Japanese and English Students Perspective on Social Media

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Abstract

Social media has created new possibilities for digitally native students to engage, interact and collaborate in learning tasks that foster learning processes and the overall learning experience. By using both qualitative and quantitative data, this article discusses the perspectives of Japanese and English students towards social media. As we know, foreign language learning is facilitated by social media and especially for a new generation of students. This paper contributes to an understanding of how language learners' perspectives on social media. 52 English students and 18 Japanese students participate in the research as the sample. We found that most of the students aware of the benefit of social media for learning languages. Furthermore, the study showed that both English and Japanese students preferred to use English or Indonesian languages to do social media activities such as posting, writing a caption, or commenting than local language or Japanese language. Therefore, Japanese and English students should improve their awareness of the benefits of social media for language learners.

Keywords: Japanese Students; English Students; Perspective; Social Media

1. Introduction

Talking about the origins of social media, researchers always began with the Bulletin Board System in the 1980s when the first time online meeting room allowed users to download files and leave a message to co-users (Bialy, 2017). At that time, the exchange was clear enough, but the interaction was limited for technical reasons. The unique thing was people did not know why was sitting at the other end of the telephone line in the social interaction. The Bulletin inspired other platforms to emerge from the internet. However, BBS proved a growing interest in this kind of communication and inspired other platforms to emerge from the early Internet. The big success of sites like Class- mates.com confirmed the need for a virtual exchange of memories, ideas, and views. This time, users could enter into social interaction with precisely chosen people, and create networks of "friends", based on their common school experience.

Social media has developed rapidly and produced more social media used like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Line, Telegram, WhatsApp Tiktok, etc. Social media itself has positive and negative impacts. It became a big pool of data for advertising and marketing. Bialy (2017) also mentioned that within the last three years, Facebook noted a 120% increase of brands placing paid on the platform. Social media companies also developed e-commerce features to ease the users' sell their products. Social and commercial activities have become two powerful drivers of social media platform development.

On the other hand, social media also a source of entertainment especially for youngers. It grabs their attention easily and in some cases, it holds their attention for a very long time every day. One study estimates that an average person today may spend more than five years on social media over their lifetime. On one side, it looks like they waste their time

but social media is also a fantastic study resource for learners especially for English or Japanese, it means that they may spend a lot of time in social media as long as they improve their knowledge and language proficiencies. Social media is a great place to meet in and interact with groups for various and specific languages. They can experience the immersive social media by using the target language by joining several groups for language learning and we may leave the group without penalty. We can explore and find the social media group that fits our language learning environments. What we need in social media to improve the language is by practicing our target language and learn the languages from the experts. As social media platforms are almost constantly at hand, language learners should use them wisely.

Successful learning strategies are determined to educational success and lifelong, the learner may be successful if they understand what it means to learn. Learning a foreign language including learning how to solve all of the problems from how to ride a motorcycle to studying medicine. One definition of learning is "the process which leads to the creation of new knowledge thus changing the learner's behavior and his or her understanding of the surrounding world" (Lauridsen, 2004). Taking in the foreign language at all levels of competence is not always consistent with the exposure of the formal classroom or other formal, predesigned learning platforms, as the process is individual, characterized by individual learning styles, and based on the needs and capabilities of the individual learner. This, however, does not mean that there are not many patterns of similarity by which foreign language learning may be organized collectively, but individualized learning platforms may serve the purpose better since individual learning patterns may be taken into account (Cuthell, 2005).

In contrast to this, it is part and parcel of language learning that it takes place in collaboration with others – you cannot learn a language without hearing and reading what others produce. You cannot learn without comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, and monitoring of output (Long, 1996; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014) so learning takes place in interaction and this must be facilitated together with individualization for language learning to be as successful as possible.

By understanding the benefits of social media for foreign learners, this study focus on exploring the perspectives of the Japanese and English students on social media. This paper explored their perspectives on social media related to their major as Japanese or English learners. Throughout the paper "Japanese and English Students" refers to those university students in Indonesia learning Japanese and English languages.

Language Learning

Successful learning strategies are determined to educational success and lifelong, the learner may be successful if they understand what it means to learn. Learning a foreign language including learning how to solve all of the problems from how to ride a motorcycle to studying medicine. One definition of learning is "the process which leads to the creation of new knowledge thus changing the learner's behavior and his or her understanding of the surrounding world" (Lauridsen, 2004). Learning is thereby individual and process-oriented in contrast to instruction, which focuses on the subject matter and aims at disseminating information. Contrary to child learning, conscious cognitive strategies are key to adult learning. Additionally, understanding why and how for instance languages work and hearing or reading explanations may be used to monitor processes that are useful shortcuts to taking in

new knowledge (Mondahl & Jensen, 1993; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014).

