

USERS' PERSPECTIVES ON IMPROVING ENGLISH SKILLS THROUGH TWITTER AND TELEGRAM

Rifa Suci Wulandari¹, Tintin Muliani²

¹STKIP PGRI Ponorogo, ²IAIN Ponorogo
rifaw1981@gmail.com

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Abstract

The need to use English in communication places English as an important language to master, especially in this modern era of the Internet. The Internet provides a bunch of information with fast distribution and a wide networking reach. The Internet can also provide material to learn English, which can be accessed for free. The two platforms that provide this access are Twitter and Telegram. Based on this phenomenon, this research aims to dig deeply into users' perspectives related to their experience using Twitter and Telegram to improve their English skills. The method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative. The data sources were collected from open-ended structured interviews, follow-up interviews, and library research. The subjects of the interview are Twitter and Telegram users who use the application to learn English outside of their formal classroom. The analysis of the interviews was done by taking notes and recording the interview results. In addition, the interview results were interpreted and transcribed into English using formal academic language. The journal analysis was conducted by summarizing and synthesizing the sources to record the title, author, year of publication, research background, research questions, and research findings and discussion. The findings show that users have positive responses and experience using Twitter and Telegram to improve their English skills.

Keywords: Twitter and Telegram; English Skills; Users' Perspectives

Abstrak

Kebutuhan penggunaan bahasa Inggris untuk komunikasi menempatkan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa yang penting untuk dikuasai, terutama di era modern berbasis internet seperti sekarang ini. Internet menyediakan banyak informasi dengan distribusi yang cepat dan mampu menjangkau jaringan yang luas. Internet juga dapat menyajikan materi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris yang dapat diakses secara gratis. Dua platform yang menyediakan akses ini yaitu Twitter dan Telegram. Berdasarkan fenomena ini, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali secara mendalam tentang perspektif pengguna terkait pemanfaatan Twitter dan Telegram untuk mengembangkan keterampilan bahasa Inggris mereka. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data diperoleh dari interview terbuka terstruktur, interview lanjutan, dan kajian pustaka. Subyek penelitian ini adalah pengguna aplikasi Twitter dan Telegram untuk belajar bahasa Inggris di luar kelas formal. Data interview dianalisis dengan cara mencatat dan merekam hasil interview kemudian diinterpretasikan dan ditranskripsi ke dalam bahasa Inggris akademis formal. Analisis jurnal dilakukan dengan meringkas dan mensintesis sumber berdasarkan judul, penulis, tahun publikasi, latar belakang penelitian, pertanyaan penelitian, serta hasil

dan diskusi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengguna memiliki respon positif dan pengalaman dalam memanfaatkan Twitter dan Telegram untuk mengembangkan keterampilan bahasa Inggris mereka.

Kata kunci: Twitter dan Telegram; Keterampilan Bahasa Inggris; Perspektif Pengguna

INTRODUCTION

In this day and age, the development of the digital age is running undeniably fast. The Internet has been increasingly used by all segments of society, from parents to children. Taskiran (2018) states in her paper that the internet has now become an inseparable part of people's daily lives. One of the biggest functions of the internet is as a source of information and a communication tool. As a communication tool in the 21st century, internet communication can connect people from all over the world. This interaction and communication are, of course, closely related to the use of a bridge language to communicate with people from other countries who use different languages (see Harida & Wulandari, 2019; Qomariyah et al, 2023; Azizah et al, 2023). In this case, the most common and used language is English. As mentioned above, English serves to facilitate communication between people who come from different regions, or in sociolinguistics, the function of English here is as a *lingua franca*, which means as the language used to communicate between people whose first language is different, for example, Indonesians and Japanese who communicate using English.

