

NON-ENGLISH MAJORS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING SOCIAL PLATFORMS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH: A CASE AT NONG LAM UNIVERSITY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 10/3/2025 Revised: 31/3/2025 Published: 31/3/2025	These days, a significant number of students use social media not only for communication and amusement but also for educational purposes. English-related information is one of the things that students frequently search for on social media, as they frequently utilize it to learn a variety of subjects. Students can access a variety of English-language information on social media platforms, which could help them pick up new skills in the language. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how students feel about using social media to improve their English. One hundred fifty non-English majors from Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City participated in the study, which employed both qualitative and quantitative instruments. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of using social media to learn English, especially useful for interacting and communicating, searching necessary resources for learning, and increasing their motivation in English learning. Based on the findings of the research, the study offers some recommendations to facilitate students' perceptions of using social platforms for learning English.
KEYWORDS	
Perceptions	
Social platforms	
Non-English majors	
Tertiary level	
Learning English	

NHẬN THỨC CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN ANH VỀ VIỆC SỬ DỤNG NỀN TẢNG XÃ HỘI ĐỂ HỌC TIẾNG ANH: TRƯỜNG HỢP TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NÔNG LÂM

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Ngày nhận bài: 10/3/2025 Ngày hoàn thiện: 31/3/2025 Ngày đăng: 31/3/2025	Hiện nay, một số lượng đáng kể sinh viên sử dụng mạng xã hội không chỉ để giao tiếp và giải trí mà còn cho mục đích học tập. Thông tin liên quan đến tiếng Anh là một trong những nội dung mà sinh viên thường xuyên tìm kiếm trên mạng xã hội, vì họ sử dụng nền tảng này để học nhiều môn học khác nhau. Các nền tảng mạng xã hội cung cấp một nguồn tài liệu tiếng Anh phong phú, giúp sinh viên có cơ hội tiếp cận và trau dồi kỹ năng ngôn ngữ. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là xác định nhận thức của sinh viên về việc sử dụng mạng xã hội nhằm nâng cao trình độ tiếng Anh. Đối tượng tham gia nghiên cứu gồm 150 sinh viên không chuyên Anh tại Trường Đại học Nông Lâm – Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Các nhà nghiên cứu đã sử dụng các công cụ định tính và định lượng để thu thập dữ liệu. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy việc sử dụng mạng xã hội trong học tiếng Anh mang lại hiệu quả, đặc biệt trong việc tương tác và giao tiếp, tìm kiếm tài nguyên học tập cần thiết, cũng như gia tăng động lực học tiếng Anh. Dựa trên các phát hiện của nghiên cứu, một số khuyến nghị đã được đề xuất nhằm nâng cao nhận thức của sinh viên về việc sử dụng nền tảng mạng xã hội trong học tập tiếng Anh.
TỪ KHÓA	
Nhận thức	
Nền tảng xã hội	
Sinh viên không chuyên Anh	
Giáo dục đại học	
Học tiếng Anh	

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1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the impact of technological progress on generations has been so great that it has become an indispensable aspect of existence [1]. Adoption of new technology has been crucial to the creation of multiple platforms that allow people to communicate, learn, share, exchange information, and further their academic careers. Social media, one of several platforms, is an Internet-based technology that promotes participation, collaboration, and sharing of media and information as well as engagement and communication [2]. Kumar et al. [3] posited that social media platforms, like Google, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, have the potential to serve as an online learning channel for students. These platforms enable learners to access and gather information that they may use to explore, construct, change, and share their knowledge. Technology can be a key tool in helping learners acquire a second language by exposing them to a wider variety of authentic resources, as noted by Renandya et al. [4]. Social media is therefore seen as an instructional tool that improves learning by allowing instructors and students to engage in novel and interesting ways [5].

Selecting Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City for this research underscores its commitment to blending technological advancements with educational methodologies. With a reputation for adapting to modern educational practices and encouraging innovative approaches, Nong Lam University supports studies that harness technology to enhance learning experiences. As social media continues to influence educational frameworks, especially in language acquisition, this institution provides an ideal environment to explore its effects on English learning.

