

UTILIZING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE JMC STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

Social media (such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) is widely used for people's entertainment and education across the globe. Furthermore, utilizing this sort of technology assists learners in mastering foreign languages such as English, Chinese, French, Japanese. The study aims to find out students' perceptions of using social media to develop English vocabulary. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods was exploited with surveys for 75 students from Module 1 at Johor Matriculation College in Tangkak, Johor, and semi-structured interviews for 15 students at random. Upon investigation, the research results show students' deep insights in using social media to improve their English vocabulary and its positive effects on students' learning vocabulary.

Keywords: English vocabulary, social media, perceptions, Malaysian students

1.0 Introduction

In the digital era, technology is developing at an unprecedented rate for the sake of human beings. In addition to technology, social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter, and so forth are gradually becoming more popular. It is undeniable that social media plays a vital role in making everything more straightforward. This is because social media helps people exchange information, find solutions, share guidance, and communicate in a virtual environment across the globe (Amedie, 2015; Hashim et al., 2018). Besides, technology was invented to meet the demands of education (Pham et al., 2022). For example, students can watch educational videos to study and look for data via the internet effortlessly (Nguyen, 2021).

Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects for learners because it strongly connects with core skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nguyen, 2021). Some studies acknowledged that students would not master the four skills without good vocabulary.

In recent years, there have been innumerable methods of learning vocabulary created by experts and teachers, yet perhaps they are not suited to most individuals. In the modern age, one of the most effective methods today applied in a lot of fields is learning vocabulary through social media (Al-Saggaf et al., 2021). The use of social media is popular among the young generation; therefore, this kind of technology is bound to develop not only English learners' vocabulary knowledge in certain contexts but also their English skills.

Although the modern method of learning vocabulary is regarded as a flexible and suitable means for youngsters, it has both positive and negative sides, according to previous studies. Moreover, there are few studies related to the application of social media for developing English vocabulary in the Malaysian context. For this reason, the paper was carried out to investigate Malaysian English learners' perceptions of the use of social media in English vocabulary advancement and how this technology

enhances their English vocabulary. The research paper will be a reference for English lecturers to consider applying social media to teach vocabulary to students in their English classes.

2.0 Literature Review

Social Media

Social media is considered internet-based technology (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), website, application, or computer-mediated technology (Ismail et al., 2019). According to Hashim et al. (2018) and Ismail et al. (2019), social media enables users to share ideas and information that creates online interaction with the world. Furthermore, Ismail et al. (2019) reported that social media is a channel containing news, entertainment, and education, or messages including broadcasting and narrowcasting medium, namely newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephones, and faxes. When it comes to education, Annamalai (2018) claimed that students become optimistic when making use of social media for learning in a virtual environment. This is because social media gives people platforms allowing collaboration, communication, and quick comments anytime and anywhere. In addition, social media users can select what they would like to see in their notifications (Yu et al., 2010).

Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning is obtaining various words during the process of studying a second language. According to Cetinkaya and Sütçü (2018), vocabulary shows learners' understanding of diverse forms of words and their suitable use in daily life. Vocabulary is necessary for language learners because those accomplishing strong knowledge about words are better at comprehending spoken and written languages and mastering communication (Tachom, 2021). In 2011, Asgari and Mustapha said that if learners have the insufficient vocabulary, they will fail to employ the language. Moreover, regardless of getting excellent grammar knowledge and pronunciation, language learners may not succeed in mastering their second language without vocabulary enlargement (McCarthy, 1990).

Vocabulary Development through Social Media

With the development of the internet and social media, learners can practice using a second language in the online environment as they can share their concepts and discuss them with others easily (Arumugam et al., 2020). Dhanya (2016) agreed with Arumugam et al. (2020); the researcher reported that the internet creates many linguistic contexts via interactive two-way conversations. For instance, social media gives students a lot of chances to meet language learners from all over the world.

