



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON TWITTER AS SOCIAL MEDIA
 IN WRITING SKILLS**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates English Department students' perceptions of using Twitter as a social media platform to enhance writing skills. Employing a mixed-method design, the study combines quantitative data from questionnaires distributed to 80 students and qualitative insights from interviews with six participants. The quantitative data reveal that a majority of students actively use Twitter and perceive it as a beneficial tool for developing vocabulary, grammar, and overall writing confidence. The qualitative findings further emphasize Twitter's role in encouraging students to express ideas more freely and creatively. Twitter provides a relaxed environment where students feel more comfortable experimenting with English writing. Despite some limitations, such as fear of mistakes or limited feedback, the study concludes that Twitter is a valuable supplementary platform for English writing skill development.

Keywords: Twitter, writing skills, student perception, social media, English education

**PERSEPSI MAHASISWA JURUSAN BAHASA INGGRIS TERHADAP PENGGUNAAN
 TWITTER DALAM KETERAMPILAN MENULIS**

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris terhadap penggunaan Twitter sebagai platform media sosial untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis. Dengan desain metode campuran, penelitian ini menggabungkan data kuantitatif dari kuesioner yang dibagikan kepada 80 mahasiswa dan wawancara mendalam dengan enam partisipan. Data kuantitatif menunjukkan mayoritas mahasiswa secara aktif menggunakan Twitter dan menilai bahwa platform ini bermanfaat untuk pengembangan kosakata, tata bahasa, dan kepercayaan diri dalam menulis. Temuan kualitatif mempertegas peran Twitter dalam mendorong siswa untuk mengekspresikan ide secara lebih bebas dan kreatif. Twitter menyediakan lingkungan santai yang membuat siswa lebih nyaman bereksperimen dalam menulis bahasa Inggris. Meskipun terdapat beberapa keterbatasan, seperti rasa takut melakukan kesalahan atau keterbatasan dalam umpan balik, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Twitter merupakan platform tambahan yang bernilai dalam pengembangan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Twitter, Keterampilan Menulis, Persepsi Mahasiswa, Media Sosial, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

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INTRODUCTION

In the current millennial era, technology has advanced rapidly in human life. Technological advancements have resulted in the emergence of social media, which has grown in popularity among the general public (Inderawati et al., 2019). According to the internet (Muyasaroh, 2020).

People use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube more frequently. as cited by Sakkir et al. (2016), state that social media are computer-mediated tools that enable people to create and share ideas, exchange information, and exchange images and videos in virtual communities and networks via the internet. Social media is a set of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaboration.



Social media has emerged as a helpful personal communication technology; Social media assists in reshaping how people live, work, interact, and acquire knowledge and skills. As a result, people have become regular visitors to these platforms. People use these social media sites to share or exchange information, photos, or videos with their family, friends, or colleagues (Akbari et al., 2012). It is impossible to deny that social media significantly impacts human life, particularly the younger generation. Social media also provides various tools for many purposes, including access to information, news, educational resources, and entertainment (Ahmed, 2015). Social media is widely used in English language learning and continues to grow in popularity (Inderawati et al., 2019). Using social media in teaching English creates new perspectives and can help students learn the language. Social media has emerged as a new tool for teaching and learning in the 21st century. The role of social media in learning also creates new perspectives that can facilitate students' learning of English.

Many new opportunities for language learners to interact in authentic ways that were previously difficult to achieve have emerged (Chartrand in Liany et al., 2021). Most English teachers agree that students must practice English outside the formal classroom to improve their communication skills (Chappel in Liany et al., 2021). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the primary skills students must master when learning English. Writing skills must be noticed because their learning success relies heavily on their ability to express themselves through writing. Writing skills are critical for all students learning the English language. According to Sakkir et al. (2016), students who master writing skills can use writing to communicate ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions to others. For some people, communicating in written words is more accessible than communicating orally. People with difficulties verbally communicating their ideas and feelings will benefit from writing.

Moreover, in Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language (Liany et al., 2021), so achieving the target of fulfilling language skills, including writing skills, is challenging. Therefore, the learning process can be carried out in a fun and exciting way, further motivating students to continue to develop naturally and regularly. The role of technology in this advanced era is to facilitate learning. One benefit of using technology to learn English is that it can engage students in new ways of learning. Another advantage is that students can use their phones to access English-related apps. English learners will receive support by using technology (Speck, 2019).

