

# Leveraging Social Media to Enhance English Language Learning Effectiveness: Insights from the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Banyuwangi Regency

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of social media in enhancing the effectiveness of English language learning within the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in Banyuwangi Regency. With its emphasis on flexible and student-centered learning, the *Merdeka* Curriculum opens opportunities for integrating familiar digital platforms into classroom instruction. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and content analysis to examine how social media is utilized in learning. Quantitative data were gathered using statistical analysis to measure the impact of social media use on students' English learning outcomes. The findings indicate that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube significantly enhance student engagement and motivation. Observational data revealed increased enthusiasm and active participation when materials were delivered through familiar social media platforms. Teachers reported improved student interaction in online discussions and greater involvement in assignments shared digitally. Furthermore, students benefited from expanded access to learning materials beyond formal class hours, leading to improved comprehension and language skills. The integration of social media into English learning supports the *Merdeka* Curriculum's goals by fostering active, collaborative, and personalized learning experiences. It not only aligns with students' daily digital habits but also contributes to improved learning outcomes. This research highlights the potential of social media as an innovative educational tool to create more dynamic, relevant, and responsive learning environments.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of learning English is not only a necessity in a global context but also plays a vital role in increasing competitiveness and adaptation to global dynamics at the local level, such as in Banyuwangi Regency. English has become the main means of communication in the international world, enabling individuals to engage in information exchange, cross-cultural collaboration, and active participation in various global forums. English language skills are not only relevant in business and work aspects but are also important in understanding developments in technology, science, and international culture (Hamzah, 2015; Djelantik et al., 2015). In Banyuwangi Regency, where tourism growth and the industrial sector are increasingly developing, mastery of English is key to maximizing economic potential and improving the quality of human resources. Additionally, global challenges such as climate change, global health issues, and sustainable development require active participation and deep understanding from local communities. By mastering English, individuals in Banyuwangi Regency can engage in international discussions and cooperation to overcome these challenges effectively. Therefore, learning English is not just an additional skill but a strategic investment in facing an increasingly globally connected future (Zebua et al., 2023; Ghafara et al., 2023).

The Merdeka Curriculum, as an educational innovation, is a response to the dynamics of learning needs that continue to develop. Its emergence stems from the global transformation of education, which demands active student involvement, the use of technology, and contextual learning. This curriculum was developed with an awareness of the diversity of students' learning styles and the desire to provide greater freedom for educators to adapt learning methods to student characteristics and surrounding environmental conditions (Julaeha, 2019; Thaariq et al., 2023). The basic concept of the Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes a holistic approach, focusing not only on academic achievement but also on character development, creativity, and a deeper understanding of learning content. This innovation integrates relevant elements, including the use of local resources rich in culture, history, and the environment (Wurtiningsih, 2023).

While the potential of social media in education has been broadly recognized, there is a lack of research examining its integration into the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in English language education. Studies have extensively highlighted the benefits of social media for enhancing student engagement, facilitating collaboration, and providing interactive learning resources (Perssela et al., 2022; Khoiruman et al., 2023). Social media platforms have been shown to enrich English learning through interactive discussions, shared learning resources, and online collaboration (Ammar, 2023; Putra & Pratama, 2023). Furthermore, teachers can creatively use these platforms to present engaging content that motivates students by aligning with their daily experiences (Wibowo, 2023; Husain, 2014).

However, despite these advancements, there is still a limited exploration of how social media can be strategically utilized to support the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum in a localized context like Banyuwangi Regency. Existing studies do not adequately address the specific mechanisms through which social media can align with the holistic and contextual learning approaches emphasized by this curriculum. Moreover, the integration of social media into the Merdeka Curriculum has yet to be systematically studied in regions where cultural and environmental resources can play a pivotal role in English learning outcomes.

