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The Influence of Social Media on Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT
Social media has become an important learning resource that supports English language learning, particularly vocabulary mastery. However, previous studies have mainly focused on specific social media platforms or students' perceptions, resulting in limited comprehensive understanding of the overall influence of social media on English vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery through a library research approach. This study employed a library research design by reviewing 22 relevant studies published between 2020 and 2026. The data were collected from journal articles accessed through Google Scholar and other academic databases. The selected studies were analyzed using qualitative content analysis by identifying recurring themes and synthesizing the findings. The results revealed that social media contributes positively to students' English vocabulary mastery. Five major findings were identified. First, social media facilitates vocabulary acquisition by exposing students to authentic English-language content. Second, it improves students' vocabulary mastery through engaging and contextualized learning experiences. Third, social media promotes autonomous vocabulary learning by encouraging self-directed learning strategies. Fourth, it increases students' motivation and interest in learning English vocabulary through interactive and enjoyable content. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including distractions, exposure to informal language, misinformation, and concerns regarding content reliability. In conclusion, social media can serve as an effective supplementary learning tool for enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery when used purposefully and critically.

Keywords: Autonomous learning, English vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, social media, vocabulary acquisition

INTRODUCTION
In the digital era, technological advancement has transformed various aspects of human life, including communication, entertainment, business, and education. The widespread availability of smartphones, internet access, and digital applications has enabled individuals to access information instantly regardless of time and location. Among various technological developments, social media has emerged as one of the most influential digital platforms in modern society. Initially used primarily for communication and entertainment, social media has gradually developed into a platform for information exchange, knowledge sharing, and educational activities. For students, social media provides opportunities to access learning resources, interact with others, and engage with various forms of digital content that support their academic development.

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The integration of technology into education has encouraged the implementation of more flexible and innovative learning approaches. Learning is no longer restricted to traditional classroom environments because digital platforms allow students to access learning materials independently. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (X) provide various types of educational content, including instructional videos, podcasts, captions, subtitles, online discussions, vocabulary explanations, and pronunciation practices. Through these resources, students are exposed to authentic English language input that enables them to experience language use in meaningful and contextualized situations beyond classroom boundaries.

The increasing popularity of social media among young learners, particularly Generation Z students, has made these platforms an inseparable part of their daily activities. Although social media is often associated with entertainment and potential distractions, educators have increasingly recognized its educational potential when it is used appropriately. Social media can support interactive learning, collaboration, and learner autonomy by allowing students to explore materials based on their interests, communicate with other users, and participate in online learning communities. Therefore, social media has shifted from being merely a communication platform into a potential supplementary resource for language learning.

One important aspect of English language learning that can benefit from social media is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in language proficiency because it supports learners' ability to understand and produce language effectively. Adequate vocabulary knowledge enables students to comprehend texts, express ideas, participate in communication, and develop other language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Conversely, limited vocabulary knowledge may prevent learners from understanding English materials and communicating effectively. Therefore, vocabulary mastery remains a crucial component of successful English language learning.

Despite its importance, vocabulary learning remains challenging for many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Many students experience difficulties in acquiring and retaining new vocabulary because they have limited exposure to English outside classroom settings. Traditional vocabulary learning approaches, such as memorizing word lists and translating unfamiliar words, may help students recognize vocabulary items; however, these approaches often provide limited opportunities to understand vocabulary in meaningful contexts. As a result, learners may struggle to apply newly learned words in real communication. This condition highlights the need for alternative learning resources that provide continuous and contextualized language exposure.

Social media has emerged as one potential solution to address these challenges because it provides authentic and accessible English language input. Unlike conventional learning materials, social media integrates various modes of communication, including text, images, audio, and video. These multimodal features allow students to encounter vocabulary through different forms of representation, helping them understand word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, and contextual usage. Through educational videos, captions, online discussions, and interactions with English content creators, learners may acquire vocabulary naturally through repeated exposure to authentic language use.