There exist a large number of research papers studying the use of social media to develop English vocabulary. Besides, researchers conducted their studies in various contexts and ages. Most of the previous studies agreed that with diverse, flexible functions and features, social media has a number of good influences on students' ability to absorb English vocabulary knowledge subconsciously. Through the use of

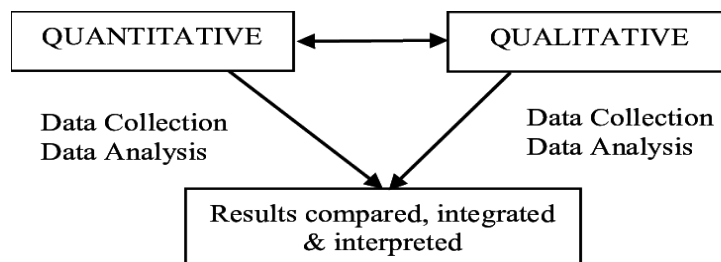
social media, students from different countries can have many opportunities to enhance their English vocabulary (Monica-Ariana & Anamaria- Mirabela, 2014).

Tik Tok

Fahdin (2021) aimed to investigate the impact of Tik Tok on enhancing vocabulary. The participants of the paper included junior high school and senior high school students with the application of online questionnaires. The findings indicated that short videos of Tik Tok with English material contents help the learners expand their vocabulary knowledge. Also, they showed good feedback regarding the use of Tik Tok because the English content videos are easy for them to comprehend, memorize, and increase a wide range of words like verbs, nouns, and so forth. Besides, Anumanthan & Hashim

3.0 Design of the study

The researchers employed a mix of the quantitative and qualitative method to fulfil the aims of the research. In order to gather the data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews and online surveys to answer the research questions. Before answering the questions of the interviews and online surveys, the participants were asked to provide their personal information such as name, gender, and age. Their answers and information were private to conduct the study.



The researchers used this approach because of the following reasons (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007; Johnson and Christensen 2004; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004): it can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions; integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches can overcome the weaknesses and utilise the strengths of each approach; applying the mixed-methods approach can improve insights into and understanding of the data, which might be missed when using a single approach; integrating qualitative and quantitative data can provide strong evidence for conclusions; and triangulating the data from different methods increases the validity of the results and the conclusions.

3.1 Data collection & analysis

To answer the research questions, the researchers utilized figures, tables, numbers, percentages, and interview extracts from semi-structured interviews to present the paper's findings and compare them with previous studies.

3.2 Quantitative Data

The researchers used Google Forms to create an online questionnaire and had participants fill it in. The number of participants for the online survey was 75 students from Module 1 at JMC. The online survey was sent to Facebook groups of JMC students to fill it out randomly. It took one week to give the participants surveys and collect enough responses.

The survey consisted of four main sections: one for personal information, three for multiple responses, and one for the 5-point Likert scale. The first section had two questions, including gender and age (year of study). The second section aimed to find out commonly used social media platforms to learn and enhance English vocabulary. The third one that had six options was about sites and functions of social media students often use to learn and enhance English vocabulary. The fourth one allowing students to choose seven options, was associated with students' knowledge in terms of vocabulary, such as academic words, synonyms/antonyms, phrases, collocations, idioms, slang words, and terms. The last one related to the 5-point Likert scale asked students to choose one of the five options (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree) for ten questions to discover the English vocabulary improvement by using social media.

3.3 Qualitative Data

With the qualitative approach, 15 students joined semi-structured interviews voluntarily. Each interview lasted about five to ten minutes and was recorded and noted carefully. After collecting the interview responses, all interview answers were considered, chosen carefully to show extracts, and presented with keywords and explanations to respond to the research question. Besides, the interview questions aimed to determine students' perceptions of using social media in the process of learning and enhancing English vocabulary.

Here are the interview questions:

1. Do you like learning English vocabulary through social media? Why?
2. Do you think learning English vocabulary through social media is effective? Why?
3. Do you think lecturers should use social media to teach English vocabulary? Why?
4. What are the challenges that you face during the process of learning English vocabulary on social media?