In the context of language learning, social media has emerged as a powerful instructional tool that enables students and instructors to engage in innovative and interactive ways. Social networks have created virtual communities specifically designed for language learners, allowing them to connect with speakers from other countries and facilitating foreign language acquisition [6]. Empirical studies consistently affirm the positive impacts of social media on language learning, showing that it helps students learn English more conveniently, affordably, and flexibly [7]. This flexibility can foster enthusiasm, motivation, and a positive mindset, creating an encouraging environment for language exploration and learning.

The present study aims at investigating non-English students' perceptions of the role and effects of social media in language learning. The following research questions are formulated:

1. What are non-English majors' perceptions of the role of social media in English learning?
2. What are non-English majors' perceptions of the effects of social media in English learning?

2. Literature review

2.1. Social media platforms in Vietnam

Social media platforms have become popular in Vietnam. People tend to learn and find information on different platforms. However, according to Hoa [8], the most popular social media platforms in Vietnam are Facebook (95%), and YouTube (89%). This study is going to discuss the background of these platforms. A group of Harvard University undergraduates developed the online social networking site Facebook in their dorm room [9]. Facebook allows users to communicate with one other through text and email exchanges, the creation of personal profiles, and the invitation of friends and colleagues to visit those profiles. Facebook users can instantaneously message one other in real time and send each other private and public messages.

Another social media platform that facilitates content sharing is YouTube. It is a free online store and video sharing platform where users can upload and share their own, altered, or imported videos in addition to watching video clips. Users of YouTube have unrestricted access to all video content with public access settings, including those containing explicit and instructional content [10].

2.2. The relationship between social media platforms and language learning

Through direct involvement in the learning process, and the utilization of real material, social media's wide-ranging effects directly assist students in these kinds of activities. Purnama et al. [11] asserted that it facilitates faster, more effective, engaging, and interactive learning for students and that it is the duty of educators to forgo conventional teaching approaches in favor of cutting-edge techniques that will best serve their students' needs. It is true that both teachers and students have profited from the casual yet productive environment created by using social media for language learning and instruction.

First of all, Facebook users can communicate with each other by making personal information profiles, allowing friends and colleagues to access those profiles, speaking up about topics that interest them, and discovering groups associated with their major. Any kind of content, including images, videos, audio files, and blogs, can be included in these personal profiles [12]. Fernando et al. [13] asserts that Facebook is a great resource for connecting with other students and working together. The perspectives from scholarly literature are complemented by those from Niu [14], who said that Facebook is a great platform for students to share articles and useful tips they find so that other people can also benefit from them.

Second, learners from younger generations tend to use YouTube more frequently since it offers a wider variety of engaging and engaging English language learning resources [15]. It is a free video sharing service that offers endless free learning resources. These assist pupils in growing their vocabulary in English while keeping them informed about global current events. According to Pattier [16], using video technology in the classroom enhanced student performance. It is highlighted that students should use YouTube as a resource for language acquisition as well as for social studies instruction. These resources ought to motivate students to get better at the language. Learners' total language proficiency will increase as their vocabulary increases [17]. There are many different resources available for learning four different language skills, from basic to advanced. Particularly Facebook and YouTube are suitable mediums for enhancing language proficiency and numerous other facets of language acquisition. Due to the availability of excellent role models, especially for English language learners, it is consistent with the fact that English is a foreign language in Vietnam.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

A series of closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was utilized in conjunction with a mixed method approach to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data. By its very nature, this kind of research focused on interviewing 15 students and using questionnaires to gather data from 150 individuals. The research for this type of study was conducted independently of the researcher. According to Creswell [18], quantitative research employs strategies of inquiry such as experimental and surveys, and collects data in predetermined instruments that yield statistical data. In reality, the results of this kind of study can be utilized to predict, clarify, and validate the provided conceptual framework.

3.2. Research instruments

The instruments used in this research were questionnaires and interviews. Before being distributed to students for data collection, the questionnaire and interview questions underwent a review by a specialist in the field of English language studies to improve their validity and reliability. The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate the students' perceptions of social media's role and impact on their English language learning. Not less significant, the interview questions were directly conducted to clarify students' points of views about social media.

3.3. Sample and sampling procedures

A questionnaire was developed as a quantitative tool to gather information on students' perceptions of social media's role and impact on their English language learning. The 14-item questionnaire, which was distributed to 150 participants, used a **five-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Responses were rated across several specific criteria that measure different aspects of social media's impact on learning.

For qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifty students selected through convenience sampling. Interview questions focused on these six criteria, allowing participants to expand on their personal experiences and provide examples of how social media supports their learning.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Non-English majors' perceptions of the role of social media in English learning

Table 1. Non-English majors' perceptions towards the role of social media in learning English

No.	Statements	N=150	
		M	SD
1	Social media is a useful tool to learn English.	3.88	.805
2	I can take advantage of social media to practice pronunciation.	3.72	.847
3	I can use social media to learn vocabulary.	3.86	.728
4	I can improve English communication skill by using social media	3.74	.884
5	Social media facilitates engagement and interaction with peers.	3.82	.769
6	Social media helps me be more confident when I interact with teachers.	3.85	.727
7	Social media helps me to explore new resources.	3.84	.667

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

The findings from Table 1 revealed that students highly perceived social media as a useful tool to learn English (item 1: M=3.88, SD=.805). Besides, students considered that they could improve pronunciation thanks to using social media (item 2: M=3.72, SD=.847). They agreed that they could use social media to learn vocabulary (item 3: M=3.86, SD=.728). Moreover, students agreed that they could improve communication skills by using social media (item 4: M=3.74, SD=.884). Relating to engagement and interaction with peers, students agreed that social media could bring them some benefits (item 5: M=3.82, SD=.769). In particular, students agreed that they could be more confident to work with teachers by using social media (item 6: M=3.85, SD=.727). Last but not least, students perceived that social media helped them to explore new resources (item 7: M=3.84, SD=.667).

The findings from the interview showed that students had a general understanding of the role of Social media. They revealed that:

"I strongly appreciate that social media is a useful learning tool to learn English. I can learn more new words and grammar structures." (S3)

"Social media is really helpful for English learning since I can get useful resources from the Internet." (S7)

"Social networks are full of useful apps and websites that help English learning become easier." (S8)

"I can make video calls with my friends, or my teachers to assist me with my homework when I don't understand." (S12)

"Social media give me a chance to make friends not only in Vietnam but also in the foreign nations and then, I can make friends with my teachers, my friends and the foreigners too. So, when they post anything in social media such as Facebook, Instagram,... in English, I can understand what they want to say or what they are talking about, then I can interact with them." (S5)

"I can chat or call video with my friends, my teacher to assist me with my homework, certain topics I don't understand or when I need more knowledge for my studies by using social media such as Facebook, Zalo, etc." (S7)

"In my opinion, I interact through comments, self-reflection and question-answering while watching a teacher's video." (S10)

"In my opinion, I interact through comments, self-reflection and question-answering while watching a teacher's video." (S10)

"Social media is seen as an amazing world for getting people together. It is improved every second based on the users' needs and feedback. People today, including me, consider social media an indispensable thing for life." (S11)

"It will help us reach and interact faster and more compactly. Not to mention the interaction on social networks will save us time and the amount of knowledge will also increase. It's also easier for us to save information." (S13)

"I frequently use social networks such as Facebook or YouTube to broaden my learning opportunities." (S15)

It is possible to draw the conclusion that students had rather positive impressions of the function that social media plays in English language learning. One may draw the conclusion that social media is a helpful tool and that students are more driven to learn English online than they are in traditional classroom settings. Surprisingly, social media could promote user involvement, connectedness, cooperation, and knowledge and idea sharing. Students can find and learn how to use a variety of study resources based on their preferred learning style by using social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. Additionally, the social networking site on the internet makes it easier for students to interact and engage with teachers. These factors are crucial in improving the outcomes of their studies.