The need for using English in communication places English as an important language to master, especially in this modern era of high competition. In fact, English has become a common language not only in international society but also in everyday life (see Putra & Rochsantiningsih, 2018; Arifin, 2019; Wulandari & Harida, 2021). Many parents teach their children to speak

English from an early age. There are also many students who learn English on their own for various purposes, such as to add skills and insights or to look cool and follow trends. Some of them take extra classes at school, attend language courses at institutions, and learn on their own. Self-learning is one of the options worth considering because of the easy access to information that can be done through the Internet. The aforementioned ease of access to information is one of the advantages of learning English independently. By using the Internet, students can access a lot of information related to their activities and improve their English skills (see Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Herdiawan et al, 2023; Harida, 2023).

Students can also use international interaction through the Internet to improve their English skills. One such tool is social networking. Through social media, people around the world can connect and interact with each other. This interaction can then be used as a platform to improve their English skills. Through social media, users can comment on each other's posts, text each other through direct messages, or use features such as podcasts and phone calls.

One of the social media sites known for its extensive networking is Twitter. The concept of this social media is to disseminate information that can be in the form of images, videos, and writings through posts, also referred to as tweets (Bandjar, 2019). These tweets can then be accessed by all Twitter users; unless the tweet user uses a locked account, then the tweet cannot be seen. Then, the most

common thing that happens on Twitter is replying to comments on tweets. It should be noted that Twitter, as a social media site, has an open space and freedom of speech. This is what makes it one of the media for exchanging information, debating, and discussing (see Sah, 2015; Iswahyuni, 2021; Risnawati et al, 2022). In controversial tweets, people usually argue with each other and write their views in the comments section. These controversial tweets come from different countries. Some of the most popular tweets are written in English, and then people comment on them in English. This is seen as a good opportunity to improve English language skills through the discourse in the comments section. In addition, there are other features on Twitter that can be used to improve English skills, such as direct messaging or the space feature, which has a podcast-like concept.

An application that also has many users is the Telegram application. Telegram is an application for chatting or SNS (Social Networking Service) that has a function to send messages, pictures, videos, audio, and so on with other Telegram users (Citrawati, 2021). The Telegram application is in high demand because it is cloud-based, so the data and media uploaded to Telegram are stored on the server without taking up space on the mobile device (Abu-Ayfah, 2020). Apart from saving storage space, this application makes it easy for users to connect with other users only through a user ID or user code that can be used to find other user accounts. Not only that, Telegram also has group chats that can be found by simply typing in the group name. This allows Telegram to reach a wide range of users. This ease of user access then brings the communication distance between users closer. Users from different countries can easily make friends and communicate with each other. This is also seen as an opportunity to improve

English language skills, as communication with people from different regions will use English as the international language.

Some of the things mentioned above are the basis for conducting this research, namely to find out how the perspectives of Twitter and Telegram users are related to improving their English language skills. The researchers observe how Twitter and Telegram can be used as a form of technology to improve English language skills and see how much positive impact users feel from using Twitter and Telegram to improve their English skills. The researchers also intend to delve deeper to find out how Twitter and Telegram can help users improve their English skills, specifically in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The results of this study are expected to provide an overview of technological innovations that can be used in English language learning in the classroom and as a means of independent English learning.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive method with data sources collected from interviews and library research. The results of both are then combined to draw conclusions from the discussion. The first step taken is to determine the topic of discussion, which is the user's perspective on improving their English language skills through Twitter and Telegram. The next step is to determine the data sources to answer the topic. The data sources for this research consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data came from the results of structured interviews and follow-up interviews, while secondary data was obtained through library research.

The analysis of the interviews was done by taking notes and recording the interview

results, then creating graphs for the scaled questions. In addition, the interview results were interpreted and transcribed into English using formal academic language. The journal analysis was conducted by summarizing the sources to record the title, author, year of publication, research background, research questions, and research findings and discussion. The next step was to synthesize sources that were similar in topic and findings. The results of both are then compared to find answers to the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are based on open-ended interview responses from 25 respondents. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 23 years old, with 84% female and 16% male respondents. All respondents were university students and used Twitter and Telegram to improve their English skills. From the 25 respondents, the researcher took 4 respondents, including 2 males and 2 females, to conduct follow-up interviews on the topic of the study. Among the 25 respondents, they have been using Twitter and Telegram for an average of 3 to 6 years. In a day, they can spend 1 to 3 hours accessing Twitter and Telegram. Then, in a week, the frequency of accessing Twitter and Telegram is about 2 to 4 times.

