

INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD FACE BOOK FOR ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstract

The amount of students at higher education using face book is running at a phenomenal level, but less has been reported in the context of EFL in Indonesia on how students consider face book as English learning tool. This paper reports the survey involving 374 undergraduate students at English department of Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta. The study was designed to explore how Indonesian EFL students view the potential of face book as a tool to support their English learning; and how face book has influenced their foreign language acquisition. The instrument of this survey was a questionnaire uses five-level likert scale and open question. The result of the survey indicates that the students believe in the language learning opportunities provided by face book. Most of students agree that face book offers promises to facilitate them learn English skills and to improve their motivation and confidence to communicate using English. However, this belief does not portray the students' practice of using face book for English learning. A number of students never uses face book for English learning purpose. Given the huge number of the students using face book, EFL teachers in Indonesia are challenged to find ways to integrate face book to achieve the success of TEFL.

Keywords: *face book, English learning tool, Indonesian EFL students' attitude*

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of Web 2.0 technology has more popular in recent years (Shih, 2011). Madge et al. (2009) and McCarthy (2010) asserted that Web 2.0 technologies involve information sharing and collaboration between users in virtual community, which includes social networking sites (SNS), video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and folksonomies. The examples of applications in Web 2.0 are *Flickr, YouTube, MySpace*, and *Facebook* (Shih, 2011). Among these applications, Facebook has become the most popular SNS in the world, including in Indonesia.

The number of facebookers in Indonesia is growing fantastically. Inside facebook (2010a, 2010b) reported that Indonesia is the third largest users of facebook in the world with 22.4 million active users and that Indonesia led facebook growth with more than one million new additional users per month. In 2013, as stated by Dan Neary, Facebook vice president for Asia Pacific, (Jakarta Post, 2013), Facebook has 64 million users in Indonesia who actively access their accounts on a monthly basis. The popularity of facebook in Indonesia is also confirmed with the data presented by Alexa (2013) which is showing that Facebook is the second top sites in Indonesia after Google.

In the context of language learning, Blattner and Fiori (2009) argue that facebook can develop sense of community which further impacts on the development of socio-pragmatic competence of language learners. Besides, other researchers have reported benefits of facebook for language learners (see Godwin-Jones, 2008; Kabilan et al., 2010; Roblyer et al., 2010; Reid, 2011; Omar et al., 2012; Yusof et al. 2012).

Publication reporting researches within this topic in Indonesian setting is limited (see Budiardi and Anggraeni, 2013; Kurnia et al., 2013; and Santi et al. 2013) Given the huge number of facebook users in Indonesia and considering the potential of facebook as English learning supports, it is worthwhile to explore how Indonesian EFL students view the potential of face book as media to support their English learning; and how face book has influenced their English language acquisition. This paper reports a study conducted at English Education Department in Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta.

B. DISCUSSION

Researches under the topic of facebook and English language learning growing in the last five years are inspired by interactionist view. Godwin-Jones (2008) write that facebook enhances communication and human interaction; it is potentially harnessed for language learning.” This is in with interaction theory in second language learning. According to Lightbown and Spada (2000: 43) social interaction is an important aspect in language learning. They explain that interactional modification makes input comprehensible, while comprehensible input promotes acquisition; therefore, interactional modification promotes acquisitions. They add that interaction behaviors aid learning in terms of immediate production. This perspective is in line with Vygotsky’s theory that view interaction is significant in cognitive development which also includes second language acquisition Lightbown and Spada (2000: 44). Supporting this view, Omar et al., (2012); suggested that facebook is a promising virtual tool and environment to promote interaction in English learning. Primary features of facebook including wall, info, blog, friends, like, unlike, comment, poke, send message, share photos, and links provide opportunities for users to have *social interaction*.

Through social interaction, facebook users can develop their language competence. Blattner and Fiori (2009) argue that facebook can develop sense of community which further impacts on the development of socio-pragmatic competence of language learners; besides, facebook improves students’ motivation and confidence in learning English. Based on Blattner and Fiori’s arguments, Kabilan et al., (2010) constructed survey questionnaire for Malaysian students and reported the survey result that the students believed facebook could be utilized as an on-line environment to facilitate the learning of English. They suggested teachers or language instructors have to integrate facebook as an educational project to make learning experience be meaningful.

