


EFL Learners' Perceptions of Social Interaction on X (Twitter) for Second Language Acquisition

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A B S T R A C T

Social media allows people to interact with others worldwide without face-to-face communication, creating opportunities for language learning through authentic online interaction. While previous studies have extensively examined language learning through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, limited research has specifically explored how interactions on X (formerly Twitter) contribute to language acquisition, particularly from the perspectives of Indonesian EFL learners. This study aimed to explore Indonesian EFL learners' perceptions of how Twitter interaction supports their language acquisition. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study involved 30 university students from different universities in Indonesia. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that learners perceived Twitter as a valuable platform for language acquisition. Through interaction on Twitter, learners improved their English proficiency, expanded their vocabulary, enhanced their exposure to authentic language use, and increased their confidence in communicating in English. Furthermore, Twitter features such as real-time interaction, discussion threads, and access to native speakers played significant roles in supporting learning. The study concludes that Twitter interaction facilitates language acquisition by providing meaningful exposure to authentic English communication and opportunities for active engagement with global users.

Keywords: *Twitter, Social Interaction, English as a Foreign Language, Second Language Acquisition*

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the use of social media has increased significantly, reshaping individuals' ways of living in several aspects, including communication, information exchange, and education (Nugraha et al., 2024). Social media makes users' lives easier by allowing them to access information from around the world and enabling activities such as long-distance communication, online shopping, and even online learning (Christian & Kurniawan, 2023). This convenience further allows users to engage in cross-linguistic interaction, which may create opportunities for language acquisition (Pikhart & Botezat, 2021).

Interaction plays a vital role in facilitating language development from a second language acquisition perspective (Long, 1981). Long concluded that second language acquisition is possible through modified interaction, which occurs when a non-native speaker interacts with a native speaker. Negotiation of meaning through communicative interaction between learners can promote language acquisition and enhance comprehension by providing learners with comprehensible input and encouraging them to adjust their output during interaction (Zhong, 2024). When a non-native English-speaking learner interacts with a native English-speaking learner, misunderstandings may arise, leading them to request clarification and confirmation checks. Those are considered negotiation of meaning in second language acquisition.

As the technology continues to evolve, particularly social media, interaction among individuals is no longer limited to direct face-to-face interaction, but can also take place through online platforms (Singh, 2022). The rapid use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Threads, etc., has been continuously changing the way people communicate with others, allowing them to share or express their thoughts and opinions. In line with this, multiple studies in language learning and acquisition have examined whether social media can facilitate language learning. As a result, previous studies have presented evidence that social media platforms can facilitate learning, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, in language skills (Alharthi et al., 2020).

While previous studies have examined whether social media can facilitate language learning, limited research has examined how Indonesian EFL learners perceive social media as a medium for language acquisition. In the Indonesian EFL context, learners learn English formally at school but rarely use it outside (Daflizar, 2020). However, social media presence offers learners opportunities to learn a language not only at school, but also through online platforms (Ahmed, 2020). In Indonesia, the most used social media among young users are YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, as well as messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Line (Rinaldy Malik & Nur Ashar Asnur, 2019). Indonesians are reported to spend an average of 9 hours per day on social media (Widiyanto et al., 2025). This amount of time spent on social media has proven to create numerous opportunities for learners to process language and receive input as they interact on these platforms, using their language and communication skills muftahm (Muftah, 2024).

Social media helps learners to improve their English skills and proficiency. Research found that social media helps learners improve their English grammar and vocabulary. Not only do learners improve their English skills and proficiency, but they also feel more motivated to learn English through social media, as they are already familiar with its use. Zarei & Rudravarapu (2019) show that Learners find Instagram very helpful in developing their English language proficiency and communication skills through meaningful online interactions with their peers. Similarly, a mixed-methods study by Shahzadi & Kausar (2020) found that using a social media platform (Facebook) as a discussion medium helps learners improve their writing skills. Learners also found it interesting and feel motivated to experience using Facebook for writing practice.