Furthermore, social media supports autonomous vocabulary learning by allowing students to regulate their own learning processes. Students can select educational accounts, save useful materials, revisit learning content, and practice vocabulary according to their individual needs and interests. This flexibility may increase students' motivation and engagement because learners actively participate in choosing resources that are relevant to

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their learning goals. Consequently, social media can create more personalized and meaningful vocabulary learning experiences.

Previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of social media to English vocabulary learning. Hanan et al. (2023) found that social media positively influenced students' English vocabulary achievement by increasing exposure to English content and encouraging active engagement with vocabulary materials. Similarly, Gustinah et al. (2025) reported that social media significantly contributed to English vocabulary mastery among Generation Z students. These findings indicate that frequent interaction with English content through digital platforms may support vocabulary development.

Several studies have specifically examined the role of TikTok in vocabulary learning. Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023) revealed that TikTok supported English vocabulary learning because its short videos provided engaging and contextualized language input. Other studies also reported that TikTok-based learning activities improved students' vocabulary mastery by providing authentic exposure, interactive activities, and opportunities for repeated vocabulary encounters (Fitriyah & Sholichah, 2023; Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022; Juwita & Syahputra, 2024; Maria & Sujarwati, 2025; Irawansyah et al., 2025; Tirtayasa et al., 2024). These findings suggest that short-form video content can become an effective supplementary resource for vocabulary development.

In addition to TikTok, other social media platforms have also shown potential in supporting vocabulary learning. Muliana and Dewi (2023) found that Instagram improved students' vocabulary mastery through visual learning materials, while Hasani et al. (2025) demonstrated that Instagram Reels supported vocabulary acquisition through authentic and engaging content. Similarly, studies involving Twitter, YouTube, and multiple social media platforms have indicated that digital media exposure contributes positively to students' vocabulary achievement (Sirait & Hanim, 2022; Yuliana et al., 2024). These findings demonstrate that different social media platforms provide various opportunities for vocabulary learning through diverse forms of language input.

Beyond vocabulary improvement, previous studies have also highlighted other educational benefits of social media. Budiartha and Sarah (2024) found that TikTok encouraged autonomous vocabulary learning because students independently explored English learning materials. Dwipa et al. (2024) reported that students perceived TikTok as an engaging learning medium that increased their participation and interest in vocabulary learning. Moreover, Perez et al. (2023) and Alenezi and Brinthaupt (2022) emphasized that social media can promote collaboration, interaction, knowledge sharing, and independent learning in educational contexts.

Although previous studies have generally reported positive effects of social media on vocabulary learning, several research gaps remain. First, many existing studies focus primarily on individual platforms, particularly TikTok, resulting in limited understanding of the broader influence of various social media platforms on vocabulary mastery. Second, previous research often emphasizes students' perceptions and attitudes rather than synthesizing empirical evidence regarding vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary mastery, autonomous learning, motivation, and learning challenges. Third, many studies are conducted in specific educational contexts, which limits a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon across different learning environments.

Based on the discussion above, this study is entitled "The Influence of Social Media on Students' English Vocabulary Mastery." The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive synthesis of findings from previous studies concerning various social media platforms and their contributions to students' vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary mastery, autonomous learning, learning motivation, and the challenges encountered in vocabulary

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learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery through a library research approach. In line with this objective, the research question addressed in this study is: "What is the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery?"

METHOD

This study employed a library research design. Library research is a research method that relies on existing documents and published literature as the primary source of data rather than collecting data directly from participants. According to George (2008), library research involves identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing information from books, journal articles, and other scholarly publications to answer research questions. Therefore, this study did not involve interviews, observations, or questionnaires. Instead, it reviewed previous empirical studies concerning the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery. The findings from the selected studies were analyzed and synthesized to identify recurring themes and research gaps related to the topic.

The sources of this research consisted of published academic literature related to social media and English vocabulary learning. The data sources included journal articles from Google Scholar and other online academic databases. A total of 22 studies published between 2020 and 2026 were selected because they specifically investigated the use of social media platforms—including TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter (X), and other digital media—in relation to students' English vocabulary learning and vocabulary mastery.