Study on the students’ attitude toward facebook for classroom work indicates that university students are very open to the possibility of using facebook and technologies to support classroom work (Roblyer et al., (2010). In relation to writing skills, Reid (2011) uses close-group facebook page that “brings students’ out-of-school literary practices into a domain which normally promotes formal, academic literary practices; a space where students feel safe enough to make their voices heard; a space where there are some interesting shifts in power relationships, identities, norms of communication and modes of learning.” Another study in writing skills suggests that incorporating peer assessment using facebook in learning English writing can be interesting and effective for college-level English writing classes. Students can improve their English writing skills and knowledge not only from the in-class instruction but also from cooperative learning (Shih, 2011). Yusof et al. (2012); found that the students, with guidance from the writing teacher, were able to provide constructive feedback to their peers. The comments and suggestions posted on the Facebook Notes were found to be useful in helping their peers to improve their outlines and their first draft. Language teachers too could benefit this new tool in giving feedbacks to the students.

Research Method

This study was conducted at Ahmad Dahlan University, especially at undergraduate program of English Education Department which has around 1400 active students. Undergraduate students at this university are age between 18 – 25 (About half users of Indonesian facebookers are at this range, Inside Facebook (2010c)).

As many as 400 questionnaires were distributed to active students (100 questionnaires for students at first year; 100 questionnaires for students at second year; 100 questionnaires for students at third year; and 100 questionnaires for students at fourth year). There are 374 students returned the questionnaire.

The questionnaire of the study consisted of three parts. The first part is demographic information which collected information of the students' gender and GPA. Part 2 consists of items to gather information about their length of membership and frequency of facebook account usage and language they use in face book loading. Part 3 is divided into two types: 5-likert scale questions and an open question. The 5-likert scale is asking the students' view on how facebook provides opportunity to learn English skills, enhances their confidence and motivation to learn English skills, and improves their English skills. While, the open question is given to enrich the data accumulated from the 5-likert scale. There's only one open ended question: "Does Facebook help you improve your English, If so, how?". Part 3 is modified by the author based on the previous research questionnaire constructed by Kabilan et al. (2010).

Data analysis of the demographic information and facebook account usage were using percentage; whereas mean score, frequency and percentage were taken to describe the students' view on facebook as English learning tool. The open question answers were coded and categorized into the identified themes (Richards, 2003). The data from the open question is to support data from the 5-likert scale questions.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Data

There are 374 participants in this research with 68% of them are female, 23% of them are male, and 9% of the participants do not fill in the gender question. That most of the participants are female is related to the nature of the research setting. The study is conducted at teacher education department, while, it has been known that teaching is female dominated profession.

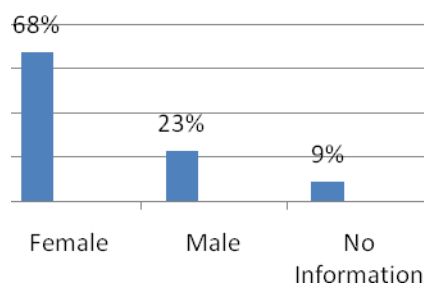


Figure 1. Gender of the Research Participants

More than half of the participants are in 3 – 4 range of GPA. Although GPA is not the best icon to represent students' English ability, it can be assumed that students with GPA more than 3 have better English proficiency, since many of the subjects in the department focus on English skills development. The author agrees that the more English ability, the more possibility the students use English in facebook loading.