Among those social media platforms mentioned earlier, Twitter can also be a potential place for language acquisition, as it enables users to communicate and exchange ideas. It provides users with various features that enable them to interact, such as Tweet (posting), reply, direct message, space, and community. Moreover, Twitter exposes users to authentic texts with diverse linguistic features, providing opportunities for learners to engage with real-world language use. Alsharidi (2018) explores female Saudi EFL learners' perceptions of Twitter as a tool for English practice. The result found that Twitter's authentic environment is an important part of their language development. They value these platforms as they can freely practice English as an L2 in a real-world context. Thus, it indicates that learners' use of English on Twitter is more likely to be social than educational.

Several studies have also examined the use of Twitter for L2 acquisition and development. Arumugam et al. (2022) stated that Twitter should be utilized not only for entertainment but also for beneficial practice. This aligns with their study's findings that Twitter can develop EFL learners' vocabulary and communication skills. Wulandari & Muliani (2023) argue that Twitter can enhance all English skills. The findings show that Twitter features can help users practice English not only in reading or writing, but also in speaking and listening. The *Space* feature allows users to listen to and engage in oral interaction with multiple people, similar to a group audio call. They also found learning English on Twitter interesting, as they can customize the material and the topic they like. Furthermore, Twitter allows learners to access culturally relevant information about the target language and to interact with native speakers (Rosell-Aguilar, 2020).

Despite the large number of Twitter users among Indonesian learners, there is limited research on how Indonesian EFL learners perceive Twitter interaction in facilitating their

language development. Focusing on learners' perceptions of Twitter's use for language development, this research aims to address this gap through a qualitative approach. This research will seek to understand how Twitter can be used not only as a source of entertainment but also as a medium of interaction that supports language development beyond formal classroom settings.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore Indonesian EFL learners' perceptions of using Twitter to facilitate their language development. A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it is well-suited to exploring participants' perceptions and experiences. It provides a comprehensive summary of perceptions, offering a detailed understanding of the topics discussed (Sandelowski, 2000). This methodological approach aligns with the need to explore phenomena and gather rich, detailed data directly from the perspectives of those involved (Falomo et al., 2026).

Furthermore, this research focuses on the types of interactions participants engage in on Twitter, such as reading and responding to posts, communicating with others, and participating in discussions in English. This research examines how interactions contribute to participants' language development, vocabulary improvement, and confidence in English interactions. Thus, the findings of this research are expected to offer insights into participants' perspectives on their experiences of Twitter interaction for language development.

Respondents

This research targeted Indonesian EFL learners who use Twitter or have ever used Twitter to communicate in English. 30 university students from different universities were chosen to participate in this research based on their Twitter activity, ensuring the answers they gave were based on their own experiences and were all relevant.

Instruments

The data was collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The instruments were adapted from a research article by Alsharidi (2018), which analyzes the use of Twitter amongst female Saudi EFL learners. To ensure data quality, the structured questionnaire was designed to gather participants' perceptions of Twitter use, including general aspects of Twitter and interaction on Twitter. This was presented as a dichotomous Likert scale with agree and disagree options, allowing the researcher to collect subjective data on participants' attitudes, opinions, and feelings. A Likert scale is suitable for gathering an overview of participants' perceptions and attitudes as the basis for the data collection (Koo & Yang, 2025). To support these data, a semi-structured interview was conducted, with open-ended questions. This enables participants to explain their perceptions, providing a more in-depth understanding of their perspectives on language development through Twitter interaction (Rouder et al., 2021).

Procedures

Data collection was conducted online via a questionnaire and an interview using *Google Forms*. This allows participants to be flexible in their availability for this research, as they come from different universities. The *Google Form* was prepared and divided into three sections: two sections contain a questionnaire, and one section is a semi-structured interview. The link to the *Google Form* was then shared on Twitter via direct message to get the participants. Data collection lasted 4 days until all participants completed the *Google Form*. The researcher then analyzed the collected data to elaborate on the results.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (TA) to identify patterns in participants' experiences and perspectives. The data analyzed included all three sections of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews: General Aspects of Twitter Usage,

English Practice and Interaction on Twitter, and Semi-Structured Interview. The questionnaire served as a preliminary reference for the research, while the interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions. Data analysis of the interview began by reading the data, identifying codes, and organizing the relevant data for each code. This relevant data was collected to determine the themes, which were then elaborated in the findings and discussion section (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will elaborate on the research results after collecting data from 30 participants' perceptions. This will address the research questions of the research: (1) How do learners perceive the role of interaction on Twitter in their second language acquisition? (2) What features did the learners find most helpful in learning English on Twitter?