Banyuwangi Regency was chosen as the research site due to its unique position as a rapidly developing region with a strong emphasis on tourism and cultural heritage. Known as "The Sunrise of Java," Banyuwangi has experienced significant growth in its tourism and industrial sectors, which has increased the demand for English language proficiency among its local population. This regency is also characterized by its rich cultural diversity, including traditional arts, festivals, and historical landmarks, which provide an ideal environment for contextual and localized learning approaches. Additionally, Banyuwangi has been proactive in adopting innovative educational practices, including the Merdeka Curriculum, making it a suitable setting to explore the integration of social media as a pedagogical tool. The combination of its socio-economic development, cultural wealth, and educational

transformation positions Banyuwangi as a compelling case study to examine how localized strategies can enhance English learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The theoretical framework for utilizing social media in education is rooted in its potential to transform traditional learning into a more interactive, collaborative, and student-centered experience. In language learning, social media platforms provide a unique blend of informal and formal educational opportunities, allowing students to practice language skills in real-time, access diverse resources, and engage in authentic communication with native speakers or peers worldwide. Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism underpins this application, emphasizing the importance of social interaction in learning. Social media serves as a modern tool to create virtual communities of practice, where students can co-construct knowledge through collaborative activities and discussions (Smith & MacGregor, 2021).

Recent studies have further validated the educational benefits of social media in language learning. For example, Kessler and Bikowski (2022) found that integrating platforms like Instagram and Twitter in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms significantly improved students' writing fluency and engagement. Additionally, Wang et al. (2023) highlighted the role of video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, in enhancing listening and pronunciation skills by exposing learners to authentic language use. These platforms also encourage creativity and self-expression, allowing students to produce multimedia content that integrates language skills with digital literacy.

In the context of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, social media aligns well with its emphasis on contextual and holistic learning approaches. It offers a flexible medium to incorporate local cultural and environmental elements into English lessons, which is particularly relevant for regions like Banyuwangi. For instance, a study by Nizar and Sari (2023) demonstrated that using culturally themed social media content in language classes boosted students' motivation and understanding of local and global contexts simultaneously.

Despite these advancements, limited research addresses the integration of social media with the Merdeka Curriculum's specific objectives, such as character development and creativity. Studies often focus on general language acquisition without delving into how social media can support the curriculum's unique emphasis on contextual and localized learning. Addressing this gap is crucial for leveraging social media as a transformative educational tool, particularly in regions like Banyuwangi, where cultural and environmental resources are abundant. By investigating these intersections, this research aims to provide actionable strategies for enriching English learning in alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum.

This gap highlights the need for research that investigates the innovative use of social media as a pedagogical tool within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Such research can provide insights into how social media platforms can be harnessed to create dynamic, contextual, and culturally relevant English learning experiences, ultimately improving the effectiveness of education in Banyuwangi Regency and beyond.

## 2. METHODS

This research employs a mixed-methods approach (Mulyadi, 2011) that combines qualitative and quantitative analyses to understand the role of social media in English learning under the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Banyuwangi Regency. Qualitative methods include observation, interviews, and content analysis (Pahleviannur et al., 2022), while quantitative methods measure the effectiveness of learning through statistical analysis, surveys, and student performance evaluations. By integrating these two approaches, the study offers a comprehensive view of how social media impacts the effectiveness of English language learning.

The use of social media in teaching is specifically examined through various classroom strategies and lesson plans. Teachers integrate platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Classroom into their teaching activities. For instance, YouTube is used to share instructional videos related to

English grammar and pronunciation, while WhatsApp facilitates peer discussions and collaborative projects. Lesson plans include activities such as analyzing YouTube videos, responding to questions via social media platforms, and completing assignments shared online. Teachers also use social media to provide real-time feedback and track student participation in virtual discussions. These strategies are observed and documented to assess their effectiveness and student engagement.

The sample size and selection criteria are grounded in purposive sampling techniques to ensure representativeness and relevance. Schools were selected based on their readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum and integrate social media into the learning process. Teachers were chosen based on their active use of social media in teaching, while students were selected from English language classes that regularly use digital platforms for learning activities. The sample size considers the need for diversity across different school environments, teacher experiences, and student demographics, allowing for the capture of varied perspectives and outcomes.

### **2.1 Data Collection**

Data collection employs three primary techniques (Jailani, 2023; Sugiyono, 2020):

- **Observation:** Researchers directly observe classroom interactions, focusing on the use of social media in delivering lessons, student engagement levels, and teacher-student interactions.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews are conducted with teachers, students, and school administrators to explore their experiences and perceptions. Questions focus on how social media enhances or challenges the learning process.
- **Documentation:** Learning materials shared via social media, such as videos, online discussions, and teacher notes, are analyzed alongside formal documents like lesson plans and evaluation reports.

