

# The Use of Social Media in Indonesian Language Learning for Students at Lamongan Islamic University

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This study aims to describe the use of social media in Indonesian language learning for students at Lamongan Islamic University and examine students' responses to its use as a learning medium. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with students from two classes of general Indonesian language courses as subjects. Data were obtained through learning observations, semi-structured interviews, student response questionnaires, and documentation of learning activities through social media. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion drawing. The results show that social media is used as a medium for communication and discussion, material delivery, and a means of practicing language skills, especially writing and speaking. The use of social media encourages increased academic interaction, active student participation, and learning motivation in Indonesian language learning. In addition, learning becomes more contextual and relevant to the characteristics of students as digital learners. The conclusion of this study shows that the integration of social media in Indonesian language learning contributes positively to the achievement of learning objectives and has the potential to be developed as part of an innovative learning model in higher education.

**Keywords:** Indonesian language learning, social media, students, digital learning, higher education

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## 1. Introduction

The development of digital technology over the past two decades has brought about a fundamental transformation in the implementation of higher education. Advances in information technology have not only changed the way students access learning resources but also influenced patterns of interaction, communication, and knowledge construction in the learning process. Social media has emerged as one of the digital technology products most intensively used by students, for both social and academic purposes. Social media platforms enable rapid, collaborative, and cross-spatial information exchange, thus offering the potential to be utilized as a learning support tool in higher education.

Students, as part of the digital generation (digital natives), are characterized by being familiar with technology, accustomed to accessing information visually and multimodally, and tending to prefer interactive and participatory learning. Alabdulkareem (2015) stated that digital generation learners exhibit a tendency to learn through social networks and digital environments that enable two-way interaction. These characteristics require lecturers to not only master the teaching material but also be able to design learning strategies that align with students' learning habits so that the learning process can take place effectively and meaningfully.

In the context of learning Indonesian as a general subject in higher education, the challenges faced are inseparable from students' perceptions of the subject. Indonesian is often viewed as a normative, theoretical subject that lacks relevance to the academic needs of students across disciplines. However, learning Indonesian in higher education plays a strategic role in developing students' academic skills, such as the ability to write scientific papers, express ideas verbally in formal contexts, and think critically and systematically

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(Kustyarini et al., 2020). Therefore, learning innovations are needed that can connect Indonesian language material to the real-life contexts of students' lives, while utilizing media familiar to their daily lives.

Various studies over the past decade have shown that social media has significant potential for integration into language learning. Tess (2018) suggests that utilizing social media in higher education can increase student participation, expand academic discussion spaces, and foster the formation of collaborative learning communities. Research by Yuningsih (2021) shows that the use of social media such as WhatsApp and YouTube in Indonesian language learning contributes to improving students' writing and speaking skills. Furthermore, visual platforms like Instagram and TikTok are considered effective in fostering student creativity through the production of multimodal texts that align with the characteristics of language learning in the digital era (Khasawneh, et al., 2024).

However, previous studies have generally been conducted in the context of large-scale state universities or language study programs, thus not fully representing the practice of teaching Indonesian as a general subject in regional Islamic universities. Furthermore, some studies tend to focus on the effectiveness of a single type of social media, without examining the diverse and integrated use of social media in the learning process. This situation indicates a research gap that needs to be filled through contextual studies that more specifically consider the characteristics of institutions, lecturers, and students.

Based on this study, the scientific novelty of this article lies in its attempt to uncover the practice of using social media in Indonesian language learning as a general course at Lamongan Islamic University. This research emphasizes the variety of social media used, the pedagogical objectives of these media uses, and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of social media-based learning. Thus, this study not only describes social media as a learning tool but also relates it to the needs of Indonesian language learning in Islamic higher education environments.

The research problems examined in this article include: (1) how social media is used in Indonesian language learning for students at Lamongan Islamic University, (2) what social media are used and what learning objectives are to be achieved, and (3) how students perceive the effectiveness of using social media in Indonesian language learning. These problems are formulated to obtain a comprehensive picture of the practice and impact of using social media in Indonesian language learning.

The purpose of this article is to describe in depth the use of social media in Indonesian language learning, identify the types of social media utilized and their pedagogical functions, and analyze students' responses and experiences with social media-based learning. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of digital-based Indonesian language learning studies and provide practical benefits for lecturers in designing and implementing innovative learning that aligns with student characteristics in higher education.

## 2. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the use of social media in Indonesian language learning for students at Lamongan Islamic University. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on revealing learning phenomena in a natural, contextual, and holistic manner, specifically related to student practices, experiences, and perceptions of the use of social media in the learning process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptive method is used to systematically describe the forms of social media use, the types of platforms utilized, and student responses without performing any treatment or manipulation of research variables.