The results showed that 22 respondents intentionally used Twitter and Telegram to learn English, while the other 3 respondents did not intentionally use them to learn English but still felt the impact of using Twitter and Telegram in improving their English skills. Some respondents admitted that they received external encouragement to use Twitter and Telegram to learn English, including because they liked Korean pop, received recommendations from English learning groups, there were courses that

used Telegram, there was a broadcast from someone related to Telegram channels to learn English, and from friends' invitations to use Twitter and Telegram to qq.

On Twitter, they usually access study tweet posts, which are posts that intentionally share English learning materials to discuss together, or sometimes they just share their study notes. In addition to study Twitter accounts, it is not uncommon for accounts from language learning institutions to share similar posts and tips on learning English. This gives respondents access to materials that they can study on their own outside of formal classroom hours. One of the respondents also admitted that learning with materials outside of class was actually more fun and easier to understand because, in addition to the material being attractively presented through posters, pictures, and short writings, they could also freely ask questions without having to be afraid. In addition, with the interactive comment feature, these Twitter users can share information, ask questions, and discuss anonymously.

The above description shows that Twitter and Telegram users respond positively to the use of Twitter as a means of learning English. The interview results are consistent with the findings of Taskiran (2018) in his qualitative research titled *Fostering Foreign Language Learning with Twitter: Reflections from English Learners*, which shows that learners from Anadolu University School of Foreign Language have a positive view and support the use of Twitter to improve English language skills. They also said that using Twitter as a social media tool also facilitated their learning experience.

In addition to Twitter, users on Telegram can access materials through channels created specifically for learning English together. They also follow channels of course institutions that

offer free learning programs during certain periods. This is certainly a good opportunity to gain insight into your English language skills. The users of these channels are also diverse, especially the international channels, which contain users from different countries. This shows that the response of Telegram users is quite good, and they consciously use Telegram media as a means to learn English. This finding is consistent with the results of Idris' research (2022), which found that learning content through Telegram was useful to help learners. It also helped them to easily access the information they needed and discuss it with others.

Improving English Skills through Twitter and Telegram

There are several aspects of English language skills that need to be mastered, such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading. For listening and speaking skills, the respondents claimed that Twitter and Telegram helped them improve their listening and speaking skills through free English videos and audios. These videos they watched were quite diverse, ranging from educational video content to meme videos and movie trailers. One respondent also admitted that he could access English movie files on Telegram for free. As a result, he practiced listening and speaking through the movies he watched. In addition to video and audio, Twitter and Telegram users can also interact with other users using their features.

On Twitter, there is a room feature that has a podcast-like concept where there is a speaker and an audience. This speaker is usually a main person with 4 to 5 moderators, and then the audience listens and gives feedback via text messages. Meanwhile, Telegram is an SNS-based social media site. Telegram has phone and voice note features that can be used

to interact. They usually exchange voice notes in private messages or in English learning groups to correct each other's pronunciation. Telegram even has a call group feature where users can call more than one user. In groups, especially English groups, they use this call group feature to practice their conversation skills, which include listening and speaking. Through the call group feature, they also learn vocabulary that is used every day and discuss interesting topics that are mutually agreed upon, making learning English activities more fun. This finding is in line with the research findings of Syamimie (2019) in his descriptive qualitative study titled "Students Response to Using Telegram in Speaking Practice during Self-Learning Time," which found that the presence of such features in Telegram can motivate users to improve their English skills independently outside of class. Their learning activities also become more meaningful, and they also enjoy the activities they do without feeling like they are learning under pressure. The same thing was also stated by Setiawan (2017) in his proceeding seminar, where in the application of an English talk class based on the Telegram application (E-Talk Castel), learners have a positive response to the innovation. The activity model is carried out by stimulating students' English-speaking skills because learners are given the freedom to talk about anything related to their lives. Learners believed that the E-Talk Castel model was interesting to implement; therefore, these learners have a good response to this E-Talk Castel innovation in improving learners' speaking skills.