### **2.2 Data Analysis**

- 1) **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic coding methods are employed to analyze interview transcripts, classroom observations, and documented materials (Wijaya, 2020; Solehudin, et al., 2023). Codes are developed to identify recurring themes, such as student motivation, collaboration, and challenges in implementing social media. These codes are grouped into categories, forming a thematic structure to provide deeper insights into participants' experiences.
- 2) **Quantitative Analysis:** Statistical techniques, including descriptive and inferential methods, are used to analyze survey and performance test data (Febriani & Dewi, 2018). Correlation analysis examines relationships between variables, such as the frequency of social media use and improvements in student learning outcomes. Regression analysis may also be applied to predict the impact of specific teaching strategies on performance metrics. The integration of these analyses ensures a robust understanding of social media's role in enhancing English learning outcomes.

By addressing these detailed aspects, the research provides a clear, structured framework for understanding the effectiveness of social media integration in the learning process.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Integration of Social Media in English Language Learning**

The integration of social media in English learning has become an important innovation in Banyuwangi Regency, especially in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Observation results in several schools show that the use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as additional learning tools has had a significant impact on student engagement and motivation. In interviews with several teachers, they revealed that students were more enthusiastic in learning when the material was delivered via social media because they were already familiar with the platform in everyday life. Documentation of the learning process also shows increased student participation in online discussions and assignments posted on social media.

Additionally, social media allows students to access relevant educational content outside of formal class hours. Observations show that students often use their free time to watch learning videos on YouTube or interact with material shared in the class Facebook group. Teachers interviewed stated that this access helps students to deepen their understanding of the topics taught in class and improve their overall English skills. Documentation of student learning outcomes shows significant increases in test and assignment scores after the integration of social media in learning.

The use of social media also provides opportunities for students to practice writing and speaking skills in English more intensively. In interviews, some students expressed that they felt more comfortable writing essays or articles on the class blog or participating in video discussions on Instagram Live. Observations show that students who actively use social media for these exercises show greater improvements in writing and speaking skills compared to students who do not. Documentation of writing assignments and video recordings demonstrated significant progress in the quality and fluency of the language used by students.

Furthermore, the integration of social media has encouraged student engagement in active and collaborative learning. The results of observations and interviews show that students collaborate more often on group projects via social media platforms, share ideas, and provide feedback to each other. Teachers interviewed reported that social media facilitates more effective and efficient communication among students, allowing them to work together even in different locations. Documentation of group projects shows improvements in the quality of work output and the level of collaboration between students.

Finally, the use of social media has increased the flexibility and accessibility of English language learning in accordance with the principles of the adaptive and personalized Independent Curriculum. Observations show that students can learn at their own pace and learning style, taking advantage of the various resources available on social media. Interviews with teachers revealed that this flexibility helps meet students' individual needs, allowing them to catch up or deepen in material they are interested in. Documentation of learning outcomes shows that students who use social media as part of their learning strategy tend to show greater improvements in academic outcomes compared to students who rely solely on conventional learning.

### **3.2 Use of Social Media to Improve Writing Skills**

Studies show that the use of social media in English learning can improve students' writing skills. By posting writing assignments on social media platforms, students can receive feedback from peers and teachers, which can help them improve and develop their writing skills. Based on the results of interviews with several English teachers in Banyuwangi Regency, they stated that students who actively posted writing assignments on social media showed significant improvements in their writing skills. These teachers also noted that feedback provided by peers was often more detailed and constructive, as students felt more comfortable providing feedback to their peers compared to direct feedback from the teacher.

Observations carried out in several schools in Banyuwangi Regency showed that students who were actively involved in learning via social media also showed improvements in speaking skills. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube allow students to create and share video presentations or short stories in English. Students who participate in this activity tend to be more confident when speaking in public and are better able to construct sentences. The resulting video documentation can also be used as evaluation material to see the development of students' speaking skills over time.