Learning comprises reflection on one's learning processes – a form of metacognition – where the ability to stop and think about one's learning process becomes central and adds to personal development. Additionally, it facilitates new insights and thereby raises cognitive awareness (Hermansen, 2005; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014). For this reason, learning should be viewed as a life-long process where assimilation and accommodation processes substitute rote learning and remembering of facts (Lauridsen, 2004). However, this process is dependent on individual learning styles "how each learner begins to concentrate on, process, absorb, and retain new and difficult information (Dunn & Dunn, 1999; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014)". From this perspective, learning is an individual matter and each learner has his or her method of acquiring knowledge.

Motivation is another important factor in learning including foreign language learning if you cannot see the raison d'être of learning something new, you probably will not bother to pay attention or take in new knowledge. Thus, a new intake about a foreign language requires that your affective filter is low and that you are willing to incorporate new and sometimes conflicting information to move ahead. In terms of looking at motivation in educational settings, the aspect of time is also an essential element. During the complex processes of foreign language learning, "motivation does not remain constant but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process, characterized by constant (re)appraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences that the individual is exposed to" (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003: 617). As a result, most learners experience a fluctuation in their enthusiasm and commitment during the learning process. In terms of foreign language learning, the establishment of a line of progression towards mastery of a foreign language implies establishing clear goals of reading competence, listening competence, presentation skills, interpersonal communication competence, and writing competence.

Taking in the foreign language at all levels of competence is not always consistent with the exposure of the formal classroom or other formal, predesigned learning platforms, as the process is individual, characterized by individual learning styles, and based on the needs and capabilities of the individual learner. This, however, does not mean that there are not many patterns of similarity by which foreign language learning may be organized collectively, but individualized learning platforms may serve the purpose better since individual learning patterns may be taken into account (Cuthell, 2005). In contrast to this, it is part and parcel of language learning that it takes place in collaboration with others – you cannot learn a language without hearing and reading what others produce. You cannot learn without comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning, and monitoring of output (Long, 1996) so learning takes place in interaction and this must be facilitated together with individualization for language learning to be as successful as possible.

Foreign language learning rests on the learner's ability to identify where the problems lie, to test his/her hypotheses in terms of language abilities as an interlocutor in a genuine communication situation, and eventually to identify the knowledge gaps. Again, similar to all other learning processes, foreign language learning is a construction process where previous knowledge is used as

building blocks and where matches and mismatches with previous knowledge are brought into play. However, foreign language learning processes do require a very high degree of practice as well, for which reason learners should be allowed to experience the 'flow' that motivates and creates new impulses. As highlighted by (Rasmussen, 1999; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014), "We as actors are situated within a framework that contains a past, present and a future – i.e. our temporal standpoint moves and writes a part of the history, and creates a culture in which learning occurs". Following this, the flow should be viewed as a condition in which people are so absorbed in a specific task that they forget all about time and place. Csikszentmihalyi (1991; in Mondahl & Liana, 2014) defines flow as, "a deep and uniquely human motivation to excel, exceed, and triumph over limitation".

Social Media

Social media, the online communities designed with Web 2.0/3.0 technologies, emerge as a new social space in the past decade. They are increasingly used for support-ing students' communicative and creative endeavors (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). They support process-oriented learning by promoting interactions among learners, or among learners and their teacher. Learners and teachers can involve others in their thinking through the posted "information pieces" and thoughts (Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs, & Meyer, 2010).

Social media afford to situate language learning in authentic community/social contexts beyond the classroom. This is critical for authentic language learning where language is learned via socialization and utilization (Gee, 2004). Such learner content generation activities can be regarded as a cultural citizenship practice, where learners appropriate their daily

encounters and into engaging learning experiences (Kukulska-Hulme, Traxler, & Pettit, 2007). Henceforth, we envisage that social media spaces could be used to design for seamless integration between classroom-based teacher-facilitated learning and autonomous, socialized learning in the learners' daily life.

In the perspective of the social network-based learning community, the social media generated by the learners can be appropriated as artifacts for learning. The posting of a social media item does not necessarily mark the end of the artifact generation process (Wong & Looi, 2010). Thus, in addressing the need for authentic, contextualized, and socialized language learning, students' acts of social media creation can be seen as self-initiated learning tasks with the use of the target language that aims to share (on their everyday encounters or thoughts, etc.) with their peers– at this stage, meanings are privileged. This is followed by social interactions not only to enrich or challenge the 'meaning' of the artifact but also for peer reviews/supports in improving the linguistic accuracy (form). In short, the age of social media offers unprecedented opportunities for language educators to create learning environments for the pervasive trajectory of authentic, cross-contextual, and socialized language learning.