Research Questions

Research question 1: How do students enhance their English vocabulary through social media?

Research question 2: What are students' perceptions of utilizing social media to enhance English vocabulary.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Pedagogical Setting & Participants

This research paper was carried out at Johor Matriculation College. According to Malaysia Educational Philosophy, the educational institution's philosophy of education consists of a holistic, lifelong, ethical, and impactful learning experience. JMC included four modules pre-university students. In each module, students must attend and pass English courses. The study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 with a population of 75 students from Module 1 at JMC, including 45 female and 30 male participants (H31, H32, H33, H34, H35). The students participating in the research were asked to fill out questionnaire surveys. After collecting survey responses, the researchers invited 15 volunteers from the group of participants to answer interview questions.

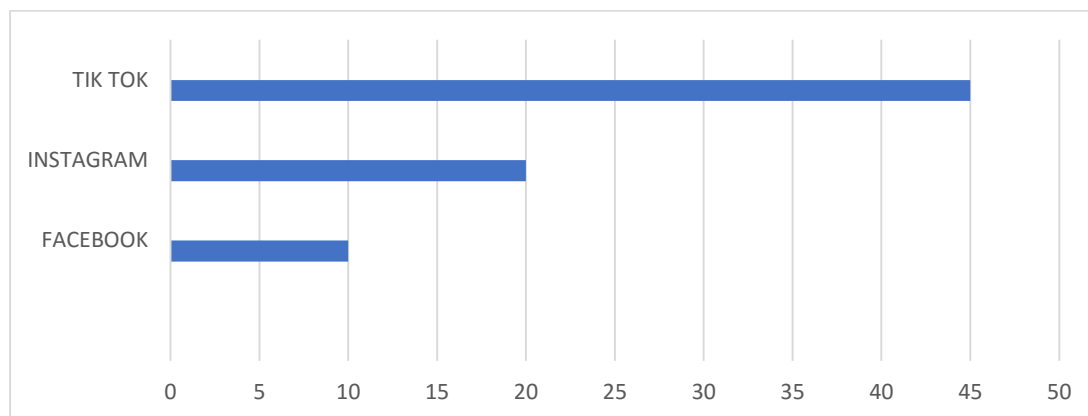
5.0 Results/Findings and discussion

Results/Findings

To answer research question 1: *"How do students enhance their English vocabulary through social media?"*, the researchers exploited quantitative data in various ways, such as figures, tables, numbers, and percentages, to demonstrate students' English vocabulary enhancement through social media.

Figure 1:

Students' commonly used social media platforms to learn and enhance English vocabulary



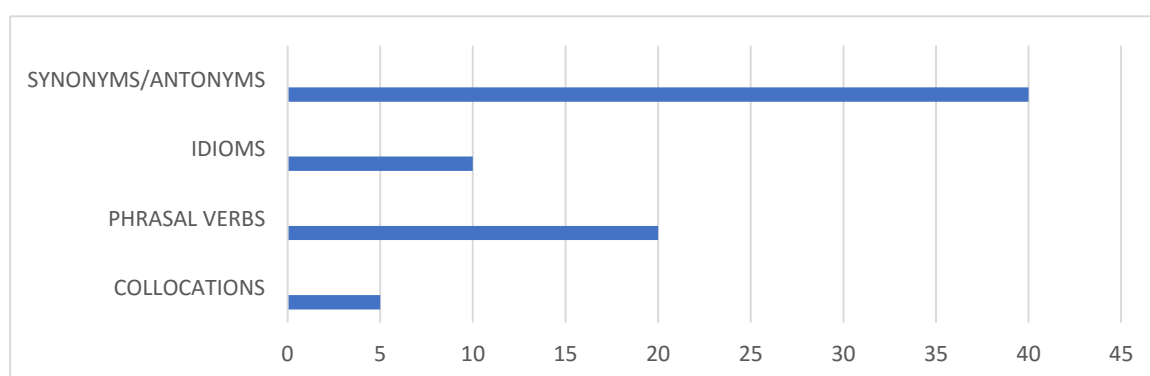
In terms of the use of social media, the researchers found that students tend to use social media platforms to learn or enhance their English vocabulary. Figure 1 demonstrated that TikTok could be seen as the most commonly used platform, with 45 participants (60%). The second social media platform that is utilized quite widely is Instagram, based on the choices of 20 participants (26.7%). Facebook is the third one that 10 participants (13.3%) use.

