Exploring the Influence of Social Media Utilization on Enhancing TOEFL Proficiency among Medical Students

Bambang Panca Syahputra[1], Rakhmat Wahyudin Sagala[2], Yusni Khairul Amri[3]
[1,2,3]*Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*
bambangpanca@umsu.ac.id

Abstract

This study delves into investigating the impact of social media utilization on enhancing TOEFL proficiency among medical students. In an era where digital platforms have revolutionized communication and learning, this study examines how integrating social media tools into language learning environments can contribute to a more engaging and relevant educational experience. The focus on medical students is particularly pertinent, given the critical role adequate English language proficiency plays in their future medical careers, where precise communication is essential. The researchers used a descriptive survey design because this study aimed to obtain detailed information about the use of Social Media (SM) in improving TOEFL proficiency from medical students' perspective. The study included 46 students, with 15 of them being men (32.61%) and 31 women (67.39%). Participants were asked to complete an electronic questionnaire distributed through their subject's WhatsApp group voluntarily. For medical students, social media platforms can be incredibly beneficial to enhance their TOEFL learning experience. These platforms offer a broader range of communication and interaction opportunities that can aid in improving English proficiency. Furthermore, utilizing social media can assist in integrating the language into daily life. The future research will be especially beneficial for students who are not majoring in English, as it will enable them to overcome their fears and improve their overall learning experience in English as a Foreign Language.

I. Introduction

Medical students may need help answering the TOEFL test due to inadequate training, motivation, age, social status, and limited foreign language skills. This study aims to promote academic engagement in TOEFL learning for medical students by leveraging social media as a supportive tool. This initiative aims to enhance TOEFL proficiency through academic engagement, as Reeve and Tseng (2011) recommended. The use of social media is seen as more capable of generating engagement between teachers and students than a Learning Management System (Siddiq, 2020). Students and teachers who use social media are more familiar with the user interface. Moreover, learners often experience failed connections or errors when the application is opened due to many factors.

Learning barriers may arise due to the limitations in students' development or mental preparedness, as stated by Sagala & Rezeki (2022). Despite the formal infrastructure limitations of universities, many students express their desire to utilize their mobile devices for both formal and informal learning (Murphy et al., 2014). The community-centered design of Social Networking Sites (SNS) benefits language learning in academia, as it encourages communication beyond the classroom and promotes the spread of native languages. According to Sari et al. (2020), the younger generation spends considerable

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time on social media using their laptops or mobile devices, with some students accessing the internet for over six to seven hours daily to obtain information or download study materials. Social media can be a valuable tool for educators to learn foreign languages and stay connected with their students, as noted by Zhang (2013).

In contrast to Korlhar et al.'s (2021) study, which found that 97% of students use social media apps, with only 1% using them for academic purposes, Faizi et al. (2013) discovered that social media platforms promote collaboration among students working towards common goals. Unfortunately, excessive social media use can negatively impact students' academic performance, social interaction, sleep duration, and physical activity (Korlhar et al., 2021), increasing their vulnerability to non-communicable diseases and mental health issues (Duffy et al., 2020). Using social networking sites to acquire knowledge and be cautious of potential negative consequences is good. Social networking sites can be a valuable tool in education when utilized appropriately. Indeed, students have many opportunities to enhance learning and access the latest information by connecting with study groups and the rest of the education system. By fostering mindfulness in the context of learning, Tyler (1948) proposed that educators should provide instruction that allows students to engage with content in ways that enable them to identify connections between their learning experiences and the meaningful elements of everyday life or their environment, not just assigning exercises or tasks to be held—no relevance to their personal context.

In higher education, the exhilaration of meaningful learning encapsulates a profound and transformative educational experience. It goes beyond mere absorption of information by cultivating a deep sense of connection between academic content and students' personal lives, aspirations, and the broader social context. When students find subject matter aligned with their interests and values, they are more likely to engage in active exploration and critical thinking (Fong et al., 2017). This connection results in high curiosity and intrinsic motivation, encouraging students to delve deeper into the material. When students understand the relevance of their studies to real-world challenges and opportunities, a sense of purpose emerges, supporting a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Xerri et al., 2018). This linkage transforms learning from a passive exercise into an active and empowering journey, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and insights to navigate the complexities beyond the classroom. Ultimately, the thrill of meaningful learning empowers students to become lifelong learners, able to apply the knowledge they acquire in dynamic and evolving contexts.

Utilizing social media can positively impact medical students' TOEFL proficiency, which can lead to a more significant learning experience in higher education. By integrating social media platforms into language learning, students can forge a connection between their language studies and their daily lives, enabling them to witness first-hand the practical application of their endeavors. This relationship becomes even more important as a medical student, as practical communication skills are essential in their future career. Students can find real-world relevance beyond traditional classroom settings by engaging with TOEFL preparation materials in a social media context. This dynamic approach cultivates their linguistic abilities while strengthening their sense of purpose and commitment to their studies, demonstrating the essence of meaningful learning.