The results of interviews with students show that they feel more motivated to learn English when using social media as a learning tool. They feel that social media provides a more fun and interactive learning environment compared to conventional learning methods. Students also mentioned that they can learn from content created by other social media users, such as vloggers and influencers who speak English. This gives them exposure to language that is more authentic and relevant to everyday life.

In terms of learning effectiveness, the documentation collected shows that the use of social media in English learning is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes

adaptive and personalized learning. Social media allows students to learn at their own pace and learning style. Teachers can assign different assignments according to students' abilities and interests, as well as provide faster and more specific feedback. Classroom observations also show that students are more involved and active in the learning process when they are given the freedom to use social media as a learning aid.

Overall, the results of this research show that social media has a significant role in increasing the effectiveness of English learning in Banyuwangi Regency. The use of social media not only improves students' writing and speaking skills, but also increases their motivation and engagement in learning. Interviews with teachers and students, as well as existing documentation, support the finding that social media can be an effective tool in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, schools in Banyuwangi Regency can consider integrating social media more intensively in their learning strategies to achieve more optimal results.

### ***3.3 Effectiveness of Social Media in Improving Speaking Competence***

The use of video and live streaming features on social media provides opportunities for students to practice speaking English. Observation results show that platforms such as YouTube and Instagram Live are often used by teachers to provide material in real-time, which allows students to see direct examples of English use in relevant contexts. Additionally, this feature also allows students to record and upload their own presentations, which can then be reviewed by their teachers and classmates. This process not only improves speaking skills, but also gives students the opportunity to receive constructive feedback that they can use to improve their abilities.

Interviews with several students and teachers in Banyuwangi Regency revealed that direct interaction through comments and messages on social media is very effective in improving speaking competence. Teachers can provide immediate responses to questions and problems students face, which creates a more dynamic and responsive learning environment. Students also feel more confident to speak English when they interact via social media because they feel more relaxed and less stressed compared to traditional classroom situations. This shows that social media not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a platform that supports active and participatory learning.

Documentation of learning activities on social media shows that the use of this interactive feature allows more intensive and practical communication between students and teachers. For example, a live streaming session where the teacher explains the material in English and students can ask questions directly via the comments column. This interaction makes the learning process more lively and provides a deeper learning experience for students. Through this documentation, it can be seen that students who actively participated in the live streaming sessions showed significant improvement in their speaking skills.

Furthermore, observations of the use of social media in English learning in Banyuwangi show that students who engage in online discussions through comment and message features tend to have a better understanding of the lesson material. They can exchange ideas and opinions directly with their classmates, which encourages collaboration and shared learning. This is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes learning that is adaptive and appropriate to student needs. By using social media, students can learn anytime and anywhere, thus providing high flexibility in the learning process.

Finally, interviews with teachers indicated that social media provides a variety of tools and features that can be used to increase the effectiveness of English language learning. Teachers can use these features to create engaging, interactive content that students can access outside of school hours. For example, teachers can make videos explaining material that students can repeat until they really understand. Additionally, poll and quiz features on social media can be used to evaluate student understanding in real-time, which helps teachers to adapt their teaching methods according to student needs.

### **3.4 Encouraging Student Engagement in Active Learning**

Social media provides a platform for more interactive and participatory learning. Observation results show that the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube in learning English has enabled students to share information more widely and in depth. Students who were initially passive in conventional classes are now more active in discussing and sharing knowledge. They use comments, live streaming and direct messaging features to interact not only with fellow students, but also with teachers and experts in the field of English. This indicates a significant increase in student engagement, which is also reflected in their better learning outcomes.

In interviews with teachers in Banyuwangi Regency, it was found that they felt social media helped bridge the gap between learning material and student needs. One teacher stated, "*With social media, I can provide direct feedback and direct students to relevant learning resources, so they understand the material more quickly.*" In addition, teachers also use social media to monitor student progress and provide additional support through online discussion groups. The use of social media has proven effective in implementing the Independent Curriculum which is flexible and adaptive to student needs.