It is not surprising to claim that TikTok and Instagram are extremely renowned and have a huge number of users in Malaysia. According to Simon (2022) in the research done among the Vietnamese in using the internet and social media, TikTok reached

86.7% of Vietnamese users. Nguyen (2020) agreed with Simon about the numbers regarding the popularity of YouTube (TikTok). She also provided some common reasons to use Facebook, like following friends, following news/events, posting photos/statuses, checking in, following celebrities, and buying stuff.

When comparing Simon and Nguyen's articles with the statistics of the study, the numbers about the popularity of TikTok and Facebook are quite similar and on top, notwithstanding the statistics associated with the purpose of learning English vocabulary. It can be concluded that English educators in Malaysia can take advantage of the popularity of social media (like TikTok, Instagram and Facebook) to motivate learners to enhance their English vocabulary.

Figure 2:
Students' obtained vocabulary knowledge via social media



Regarding vocabulary, Figure 2 shows students' knowledge of collocations, synonyms or antonyms, phrasal verbs and idioms. The result pointed out that 40 students (53.3%) can acquire knowledge on synonyms and antonyms; 20 (26.7%) can obtain phrasal verbs using social media. In addition, 10 students (13.3%) can learn idioms considered one of the toughest parts of vocabulary for English learners. This is because idioms do not show their meaning based on their separate words; learners must learn them from real contexts. Collocations came as the last with only 5 students (6.7%) learnt it using social media. Thus, the use of social media with countless examples in the world might make idioms simpler to understand for English students.

Utilizing social media may give them a lot of chances to meet common and essential phrases. Meeting a thing many times is likely to make learners memorize it longer. If they have a chance to speak or write, they can reuse what they have seen on social media. Moreover, perhaps learning new words from books is boring, passive, or inadequate and does not create motivation for memorizing the knowledge. On the other hand, vocabulary knowledge is innumerable on social media through images, statuses, videos, comments, etc. Therefore, learners can imitate other social media users' vocabulary usage and create their own ideas suitable for future use.

Table 1. Students' English vocabulary improvement

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	When I learn English vocabulary through social media, I can retain words longer.	5.8%	5.2%	35.1%	39%	14.9%
2	I can learn a word easily through social media because it is shown in attractive or entertaining ways such as videos, images, memes, etc.	7.8%	3.9%	14.9%	37%	36.4%
3	Social media allows me to acquire necessary words that I can use in real-life situations.	7.8%	2.6%	16.2%	33.8%	39.6%
4	I try to use various words to express my opinions on social media.	5.2%	7.1%	29.2%	35.1%	23.4%
5	Social media improves the ability to use words in the correct context.	7.1%	2.6%	26%	42.2%	22.1%
6	When I do not know a word other social media users use, I am curious to search for its meaning.	5.2%	5.2%	13.6%	35.1%	40.9%
7	I use the vocabulary I learned through social media when speaking or writing.	7.1%	6.5%	29.2%	38.3%	18.8%
8	Social media gives me an active environment where I can practice using my English vocabulary by connecting with friends from English-speaking countries.	7.1%	6.5%	22.7%	40.9%	22.7%
9	I can enhance my vocabulary through comments and replies on social media.	7.1%	2.6%	23.4%	37%	29.9%
10	When watching videos, I can increase my vocabulary by reading English subtitles.	7.8%	3.2%	13%	38.3%	37.7%

As shown in Table 1, the result showed that social media had a beneficial impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. Particularly, the finding revealed that 53.9 % of students who responded to item 1 agreed that they could preserve the words presented on social media longer in their memory. In item 3, 73.4 % of students agreed that they acquired essential words used in authentic situations as they had constant exposure to English via social media, improving their vocabulary and communication skills. Furthermore, the result showed that 58.5 % of students use multiple words to express their ideas on social media (item 4). Particularly, social media might create a safe and friendly environment for students to express themselves without restraint. Students can learn and use common and trendy words on social media to connect with others. For example, students can easily share the same topic with others in mutual conversations on social media. In item 9, the result reported that 66.9 % of students can improve their vocabulary through comments and replies on social media.