This paper presents a survey to determine academic engagement among medical students. This survey aims to explore student academic engagement in TOEFL learning between medical students at one of the private universities in Indonesia. In measuring each variable, researchers use instruments that experts have developed to guarantee validity and reliability, both statistically and theoretically. The researchers used Reeve & Tseng's

(2011) measurement tools to evaluate different academic engagement aspects, such as agentic engagement, behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. The study aimed to examine whether there were any distinctions in academic engagement based on these factors. This study seeks to answer the most basic question: Does academic engagement mediate increasing TOEFL proficiency using social media?

II. Research Method

The researchers used a descriptive survey design because this study aimed to obtain detailed information about the use of Social Media (SM) in improving TOEFL proficiency from medical students' perspective. The study included 46 students, with 15 of them being men (32.61%) and 31 women (67.39%). Participants were asked to complete an electronic questionnaire distributed through their subject's WhatsApp group voluntarily. Although the researchers could not control the questionnaire filling, this data collection method was considered feasible (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Participants were instructed to answer questions based on their experience and knowledge gained during lectures. These undergraduate students belonged to the Faculty of Medicine and were enrolled in the TOEFL course, which consists of three classes, VI-A, VI-B, and VI-C.

Prior to handing out the questionnaires, the researchers gave instructions on their Instagram account's post feed. These instructions were intended for students to follow and respond to in the comments section using English. The instructions included a reading section, a listening section, and a section on structure and written expression.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Information

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	32,61
	Female	31	67,39
Class	VI A	16	34,78
	VI B	15	32,61
	VI C	15	32,61
Age	18-20	16	34,78
	20-23	25	54,35
	24 above	5	10,87
	Total	46	100

This study adopted the academic engagement rubric developed by Reeve & Tseng (2011) and then created a 22 questions of questionnaire with five scales: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. The instruments are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. The rubric of the academic engagement questionnaire

Aspect	Question item	Item number	Total items
Agentic Engagement	1. When in class, I often ask questions 2. I tell my lecturer about what I like or do not like about lecture activities 3. I tell my lecturer about what things can make me interested in taking lectures 4. When in class, I express my preferences and opinions 5. I advise on how to make lectures better	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5
Behavioral Engagement	1. I listen to lectures with great attention 2. I tried hard in my studies 3. Every time my lecturer teaches a new topic, I listen very attentively 4. I am always serious when learning something new in class 5. I pay close attention to lecture's	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	5
Emotional engagement	1. I feel happy when I learn something in class 2. When doing something in class, I think interested 3. When in class, I always want to know more about what I am learning 4. Lectures are fun for me	11, 12, 13, 14	4
Cognitive engagement	1. When doing assignments, I try to relate what I will learn to what I already know 2. When studying, I try to relate what I learn to the experiences I have had 3. I try to combine ideas from the material I study 4. I make my own examples to help me understand the important concepts of the material I am studying 5. Before starting the lesson, I think about what I need to understand later 6. When doing assignments, I stop occasionally and discuss material from the problems I have worked on 7. When studying, I keep track of how much I understand, not just when I get the answers right 8. If what I am doing is difficult to understand, I change the way I study the material	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22	8

The survey was conducted with participants selected based on comparable standards pertaining to their academic engagement. They were told to complete a questionnaire based on their experience and what they learned during lectures. Respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire honestly and truly describe them. The answers to the instrument will be acceptable for the assessment regarding their course. The time needed to complete the questionnaire is approximately four minutes without doing anything else.

III. Result and Discussion

At the end of the semester, students are asked to complete a survey based on their experiences and learnings from lectures. They are encouraged to answer the questionnaire honestly and to describe themselves accurately. The information collected will be used to evaluate the course. The questionnaire should take about four minutes to complete without interruptions. Once the survey responses are collected, the next step is to analyze the data based on the items given to the students. In this study, 46 students, comprising 15 men (32.61%) and 31 women (67.39%), were included in the sample group.

Table 3. Agentic engagement: asking questions, expressing preferences, offering suggestions or contributions, communicating ideas

Code	Instrument Items	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AE1	When in class, I often ask questions	4,00	1,00	5,00	2,8043	0,98024
AE2	I tell my lecturer about what I like or do not like about lecture activities	4,00	1,00	5,00	2,5435	0,86169
AE3	I tell my lecturer about what things can make me interested in taking lectures	3,00	1,00	4,00	2,6522	0,87477
AE4	When in class, I express my preferences and opinions	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,2174	1,05226
AE5	I advise on how to make lectures better	4,00	1,00	5,00	2,5652	1,06775

Table 4. Behavioral engagement: listening to lectures, paying attention during lectures

Code	Instrument Items	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BE1	I listen to lectures with great attention	2,00	3,00	5,00	3,8043	0,83319
BE2	I tried hard in my studies	2,00	3,00	5,00	4,0870	0,81175
BE3	Every time my lecturer teaches a new topic, I listen very attentively	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,7174	1,02552
BE4	I am always serious when learning something new in class	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,8478	0,81561
BE5	I pay close attention to lecture's	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,8478	0,86839