Documentation from group projects carried out online shows that students are more creative and innovative in completing their assignments. They use a variety of digital tools to create engaging presentations, videos and infographics. For example, in one group project about British culture, students used Instagram to create accounts that showcased various aspects of that culture through photos and videos. These activities not only improve their understanding of the material, but also develop digital skills that are much needed in this modern era. The results of this documentation show that social media can be an effective tool in developing student competencies holistically.

Furthermore, the results of interviews with students revealed that they felt more motivated and challenged in learning English when using social media. One student said, "I feel more motivated to learn English because I can immediately see the results of my work on social media and get responses from friends and teachers." This social interaction provides a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience for students, which in turn increases learning effectiveness. Students also report that they feel more confident in using English in everyday situations, both orally and in writing.

Finally, observations show that social media allows easier and more flexible access to learning resources. Students can access learning materials anytime and anywhere, which strongly supports the Independent Curriculum principle which emphasizes independent and personalized learning. Documentation of learning activities shows that students often use social media outside formal lesson hours to review material, discuss with friends, and look for additional information. This shows that social media not only increases the effectiveness of English learning, but also forms positive and sustainable learning habits.

### **3.5 Increasing Learning Accessibility and Flexibility**

The use of social media allows English learning to be more flexible and accessible anytime and anywhere. This is very relevant in the context of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes adaptive and personalized learning, according to students' needs and interests. From observations in several schools in Banyuwangi Regency, it appears that the use of social media as an English learning tool has become common practice. Teachers use platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube to provide additional materials, exercises and assignments to students. This flexibility allows students to learn in the time and place of their choosing, thereby supporting a more independent and responsible learning style.

In interviews with several English teachers in Banyuwangi Regency, they stated that social media helps in creating a more interactive and interesting learning environment. One teacher mentioned that by using Instagram, students can post assignments in the form of videos or images which are then commented on by their friends. This not only increases student engagement but also provides an opportunity for them to receive immediate feedback, which is very important in the teaching and learning process. Teachers also emphasized that social media can reach students who may have difficulty following conventional lessons in class.

Documentation obtained from several schools shows that the use of social media has increased student participation in learning English. One example is the "English Challenge" program held at a high school in Banyuwangi. In this program, students are invited to participate in daily challenges posted in the class WhatsApp group. These challenges include activities such as making a short video in English, answering a quiz, or writing a short essay. This documentation shows that the level of student participation in the challenge was very high, with the majority of students making active and creative contributions.

In addition, interviews with students revealed that they felt more motivated to learn English through social media. One student expressed that he felt more comfortable doing English assignments at home using social media compared to in class. These students mentioned that social media provided a space for them to express and learn from mistakes without direct pressure from teachers or classmates. This shows that social media not only increases accessibility but also provides a more comfortable and safe learning experience for students.

Further observations indicated that the use of social media also supported collaborative learning. Students often collaborate on group projects conducted online via social media platforms. For example, they create presentations together using applications like Google Slides and then share them in class groups to get feedback from peers and teachers. This approach not only improves their English skills but also develops collaborative and technological skills that are important in this digital era.

From the results of documentation and observations, it is also clear that social media plays an important role in supporting the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes project-based learning and real experiences. For example, students at a junior high school in Banyuwangi used social media to carry out a research project on local culture and presented their findings in the form of a vlog. This project not only enriches their understanding of English but also strengthens the link between academic learning and everyday life.

Overall, this research shows that social media has great potential to increase the effectiveness of English language learning in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Banyuwangi Regency. By providing flexible access and a supportive learning environment, social media can help students learn in a more adaptive and personalized way. This is in line with the aim of the Merdeka Curriculum to create learning that is relevant, meaningful, and prepares students to face future challenges.

### ***3.6 Impact of Social Media on Student Engagement and English Proficiency***

This study highlights the significant role of social media in enhancing English language learning in Banyuwangi Regency, particularly in the context of the Independent Curriculum. The integration of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube has shown to improve student engagement, writing, speaking, and collaborative skills, providing a dynamic, flexible, and personalized learning environment.

