

FROM SCROLLING TO SPEAKING: VOCATIONAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENGLISH ORAL DEVELOPMENT

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received: November 7, 2025 Revised: December 4, 2025 Accepted: December 11, 2025 Published: December 30, 2025 Keywords: English language learning, Social media, Speaking development, Student Perceptions, Vocational students	Social media has become a familiar source of English-language input for adolescents, yet its value for speaking development depends on how learners perceive and use the available content. This study explored how eleventh-grade students at SMK Negeri 1 Sigi perceived the use of social media for developing English speaking skills. A descriptive qualitative design was employed with 12 students selected through purposive sampling and one English teacher serving as a key informant. Data were obtained through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and documentation, and were analyzed through thematic analysis and triangulation. The findings revealed six recurring themes. Students perceived social media as useful for improving pronunciation, developing vocabulary, increasing motivation, building speaking confidence, and providing opportunities for speaking practice beyond the classroom. TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram were the platforms most frequently mentioned by participants, mainly because of their accessible video-based English content. Students reported learning through imitation, repetition, listening, watching videos, and recording or practicing their own speech. Nevertheless, the findings also identified difficulties in understanding fast speech and unfamiliar accents, fear of making mistakes, and distraction by entertainment-oriented content. Overall, students held predominantly positive perceptions of social media as a supplementary resource for English speaking development rather than as a replacement for classroom instruction. The study suggests that teachers should provide structured guidance, help students select appropriate English content, and turn passive viewing into active speaking tasks. This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.
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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become increasingly embedded in young people's everyday communication, entertainment, and information-seeking practices. In English language education, this development creates opportunities for learners to encounter English beyond the formal classroom. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp expose learners to videos, conversations, captions, voice recordings, and other forms of multimodal content that can function as informal language-learning resources. Previous research has reported that social media and mobile applications can support oral communication, motivation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and learner engagement when they are integrated

purposefully into language learning (Ahmed et al., 2022; Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022; Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019).

Speaking is particularly important because foreign-language learning ultimately requires learners to use language for communication. At the same time, speaking is often perceived as difficult because learners must coordinate pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and confidence while communicating. Indonesian EFL learners have been reported to experience problems such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, anxiety, lack of confidence, and insufficient opportunities for practice (Handini et al., 2021; Rahadian et al., 2022). Social media may respond to some of these constraints by giving learners repeated access to spoken English and opportunities to imitate, rehearse, and interact with language content. YouTube-based studies, for example, have found benefits related to authentic input, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence, while TikTok-based studies have highlighted the potential of short videos and interactive features to support speaking practice (Hussein et al., 2021; Rastari et al., 2023; Yulita & Hertiki, 2023).

The educational value of social media, however, should not be reduced to the presence of English content alone. Learners need to attend to the language, process what they hear, and produce language themselves. A student may repeatedly watch English videos without actually speaking. This distinction is important because the present study is concerned with students' perceptions of social media as a resource for speaking development, not simply with their frequency of social media use. The thesis on which this article is based conceptualizes speaking development through pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, confidence, and comprehension, and describes social media learning activities such as watching English videos, listening to conversations, learning vocabulary, practicing pronunciation, and creating videos or voice notes.

Research has increasingly examined particular platforms. Studies of TikTok have reported positive perceptions and possible gains in speaking confidence, vocabulary, and oral practice (Adhani et al., 2023; Jannah & Rizal, 2024; Zaitun et al., 2021). YouTube research has likewise indicated that authentic video input can support speaking performance and learner engagement (Budiyaniti, 2023; Hussein et al., 2021; Ilyas & Putri, 2020; Piannur & Rosita, 2023). Other studies have examined WhatsApp and mobile-assisted learning, showing that voice recordings, messaging, and mobile interaction can provide additional opportunities for oral practice (Ahmed et al., 2022; AlAzzam-Khraiwish et al., 2021; Oye & Salvador-Cisneros, 2022). These studies demonstrate the pedagogical potential of digital media, but they also suggest that accessibility and entertainment do not automatically produce active language learning.