The subjects of this study were students at the Islamic University of Lamongan taking the general Indonesian

language course during the current semester, consisting of two classes with diverse student characteristics. In addition to the students, the lecturer in charge of the Indonesian language course was involved as a supporting informant to obtain data on learning planning and implementation. This study was conducted at the Islamic University of Lamongan from October to November, with the research locations including lecture classrooms and a virtual learning space utilizing social media.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from learning observations, semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers, and student response questionnaires regarding the use of social media in Indonesian language learning. Meanwhile, secondary data include Semester Learning Plan (RPS) documents, teaching materials, and documentation of learning activities uploaded or shared through social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. The use of these various data sources aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study (Miles et al., 2020).

The research instruments used included observation guidelines, interview guidelines, student response questionnaires, and documentation sheets. The observation guidelines were used to record student learning activities and interactions in using social media. The interview guidelines were semi-structured to allow researchers to explore data in depth while remaining focused on the research focus. The student response questionnaires were used to gather data on student perceptions, interest levels, and experiences in social media-based learning. These instruments were developed based on the research objectives and were consulted with experts to ensure the appropriateness and clarity of the questions.

The data collection procedure was carried out in several stages. First, the researcher observed the implementation of Indonesian language learning utilizing social media. Second, the researcher distributed questionnaires to students to obtain initial data on their responses and learning experiences. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several students and their lecturers to deepen the findings from the observations and questionnaires. Fourth, the researcher collected documentation in the form of teaching materials, screenshots of discussions, and student assignments uploaded via social media. These steps were carried out systematically to ensure the data obtained complemented and supported each other (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data analysis technique in this study refers to an interactive qualitative data analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused on data relevant to the research objectives. Next, the data was presented in descriptive form and simple tables for ease of understanding. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which was carried out in stages, taking into account the consistency of the data obtained. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively quantitatively using percentages to strengthen the qualitative findings (Miles et al., 2020).

Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, namely comparing data from observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by confirming the research findings with informants to ensure the consistency between the data obtained and their experiences. With these steps, it is hoped that the research results will have an adequate level of trustworthiness and validity.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Research result

The general Indonesian language course at Lamongan Islamic University is a compulsory course for students across all study programs in the first semester. This course is designed to equip students with academic language skills, including scientific writing, speaking in formal forums, critical reading, and understanding linguistic rules. According to the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), Indonesian language learning is directed toward learning outcomes that emphasize skills and application, rather than solely mastery of theory.

The learning model implemented is blended, combining face-to-face learning with online learning through social media. Lecturers utilize social media as a learning support to expand discussion space, deliver supplementary materials, and assign and assess student assignments. This model aligns with the characteristics of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and the use of digital technology (Zubaidah, 2018).

#### Forms of Using Social Media in Learning

Observations and documentation show that lecturers and students utilize several social media platforms in Indonesian language learning. These include WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. Each platform has different functions and usage characteristics, tailored to the learning objectives.

**Table 1.** Social Media Used in Indonesian Language Learning

Social media	Frequency of Use	Main Form of Utilization
WhatsApp	Very often	Class discussions, announcements, assignment collection
YouTube	Often	Delivery of audiovisual materials, presentation references
Instagram	Quite often	Upload creative assignments, writing and speaking practice

Based on Table 1, WhatsApp is the most frequently used social media platform due to its ease of access and rapid two-way communication. YouTube is used as a source of additional material in the form of learning videos and student presentations. Meanwhile, Instagram is utilized as a publication platform for students' creative assignments, such as uploading short speech videos and language infographics.

Learning activities conducted through social media include online discussions, individual and group assignments, presentations, and the uploading of text-based and audiovisual content. These activities enable students to actively engage in learning and express their understanding through various forms of language representation.

#### The Purpose and Function of Social Media in Learning

Interviews with lecturers and students indicate that social media serves several pedagogical purposes. First, social media serves as a communication and discussion platform, particularly through WhatsApp. Students utilize class groups to ask questions, respond to material, and discuss topics outside of face-to-face lectures. This function expands learning interactions and encourages student participation, which tends to be passive in class.

Second, social media serves as a medium for delivering learning materials. YouTube is used to share instructional videos containing explanations, examples of scientific writing, and presentation techniques. This audiovisual medium helps students understand abstract and procedural material, as confirmed by Mayer's (2020) research on the effectiveness of multimedia learning.

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Third, social media is used as a medium for practicing language skills, particularly writing and speaking. Through Instagram, students are asked to create and upload content in the form of short argumentative texts, language posters, and video presentations. This activity encourages students to use Indonesian contextually and creatively in the digital space, in line with the research findings of Khasawneh, et. all., (2024) .

### Student Responses and Perceptions towards the Use of Social Media

Student responses to the use of social media in Indonesian language learning were obtained through a questionnaire completed by 62 students from two classes. The results indicated a generally positive perception of social media-based learning.

**Table 2.** Student Responses to the Use of Social Media

Rated aspect	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree Less (%)	Don't agree (%)
Learning is more interesting	42	45	13	0
Easy to use media	50	40	10	0
Increase learning motivation	38	47	15	0
Helps understand the material	35	48	17	0

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that using social media makes learning Indonesian more engaging and easier to follow. Students also experienced increased motivation to learn and easier understanding of the material through more varied and interactive presentations.