Social media or Web 2.0 based applications include online chat forums, wikis, blogs, social networking sites that make knowledge sharing easy and unobtrusive for the individual. This type of tool facilitates communication, sharing information, and online socialization. Using Web 2.0, users may easily express or share their opinions, 'think by writing', seek others' opinions and feedback, and be connected with others. Furthermore, multimedia production in form of audio (e.g. podcasting using mobile

technology) or video (vodcasting, YouTube) capabilities continue to grow and offer new opportunities for teaching, learning, and assessment. Using social media, students may record discussions and upload them on the platform for further knowledge sharing, assessment, reflection, and feedback from peers and professors. This contextual collaboration seamlessly integrates content sharing, communication channels, and collaboration tools into a unified user experience that enables new levels of productivity (Geyer, Silva Filho, Brownholtz, & Redmiles, 2008). Web 2.0 tools may shift control to the learner, through promoting learner agency, autonomy, and engagement in social networks that straddle multiple real and virtual learning spaces independent of physical, geographic, institutional, and organizational boundaries (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010).

2. Research Methodology

An online survey method was used in this research to find the data. The sample of the study is 70 university students in UNDIP with 52 of them are English students and 18 were Japanese students as presented below.
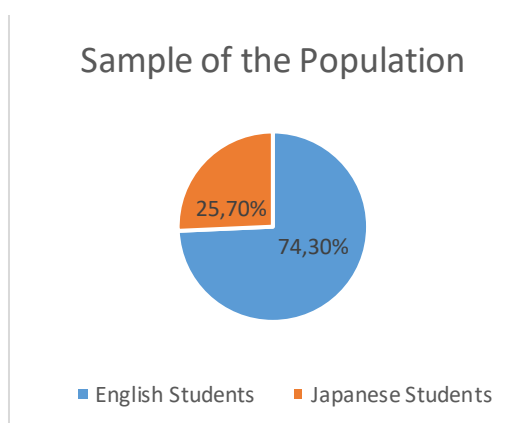

Figure 1. Sample of the Study

The data was collected from 25th April – 5th May 2021. In the online survey, the students were provided several questions needed by the research such as name, major,

and information about the social media users. The data then, verified and explained below.

3. Results and Discussion

Social media has developed rapidly and produced more social media used like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Line, Telegram, WhatsApp Tiktok, etc. It has positive and negative impacts. It became a big pool of data for advertising and marketing. Social media became a part of human life especially for university students as they were born in the era of technology. Through the research, the perspectives of language learners on social media were explored Based on the data, Facebook is no longer the most popular online platform or social media among university students in Indonesia. Today, roughly (97%) of Indonesian university students ages 19 – 21 say they use Instagram higher than other platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Line, Telegram, Tiktok, Clubhouse, Linked in, Kakaotalk, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Tumblr. This shift in social media is just one example of how the technology landscape for your people has evolved. The unique thing is the LinkedIn as the social media that shared academic activities was only used by 1 % of the sample. It means only one who used it.
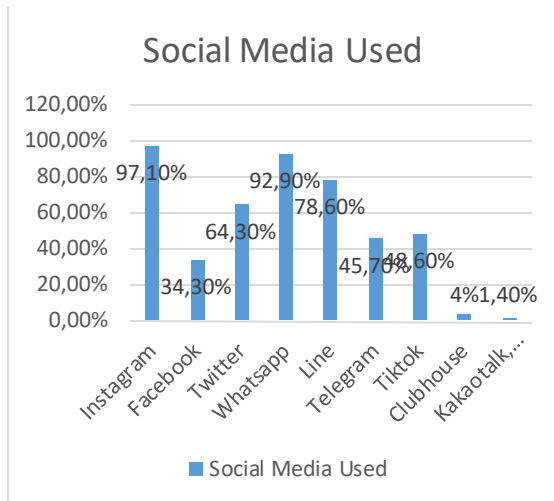
Figure 2. Social Media Used by University Students