The focus of this research was the contribution of social media to students' English vocabulary mastery as reported in previous empirical studies. More specifically, this study examined five aspects identified from the reviewed literature: vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary mastery, autonomous vocabulary learning, learning motivation, challenges of using social media in vocabulary learning.

The research procedure consisted of several stages. First, the researcher identified the research topic by reviewing issues related to social media and English vocabulary learning. Second, relevant literature was searched through Google Scholar and other academic databases using keywords such as social media, English vocabulary mastery, vocabulary acquisition, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and EFL students. Third, the researcher selected the literature based on predetermined inclusion criteria. The selected studies had to (1) focus on social media and English vocabulary learning, (2) involve English language learners, (3) be published in reputable academic journals or conference proceedings, and (4) be published between 2020 and 2026. Studies unrelated to vocabulary learning or social media were excluded. Fourth, the selected articles were read carefully, and important findings related to the research objective were identified. Finally, the findings from the selected studies were categorized into several themes and synthesized to explain the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

What is the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery?

The findings indicate that social media contributes positively to students' English vocabulary mastery. Based on the reviewed literature, five major findings were identified: (1) social media facilitates vocabulary acquisition, (2) social media improves students' vocabulary mastery and achievement, (3) social media promotes autonomous vocabulary learning, (4) social media increases students' motivation in vocabulary learning, and (5) social media presents several challenges that may affect vocabulary learning outcomes.

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Discussion

This section discusses the findings obtained from previous studies regarding the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery. The discussion is organized based on several themes, including vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary mastery, autonomous vocabulary learning, learning motivation in vocabulary learning, social media challenges of vocabulary learning. Each theme is analyzed and synthesized to identify recurring themes and research gaps related to the topic. The results indicate that social media has both positive and negative impacts on students' vocabulary learning process, depending on how it is used in educational contexts.

Vocabulary Acquisition

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that social media facilitates English vocabulary acquisition. Students generally perceive TikTok as an effective and engaging medium for learning new words, and its use has been associated with substantial gains in vocabulary knowledge (Alshreef & Khadawardi, 2023; Juwita & Syahputra, 2024). TikTok videos provide learners with attractive and meaningful content that enables them to encounter new vocabulary in authentic contexts. Rather than learning isolated words from traditional materials, students can observe how vocabulary items are used in real communication through captions, dialogues, and visual representations. This contextual exposure helps learners understand word meanings more effectively and increases their ability to remember newly acquired vocabulary.

Likewise, Instagram Reels provide contextualized and visually attractive input that supports vocabulary learning (Hasani et al., 2025). The combination of short videos, images, audio, and written text allows students to receive vocabulary input through multiple modes of learning. These multimodal features may accommodate different learning preferences and create more engaging learning experiences. As a result, students are not only introduced to new vocabulary but are also provided with opportunities to understand pronunciation, usage, and meaning based on real-life situations.

Regular exposure to English videos and subtitles on TikTok further accelerates vocabulary acquisition while simultaneously enhancing pronunciation and spelling skills by providing authentic language input (Alharthy, 2025). The frequent interaction with English content allows learners to encounter vocabulary repeatedly, which is important for vocabulary retention. Moreover, exposure to subtitles and spoken language helps students connect written forms with pronunciation, enabling them to develop broader language knowledge beyond vocabulary recognition.

In addition, learners who study through social media report positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning and demonstrate improved learning outcomes (Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022). Positive perceptions toward social media encourage students to engage more actively with English content and increase their willingness to learn independently. When students enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to spend additional time interacting with English materials outside formal classroom settings.

More broadly, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serve as accessible sources of information and opportunities for meaningful language exposure, thereby promoting the acquisition of English vocabulary (Khasanah, 2025). Unlike conventional learning resources that are limited by classroom time, social media provides continuous access to various English materials that students can explore according to their interests. This accessibility allows vocabulary learning to occur naturally through daily digital activities.