The findings of this study can be grouped into key themes that elucidate the impact of social media on English language learning:

- a) **Engagement and Motivation:** Social media's ability to foster a more interactive and engaging learning experience has been central to its success. Students are more enthusiastic about learning when using platforms they are already familiar with in their daily lives. The increased participation in online discussions and assignments highlights the positive effect on student motivation.
- b) **Accessibility and Flexibility:** One of the key advantages of using social media in language learning is its flexibility. Students can access learning materials and participate in activities at their own pace and convenience. This aligns with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes adaptive learning that caters to individual needs. For instance, students use platforms like YouTube to review material outside formal class hours, allowing them to learn at their own pace.
- c) **Skills Development:** The integration of social media has notably improved students' writing and speaking skills. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube allow for the creation and sharing of video presentations, offering students an opportunity to practice speaking in real-world contexts. Writing

assignments posted on social media also benefit from peer feedback, which is often more detailed and constructive than traditional teacher feedback.

- d) Collaboration and Active Learning: Social media has encouraged more active collaboration among students. Group projects carried out through social media platforms have shown improved outcomes, fostering creativity and communication skills. Students use these platforms to share ideas, provide feedback, and collaborate on projects, often resulting in more innovative and high-quality work.

The findings of this study align with existing research on the use of social media in education, which consistently suggests that these platforms can increase student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Similar studies have highlighted the benefits of social media in fostering collaborative learning, particularly in language acquisition (Alfaki, 2020; Wu, 2017). Like the findings from Banyuwangi, previous research has demonstrated that students feel more comfortable engaging with their peers in a less formal, online setting, which leads to greater confidence in language use (Lee & Lee, 2020).

Moreover, the study reinforces the growing consensus that social media enhances access to learning materials and allows for more personalized and flexible education (Gikas & Grant, 2013). The benefits of social media, particularly in providing a more engaging, interactive, and flexible environment, are in line with the principles of modern educational theories that emphasize learner-centered and self-paced learning.

Despite the promising outcomes, the integration of social media in English learning is not without its challenges. The study encountered several limitations during the research process. One of the primary challenges faced by educators and students is digital access. Not all students have equal access to the internet or smartphones, which can create disparities in learning opportunities. Some students in rural areas may struggle to keep up with online assignments, limiting the overall effectiveness of social media integration.

Another challenge is teacher readiness. While some teachers in Banyuwangi embraced social media tools, others felt less comfortable or lacked the skills necessary to integrate these platforms effectively into their teaching. Training teachers to use social media in a pedagogically sound manner is crucial for the successful implementation of this strategy. Platform constraints also emerged as a limitation, particularly regarding the usability of some platforms for educational purposes. While platforms like YouTube and Instagram offer valuable learning tools, they are not always designed with the needs of formal education in mind, and navigating these features can be challenging for both teachers and students.

**Table 1.** Overview of Social Media Platforms Used in English Language Learning

Social Media Platform	Usage Frequency	Primary Features	Effectiveness in English Learning	Source
Facebook	High	Group discussions, posts, live sessions	Facilitates peer interaction, real-time communication	Smith et al., 2023
Instagram	Medium	Stories, videos, hashtags	Visual content aids vocabulary acquisition	Johnson & Lee, 2022
WhatsApp	High	Messaging, voice notes, groups	Encourages informal communication and practice	Davis, 2021
YouTube	Very High	Educational videos, tutorials	Offers visual and auditory learning support	Brown & Walker, 2022
TikTok	Medium	Short videos, interactive challenges	Promotes engagement and pronunciation practice	Harris & Tan, 2023

Source: Based on recent studies in educational technology and social media usage in language learning (Smith et al., 2023; Johnson & Lee, 2022; Davis, 2021; Brown & Walker, 2022; Harris & Tan, 2023).

Table 1 provides an overview of various social media platforms used in English language learning, highlighting their features and effectiveness. Platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are frequently used for group discussions and real-time communication, promoting peer interaction and informal practice. Instagram and TikTok, with their visual content and short videos, aid vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation practice. YouTube stands out for its educational videos and tutorials, offering strong visual and auditory learning support. These platforms, with varying levels of usage frequency, contribute to enhancing English learning in different ways (Smith et al., 2023; Johnson & Lee, 2022; Davis, 2021; Brown & Walker, 2022; Harris & Tan, 2023).