The local context is also important. The present research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Sigi, where the target population consisted of 20 eleventh-grade students in Computer and Network Engineering and 12 students who actively used social media for English learning were selected as participants. The thesis identifies a gap in research concerning vocational high school students' perceptions in Sigi Regency, particularly because earlier studies tended to

emphasize the effect of a particular platform or measurable speaking outcomes rather than students' own views and experiences across several platforms. Understanding these perceptions is useful because students' views can influence whether they use social media as an intentional learning resource or mainly as entertainment.

Accordingly, this article reframes the thesis findings around the relationship between everyday social-media practices and perceived speaking development. Rather than asking whether social media objectively improves speaking scores, the study asks how students interpret its usefulness, what learning activities they actually report engaging in, and what limitations they encounter. This focus provides a learner-centered perspective that can complement experimental and survey research. The study therefore aims to explore eleventh-grade students' perceptions of using social media for English speaking development and to identify the benefits and challenges that shape those perceptions.

The study addresses the following research question: How do eleventh-grade students perceive the use of social media for developing their English speaking skills?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design because the purpose was to understand students' experiences, views, and interpretations of using social media for English speaking development. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Sigi. The target population consisted of 20 eleventh-grade students in the Computer and Network Engineering program, while 12 students were selected purposively because they actively used social media as a resource for learning or practicing English. One English teacher participated as a key informant.

Data were collected using four sources: a student questionnaire administered through Google Forms, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and documentation. The research instruments included a 14-item questionnaire, interview guides containing 10 questions for students and 10 questions for the teacher, a 10-indicator observation checklist, and documentation of research activities. The questionnaire addressed accessibility, engagement, relevance, pronunciation, vocabulary, speaking practice, motivation, enjoyment, real-life language use, and continued integration of social media into speaking instruction. The interviews explored platforms used, learning practices, perceived benefits, challenges, emotional responses, perceived improvements, and ways of overcoming difficulties.

The interview and observation procedures focused on what students did with English-language content rather than on social-media use in general. Observation indicators included students' access to platforms, attention to English-speaking content, imitation of pronunciation, speaking practice based on viewed content, enthusiasm, participation, interaction with peers in English, questions about English content, and responses to teacher instructions. Documentation was used as supporting evidence of the research activities.

Data analysis followed a thematic process adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006), as described in the thesis. The researcher first became familiar with the data, generated initial codes, searched for recurring themes, reviewed the themes, defined and named them, and

then produced the report. Data from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation were condensed and organized into thematic descriptions. Conclusions were checked through triangulation across the four sources. Because the study focused on perceptions, the findings are interpreted as students' reported and observed experiences; they are not presented as experimental evidence of causal improvement in speaking proficiency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis produced six major themes: (1) social media helps improve pronunciation, (2) social media develops vocabulary, (3) social media increases learning motivation, (4) social media builds speaking confidence, (5) social media provides opportunities for speaking practice, and (6) social media presents challenges for speaking development. The overall pattern was predominantly positive, although students and the teacher also recognized limitations.

Table 1. Social Media Platforms Mentioned by Participants

Platform	Number of students mentioning the platform
TikTok	7
YouTube	6
Instagram	2

Note. Students could mention more than one platform; therefore, the totals exceed the number of participants.

Table 2. Frequency of Major Themes

Theme	Students mentioning the theme
Pronunciation improvement	10
Vocabulary development	11
Increased motivation	9
Confidence building	8
Speaking practice opportunities	10
Challenges	7

Note. Frequencies represent the number of the 12 participants whose responses were coded under each theme; one student could contribute to more than one theme.

1. Social media as a source of pronunciation practice

Pronunciation was one of the most prominent themes. Ten students were represented in the thematic frequency data as mentioning pronunciation improvement. Students reported listening to English-speaking videos and imitating the way speakers pronounced words and expressions. The classroom observation supported this perception: students paid attention to pronunciation, repeated words or expressions, and sometimes replayed video segments to hear them more clearly. The teacher also observed that students brought pronunciation patterns and vocabulary encountered online into classroom interaction.

This finding suggests that social media functions as an accessible source of repeated spoken input. Instead of relying only on textbook dialogues or teacher modeling, students can listen to different speakers and compare their own production with what they hear. Ilyas and Putri (2020) similarly described YouTube as an alternative source for EFL speaking development, while Hussein et al. (2021) found that YouTube-supported instruction produced noticeable gains in pronunciation and fluency-related speaking performance. The present study adds a learner-perception dimension: students themselves interpreted repeated listening and imitation as useful strategies for pronunciation development.