In learning English using technology, apart from well-known social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and others, Twitter has many fluent users expressing themselves in English. Berdasarkan penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Hafizah Ali (2021) entitled "A Survey On The Use Of Social Media As A Medium In Learning Writing Skills" to English students class of 2019, at Riau University, several social media are generally frequently used, namely Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Line, Pinterest, TikTok, Tumblr, and Reddit. Based on the results of student answers, it was found that Twitter was the platform with the highest frequency, which was most commonly used in learning to write. Therefore, researchers are interested in specifically examining the influence of using Twitter as a social media on writing skills, as seen from students' perceptions.

Twitter itself is a social media application that has a wealth of knowledge and many active users who post all kinds of information on it, ranging from personal opinions to trending topics to news about the nation to articles on education, business, and the economy, among other exciting and inspiring topics. Twitter provides a feature called "retweet," which allows us to share other people's posts and add our ideas or posts to them. This provides many advantages for Twitter, including the ability to exchange private and public information, provide up-to-date information, improve writing skills, motivate us to develop ideas from the information we read, and be more creative in conveying ideas in Indonesian. With the diversity of Twitter user characteristics, Twitter also produces posts in various languages. Twitter is widely used and updated in disseminating information in Indonesia. According to a report by the Central Bureau of Statistics, as of January 2022, Indonesia had 18.45 million Twitter users, placing it the fifth largest user country globally.

As a social media for sharing ideas, responses, and feelings, Twitter can increase students' motivation to be braver in writing English and applying what they have learned at school, because they see user posts and ideas. As Harmer (2007:113) said in Budiman (2012), "Many students think or say that they cannot or do not want to write." This may be because they need more confidence, feel bored, or believe they have nothing to say. Many people choose not to say anything because they lack knowledge, and hesitate when they want to say or write something because they are not confident. On Twitter, we can write anything according to our skills and



abilities, and share sentences we can make immediately. The challenges and difficulties experienced when writing English can be a factor in developing writing. As Thandrevaj (2021) said, some students feel it is difficult to commit to replying to tweets daily because they have to construct appropriate sentences using appropriate word choice. However, it helps them to enhance their knowledge and improve their ability to read and write in English.

In this instance, there is related prior research by Ahmed (2015) in his journal article titled "The Effect of Twitter on Creating Writing Skills in English as a Foreign Language," which seeks to determine the impact of Twitter on EFL writing and to determine whether Twitter influences ideas, context, organization, voice, and writing style. Moreover, the results of his research show an increase in the experimental group compared to the control group in the post-writing test, which is associated with positive results on Twitter usage. The experimental group also demonstrated improved writing skills in ideas and content, organization, sound, and style. This proves that Twitter has a positive effect on improving students' writing skills. The benefits that students claim are English learning resources and Twitter as a medium for learning English as a foreign language, which is easy and fun. However, Twitter provides an easy and fun way to learn English and materials for language learners.

Based on the researchers' observations of English students at the University of Riau, most felt embarrassed and were not free to practice writing English on social media because they felt insecure and afraid of being judged if they made a mistake. Many are active Twitter users, especially in the 2019 batch. Therefore, researchers are interested in further studying this issue by researching English Department students' perception of Twitter as social media regarding writing skills. With English language education students at the University of Riau class of 2019 as the object of this research, because it is necessary for the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Twitter is defined as a real-time information network where users share ideas and interact using short messages called tweets. Initially limited to 140 characters and later expanded to 280, Twitter's microblogging nature promotes brevity and clarity in communication (Krutka, 2014). As a social networking tool, it allows users to follow accounts, engage in conversations, and participate in global discussions using hashtags and mentions.

Recent studies highlight Twitter's educational advantages, particularly in language learning. Twitter encourages authentic communication, provides exposure to various language styles, and fosters learner autonomy (Borau et al., 2009; Utimadini et al., 2015). Educational accounts and communities, such as "menfess" accounts, offer spaces where learners can ask questions and exchange ideas anonymously, enhancing comfort and participation (Tyas & Ansari, 2021). Writing, in this context, is considered both a cognitive and social activity. According to Brown (2004), writing consists of five components: organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style. The writing process involves planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Harmer, 2007). Twitter's features naturally support these stages, encouraging concise planning and immediate feedback.

From a theoretical perspective, the study is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Twitter provides a platform for such interaction, making language practice more contextual and meaningful. Furthermore, Flower and Hayes' cognitive process theory supports the use of Twitter in writing, as it engages learners in continuous planning and revising.

Previous research confirms the positive impact of Twitter on writing. Ahmed (2015) found significant improvements in writing skills, including vocabulary, coherence, and style, among students using Twitter. Azlan and Yunus (2020) observed increased motivation and confidence in university students. These studies validate the potential of Twitter as a valuable resource for developing writing skills.