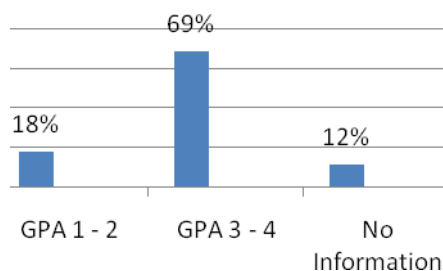


Figure 2. GPA of the Research Participants

Facebook Account Usage

As many as 98% of the participants has facebook account; and only 5 of 374 participants do not have facebook account. Most of the students who have facebook account started their membership since 2 years ago. It means that they are not beginner users. The author assumes that they might be intermediate or advance users of facebook who tend to use more features existing in facebook, indisputable English learning groups and friends from other countries. (P.56, P.132, P.319)

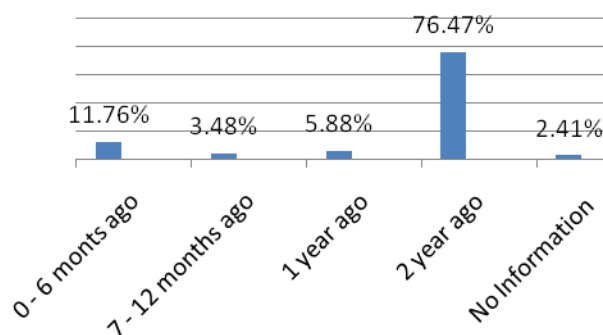


Figure 3. The Time when Signing Up Facebook Account

The finding showed in Figure 4 informs that research participants are active users of facebook with 26.47% signing in to their account 1 – 3 times a day, and 23.53% signing in to their account 1 – 3 per week. If the students use English language for their facebook usage, this high frequency of facebook sign in represent the frequent practices of using English. Unfortunately, as drawn in Figure 5, almost half of the participants use Indonesian and only one sixth of them use English. Even though the participants are English department students, they do not practice their English when they are signing in to their facebook account. Their main reason for using facebook is for fun and for socialize – but for learning (P.133, P.142).

While it has been accepted that all features in facebook are originally designed in English language, the huge number of facebook users in Indonesia does not represent the number of users who prefer English in loading their facebook accounts. Some of the participants even change the setting into Indonesian (P.43, P.334). Inside Facebook (2010c) confirms this finding that it's only one fifth of Indonesian facebook users load their account using English. This percentage is lower comparing to four neighbors of Indonesia: Malaysia 78.8%, Philipines 98,7%, Singapore 94,6%, and Hongkong 35,8% (Inside Facebook, 2010c).

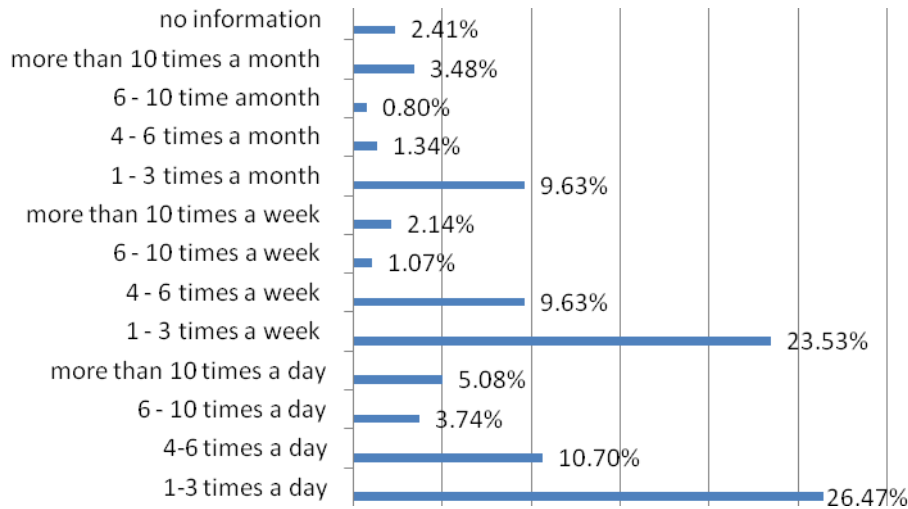


Figure 4. Students' Frequency in Signing In Facebook Account

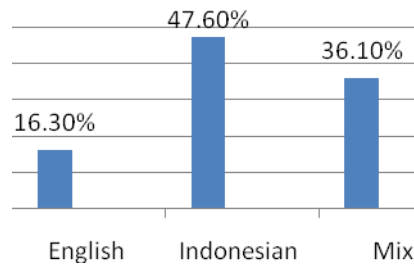


Figure 5. Language used by the Students' in Loading Facebook

Students' View

Opportunity to Learn English Skills

About half of the students agree that facebook provides the opportunity to practice English skills especially writing and reading. Around one third of the participants slightly agree that facebook provides opportunity to make oral communication.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Facebook provides opportunity to practice writing in English	4.84%	9.14%	29.30%	49.46%	7.26%	3.4
Facebook provides opportunity to practice reading in English	2.96%	8.87%	27.42%	54.03%	6.72%	3.5
Facebook provides opportunity to make oral communication in English	4.58%	22.64%	32.88%	36.39%	3.50%	3.1