Also, social media includes diverse vocabulary usage from people of different ages compared with learning from traditional books. Item 10 showed that 76% of students could enhance their vocabulary size by watching subtitles upon watching videos. Although learners cannot completely comprehend the content with English subtitles, they can guess the meaning of new words from the subtitles in the context of the video.

Besides, the student's attitudes are considered positive regarding their use of vocabulary. Students acknowledged their improvement in the use of vocabulary in items 5 and 7, with 64.3% of students believing that using social media can help them apply the words learned via social media properly. Particularly, social media contains many pictures and videos facilitating students' vocabulary acquisition and can be used in the classroom. Additionally, about 57.1% of students in item 7 agreed that they could make use of the words they learned on social media in their writing and speaking. Social media motivated students to be more engaged and assured when speaking and writing to others.

Regarding interest in learning vocabulary, the findings indicated that social media positively impacted students' motivation to learn English. Specifically, 73.4% of students believed social media is likely to promote their interests with attractive and entertaining things (item 2). Particularly, social media is fascinating since words and images are often used together. 76% of students who responded to item 6 reported that they get curious to look up the meaning of words they encounter on social media. Moreover, 63.6% of students in item 8 considered social media as an active environment to connect with people from English-speaking nations all over the world. Social media can reduce students' individual levels of anxiety. Besides, social media is freely accessible, cost-free, and appealing to its users

Interview question 1: Do you like learning English vocabulary through social media? Why?

When asked about students' fondness for using social media to learn vocabulary, most students confirmed that they like learning it on social media. These were identified as (1) expanding vocabulary knowledge, (2) improving vocabulary usage, (3) increasing learning interest, (4) promoting comfort and active learning, and (5) improving the ability to memorize words. The following extracts represent these perspectives. One of the common reasons students like social media is that they encounter lots of new and diverse words that they have not known when surfing social media. Besides, they can see different level words and multiple topics. They also explained that social media keeps them up to date with trendy words. Another reason is that most students show interest in using social media to learn vocabulary. They consider social media an attractive learning tool, making them feel less bored and learn words unconsciously. They got excited and wanted to learn. Next, some students supposed that social media is convenient, free of charge, and without much pressure. They have a relaxed state of mind when learning on social media. The last reason is that students find it easier to remember words over a long-term period, i.e., funny photos, memes, short articles, and authentic context. The interview results showed five main reasons that students like learning vocabulary through social media.

Improving vocabulary usage

Most of the students who were asked about their preferences for using social media to learn vocabulary stated that they enjoy doing so because they can enhance vocabulary usage. This is because they can recognize the word context they come across on social media and apply it to situations in real life. They can likewise expand their vocabulary usage.

Increasing learning interest

Regarding learners' fondness for utilizing social media to acquire vocabulary, some of the students said that they like using social media to learn since it increases interest in learning. Students frequently use social media because they find vocabulary learning less tedious, funny, exciting, and pleasant. They can thereby improve their interest in learning compared to traditional learning.

Promoting comfort and active learning

In terms of preferences for utilizing social media to acquire vocabulary, some students agreed that they like using social media to learn vocabulary as it encourages comfort and active learning. Students frequently use social media because they find it easy, which is one of the reasons why they like it. Social media enables students to make the most of their time and speeds up information access. Social networking also fosters a calm learning environment. Social media can therefore assist students in actively and easily learning vocabulary.

Improving the ability to memorize words

With respect to students' fondness for using social media to learn vocabulary, some students confirmed that they like it since it helps them retain words better. Social media

helps them memorize words longer thanks to word repetition and humorous images, videos, and articles. They can therefore remember words for a longer time.