Thus, Twitter, with its features and social dynamics, offers an informal yet effective platform for practicing English writing. It encourages learners to be concise, creative, and responsive, aligning well with the principles of writing development and digital literacy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method approach using the sequential explanatory model, where quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to strengthen and elaborate the



findings. The research was conducted at Universitas Riau between June and July 2024. The population consisted of 116 students from the English Education Department, class of 2021. From this population, 80 students were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: they had been using Twitter for more than one year and considered it part of their daily communication and learning tools.

Data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire included 25 items using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), aimed at exploring students' perceptions of Twitter as a platform to enhance writing skills. Following the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with six selected participants—three with the highest and three with the lowest scores—to verify and gain deeper insights into the questionnaire responses. The interview questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to explain their experiences more fully. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were used to provide flexibility in follow-up questions and clarify responses. All interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and later translated into English for analysis purposes. To preserve the authenticity of the participants' voices, the data are presented in their original form, with minimal editing. Some responses may include informal language, pauses, or instances of code-switching, which were intentionally retained to reflect the natural flow of spoken communication. These features not only capture the spontaneity of the interview setting but also offer valuable insight into the participants' genuine attitudes and experiences. The instruments used were adapted from previous studies (Salsabila Ali, 2021; Safitri, 2021).

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including means and percentages, based on classification criteria by Sudjana (2005). Meanwhile, qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the accuracy of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing data from both the questionnaire and the interview responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions regarding the use of Twitter as a platform to support English writing skills. The results are presented in three key areas: (1) students' behavior in using Twitter, (2) their perceptions of its impact on writing skills, and (3) their emotional responses to using Twitter for writing.

1. Students' Behavior in Using Twitter

Table 1. Students' responses on the frequency of using Twitter

| No. | Statement | SD (n/%) | D (n/%) | N (n/%) | A (n/%) | SA (n/%) | Total | Mean | Criteria |
|-----|---|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|-------|------|----------|
| S1 | I use Twitter multiple times per day | 0 (0%) | 6 (7.5%) | 10 (12.5%) | 33 (41.3%) | 31 (38.8%) | 80 | 4.11 | High |
| S2 | I regularly participate in Twitter related to writing | 0 (0%) | 8 (10%) | 22 (27.5%) | 25 (31.3%) | 25 (31.3%) | 80 | 3.84 | High |

The majority of students reported using Twitter frequently, with 80.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing they access the platform multiple times a day (S1, M = 4.11). Similarly, 62.6% stated they engage in writing-related activities on Twitter (S2, M = 3.84). These results suggest that Twitter is not only widely used but also actively utilized for writing purposes by English Department students at Universitas Riau.



Table 2. Students' responses on the purposes of using Twitter

| No. | Statement | SD (n/%) | D (n/%) | N (n/%) | A (n/%) | SA (n/%) | Total | Mean | Criteria |
|-----|--|----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------|------|----------|
| S3 | I use Twitter for educational purposes | 0 (0%) | 5 (6.25%) | 39 (48.8%) | 28 (35%) | 8 (10%) | 80 | 3.49 | Medium |
| S4 | I use Twitter for personal purposes | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 26 (32.5%) | 54 (67.5%) | 80 | 4.68 | High |

The data show while students acknowledge using Twitter for educational activities (S3, M = 3.49), the platform is predominantly used for personal purposes (S4, M = 4.68). The contrast in scores indicates that although educational use exists, Twitter functions more strongly as a personal and social tool among these students. Findings show that Twitter is widely used among English department students at Universitas Riau. Out of 80 respondents, 63.75% reported high frequency of Twitter use, while 36.25% indicated moderate use. None reported low usage. Most students use Twitter multiple times daily (mean = 4.11), and a significant number engage in writing-related threads (mean = 3.84). This high level of engagement suggests that Twitter is deeply integrated into students' daily routines.