Learners' Perceptions of the Role of Interaction on Twitter in Their Second Language Acquisition.

Learners' Use of Twitter

Table 1. Learners' Use of Twitter

No.	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	I am an active Twitter user	96.7%	3.3%
2.	I find it easy to write a tweet	100%	0%
3.	I use Twitter for different purposes	90%	10%
4.	I use both English and Indonesian when I interact on Twitter	96.7%	3.3%

The findings show that all participants meet the criteria for participation in this research. Most participants are active Twitter users, and one is not an active user but regularly interacts in English on Twitter. This ensures the data is all relevant to their own experiences with Twitter. All participants agree that writing a Tweet is easy, as they have used this platform regularly. Then, most participants use Twitter for different purposes (academic and entertainment). Lastly, most participants use both English and Indonesian to interact on Twitter.

Interaction on Twitter as a Language Exposure

Twitter, as a social media platform, has users from all over the world. Learners agree that Twitter helps them connect with the global community and interact with people from other countries. Thus, helps to expose them to authentic language use in a real-world context.

Table 2. Learners Perception of Twitter as a Language Exposure

No.	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	I am more internationally connected when I interact in English on Twitter	90%	10%
2.	I am exposed to real language when I interact in English on Twitter	83.3%	16.7%
3.	I feel that Twitter is a natural place in which to practice English because there is meaningful interaction amongst people	96.7%	3.3%

As shown in Table 2, learners' perceptions of Twitter as a language exposure were very positive. Most of them agree that Twitter helps them practice English, as they are exposed to real language when they interact in English there, and there is meaningful interaction amongst people. This indicates that Twitter interactions facilitate their language development by providing a space to practice English with others. Several participants stated that interacting with users from diverse linguistic backgrounds enables them to see how English is naturally used in real-life communication. One participant stated, "I can learn new vocabulary and see how English is used in real conversation" (P22). This indicates that through interacting with English speakers on Twitter, she can learn new vocabulary and how to use it correctly in real conversation. Similarly, another participant highlighted vocabulary acquisition through interaction with English speakers. "By interacting with many English speakers online, I can actively try to communicate with them as well as gain new vocabulary from them" (P28). By interacting with English speakers on Twitter, she can engage more in English conversation and thereby gain

new vocabulary. Participants also noted that not only does interacting with English speakers help them acquire vocabulary, but it also allows them to understand expressions, slang, and idioms, as well as how to use them within the context (Hattem & Lomicka, 2016).

Although interaction on Twitter provides learners with language exposure, Several participants reported difficulty understanding the meanings of certain words, slang, and expressions used on Twitter. Participants mentioned, *"Sometimes the language used in Twitter can be confusing, especially when people use abbreviations or slang that I'm not familiar with"* (P21). However, these challenges also encourage learners to seek clarification or try to search for the meaning on their own. This indicates that the language limitations that learners face when engaging in Twitter interaction might create a meaningful interaction with the negotiation of meaning to prevent misunderstanding (Aloraini & Cardoso, 2022).

Interaction for Language Development

Regular Twitter interaction gradually affects learners' language proficiency. This is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Learners' Perception of Interaction for Language Development

No.	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	My interactions with people I follow on Twitter Improve my English	93.3%	6.7%
2.	I learn new vocabulary when I interact in English with other people	100%	0%
3.	I believe my English has improved since I started interacting with People on Twitter	93.3%	6.7%
4.	I believe using Twitter to practice English helps me learn new English language items	100%	0%

The findings show positive responses from learners' perceptions of their language development through Twitter interaction. Most participants agree that interactions with their Twitter followers improve their English, and their English has improved since they started interacting with people on Twitter. Then, all of them agreed that interacting in English on Twitter helps them learn new vocabulary and other aspects of the English language, including slang, expressions, and idioms.

The participants' interview results support these findings. One participant mentioned, *"Yes, it helps me learn new words, slang, and improve my communication skills"* (P4). The participant highlights her development of vocabulary and communication skills. Similarly, another participant responded, *"Yes, it really helps, especially with everyday language and slang. I often learn new expressions and stay updated with how English is used in daily conversation"* (P23). This reflects that by actively interacting on Twitter, learners can learn new vocabulary, expressions, slang, and keep up to date with how it is used in daily conversation. Interacting on Twitter helps learners to keep up with language evolution, particularly in informal communication contexts.

