et al., 2020). Apart from that, cell phones are also needed to monitor the child's whereabouts, pick them up when school activities end, and as a facility for teaching and learning at school (Goh, 2018).

Apart from the need for communication between parents and children and facilities for learning at school, all students have access to social media as a means of communication between friends and as entertainment. Students have many accounts, including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, Telegram, games, and other applications. These applications can make students dependent on them, making them addictive (Aktan & Gökçearsan, 2022).

For students who cannot control their addiction to the applications they have, their daily activities will be disrupted, which can further reduce their quality of life, including a lack of quality understanding of lessons during the teaching and learning process in class. Previous research has found that excessive use of social media can negatively impact student learning and academic performance (Iqbal, 2018; Oguguo et al., 2020; Takieddin et al., 2022). Social media use during class can be a major distraction for students, causing them to lose focus on the lesson and miss important information and instructions (Takieddin et al., 2022). The constant urge to check social media updates and notifications can fragment students' attention and make it difficult for them to engage deeply with the course material (Takieddin et al., 2022).

1. Frequency of cell phones use by students during English learning

Based on the results of the students' interviews, they all state that they often use their cell phones secretly in class while teaching and learning are running. Although the teacher has forbidden using cell phones, it needed to find the information to support the learning.

"Often, but it depends on who the teacher is. Sometimes, teachers do not bother students when they take out their cell phones or put them on the table. However, when I use my cell phone, I keep discreet so I do not get caught". Student C shows that she often uses her cell phone during English class.

Student F also states, *"Often. Because I usually put my cell phone on the table, I might be interested in using my cell phone. Just look at the conditions, like who the teacher is. Moreover, always secretly whenever there is a chance."*

Student G says, *"Quite often, I often use my cell phone secretly if I can use it."*

Student N adds that he always uses his cell phone when the teacher does not see or notice him.

There's of the four students clearly show that students often use cell phones secretly when English lessons are in progress. This is because there is an opportunity for them to use it even though the teacher has prohibited it; even the prohibition on using cell phones in class has been included in the school rules and regulations. The frequent use of cell phones is due to the opportunity for them and also their curiosity

about the social media accounts they have; this is to the findings of previous studies where cell phone distractions occur every 3-4 minutes, and students use their phones for more than 25% of effective class duration (Kim et al., 2019).

2. Social Media Use by Students During English Learning

Applications that students widely use while studying are WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, games and online novels. Moreover, WhatsApp is the most widely used application by all students. The data obtained shows the following:

Student A said, *"Usually I open Whatsapp more, look at the chat or stories on Whatsapp,"* student B said, *"Usually open Whatsapp, Twitter. Check chat on Whatsapp, check WhatsApp stories too,"* Student C said, *"Usually when you open Whatsapp, especially if there is a notification from a chat on Whatsapp, you can immediately check it,"* Student D *"Usually open social media more often, such as Whatsapp and Instagram,"* student F *"Often open Whatsapp and games,"* student I said *"Whatsapp and Tiktok,"* student I clearly said *"always access Whatsapp,"* student N said *"I always use Facebook, TikTok and Whatsapp whenever I have chance to use the cell phone,"* and also students O said, *"Of Course, Whatsapp sir."* As noted from the data, some students accessed Instagram as well; student D stated, *"I am always scrolling Instagram if I have a chance to open it,"* student G also said that she likes to check her Instagram account. Student I answered, *"Not only Whatsapp and TikTok, I access Instagram during the class."*

On this date, most students always access and check their social media accounts whenever and wherever they want. WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok are applications they consistently access during class. This supports the research of Shittu & Taiwo (Shittu & Taiwo, 2023) that revealed that besides Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. WhatsApp is also one of the most popular social media platforms used by students (Sutisna, Widodo, Anar, et al., 2020).

3. Duration of Accessing Social Media During English Learning

The interview results found that students' access to social media during English class ranged from 5 minutes to 30 minutes. As said by a student, *"I always access the internet from my cell phone about 5 minutes for Whatsapp and Instagram."* student C said, *"Just a moment, at most one course can take around 15 minutes"*. Meanwhile, student A, who was recorded as one of the students who accessed social media the longest beside student N, said: *"Usually, as long as he has free time or when he has the opportunity in class. The range, in minutes, adds up to around 30 minutes in class"*. This can be found in one study by Kim et al. (2019) which revealed that students spend much time on social media. Around 25% of their schoolwork is spent on social networking sites.

It is also known, according to information from 2 English teachers as informants, that there will be a condition where the class becomes quieter; there is no interaction between students as if they are paying attention and listening carefully to the lesson material being delivered by the teacher, they lower their faces towards the table as if they are focused on listening. In reality, this condition allows students to access the internet via their cell phones so that the teacher does not know. Indeed, they are all concentrating on the lesson; it is hoped that the teacher can identify this situation and solve the class problems.