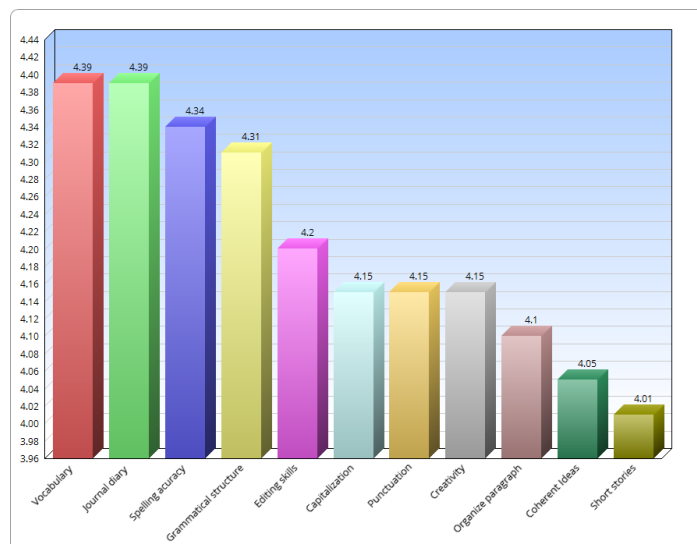
Qualitative data supported these findings. Students with positive perceptions reported using Twitter for several hours a day, often engaging with content related to writing or learning. As one participant (S2) stated, "I have been using Twitter since middle school, for about nine years. I use it quite often, almost every day, and usually for around 3–4 hours per day, sometimes even more."

Conversely, those with non-positive perceptions tended to use Twitter for entertainment or passive browsing. Participant S5 mentioned, "If I count it, I probably use Twitter only 2–4 times a week. Not too often, but not too rarely either."

2. Students' Perceptions of Twitter's Impact on Writing Skills

Quantitative data revealed that 86.25% of students perceived Twitter as having a high impact on their writing skills. All components of writing assessed in the questionnaire (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, coherence, editing, and creativity) received high average scores, with vocabulary (mean = 4.39) and grammatical awareness (mean = 4.31) being the most positively rated aspects.

Figure 1. Mean scores of students' perceptions on writing skill components developed through Twitter.





The figure 1 above illustrates students' perceptions regarding the improvement of various writing skill components through Twitter. Vocabulary and journal-style writing were the most highly rated, both with a mean score of 4.39. Spelling, grammar, and editing skills also scored high, reflecting Twitter's role in supporting core language development. Lower but still positive scores were found in paragraph organization, coherence, and short story writing.

Interview responses echoed these results. Students with positive perceptions shared that Twitter helped them improve their grammar, expand vocabulary, and structure ideas more clearly. Participant S1 said, "Before, my vocabulary was still basic, but after using Twitter, I learned more vocabulary and could enhance my writing." Participant S3 added, "I think it makes me easier to pour my ideas into writing. Sometimes when writing I often get stuck, but with Twitter it's more fluent." In contrast, students with neutral or non-positive perceptions reported limited benefits, mainly in vocabulary or surface-level mechanics such as punctuation. Participant S5 explained, "So far what I feel is just vocabulary or maybe like capitalization or punctuation. Only small things."

3. Students' Feelings about Using Twitter for Writing

Emotional engagement was another key dimension explored. A majority of students (75%) expressed high positive feelings toward using Twitter in writing practice. Statements related to increased confidence, enjoyment, and creativity received high ratings. For example, the statement "Twitter forms a more relaxed and stress-free language learning environment" had a mean score of 4.48.

Figure 2. Mean scores of students' emotional responses to using Twitter for writing practice.

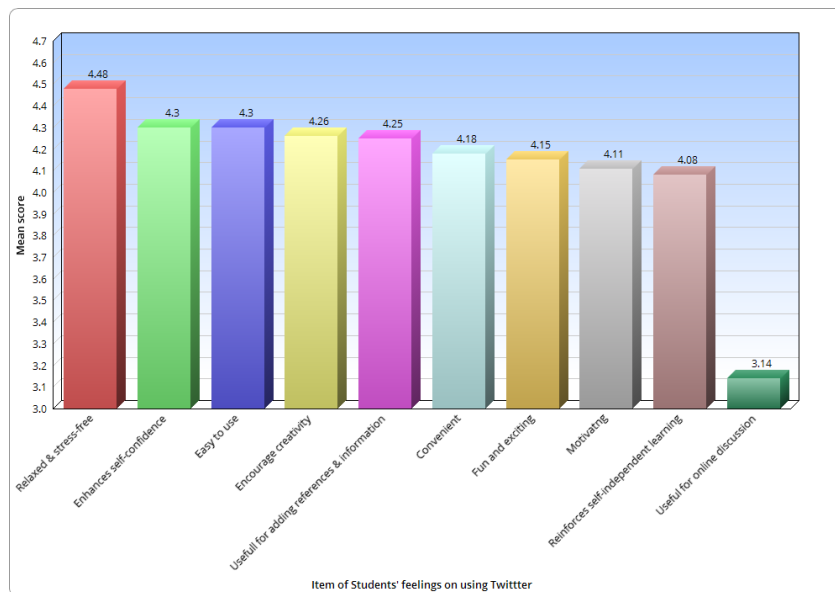


Figure 2 summarizes the students' emotional responses. Twitter was seen as stress-free, easy to use, and confidence-building. Students also appreciated the platform's ability to enhance creativity, provide useful references, and make writing more enjoyable. The lowest-rated item, usefulness for online discussion, still received a neutral-to-moderate score, indicating a potential area for development.