Interview question 2: Do you think learning English vocabulary through social media is effective? Why?

Besides, some students are aware of the benefits of social media in enhancing vocabulary knowledge. These were recognized as (1) sharing information, (2) facilitating vocabulary acquisition, and (3) creating positive learning environments. The interview results showed four main benefits. One of the most common advantages is that students can access a broad amount of knowledge; they consider social media a valuable source where they can explore and choose what information to learn, such as learning more English in different countries. Specifically, three students claimed that they could learn words through online interaction with others and discuss a subject in a forum. They can also learn from better people who share their own knowledge and use trendy words. The next benefit is that students can retain words more effectively. They spent much time watching comments, posts, pictures, and videos. They also explained that the trend makes it easier to learn the context. As a result, they have repeated exposure to new words and can easily recognize the context. Finally, most students express their satisfaction with social media in terms of its convenience, appealing, entertaining, and relaxing environment. They also shared that learning words unconsciously through funny articles and pictures was not stressful.

Creating positive learning environments

In terms of the effectiveness of using social media to acquire vocabulary, the students described it as a handy, entertaining, enjoyable, and unrestrictive way to learn. Social media also encourages comfort and independent learning. Social media thus promotes a helpful environment for students.

Interview question 3: Should lecturers use social media to teach English vocabulary? Why?

To suggest a reference for lecturers to create an innovative instructional model for vocabulary teaching, the researchers investigated students' opinions about whether utilizing social media is highly recommended or not. Surprisingly, most participants agreed that English lecturers should combine this method with the current courses. In particular, they shared numerous reasons why they suggested this sort of learning, including (1) providing many chances to practice, (2) providing creative learning, (3) convenience in teaching and learning, (4) improving learners' vocabulary usage, and (5) following popular role models.

Providing many chances to practice

Regarding using social media in teaching, some students confirmed that teachers should apply it since it provides more opportunities for students to practice. Students considered it to be a truly interesting activity for communicating with others. Additionally, students get access to the latest vocabulary across a range of subjects. Thus, social media can increase students' likelihood of practicing their English language.

Unlike an enormous network on social media, traditional classrooms lack conditions and opportunities for learners to practice due to various factors such as humans, time, environments, etc. For this reason, many participants believed that social media contains various approaches for them to learn and practice using vocabulary.

Providing creative learning

One of the biggest differences between digital environments and face-to-face environments is creativity. The creativity on social media is diverse because the network has many functions that can be done easily. Most participants suggested that lectures can exploit social media to make classes less boring and more active. Mental factors also affect the learning process, so lectures play a role in motivating students to study. Social media will be a tool to satisfy learners in their learning process.

In terms of using social media as a learning tool, some students agreed that teachers should apply social media in teaching because it provides students with creative learning. Lessons with the use of visual aids like videos are less tedious and more engaging, which motivates students to learn. Teachers in particular, can create humorous educational videos easily via online applications instead of boring lectures. Furthermore, videos designed by lecturers can be reused many times, which saves teachers' efforts in their teaching. As a result, students can benefit from creative learning.

Convenience in teaching and learning

Social media is described as a convenient way for learners and instructors in educational contexts. Students 3 and 11 said that teachers could make videos to save their teaching time because the videos can be reused to teach. In addition, Student 7 thought that lecturers could create pages about vocabulary and structures. For students 5, 12, and 13, social media can help learners to learn vocabulary anytime and anywhere. Student 6 reported that students could be observed and looked after more carefully if the method is applied. Youngsters are people who use social media every day. This way of teaching is recommended as it is suitable for the young generation to adapt (Student 9).

Regarding applying social media in teaching, some students confirmed that teachers should use it due to its convenience in teaching and learning. Social media in particular, may enhance learning and enable students to make use of both time and space. For lecturers, creating pages about vocabulary and grammatical structures where students may easily access the knowledge and watch/rewatch videos. As a result, learning and teaching via social media are more convenient for both students and teachers.