These findings suggest that the multimodal features of social media content create meaningful contexts for encountering and retaining new vocabulary. Frequent exposure to

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English through social media enables learners to acquire vocabulary incidentally while engaging with content that aligns with their interests and daily experiences. Although each study emphasizes different platforms and learning contexts, ranging from TikTok videos to Instagram Reels and general social media use, they consistently highlight the important contribution of social media in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, social media can be considered a valuable supplementary tool that extends vocabulary learning beyond the classroom environment

Vocabulary Mastery

The reviewed studies consistently indicate that social media contributes positively to students' English vocabulary mastery. Exposure to English content on social media significantly improves vocabulary test scores and overall vocabulary achievement (Gustinah et al., 2025; Roni & Hermansyah, 2025). Similarly, social media platforms support vocabulary development in specialized contexts such as Maritime English by providing authentic and professionally relevant language input (Ratnaningsih et al., 2024). Experimental studies further demonstrate that TikTok is an effective instructional medium, as students who learn through TikTok videos achieve higher vocabulary scores than those taught through conventional methods (Tirtayasa et al., 2024; Irawansyah et al., 2025). Classroom action research also confirms continuous improvement in vocabulary achievement through repeated exposure to TikTok-based learning activities (Fitriyah & Sholichah, 2023). These findings suggest that purposeful engagement with social media can substantially enhance students' English vocabulary mastery. The consistent improvement in students' vocabulary scores across different studies indicates that social media can effectively complement formal classroom instruction. By providing interactive and contextualized input, social media helps learners consolidate and apply newly acquired vocabulary.

The data present similar findings regarding vocabulary mastery. All studies found that social media positively influences students' vocabulary mastery. The use of TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms helps students improve their vocabulary achievement and learning outcomes. Moreover, students who actively engage with English-language content on social media tend to achieve better vocabulary scores. Therefore, social media can be considered an effective tool for improving students' English vocabulary mastery. Although the studies were conducted in different contexts and employed diverse instructional approaches, ranging from ESP settings to experimental and classroom action research designs, they consistently demonstrate the positive contribution of social media to vocabulary mastery.

Autonomous Vocabulary Learning

Social media also promotes autonomous vocabulary learning. Students perceive TikTok as a convenient and effective platform that allows them to develop vocabulary knowledge independently (Budiartha & Sarah, 2024). Through audio-visual content and flexible access to learning materials, learners can study according to their own needs and preferences (Dwipa et al., 2024). They often employ self-regulated strategies such as saving and revisiting videos, practicing pronunciation, and interacting with peers online, which strengthen learner autonomy (Liana et al., 2026). In addition, social media fosters interaction and collaboration beyond the classroom, enabling students to access information and construct knowledge independently (Alenezi & Brinthaupt, 2022). The flexibility of social media allows learners to regulate their own pace and strategies of learning, thereby fostering learner autonomy. Such independent learning habits are essential for the long-term development of vocabulary knowledge and overall language proficiency.

Although the studies emphasize different dimensions of autonomy, ranging from self-regulated learning strategies to collaborative knowledge construction, they consistently

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highlight the important role of social media in fostering independent vocabulary learning. These findings imply that social media not only provides access to learning materials but also empowers learners to take greater responsibility for their own vocabulary development. The ability to choose content, regulate learning pace, and interact with authentic language input may contribute to the development of lifelong learning habits that extend beyond the classroom.

Learning Motivation in Vocabulary Learning

The literature further reveals that social media enhances students' motivation to learn vocabulary. The engaging features and diverse learning materials available on TikTok create enjoyable learning experiences that encourage active participation (Rama et al., 2023). Students who use social media purposefully tend to encounter English content more frequently and consequently achieve better vocabulary outcomes (Hanan et al., 2023). Moreover, the interactive and entertaining nature of TikTok increases learners' interest and fosters positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning (Dwipa et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that social media can serve as a powerful motivational tool in English vocabulary instruction. The popularity and accessibility of social media platforms make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and relevant to students' lives. Consequently, learners become more willing to participate actively in vocabulary-related activities and sustain their interest in English learning.