At the same time, pronunciation exposure was not always easy to process. Students reported difficulty when speakers talked too quickly and when they encountered unfamiliar accents. This is pedagogically significant because authentic input can be beneficial while also being challenging for learners whose listening proficiency is still developing. Therefore, teacher mediation remains necessary. Teachers can guide students toward suitable levels of difficulty, encourage the use of subtitles when necessary, and ask learners to replay short segments and practice specific expressions rather than simply watching entire videos.

2. Social media as a source of vocabulary development

Vocabulary development was the most frequently represented theme, with 11 of the 12 participants mentioning it. Students described encountering unfamiliar words and expressions while watching videos, listening to songs, reading captions or subtitles, and interacting with English-language content. The teacher reported that students had begun to form words and sentences from vocabulary encountered on social media and attempted to use some of those expressions during classroom activities.

The finding illustrates the value of contextualized exposure. Students did not always study vocabulary through explicit word lists. Instead, new words appeared within stories, conversations, captions, songs, or topics that interested them. Such incidental encounters may make vocabulary more meaningful because learners see how expressions are used rather than meeting isolated definitions. Ernestivita et al. (2024) and Usman et al. (2024) likewise emphasize the potential of social-media content for vocabulary learning, while research on captioned video exposure suggests that repeated multimodal input can support incidental vocabulary acquisition.

For speaking development, this is especially relevant because limited vocabulary can restrict students' ability to express ideas. When students collect expressions from authentic content and subsequently attempt to use them, social media can help connect receptive exposure with productive use. Nevertheless, the quality and appropriateness of online vocabulary cannot be assumed. Students may encounter slang, informal expressions, or inaccurate language. Teacher guidance is therefore needed to help learners distinguish useful expressions from inappropriate or unreliable content.

3. Social media as a source of motivation

Nine students mentioned increased motivation. Students described social-media learning as interesting, enjoyable, accessible, and less formal than conventional classroom activities. Several participants indicated that they felt enthusiastic because they could learn from

interesting videos while simultaneously improving their English. Classroom observation also showed enthusiasm, participation in discussion, attention to learning materials, and positive responses to teacher instructions.

The motivational dimension is consistent with previous research on social media and mobile-assisted language learning. Manogaran and Sulaiman (2022) reported that social media can support speaking development and learner motivation, while Aliakbari et al. (2022) found that mobile learning through WhatsApp was associated with greater satisfaction and motivation to participate in class discussion. Studies of TikTok have also reported that short and engaging content can increase learners' willingness to participate (Yulita & Hertiki, 2023; Jannah & Rizal, 2024).

The present findings suggest that motivation is partly connected to learner autonomy. Students can choose topics related to music, movies, sports, games, travel, or daily life and encounter English in contexts that are personally meaningful. This flexibility may transform English from a classroom-only subject into an activity embedded in everyday routines. However, the same entertainment value that increases motivation can also become a distraction, indicating that motivation and distraction are closely connected in social-media learning.

4. Social media and speaking confidence

Eight students mentioned confidence building. Students reported becoming more willing to try speaking English even though they still made mistakes. Continuous exposure to English content appeared to make them more familiar with pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns. Observation findings similarly indicated that students were willing to participate in speaking activities, even when their production was not yet fully accurate.

The perceived confidence benefit can be interpreted through the low-pressure nature of self-directed digital practice. Students can replay a video, pause it, imitate a sentence, record their voice, and repeat the activity without immediate public evaluation. This may reduce the pressure associated with speaking in front of classmates. Previous studies of TikTok and YouTube have similarly identified confidence as one of the potential benefits of digital speaking practice (Yulita & Hertiki, 2023; Budiyaniti, 2023).

However, confidence should not be interpreted as the absence of anxiety. The data also show that some students remained nervous or afraid of making mistakes. Thus, social media may create additional practice opportunities, but confidence development still depends on how students are guided to use those opportunities. Teachers can build confidence by emphasizing gradual practice, encouraging students to record short responses, and using peer feedback that focuses first on communicative success before detailed correction.

5. Social media as an opportunity for speaking practice

Ten students mentioned opportunities for speaking practice. Their reported practices included imitating dialogues, repeating expressions, recording their voices, singing English songs, and practicing conversations based on online content. These activities are important

because speaking is a productive skill that requires learners to produce language, not merely understand it.