Additionally, another participant shared, *"Yes, I think using Twitter helps me practice English in several ways. It allows me to use English in real-life communication, not just in a classroom setting. I can improve my vocabulary and learn informal expressions. Since there are many tweets written in English, I can also learn by reading and understanding how the language is used in different contexts."* (P9). This indicates that learners are exposed to how English is used in real-life contexts, which allows them to learn English not only through interaction but also through reading and observing how the language is used in different contexts. The findings also showed that learners naturally learn new vocabulary, expressions, etc., as they regularly use Twitter. This indicates the learners' incidental learning process. Incidental learning occurs when people acquire words or expressions unconsciously, without intending to memorize them (Hulstijn, 2013). Learners naturally acquire language without any intention to learn it through interacting with people and reading tweets. This shows that exposure quantity affects learners' vocabulary acquisition (Amalia & Sulistyani, 2025). Some participants mention that they also acquire new vocabulary through reading fictional stories on Twitter, known as Alternative Universe (AU). Learners perceive that AU facilitates their language acquisition, as many of its courses are taught in English. By frequently reading AU, they are exposed to new

vocabulary and how to use it in context, which then helps them to improve their vocabulary and reading skills (Yuniasih et al., 2025).

As the learners get exposure to various linguistic features on Twitter, they become more familiar with commonly used expressions and communication styles. Several participants responded that through regular use of Twitter for interaction or just reading tweets, they become more aware of how certain words, expressions, idioms, or slang are appropriately used in different contexts. They will also learn how to use them by writing their own tweets using those linguistic features. This shows that the language exposure learners get on Twitter can encourage them to apply it in their own communication practices. Thus, it will develop their writing skills as they learn to use words correctly and become accustomed to them.

Furthermore, the language exposure that learners get from engaging in global communication gradually improves their communication skills. *"Yes, it helps me learn new words, slang, and improve my communication skills"* (P4). The participant highlights her development of vocabulary and communication skills. These findings align with Alshaibani (2020), who argues that engaging in discussions in the target language enhances learners' capability to use it. Additionally, Twitter provides learners with a space to interact with people around the world, which supports their improvement in communicative competence.

Interaction for Learners' Confidence

The research also found that several participants feel more confident interacting on Twitter. This is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Learners' Perception Regarding Confidence

No.	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	I am more comfortable communicating in English on Twitter	63.3%	36.7%
2.	I feel that Twitter is an encouraging place to practice English because no one judges my mistakes	80%	20%
3.	Continuous practice of English on Twitter strengthens my confidence in using the language	96.7%	3.3%

Table 4 shows learners' perceptions of their confidence in interacting on English Twitter. Several participants agree that they feel more comfortable interacting in English on Twitter, and most agree that continuous practice of English on Twitter increases their confidence in using the language. Several factors influence learners' confidence when interacting in English on Twitter. First, English is an international language that almost everyone uses to interact with people from other countries. *"Yes, I do. As I have said before, many people around the world are using Twitter, and those who are gathered into one community, it is natural to have daily tweets using English to connect with each other. This made me not feel afraid to speak out my thoughts using English, and little by little I think that it helped me improve the English itself"* (P8), suggests that, as English is commonly used on Twitter to interact with users, it encourages her to use the language more often. Thus, enhance her confidence in using English, and gradually improve her proficiency. Second, learners feel that Twitter provides a comfortable space to practice English. *"I think Twitter provides a space where I can freely practice English. Even when I make mistakes, no one really judges me, so it makes me feel more comfortable to try and keep learning"* (P15). Learners feel more comfortable practicing English on Twitter because they feel safe to learn, as no one judges them if they make mistakes. They are easy to find users with the same interest in learning English. Third, most people use casual or informal language on Twitter. This increases learners' confidence as they don't need to think about grammar to create a perfect sentence. Last, some learners feel more confident expressing themselves on Twitter because they cringe when using Indonesian to express their feelings.

