

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The way people learn English has changed considerably in the digital era. English learning was mainly associated with formal classroom instruction, where teachers, textbooks, and classroom activities became the primary sources of language learning. However, the rapid development of digital technology has expanded learners' opportunities to engage with English beyond the classroom. As a result, English can be encountered through various activities in everyday life, allowing learners to access the language anytime and anywhere. This shift indicates that English learning is no longer limited to formal educational settings but is also supported by learning experiences that occur outside the classroom through various informal learning environments (Guo & Lee, 2023). Therefore, learners now have greater opportunities to engage with English in more flexible and meaningful ways than ever before.

Among the various informal learning environments, social media has become one of the most widely used digital spaces in everyday life. The increasing use of digital platforms has made social media an environment that

provides learners with opportunities to encounter English outside formal educational settings (Guo & Lee, 2023). Along with its rapid development, social media provides access to a wide range of digital content, including content presented in English. As users engage with social media for entertainment, information, and communication, English gradually becomes part of their everyday online experiences. This development highlights the growing role of social media in creating opportunities for learners to encounter English in their daily lives (Ilmita et al., 2025).

As opportunities to encounter English continue to increase in everyday life, English language exposure has become an important aspect of language learning. English language exposure refers to learners' contact with the target language through various sources that provide continuous language input (Al-Zoubi, 2018). In second language learning, exposure is considered essential because it enables learners to become familiar with vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and authentic language use over time. Continuous exposure also allows learners to process and understand the language more naturally through repeated encounters in different contexts. Previous studies have shown that greater exposure to English can support learners' second language development by increasing opportunities to encounter, understand, and use the target language in

everyday contexts (Jahrani & Listia, 2023). Therefore, English language exposure has become a fundamental concept for understanding how learners develop their English proficiency through continuous contact with the language.

Based on the researcher observations, students of the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno (UINFAS) Bengkulu use social media as part of their daily lives. The widespread use of social media has become an integral part of students' daily activities for various purposes beyond academic learning. As they spend time using these social media, opportunities to encounter English have also become part of their daily experiences. This phenomenon indicates that English language exposure has become part of students' everyday lives, making it important to further understand how they experience the language through social media.

The ways learners experience English language exposure may vary depending on how they interact with the language. Generally, language exposure can be understood through two forms: active exposure and passive exposure. Active English language exposure occurs when learners intentionally seek opportunities to engage with English in order to improve their language skills (Sockett, 2014). In this form of exposure, learners consciously direct their attention to the language and actively participate in the learning

process to achieve specific learning goals. Rather than simply receiving language input, learners interact with English by producing or responding to the language through meaningful communication and purposeful language use. Because of this active involvement, out-of-class technology-mediated English exposure has been associated with positive language learning outcomes, particularly in learners' L2 vocabulary development (Lai et al., 2022).

In contrast to active exposure, passive English language exposure occurs when learners encounter English without intentionally seeking opportunities to learn the language. According to Sockett (2014), learners experience this type of exposure while their attention is primarily focused on activities other than language learning, allowing English input to be received incidentally rather than deliberately. Unlike active exposure, learners are not expected to produce or consciously practice the language. Instead, they mainly act as receivers of authentic language input, gradually developing familiarity with English through repeated encounters with the language. Pikhart and Botezat (2021) further argue that continuous exposure to authentic English in digital environments enables learners to internalize language naturally, even when language learning is not their primary intention.

Consequently, passive English language exposure has attracted increasing attention in recent English language learning research because it demonstrates that meaningful language development can occur beyond intentional learning activities. As passive English language exposure occurs naturally in learners' everyday digital activities, students may experience it in different ways depending on the types of content they encounter, their patterns of social media use, and how they engage with English while using these platforms. Therefore, exploring students' experiences of passive English language exposure is important to gain a deeper understanding of how this form of exposure is experienced in authentic daily contexts.

English language exposure is generally categorized into active and passive exposure. Active exposure has received greater attention in previous studies because learners intentionally engage with English through speaking, writing, or other purposeful learning activities, and its contribution to language development has been widely documented. However, with the rapid growth of social media, learners are increasingly exposed to English passively while scrolling through videos, reading captions, or consuming online content without intending to learn the language. Recent studies suggest that this passive exposure may also contribute to vocabulary growth, listening

comprehension, and familiarity with authentic language use. Nevertheless, compared with active exposure, limited research has explored how learners actually experience passive English language exposure in their daily social media use, particularly in the Indonesian EFL context. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring students' experiences of passive English language exposure through social media.