4.2. Non-English majors' perceptions of the effects of social media in English learning

Table 2. Non-English majors' perceptions of the effects of social media in English learning

No.	Statements	N=150	
		M	SD
8	Social media is a way to enhance English language learning.	3.83	.668
9	Social media helps me learn faster and more effectively.	3.82	.685
10	Social media helps me learn English in an interactive manner.	3.63	.802
11	Social media helps me access authentic English content.	3.67	.844
12	Social media helps me to be confident in communication.	3.65	.756
13	Social media helps me to recognize and overcome mistakes in using English.	3.77	.728
14	Social media increases my motivation to learn English.	3.81	.850

Note: M: mean; SD: Standard deviation

The result from Table 2 uncovered that students considered social media a way to enhance English language learning (item 8: M=3.83, SD=.668). Furthermore, students also agreed that social media helped them learn English more effectively (item 9: M=3.82, SD=.685). Students relatively recognized social media helped them to learn English in an interactive manner (item 10: M=3.63, SD=.802). Students also agreed that social media helped them to access authentic English content (item 11: M=3.67, SD=.844). Surprisingly, non-English students agreed that they were confident in communication thanks to social media (item 12: M=3.65, SD=.756). Aside from these, students agreed that by using social media, they knew how to recognize and overcome mistakes in using English (item 13: M=3.77; SD=.728). In particular, students confirmed that they felt more motivated to learn English with social media (item 14: M=3.81, SD=.850). To make clear students' perceptions of the effect of social media, students were asked to give their opinions for the interview. Here are some of the obvious examples for the reasons:

"My speaking has improved a lot thanks to practicing speaking everyday with foreign friends on Facebook and watching lessons on YouTube." (S6)

"It is no doubt that I can improve my pronunciation by imitating foreigners on YouTube channel." (S8)

"I improve my writing skills as well. I have been trying to use Facebook to post my short paragraphs or essays. Then I have received positive feedback from my foreign friends." (S9)

"Learning on social media can improve all English skills. I can practice listening skills by watching clips on YouTube. For reading skills, I can read posts which my friends share. As for other skills, I try to find a friend on social media to practice with me." (S13)

"I have more chances to practice with meaningful resources from the Internet such as English websites, English books and clips on Facebook." (S14)

"Every day, I can learn some new words which my foreign friends post on Facebook. I can have more chances to communicate with them online." (S15)

The study's findings showed that students had a quite high degree of perception of how using social media affected their ability to learn English. Research indicates that students have profited from using social media to learn languages in a casual but productive setting. Social media's vast benefits involve students directly in these activities by giving them firsthand experience, guaranteeing their participation in the learning process, and utilizing real materials.

Based on the findings from the study, several solutions can be implemented to enhance the role of social media in English language learning for non-English majors. Initially, integrating social media more systematically into the curriculum by designing assignments that involve using platforms such as YouTube or Facebook for collaborative learning can further enhance their educational value. Furthermore, offering workshops or webinars on how to use social media effectively for language learning, particularly for discovering authentic content and engaging in interactive language exchange, would help students maximize the benefits of these platforms. Additionally, promoting the creation of online study groups or peer collaboration through social media would foster a collaborative environment, enabling students to share resources and feedback, thus improving their language skills. Furthermore, recommending specific social media accounts or groups that provide high-quality, educational content in English will guide students toward authentic learning materials. Encouraging self-reflection and feedback through social media features, such as comments or video responses, can also reinforce language learning. Ultimately, helping students set clear, measurable goals for their social media use in learning English would ensure that their engagement with these platforms remains focused and purposeful. By adopting these solutions, social media can become a more structured and effective tool for enhancing English language acquisition, engagement, and motivation among non-English majors.

5. Conclusion

The overall findings demonstrated that students' opinions of social media's contribution to English language acquisition were generally positive. Students also provided a wealth of ideas regarding social media's function in English language learning. Firstly, social media is thought to be a helpful tool for learning English since it allows users to rapidly interact with people worldwide and access English-language content. Secondly, social media helps students engage and communicate with their professors and peers because it allows them to chat, make video calls for group projects, and ask teachers for guidance and assistance. Finally, social media allows students to explore new resources and expand their learning environment by searching for materials and topics that they may not find at school. Furthermore, the findings showed that students had a reasonably high degree of perception of the effects of using social media. The students agreed on the following effects of social media use on their English language learning: learning English more effectively; accessing more authentic resources; boosting students'

confidence in their ability to communicate in English by assisting them in correcting their language errors; and raising students' motivation.

These findings suggest several courses of action for non-English majors in learning English. Firstly, students should be aware of fake information on social platforms. Students need to evaluate vital sources in order to facilitate their English learning. Secondly, students should not abuse social platforms. They need to have suitable schedules to learn on social platforms.

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