Continuous interaction with people who also use English on Twitter increases their confidence as they get used to it. They can express their thoughts freely without being judged while also learning to use the language correctly. People on Twitter tend to let the person they interact with know if they make mistakes. This creates a positive environment where learners can receive direct feedback and learn from their mistakes (Alshahrani, 2017).

However, some participants experienced the opposite. Interacting using English on Twitter, in fact, creates anxiety for them. *"There are many grammar police with harsh words"* (P13). *"Grammar police"* refers to people who constantly focus on correcting others' grammar. Such people are not uncommon; other participants responded similarly. Those people can create a fear of making mistakes in some people when they interact, as they are corrected in a not-so-positive way. Similarly, some participants feel scared of being judged harshly when they make mistakes in English interactions.

These findings indicate that learners perceive Twitter interactions positively as a source of language exposure that enhances their language proficiency and confidence. Interaction on Twitter provides learners with exposure to authentic language, which helps them develop their English proficiency and confidence by engaging with international users (Malik et al., 2019). However, some challenges might occur in their interaction, such as language limitations and fear of making mistakes (Kinnison et al., 2017). Despite these challenges, opportunities to interact with native speakers and engage in real-time communication within authentic contexts facilitate significant language acquisition (Alsharidi, 2018).

Features of Twitter that Support English Learning

Learners use various Twitter features to support their language learning. The findings reveal several features that learners perceived as particularly helpful in facilitating their language learning.

Table 5. Most Helpful Twitter Features

No	Twitter Features	Total
1.	Translate	11
2.	Reply/Comment	7
3.	Posting/Tweet	5
4.	Threads	4
5.	Search	4
6.	Quotes	3
7.	Communities	3
8.	Grok	3
9.	Direct Messages (DM)	2
10.	Timeline	2
11.	Likes	1

Table 5 presents the most helpful Twitter features for learners' language learning, as reported by Indonesian EFL learners. Each learner can mention more than one feature, but overall, the translation feature was found to be the most helpful of the Twitter features. *"The translation feature helps me to get to know its meaning directly in Bahasa"* (P29). Learners found the translation feature helpful in their learning practice, as it allows them to translate words they don't understand on Twitter easily. This suggests their strategies for addressing language limitations. However, this only works on vocabulary limitations, not on slang and expressions.

While the Translate feature helped find the exact meanings of words, the Search, Quotes, Grok, Replies, and Thread features helped understand how words are used in context. Particularly, these features help learners when they encounter unfamiliar slang, expressions, or idiomatic language on Twitter. Participant mentioned *"The search bar helps me check meanings or see how words are used in context"* (P7), another participant added *"For me, I think the quote tweets are the most helpful because by reading quote tweets, I can see different perspectives and how people express reactions in English. Replies and threads also help me understand conversations in English. By reading how people respond to each other, I can learn how to express opinions, agree or disagree naturally"* (P9). This indicates that learners were able to interpret meanings and gain a better understanding of authentic language use by observing how other users use certain words in conversations.

Moreover, the Communities, Timeline, and Likes features provided learners with exposure to English through content that appeared on their Twitter pages. The communities feature allows them to follow communities based on their interests. Learners respond that by

reading tweets on their Timeline, they can improve their reading skills and vocabulary. However, the timeline feature sometimes brings random or irrelevant content that does not align with learners' interests. Nevertheless, the "Likes" feature can help prevent this, as interacting with preferred content helps the algorithm display more content that aligns with learners' interests and learning needs.

These findings suggest that learners use Twitter features to help them practice English. The available features make it easier for them to directly search for something they don't understand on Twitter, including unfamiliar words, slang, expressions, and idioms, without leaving the platform. This indicates that Twitter features play a significant role in supporting learners' learning process (Saepuloh et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Learners perceive Twitter as a beneficial medium for language acquisition. The platform provides opportunities for interaction with a global community and exposure to authentic English use in various contexts. Through these interactions, learners perceive improvements in their language proficiency and confidence in using English. In addition, Twitter's features support engagement and facilitate language learning by enabling access to authentic communication and diverse language input. This study concludes that Twitter interaction can support EFL learners' language acquisition by providing meaningful opportunities for communication and exposure to authentic language use. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to the limited number of participants and the specific context of the study. Future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample of participants and to further investigate language acquisition through interactions on different social media platforms.

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