Interviewees also mentioned that Twitter felt like a low-pressure space to practice writing. Participant S1 shared, "At first, the character limit on Twitter was confusing and somewhat restrictive. But over time, I realized that it helped me become more creative and more specific in expressing my ideas." Confidence was another frequently mentioned benefit. Participant S2 said, "Since I have been using Twitter for quite some time and often write in English there, I feel more confident when I have to write English assignments."

However, not all experiences were positive. A few students mentioned fear of judgment or lack of motivation due to passive use. Participant S6 stated, "Sometimes people on Twitter can be too critical. If I make



a grammar mistake, they reply and correct me. That's why I prefer writing in Indonesian rather than English." These cases suggest that while Twitter has the potential to support emotional comfort and learning, its effectiveness depends on students' willingness to engage with the platform actively.

Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that Twitter can serve as an effective supplementary tool for enhancing writing skills, especially when students use it purposefully and actively. The integration of reading, composing, and interacting with texts fosters improvements in vocabulary, grammar, organization, and creativity. These results align with prior research (Ahmed, 2015; Borau et al., 2009; Khoiriyah, 2017), which emphasizes Twitter's educational potential.

The study also supports theoretical frameworks like Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underscores the role of social interaction in language development, and Flower and Hayes' process model of writing, where planning, translating, and revising are core elements — all of which are evident in Twitter usage.

In conclusion, Twitter holds strong potential as a learning tool, particularly for students who are motivated, consistent, and strategic in their use. Emotional comfort, ease of access, and real-time feedback further enhance its effectiveness in developing English writing skills.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on understanding the perceptions of English Department students at Universitas Riau regarding the use of Twitter to improve their writing skills. The research encompassed a sample of 80 students who actively use Twitter, with data collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews. This mixed-method approach provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into how students perceive the influence of Twitter on their writing proficiency. In summary, this study highlights that Twitter is widely used among English Department students, with many recognizing its benefits in writing skills development. Twitter plays a significant role in enhancing vocabulary, grammar, spelling, paragraph organization, and overall writing confidence. However, the degree of improvement depends on how students utilize the platform. Those who actively engage with educational content on Twitter experience notable writing development, whereas passive users see limited benefits. These findings suggest that incorporating Twitter as a supplementary tool in academic writing instruction may be beneficial, particularly when students are guided on how to maximize its educational potential.

From the collected data, it was evident that a significant number of students frequently use Twitter and believe it has a positive impact on their writing abilities. The platform's informal and dynamic nature allows students to expand their vocabulary, enhance self-expression, and improve their spelling and grammar skills. Many students pointed out that Twitter's character limit forces them to be concise and clear, which aids in developing their editing skills and ability to convey messages succinctly. Additionally, Twitter serves as a stress-free environment for language practice, which helps in boosting students' confidence in their writing.

The research further delved into specific writing components that students utilize and improve upon through Twitter. These components include grammar, vocabulary, paragraph organization, and spelling. Twitter's format, which encourages brief yet coherent posts, pushes students to focus on proper capitalization and punctuation. The data revealed that 47.5% of the students rated Twitter's effectiveness in improving their writing skills as very high, while 46.25% rated it as high, underscoring the strong positive perception among the majority of participants.

Considering the conclusion above, the following recommendations are proposed: Students are encouraged to use Twitter consistently to enhance their writing skills through active participation, experimentation with various styles, and attention to peer feedback. Regular use of Twitter can help improve vocabulary, grammar, confidence, and writing fluency. Educators should integrate Twitter into classroom activities as a digital tool for micro-writing tasks that promote clarity, creativity, and engagement. Assignments such as tweet-length summaries, hashtag discussions, or reflective threads can enrich students' writing practice. Further studies are suggested to examine the long-term effects of Twitter on writing skills with more diverse samples. Exploring other social media platforms may also offer broader insights into their role in language learning and writing development.



In conclusion, this study underscores the potential of Twitter as a multifaceted tool that supports language acquisition, technical writing skills, and personal expression. By leveraging social media within educational frameworks, students can significantly enhance their writing abilities in an engaging, modern, and interactive manner. This integration of digital tools in education not only aligns with contemporary communication trends but also fosters a more connected and participative learning environment.

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