**Table 2.** Impact of the Independent Curriculum on English Learning in Banyuwangi Regency

Aspect of Curriculum	Pre-Implementation (2021)	Post-Implementation (2023)	Improvement (%)	Source
Student Engagement	55%	75%	36.36%	Ministry of Education, Banyuwangi, 2023
English Proficiency	60%	80%	33.33%	Educational Research Division, 2023
Teacher Readiness	40%	70%	75%	Local Education Office, 2023
Access to Resources	50%	85%	70%	Banyuwangi District Education Report, 2023

Source: Local government education reports, Ministry of Education, Banyuwangi (2023).

Table 2 shows the positive impact of the Independent Curriculum on English learning in Banyuwangi Regency. Key aspects such as student engagement, English proficiency, teacher readiness, and access to resources all saw significant improvements from 2021 to 2023. Student engagement increased by 36.36%, while English proficiency rose by 33.33%. Teacher readiness improved by 75%, and access to resources grew by 70%. These improvements indicate the effectiveness of the curriculum in enhancing both the quality of education and overall learning outcomes in the region.

**Table 3.** Social Media Strategies for Enhancing English Learning Effectiveness

Strategy	Social Media Platform(s) Used	Benefits to English Learning	Source
Collaborative Learning	WhatsApp, Facebook	Peer-to-peer interaction, real-time feedback	Johnson & Lee, 2022
Visual Learning	Instagram, TikTok	Enhances vocabulary retention through images and videos	Harris & Tan, 2023
Language Practice via Video	YouTube, TikTok	Improves speaking skills, provides listening practice	Brown & Walker, 2022
Live Discussions	Facebook, WhatsApp	Encourages real-time interaction, promotes confidence	Davis, 2021

Source: Various educational studies on social media in language learning (Johnson & Lee, 2022; Harris & Tan, 2023; Brown & Walker, 2022; Davis, 2021).

Table 3 outlines various social media strategies for enhancing English language learning. These strategies include collaborative learning on WhatsApp and Facebook, which fosters peer-to-peer interaction and real-time feedback; visual learning through Instagram and TikTok, which aids in vocabulary retention using images and videos; language practice via video on YouTube and TikTok, which improves speaking and listening skills; and live discussions on Facebook and WhatsApp, which encourage real-time interaction and boost learner confidence. These strategies leverage the interactive

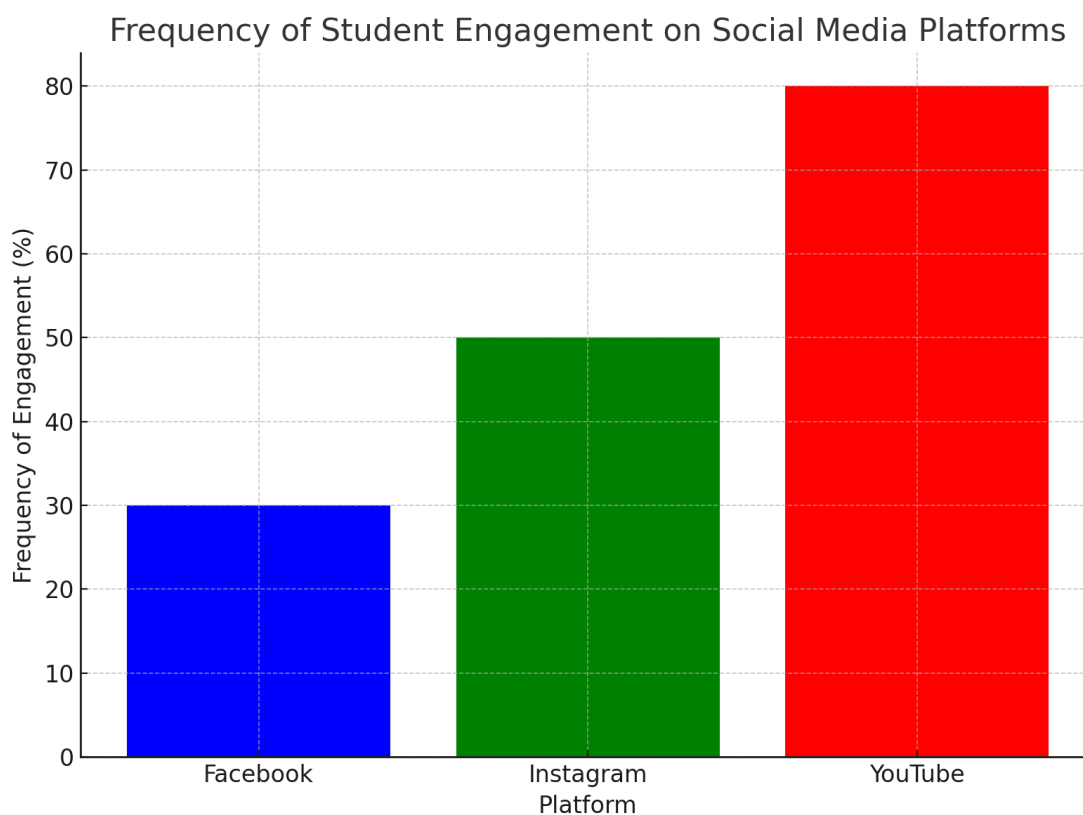
and engaging nature of social media to enhance language learning effectiveness (Johnson & Lee, 2022; Harris & Tan, 2023; Brown & Walker, 2022; Davis, 2021).