Figure 3. Social Media and Language Proficiencies

The existence of social media provides an opportunity to connect with other people exchanging memories, opinions, and agendas easily and very cheaply. By using social media, one could find former classmates and find new "friends" that growing to be social networks. These "friends" could come from almost over the world with internet access. There can be several motivations for using social media. In April 2015, Global Web Index published a report presenting the reasons people use social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Among the reasons, number one is "social" meaning that to keep in touch with my friends. While the number two on the list is to stay up to date with the current events. It means that the use of social media for looking at general information has been the trend among users. And social media are more considered a source of content or new knowledge and information, even though it is generated by the users. Related to the fact, this research found that 70-72% of the language learners especially Japanese and English use social media to improve their language proficiencies. It is showed in figure 3.
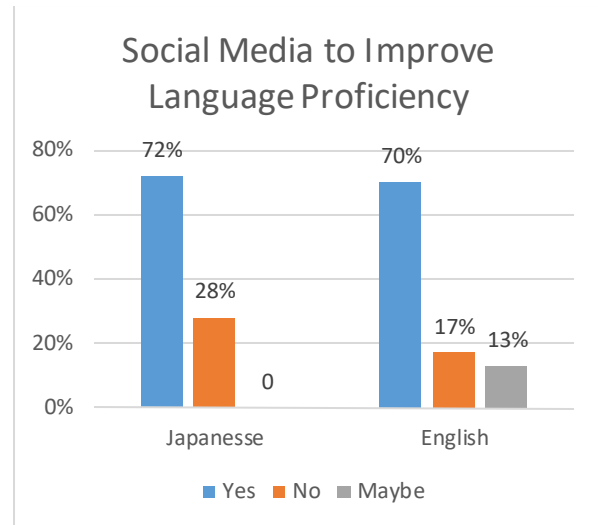
Based on figure 3 above, we can see that most of the Japanese or English students use social media to improve their language proficiencies, about 17% of English students and 28% of Japanese not clear mentioning the use of social media for improving their language proficiencies. About 13 % of English students use social media as a source of entertainment. It showed that most of the Japanese students, 72% of them, and 70% of the English students use social media to improve their knowledge by following several accounts of learning English or Japanese. The use of social media was shifted from being less social and more informative. We can conclude that the students can get a positive benefit from social media. Based on their view, one of the students said that through social media they can find tips on how to improve their English or Japanese. Many accounts in social media providing new knowledge on improving their language proficiencies. They also have the opportunity to communicate with the native.

As most of the students use their social media, the research also exposed that most of the students mentioned that there is a

connection between their social media use and major. The results showed in figure 4.
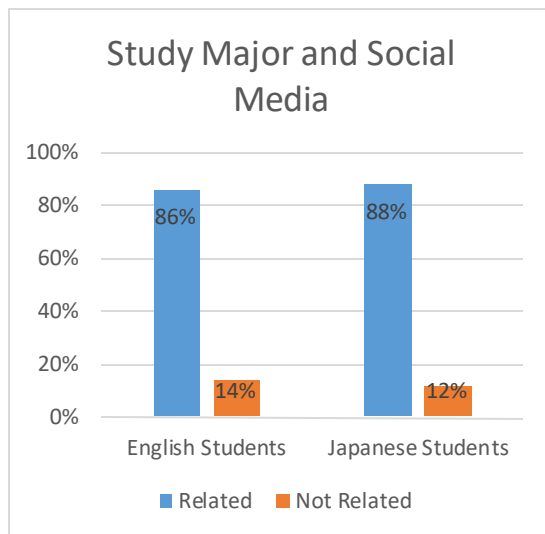

Figure 4. Study Major and Social Media

Based on the findings presented, we found that about 86% of English students and 88% of Japanese students said positive impacts on social media and majors. It means that most of the students aware that they should use social media wisely. About 14% of the English students and 12% of Japanese students mentioned that their social media did not relate to their major. The only focus on the use of social media as entertainment sources.

The use of social media to improve language skills can be seen in how they use social media and what language they use. Most of the English and Japanese students use Indonesian or English language to comments, post, or write a caption on social media. Only a few of them use the local language, Japanese or Korean language. This finding was interested as for English students they quite confident to use show their language skill in social media, but Japanese students, they also prefer to use English or Indonesian as a medium of sharing. They prefer to use English or Indonesia than the Japanese because Indonesia is their first language, and English is an international language. Either their followers or other people will understand the message. Another reason is practicing Indonesian or English.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results, most of the students aware of the benefit of social media for learning languages. Furthermore, the study showed that both English and Japanese students preferred to use English or Indonesian languages to do social media activities such as posting, writing a caption, or commenting than local language or Japanese language. Therefore, Japanese and English students should improve their awareness of the benefits of social media for language learners. And they should be motivated to use their social media as a medium to show their language skills. We found that most of the students aware of the benefit of social media for learning languages.

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