Improving learners' vocabulary usage

Applying knowledge learned in classes in real life is compulsory for language students. Nevertheless, learners tend to lack practice using vocabulary in classes because of limited

chances to speak or write as well as apply the words to produce their output. The problem might make learners use vocabulary in the wrong contexts. To remedy this

problem, social media is considered a solution. Because social media has communities or groups of English users in the world, the learners can get on well with them to produce the output. Students can apply the words they learned naturally by frequently practicing in foreign language environments.

Following popular role models

Creating content about English vocabulary is renowned in the world in general and in Vietnam in specific. One of the reasons why lecturers had better use social media to teach vocabulary is that there are innumerable English teachers across the globe creating their accounts, pages, or channels to provide plenty of content about the English language as well as vocabulary. Learning from them is low-cost, convenient, and effective. Student 2 recommended that lecturers should imitate online English teachers as role models.

In terms of using social media in teaching, some students confirmed that teachers should apply social media in teaching since it provides a popular role model for learners to follow. There are communities or groups of English speakers, particularly on social media, allowing students to practice by imitating the models naturally.

Interview question 4: What are the challenges that you face during the process of learning English vocabulary on social media?

Although most participants mentioned the benefits of learning vocabulary on social media, the disadvantages also existed. In particular, most participants agreed that learning on the online platform caused external factors affecting learners' attention. One of the common reasons was that social media tends to be used for the purpose of users' entertainment. Some learners might have insufficient efforts in the pursuit of the process of learning vocabulary on social media.

Lack of motivation

Regarding the drawbacks of social media in teaching, some students stated that they were impacted by outside causes, making it difficult to concentrate. They failed to take notes or write down things, weakening their long-term memory. They were hence unmotivated due to being independent.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusion.

In conclusion, with a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, the research paper explored students' perceptions and how they improve their English vocabulary with the use of social media. Concerning vocabulary improvement through the use of social media, the results concluded that social media provided an active and practical environment for learners. The students were the representatives of the young generation having many opportunities to adapt to virtual environments as well as social media. Therefore, there is no doubt that the result showed that most of them utilize online platforms to learn and enhance English vocabulary, particularly via pages or channels of famous applications such as Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram. Thanks to getting along with social media platforms, the learners develop their vocabulary in terms of phrases, synonyms or antonyms, or idioms. Moreover,

the finding demonstrated numerous achievements during the process of using social media to improve vocabulary knowledge. Specifically, the learners can memorize words over a long period of time due to the application of attractive or entertaining approaches like videos or images. Besides, the students can share everything freely on social media through comments or replies containing real-life contexts. Social media also motivates students to search for words they donot know on social media. By making use of available functions of social media, the learners have more chances to practice using vocabulary with their efforts and connect with many English users across the globe.

Additionally, students' perceptions were divided into three aspects: the learners' fondness, socialmedia's effectiveness, and their opinions about using social media to teach vocabulary. The firstone was related to the students' fondness regarding using social media to learn and enhance vocabulary, supported by the reasons, namely (1) expanding vocabulary knowledge, (2)improving vocabulary usage, (3) increasing learning interest, (4) promoting comfort and activelearning, and (5) improving the ability to memorize words. The second one was about social media's effectiveness in enhancing English vocabulary, which was supported by the ideas such as (1) sharing information, (2) facilitating vocabulary acquisition, and (3) creating positive learning environments. The last one was associated with students' attitudes toward whether lecturers should employ social media to teach vocabulary. The finding indicated that most participants agreed with the idea and shared some reasons, including (1) providing many chances to practice, (2) providing creative learning, (3) convenience in teaching and learning, (4) improving learners' vocabulary usage, and (5) following popular role models. On the otherhand, learning vocabulary through social media caused distraction (1) and lack of motivation (2) for the learners. Based on the findings, the researchers believed that English lecturers couldhave a deep understanding of learners' attitudes and experiences to consider applying social media as a modern tool to teach vocabulary as well as the English language.

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