The interview results corroborated the questionnaire findings, in which students stated that learning through social media provided a learning experience more relevant to their daily lives. Social media allows students to learn flexibly, collaboratively, and beyond the confines of a formal classroom. This finding aligns with Tess's (2018) research, which found that social media can strengthen student engagement in higher education.

### Discussion

The research results show that the use of social media in Indonesian language learning at Lamongan Islamic University has made a positive contribution to the learning process and quality. Social media is no longer merely used as a technical support tool, but rather functions as an alternative learning space that allows for broader and more sustainable academic interactions between lecturers and students. The integration of social media in this learning reflects the application of digital learning principles that emphasize flexibility, active participation, and collaboration in building knowledge, as stated by Anderson (2016) within the framework of online learning and networking.

The alignment of the research findings with digital learning theory is evident in the increased student engagement in discussions, completing assignments, and practicing language skills. Social media allows students to interact more openly without being bound by the constraints of space and time, thus providing greater participation for students who tend to be passive in face-to-face learning. This finding aligns with the social constructivist perspective, which places interaction, dialogue, and collaboration as key elements in the learning process (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2019). In this context, social media acts as a vehicle that facilitates the formation of network-based collaborative learning, where students can build understanding together through the exchange of ideas and learning experiences.

The role of social media in enhancing learning interactions is also reflected in the intensity of academic communication that occurs outside of class hours. Students utilize platforms like WhatsApp to ask questions, discuss material, and respond to assignments on an ongoing basis. This type of interaction not only strengthens academic relationships between students and lecturers but also creates a more inclusive and responsive learning environment to student needs. This finding reinforces the research findings of Tess (2018), which asserted that social media can expand the space for academic discussion and increase student engagement in

learning at university.

When compared with previous research, the results of this study show both similarities and significant differences. The similarity lies in the finding that the use of digital and visual-based media has a positive impact on motivation and language skills. Research by Umamy et al. (2023), for example, shows that the use of Powtoon media can improve students' persuasive writing skills through the presentation of visual and engaging materials. Although the context and educational level are different, these findings reinforce the findings of this study that digital media, including social media, can improve the quality of language learning through a contextual and multimodal approach. Similarly, research by Yuningsih (2021) and Kusumaningrum and Nurhadi (2022) confirms that social media contributes positively to students' writing and speaking skills.

The difference is that this study specifically examines the integrated use of several social media platforms in Indonesian language learning as a general course at a regional Islamic university. Thus, this research broadens the scope of previous studies, which generally focused on one type of media or on a specific language study program. The position of this research's findings within the study of Indonesian language learning demonstrates that social media can be a strategic medium for contextualizing language learning with the realities of students' digital lives. Indonesian language learning is not only directed at mastering linguistic rules, but also at authentic, critical, and relevant language practices in today's communication context (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2017).

The learning implications of this study indicate that social media use positively impacts students' learning motivation, comprehension, and language skills. Social media enables students to produce academic and non-academic texts in various multimodal formats, making Indonesian language learning more applicable and meaningful. This finding aligns with Mayer (2020), who stated that multimedia-based learning can enhance conceptual understanding if designed according to cognitive principles. Furthermore, research by Umamy et al. (2025) shows that implementing a systematic thinking framework, such as Barrett's Taxonomy, can improve students' reading comprehension. These findings reinforce the implications of this study, which emphasizes that digital media integration needs to be accompanied by clear pedagogical planning to optimally impact language skills.

However, this study has limitations that require consideration. These include the limited number of subjects, which involved only two classes, the relatively short research period, and the limited use of social media, which focused on a few specific platforms. These limitations limit the generalizability of the research results to broader and more diverse contexts.

Based on these results and limitations, it is recommended that Indonesian language lecturers design a more planned and systematic use of social media as an integral part of learning, rather than simply as a supplementary medium. Lecturers need to consider the appropriateness of the media to learning objectives, student characteristics, and principles of digital ethics. Furthermore, further research is recommended to involve a broader range of subjects, use more varied research designs, and examine in more depth the impact of social media use on each language skill, such as critical reading, academic writing, and formal speaking.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of social media in Indonesian language learning for students at Lamongan Islamic University has been proven to support the achievement of learning objectives in a more contextual and participatory manner. Social media functions as an effective learning medium in facilitating academic interactions, expanding learning spaces, and encouraging students' active involvement in practicing language skills, especially writing and speaking. The integrated use of various social media platforms allows Indonesian language learning to

be oriented not only towards mastering rules, but also towards applying language in authentic digital communication contexts. These findings indicate that social media integration aligns with the characteristics of students as digital learners and contributes to increased motivation and understanding of the material. Going forward, this research opens up opportunities for the development of a more systematic and integrated social media-based Indonesian language learning model with a specific pedagogical approach, and encourages further research with a broader scope of subjects and research designs to strengthen the findings obtained.

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