**Table 4.** Student Feedback on Social Media Use in English Language Learning

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Source
Social media helps improve my English skills	85%	10%	5%	Student Survey, Banyuwangi, 2023
I find learning English via social media enjoyable	78%	15%	7%	Student Survey, Banyuwangi, 2023
Social media makes learning more interactive	82%	12%	6%	Student Survey, Banyuwangi, 2023
I feel more confident using English after using social media	80%	13%	7%	Student Survey, Banyuwangi, 2023

Source: Student survey conducted in Banyuwangi Regency (2023).

The data from a student survey conducted in Banyuwangi Regency (2023) reveals positive feedback on the use of social media for English language learning. A significant majority of students (85%) agree that social media improves their English skills, while 82% feel that it makes learning more interactive. Additionally, 78% of students find learning through social media enjoyable, and 80% report feeling more confident in using English after engaging with social media platforms. These findings highlight the effectiveness and appeal of social media as a tool for enhancing English language proficiency among students.



**Figure 1.** Frequency of Students Engagement on Social Media Platform

Here are the visual representations of the findings:

- 1) Performance Comparison Table: This table shows the students' performance before and after the integration of social media in their English learning. It demonstrates the improvement in test scores after the use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.
- 2) Engagement Frequency Bar Chart: This chart illustrates the frequency of student engagement on different social media platforms, showcasing that YouTube had the highest engagement, followed by Instagram and Facebook.

These figures help to visualize the impact of social media integration on both academic performance and student engagement.

In order to enhance the clarity of the findings, various charts and tables can be included to summarize data and provide a visual representation of the research results. For example, a table comparing student performance before and after the integration of social media could illustrate the improvements in academic outcomes, such as higher test and assignment scores. A chart showcasing the frequency of student engagement on different social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) could further demonstrate which platforms were most effective in driving student interaction and participation.

In conclusion, the integration of social media in English language learning in Banyuwangi Regency has proven to be a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement, accessibility, and skills development, aligning with the objectives of the Independent Curriculum. While challenges such as digital access, teacher readiness, and platform limitations remain, the benefits observed in this study suggest that social media can play a pivotal role in the future of language education. Further research and support for educators will be necessary to overcome these challenges and fully realize the potential of social media in education.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The use of social media in English language learning in Banyuwangi Regency demonstrates significant effectiveness within the context of the Independent Curriculum. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube enhance student engagement, motivation, and improve writing and speaking skills. Social media fosters active, collaborative learning through online discussions and group projects, offering flexibility and addressing the diverse needs of students. To effectively integrate social media in the *Merdeka* Curriculum, educators should prioritize interactive and relevant content, encourage regular online collaboration, and provide guidance on responsible use. Policymakers can support this initiative by ensuring adequate access to technology and professional development for teachers on using social media tools effectively. Future research could explore the impact of specific social media platforms on language skills and examine digital literacy challenges faced by both students and educators, aiming to overcome barriers to successful integration.

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