Although the reviewed studies emphasize different dimensions of motivation—ranging from positive attitudes and enjoyment to the relationship between social media engagement and vocabulary achievement—they consistently demonstrate that social media creates a supportive environment for vocabulary learning. The combination of interactive features, authentic content, and opportunities for meaningful participation appears to sustain learners' interest and encourage continued engagement with English. Moreover, the familiarity of social media platforms reduces learners' anxiety and makes vocabulary learning feel more relevant to their daily lives. As students experience success and enjoyment while interacting with English content, they are more likely to develop confidence and maintain long-term commitment to vocabulary learning. These findings suggest that, when integrated purposefully into instruction, social media can serve not only as a source of linguistic input but also as a catalyst for enduring motivation and active vocabulary development.

Challenges of Social Media in Vocabulary Learning

Despite its benefits, social media presents several challenges for vocabulary learning. Although TikTok provides authentic language input and supports vocabulary growth, learners may experience distractions, encounter misinformation, or become overly exposed to informal language (Alharthy, 2025). Similarly, students using Instagram and TikTok are often influenced by trends and slang, highlighting the need for effective learning strategies and critical evaluation of content (Fauziah et al., 2023). Continuous content flow and concerns regarding the accuracy of learning materials may also hinder learning effectiveness (Liana et al., 2026). Therefore, social media should be used thoughtfully and purposefully to maximize its educational benefits while minimizing potential drawbacks. These challenges highlight the importance of digital literacy and appropriate pedagogical guidance. Teachers should assist students in selecting reliable content and developing critical awareness so that the educational benefits of social media can be maximized while minimizing its potential drawbacks.

Although the reviewed studies emphasize different challenges, they collectively indicate that the effectiveness of social media for vocabulary learning depends largely on learners' ability to use these platforms critically and strategically. Developing digital literacy skills, such as evaluating the credibility of online content and managing distractions, is therefore essential. With appropriate guidance from teachers and the adoption of effective self-

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regulated learning strategies, students can maximize the benefits of social media while minimizing its potential drawbacks. In this way, social media can remain a valuable supplementary resource for vocabulary development without compromising the quality of language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the influence of social media on students' English vocabulary mastery through a library research approach. Based on the analysis of 22 selected studies published between 2020 and 2026, the findings indicate that social media has a positive influence on students' English vocabulary mastery. The synthesis of previous research demonstrates that social media is not only a communication and entertainment platform but also a valuable supplementary learning resource that supports vocabulary development among EFL learners.

The findings reveal that social media contributes to vocabulary learning in several ways. First, social media facilitates vocabulary acquisition by exposing students to authentic English-language content through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and other digital media. The availability of multimodal content, including videos, captions, audio, and visual materials, enables students to encounter vocabulary in meaningful and contextualized situations. Second, social media improves students' vocabulary mastery by providing engaging, interactive, and flexible learning experiences that allow learners to understand and apply new vocabulary more effectively. Third, social media promotes autonomous vocabulary learning by enabling students to access learning materials independently, regulate their learning processes, and develop self-directed learning strategies. Fourth, social media increases students' motivation and interest in learning English vocabulary because the content is attractive, relevant, and closely connected to students' daily digital activities.

However, this study also identified several challenges associated with the use of social media for vocabulary learning. These challenges include distractions, exposure to informal language or slang, misinformation, and concerns regarding the reliability of online learning materials. Therefore, the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool depends on students' ability to use digital platforms critically and purposefully. Teachers also play an important role in guiding students to select appropriate learning resources and develop digital literacy skills.

Overall, social media can be considered an effective supplementary tool for enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery when it is integrated appropriately into the learning process. This study contributes to a broader understanding of how different social media platforms support vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary mastery, autonomous learning, and learning motivation. Future studies are recommended to further investigate the long-term effects of social media use on vocabulary development and explore effective strategies for integrating social media into formal English language instruction.

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