Tabel 1 . Students' view on FB provides opportunity to learn English skills

a. Confidence to Practice English Skills

The findings on the students' view of how facebook increases their confidence in practicing English skills is in line with their view on how FB provides opportunity for learning English skills. The students tend to disagree that facebook can enhance their confidence to make oral communication. Video upload is the feasible feature for practicing oral communication practice.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Facebook enhances confidence to write in English	1.63%	0.32%	31.52%	48.37%	5.16%	3.4
Facebook enhance confidence to read in English	1.89%	10.81%	28.38%	51.08%	7.84%	3.5
Facebook enhance confidence to make oral communication in English	4.12%	26.92%	35.44%	30.77%	2.75%	2.9

Tabel 2 . Students' view on FB enhances confidence in practicing English skills

Motivation to Practice English Skills

Various degree of agreement is shown in Table 3. In general the students slightly agree that facebook can motivate them practicing their English skills.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Facebook increases motivation to write in English	2.37%	16.67%	32.51%	42.35%	5.74%	3.2
Facebook increases motivation to read in English	3.01%	18.36%	28.77%	44.11%	5.75%	3.2
Facebook increases motivation to make oral communication in English	4.38%	23.01%	36.99%	32.60%	3.01%	3.0

Tabel 3 . Students' view ob FB increase motivation in Practicing English Skills

Attitude

The student agree that facebook makes learning English more interesting and easier. It helps them learn new vocabularies and shape better attitude toward English learning. But they slightly agree that facebook change their attitude toward English.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Facebook makes learning English more interesting	2.73%	16.12%	25.14%	47.27%	8.74%	3.4
Facebook makes learning English more easier	2.73%	19.95%	32.79%	37.70%	6.83%	3.2
Facebook helps me learn new words in English	3.01%	9.02%	24.04%	49.73%	14.21%	3.6
Facebook shapes a more positive attitude toward English	2.47%	19.45%	39.73%	34.52%	3.84%	3.1
Facebook shapes a more positive attitude toward English learning	3.31%	18.23%	33.70%	38.95%	5.80%	3.2

Tabel 4 . Students' view other benefits of FB as English Learning support

Disconfirming Evidence

There are five students who don't have facebook account. But four of them have positive attitude toward the use of facebook as learning tool. One student who does not have facebook account answers the open question as : *No, Because facebook is not learning media (P.273)*. This student is not flexible in defining learning media.

Other negative evidence is written by some students: *No, because we just found the galau* status in facebook (P.90; For me facebook can't improve english. Facebook just give me negative effect. I disagree if facebook to improve skill english many people alay* because facebook (P.277); No, nothing, rather sometimes, tend to twitter. Because twitter is more interesting and there are many english account that provide quotes/interesting than fb (P.83); No, it didn't I prefer movie to help me learn english more (P.75)*. The students do not find a

way to say that facebook is good for their English learning, because they experience that in facebook they just see confused and tacky people. They prefer other tool like movie and twitter as alternative.

C. CONCLUSION

The study points out that the students view that facebook is potential as English learning tool. Most of students agree that face book offers promises to facilitate them learn English skills and to improve their motivation and confidence to communicate using English. However, this belief does not portray the students' practice of using face book for English learning. A number of students never uses face book for English learning purpose. Because learning English is not their primary reason for using facebook. It is suggested that given the huge number of the students using face book, EFL teachers in Indonesia are challenged to find ways to integrate face book to achieve the success of TEFL.

Note:

*) *galau* and *alay* are Indonesian pop varieties that mean confused and tacky.

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