Although passive English language exposure has received increasing attention in English language learning research (Sockett, 2014; Pikhart & Botezat, 2021), several issues remain insufficiently explored. Existing studies have primarily focused on the relationship between English exposure and language learning outcomes or on the educational potential of digital media in supporting English learning (Lee & Dressman, 2018; Pikhart & Botezat, 2021). However, limited attention has been given to understanding how learners naturally experience passive English language exposure through their everyday use of social media, particularly in the Indonesian EFL context. In addition, previous research has rarely examined learners' own perspectives regarding the benefits and challenges they experience while encountering English passively through social media. Therefore, further research is needed to provide a deeper understanding of students' passive interaction with

English and their experiences of passive English language exposure in daily social media use.

Based on the research gap identified above, this study aims to explore passive English language exposure experienced by eighth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno (UINFAS) Bengkulu through their use of social media. Specifically, this study seeks to examine how students passively interact with English while using social media and to investigate the benefits and challenges they perceive from these experiences. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of passive English language exposure in the Indonesian EFL context and provide insights for learners, educators, and future researchers regarding the role of social media in supporting English language learning.

B. Problem Identification

Based on the background of the study described above, the problems related to students' experiences of passive English language exposure through social media at UINFAS Bengkulu can be identified as follows:

1. Passive English language exposure through social media has become part of students' daily lives, yet this phenomenon has not been fully explored.

2. Previous studies have mainly focused on active English language exposure or language learning outcomes, while passive English language exposure through social media has received relatively less attention.
3. There is still limited understanding of how students experience passive English language exposure through their daily use of social media.

C. Limitation of Research

This research focuses on exploring the experiences of eighth-semester students of the English Education Department at UINFAS Bengkulu regarding English language exposure through social media. The study is limited to social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram as sources of Passive English exposure. The research aims to explore how students experience and perceive English language exposure through social media in their daily lives.

D. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the researcher are formulated the research questions such as:

1. How do the 8th-semester students at UINFAS experience Passive English Language Exposure through social media?
2. What benefits and challenges do the 8th-semester students at UINFAS experience during Passive English Language exposure through social media?

E. Research Objective

The objectives of this research are as follows :

1. To explore and describe the various ways in which 8th-semester students at UINFAS Bengkulu passively interact with English-language content across different social media platforms.
2. To identify and analyze the specific challenges and benefits that students experience during their passive exposure to the English language on social media.

F. Significances Research

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), specifically regarding informal digital learning:

1. Theoretical Significances

This study will enrich the existing theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), particularly the

concept of incidental learning and passive exposure. It provides new insights into how social media algorithms create a personalized linguistic environment that supports language acquisition in a non-formal context. Furthermore, this study adds to the literature concerning digital immersion in Islamic higher education settings.

2. Practical Significances

- a. For Students: It will help students become more aware that their daily social media habits can be transformed into a valuable learning tool. It encourages them to be more mindful of the English content they consume.
- b. For Teachers and Lecturers: It provides information for educators to understand how students learn outside the classroom. This can help lecturers design materials or assignments that bridge the gap between formal lessons and students' digital interests.
- c. For Future Researchers: This study can serve as a reference or a starting point for other researchers who wish to explore the qualitative and psychological aspects of social media in language learning more deeply.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings, the following terms are defined according to their use in this study:

1. **Passive Exposure:** This refers to Passive English Language Exposure, which refers to an individual's experience of encountering information or stimuli from their surrounding environment. In the context of language learning, exposure can be understood as learners' experiences of coming into contact with English through various sources that stimuli can be heard, observed, or read.
2. **Social Media:** Social media referred to digital platforms that enabled users to access, consume, interact with, and share various types of content. In this study, social media was specifically limited to **TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram, and** as these platforms were the sources through which the participants encountered English-language content during their everyday activities.
3. **Students' Experiences:** **refer to** the ways in which learners encounter, perceive, interpret, and respond to particular situations or phenomena. In this study, students' experiences included how they encountered English content, the forms of exposure they experienced through

watching, listening, and reading, and their responses to the English content encountered during their social media use.