Twitter and Telegram can also be used to practice reading and writing skills. Through structured interviews, respondents explained that they improved their reading skills by sharing posts on Twitter. Many users upload posts in English, whether they are random

tweets, motivational messages, fan fiction stories, works such as short stories and rhymes, or other information. Through these tweets, Twitter users practice understanding the English text they receive. Then, if there is a new term that they do not understand, they will look up its meaning on the Internet to increase their vocabulary. These Twitter users usually access information on basic accounts such as English Fess and Literary Base.

One respondent admitted that learning to read on Twitter is very fun because they can choose what to read according to their preferences. While on Telegram, respondents said that they read a lot of stories sent in English groups, channels, and wording. Of course, while practicing reading skills, these Twitter and Telegram users also receive information from other users, so they not only improve their reading skills but also their critical thinking skills. This is in line with Kunnath's (2019) research in his article titled *Developing Students' Critical Consciousness: Twitter as a Tool to Apply Critical Literacy in the English Classroom*, which states that learning and discussing with other users can help to find out how other people think and see things and then relate it to their perspective. Reading another user's tweets helped to teach an important principle of critical literacy, as reviewing other people's tweets provides alternative perspectives on issues. The importance of critical thinking is also emphasized in the research findings of Bandjar (2018) in his dissertation, which states that Twitter is indeed one of the social networks that has the ability to spread information widely and quickly, but unfortunately, it also has a negative side where there are still Twitter users who spread hoaxes, black campaigns, and even pornography. This is why Twitter users need to have the awareness

to think critically and not necessarily accept information lightly.

Furthermore, for writing skills on Telegram, the majority of respondents improved their writing skills by texting with friends who use English. Respondents admitted that they also have international friends, so they have to chat in English. This really helps them to practice their knowledge and vocabulary. Meanwhile, Twitter users can improve their writing skills through tweets, the autocorrect feature, and interacting with comments on English posts. Interestingly, there is a role-playing community on Twitter where Twitter users interact with each other by playing the role of a character they admire, which can be a celebrity, a boy/girl group, or an anime character. Users in this community mostly interact in English. They make friends, reply to each other's tweets, and send direct messages in English. These Twitter users claim that the role-playing community has improved their English writing skills because those who communicate in English certainly want to make a good impression by speaking English correctly. This forces them to practice writing well.

Prayogo's research (2022), which discusses the phenomenon of the role-playing community on Twitter as a learning medium for written English, also found similar responses, where members of the role-playing community admitted that through role-playing they were unconsciously practicing English, but because the activities were fun, they enjoyed the process. They said that role-playing made them more expressive and exploratory in portraying the characters they brought with them. This writing skill is, of course, supported by Twitter and Telegram users' frequent exposure to vocabulary and sentence structure from the information they read. Reading new information can expand

their vocabulary. Meanwhile, writing also makes them discover new vocabulary when they don't know the translation of the word they want to use. This means that all activities, including reading and writing, play a role in increasing the English vocabulary of Twitter and Telegram users. The vocabulary they acquire is then stored in their memory, which can then be used and practiced to construct sentences and communicate their ideas in English (Risadi, 2022).

Users' Perspectives on Improving English Skill through Twitter and Telegram

The follow-up interview discussed the personal evaluation and preference of Twitter and Telegram users about their experiences using these two applications to learn English. Out of a total of 25 respondents, 18 respondents preferred Twitter for various reasons. Twitter is considered more interactive for open discussions. It also has a wider reach with clearer user accounts and user profiles that can be tracked. On Twitter, there are many outsiders and educational accounts that are more qualified and professional, so learners can learn a lot from them. In addition, Twitter is also an up-to-date social media platform because the spread of information is very fast and can also be tracked through trending topics. Meanwhile, 7 respondents prefer Telegram because of its very interesting features, such as the quiz and game features that are quite interactive and can be played with friends or in groups. This quiz game feature can be held alone and can be created by Telegram users, so the material can be adapted to the topic that is used as a quiz. In addition, Telegram users also feel that Telegram is more private, making it suitable for those who prefer personal conversations rather than public discussions.