4. The Students' Reasons in Using Cell Phones to Access Social Media During English Learning

Then, we get why students consistently access social media during English class. Here, all students stated that they accessed their social media accounts because of boredom with the way the teacher teaches, the material, and even the lesson itself. Another reason is that they do not get sleepy while studying in class. For example, student B said, *"Because sometimes the lesson is boring, the teacher's way of teaching is boring."* Student D said, *"Yes, usually because I am bored with the topic of learning in class. The more boring it is, the more often I open my cell phone"*. Student F stated, *"The first, because I was bored with learning. Second, so I don't fall asleep in class. So I open it for a moment, and then I pay attention to the material again"*. Student H said, *"First, because there was an incoming notification, so immediately checked. Especially, if there is news from family or others that is important. Second, because the teacher's discussions in class are a bit boring"*. This shows that students' reasons for accessing social media during English lessons are mainly boredom and the desire to stay awake, especially when the teaching and learning process is not enjoyable. These reasons are incredibly supportive (Tong, 2018), which states that when the classroom atmosphere is not enjoyable, the students will quickly feel bored and drowsy, so they tend to look for entertainment or distraction on their cell phones.

The reason for the results can be emphasized in students' feelings of boredom during the teaching and learning process in the English class. Feelings like this are the main trigger for students to use cell phones in English classes, where the use of the device is not a learning-supportive device but instead a means to access their social media accounts (Demarcsek & Todea, 2016). In addition, using cell phones in the classroom also affects students' academic performance. The research stated that students who frequently use their phones during class showed lower academic achievement (Mohammad et al., 2015). Some students said that the frequent use of cell phones during English lessons impacted their understanding of the material being taught and their grades (Kim et al., 2019).

Based on the results of the previous studies, several themes emerged regarding why students use social media during the learning process and its impact on their academic performance. Reasons for using social media during the learning process (Alalwan, 2022; Gruzd et al., 2018): 1) keeping in touch with friends and family (Iqbal, 2018; Karjo, 2020), 2) checking for updates and news (Alalwan, 2022), 3) browsing for entertainment and leisure (Gruzd et al., 2018), 4) avoiding boredom during class. Impact of social media use on learning process: 1) distraction from learning materials (Gruzd et al., 2018; Iqbal, 2018), 2) reduced attention span and focus on the lesson, 3) less time for study and completing assignments (Alalwan, 2022), 4) lower academic performance (Alalwan, 2022; Iqbal, 2018).

The findings indicate that excessive use of social media during the learning process can have significant negative impacts on students' academic performance. Students often use social media to relieve boredom or stay connected with friends, but this can lead to distraction, reduced focus, and less time studying (Iqbal, 2018; Karjo, 2020). Educators need to find ways to mitigate the adverse effects of social media and promote its responsible use to enhance the learning process (Iqbal, 2018).

Besides the boredom students feel while learning English in class, another reason is students' dependence on cell phones. Students always want to access their social media accounts; their attention is always focused on their cell phones (Mahsud et al., 2021). This is not entirely their fault because they are digital natives where, since birth, their environment has provided super sophisticated digital devices in everyday life.

The environment creates humans who depend on cell phones to be close to the devices. This excessive dependence can reduce the quality of learning and even a person's quality of life if they cannot control their cell phone use wisely (Shah et al., 2019). As mentioned in the research, excessive cell phone use can impact academic performance, physical health, and social interaction. Excessive use of social media during English lessons impacts academic performance and student behavior in the classroom. Teachers complain that student concentration is disrupted, so students become increasingly undisciplined and need help completing assignments on time.

In order to overcome the problems caused by the use of social media during the English learning process, several solutions can be implemented. Teachers should be aware of this condition, where using cell phones during learning can hurt students' understanding of English lessons. So teachers can identify the problem and find the right solution to the problem (Christiana Ijeoma, 2020). Teachers can create strategies, methods, and learning materials that are appropriate and interesting for students so that students can be active and consistently participate in classroom learning with full attention and enjoyable (Barekat, 2023; Geng, 2021; Hidayati et al., 2021; Quy, 2019).

Conclusion

Of all the students who participated in this research, it can be concluded that they used cell phones during the class's English teaching and learning process. They always try to access or open their social media accounts, with a 5 to 30-minute duration in 1 subject. This hurts misusing a cell phone. The impact of using cell phones during English lessons is evident. Namely, it can reduce students' understanding of the lessons and their focus. Students reduce their attention span and focus on the lesson, which can decrease their academic performance. They argue that studying in the classroom is boring, so they divert their attention by accessing social media. This behavior becomes a habit, making them dependent on the cell phone. To overcome this problem, teachers must create engaging and innovative learning media or methods so that students feel energized and are always motivated to focus on the lesson.

The researchers realized that in conducting this research, the researcher experienced limitations that could affect the research results. There are limitations in research time, energy, and researcher abilities. Besides, this research is limited to revealing students' reasons for using cell phones to access social media during English learning. It would be better if the research does not stop at revealing the reasons; it is suggested that other researchers can develop appropriate teaching methods regarding students' boredom during classroom learning based on empowering cell phones to activate students during learning.

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