The finding supports research on mobile and social-media-supported speaking instruction. Ahmed et al. (2022) found that mobile applications including WhatsApp could support speaking accuracy and fluency, while Oye and Salvador-Cisneros (2022) reported that voice messages and short videos can create opportunities for oral communication practice. Research on WhatsApp-supported speaking instruction has also highlighted recording, listening back to one's own speech, and peer feedback as useful affordances (AlAzzam-Khraiwish et al., 2021). In the current study, students' descriptions show a similar movement from exposure toward production.

This distinction is central to the pedagogical value of social media. Watching English content may provide input, but speaking improvement requires students to respond to that input. Teachers can therefore convert social-media exposure into structured tasks: students can imitate a short dialogue, record a one-minute response, summarize a video, retell a story, or create a short English-language video. Such tasks can make social media a bridge between informal exposure and deliberate speaking practice.

6. Challenges in using social media for speaking development

Seven students mentioned challenges. The main difficulties were fast speech, unfamiliar accents, fear of making mistakes, and the complexity of some English content. The teacher additionally highlighted the risk that students may pay more attention to entertainment than learning. These challenges indicate that positive perceptions do not mean that social media is automatically effective.

Fast speech and unfamiliar accents can create a gap between authentic input and learners' current proficiency. Students reported using subtitles, replaying videos, practicing listening, choosing easier videos, and speaking every day to overcome these difficulties. These strategies show that learners already engage in some forms of self-regulation. Teachers can strengthen these strategies by recommending content at appropriate difficulty levels and by teaching students how to slow down, replay, transcribe, imitate, and then reproduce selected segments.

The distraction issue is equally important. Social-media platforms combine educational material with entertainment, advertisements, trends, and unrelated content. Recent research on social-media-supported English learning has also identified distraction and the need for structured learning as continuing challenges (Ningrum & Apoko, 2025). Therefore, the instructional value of social media depends on purposeful task design. Students should have clear learning objectives, time limits, selected content, and an expected speaking product.

7. Overall interpretation

Taken together, the findings indicate that students predominantly perceive social media as a useful supplementary resource for English speaking development. The strongest perceived benefits were vocabulary development, pronunciation practice, speaking practice, motivation, and confidence. These perceptions were supported by interview accounts, classroom observations, and teacher responses. The findings are broadly consistent with previous

research showing that digital and social-media tools can provide authentic input, learner autonomy, motivation, and additional opportunities for oral practice (Manogaran & Sulaiman, 2022; Rastari et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the study does not demonstrate a causal increase in students' speaking proficiency because it did not employ a pre-test/post-test or experimental comparison. The contribution of the study lies in documenting how learners understand and use social media as a speaking resource. This distinction is important for interpreting the results responsibly. Students perceive social media as helping their speaking, but the effectiveness of that resource is likely to depend on active engagement, appropriate content selection, repeated practice, and teacher guidance.

CONCLUSION

This study explored eleventh-grade students' perceptions of using social media for English speaking development at SMK Negeri 1 Sigi. The findings show a predominantly positive perception. Students viewed social media as useful for pronunciation practice, vocabulary development, motivation, confidence building, and more frequent speaking practice. TikTok and YouTube were the most frequently mentioned platforms, with Instagram also used by some participants. Students' learning practices included watching English videos, listening to spoken English, imitating pronunciation, repeating expressions, learning vocabulary in context, and recording or practicing their own speech.

The findings also demonstrate that social media presents challenges. Students experienced difficulty with fast speech and unfamiliar accents, some remained afraid of making mistakes, and the teacher identified entertainment-oriented content as a source of distraction. These limitations indicate that social media should be treated as a supplementary learning resource rather than a substitute for teacher-led instruction.

Pedagogically, teachers can maximize the benefits of social media by curating appropriate English-language content, providing clear speaking tasks, encouraging imitation and recording, and helping students move from passive viewing to active language production. Students can also be encouraged to use subtitles strategically, replay difficult segments, select content that matches their proficiency, and practice speaking regularly. Future studies may involve larger samples, different educational levels, or comparisons of specific platforms. Experimental or mixed-methods research could also examine whether the positive perceptions identified here correspond to measurable gains in pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, or confidence.

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