Regardless of the perspectives of Twitter and Telegram users regarding their experiences using both applications to improve their English language skills, the facts on the ground are that these two applications, if used properly, can provide benefits and facilitate human activities. Both Twitter and Telegram have a constructive influence on improving their users' English skills. Therefore, Twitter and Telegram users also have a positive response to using Twitter and Telegram to learn English. With an interesting experience and freedom of expression, it further supports Twitter and Telegram users who want to improve their English skills, both written and spoken.

Besides its advantages, researchers also ask the respondents about its difficulties and possible overcomes. In the follow-up interview, respondents state that there are several negative impacts of using Twitter and Telegram. The first is a lack of engagement with native speakers. While it is possible to find conversation partners or language exchange groups on Telegram and Twitter, finding native speakers ready to engage in meaningful conversations or provide feedback on one's language skills might be difficult. The proposed answer is to reach out to other learners and native speakers on one's own initiative. Participate in debates and solicit criticism of one's writing or speech. Students can also connect with other language learners at their level by joining online communities dedicated to language learning. The second issue is the massive amount of stuff. With so much content available on Twitter and Telegram, it might be challenging to sift out irrelevant or low-quality content and focus on resources that are relevant to your learning objectives. To find information that is relevant to your interests and language level, utilize hashtags and search criteria. Follow

trustworthy accounts and groups that share high-quality language learning content. So, those two issues can be considered before utilizing Twitter and Telegram to learn English.

Both Telegram and Twitter can be good for learning English, but they have various advantages and restrictions. Telegram enables more private conversations and group chats, which can be useful for honing writing and speaking abilities with other learners or native speakers. Twitter, on the other hand, allows users to read and create brief messages in English and interact with a larger community of users, including experts in numerous industries. Finally, the choice between Telegram and Twitter for English learning is determined by the individual's learning style, goals, and interests. It may be wise to try both systems and evaluate which one works best for the user.

People can use Twitter and Telegram to enhance their speaking abilities by participating in discussions, joining language exchange groups, or finding conversation partners who are fluent English speakers. People can also practice summarizing or discussing podcasts or videos in English with other learners by listening to them or watching them. People can enhance their reading abilities by following English language learning accounts on Twitter, which share articles or news reports in English. People can also join Telegram reading groups to read and debate books or articles with other students. People can enhance their writing skills by participating in writing challenges or prompts on Twitter or by joining writing groups on Telegram, where they can obtain comments on their writing. People can also use Twitter and Telegram to practice writing short essays, blog entries, or tweets in English. Additionally, consumers can access internet resources such

as grammatical guides or writing exercises via Telegram and Twitter to help them improve their writing skills.

Telegram and Twitter can be helpful technologies for language learning resources. It can provide opportunities to practice reading, writing, and speaking abilities, as well as connect with other learners and native speakers. However, keep in mind the potential issues and restrictions described above, and use these platforms in conjunction with other resources for a well-rounded language learning experience. Finally, the option to use Telegram and Twitter for English study should be based on the individual's learning style, goals, and interests.

CONCLUSION

The Internet is increasingly used by all segments of society, from parents to children. As a communication tool, the Internet can connect people from all over the world. Students can also use international interaction through the Internet to improve their English skills. The two platforms that provide access to international interaction are Twitter and Telegram. The research findings show that Twitter and Telegram can be used to improve users' English skills. It can cover all skills in English, such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading, through the features it has. Users can practice listening and speaking through the 'features'space' on Twitter, videos and movies they watch, the voice note feature, and the voice call group on Telegram.

For writing and reading, they can practice through written material shared on this application, such as short stories, fanfiction, quotes, facts, and information, and through interaction in comment sections and texting in private messages. Users claimed that learning English through Twitter and Telegram highly

motivates them to learn English because it is interesting and they can customize the material related to things they like. Furthermore, they can express and discuss their ideas openly. In short, Twitter and Telegram can be innovative technologies used for improving English skills.

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