Table 5. Emotional engagement: feel curious about learning, enjoy learning new things, class is fun

Code	Instrument Items	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EE1	I feel happy when I learn something in class	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,6304	0,90330
EE2	When doing something in class, I think interested	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,6522	0,87477
EE3	When in class, I always want to know more about what I am learning	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,7174	0,93483
EE4	Lectures are fun for me	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,4130	0,83203

Table 6. Cognitive engagement: try to connect learning to experience, change the way to learn, and make sense when studying

Code	Instrument Items	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CE1	When doing assignments, I try to relate what I will learn to what I already know	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,6304	0,82620
CE2	When studying, I try to relate what I learn to the experiences I have had	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,7609	0,82151
CE3	I try to combine ideas from the material I study	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,5870	0,88383
CE4	I make my own examples to help me understand the important concepts of the material I am studying	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,5217	1,11034
CE5	Before starting the lesson, I think about what I need to understand later	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,4130	0,95629
CE6	When doing assignments, I stop occasionally and discuss material from the problems I have worked on	3,00	2,00	5,00	3,4565	0,78050
CE7	When studying, I keep track of how much I understand, not just when I get the answers	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,6522	0,99370

	right					
CE8	If what I am doing is difficult to understand, I change the way I study the material	4,00	1,00	5,00	3,3913	1,04304

Now, let us analyze the statistical data collected from the respondents' responses to the questionnaire. Our attention will be on how the respondents view the agentic engagement factors. Based on the collected data, the participants have a favorable attitude toward the questions pertaining to agentic engagement. The students demonstrate a proactive and enthusiastic approach to their education, as evidenced by their responses to the statement "When in class, I often ask questions" (AE1), which has an average value of 2.8043. However, it is worth noting that the lowest mean value was observed in response to question AE2, "I tell my lecturer about what I like or do not like about lecture activities." For a more comprehensive understanding of these findings, kindly refer to Table 2. The agentic engagement measure, which describes the extent to which students use an agency to personalize the learning experience, can add value to engagement measures, especially in digital platforms where action and agency are integral to student success (Stella & Corry, 2016; Mehdipour et al., 2018). This section of the article delves into participants' responses when asked about their behavioral engagement with academic tasks, learning involvement, and effort, all of which are crucial for students to prepare for their future education effectively. Rooij et al.'s (2017) study highlights the significance of both behavioral and cognitive engagement in the learning process. Upon analyzing the data presented in Table 3, it becomes apparent that the most common response, with a high score, was for item BE2, which reads, "I put in much effort into my studies." Those who selected this option demonstrated their commitment to making their learning experiences meaningful and productive.

Conversely, the least common response was for BE3, which reads, "I pay close attention to every new topic my lecturer teaches," with a score of 3.7174. This score is the lowest among the five behavioral engagement questions. These findings provide valuable insight into the engagement levels of students and their willingness to devote significant effort toward their education. The survey's complete results are available in Table 3 for further reference and analysis.

Within item EE3, which measures emotional engagement, students are allowed to express their desire to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter they are studying in the classroom setting. Additionally, item EE4 assesses whether students find the act of studying to be a pleasurable experience. It is crucial to note that emotional engagement plays a significant role in the well-being of adolescent students, as it reflects the value they place on their education and their overall sense of fulfillment. For a comprehensive breakdown of the descriptive statistics related to this topic, please refer to Table 4.

In the realm of cognitive behavior, students must be able to solve problems and apply the knowledge they gain to real-life situations. This is precisely why the CE2 item, "When studying, I try to relate what I learn to my experiences," holds significant importance. By attempting to establish connections between what they learn and their personal experiences, respondents demonstrate a critical aspect of learning that helps them retain information. Without this crucial link, students may alter their learning approach, as in CE8, "If what I am doing is difficult to understand, I change the way I study the material." However, this change may not significantly impact their learning outcomes.

Research conducted by Pietarinen, J., Soini, T., & Pyhältö, K. (2014), highlights that students' engagement with learning is heavily influenced by their interactions with the school environment and the teaching practices implemented by their instructors. In TOEFL learning, a substantial number of topics in the reading section are inspired by everyday life experiences. See Table 5 for gain further insight into this topic.

IV. Conclusion

After conducting a thorough examination, we have come to the following conclusions: utilizing social media platforms for academic engagement during the TOEFL learning process can greatly enhance medical students' learning engagement. Social media provides a wider scope for communication and interaction. The majority of medical students express their strong agreement that social media usage can improve their English proficiency and help them learn how to use and practice the language in their daily lives.

In order to enhance the quality of research, academic engagement must encompass comprehensive discussions on various aspects, such as different majors, education levels, and diverse sources. In the future, studies will be conducted to measure the levels of anxiety and self-esteem in foreign language learning to bolster overall student academic achievement. The future research will be especially beneficial for students who are not majoring in English, as it will enable them to overcome their fears and improve their overall learning experience in English as a Foreign Language.

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